

## **APPENDIX G**

### **THE BROADER CONTEXT**

### **PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN**

District of Saanich, BC.

July 2012

## The Broader Context - Trends in Parks, Recreation and Society

Note: See Working Paper #5 for a more complete review.

In assessing these trends in order to advise the Department about how they should plan, many different sources of information were reviewed. One of the most important current sources is the Benefits Hub (<http://arpaonline.ca/research/benefits-hub/>), which is an information system brought together by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, and outlines the research backing for the idea that recreation, in its broadest sense, provides many important and indeed essential benefits to any community. Its primary marketing messages are:

### **OVERALL MARKETING MESSAGE**

LEISURE ACTIVITIES, PARKS AND GREENSPACE ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL WELL BEING, TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE, TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY;

### **EIGHT KEY MARKETING MESSAGES**

1. Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and parks are ESSENTIAL TO PERSONAL HEALTH - Active Living is a key determinant of health status.
2. Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and Parks are all key to balanced HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - helping Canadians reach for their potential.
3. Recreation, Fitness, Sport, Arts, Culture and Parks/Greenspace are essential to QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLACE.
4. Recreation, Sport, Arts and Outdoor Pursuits reduce self-destructive and ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.
5. Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and parks build STRONG FAMILIES and HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.
6. PAY NOW or PAY MORE LATER! Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and Parks reduce health care, social service, and police/justice costs!
7. Recreation, Sport, Art, Culture and Parks are significant ECONOMIC GENERATORS in your community!
8. Parks, open spaces, and natural areas are 'Greenspace' essential to WELL BEING and our ENVIRONMENTAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVIVAL

In addition to these key marketing messages, the following trends have been identified, three external to parks and recreation, two internal:

### **Changing Community Values**

The environmental movement is recognizing a much broader definition of 'sustainability' than simply environmental, by recognizing a 'four pillar' approach which adds social, economic, and cultural pillars to the environmental pillar. The Saanich OCP embeds these pillars into municipal management, and their articulation in parks and recreation must be one focus of this master plan.

Technology and globalization have been strong forces for the past decade and will continue to drive change. But they are also rekindling an interest in local issues and a search for a sense of community.

There is also a growing sense of personal responsibility, in particular for personal health – the health system’s job is to cure illness...it is each of our responsibility to keep ourselves healthy...such as through active living, wise eating, etc.

There is also generally less acceptance of a world, especially in the public sector, which is divided into silos. Clearly health and schools are connected to recreation and parks...and the public expect to see these public agencies working collaboratively.

This is in part an expectation for a higher quality, more seamlessly delivered product. We want products, like early childhood programming, which meets our needs and timelines, not those of disparate public agencies...why – because that is what we have grown to expect and what the private sector delivers (or certainly claims to deliver).

And we have higher expectations about accountability and reporting.

### Changing Socio-Economic Structures and Lifestyles

People live 24/7 lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and expect their parks and recreation systems and services to recognize this. More people are working from home, and the three ‘boxes’ of work, home and recreation centre must adapt accordingly.

Our expectations are also of immediacy...and social media is increasingly meeting this challenge. The rise of Facebook and sites like meetup.com are changing the way we recreate and the traditional idea of an 8 week course, at a given time, in a set place, could likely going to be gone within the time horizon of this plan...challenging us to rethink one of the fundamental underpinnings of recreation delivery.

Technology is also enabling us to connect locally, and is strengthening our sense of place and of community. This community development role has always been a key building block of recreation...and there is renewed potential to rediscover our local human connections using the tools of technology.

### Changing Demographics

Saanich’s changing demographics were discussed earlier and are key trends:

- More seniors, although in this next decade this will mean more active new retirees as opposed to more in the 75+ age groups...and likely to be very active.
- More young families, as Saanich continues to attract the young families who are the echo of the echo of the boom.
- The challenge of affordability as Saanich house prices remain on average double the Canadian average.
- And increasing ethnicity, as Canada continues to be a haven for the world’s mobile populations.

## Changing Recreation Delivery

Many of the key recreation trends have been noted earlier as issues that are challenging user groups and municipal managers:

- The challenges of aging infrastructure, coupled with rising energy costs.
- The decline in participation in structured programs and the rise in self-programming, whether drop-in or self-arranged (such as through meetup.com, etc).
- Increasing recognition of the social dimension in recreation ...they come for physical activity, but it is the social element that keeps them coming back.
- Increasing awareness that a risk averse world often removes the challenges that are essential for self-satisfaction.
- Expansion and demand for more programs in the arts and in health related programs.

## Changing Park Delivery

- Increasing demands and decreasing funding is leading to the development of alternative funding approaches, one of which is closer relationships with community associations, sport groups and volunteers. One example of this might be allowing community stewardship of small and neighbourhood parks (examples include adopt-a-park).
- Sustainable park design and operation brings challenges of expectations, however there is an increasing interest in natural parks, nature sanctuaries and the urban forest.
- Increasing the role of parks as community gathering spaces, such as plazas and urban squares.
- Increasing environmental education.
- Rediscovering unstructured play in the park.
- Linking parks to food security and an increasing demand for community gardens and allotments.
- More trails...and greenways...and networks for humans and wildlife to move around.
- Increased use of IT to manage park infrastructure and to 'tell the story' about parks, their usage and importance.

Key phrases for the coming decade which were noted by parks and recreation managers in other communities included:

- **Sustainability** - but with the 'four pillar' approach – environmental, social, economic, and cultural.
- **Partnership and collaboration** – with communities, with the commercial sector, and with other public agencies
- **Active lifestyles** – reinventing unstructured play and linking children with nature, as well as finding ways to help all people to live a more active life.
- **Alternative funding sources** – because the budgets are not going to meet the public's expectations.