



# **LIFE REVIEW**

## **Summary Report to GVAC**

September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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This submission represents the final version of the LIFE Review, and includes the July and August round of feedback from GVAC, Research Team representatives and community partners.

Beginning with the background of LIFE, the report centres on a comprehensive set of recommendations to be considered by GVAC. While many of the recommendations have received universal positive response, others have generated healthy debate and require GVAC deliberation. In this version, the authors have included expanded information related to the recommendations that have attracted most attention, and in certain cases, outlined choices that GVAC may decide to adopt.

Our appreciation is extended to all of you who have provided comprehensive input during the past six months.

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LIFE Review Research Team – Identified on Page 2 of Review

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## Section A - About the Review

The Leisure Involvement for Everyone (LIFE) program was conceived in the late 1990's to reduce barriers to leisure activities and recreation programs for low-income families and individuals in the District of Saanich. Unique in design, over the next 10 years the LIFE program expanded across all Greater Victoria boundaries with each of the seven local governments supporting the program and involving 13 recreation facilities. (See Appendix C.1 - Backgrounder on LIFE).

This LIFE Review is the first formal assessment of the LIFE program since its inception. Spearheaded by District of Saanich in partnership with Greater Victoria Active Communities (GVAC), the review began in October 2018 (See Appendix C.2 - Timeline for Review) with the assembly of a LIFE Review Research Team representing the region's primary recreation departments. We acknowledge the commitment of the Research Team representatives who have worked so effectively in capturing how LIFE is functioning across the region and contributing fully to this review.

- Saanich Parks and Recreation / *Represented by Mena Westhaver*
- Esquimalt Recreation / *Represented by Christina Moog & Dana Robertson*
- Recreation Oak Bay / *Represented by Steve Meikle*
- City of Victoria / *Represented by Stephanie Wideman*
- Panorama Recreation / *Represented by Hannah Nawroth*
- West Shore Parks and Recreation / *Represented by Bobbi Neal & Angelina Loglisci*
- SEAPARC Leisure Complex / *Represented by Nathan Stewart*

### Methodology of Review:

The Review relied on three main sources of information to determine what aspects of the LIFE program are working well, what things were not working well, and what changes could be made to improve the program:

Survey of LIFE participants with 581 responses (Visit website for complete Survey with Anecdotal Responses go to: [bit.ly/LIFE Survey w responses](https://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses))

1. Public Engagements: Research Team members were oriented to a common format for facilitation of focus groups and interviews that involved:
  - a. Community partners servicing low-income clientele in Greater Victoria Recreation Departments
  - b. LIFE participants
  - c. Recreation staff serving LIFE participants
2. Expertise of the representatives of the Research Team each of whom work day to day with the LIFE program, supported by regular oversight of GVAC members.

The LIFE research team were oriented to a common format for facilitating focus groups using a common methodology based on appreciative inquiry (*what's working well, what should be changed*). The team organized and designed public engagements and the LIFE Survey. This public engagement phase was implemented between December 2018 and March 2019, the results of which were posted on the Saanich website inviting public response. The LIFE Review Research Team met monthly to guide the progress and analyze the emerging information.

### Who is the LIFE Program Participant?

LIFE participants vary greatly in their identity, ranging from school children registered through educational advocates, to individuals or small and large families, long-time residents, new residents and immigrants, single parent families, young and old persons with disabilities, and older adults. All of these participants shared the common experience of living on a low income.

In the 2016 Census, about 10% (38,805 of Greater Victoria's population of 367,770 persons) were identified in the Canada Statistics Low Income Cut-off demographic. Of this number, 9,657 persons - over 25% of those identified in the Low Income Cut-off in the Greater Victoria Region - participated in the LIFE program in 2018.

The total investment in the LIFE program in 2018 across the region totalled \$559,586. See chart below. For more details, see Appendix C.5

### Cost of LIFE Program

	In-house drop-ins	Regional drop-ins	In house Annual Pass	Regional Annual Pass	Registered Programs	Total:
City of Victoria	\$53,068.05	\$8,665.20	\$14,478.97	\$11,684.36	\$36,300 (subsidy)	\$124,196.58
Esquimalt	\$7,753.00	\$17,224.50	\$5,915.14	\$1,230.00	\$400	\$32,522.64
Oak Bay	\$6,450.00	\$24,630.00	\$4620,00	\$92.00	\$6,780.00	\$42,972.00
Panorama	\$22,913.25	\$1951.00	\$9,924	\$3,690	\$4,938.41	\$43,416.66
Saanich	\$164,524.00	\$4,819.75	\$20,280.32	\$11,053.74	\$58,200.60	\$258,878.41
Sooke	\$13,390.50	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	\$2500	\$15,890.50
West Shore	\$27,969.50	\$3,055	\$5,390	\$2,460	\$17,216.50	\$56,091
Totals:						\$573,967.79

## Section B - What is Working

Throughout this review, current LIFE members as well as community partners that serve or advocate for LIFE participants all conveyed their deep appreciation for the opportunities provided by the LIFE program. Information from the focus groups, public engagements, and the LIFE Survey converged to frame a clear picture of how valuable the LIFE program is to participants, and what they believed would improve the program.

### What did the LIFE Survey tell us?

Of the 581 survey respondents [bit.ly/LIFE\\_Survey\\_w\\_responses](https://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses), the largest two groups responding were the 30-39 and 40-49 year olds (about 23% each), followed by 60-69 and 50-59 (about 18% each). Approximately 37% of survey respondents were in one-person households, while 54% were in households of 2-4 persons.

Slightly more than half the total were parents, and a third of these were single parents (see Appendix C.7 for Single Parent segment). The respondents were users of at least one of the 13 recreation centres and represented a wide range of experience with LIFE: 15% were “new” participants, 31% were 1-2 year participants, 25% 3-5 years, with 23% were “more than” five year participants.

When asked how many times they use their LIFE pass per week, 46% used it 0-1 times, 42% used it 2-3 times, and 9% used 4-5 times.

When asked to assess the value of the various LIFE program options, people gave the “52 Free Admissions” the highest rating (82 % “Very Valuable”, 13% “Valuable”). Program Discounts had the second highest rating (58% “Very Valuable” and 20% “Valuable”). Third was the Annual Pass at 50% of cost (41% “Very Valuable”, 14% Valuable). Last mentioned was the Regional Annual Pass at 50% of cost (36% “Very Valuable”, 14% Valuable).

Critical to our review was the question “... would you still be involved in recreation centres without the LIFE Program?” 59% stated “No”, with another 11% choosing “Maybe”.

One person explained: *“As a low income disabled unemployable citizen I would suffer physical, emotion, and mental hardships”.*

Another wrote: *“This LIFE program is invaluable to me and my family. After an injury I was able to go to the gym and get help for the rehabilitation that I needed to get me better quickly. Also my son is able to go swim with friends and use the facility much more than I could ever afford to send him.”*

The anecdotal comments and comments related to the questions on the LIFE Survey were overwhelmingly positive. Examples:

*“It is really helpful in winter with the young kids. The difference between a bad year and a good year is LIFE program”*

*“Absolutely no way could we afford to go swimming every week and sometimes 2 or 3 times a week. Me and my son depend on these facilities a great deal. He has ADHD and needs to be active and we both love going to the pool together.”*

*“The LIFE program makes an otherwise prohibitive cost affordable...”*

*“The L.I.F.E. program allows us to attend without feeling guilty of the cost.”*

*“My grandsons and I bond, exercise and heal from life’s struggles at the pool.”*

*“Without the LIFE pass, I would not be able to attend any rec centre or program due to costs and my limited income (DCCP).”*

*“The LIFE pass is wonderful and a huge support for my family. Using the pool and the skating (rink) are the only activities we can afford to do without worrying about the cost.”*

*“If not for this program, my children would never have had the opportunities and safe activity level they have. I am forever grateful” (30-39 year old parent who responded she would could not afford recreation for her family without LIFE)*

*“I love the LIFE program, thanks for having it! I am healthier and happier because of it, and feel more connected to my community.”*

*“I’m new to Victoria and now we have a steady home closer to the pool we will be going as much as we can...I’ve also gone to a couple of the work outs and really enjoyed them ...thx for the life pass as without I’d never be able to afford it...”*

The majority of respondents indicated that the LIFE program played a huge part in helping them stay healthy and connected. Areas for improvement are defined below - current “GAPS” in our attempt to serve those financially struggling. Full survey results are found at [bit.ly/LIFE\\_Survey\\_w\\_responses](https://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses) and identify both areas requiring attention and the positives of the LIFE program.

The focus groups and meetings with staff, community service partners, and LIFE participants enabled us to deepen our understanding of what issues and challenges lay below the LIFE Survey data. Importantly, all the general patterns captured in the LIFE survey revealed a great appreciation for the service and how much participants advocated for the continued existence of LIFE. These patterns were corroborated in the face-to-face meetings. Again, we asked what was working well, what was not working, and what could work better.

Throughout these conversations, we were reminded of how tenuous involvement in recreation can often be for LIFE participants. While people described what LIFE offers – the drop-ins, the program discounts, the invitation to participate in interesting and healthy activities - they also described how one or two ostensibly minor events can derail their registration or their commitment to the recreation centre's activities. For those on the margins of society who struggle with survival of self and family both financially and emotionally, challenges such as the extra cost of equipment, the time and cost of transportation, an unfriendly interaction with staff, or inconsistent information about programs can be overwhelming – to the extent that they cut themselves off.

In focus groups with community partners who parallel our work with LICO clients, one person remarked: *“The more poor, the more isolated – the greater need for socialization and engagement”*.

This leads us to identifying the specific challenges that LIFE participants face.

### **Section C - Where are the GAPS in the LIFE program? What is *not* working?**

In discussing our findings and debating recommendations, these questions were the most compelling:

#### **How well is the cross-regional coordination of LIFE Program working?**

The survey and focus groups revealed that participants became confused and frustrated when applying to and participating in the LIFE program, caught between different program information and contradictory protocols in the registration process practised by different recreation centres and websites.

#### **Are the majority of those in the greatest need being served by the LIFE program?**

Many testimonies from respondents pointed to the difficulties caused by increased cost of living in Greater Victoria. Both those under the LICO (Low-Income Cut-Off) and those whose income finds them marginally above the threshold described the increasing challenges of meeting basic needs.

It is important to note that in our research we were able to gather solid information confirming the high value of participation experienced by those who have met the criteria for Low Income Cut-off and were able to be fully involved in LIFE programs. Invisible to us however, are those individuals and families whose incomes were above but close to LICO who do not participate in recreation. This demographic did not have opportunity to participate in surveys or focus groups to explain their experiences related to recreation centres. Moving forward without hard data on this question, the Research Team members discussed the needs of this missing demographic, researched how other Canadian municipalities are working with this challenge, and

explored options that might address specific needs. Further discussion at the GVAC level is needed.

### **Does the current LIFE Program provide enough opportunity for people to realize health benefits of physical activity and social participation?**

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 1) a child 5-17 years be physically active 60 minutes per day, and 2) that youth, adults and older adults require 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity per week to stay healthy. (CSEP – activity guidelines: <https://csepguidelines.ca>). This recommendation sets a higher standard than the opportunities offered currently to LIFE participants.

Many survey and focus group respondents aligned with this standard, indicating the 52 free drop-in passes provided by the LIFE Program were not enough to keep them active. Again, the design of our LIFE review did not generate statistical data specifically asking if participants needed an increase in passes and program offerings, but anecdotal data reflected that for many participants, there is need for expanding opportunities for participation.

*“I would like to thank you for this program, my kids love it so do my husband and I. It’s so helpful for us and everyone else. But if you can increase the times on the card or the amount of the money that is in the cards “especially for the kids” ...it would help get them more healthy and more valuable in their lives.”*

### **What additional support is required to invite and sustain healthy participation?**

The survey revealed that the barriers to participation were largely cost-related. When asked, “What things limit your involvement in recreation?” 79% identified “cost of activity and/or equipment”. The second limitation noted was the schedule of activities. Transportation, childcare, finding activities they like, and feeling accepted each tallied at 15% or lower by the whole respondent group. However, when the information from selected subsets of respondents is examined, the majority of parents, for example, identified “Nobody to look after my children” as their main limitation. For full Survey with Anecdotal Responses, visit: [bit.ly/LIFE\\_Survey\\_w\\_responses](https://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses).

### **How have other municipalities’ low income recreation programs evolved?**

We researched other Canadian programs for low-income participants. Notably, the program that stood out was Edmonton’s Leisure Activity Program, the program after which the LIFE program was modeled in the 1990’s. (Please see Appendix C.9 for full details of the Edmonton program)

These are a few highlights from other city models:

- 1) Applicants whose income is above the Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) are provided a scaled reduction of recreational costs. This is the cornerstone of Edmonton's revised Leisure Access Program, (LAP).
- 2) Some municipalities have successfully integrated registration of recreation passes with transit passes for low income citizens
- 3) Alternate means of proving income status: for example, disabilities documentation, or applicants can use their Red Compass Card (BC Bus Pass) as means of proving financial status (Vancouver's Leisure Access Program)
- 4) Application information and forms are offered in multiple languages
- 5) Applicants can register at a central city office, not the recreational facilities, thereby reducing chance of being stigmatized (Kamloops)
- 6) To expand participation of First Nations residents, Powell River initiated an agreement with the local First Nations communities to share costs of expanded recreation opportunities.
- 7) Most municipalities practised the option of using some form of adjudication to verify an applicant's level of need in cases where having the right documentation was a problem.

### **Section D – LIFE Review Recommendations**

Six sets of recommendations have been created within the themes identified below. Each recommendation is supported by data gathered from both qualitative and quantitative processes. Beneath each recommendation is a brief rationale; the Appendices offer more in-depth rationale for many of the recommendations.

1. Cross-Region Alignment & Marketing / Advertising
2. Low-income Threshold
3. Registration Process
4. Program Options and Usage
5. Additional Support
6. Privacy, Confidentiality, and Respect

#### **1. Cross-Region Alignment and Marketing/Advertising**

- a. Develop a consistent regional toolkit for internal and external customer reference. Include best practices and program information within the internal document (for staff), and additional information and other community resources in the external version (for participants).

- b. The Intermunicipal LIFE and Marketing Committee will develop a Marketing Plan that provides consistent templates to be used for Greater Victoria recreation departments in all their communication: websites, social media, community expositions, radio, active living guides, and print material.

*Rationale*

Participants in the LIFE Review stated that inconsistencies in program information, program options, and registration processes were detrimental to their participation. If one recreation centre is guided by different protocols or information than another centre, LIFE participants become confused and discouraged. The Regional LIFE Research Team concluded that further aligning ourselves more closely to a common standard, and sharing the marketing and communication expertise, would be advantageous to both staff and participants.

Applicants do not see themselves as working with “one municipality or the other”. They consider themselves residents of Victoria. Greater consistency will provide more opportunities, make better use of shared resources, and better support our citizens.

## 2. Low-income Thresholds

- a. Raise minimum low-income level to better align with regional cost of living – suggested addition of 5% above Stats Can LICO figures.

*Rationale:*

The rising cost of *housing* in Victoria is understood to be the primary cause for the significant rise in cost of living. According to the 15th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey 2018, Victoria is ranked one of the *severely unaffordable* housing markets in the world. Often Victoria is mistakenly perceived to be “affordable” when compared to neighbouring Vancouver; but Vancouver is currently second only to Hong Kong for being the most unaffordable city in the world.

(for details: <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf> )

The 2019 living wage for Metro Vancouver is \$19.50 per hour. Notably, Victoria is second highest in BC at \$19.39 per hour. The living wage is the hourly amount that each of two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic expenses (including rent, child care, food and transportation) once government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies are taken into account. While the federal government policy changes of 2017 alleviated some of the financial pressure on families, most Victoria area families still face significant challenges making ends meet.

(for details: <http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/projects>)

The most recent Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria report stated that about 27 per cent of two-parent, two-child families in Greater Victoria do not reach the living-wage threshold. “Housing costs are still a big

driver; average rent for all bedroom types in B.C.'s capital increased by 7.5 per cent in 2018". "That's really demonstrating that people are living below these basic quality-of-life measures," the author, Hardman said.

([http://communitycouncil.ca/sites/default/files/2019\\_Living\\_Wage\\_Report\\_Victoria%20-%20For%20Release\\_0.pdf](http://communitycouncil.ca/sites/default/files/2019_Living_Wage_Report_Victoria%20-%20For%20Release_0.pdf))

The annual household expenses for our model family of four actually rose by \$2,961 compared to 2018, a 4.1 per cent increase. Not surprisingly, the largest contributor to this increase was median rent for a 3-bedroom apartment, which rose by \$135 per month, to \$1,750 per month. For some areas of the region, the rental rates are considerably higher. The Living Wage family is living in core housing need, paying a higher proportion of their income for rent and utilities than is considered by CMHC to be affordable, like nearly half (44 per cent) of renter households in the Greater Victoria region.

### **How has the cost of living impacted the user statistics for LIFE**

**Programs?** Since 2013 there has been a proportional *decrease* in the percentage of low income families and individuals participating in LIFE Programs in Metropolitan Victoria. While the number of Life Participants has remained roughly the same (about 10,000 uses) between 2013 and 2018, the number of families and individuals in the low income category has increased by over 6%. This suggests that LIFE has become less accessible to those on the margins of poverty. (See APPENDIX C3 - Stats Canada Low Income chart comparing 2013-2017 Victoria after tax, Low Income families between 2013-2017).

Respondents in focus groups provided many examples of how the rising cost of living, particularly in rental and housing costs, have limited their life choices.

In the Victoria Foundation's 2018 Vital Signs Report<sup>1</sup>, the top two priorities related to recreation identified by respondents were:

1. "Improving access to programs for low-income individuals and families" – 31% of respondents citing this as most important and
2. "Providing more affordable recreation and sports opportunities" – 24% of respondents. (See Vital Signs priorities summary: <https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/>)

The unaffordable cost of recreation was identified in the LIFE Survey as the main barrier to participation. While there was overwhelming support and gratitude expressed by those who have benefitted from the LIFE program, those living on the margins of the low-income threshold described how their access to recreation was limited by costs of activities, gear, and transportation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Victoria-Vital-Signs-2018-Final-Report-Aug-14.pdf>

79% of respondents in our survey reported that they considered the cost of activity and equipment was the thing that was most limiting their involvement in recreation. (See Appendix C.5)

When LIFE participants were asked if they would be involved in recreation centres without the support of the LIFE Program, 64% responded “No”. (See Q. 12 in Full Survey Appendix C.10) Anecdotal comments included:

*“I can’t eat or clothe my family and myself already.”*

*“Not before I had two jobs, as my rent is so high on one income.”*

*For Full Survey Report with all anecdotal comments, please visit:*  
[bit.ly/LIFE\\_Survey\\_w\\_responses](http://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses)

- b. Research the viability of implementing a tiered system, or “sliding scale” with different levels of discount or program benefits to enable those who are marginally above the current low-income threshold but unable to afford recreation.

This population includes the ‘working poor’ and vulnerable populations (students, persons with disabilities, single parent families, older adults etc.) whose income is higher than our current criteria, making them ineligible for LIFE using current criteria.

Locally we can look to the “Saanich Better at Home” support program that has operated successfully with a sliding scale to assess registration. Even more relevant to our review is Edmonton’s Leisure Access Program (LAP) which coincidentally was used as a model for creating the LIFE program in the 1990’s.

In 2017 LAP implemented a sliding scale, along with a new integration of the recreation pass with Edmonton transit pass.

Tier 1 (below \$25,000) = unlimited free drop-in and 4 program discounts

Tier 2 (\$26,000-30,000) = 50% off pass purchase and 4 program discounts

Tier 3 (\$31,000-35,000) = 25% off pass purchase and 2 program discounts

When we requested information on the tiered LAP program rollout, an Edmonton City Councillor volunteered the political perspective: “The program has been working at least as well as we hoped and the third tier has been cost neutral as there have been no additional budget requests.” (Email correspondence, Jun 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019). In a follow-up interview with LAP Supervisor of Citizen Service, related to the Community and Recreation Facilities, Josh Koehli, he explained that they recently extended their standard LAP to include participants whose income was up to 10% above LICO, and added reductions for a second tier for participants whose income is 10 -25% above the LICO. (See details in Appendix C.9 – Edmonton’s Leisure Access Program and Ride Program)

*Rationale:*

For those whose slightly higher income precludes their eligibility for LIFE subsidies, the full cost of participation remains prohibitive. (The Research Team agreed that further research into this strategy would be essential prior to moving ahead.) This comment represents a client faced with tough choices:

*“We will no longer qualify for the LIFE program in 2019 however, now that our family has enjoyed and benefited from using the rec centres so much in the last two years that we had the LIFE program, we will now be paying guests at the rec centre on a regular basis. I do wish there was a cost effective option for our family coming off the LIFE program.”*

*“I make \$2000 more this year and didn’t qualify...the difference in what we are able to do is huge.”*

*“I am a single adult with disabilities on provincial disability support, but I have a part time job and sometimes earn 25 000 per year when I’m doing well, and other years only earn 20 000. Many people I know who earn in the range of 25 000 here are still most certainly low-income when their cost of living is taken into consideration. I hope your board can review this. It’s a barrier to me to access a LIFE pass this year because I earned 25000 in 2017, although I won’t earn that much this year, and I won’t be able to afford to attend the rec centre without a LIFE PASS. I would greatly appreciate if you made it more accessible for people like me who have shifting incomes due to disabilities, and for the rest of the population for whom 25,000 per year is not a middle income by any means in 2019 in Victoria.”*

Some comments represented the “working poor”, whose income was marginally higher than the CRA low-income threshold. As one Survey respondent wrote:

*“I’m working poor. I make 3000\$ a month but spend \$3200 and can’t apply for LIFE pass because of what I make on paper”.*

- c. Develop partnerships with other regional agencies that support low-income individuals with the goal of integrating memberships that are represented on one pass. Example: a pass that integrates access transit and recreation.

*Rationale:*

Other cities have created an integrated pass system that helps alleviate the transportation challenges LIFE users experience when trying to access recreation. For example, Edmonton has successfully adopted an integrated recreation and transit pass. SURVEY: When asked about what things limit their involvement in recreation, 84 respondents indicated transportation: “Can’t get there”. (See appendix C.6).

### 3. Registration Process

- a. Develop a cross-regional online LIFE Program registration option modeled after the JumpStart funding application process. This online option would be in addition to the face-to-face process currently in place. Applicants would be informed of the waiting period immediately following the application submission, and would be notified upon successful application, or if further information may be required.

*Rationale:*

The LIFE Survey informed us that 7% of respondents found the registration process difficult to very difficult, and 30% rated it “okay”. The Research Team proposed simplification of the process and assurance that applicants across the Greater Victoria region would have easy access to a common format.

- b. Identify other recognized certificates or proof of low-income status. Maintain a current list of documents and evidence of proof of income that LIFE applicants could use to meet LIFE income criteria.

*Rationale:* Applicants, perhaps those most vulnerable, become discouraged by repeatedly being asked by different agencies for proof of income. This happens year after year and often multiple times within a calendar year. A list of legitimate documents used commonly in the community would alleviate this repetition; examples: Transit Pass, Disability Income Statements, or documentation of employment assistance.

- c. Provide multi-year approval as an option for those with permanent disabilities.

*Rationale:*

In any situation where a person’s challenge is ongoing, avoid repetition and redundancy by extending approval to three years. This option will reduce the stress of the applicant and their support persons who are often taxed with the duties of trying to locate the correct information and documentation. This expiry extension will also reduce the work load on reception staff.

- d. Reform practices that are excluding some low-income populations.
  - i. Open the LIFE program to include post-secondary students and treat them as any other LIFE applicant. Student applications can be processed with same documentation as other applicants.
  - ii. Ensure that Aboriginal applicants of low-income status have not been excluded from LIFE on the assumption that their local First Nation community is providing recreation services. We should consider replicating the model practiced in school districts where a staff “person of rapport” acts as the “guardian”. And identifies children in need. The

names are vetted through the LIFE Programmer of the associated recreation department to ensure they are added to that school's "Youth LIFE" account. This ensures ease of access.

*Rationale:*

We should be consistent in how we operationalize our two main criteria; Low-income status and proof of residence. In the earlier days when the LIFE Program was conceived, college and university students typically had access on campus to a full range of recreational facilities and activities, all included in their semester fees. Today, both of our larger institutions Uvic and Camosun require students to pay extra fees if they want to be involved in anything beyond the basic recreational activities available on campus. These extra fees are comparable to Greater Victoria Recreation Centres. The current practice of excluding students is inconsistent with our mandate to offer recreation to all members of our community, both individuals and families, and could be perceived as discriminatory.

- e. Ensure the use of the "Adjudicator Form" is practiced consistently across the region. The adjudicator form helps applicants who have the legitimate need but lack the formal documentation (the two qualifiers for successful application being 1) proof of low-income and 2) proof of residency.)

*Rationale:*

All information from partners, participants, and LIFE Research Team members supported continuing the adjudication practice that enables staff to register in exceptional circumstances valid applications for those who are applying without required documents and/or for those applicants whose current income is not reflected accurately on past income statements.

- f. Adopt regional *Youth* Adjudicator Form to better support youth relying on school advocates (counsellors and/or administrators) who do not have support from families or resources in their home life to complete the application process.

*Rationale:*

Having a clear and commonly recognized form will reduce the obstacles faced by school staff members to actively support youth whose families are not able to advocate on their behalf or on behalf of their child.

- g. Enhance current registration system to build consistency between LIFE products and non-LIFE products. For example, enable online access for LIFE participants to use coupons for discounts.

*Rationale:*

Participants become discouraged when they face inconsistencies that may also create barriers, for example: On the first day of registration for

an upcoming season, popular programs will fill up within moments of online registration beginning at 6am. However, if applicants have a LIFE Pass and want to use a program discount coupon, they need to register in person - often resulting in no open spaces in programs. This is especially limiting for families with young children.

- h. Research and develop a process for accepting group applications from adjudicators or community partners who are applying on behalf of multiple individuals. Individuals would be set up in our systems under one organizational contact name.

*Rationale:*

Enabling community partners to complete group applications would simply make the process of registering their participants easier, efficient, inclusive and streamlined for staff at the front desks...

- i. To alleviate challenges of proving of low-income status, remove the word “household” income to determine income. Use the status stated on the applicant’s notice of assessment i.e., “married, single etc.”

*Rationale:*

A “household” may consist of multiple living arrangements and relationships, but does not assume relationships of dependency. In consideration of the growing challenges of affordable housing, we are seeing more and more multi-family dwelling situations that are bringing together independent people, living in the same home, needing the opportunity to apply for the LIFE program as individuals. The individual’s status shown on their Notice of Assessment will indicate what will be required of them to apply for the LIFE Program. To ensure that individuals applying for the LIFE Program are able to do so based on their individual income amount, we must change our current practice, that is, requesting proof of income from all individuals 18 years and older, assuming that the combined income of the household is a shared income.

- j. Actively support the continuation and commitment of the regional LIFE Committee in its role to refine and improve the LIFE Program, by developing common operational practices within all 7 recreation departments that are focused on consistency while maintaining compassion and flexibility.

*Rationale:*

Consistency provides continuity within the seven recreation departments and ease for internal users of the LIFE program (for example, Reception staff) and ultimately for the LIFE participant. The commitment of the regional LIFE team provides a venue to share new concerns and challenges, and the opportunity to make changes as “one” versus trying to change seven very different LIFE programs operating throughout Greater Victoria.

- k. In order to implement all the tasks presented in this review and to retain the LIFE program as a valuable asset amongst regional partners the Research Team has is proposing two different options for GVAC to consider:
- 1), LIFE should be integrated as a standing agenda item and tasks within this review be assigned to regional committees by 2IC for implementation. (For example, Recommendation #1 to Marketing; Recommendation #3 to Regional Reception Services Group.) The coordination of these items can remain with the established LIFE committee.
  - 2) Explore the viability and merit of creating a new regional coordinator position; a part-time role focused on coordinating the implementation of the recommendations that are approved in 2019.

*Rationale:*

To implement effectively the recommended changes in this review, the current recreation centre representatives may or may not have the needed capacity to accomplish the tasks that are accepted by GVAC in 2019. GVAC will need to decide on the best choice, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of additional human resources that may be required.

#### 4. Program Options

- a. Decide on the viability of increasing the number of free program options for LIFE participants

*Rationale:*

The question of whether the number of LIFE passes and Program discounts should be increased generated much discussion in the Research Team, resulting in clarification of diverse perspectives, but no consensus. We present these to GVAC for their consideration. Three distinct positions have emerged:

- 1) Unlimited free passes: At one end of the spectrum, City of Victoria on July 1<sup>st</sup> implemented a new system that offers unlimited free passes to LIFE program clients. The website reads: "Unlimited access to City of Victoria recreation facilities" along with an increase in duration of the pass from one to two years.
- 2) Status Quo: At the other end of the spectrum is the perspective that the current 52 passes and program discounts currently provide LIFE users with adequate access to recreation. It is argued that there is insufficient statistical evidence that justifies increased access.
- 3) The middle perspective proposes that many LIFE users need increased access beyond the 52 passes in order to achieve the basic health benefits

as recommended in the weekly activity guide recently published by CSEP (See above section for details). The recommendation from this perspective:

Double number of drop-in visits: Building on existing program options, after using their first 52 visits, participants would request an additional 52 visits at no cost. These additional 52 visits will act as a “reward” for completing 52 visits of recreation and will also align with recommendations in current literature regarding exercise engagement for health benefits. On completion of their full 104 visits, LIFE participants may apply their 50% off coupons (up to a maximum of \$50 per coupon) to purchase an additional Access Pass (10x, 25x, 3 month, 6 month) to continue their recreation.

This third perspective or recommendation was supported by many respondents in the Public Engagement. Examples:

*“It is really helpful in winter with the young kids. The difference between a bad year and a good year is LIFE program”*

*“I need more free visits as I attend two to three times per week. This does not last me a year”*

*“I would use it more often but it’s only good for 1 day per week for a year”*

*“I’m a single mother currently studying. I could bring my kids more often if I also had a LIFE pass for me. I can’t afford to pay my entrance every time my kids want to go to the pool... (aka every day...)”*

*“I didn’t use to use it as often but more recently we’ve started using the rec centre weekly which means it’ll run out faster. The 50% off option is a huge relief as well for summer programs for my child, for yoga for me.”*

## 5. Additional Support

- a. Provide Leisure Access Passes to support workers, or a team of support workers, working with a LIFE client who requires assistance with recreation. As an additional support service, when approving a LIFE Pass application for an individual with a disability who has clear need for one-on-one support when recreating, information regarding the Leisure Assistant's Pass programs available through Recreation Integration Victoria or GVAC (dependent on their region) needs to be shared. Ensure Leisure Assistant's Pass information is easily accessible on all centre websites; including providing a link on the LIFE Program landing pages to the Leisure Assistant's Pass information.

*Rationale:* Being accompanied by a support person may be the only way some LIFE participants can access recreation. This may be a part of the person's job or volunteer role, but having to pay for an extra admission reduces participation of the LIFE client.

- b. Research the viability of an equipment loan program that will make program recreation and acquisition of equipment more affordable to LIFE participants. Explore partners in our community such as Recreation Integration (RIV). It is recommended that the LIFE participants have access to free skate rentals beginning in 2020.

*Rationale:*

In acknowledgement of what LIFE participants shared in the LIFE survey, making recreation more readily available should be our top priority; eliminating barriers is essential. Not having access to equipment is a significant barrier to participation for many.

*"With rental costs the way they are, and little help from govt, we can't afford to go to the rec centre often."*

- c. Explore different options for child-minding to support LIFE parents and guardians; explore option of joining with community partners to expand child care options to support LIFE families. For example, explore possible partnership with Strong Start, building on the shared commitment to low-income families.

*Rationale:*

Acknowledging that child care is an essential service for parents in order to provide them the opportunity to participate in our centres is key.

## 6. Privacy, Confidentiality, & Respect

- a. Develop protocols that protect the privacy and confidentiality of LIFE participants when interacting with reception staff. For example, Pearkes has created a system that provides privacy for their customers by establishing a customer line-up by placing a “please wait until you are called forward” sign at their front reception desk. .

*Rationale:*

We need to reduce “awkwardness” and potential embarrassment that people have reported while disclosing personal information that other patrons or staff may overhear.

- b. Explore alternative to placing a sticker on access passes to ensure LIFE participants are treated 'in same manner as everyone else', especially when they visit other centres than their home centre or when visiting alongside a friend.

*Rationale:*

Each LIFE participant’s “visit” should mirror the same process that every pass holder experiences to avoid embarrassment.

- c. Provide frontline staff and other staff a *Best Practices Guide* and training to work effectively and compassionately with issues common to LIFE participants; i.e., anxiety, poverty, racism, at-risk-youth, and diversity.

*Rationale:*

Public engagements and the Survey revealed that most participants indicated potential sensitivities related to involvement in LIFE were respectfully attended to by staff. As one reception staff said, “*Providing someone the LIFE program makes me feel good*”.

However, there were some exceptions. In the Survey, when asked what things limit your involvement in recreation, 65 persons (11.9 % of respondents) indicated that “Feeling accepted for who I am” was a limitation. For example, one Survey respondent wrote: “*We’ve been getting the humiliated feeling when we use drop in pass in front of people*”.

In our session with Saanich support staff, people talked about the challenges inherent in working with LIFE clients, recognizing the potential “stigma” on all levels. Staff want to be supportive and successful while working with the unique needs of many of the LIFE clients. It is recommended that all reception staff be equipped with skills to best guide them through the process of a LIFE application and ongoing interaction with LIFE clients

- d. Build consistent communication protocols and orientations about LIFE with First Nations Offices.

*Rationale:*

Often the communication with First Nations representatives across the region is inconsistent. Strengthening the relationship and partnership opportunities within our community will encourage participation. At the heart of this is the need to acknowledge that we are part of the same community and create better avenues through which we can share resources.

- d. Make available orientation tours for new users, done in a way that would be especially useful to new LIFE participants, helping them experience a sense of belonging.

*Rationale:*

Ideally, all members of our community, new and old, should experience a strong sense of belonging in their recreation centres. Our review revealed that even the smallest signal that the recreation centre is not fully inclusive can deter potential LIFE participants from continuing their involvement. Expanding the number of facility tours, for example, can open up dialogue, create stronger “connections”, and instil a feeling of belonging for the participant.

## Section E - APPENDICES

### Appendix C.1 – LIFE Backgrounder

How it began ...

<https://planh.ca/success-stories/capital-region-life-flourishes-recreation-facilities>

#### Capital Region: L.I.F.E. Flourishes in Recreation Facilities

For two decades, the fee-subsidy program entitled Leisure Involvement for Everyone (L.I.F.E.) has reduced barriers to leisure activities and recreation programs for low-income families and individuals throughout Greater Victoria. While many fee-subsidy programs like this have been implemented elsewhere, this program is especially unique because it crosses municipal boundaries. All thirteen local governments within the Greater Victoria are involved in operating this program across fourteen parks and recreation facilities. The L.I.F.E. program serves as an effective mechanism to coordinate and collectively promote affordable and accessible recreation services common in Greater Victoria.

#### Evolution of the L.I.F.E. Program

In 1998, several municipalities had their own Leisure Access Programs, but these fee-subsidy programs were individualized for each municipality, applicants had to enrol in the program that corresponded with their municipal boundary. Since applicants could only use the pass at the designated recreation centre within the municipality they applied to, this meant the pass was non-transferable to other recreation centres. This made it difficult for people to navigate the services and to access recreation and leisure activities that would help them achieve a healthier lifestyle. It was recognized that residents look beyond local government borders for recreation opportunities, so a mechanism was needed to more effectively coordinate affordable and accessible recreation services common to the CRD.

To address these challenges, staff from recreation departments and municipalities across the CRD were brought together to form the Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Managers Committee in 2000. This unique collective approach fostered a strong regional connection so committee members could work together towards a shared goal and minimize the potential for duplicating efforts. The committee agreed that equitable distribution of funding was more important than equal distribution, meaning that the municipalities that had the highest demand for fee-subsidy programs were given a larger portion of funding than those who did not have as high of a need.

*“When we sit as a regional group we get a chance to understand each other better and we make decisions about what is best for the region instead of what’s best for our own municipalities, particularly around an issue like access.” ~ Sandy Clarke, Manager of Recreation, West Shore Recreation*

The original mandate of the committee was to initiate a common recreation fee subsidy program in the region for low-income residents, now known as the L.I.F.E program. Key considerations included: providing a subsidized access pass, discounts to leisure programs, establishing an appropriate cost, ensuring that the pass was transferable to other recreation centres, and protecting client’s integrity. Research was conducted to understand what the program model would look like, and programs such as Edmonton’s Leisure Access Program were studied to identify viable options.

The committee came to a collective agreement that the L.I.F.E. Program would offer two opportunities: an annual access pass that would provide 52 admissions (one admission per week) that could be used at any of the 14 recreation facilities within the region, and a discount option that would ensure savings on registration for recreation programs or classes. The discount option is tailored to each of the municipalities and may be offered as either a percent discount (e.g. 50% off), or a credit (e.g. \$70/adult). Also, knowing that program participants would be discouraged from applying for the pass if it was not discrete, the access pass closely resembles the look of the traditional access passes.

After reaching this decision, each recreation manager presented to their mayor and council in each of the municipalities, and the idea was approved, acknowledged and launched in 2000 as a regional program. Approximately 10,000 L.I.F.E. passes were issued in 2018, a number that has been roughly the same since 2013. There has been an increasing need for more affordable programs in the CRD, and this strong collective partnership has helped to generate new program ideas that prioritize affordability and access to services, while also stimulating partnerships with other entities, such as and Jumpstart.

### **Key Outcomes & Impacts**

This collective partnership (both past and present) has helped to minimize duplication of programs. Past partnership with Coast Capital Savings has resulted in sponsorship of free swimming and skating events at each of the recreation centres throughout the region. Presently the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities has helped to provide additional funding for children 4-18 years to participate in recreation programs.

The Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Managers Committee continues to meet bi-annually to discuss programs that fit into the regional model such as the Regional May Pass, which allows access to 13 centres for a discounted cost of \$25 for the month, and the Regional Recreation Annual Pass, which gives patrons access to all regional recreation facilities at a more affordable cost of \$475.

### Partnerships & Stakeholders in LIFE

Greater Victoria Inter-Municipal Recreation Managers Committee includes representatives from:

- City of Victoria
- Esquimalt Recreation
- Peninsula Recreation
- Recreation Oak Bay
- Saanich Parks and Recreation
- SEAPARC Leisure Complex
- Westshore Parks and Recreation

Each of the thirteen municipalities in the CRD participate in the L.I.F.E. program:

- [Central Saanich](#)
- [Colwood](#)
- [Esquimalt](#)
- [Highlands](#)
- [Langford](#)
- [Metchosin](#)
- [North Saanich](#)
- [Oak Bay](#)
- [Saanich](#)
- [Sidney](#)
- [Sooke](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [View Royal](#)

Other current partnerships have stemmed to improve access and affordability to services:

- [Canadian Tire Jumpstart](#)

**Appendix C.2 – Timeline for LIFE Review Process 2018/2019**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Participants:</b>
April 1992	Inception of the LIFE program	Saanich
Mena will consult with the Research Team	LIFE program is implemented by all Greater Victoria Recreation Departments – Identifying one representative per recreation department to build the Research Team.	Greater Victoria Recreation Departments
Sept. 2018	LIFE Review is launched	
Oct. 2018	Individual GVAC partners identify their representative for the Facilitation/Research Team.	GVAC Team
Nov - Dec 2018	Facilitation/Research Team Orientation and training begins Review protocols for Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) as required	Facilitation/Research Team
Nov - Dec 2018	Privacy Impact Assessment completed through Saanich for both the survey and the review as a whole	Project Manager and Consultant
Nov - Dec 2018	Develop and launch LIFE Participant survey	Facilitation/Research Team
Nov - Dec 2018	Planning public engagement strategy	Facilitation/Research Team
Dec 2018-Mar 2019	All surveys and public engagements completed	Facilitation/Research Team
Mar – May 2019	Developing draft recommendations, refining recommendations, developing formal draft for GVAC partners	Project Manager, Consultant, Research Team
Summer 2019	Incorporate feedback from GVAC, Research Team and community partners into Final Draft	Project Manager, Consultant, Research Team
Summer 2019	Present Final Draft to GVAC	Project Manager and Consultant
Summer 2019	Final Steps/Presentations as requested	TBC

### Appendix C.3 – Low-Income Cut-off / After Tax (LICO)

#### Metropolitan Victoria after-tax low income status of census families based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family composition

		Victoria, British Columbia (map)				
		Family types with or without children <sup>3 6 7 8 12</sup>				
Census family type <sup>4 5 7 8</sup>	Statistics (CFLIM-AT; updated methodology) <sup>9</sup>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
All family units in low income <sup>3 4 6 7 8 9 12</sup>	Number of families in low income <sup>3 6 7 8 9</sup>	31,880	33,110	33,950	33,570	34,100
	Median after-tax income for family in low income <sup>3 4 5 9 13</sup>	12,860	13,540	14,050	14,600	15,540
All census families in low income <sup>3 4 5 9</sup>	Number of families in low income <sup>3 6 7 8 9</sup>	10,250	10,510	10,350	9,890	9,810
	Median after-tax income for family in low income <sup>3 4 5 9 13</sup>	18,950	19,460	20,290	20,910	22,240
Couple families in low income <sup>4 5 6 9</sup>	Number of families in low income <sup>3 6 7 8 9</sup>	6,110	6,410	6,370	6,210	5,960
	Median after-tax income for family in low income <sup>3 4 5 9 13</sup>	19,850	20,380	21,100	21,040	23,160
Lone-parent families in low income <sup>4 5 7 9</sup>	Number of families in low income <sup>3 6 7 8 9</sup>	4,140	4,100	3,980	3,690	3,850
	Median after-tax income for family in low income <sup>3 4 5 9 13</sup>	17,860	18,410	19,390	20,750	20,840
Persons not in census families in low income <sup>4 5 8 9</sup>	Number of families in low income <sup>3 6 7 8 9</sup>	21,640	22,600	23,600	23,680	24,290
	Median after-tax income for family in low income <sup>3 4 5 9 13</sup>	11,470	11,590	12,010	12,720	13,740

Statistics Canada. **Table 11-10-0020-01 After-tax low income status of census families based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family composition**

## Appendix C.4 - LIFE User Statistics

## 2018 Inter-Municipal LIFE Statistics

Jan.1/18 to Dec. 31st, 2018	Adult LIFE 52X	Senior LIFE 52X or Centre Pass	Child LIFE 52X	Pre-school LIFE 52X	Youth Teen LIFE 52X	First Nation	50% Annual Pass within centre	50% off annual regional pass	Total LIFE Participants per area:
<b>Esquimalt</b>	371		182			56	55	3	<b>667</b>
<b>Oak Bay</b>	190 (no differentiation between adult or senior)		34 (no differentiation between ages of children - under 5 free)		8	Do not separate	24	2	<b>258</b>
<b>Panorama</b>	379 (no differentiation between adult or senior)		278 (no differentiation between ages of youth – children under 5 free)			-	58	15	<b>730</b>
<b>Saanich</b>	2225 (all together)		893	N/A – do not sell	382	Do not separate	69 (all ages)	42 (all ages)	<b>3611</b>
<b>Sooke</b>							2		<b>453</b>
<b>Victoria</b>	1668	417	456	141	176	Do not report	45	50	<b>2858</b>
<b>West Shore</b>	624	71	310	-	108	-	28	10	<b>1151</b>

**Total L.I.F.E. clients for 2018: 9728**

### Appendix C.5 – Investment in the LIFE Program - 2018

In 2018, LIFE participants were provided the opportunity to recreate in our 13 community recreation centres within Greater Victoria’s 7 Recreation Departments. The value of the LIFE program invested in Greater Victorians in 2018 can be illustrated as follows:

	In-house drop-ins	Regional drop-ins	In house Annual Pass	Regional Annual Pass	Registered Programs	Total:
City of Victoria	\$53,068.05	\$8,665.20	\$14,478.97	\$11,684.36	\$36,300 (subsidy)	\$124,196.58
Esquimalt	\$7,753.00	\$17,224.50	\$5,915.14	\$1,230.00	\$400	\$32,522.64
Oak Bay	\$6,450.00	\$24,630.00	\$4620,00	\$92.00	\$6,780.00	\$42,972.00
Panorama	\$22,913.25	\$1951.00	\$9,924	\$3,690	\$4,938.41	\$43,416.66
Saanich	\$164,524.00	\$4,819.75	\$20,280.32	\$11,053.74	\$58,200.60	\$258,878.41
Sooke	\$13,390.50	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	\$2500	\$15,890.50
West Shore	\$27,969.50	\$3,055	\$5,390	\$2,460	\$17,216.50	\$56,091
Totals:						\$573,967.79

- For complete breakdown of the above numbers, department by department, please see below.

### LIFE Pass Value – Recreation in Greater Victoria Region

#### City of Victoria

Subsidy use 2018	\$36,300		
CoV Adult Visits	6601	\$5.80	\$38285.80
CoV Senior Visits	2415	\$4.55	\$10988.25
CoV Youth Visits	388	\$3.50	\$1358
CoV Child Visits	812	\$3.00	\$2436
Regional LIFE Visits	1494	Variable – use Adult	\$8665.20
50% Discount CoV Pass	\$14478.97 in discounts		
50% Discount Regional Pass	\$11,684.36 in discounts		

**Esquimalt**

Program discounts = We are having the same issue as Westshore and not successfully pulling a report to show the value of discounts used towards programs so I have just been able to pull the pass value below.

Pass value = \$32,522.64

Breakdown below:

52 admission passes issued = 651 (only calculated off what was used here, not the full 52 issued)

Esquimalt member scans:

Child = 39X\$3 = \$117

Adult = 1328X\$5.75 = \$7636

Non Esquimalt member scans:

Child = 72X\$3 = \$216

Adult = 2958X\$5.75 = \$17,008.50

\$50 off membership discount = 8X\$50 = \$400

50% off annual membership OR membership discount 53 passes = \$5915.14

50% regional annual membership = 5X\$246 = \$1230

**Oak Bay**

For drop-ins I have just done an average amount per drop-in as we don't seem to have the breakdown between Adult and Senior/Youth in terms of "out of District" pass scans. Our Youth/Senior rate is \$5.25 and adult is \$6.75 so the average is an even \$6 per visit.

In 2018 - We had 1075 "in District," pass scans and 4105 out of area pass scans for a total of 5180 scans @ \$6 per visit = \$31,080

Interesting to note that we only issued 258 LIFE passes to Oak Bay residents, a lot of scans/usage from that total and from out of district pass holders.

Program Discount coupons – Approx. \$6780 in program discounts in 2018.

## Panorama

Total: \$43,416.66

Breaks down as...

\$4,938.41 in program discounts

657 52-Visit passes issued (379 adult and 278 youth) with total 3974 scans (2889 adult scans and 975 youth). Associated value = \$22,913.25 (\$19,500.75 in adult admissions and \$3,412.50 in youth)

331 drop-ins from out of region. Estimated value of \$1,951.

Issued 42 Deluxe Adult Annual at 50% off which included 16 Deluxe Annual Youth. Equates to \$9,924 in discounts, not including whatever program discounts these pass holders received as our Deluxe Adult and Youth Annual Pass holders receive 10-20% off most registered programs.

Issued 15 Regional Annual passes at 50% off. Equates to \$3,690 in discounts.

## Saanich

<b>Revenue Covered by LIFE Program</b>	
-\$45,961.38	Activity in AN (Active Net Registration)
-\$12,239.22	Activity in Class Registration*
-\$2,683.91	50% off Saanich Pass – Class Registration
-\$2,022.59	50% off Regional Pass – Class Registration
-\$17,596.41	50% off Saanich Pass - AN
-\$9,031.15	50% off Regional Pass - AN
-\$144,523.25	Drop-Ins AN
-\$20,000.75	Drop-Ins Class Registration
-\$4,369.25	Point Of Sale** from Active Net Registration
-\$450.50	Point Of Sale from Class Net Registration
<b>-\$258,878.41</b>	

\* Registration System prior to AN (In Feb 2018 Saanich went from CLASS to AN)

\*\* When someone drop-ins in to a Saanich Centre who is NOT a Saanich LIFE member

**Sooke**

In-house Pass = \$0

Regional Pass = \$0

Program Discount = not sure but an accurate estimate would be \$2,500 based on earlier years when we actually had accurate records.

**2018 LIFE Drop-ins**

Item	Visits	Item Price	Total
LIFE Swim – Teen	109	\$ 3.50	\$ 381.50
LIFE Swim - Preschool	87	\$ -	\$ -
<b>LIFE Swim - Regional</b>	24	\$ 6.00	\$ 144.00
LIFE Swim – Child	694	\$ 3.00	\$ 2,082.00
LIFE Swim – Adult	1,605	\$ 6.00	\$ 9,630.00
LIFE Swim – Adult	15	\$ 6.00	\$ 90.00
LIFE Skate – Teen	26	\$ 3.50	\$ 91.00
LIFE Skate - Preschool	18	\$ -	\$ -
LIFE Skate – Child	126	\$ 3.00	\$ 378.00
LIFE Skate – Adult	99	\$ 6.00	\$ 594.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,803</b>		<b>\$ 13,390.50</b>

**West Shore:**

2018 LIFE Pass Value - West Shore Parks & Recreation <b>Product</b>	<b>Number Purchased</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>	<b>Discounted Amount on each product</b>	<b>Total Value of Discount Provided</b>
55+ Senior Centre Pass	71	-	\$52.50	\$3,727.50
3 Month Pass, \$50 Off	4	-	\$50	\$200.00
1 Year Pass, 50% Off	28	-	\$192.50	\$5,390.00
1 Year Regional Pass, 50% Off	10	-	\$246.00	\$2,460.00
Program Registration	-	50% off up to \$50		\$17,216.50

<b>Scans Product</b>	<b>Number Purchased</b>	<b>Number of Scans</b>	<b>Scan Value</b>	<b>Value of Used Scans</b>
1 Year WSPR Pass, 50% Off	See above	2,973	\$6.50	\$19,324.50
1 Year Regional Pass, 50% Off	See above	470	\$6.50	\$3,055.00
3 Month Pass, \$50 Off	See above	142	\$6.50	\$923.00
<b>LIFE Membership</b>				
Adult 52X Drop-ins	624	4,303	\$6.50	\$27,969.50
Child 52X Drop-ins	310	884	\$3.20	\$2,828.80
Teen 52X Drop-ins	108	421	\$4.65	\$1,957.65

**Appendix C.6 - LIFE Survey, “Things that Limit...” Selected Profiles referenced in Report**

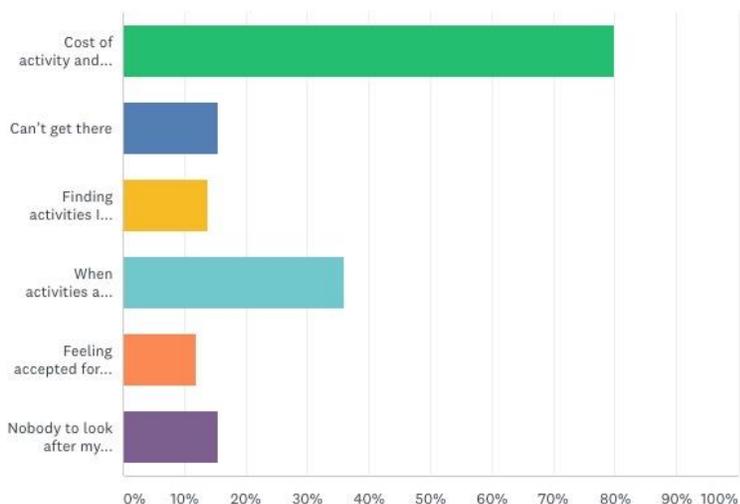
**SURVEY PROFILES: #1 Things that limit involvement in Recreation**

Q13

[Customize](#) [Save as](#)

Please check and comment on the things that limit your involvement in recreation

Answered: 545 Skipped: 36



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Cost of activity and/or equipment	79.82% 435
▼ Can't get there	15.41% 84
▼ Finding activities I like	13.76% 75
▼ When activities are scheduled	35.96% 196
▼ Feeling accepted for who I am	11.93% 65
▼ Nobody to look after my children	15.41% 84
<b>Total Respondents: 545</b>	

[Comments \(140\)](#)

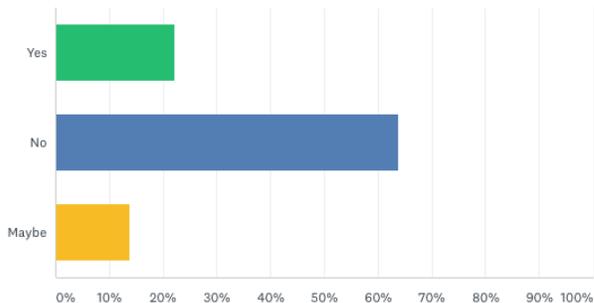
Appendix C.7 – Survey Profiles, #2 Single Parents and Costs

Q12

 Customize  Save as ▼

If the L.I.F.E. program did not exist, would you still be involved in recreation centres?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

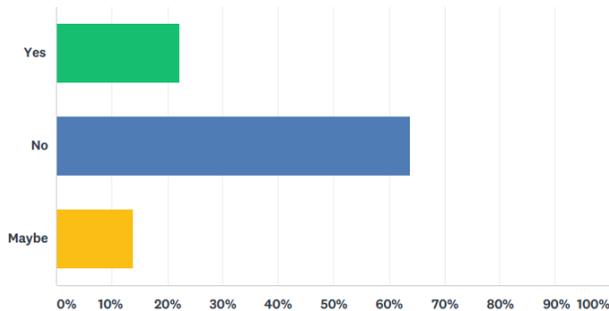


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	22.22%	8
▼ No	63.89%	23
▼ Maybe	13.89%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>

L.I.F.E. Review 2019

Q12 If the L.I.F.E. program did not exist, would you still be involved in recreation centres?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0

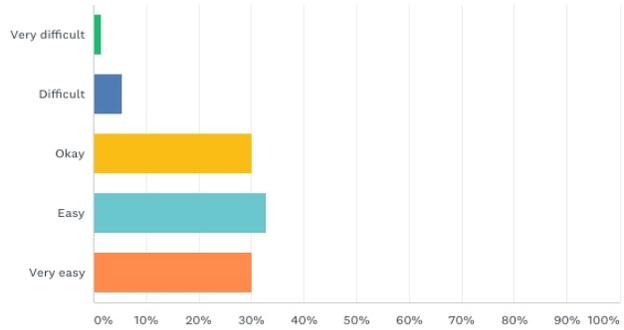


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.22%	8
No	63.89%	23
Maybe	13.89%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>

**Appendix C.8 – Survey Profiles, #3 - Ease of Registration**

How would you rate the ease of registration for the L.I.F.E. program?

Answered: 576 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Very difficult	1.39%	8
▼ Difficult	5.38%	31
▼ Okay	30.21%	174
▼ Easy	32.81%	189
▼ Very easy	30.21%	174
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>576</b>

## Appendix C.9 - Edmonton's Leisure Access Program and Ride Program (transit)

**Tiered System** with differentiated financial criteria: Visit Edmonton's LAP: [https://www.edmonton.ca/programs\\_services/leisure-access-program.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/leisure-access-program.aspx)

### Summary Notes / June 2019 Leisure Access Program *Interview with Josh Koehli / Supervisor, Citizen Services in Community and Recreational Facilities in Edmonton*

- 1) 2017 - Launch of revised LAP in Edmonton  
Staff was asked to integrate passes for both **transit** and **recreation** for Lower-income users: two big departments. Transit is new to this integrated system; they were starting from the beginning, but LAP had been in motion for decades.

Councilor Knack – Key champion on council; Calgary's program was the inspiration for the recent innovation; but Calgary's program was originally driven by Transit, and a tiered system that separated users who were both below and above LICO scale; too complex for Edmonton, that had already provided free access to all below LICO.

- 2) Using subjective feedback from non-profits in community that identified those people in need and how many people were just above LICO, they developed a **Tiered System**:
  - 1) **Level Tier 1:** (Base program) Eligible if in range of LICO + 10%; established the free membership based on 75% discount on 3-4 registration programs
  - 2) **Level Tier 2;** eligible if 10-25% above LICO monthly membership; fee; 10 -25% above. Includes zoo and observatory plus 17 rec centres: Access to all of these for \$20 per month, month- to month basis; Family \$70 for up to 7.

Numbers: LAP Enrolment in June 2019: 60 – 70,000 registrants. "We have taken lead from council; no pushback from the new tier system".

**Transit Combined:** Sliding scale was initiated at the same time as the RIDE TRANSIT Program, all done through the office of Citizen Services. Transit just caught up with Recreation's changes in tiered system and approved the move to a Tiered system.

Main point: everyone eligible for LAP is automatically enrolled, and information is accessed by both programs. (Shared data base with transit to facilitate applications)

By end of year, up to 100, 000 users expected – from a total Edmonton pop of 800,000: 250 applications per day.

Staff estimate that 25% of Edmonton population living on low income as defined by LICO are participants of LAP.

Applications are still cumbersome for applicants

Registrations for LAP: Online/ or paper? Still paper – but working to getting away from reliance on paper and physical submission.

Registration is at 10 different recreation centres; Discounted RIDE transit program users can access passes here.

### **Biggest challenges?**

- 1) Keeping up with the volumes in registration. Big staff numbers required to deal with applications. Application is cumbersome.
- 2) Quantifying the costs in relation to the usage; Staff have been focused on implementation; what is the real cost of program delivery taking into consideration all the various program components?  
Reg Membership = \$700 ... does that not mean that we are giving.  
Average LAP participant \$17 per year. Hard to research at this point in the throes of implementation, new software.
- 3) We have added those who are on Employment Insurance Benefits; big area for abuse – but Edmonton felt that this was important and worth the risk. They are now looking at more efficient process of registration. Also, documentation of being a newcomer to Edmonton is acceptable document.
- 4) In the community people are getting used to using same ID to apply for different community subsidies.
- 5) Front Desk: folks need to be oriented and trained. Key to the process is having a central place for processing applications.

Report: LAP taken its lead from Council; but with lots of support from community agencies

**Other notes:**

- **Is Tier 2 cost recovery?** It is hard to tell, as the numbers in this domain have been modest.
  - Full cost of the average visit is calculated to be \$2.00. Marketing of the tier 2 has not been aggressive; Uptake on the 10%-25% Tier 2? There has been a gradual increase; marketing is described as taking a passive, cautious approach.
  - **Big Q – What is our subsidy cap?** We have significantly grown the program. We have growing revenue demands. RIDE partnership has increased usership. There is a threshold in each facility that can force a limit on numbers, and impede the city from growing its business.
- Council: do they honour anecdotal data coming in from different sources. “We have definitely relied on the anecdotal information.”
  - Gives us an option; we can provide an answer to those who have need.

**Summary:**

The program is working well. It gives the city an established system to help them respond to all inquiries and requests for subsidies. It gives the city a number of viable options to offer the public. Less ambiguity, streamlining Transit and Recreation Services.

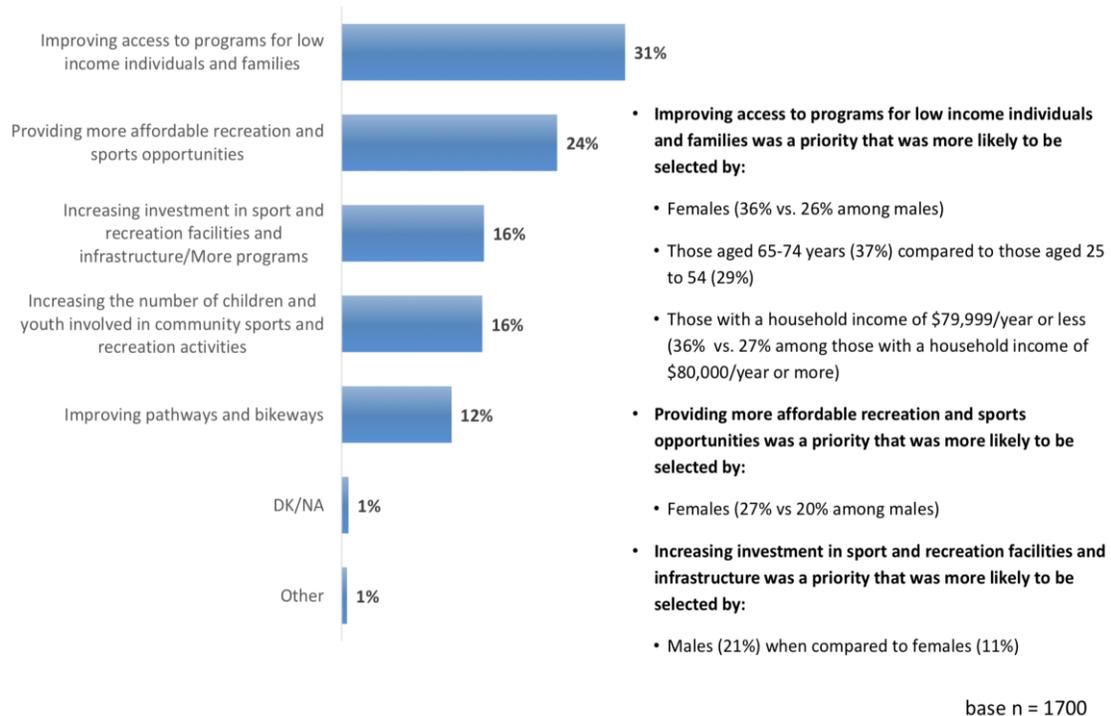
**Is the Ride Transit Program the same as the Leisure Access Program (LAP)?**

The application/renewal process is the same and you will automatically be considered for both programs. Please note that even if you qualify for LAP, you are not eligible for a monthly pass under the Ride Transit Program if you are:

- Aged 65 and over (eligible for **Senior fares**)
- Children six and under
- A post secondary student, currently enrolled in the **U-Pass program**
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) card holder (free when you display your CNIB identification when boarding)
- 26% above the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) or unable to provide income verification documentation
- Children under government care who receive a transit pass from Child and Family Services

**Appendix C.10 - Vital Signs Report (Victoria Foundation)**

**Priorities for Sports & Recreation**



**Appendix C.11 - LIFE Survey, Questions & Numbers**

For full Survey Results that include anecdotal comments visit:  
[bit.ly/LIFE\\_Survey\\_w\\_responses](https://bit.ly/LIFE_Survey_w_responses)