

APPENDIX A

**KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
AND RECOMMENDED
INITIATIVES**

**PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURE MASTER PLAN**

District of Saanich, BC.

July 2012

Key Strategic Objectives (KSOs) and Recommended Initiatives

The key strategic objectives address how the Department should respond to identified changes and challenges, and set a course for the future. Unlike previous master plans which addressed issues and made recommendations on a divisional basis, this master plan follows the framework laid out in the Official Community Plan (OCP), now used by Saanich for all departmental planning and reporting.

The Master Plan outlines 29 key strategic objectives. For each one of these, it outlines recommended initiatives. This framework will allow it to dovetail with the annual strategic plan update and the five year rolling financial plan.

The key strategic objectives are presented on the following pages. In addition to the recommended initiatives, the master plan outlines the data and information that substantiates the objective; indicates which policies in the OCP it links to; and suggests some resources and best practices which will provide some base data from which Saanich staff can start the implementation process.

The last ten key strategic objectives are somewhat different from the ones that link to the OCP strategic themes of environmental integrity, social well-being and economic vibrancy. The title of this section is Taking Action and Tracking Progress. This is a theme from the OCP, and reflects the focus of the Municipal Strategic Plan on Financial Objectives, Learning and Growth Objectives, and Internal Process Objectives. The focus of these ten strategic objectives are the internal operations of the Department. As such, some of the additional information noted above (rationale and links to research; best practices; and OCP policy linkage) is less appropriate and has been omitted.

Environmental Integrity

By way of introduction to the concept of environmental integrity, the OCP notes

Environmental integrity assures the continued health of essential life-supporting systems of nature, including air, water, and soil, by protecting the resilience, diversity, and purity of natural communities (ecosystems) within the environment.

Conservation of life-supporting ecosystems is critical to the well-being and survival of our own and future generations. Without a healthy environment, social well-being, economic health, and sustainability of our community is not possible.

Human impact on these ecosystems from climate change, resource consumption, fresh water depletion and contamination, declining air quality, loss of biological diversity, and population growth must be addressed in a timely, comprehensive, and coordinated manner.

Looking after the natural environment, and mitigating the impact of the built environment, is an essential and shared responsibility between all levels of government, private interests, and the community. It requires awareness, cooperation, innovation, and action.

Creating a sustainable environment has two key areas, and the Department is engaged in supporting and delivering on both these areas:

- **Natural Environment** – the Department is the prime custodian of the parks and open space which, along with the rural lands, make up the majority of the natural land in Saanich. The OCP includes policies to ensure that climate change is addressed, ecosystems are protected in terms of their environmentally sensitive lands, their urban forests, their air and water quality and the protection of their natural habitats.
- **Built Environment** – the Planning Department’s major powers concern the built environment and it is not surprising that there is a strong focus on sustainable land use and the various powers and controls that the Planning Dept. has in order to deliver on its themes, which are as follows: growth management, energy consumption, building ‘green’; urban design, centres and villages, neighbourhoods, etc. Other aspects of the Built Environment include Parks, Trails and Open Space.

Clearly the Department has a key role to play in these areas, and the key strategic objectives and recommended initiatives are designed to elucidate that role in the future.

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

All through the consultations and community survey work, the need for a high priority to be placed on parks, trails and natural area planning was reinforced:

- Over 70% of survey respondents noted using their neighbourhood parks, trails and beach accesses
- 80% of respondents used the trail system for exercise, 50% to enjoy nature, and almost 30% to walk their dogs
- 57% noted that enhancements to the trails system was a high priority.
- Many respondents commented about specific parks, commenting about improvements that could be made and noting their satisfaction and genuine delight with the system.

Most of the proposed key strategic objectives and recommended initiatives focus on the detailed planning of the system, so, unlike other sections of this master plan, we have not repeated this information on each time.

Key Strategic Objective #EI-1: Park System Planning

Establish a firm foundation for system-wide park planning

Discussion

Major challenges that face the adequate provision of parkland today and in the future include:

- Declining budget resources relative to increasing operations demands, e.g. aging facilities, increased amount of public space that needs turf and horticulture maintenance, increased demand for invasive species removal, increased demand for tree maintenance/hazard assessment, increased boulevard upkeep including rain gardens, expanding site furniture/play equipment inventory, increased number of plazas and hardscapes to maintain.
- Increasing awareness of and demand for environmental stewardship – e.g. demand for inventory and protection of natural areas, for water, urban forest management, for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's).
- Unevenness of the current distribution of municipal parkland of all types across the municipality, primarily due to historical factors. This is also frequently enshrined in local area plans.
- The distribution of parkland and other open spaces provided by other agencies, such as CRD and the school districts, that lessens the need for municipal provision.
- Increasing demand for expanded opportunities in parks- e.g. demand to provide spaces for hosting special events such as festivals and sports events, and to create diverse park amenities such as community gardens, water parks, interpretive trails, dog parks, bike parks, adventure playgrounds, etc.
- Explicit demand for new urban parks in Neighbourhood Centres and Villages, and areas that have been identified for increased density in the Saanich 2008 OCP
- Accountability - with increased community involvement comes an increased need for decision making transparency and communication accessibility.

Best Practices and Related Resources

While most of the recommended initiatives are self-explanatory, several other communities can serve as examples of exemplary park system planning: Calgary, Surrey, Richmond are examples of note.

These challenges require a significantly higher level of organizational complexity than has been the case in the past, and the Division is struggling to establish these systems. It should be noted that, since development of the 2001 master plan, the land area managed by the Parks Division has increased by 14% while full time staffing has increased by only 6%. While more difficult to quantify, the public's expectation for service has also increased.

The Department has started the process of rationalizing its approaches to system-wide park planning. Initiatives such as the Park Priority Guide, Urban Forest Strategy and Park Natural Areas Action Plan/ Management Guidelines are steps in the right direction. Additionally, an Invasive Species Action Plan and Management Strategy are currently being developed. The implementation of these strategies will engage the Department over the next five to seven years which is the time horizon of this Master Plan.

However a number of other strategic initiatives are required.

A comprehensive municipal-wide inventory of facilities and outdoor amenities located in parks (e.g. tennis courts, ball diamonds, sports fields, playgrounds, skate parks, water parks, dog parks, community gardens, washrooms, etc) is required in order to address parkland provision, planning and management challenges. The inventory should include, at a minimum, a categorically arranged list of the designated amenity areas/ facilities and their associated elements, and other relevant information such as lights, hours of operation/availability, existing management strategies, records of actual use (if appropriate), life-cycle renewal plans, and partnership arrangements. The data from this inventory could also be produced as an annual statement on trends in Saanich parks (e.g. soccer continues to be a growth sport but appears to be stabilizing, ethnic communities are seeking space for large outdoor gatherings, etc.).

The current parks classification system is identified in the 2010 Saanich Park Property Inventory. The Saanich 2008 OCP (4.2.8.4) directs a minimum standard of 5.0 hectares of parkland per 1000 residents. The current system and minimum standard approach has various inadequacies that need to be addressed; these are outlined in the Inventory, and have been further reviewed as part of the Master Plan process. Firstly the 5.0 hectare standard is a minimum, yet it is often taken as the appropriate amount of land that should be provided. Secondly, in Saanich, natural parks and nature sanctuaries make up a significant portion of current parkland; this implies an over-supply when in fact many local areas may well have an inadequate area of parkland. Thirdly, parkland has been obtained through land acquisition, as opposed to a strategic approach, and therefore the inventory may not be appropriate in any given local area. And all these questions beg the more fundamental question: is a 'quota' based classification system the most appropriate vehicle to make any of these decisions?

The analyses conducted as part of this master plan have identified many factors that require further community discussion, although recognizing that for many questions, there is no 'right' answer. Although seemingly precise, there is in fact no pure science in parks system spatial needs formulas - they have generally been derived from municipal standards in use for many years throughout North America. Natural parks and nature sanctuaries make up a significant portion of municipal park space resulting in an apparent surplus of park land. However, these areas are recommended to be considered on an individual site and issue basis. Thus, recommended standards for open space represent only minimums to help guide park acquisition in a cost effective manner. All opportunities for acquisition must also be considered in the context of Official Community Plan and the Local Area Plan policies, economic considerations and environmental/social needs.

It would be appropriate to continue to use (and update as required) the Inventory's Parks Classification, Systems Standards, Qualitative types and Priority Assessment Criteria.

These criteria, outlined in more detail in the Inventory, would be:

- Site and environmental values.
- Community need.
- Economic considerations.
- Urgency.

Saanich's many parks are complex, encompassing a mix of built amenities, ecosystems, habitats, and conflicting visitor uses. The Park Natural Area Management Guidelines have been developed to help make appropriate decisions as the Department undertake planning, development and management of these park natural areas, and work to restore ecosystems. However, park-specific management plans are needed that comprehensively address all issues and allow work to be incorporated into capital and operations program cycles.

Park Management Plans will be developed in accordance with the Park Natural Area Management Guidelines. This process will be coordinated mainly through park planning and design as fully integrated planning exercise with community consultation.

Strong interest has been expressed for enhancing our trails. The Centennial Trails 2006 and Beyond is the start of a municipal-wide system plan. The goal is to create an overall Trail System Master Plan that creates North-South and East-West multi-use trail connections. Serving both recreational and alternate transportation needs the System would connect destinations, centres and villages; create loops in neighbourhoods and the community. Trails offer the greatest variety of opportunities for the greatest number of users and are ideally accessible to all. A Trail System Master Plan needs to be part of the Regional system as well with connections to the CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Comprehensive Inventory** – Continue to build a comprehensive inventory of parks data and information, including a comprehensive Asset Inventory, related policies and standards for the functional areas located in parks, and annual statistics for the Department.
- **Parks Priority Needs** – Continue to use the Park Classification & System Standards, the Parks Qualitative Types and the Parks Priority Assessment Criteria as identified in the 2010 Park Property Inventory. These will be update as needed.
- **Urban Forest Strategy** – Continue the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy recommendations.
- **Invasive Species Management Strategy** - Complete the Invasive Species Action Plan and Invasive Species Management Strategy, and implement once adopted by Council.
- **Park Natural Areas Action Plan/ Management Guidelines** – Continue to implement the Park Natural Areas Action Plan and use the Park Natural Areas Guidelines to identify, protect and restore sensitive ecosystems. Explore opportunities for the creation of new natural area parks, or expanded natural areas within existing parks.
- **Trail System Master Plan** - Complete a comprehensive municipal-wide Trail System Master Plan. The goal is to prepare an overall Trail System Master Plan that creates North-South and East-West multi-use trail connections. Serving both recreational and alternate transportation needs the System would connect destinations; create loops in neighbourhoods and the community. It creates the greatest variety of opportunities for the greatest number of users and is accessible to all. Ensure linkage to the CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.
- **Park Facility Upgrading Strategy** – the need for existing and new accessible park facilities such as washrooms, should also be addressed.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 4.2.8 (various policies)

Key Strategic Objective #EI-2: Operational Planning and Maintenance Management System

Establish clear guidelines to guide the operational and maintenance systems of the Parks Division

Discussion

Increasing maintenance management demands combined with limited increases in staff and financial resources, and limited use of current technology to help reduce workloads and improve management, maintenance and operations delivery, is a huge issue for the Parks Division.

Saanich Parks is responsible for the operation of more than 165 parks covering 780 hectares of parkland. With all the playgrounds, sports fields, trails etc, a systematic system of maintenance management is needed. Instead of relying on traditional levels of service a system based on defined levels of service for the various functions, tasks & activities is needed. This system will help address operational & capital functions.

A comprehensive MMS strategy and action plan should be developed and implemented. It should include a clear statement, endorsed by Council, regarding what the Division (and potentially the Department) does and does not do; it should incorporate 'best management' and sustainability practices, identify hierarchies of levels of maintenance, and set guidelines for existing and future partnerships. The document should also provide direction for future purchase, installation, maintenance and safety standards of any plants/grass, objects, materials or facilities that will ultimately be the Division's to maintain - e.g. lawns, benches, paving, fences, play apparatus, sport courts, trails, planting beds, etc. The document should be directly tied to Saanich's climate action and other sustainability policies. It also will support the Customer Service Standards initiative.

As a way of raising the Department's profile and getting public information about the Parks Division's services and accomplishments to the community, a condensed, easy to read version of the document should be made available to the public. The condensed version should include an educational outreach component that explains Saanich's Best Management Practices such as reduced watering and mowing, and integrated pest management, etc. - activities that are seen by some of the public as just poor maintenance.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Maintenance Management System** - Complete a Division/Department/District wide comprehensive Maintenance Management System (MMS) Strategy and Action Plan

Best Practices and Related Resources

While many local governments are struggling with the same issue, it is likely that discussions with several of the large Lower Mainland departments, as well as in other areas of the Pacific North West, will yield a basis on which an effective system can be built, or the Division's current system enhanced.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 4.2.8 (various policies)

Key Strategic Objective #EI-3: Priority Parks Infrastructure/Services

Move ahead with the planning of major parks infrastructure & services in an organized and appropriately resourced fashion

Discussion

The focus of KSO-EI1 is on the parks system planning that is essential to creating a firm foundation for both operational and maintenance planning (addressed in KSO-EI2) and park and site specific planning. It is this later item that is the focus of this key strategic objective.

Saanich currently has 167 parks of various sizes and types, from large natural parks which serve the whole community and are regional attractors, to the smallest neighbourhood parks. Many of these parks are complex, encompassing a mix of built amenities, ecosystems, habitats and conflicting visitor uses. Natural Area Guidelines have been developed to guide some of these matters from a conceptual approach but to ensure all aspects are taken into consideration specific parks plans are needed. Balancing stewardship interests with visitor/use interests can create challenges. At times even competing interests for use alone creates management conflicts. Examples include: accessibility, bike policies, dog management, and invasive species.

As alluded to above, dog management is an issue on which Saanich residents have differing perspectives. When asked about satisfaction levels with current services, 40% of survey respondents indicated they were satisfied with the existing dog management practices and 16% indicated they were not satisfied (see p.12 of Appendix F). From comments that were received elsewhere in the consultation process, the best approach on this contentious issue is for the Department to continue to monitor the issue and liaise with stakeholders and the broader community as required to balance the needs of the community..

These plans would address planning, development and operational management of these parks. A planning cycle needs to be established for these park management plans to be developed and then reviewed. It is likely appropriate that a ten year cycle is adequate for most of the parks, although changing public expectations and community standards may necessitate a more frequent review for some of the more heavily used parks. Park specific plans that are underway include Cadboro Gorge Park and Cuthbert Holmes Park. Other priorities in this Master Plan would indicate that Lambrick Park and Gorge Waterway Park should be high on the priority list for review. Both these parks will also raise heritage issues and the municipal policies on heritage buildings will ensure that consideration is given to the adaptive reuse of heritage designated buildings.

It will also be essential to include new park uses in the park specific planning. Examples of this would include the various forms of youth outdoor recreation which have, over the past ten years, grown in popularity, and which are often found in parks on an unplanned basis; this would include mountain biking and skateboarding. These may be viewed as less desirable by some park users, but they have become legitimate uses (mountain biking is an Olympic sport) and are important elements in any strategy to increase active living in children and youth.

High priority must also be given to the development of new parks and trails in defined urban centres and villages, as recommended in the 2008 OCP. Development of these parks must begin with cross-departmental collaboration to establish urban park criteria and design guidelines, and the collaboration must follow through design review and implementation. Opportunities to create major park or plaza settings in collaboration with the Planning teams for the Uptown, Tillicum, Shelbourne and Douglas Corridors, should be explored. Urban parks should support the principles of placemaking and walkability, and should be linked to municipal trail and greenway networks.

How land for these parks and trails can be obtained and funded needs to be a priority for the municipality as it develops its plans for these areas. Density bonusing can be used to great effect with some facilities, but is less used with parks and trails. However there is an increasing focus on what is often termed POPAs – privately owned, publicly accessible land. These include the areas around buildings that are set-backs from the property boundaries; they are required for uses such as fire access, but can equally serve as trails and pathways and other gathering spaces, if planned in a concerted manner. The potential for these approaches should be discussed with the Planning Department and where possible built into plans and bylaws, or required of developers as design guidelines.

These urban parks will be very much ‘people places’, but this is also true of many parks, and this necessarily involves a set of people amenities. In the survey, a lack of park washrooms and related facilities was identified as essential to park and trail use by an aging population and by parents with young children. This need is noted in other key strategic objectives.

A need for a second children’s waterpark was noted in the 2001 Master Plan and is still an outstanding requirement noted frequently by survey respondents. Another location or other opportunities for water play should be explored.

Alternate funding strategies and partnerships should be considered prior to development/acquisition - understanding how new parkland and trails will be managed and assuring that it can be managed (financially and physically) is important information to know *before* capital funds are expended. These strategies might include extended opportunities for volunteers and community associations, and formalized relationships with private and public sector organizations and non-governmental organizations including not-for-profits. The recommendation to explore alternate funding opportunities was also identified in the 2001 Master Plan.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Park Specific Management Plans**- Prepare park specific management plans for all the major parks in Saanich, and review and update the management plans on a 10 year cycle.
- **Youth Outdoor Recreation Opportunities** - Create diverse and accessible youth outdoor recreation opportunities. Explore opportunities for BMX trails, skateboard parks or nodes, rock climbing, geo-caching, etc.
- **Infrastructure Replacement** – a long term approach to infrastructure refurbishment and/or replacement should be developed for park assets. This plan needs to be aligned with the multi-year capital plans.
- **Parks, Trails and Open Space Strategies for Centres and Villages** - Develop urban park criteria and design guidelines using a cross departmental collaborative process. Explore major park or plaza opportunities with associated trail linkages, through collaboration with the Planning teams for Uptown, Tillicum, Shelbourne and Douglas Corridors.
- **Additional Park Washrooms** – An overall strategy to upgrade park washrooms and create additional washrooms should be developed. This also includes access to drinking water in our parks and trails.
- **Children’s Water Park** – An additional children’s water park or water play areas should be developed as part of the planning for community level parks.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
A variety of policies in 4.2.8

Key Strategic Objective #EI-4: Cross-Departmental Planning

Seek District support for a more open role in cross-departmental development initiatives

Discussion

Cross-departmental planning is encouraged in the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and many of the initiatives in the OCP call for and require departments to work together. To achieve the best possible outcomes to existing land/development oriented municipal plans and initiatives, and to get maximum value from available resources, further collaboration between Parks and Recreation, Planning, Engineering and Public Works is encouraged. Examples of some of the initiatives within the OCP's Environmental Integrity framework, or with possible Environmental Integrity implications, which the Department is specifically responsible for are:

- C4(a) Create a program to respond to invasive species and noxious weeds
- C4(c) Review and implement strategies contained in the Urban Forest Strategy
- C4(d) Develop best management practices (BMP's) for maintenance activities within natural area parks
- C1(a) Develop training and opportunities to increase civic participation among older adults.

Best Practices and Related Resources

Cross-departmental planning is always a challenge. Recent efforts to address the issue in Kelowna are of note.

Various comments from the public focused on the need to build a more integrated approach to the urban realm and proposed that the municipality focus on increasing cross-departmental collaboration and communication.

Examples of other municipal environmental initiatives which would benefit from stronger cross departmental collaboration include:

- The Urban Forest Strategy, adopted in November 2010, lists seven action items and various policies that will only be achieved through a collaborative interdepartmental approach.
- The Boulevards Management Bylaw, Boulevard Tree Policy, Boulevard Maintenance Expectations, an Approved List of plants that can be planted on a boulevard, and an Application for Boulevard Use are found on the Engineering Services web page and not on the Parks web page. The Engineering website states that the most common application for boulevard use is for landscaping and installation of devices to stop vehicle encroachment. They indicate that Parks must undertake planting and pruning of all boulevard trees but it does not require that Parks be involved in decision making if trees are being planted, pruned or removed.
- The Invasive Plants Brochure is on the Environmental Services web page and not on the Parks web page although a note on the ES web page advises that anyone seeing the listed invasive plants on public land in Saanich should contact the Parks Division.
- The Parks Division is involved in several stormwater management initiatives such as boulevard swales on north Shelbourne Rd. (managing flows to Douglas Creek), a tiered rain garden at the intersection of Poplar and Richmond, but is not participating in the harmonization of Saanich bylaws for stormwater management requirements. The harmonization project is an Environmental Services initiative; they are partnering with Planning and Engineering Services.
- The role of the Parks Division in land use planning such as the OCP, Local Area Plans, and development proposal reviews is significant. A closer relationship between the Division and the Planning Department to ensure community needs are met and can be sustained in the long term is paramount.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Collaboration** - Increase cross departmental collaboration on land related municipal initiatives, environmental initiatives, Development Permit Application reviews, capital cost construction projects, and operations management.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

A variety of policies in the OCP require cross-departmental initiatives involving the Department

Key Strategic Objective #EI-5: Marketing and Communications

Increase the capacity of the Department, and the Parks Division in particular, to communicate with the public, other departments, stakeholders and with Council

Discussion

The Parks Division is an important and growing resource for information and guidance on many far reaching environmental issues such as invasive species management and the urban forest, and on more localized seasonal concerns such as tent caterpillar control, summer watering, etc. The Division provides educational material on their web site, distributes brochures on stewardship related topics, responds to queries from the public, periodically holds workshops, and staff have occasionally appeared on the local news and radios shows.

Their accessibility as a stewardship resource is, however, more limited. The Parks office is not located in an area that the general public typically frequents, and only two stewardship links are included under 'popular links' on the District's home page,. The Parks web page is not directly linked to any of the major themes listed under 'Mayor and Council' on the Saanich home page, including Sustainability and Climate Change, and Natural Environment. (Natural Areas in Parks is a subject on the Natural Environment page but the contact link for the page is Environmental Services). Although Parks profile and interaction with the public has increased significantly over the past decade, associated demands on their resources is not reflected in its communications vehicles.

Best Practices and Related Resources

There are a variety of municipalities that have comprehensive policies and procedures related to public engagement: Surrey is one of the best. Environmental education is well managed in the Capital RD.

In several of the other Key Strategic Objectives there has been some discussion of the need for more communications vehicles, and several related recommended initiatives are included in KSO-#TA-10. Some of the following ideas and initiatives specific to environmental integrity are also required:

- A comprehensive and strategic approach to public relations that will keep the general public and Saanich staff apprised of current park planning and design projects and initiatives, and engage them when appropriate.
- Clarification at the District level of the public participation process and the further development of policies, guidelines and techniques to improve this process.
- A marketing plan for the Department, and Parks in particular, that would:
 - Link to Saanich-wide environmental integrity initiatives
 - Be an information hub to share operations, event programming and general (horticulture, arboriculture, sustainability) knowledge with the public
 - Increase public recognition that the Department contributes to the health and well being of society.
 - Quantify the benefits of parks and parks services.
- Continue to develop innovative policies/procedures or memorandums of understanding to mandate and engage partners who help parks to meet mutually desirable goals, provide a source of additional grant funding, who utilize the parks and who assist with the stewardship in the parks.
- Update the municipal website to provide essential and up-to-date information. It is important that there are resources in place to keep the web site up-to-date.
- Establish a web-based comprehensive document library and archive. Departmental documents and background information are currently not well organized for easy reference by public and staff.

- Review opportunities to expand the interpretive and directional signage program that will help educate the community about the District's natural and human heritage, encourage safe use of parks and trails, and provide for easy wayfinding. This directive is included in the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan (initiative F4(c)). The Strategic Plan also encourages exploration of a variety of mediums, including brochures and the web, to achieve the objective.

In addition to these more informational elements, there is also a need to clarify within the municipality the roles and responsibilities related to environmental education. This is a function not offered by the Department at present, and which is very much off the agendas of the front-line park staff. Yet it is crucial to the public understanding of parks, trails and open spaces, and this capacity needs to be enhanced within the municipality.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Environmental Education** - Increase environmental education and awareness programs; clarify and strengthen partnerships and relationships with a wide range of community, volunteer, not-for-profit, government and educational organizations.
- **Community engagement** - Explore opportunities to engage the public and staff in innovative specialty park planning, e.g. community gardens, pocket parks, etc
- **Parks marketing plan** - Develop and implement a Parks marketing plan that includes the creation of a web based information resource hub and cross link to other departments
- **Signage** - Explore opportunities to expand the interpretive and directional signage programs that will help educate the community about the District's natural and human heritage, encourage safe use of parks and trails, and provide for easy wayfinding.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 4.2.8 (various policies)

Social Well-Being

Enhancing social well being is the second pillar of community sustainability. The OCP notes:

Strong communities provide the essential social infrastructure necessary for individuals and families to attain well-being. Social well-being encompasses two components: basic needs such as nutrition, housing, sufficient income, and public health and safety; and opportunities for learning, faith, recreation, creativity and artistic expression, community identity, citizen engagement, and cooperation. To help meet these needs, local government, senior governments, and community stakeholders must continue to work in partnership.

The “Healthy Communities” initiative identifies four key building blocks for creating a strong and resilient community, namely; Community Involvement; Political Commitment; Inter-sectoral Partnerships; and Healthy Public Policy. These building blocks are essential tools for addressing the multiple and interconnected determinants of health.

Saanich has a long standing commitment to building and maintaining a healthy community. This commitment can be seen in long range policy documents, through the work of the Healthy Saanich Committee of Council, through the variety of outreach, capacity building, and education programmes provided through the municipality’s various Departments, and in partnerships with numerous community based groups.

While many of these elements, such as housing are managed by other municipal departments, and others, such as health, are managed by outside agencies (VIHA), many of the elements within the OCP’s scope of social well being fall with or to the Parks and Recreation Department:

- Creating the social infrastructure for ‘balanced, active and diverse lifestyles’ is lead in Saanich by the Department, with parks and trails and recreation centres offering opportunities for citizens to ensure that their lifestyles are active, while a wide variety of opportunities such as in sport, culture, and the arts, ensure that citizen lifestyles can be diverse and hopefully balanced.
- Ensuring citizens can achieve good health has for many decades (since the 1974 Lalonde Report) been recognized as moving far beyond the doctor and the hospital, into the community where the citizens can exercise control over their own personal social determinants of health. And it is at this interface that recreation and good health intersect. And in an era of rapidly increasing health care costs, staying active is an essential prescription for a healthy lifestyle; again, the Department has a key role to play for all ages, especially for children and youth, and for seniors.
- Personal development and community involvement go hand in hand, and no department in the municipality works with as many organizations and associations as the Parks and Recreation Department. Yet volunteering in Canadian communities is diminishing and in Saanich, as in many other municipalities, there has been a drawing back from a community development role as the pressures of revenue generation in the past decade have taken precedence. If the goals of community involvement are to be achieved, then the Department must increase its commitment of resources to community development.
- The Department works with many public agencies and the fiscal restraint of the past three decades has impacted many of them...none more so than the education system. In particular, the withdrawal of schools and school districts from physical activity, PE and extra-curricular sport has caused the community sport system to flounder. This is slowly being addressed with national and provincial initiatives and the Department has a key role to play in helping with that rebuilding process.
- The Department also has roles to play in other areas, such as the development of community gardens.

The key strategic objectives and recommended initiatives are laid out on the following section of the Master Plan.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-1: Programming

Continue to offer a wide range of programs and services to all Saanich residents

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The delivery of recreation programs is one of the main elements of the Department's service to residents. Many survey respondents noted high satisfaction with current programs but a range of programming was noted as a priority for the future.

Offering program opportunities to citizens has always been the 'bread and butter' of recreation departments, together with the operation of facilities which are where these programs are offered. Offering programs was seen as the primary way in which the goal of 'development of the individual' was achieved. This aspect of departmental operations has grown significantly over the past decade: in 2001, there were 10 programmers; now there are 38 FTEs allocated to this task. One of the primary reasons for this growth has been that it fits in well with a 'cost recovery' model of departmental operations. It is very easy to determine if a program is to run: does it meet the minimum number of participants to break even? This is an important variable during a period of fiscal restraint...which seems to have been with us permanently for the past 25 years or longer!

Best Practices and Related Resources

The range of programming provided in most Lower Mainland municipalities can be used as a model. In Alberta, the City of Red Deer is a best practice in the integration of not-for-profit groups' programming into the municipal system.

However it is easy to slip into programs for programs sake mentality. This has some disadvantages:

- It is likely that competition with the private sector will increase since these are lucrative programs and the public sector must account for some of its costs differently.
- Competition with the not-for-profit sector may also increase since those groups may often use municipal facilities to deliver similar programs...and are required to pay rent for them, albeit at the not-for-profit rate.
- There may be competition with other public agencies – for instance there may be non-credit courses offered by UVic or Camosun College, for instance introductory language courses, which are also offered by the municipality.

What is needed is a more collaborative approach and a recognition of the broader goals that drive the Department. For instance, if it is the goal to strengthen community not-for-profit agencies, then a more collaborative approach to program delivery that leaves money-making courses in their hands, would seem to be a positive move.

- It is also important that the overall messaging of the programming be consistent with outside authorities. This is referenced in other KSOs such as regarding introduction to sport programs/physical literacy, and early childhood development programs. This will allow individuals to understand the program outcomes in a broader context: for instance, it is not just a dance program, but a program that builds the gross and fine motor skills of pre-school children.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Regular Review** - Conduct a regular review of all programs to ensure that they are consistent with the Department's mission statement and are delivered in a manner that does not conflict with other delivery agencies. Ensure that user groups, are involved in this program review.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
5.2.2.1

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-2: Health and Recreation

Strengthen the linkages between the Department and VIHA to ensure that the health benefits of parks and recreation services are fully available to Saanich residents and are recognized by the health care system

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The importance of health care to all Canadians and the likely costs involved as the population ages, together with the recognition of the importance of physical activity to the health of every individual, was noted as a key trend, and was frequently noted by key informants from allied agencies.

The linkages of recreation, health and active living are now well documented; being fit and active, as well as eating well, and being connected to one's community are the keys to a healthy and fulfilling life. The Department meets this mandate through all its activities: programming, parks and trails provision for groups and individuals, from sport groups to dog walkers, supporting community groups...and much more. The Department is truly in the Quality of Life business, and many of the initiatives proposed in this Master Plan are focused on increasing active living.

However the linkages between active living and the mainstream health systems can be increased. Since at least the Lalonde Report (1974), it has been acknowledged that medicine and the traditional health care system only play a small part in determining health status. Health is actually determined by a wide range of genetic and social factors and the personal and community environment. The traditional health care system, represented in Saanich by VIHA, is therefore only one aspect of keeping people healthy...and the quality of life system, of which municipal parks and recreation is a large part, also has a role to play. The question therefore is how can the municipality and VIHA best work together to deliver optimum health services, broadly defined.

VIHA has recognized the value of closer linkage with the municipal level of government and have initiated a program to develop Community Health Networks in two other parts of their area, Mt Waddington and the Cowichan Valley. These serve as "a forum for discussion on the determinants of health, the identification or health service priorities, health service planning and development, and other issues related to health status of Cowichan Valley citizens and communities." In the Cowichan Valley, the co-chair is the Mayor of Ladysmith and it is staff from each parks and recreation department who represent municipal interests on the Network.

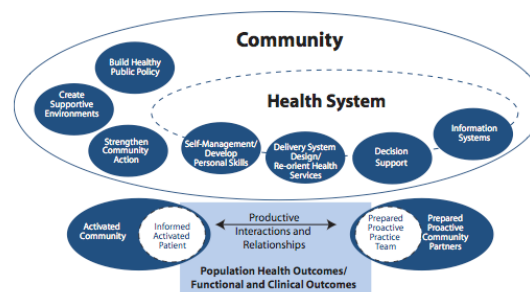
Best Practices and Related Resources

Mt Waddington and Cowichan Communities both have operating Community Health Networks.

Burnaby offers a range of programming in conjunction with Vancouver Community Health aimed at persons with chronic illnesses.

The province of Nova Scotia is developing an extensive volunteer support program for older adults experiencing chronic illness.

Figure 2. The Expanded Chronic Care Model: Integrating Population Health Promotion



Created by: Victoria Barr, Sylvia Robinson, Brenda Marin-Link, Lisa Underhill, Anita Dotts & Darlene Ravensdale (2002)
Adapted from Glasgow, R., Orleans, C., Wagner, E., Curry, S., Solberg, L. (2001). "Does the Chronic Care Model also serve as a template for improving prevention?" *The Milbank Quarterly*, 79(4), and World Health Organization, Health and Welfare Canada and Canadian Public Health Association, (1986). Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion.

The formation of a Saanich Community Health Network would be a positive step in opening the dialogue that must precede greater collaboration. VIHA will expect that the area covered by the Network will be co-terminous with its Local Health Area (the same as SD63); this will require partnering with both the Panorama Recreation and SD63, but this has as many advantages as disadvantages.

While there are many areas of the Department's services which would be enhanced by closer collaboration with VIHA (for instance, early childhood and care – see KSO#EV-1), the area of chronic care management is likely to have the greatest quality of life enhancement and health cost reduction. In recreation and active living terms, this includes working with those, normally aging, persons who are suffering from a chronic illness or condition. In most cases, research has indicated that maintaining or improving both physical and social recreational patterns and activities is an essential step in maintaining quality of life and health, and keeping these individuals in the community rather than in health institutions. Three initiatives are of interest here:

- VIHA staff have developed an Expanded Chronic Care model which identifies the community setting and its services as critical to managing chronic care.
- In Nova Scotia¹, the provincial government is funding an initiative that will address the following question: What is needed in order for community recreation/physical activity settings to be contexts for promoting healthy active living by adults at risk for or living with a chronic health condition?
- In Burnaby, the Parks and Recreation Department has a range of fitness programs for those living with or recovering from chronic conditions such as strokes, diabetes, etc.

Clearly this is a growing area of collaboration which Saanich needs to become engaged in to support its aging population.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Community Health Initiatives** - Explore options, in conjunction with various other service providers, for opportunities through which to enhance community health (e.g.: Prescription for Health, Community Health Networks)
- **Chronic Disease/Lifestyle Programming** - Strengthen community-based services and supports to more effectively address chronic disease prevention and lifestyle management focusing on adults who are at risk for developing chronic conditions as well as those who may need access to community-based programs to support ongoing efforts to self-manage their chronic condition.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 5.2.1 addresses issues of Community Involvement and Partnership as key to creating a Healthy Saanich

¹ See Addressing Chronic Disease Prevention and Lifestyle Management in Nova Scotia Communities - Background Information from Dr Susan Hutchinson, Dalhousie University - April 4, 2011

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-3: Age-Friendly Communities

Continue to develop the concepts of age-friendly communities and collaborate with other departments and stakeholders on parks and recreation services for seniors

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

42% of survey respondents noted that services for seniors should be improved as a high priority. Our trend analysis identified the aging population as a major demographic shift, and adapting the community infrastructure and enhancing programming as important ways of supporting 'aging in place'.

The next decade is a key time for addressing aging issues – by 2020, the first baby boomers will be turning 75 years of age, and the projections of increasing health care costs due to this grey wave will become reality.

There are three 'ages' of seniors (although none are related to chronological age):

- Young seniors who are still very physically active. Programming for this group needs to occur in the recreation centres as, by and large, they prefer to recreate in the ways they have always done...they are older adults and shun the term 'senior'.
- Older seniors who are less physically active but who are interested in the social values or recreation, although with some physical activity. This is the age group for whom municipally run seniors centres are best oriented.
- The 'frail elderly' who are dependent on the care and support of the health system. For this group, while they are often still users of the seniors centre, recreation professions seldom have the skills, training or facilities to address their needs (without significant support from VIHA).

Best Practices and Related Resources

Saanich is one of the WHO's pilot communities for implementing age-friendliness. The other Canadian cities and world cities in this initiative are best practices, while the work produced by UVic's Dept of Gerontology are excellent resources.

Saanich is at the cutting edge of seniors active living and age friendly community planning. The recommendations of the 2004 Active Aging Strategy, and the 2006 Age Friendly Cities Initiative will continue to be relevant into the next decade:

- Expand programming in recreation centres and seniors centres focusing on physical activity and social recreation, ensuring that it remains affordable.
- Improving both physical access to all facilities and also ensuring that marketing to seniors is age appropriate and tailored to their needs.
- Continuing to partner with and support seniors centres and seniors organizations, especially in their recreation services to older seniors and outreach programming to the frail elderly.
- Amalgamate payments to senior centres and the support of seniors organizations to provide equitable management.
- Ensuring a holistic approach to mobility, and ensuring that there is a seamless system of sidewalks and trails to allow residents of all ages to connect to all community hubs, by walking, cycling and by motorized scooter.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Implement Strategy** - Continue to implement and update the recommendations of the 2004 Active Aging Strategy, and the 2006 Age Friendly Cities Initiative.
- **Expand The LIFE Program** - Work with the other regional recreation agencies to expand the LIFE program to provide free drop-in swimming, skating and weight room access for seniors on referral from their health practitioner.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

5.1.2 addresses housing issues and policy #16 and 17 address 'aging in place'.
Policy 5.2.2 addresses active aging.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-4: - New Approaches to Children and Youth Programming

Continue to deliver a wide range of structured and unstructured programming for children and youth, but also rethink programming and reorient resources to focus on new approaches to encouraging physical activity in these critical age groups

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

58% of survey respondents noted increasing services to low income families as a high priority. The need to find new approaches to the issues of childhood obesity was noted as a priority by 51% of respondents.

There is a lot of evidence that children and youth are increasingly overweight and obese. The lack of physical activity in their lives is a major contributing factor. The research also indicates that there are higher levels of overweight/obese in children from low income households.

Saanich offers a wide range of programming for children and youth, both directly and through not-for-profit partners such as sport organizations. These involve both parks and recreation services. They have added programming in the last decade but overweight/obesity has continued to increase. It is time to try new approaches. The municipality is working with SD63 on a report funded through UBCM entitled the Saanich Healthy Kids Report.

One element of childhood which has largely disappeared over the past several decades is unstructured play – while there are many reasons for this, there is a movement to ‘reinvent’ it, and parks are the perfect, and historical, venues for play for all ages from early childhood (see KSO EV#1) to the teenage years.

This will take a slightly different programming approach, so the Department will need to experiment with ‘just play in the park’ to see what mix of supervision, timing, promotion and activity focus works best in different communities.

It will also involve a rethinking of playscapes in parks and the kinds of parks and park amenities that are provided. The Beckwith Water Park was built in the 1990s and the 2001 Master Plan recommended that a second be built; this still remains a need. Equally, the demand for youth outdoor recreation facilities was included in the 2001 Master Plan, but bike parks and other youth parks and park features have not been developed.

This will also offer opportunities to link children with nature...another trend identified by the parks and recreation community. Greater Victoria is a strong base of the Children and Nature Alliance, and their knowledge and experiences, such as with their Natural Leaders program, should be investigated.

This generation – young parents and children and youth – are also very ‘social media savvy’, and there will be opportunities to use social media to expand program marketing and delivery initiatives.

Best Practices and Related Resources

City of Edmonton has pioneered work in Canada on the topic of ‘play’. The UK also has many interesting ideas and best practices. The website of the Child and Nature Alliance provides an excellent starting place for research in the topic.

Youth can be a challenging age group to work with (as the parents of teenagers can attest). Saanich developed a Youth Development Strategy in 1998 (updated 2003) and as a result of that, youth centres were opened at three of its four recreation centres, with dedicated staff working out of these centres. Most of the recommendations of that strategy have been implemented and the time is ripe for strategy renewal based on an extensive consultation program with youth of all ages.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Expand The LIFE Program** - Work with the other regional recreation agencies to expand the LIFE program to provide free drop-in swimming, skating and weight room access for all children and youth
- **Play Programs** - Initiate an after-school 'just-play-in-the-park' program at Saanich parks with close linkages to elementary schools
- **Link to Schools** - Share the 2011 Saanich / School District #63 Healthy Kids Report with District 61 and use it as a platform for working to increase physical activity levels of children in our community.
- **Communication and Promotion** - Work with schools and the health authority to develop and deliver a social marketing and/or education campaign through schools to increase awareness of the factors leading to increases in obese and overweight children and the need to focus on increasing physical activity and encouraging healthy eating.
- **Children and Nature** - Develop initiatives in conjunction with the Children and Nature Alliance and other stakeholders to use parks and recreation experiences to help children and youth to connect with nature.
- **Youth Strategy** – Conduct a youth consultation process and develop a new Youth Development Strategy

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Ensuring access to programs is addressed in 5.2.2.2.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-5: Local Food Production

Explore the opportunities within the park and recreation system for individuals and communities to grow food locally

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Increasing local food production is well supported in the OCP and through recent Council discussions. It is part of a larger trend noted to positively impact GHG reduction.

Saanich is a community which is conscious of its agricultural heritage, and favours expanding the opportunities to grow food locally. Council adopted a policy in 2003 which allows for the expansion of community gardens and other related initiatives. In terms of community gardens, the inventory of allotment plots has declined considerably since 2001 with the development of the Catholic Church lands on Gordon Head Road for housing.

Best Practices and Related Resources

City of Vancouver has an extensive community gardens program.

Community gardens are attractive to many demographic groups – seniors who are vacating their family homes, and young apartment dwellers. And both these groups will increase in number over the next decade.

There are a variety of locations for community gardens, especially if the average plot size is reduced. One location would be in neighbourhood parks, while other possibilities would be boulevards, small municipal or public owned plots, and school grounds (obviously in conjunction with or somehow linked to school programming).

However community gardens need to have an organizational structure to support them, and this needs to have firm neighbourhood roots.

The question will be asked ‘is this an appropriate use of land in a public park?’ In our opinion, the answer is ‘yes’ – we all benefit from the smaller eco-footprint that locally grown food produces, and community gardens will also provide a sense of community interest, pride and activity. And they will be attractive in their own right.

Other local food initiatives should also be pursued. For instance the Parks Division has experimented over the past few years with the addition of fruit trees and vegetables to park horticultural borders. This is a great and welcome addition and should be continued.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Cross-Departmental Work Team** - Establish a cross-departmental work team with representatives from relevant departments to review existing Council policy and to move the initiative forward.
- **Priority Neighbourhoods** - Develop a process for identifying firstly priority neighbourhoods and secondly potential community gardening sites and opportunities in those neighbourhoods.
- **Feasibility Assessments** - Explore the feasibility of boulevards and other municipally owned land for community gardening.
- **Experimentation** - Continue experimenting with fruit and vegetable bearing trees and plants in municipal planting.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

5.1.1 supports Agriculture and Food Production and several policies focus on community gardens (5.1.1.12) and related activities.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-6: Cultural Bridging

Encourage cultural bridging by working with multi-cultural and aboriginal groups to expand the number of programs and events in Saanich oriented to their cultures.

Discussion**Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results**

The visible minority population of the municipality is projected to grow over the next decade.

Saanich has a growing ethnically diverse population, as well as a small Aboriginal population. In 2006, 16% of the population noted themselves as 'visible minorities'. The primary ethnic groups were Chinese and South Asian.

The Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) provides services to these populations and would welcome the opportunity to partner with the municipality to develop more activities to showcase Saanich's many cultural communities. This would also serve as an educational experience for all residents.

However the Department itself also needs to increase its cultural awareness, and a staff training program should be initiated. All things being equal, hiring staff with knowledge of these communities would also be a positive move.

Best Practices and Related Resources

All the Lower Mainland municipalities have extensive experience in addressing the needs of multi-cultural groups.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Events** - Promote the hosting of multi-cultural sport and cultural events
- **Staff Awareness** - Work with ICA-Victoria to improve staff awareness of multi-cultural issues.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Cultural diversity is a community value for strengthening community in Saanich (sec. 5.2) and is embedded in policy 5.1.4.2.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-7: Community Development

Foster community development and increase the capacity of the not-for-profit sector

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

36% of survey respondents supported strengthening local community groups. Many of the identified trends included strategies to strengthen the overall community development process.

Recreation's roots are in community development. The goals of the last two master plans have been individual development and community development. Yet over the past decade, there has been a stronger focus on revenue generation and program delivery, which promote individual development, than on community development.

A new balance needs to be established, especially with regard to strengthening relations with not-for-profit groups. The focus should be on organizational capacity building, enhancement/development of partnerships, and on volunteer support and development. How this will be done, and what some of the capacity building strategies might be, will need to be worked out over time. However the following opportunities should be pursued:

- Identifying specific Saanich staff people to liaise with specific types of organizations, such as outdoor sports groups, indoor sport groups, arts and cultural groups, etc.
- Liaising with not-for-profit groups, such as by attending their AGMs, identifying issues and bringing them to the attention of colleagues and senior management.
- Identifying cross-sectoral issues and solutions; this might include insurance and risk management, event management and other skill development, etc.
- Ensuring promotion of the programs of not-for-profit organizations through the Active Living Guide.
- Assisting them in finding spaces to meet, both in municipal and other facilities.
- Assisting the development of websites, and linkage with the municipal website; and exploring the potential to link to the municipality's CLASS system for direct program registration, etc.
- Promoting the current Volunteer Training Program to enhance skills and commitment in the community.
- Develop a higher profile volunteer recognition program.

Best Practices and Related Resources

The City of Red Deer has 22 community associations through which it delivers services, and which develop their own programs. A similar system works in Vancouver, where community centres are often operated by community associations.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Organization Liaison Function** - Strengthen the organization liaison function of staff to ensure that all key community organizations have a staff person as their liaison, with these staff roles focusing on capacity and partnership building, and volunteer development and renewal.
- **Active Living Guide**- Explore options in both the printed and on-line *Active Living Guide* to accommodate more information about programs of not-for-profit organizations.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Many of the policies in 5.2.1 focus on community development.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-8: Placemaking

Enhance 'placemaking' within Saanich's communities and neighbourhoods

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

36% of survey respondents supported strengthening local community groups and over 80% noted using their neighbourhood parks.

Many of the identified trends included strategies to strengthen the overall community development process.

The Project for Public Spaces defines 'placemaking' as:

Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Put simply, it involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them.

In the course of research for this Master Plan, many Saanich residents described successful parks as places where people go, where activities happen, and where community is built. They contrasted this with undesirable environments that are void of people (except in some cases the homeless), inhospitable, and unattractive.

Saanich has moved in the direction of animating parks and working with community associations on projects, events and celebrations. This is a journey which must continue if parks are to be 'successful' and meet the aspirations of the community as vibrant places expressing quality of life.

Best Practices and Related Resources

The Project for Public Spaces (<http://www.pps.org/>) has an extensive section on their website, including a Placemaking Blog, which provides excellent North American examples of public spaces and how to create them.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Community Events** - Explore opportunities for the Department to initiate, respond to and support community events. Ensure that there are opportunities for a diverse range of community events in key Saanich parks.
- **Calendar of Events** - On the Department web site, include a comprehensive calendar of all events that will take place in Saanich Parks. Cross link the web site to related areas of interest such as CRD parks, local cultural and heritage sites, soccer/baseball/rugby schedules, etc.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Section 4.2.8 (various policies)

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-9: Community Sport

Work with the community sport organizations, Pacific Institute of Sport Excellence (PISE) and Pacific Sport, as well as other interested parties, to ensure that the 'Sport for Life' philosophy and approaches are central to sport and athlete development for children aged 0 to 12 years

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The need to address the fundamental restructuring of the community sport system was identified in focus groups and key informant interviews. Its downstream impacts were frequently noted by the public. The changes occurring at the national and provincial levels were noted in the trend analysis.

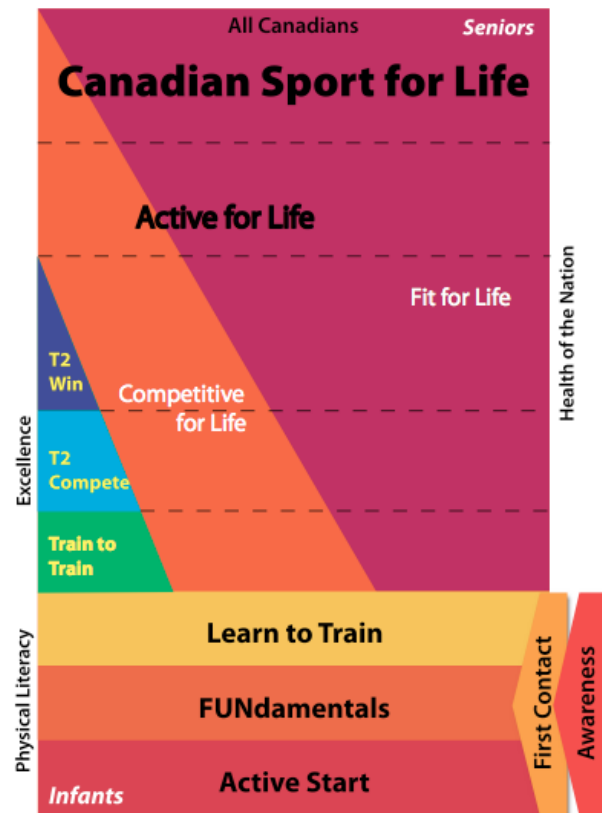
Over the past decade, Canada's sport development system has been revised. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. CS4L links sport, education, recreation and health and aligns community, provincial and national programming. The Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model is a seven-stage training, competition, and recovery pathway guiding an individual's experience in sport and physical activity from infancy through all phases of adulthood. CS4L, with LTAD, represents a paradigm shift in the way Canadians lead and deliver sport and physical activity in Canada.

The Sport for Life (CS4L) initiative is well underway in many communities. This program ties into the new Canadian Sport Policy which is due for release in June 2012. It identifies three 'rungs' at the base of the model focusing on ages 0 to 12 years. These are the introduction of children to sport and its lifetime values, and a focus on building 'physical literacy'. These rungs are the responsibility of local programming, and the general agreement is that the municipality has a central role to play in Active Start, and should share responsibility for FUNdamentals and Learn to Train with the community sport organizations.

We have also been made aware by the sport community that the school-based PE system is struggling, as fewer and fewer trained PE teachers are employed at the elementary and middle school levels, and as the school districts have been forced by fiscal pressures to remove the capacity to train regular classroom teachers to adequately deliver the PE curriculum. This results in students reaching grade 9 with minimal skills...to the frustration of sport groups and little likelihood of these students enjoying the lifetime benefits of sport participation. Saanich is by no means alone in experiencing this problem. It is Canada-wide (although perhaps more acute in Saanich due to the older teacher workforce).

Best Practices and Related Resources

The CS4L website and related resources can be found at:
<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/>



The sport community has started to address these issues:

- Over 50 sports have modified games for those under age 12 years which are built on the CS4L model.
- The Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence (PISE) has started to develop organizational support resources, such as assistant coaches working with middle school sports teams.
- PacificSport staff are liaising with other regions which are working on the same issues.

What is needed in Saanich is:

- Awareness of the issues by each of the parties involved.
- Leadership, which will come from PISE (although speed of implementation will depend on the resources that they have at their disposal).
- A collaborative and planned approach to the issues.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Community Sport for Life** - Adapt CS4L for use in Saanich sport programs (offered by staff or contracted) and encourage its use with local sport organizations and their approaches for their under 12 year programming. This can be done in partnership with PISE and their efforts to “Train the Trainer” in the community, schools and with PAC groups.
- **Promote regionally** - Work with other municipalities to ensure that this approach has geographic continuity.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
5.2.1.1

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-10: Regional Facility Planning

Work with the community and regional sport groups, UVic and Camosun College, Greater Victoria Library Board, School Districts 61 & 63 and other local governments in the region to ensure coordination of major public facility planning

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Both the infrastructure deficit and the need for partnering in capital planning are noted trends, as well as being part of existing Council policy and approach.

The last master plan called for regional collaboration on high-performance sport facilities, but little progress has been made. It remains an issue and was noted by several focus groups and key informants.

It is unlikely that the next decade will be as capital resource rich as the past decade. This will be true for all public agencies. It is also true that both public and elected officials expect that capital projects will include partnership elements; the collaborations between the school districts and the municipality to create three community middle schools and the Cordova Bay Seniors Centre have been well received, as has the new Centennial Library at Pearkes. Partnerships such as this are becoming the way of doing business.

There will be at least three major opportunities that will occur over the next decade:

- The library board multi-year plan proposes new libraries with the potential to partner with community centres. In principle, this should be supported as the cross-marketing potential will be significant, as evidenced by the Saanich Commonwealth Place and Pearkes libraries.
- The University is building a major new community recreation and athletics complex which will impact municipal services in a variety of ways. For instance there is potential for community memberships, and for use of the new 50m pool by competitive swim groups currently using SCP. These are all issues which require a continuing discussion, and offer a variety of collaborations.
- The Ministry of Education has extended the Neighborhoods of Learning program to potentially include many more schools. This opens up renewed potential for collaboration. It is likely that the school districts will be most interested in collaborating with regard to secondary schools, since it is at this level that the majority of declining enrollment would occur over the next decade. This opens up potential for discussion related to Claremont School in SD63.

Best Practices and Related Resources

Saanich itself is a best practice example of well-planned approaches to linking to school districts and libraries.

The City of Kamloops has collaborated with Thompson Rivers University on the development of athletics facilities.

In addition, there will continue to be interest from a variety of partners for the development of competitive sport facilities. This is a conundrum for a number of reasons:

- The existing competitive sport facilities in Saanich are well used; for example, Saanich Commonwealth Place is home to many athletes in the aquatic sports.
- These facilities and their programming develop youth athletes and the broad community gains pride from their efforts and successes. Greater Victoria athletes made up 13% of the Canadian team at the 2008 Summer Olympics, and will again at this summer's London 2012 Olympics.

- There is broad public support for high-performance sport - this was shown by the sellout crowds at the 2007 U20 soccer World Cup, where Victoria was one of eight host venues across Canada².
- Current high-performance legacies are running out -- the aquatic agreement from the Commonwealth Games in 1993 expires in 2013 or before, and the 1967 University of Victoria Centennial Stadium (last upgraded for the 1994 Commonwealth Games) is no longer considered a potential hosting venue beyond the local level.

However the solutions must be regional, with Saanich, as the largest municipality showing leadership and doing its share. Some kind of regional high-performance study is required to address the issues and identify solutions, including funding formulae (which would include the potential for community sponsorship). Rectifying these facility deficits will be considerable but the revenues from the potential sports events will more than cover these costs (see KSO#EV-2).

Recommended Initiatives

- **Library Planning** - Liaise with the Library Board regarding the implementation of its long-range facility plan and support the concept of co-location of libraries and community centres.
- **University Liaison** - Discuss with the University, the impact of its new recreation facilities on Saanich recreation facilities, programs and services.
- **School District Liaison** - Continue to discuss facility planning issues with the school districts, utilizing where possible funding such as through the Neighbourhoods of Learning program to further develop the joint use of public buildings.
- **Accessibility** – Ensure that all new or renovated parks, recreation and cultural facilities (whether regional or Saanich operated) focus on the need for access by users of all abilities. Continue to follow guidelines and initiatives outlined in the 2009 Measuring Up report.
- **Promote Regional Collaboration** – Work with other municipalities to develop a regional, collaborative approach to the development of regional sport.
- **High Performance Sport Facility Study** - Work with other municipalities to commission a High Performance Sport Facility Study, to determine which are the key facilities to support the region's goals for sport development (eg renovation/replacement of UVic stadium, new soccer stadium, major hockey complex).
- **Continue funding Commonwealth Legacy** - Identify alternative funding sources/approaches to ensure the continuation of the Saanich Commonwealth Place High Performance Legacy Fund.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

5.2.1 stresses Community Involvement and Partnerships, with policy 5.2.1.5 noting libraries and 5.2.1.3 referring to schools and post-secondary institutions.

7.2 addresses regional issues.

² The lack of a facility for this level of soccer means that Victoria will not be hosting events in the 2014 and 2015 Women's World Cup of Soccer.

Key Strategic Objective #SWB-11: Arts and Culture

Work with Saanich and other groups to identify long-term support for the arts and culture

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

21% of survey respondents noted as a high priority improving arts programming.

Saanich municipality has long recognized the value of the arts as fundamental to quality of life as well as the social and economic growth of the community. It also recognizes that investment in strong creative communities requires support from a wide range of public and not-for-profit sector partners. The 2009 Arts and Culture Strategy identified six broad areas where further emphasis should be placed:

- Providing spaces for the arts. The strategy indicated that spaces are required for a range of activities. Some of those will be met in the new arts centre at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, but other activities such as rehearsing and performing will only be partially met.
- Increasing arts and cultural awareness, through working with arts organizations and other not-for-profit agencies to both promote the arts and to display the arts.
- Build creative capacity by increasing partnerships, increasing cultural funding and strengthening arts and cultural organizations.
- Increasing arts and cultural activities in Saanich neighbourhoods, by facilitating more community events, continuing to deliver programming, and by working with community associations.
- Expanding youth leadership opportunities by working more closely with the schools and linking youth with artists in a variety of other ways.
- Supporting economic development through the arts by monitoring the performance of the arts sector and developing a cultural tourism plan.

Best Practices and Related Resources

The Regional Arts Strategic Plan provides extensive information, as does the recently developed Saanich Arts Policy. Kelowna is a model of what can be achieved.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Implement Arts and Culture Strategy** - Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2009 Arts and Culture Strategy

Links to sections and policies of the OCP 5.2.3 deals exclusively with Arts and Culture.

Economic Vibrancy

Enhancing economic vibrancy is the third pillar of community sustainability. The OCP notes:

A sustainable economy provides diverse and viable economic opportunities for meeting the social needs of present and future generations, supporting a liveable, high-quality built environment, and reducing and/or limiting negative impacts on the natural environment. It is characterized by the use of renewable resources, a reduction in pollution and waste, and the efficient use of energy, materials, and labour. A sustainable economy is both resilient and responsive to changing circumstances.

Saanich can build on a number of strengths to further develop a vibrant local economy. These include its strategic location on the Pacific Rim, a well-educated, stable labour force, high quality educational, research, health care, and high technology infrastructure, and good transportation links to the Mainland. Saanich also has a strong and diverse core of economic activity in retirement services, health care, education, sports, tourism, high technology, film, research, and agri-tourism.

At the same time, a number of challenges in the local economy need to be addressed to ensure continued economic viability. These include the geographic constraints of an island location, limited availability of land for new large scale commercial and industrial development, an aging workforce, shortages of skilled workers in many sectors, significant pockets of unskilled people, a significant number of lower income service sector and tourism jobs, a lack of affordable housing, traffic congestion, and a complex regulatory environment.

The Department contributes to the economic vibrancy of Saanich in many ways, some directly and some indirectly.

There is little doubt that Saanich is an incredibly attractive community, and receives in-migrants from elsewhere in the region, across BC and Canada, and from other countries. They are attracted by its quality of life, and, beyond nature and climate, no agency contributes more to sustaining and enhancing this quality of life than the Parks and Recreation Department. And the commitment to maintaining this quality was evident throughout the Master plan's consultation processes.

In this role, the Department also works closely with the Planning Department and other municipal departments to ensure that parks and recreation amenities are part of the planning for new centres and villages and their urban parks and gathering places, for increased sustainable mobility through trail development, and through the protection of the urban forest and natural areas.

The Department, through its programs and activities, can also stimulate economic activity:

- Many of the community's residents are young families and many of them require or choose to have all adults in the household working. This requires that they find care and stimulation for their children, both those aged 0 to 5 years and those of school age. Ensuring that this key element of the economic infrastructure is in place is a responsibility that falls, within the municipality, to the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Many communities, including greater Victoria, have discovered sport tourism – that hosting sport events brings visitors/tourists who spend money in the community. Saanich has been the recipient of such economic flows since the Commonwealth Games of 1994, and Saanich Commonwealth Place is a frequent host facility for provincial, national and international events. Saanich, through the Department, with good planning, can play a stronger role in this regard.
- Using its resources such as parks and trails to support eco-tourism.

The key strategic objectives and recommended initiatives are laid out on the following section of the Master Plan.

Key Strategic Objective #EV-1: Eco-tourism

Work with the relevant tourism groups to promote the Saanich park and recreation system to eco-tourists.

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Key informants noted that there is potential for the parks and recreation system to add to the capacity of the local tourism industry.

The amenities that Saanich residents use for recreation are also attractive to tourists. Increasingly eco-tourism, or outdoor activities for tourists while they are travelling, is a growing phenomena. This includes the attractions of great parks like Mt Douglas, the beach accesses of Ten Mile Point and the incredible trail system which has been developed in conjunction with the CRD.

There are various niche markets that can be further developed:

Bicycle tourism has grown significantly over the past decade and is now heavily promoted by Tourism BC. While it includes exhilarating mountain biking at one end of the spectrum, a focus on more relaxing biking on Saanich's recreational trails is an appropriate tourism product that can be marketed. The municipality needs to ensure that there are bicycle friendly amenities at recreation centres and parks.

Walking and hiking are also attractions for those visiting Saanich and Victoria. The establishment of a regional pathway system by CRD Parks, using many of Saanich's trails, will be an added attraction for those on vacation.

Golf is a major activity that many people engage in on their vacations and the Cedar Hill Golf Course is one of many in the region. Its proximity to downtown hotels makes it a good venue for vacationers.

While these opportunities may not yield revenue directly to the Department (except the golf course), they will add to the attraction of the Greater Victoria region to tourists and increase economic vitality of the region's tourism industry.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Work with tourism Industry** – work with relevant tourism groups to identify tourism amenities and integrate them into tourism promotions.

Best Practices and Related Resources

The Capital Region Parks Division is working with Tourism Victoria to develop trail and other tourism potentials. The City of Kelowna also has a close and effective working relationship with Tourism Kelowna and promotes a variety of eco-tourism opportunities.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Policies 6.2, 9 and 10 address the economic importance of tourism related initiatives.

Key Strategic Objective #EV-2: Sport and Cultural Events

Promote and increase the economic benefits that flow from the Department's services related to hosting major sport and other events in Saanich and the region

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Sport event hosting has been well developed for 25 years in many Canadian communities, and is an identified trend. Saanich has been involved, with other municipalities, in its delivery. Various key informants noted that more focus on the potential of sport tourism would result in increased economic benefits.

Sport tourism is recognized as a way that communities can leverage economic benefits from recreation and park facilities. Saanich has been a participant in sports tourism through Saanich Commonwealth Place which has hosted provincial, national and international events, primarily but not exclusively in aquatics sports, since 1993. These events and the Commonwealth Games Legacy fund have provided a high performance system which has allowed Saanich residents, especially youth, to reach their Olympic potential. And we all enjoy basking in the reflected glory of an Olympic medal. Other recreation facilities also host events which attract out-of-town participants and deliver economic benefits: for instance the G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre, which hosts many tournaments including the annual Pacific Cup Old-Timers Hockey event.

Best Practices and Related Resources

Sport Host Victoria is a good model, although more active sport event hosting cities in BC are Kamloops, Abbotsford, Kelowna and Prince George.

However Saanich has not been a particularly active participant in SportHost Victoria³, which is the lead agency in the region that fosters the development of sport tourism. In the past, this has been due to a lack of hotels in Saanich which would benefit from hosted events. As well, apart from Saanich Commonwealth Place, Saanich has not considered sport tourism in its facility development and upgrading process.

This has been frustrating to sport groups which would like to have seen more focus on the development of high-level sport facilities. This aspect of parks and recreation development is addressed for the future in KSO#SWB-9.

Regardless of this, Saanich needs to continue as an active member of SportHost Victoria. With closer working relationships with sport groups (key strategic objective SWB-8) the Department will be able to assist in identifying not just competitive events, but also a range of conferences, training camps, and organizational meetings which will also add to the region's economic development profile.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Support SportHost** - Commit to ongoing membership of SportHost Victoria and work with them to identify and deliver as full a range of sport events as possible, given the lack of both high performance sport facilities and accommodation located in Saanich.
- **Work With Community Organizations** - As part of the increased community liaison function, work with community organizations to identify events that can be hosted as fund-raisers for those organizations, and economic impact for the region.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Policies 6.2, 9 and 10 address the economic importance of tourism related initiatives.

³ 2011 is the first year in a while that Saanich is a member of SportHost Victoria.

Key Strategic Objective #EV-3: Early Childhood Development

Take a more proactive role with the Early Childhood Development community in Saanich to increase the potential of park and recreation programming to serve the development needs of the 0/6 age group as well as the care needs of young families and the economic needs of the community

Discussion

The municipality has an important role to play in ensuring it is attractive to and supportive of its residents' lifestyles. One of its key policies in this regard (6.1.6) is:

Support the retention and recruitment of a qualified labour pool by ensuring access to appropriate and affordable housing and other necessary support services such as child and elder care

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

44% of survey respondents supported making programs for early learning a high priority. Numerous comments from the public noted the importance of focusing on early childhood development. The move to full-day kindergarten in BC and Ontario schools indicates both a focus and a trend.

The municipality has an important role to play in ECD. The municipality, largely through the Parks and Recreation Department, is already a significant player and partner, providing a range of recreation programs, by supporting organizations such as Saanich Neighbourhood Place, by providing children's play environments in parks, and by long-term efforts to make Saanich child-friendly.

The Department has recently looked at ECD programs and the broader context in which they operate and it is clear from that study that these programs are well-received but need to be kept really affordable as many parents of young children suffer from a lack of income. The study also looked at how the municipality relates to the care community in Saanich – people and small businesses and organizations providing in-home or group care, licensed or unlicensed, for children of less than school age. The study identified a number of roles that the municipality could play, with actions they could take to implement each role:

- To be a recognized player and partner in, and advocate for, the early childhood development community.
 - Participating in forums for joint planning
 - Leading the advocacy for early childhood development at provincial and national forums
- To enhance economic viability, and ensure sustainable, supportive, and appropriate child care as an essential element of community infrastructure.
 - Developing a Municipal Child Care Strategy
 - Assisting with the goal setting around how much care needs to be provided in the community
 - Identifying opportunities for increasing the number of care spaces that are provided

Best Practices and Related Resources

There has been extensive work conducted in the Lower Mainland by Success by Six, the United Way and UBC Human Early Learning Partnership. See <http://successby6victoria.ca/>

- To continue to deliver a set of early childhood development programs and opportunities.
 - Continually refining the range of early childhood development programming in response to changing community needs
 - Expanding the 'hub' model for supporting early childhood development, and establishing StrongStart programs in municipal facilities
 - Linking the content/curriculum proposed for early childhood development settings by schools (as in full day kindergarten) or professional organizations and embedding this into municipal programming
 - Supporting the community organizations that deliver early childhood development programming
 - Upgrading staff training as necessary
- To ensure programs are affordable
 - Expanding the LIFE program so that the costs of participation in local programs are diminished
- To ensure that neighbourhoods are 'friendly' to preschoolers and their families, and that all Saanich plans consider the full range of early childhood development experiences
 - Developing a community-based child friendliness audit process

Recommended Initiatives

- **Early Childhood Development Strategy** - Implement the recommendations of the Early Childhood Development Strategy

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

The importance of child care to economic vibrancy is noted in 6.1.6.

Taking Action and Tracking Progress

Within the master planning process, there are always issues which do not fall easily into the frameworks that are used to structure the report, be they the organizational frameworks of parks, recreation services, etc; or in this case, the three pillars of sustainability used by the OCP.

As the OCP notes:

For an Official Community Plan to be effective, its objectives and policies must be implemented. Achieving the Saanich Vision will be determined by future decisions of Council regarding priorities, funding, and implementation, and through consultation and cooperation with senior governments, other local governments, school districts, the private and not-for-profit sectors, and the community.

From time to time this Official Community Plan will need to be amended and updated to respond to community needs and remain a relevant, viable, and effective tool for guiding growth and development. While there is no mandated time period for reviewing plans, it is common practice to undertake a comprehensive update every five to ten years. Periodically, amendments may be required in response to specific development applications or to accommodate new planning concepts. Public consultation is required prior to proceeding with any amendments or updates.

As the Saanich Strategic Plan notes, there are four types of objectives: one, which it terms 'citizen objectives' focus on what the citizens would like to be done; the other three focus on what needs to be in place within the machinery of government to actually get things done. These three kinds of objectives are termed financial objectives, internal process objectives, and learning and growth objectives. Most of the key strategic objectives noted earlier in the Master Plan under the headings of Environmental Integrity, Social Well-Being and Economic Vibrancy, would be citizen objectives.

In this final section of the Master Plan, we identify key strategic objectives which address issues of finance, internal processes and learning and growth. There is of course some overlap with the other objectives; for instance, a key financial objective is having an adequate capital and operating budget to implement them. Rather than state this obvious fact as a recommended initiative in every objective, one or two objectives in this section focus on those critical financial objectives. The same applies to staffing and staff training, marketing and promotion, etc.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-1: Scope of Service Review

Establish a tri-annual review process for reviewing the current and future scope of services with Council to ensure understanding of and commitment to future service delivery by the Parks and Recreation Department

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Our review of the current mandate and vision of the Department, our review of the aspirations of Council as articulated in the 2008 OCP and other plans recently adopted, and the budget and resource strictures that have been imposed over the past several years, and which seem likely to continue for a few more years, indicate that a new process must be found for linking expectations with the budgets allocated.

While the name of the Department may have varied over time – Leisure Services, Community Services, Parks and Recreation– there have been several constants in the evolution of park and recreation services in Saanich and in Canada generally:

- The scale of operation has continually increased – more parks and parkland; heightened environmental focus; more facilities; more community event support; more programs and programming.
- New services and amenities have been added – trails, artificial turf, indoor tennis, early learning and care programming, Youth Council.
- The emerging fields have outstripped the diminishing fields (often those ‘diminishing’ are being replaced by ‘new and better’) – print materials have been replaced by electronic; mowing grass by maintaining artificial turf.

Which adds up to a ‘core scope of service’ which is ever expanding. And surveys and the actions of the elected officials indicate that we as a community like it that way. The most recent statement, albeit somewhat oblique, of the scope of service of the Department is the OCP; in stating what the elements of Sustainable Saanich should be, the scope of park and recreation services is also defined.

However the ever expanding scope is not sustainable when the primary revenue source is property taxation and there is little public or political appetite to increase it (notwithstanding survey results). However the departmental staff, in all divisions, find themselves caught between these twin spears of increasing public expectations and static or diminishing revenues.

Continually increasing user fees will be challenging to maintain while trying to keep services affordable for all. There must be some hard choices made during the life of this Master Plan.

As noted earlier, the definition of core services is built into the OCP which Council has only recently approved. A marginal expansion of this is presented in the section “Managing the Scope of Service and Defining Core Services” on page 63. However a review process does need to be put in place. The review process needs to be conducted every three years, preferably early in the life of each new Council. And subsequent budget setting needs to reflect this review process.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Review Process** - Establish a timetable and manageable process for the review of the Department’s scope of services

Best Practices and Related Resources

This is not an area where there are any easy solutions or best practices. Currently, the efforts of the City of Toronto offer daily insights into the difficulties of matching scope of services to resources available. Closer to home, the City of Langley takes a more constrained approach to the expanding social aspects of the recreation and culture function.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Policy 7.1.1 focuses on the need to ‘integrate and harmonize the priorities and programs of the OCP through the “Strategic Plan”, the “Financial Plan”, Capital Expenditure Program and annual budgeting process’.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-2: Capital and Operating Budgets

Initiate discussion with Council concerning major initiatives to increase the capital and operating budgets of the Department

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

70% of survey respondents indicated a willingness to pay increased taxes for recreation and park services, while 43% indicated support for free basic recreation services to Saanich residents.

The Saanich municipal budget in 2011 was \$195 million. The Parks and Recreation Department has annual (2011) operating expenditures of \$22.4m, revenues of \$10.0m.

The municipality is generally holding the line on tax increases. The tax increase for the average homeowner, municipal portion only, for 2011 was 3.6 % or \$69.69. Of this, \$55.18 is attributable to services, and \$14.51 attributable to infrastructure replacement.

The municipality has committed to increasing the allocation of funds to the capital budget to ensure sustainable capital replacement of key buildings and other assets. While currently less funding is allocated than is likely to be needed, it is planned that all municipal capital budgets will be balanced by 2019. However this expectation is also based on the assumption that the current buildings and parks amenities will remain at their existing levels both in terms of quality and quantity. Capital projects are funded from a variety of sources, and in recent years the availability of federal/provincial infrastructure funding has allowed significant upgrading to be accomplished.

The projected operating budget revenues and expenditures in 2011, together with the gross and net revenues and expenditures, are as follows:

	2011 Budget			
	Revenues	Expenditures	Net	Revenues to Expenditures Ratio
Administration	\$0	\$775,700	\$775,700	0%
Parks	\$0	\$5,755,000	\$5,755,000	0%
Cedar Hill CC	\$1,399,600	\$2,207,900	\$808,300	63%
Gordon Head CC	\$1,670,900	\$3,040,500	\$1,369,600	55%
GR Pearkes CC	\$1,914,900	\$2,845,400	\$930,500	67%
Saanich Commonwealth Place	\$4,139,300	\$6,083,900	\$1,944,600	68%
Community Services	\$174,500	\$1,125,200	\$950,700	16%
Golf Course	\$936,900	\$936,900	\$0	100%
Total	\$10,236,100	\$22,770,500	\$12,534,400	45%

Best Practices and Related Resources

Recent referendums in Kamloops (2005) and in the CRD to establish the Sea to Sea Green Blue Belt, are examples of successful financial strategies/approaches.

Overall, the Department has a ratio of revenues to expenses of 45% - it costs \$1.00 for every 45c of revenue obtained. The Golf Course shows the highest return.

Given this current situation, the following points can be made:

- The implications of the infrastructure deficit is recognized by Council who have committed to increasing the proportion of capital budget that is allocated to replacing existing as opposed to building new infrastructure.
- The overall return of 45% is well within the range achieved by other municipalities, but the focus on revenue generation and increased user fees which has occurred over the past several years has decreased access for many families, and the LIFE program has not fully compensated for this.
- The balance of usage of facilities by subsidized groups (children and youth) versus full cost groups (adults) has also been adjusted to increase revenues. This has been eased by changing demographics, but this may not continue over the next decade.
- Partnering with not-for-profit groups has generally been successful, but the sense of ownership of a public asset passes to the not-for-profit group and this can at times cause conflict with other groups or with the general public. The 'Home Field' policy requires review.

In many ways, the Department is experiencing 'death by a 1000 cuts'. Consideration should be given to retreating from one or two major items, as opposed to continuing to 'nickel and dime' the Department. For instance, consideration might be given to spinning off the golf course as a municipal corporation (or similar status) or outright sale.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Long term Costing** - Complete the Park Priority Planning process and the development of a Trails Master Plan, and cost these upgrades over the next decade. These new initiatives need to be balanced with the long term needs for maintaining existing infrastructure. Operating expenses for all new projects and developments need to be considered and/or resourced.
- **Referendum** - Consider a referendum⁴ that would establish a Parks, Trails and Natural Areas Sustainability Fund, which could be used over the following ten years with matching contributions to initiate a wide range of park, trail and natural area capital projects.
- **Partnering Formula** – In conjunction with a review of the 'Home Field' policy, consider a policy and formula for partnering with not-for-profit groups based on the recent soccer/artificial turf model. The formula needs to balance the participation and public programming potential with the municipal contribution.
- **Supporting the Private Sector** - Encourage the development within the region, by private enterprise and not-for-profit alliances, of facilities that serve lower participation/special interest groups. An example (for which there will likely be significant demand) would include a new commercial hockey arena (twin pad or four-plex).

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Policy 7.1.1 focuses on the need to 'integrate and harmonize the priorities and programs of the Official Community Plan through the "Strategic Plan", the "Financial Plan", Capital Expenditure Program and annual budgeting process'.

⁴ A referendum was successfully implemented in Nov.1990 for \$5m (\$3m for acquisition, \$2m for development). The concept of a fund that will be used to leverage other funding sources, such as federal-provincial infrastructure grants, is used in a variety of other areas, for instance CRD's Regional Housing Trust Fund (see <http://www.crd.bc.ca/housingsecretariat/trustfund.htm>)

Key Strategic Objective #TA-3: Facility Planning

Establish a long term strategy for renovating aging facilities.

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The need to address this issue has been identified by Council and a District-wide Facility Review has been initiated. This issues was also made by many other key informants and at focus groups. Many comments made by survey respondents noted a need for facility upgrading.

However tight the financial situation is over the next decade, there will be continuing requirements for capital upgrading. This may come in a planned and coordinated fashion, or it may come from a significant failure of a key asset or an opportunity which cannot be passed up. Examples may include responding to a major failure in the Pearkes arena refrigeration system, or the opportunity to purchase land in a strategic location. The preference is obviously to do it in a planned fashion (although recognizing the need for some contingency planning). Investigations of facilities as part of this master planning process identified several issues that need to be addressed in the short term:

- The cooling system of the older of the two arenas at Pearkes is very close to the end of its life, and should be replaced as soon as feasible. It would be better planning to do this while the arena is closed for the summer, than to have it fail during the main ice use season.
- The Bert Richman building at Lambrick Park is used both by the Department, by some not-for-profit groups and by the Mavericks and Greater Victoria Baseball Association; however its use level is not great. It is a converted barn and even its renovations into a recreation building took place over 40 years old. Before any decisions are made with regard to its future, two studies are required:
 - Firstly, its use and utility within the park as a whole and with regard to the needs of Gordon Head Recreation need to be assessed; there are several other baseball buildings, and likely any utility as a general recreation building has been obviated by the recent expansion of the recreation centre, or those needs are better accommodated by expanding the recreation centre as opposed to renovating the Bert Richman building.
 - Secondly, and only if the first study indicates that there is a need for the space, the costs of upgrading the building should be examined.
- The inventory of parks buildings needs to be reviewed and a program established for upgrading these washrooms and adding new as required to support other programs, trails, etc.

Best Practices and Related Resources

The BCRPA has developed a comprehensive database on this topic, which can be accessed at

https://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation_parks/facilities-assessment-study

Issues related to land for future expansion should also be considered as they will draw from the same capital funds as new or renovated buildings. In particular, two of the four community centres are land-locked which will limit any future expansion. While each situation is different, any opportunities that arise to acquire additional land should be seized upon.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Facility Lifecycle** - Continue to support District efforts on facility lifecycle costing review
- **Pearkes** – Refurbish the Gold (original) Arena at G.R. Pearkes
- **Bert Richman Building** - Plan for the closure/demolition/renovation of the Bert Richman Building in Lambrick Park
- **Park Washrooms** - Upgrade and add new park washrooms and other park facilities.
- **Site expansion** - Site expansion where possible/necessary such as G.R. Pearkes (in conjunction with Tillicum development) and Saanich Commonwealth Place (expansion at the rear of the building)

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

This issue is a high priority in the Municipality's Financial Plan.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-4: Alternate Revenue Sources

Diversify revenue sources such that increases in taxation are minimized while still providing the progressive parks and recreation system that Saanich residents have grown accustomed to and are proud of

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

There was a high percentage of support in the survey for utilizing alternate funding sources such as private donations (79%) and corporate sponsorships (67%).

The next five years are projected to be difficult years financially for most western economies -- and this will include Saanich municipality. The continuing impacts of the 2008 Banking Collapse, and required major investments in public services and infrastructure (water, sewerage, etc.) are the primary reasons. More conservative senior governments will also likely limit the fiscal opportunities of lower level governments.

However it is unlikely that the demands on the park and recreation systems will diminish -- indeed the very opposite is likely to be the case.

The Department's two main sources of income (over which it has control) are fees and charges and development cost charges (DCCs). The following comments can be made about these:

- Fees and charges – over the last ten years, the recreation system has often addressed funding shortfalls through raising program and other fees. It has addressed affordability issues by instituting the LIFE program and this is a significant assistance to low income families. If fees and charges are increased, there must be a parallel enhancement of this program.
- Development cost charges – these charges contribute to the cost of new park facilities but are constrained by the legislation that establishes them. The municipality periodically reviews them to ensure their fairness, but it should also be recognized that, with Saanich approaching its 'build out' population, the amount raise by new DCCs will diminish.

Funding shortfalls can be addressed in part by some redistribution of existing resources, but if the current or enhanced level of service is to be maintained/achieved, new sources of revenue must be found if taxation is not to increase.

The following are some ways of generating additional revenue:

- Investigate and potentially expand corporate sponsorship opportunities through naming rights, corporate partnerships, and other opportunities (supported by 67% of survey respondents).
- Investigate and potentially expand the gifting and bequest opportunities by identifying a series of 'community gifts' that will provide 'marginal' (where 'marginal' means 'would not be done otherwise') community benefit to the park and recreation system and work with community organizations to promote this community gifting program. This could take the form of a 'gifts catalogue' identifying and promoting community gifting opportunities. The contributions should be structured to include both a capital and operating portion (supported by 79% of survey respondents)..

Best Practices and Related Resources

The City of Vancouver has studied the issues of alternative revenue sources, and has a comprehensive approach to amenity 'bonusing'. Examples of recent local initiatives would include the CRD/TD Bank partnership to develop regional trails

- Partner with not-for-profit and for-profit groups on the development of new and enhanced facilities, programs and services. The development of artificial turf fields in partnership with soccer groups is an example of what can be achieved.
- Work with the Planning Department to explore the amenity contribution potential in planning/developing centres and urban villages. The OCP identifies a range of 'amenities' that can be provided through this program, and many of these would be positive additions to the recreation and park system. These would include: open space, floor space designated to not-for-profit group use, enhancement of natural areas, spaces for early learning and care, bicycle facilities.
- Identify and discuss the broader dimension of competition with the private sector around activities where that sector is a key player (sports might include golf, squash, indoor tennis, adult hockey), and ensure that all such sports are treated equally, and revenue potential is expanded. These initiatives have all emerged at different times, and differ one from another. These inconsistencies should be rationalized before this program is expanded, so that the level of public investment is identified.
- Consider the potential for the development of commercial activities in parks, such as limited food services, equipment rental (such as kayaks). These should be seen as means of attracting more people to the parks, as opposed to just ways of raising revenue. This can also be linked to KSO-EI#6, regarding 'placemaking' and enhancing the use of parks for events and festivals.

It should also be noted that increases in taxation may well be supported by Saanich residents, as evidenced by the public survey results (although recognizing that changing situations and the presentation of other alternatives for funding, may well alter levels of public support).

Recommended Initiatives

- **Investigating Alternative Revenues** - Continue to investigate alternative revenue opportunities.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 7.1 addresses strategy financing.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-5: Operating Capacity and Resources

Balance operating capacity and resources and/or reallocate between Divisions to meet increasing operating demands

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The question of additional resources was not asked in the survey, but 70% of the public did indicate a willingness to pay for additional services. The need for additional capacity and resources was clearly stated in discussions with staff, particularly those in the Parks Division.

Discussion

The Department has 290 FTE positions. In terms of personnel, many are part-time or contractors. Over 50% of the municipal workforce are parks and recreation employees. The FTE allocation has grown only slightly over the past decade, but has been reduced over the past couple of years (2010/2011 reduction of 1.4%).

Our assessment of the current situation and near future for each division is as follows:

Parks Division (60 FTEs – 21%) – is currently stretched beyond capacity; is falling behind in IT and other capital investments and practices; is continually buffeted by public demands as it attempts to shift to new practices; is required to meet many goals in the Municipality's move to environmental and other aspects of sustainability.

- Over the next five years – the Division will need significantly more resources to have the capacity to meet public expectations and OCP (and Master Plan) implementation. Options to shift responsibilities to other departments should be explored.

Recreation Division

Recreation Centres - (179 FTEs – 62%) – at capacity; recent upgrades have assisted delivery of quality and quantity of programs and opportunities.

- Over the next five years – more integration with the Parks Division will assist with their capacity to meet several KSOs (Placemaking, Community Events, etc). Some reduction/consolidation in programming will assist expansion of community development functions.

Community Services (15.5 FTEs – 5%) – at capacity; linkage with not-for-profit groups and expansion of community development function has been increasing their workloads over the past few years.

- Over the next five years – increasing community development policy and program work, as well as front line liaison, will require additional staffing.

Golf Course Division (22 FTEs – 8%) – at capacity; despite recent reports, the Golf Course still plays a marginal role within the Department; it should also be noted that many municipalities are exiting this function.

- Over the next five years – will remain as is in terms of staffing.

Administration (7.4 FTEs – 2.5%) – at capacity; 7.4 FTEs is a pretty lean central administrative unit.

- Over the next five years – several functions will grow (IT and Communications), with overall management numbers increasing slightly.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Balance Capacity and Resources** – Work with internal and external stakeholders to clearly define the balance of capacity, resources and increasing operational demands.
- **Explore FTE Reallocation**- Another option to explore is the reallocation of Department FTEs to meet OCP and Master Plan recommended initiatives.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

One of the OCP's Community Values states *Good financial and regulatory stewardship, consistent with the Official Community Plan's policies.*

Key Strategic Objective #TA-6: Staff Training

Ensure that adequate resources are committed to staff training to ensure that the staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the emerging needs and those areas where the master plan envisages additional activity.

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Additional staff training was identified in focus groups related to a number of issues.

Discussion

Staff training is essential at any time for successful organizational change. This is even more important in an era when a high percentage of the workforce are reaching retirement age. The importance of human resource development and training is stressed in the municipal strategic plan and work will begin in the fall of 2011 to identify key competencies, supply and demand issues across the municipality. However departmental administrators noted that staff training has not been adequately resourced in the Department.

Best Practices and Related Resources

Work will begin in the fall of 2011 to identify key competencies, supply and demand issues across the municipality. Work has begun to gather resources to support this initiative.

Training needs to focus on several objectives:

- Replacement of key staff competencies -- for instance certain maintenance and operations trades/skills will disappear as experienced staff retire.
- Ongoing training of existing staff to meet changing organizational needs -- for instance front-line staff (in all areas) need training to address new programs and equipment.

In addition changing strategic directions such as articulated in this master plan will also require human resource development, although implementation may be more complex and involve liaison with the post secondary system:

- Incompatible credentialization between the health and recreation sectors is a major barrier to closer program integration. This needs to be investigated and an appropriate strategy put in place (there is potential for this to be a broader province-wide initiative in conjunction with BCRPA).
- Many countries have training programs specifically focused on facilitating unstructured play (for example the United Kingdom). If key strategic objective SWB-4 is to be successfully implemented, this training must be created through Victoria's postsecondary institutions. In the short term, some in-service training building on the existing skills of recreation programmers will likely suffice.
- The changing environmental consciousness of the public is placing pressures on staff and one way of addressing these pressures is to increase the competencies of staff.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Staff Training** - Ensure that initiatives include a staff training and development component.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Staff training is a key set of objectives in the Municipal Strategic Plan.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-7: Sustainability Principles

Implement sustainability principles in all aspects of the Parks and Recreation Department services and operations

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Sustainability is one of the guiding principles of the OCP.

Discussion

The adoption of sustainability principles to guide all aspects of municipal operations is a policy of the OCP and the Municipal Strategic Plan. The Department is well on the way to identifying how such a set of principles will impact service delivery, however the full implications of this will take some time to work out, and there will be financial implications.

Best Practices and Related Resources

Few municipalities are doing as good a job as Saanich. Well done!

In addition, the Strategic Plan notes with regard to measuring and reporting on sustainability:
Incorporating standardized indicators in 2011 will enable Saanich to compare Governance, Recreation, Transportation and the Environment with other municipalities and enable Saanich to better report out progress in 2013 towards attaining the community vision.

Some initiatives, which will also assist in reducing GHG emissions will include the following:

- Ensuring all major building additions and renovations are built to LEED Silver level or above.
- Ensuring that all new park facilities and amenities showcase sustainable technology.
- Working with Financial Services to ensure that all capital buildings and equipment are included in calculations related to long term replacement.

The Department needs to ensure that the sustainability indicators reflect all aspects of sustainability – the ‘four pillars’ approach which gives equal weight to environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Sustainability Indicators** -Utilize the indicators from the Strategic Plan to reflect the Department’s activities and contributions to community life.
- **Ensure Funding** - Identify initiatives which will be impacted by the requirement to implement sustainability principles and ensure that adequate funding is allocated.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

All aspects of OCP
Section 4.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-8: Regional Collaboration

Explore regional collaboration in order to deliver the highest quality services in the most effective, efficient and economical manner

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The need for regional collaboration was addressed in the 2001 Master Plan and is still an outstanding issue. The need was noted by many key informants when addressing how Saanich could best meet its program and facility needs.

Discussion

There is discussion in other of these key strategic objectives related to regional collaboration. It is a perennial issue in Greater Victoria. However it should be noted that recreation and park program delivery is one of the most integrated services in the region, and the directors of the various agencies deserve credit for achieving this within an environment where such collaboration is not always well received. Several significant achievements should be noted:

The regional recreation pass links all recreation centres and allows participants to integrate physical activity into their increasingly mobile and 24/7 lives. And the regional LIFE program offers similar opportunities for those living on low incomes across the region. Both have been made possible through the acquisition and use of compatible software across the region, and of course the support of the senior administrators.

However there are other areas where there is potential for collaboration; in some cases, these are already the focus of other key strategic objectives – regional scale facilities, both for arts and for sport, is one case in point. Another area where regional collaboration could be achieved is with environmental education.

Any discussion about regionalism also needs to consider how the region is changing and what it will look like by the end of the decade. One aspect which will have changed is the sense of centrality within the region. Historically, the Downtown of Victoria has been the region's centre. However, this is changing; with greater amounts of housing in the Western Communities and a proposed LRT system which will move people from the Western Communities to Downtown, and from UVic to the Dockyard, the centre of the region will be Uptown, not Downtown. This will change the areas around Uptown; some of this has begun with the major development and rezoning of adjacent lands. However, the parks and recreation system to serve this new area is not yet in place should be considered. Many key resources are to hand in this area: the trail spines are in place and considerable parkland exists close by, such as Swan Lake and Cuthbert Holmes Park. However a closer integration of park and urban planning is required if, by the end of the decade, this area is to be both people-friendly and the heart of the region.

Best Practices and Related Resources

There is more regional collaboration in recreation service planning than in many other service areas. However capital planning poses other issues, and it is necessary to go farther afield for examples; however the Tri-Leisure Centre that was funded and built jointly between the municipalities of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County, west of Edmonton Alberta, would be an interesting model to investigate.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Regional Directors Meetings** - Continue to meet regularly with staff and managers in other parks and recreation departments
- **Additional Regional Initiatives** - Explore the potential for additional regional initiatives (complementing/expanding the LIFE program, regional passes, regional scale facilities, etc).

Links to sections and policies of the OCP
Section 7.3 addresses issues of regional context and collaboration.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-9: Outcomes and Tracking Progress

Identify outcomes and monitor progress

Discussion

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

Key informants noted the need for hard data to measure investments in the sector. It is also a trend to identify key outcomes and indicators.

The recreation and park professionals have historically been excellent providers of qualitative information about the positive benefits of investment in the system. Whether through measures of use or of satisfaction, or more often through anecdotal comments, we know that there are benefits to participation and many people are happy to tell us how pleased they are with our services.

Best Practices and Related Resources

There are a variety of more global indicator systems and, where possible, Saanich should tie into those.

But in this day and age, where government revenues are scarce but critical, and every municipal service can make equal claims for additional funding based on public service, it is even more important to be able to say “judge us on what we produce...and this is what we produce”.

This requires measuring outcomes rather than inputs, and being able to indicate how each measure is related to both the problem and the outcome.

It is also important that these measures are comparable in three continua:

- Across time, so that we can see whether our investments are impacting the problems.
- Across jurisdictions, so we can say how our performance compares with our peer agencies, with both assisting in assessing the effectiveness of policies and program approaches.
- Between neighbourhoods, so that we can determine how to adjust resource allocations to ensure equity.

The need for cross-jurisdictional measures also makes linking to one or more of the institutional performance measure systems more important. These are data gathering exercises managed by UBCM/FCM or the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, which is a recently established national advisory centre.

Performance measures and indicators for each KSO are included as appendix A of this Master Plan but further work should be conducted by the Department and municipality, with a view to identifying a set of key quantitative measures, and then using them track progress and report to Council and public on a regular basis.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Annual Reporting** - Report to Council and the public through the annual Strategic Planning process.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

Section 7.2 addresses Indicators.

Key Strategic Objective #TA-10: Marketing and Social Media

Continue to review Departmental marketing activities and ensure linkage with new technologies and social media

Rationale and Links to our Research, Studies, Survey Results

The Active Living Guide is the main tool that residents use to find out about programs and services. Web-based tools, such as the website, the on-line version of the Active living Guide, and social marketing tools are used by between a third and a half of residents, with the percentage highest among youth, and lowest among seniors.

Discussion

With over 100,000 residents and over 2million 'interactions' of one kind or another with those residents and others in the region, the municipality needs to ensure that its channels of communication with residents are totally in tune with both residents preferences and with changing means of interaction.

Best Practices and Related Resources

For an idea of how these new social media sites are evolving, see <http://www.meetup.com/cities/ca/bc/victoria/>

Over the last ten years, the Department has moved with the times and gradually added various web-based means of communication to the paper-based means: the website has grown, the Active living Guide is now available in an online version allowing direct registration for all programs. More recently, a Facebook presence has been established and is growing in usage and popularity.

When asked in the survey, in a question that asked them to select as many means of communication as they wished, most respondents noted three or more vehicles, with the Active Living Guide being the most frequently noted. Focus groups also noted how people use these various means in combination, with it being common for people to prefer to find programs in the paper version but to book on-line.

Increasingly therefore, as the younger generation's approaches to technology become more the mainstream, and the whole population becomes more familiar with them, the balance of non-web to web based communications will shift...and the Department will need to keep up with these shifts.

However the challenge is knowing where this aspect of the world is going, as the world of social media is changing rapidly. The only sensible course of action is to stay alert and flexible.

However there is a bigger question which lurks behind this one, and that is whether changes in social media are fundamentally changing how people manage their recreation and leisure activities. Certainly activities and programs that once needed to be planned ahead, are now increasingly organized 'on the fly' as smart phone technologies and social media converge. Will this change the demand for recreation programs, or the how people approach the organization of their leisure time? Social media sites like Meetup.com are starting this process, and it is likely to impact programming focused on young children long before it hits seniors programming.

Once again, the only course of action is to stay abreast of the trends and stay on top of the wave.

Recommended Initiatives

- **Monitor Social Media Opportunities** - Establish a working group to meet regularly to discuss and explore marketing, communications and technology issues.
- **Public Relations Strategy** - Develop a Departmental/District wide, comprehensive and strategic approach to public relations, ensuring consistent messaging.
- **Public Participation** - Clarify and expand District public participation processes and provide training and support for staff who are involved in communication with the public
- **Website** - Update and expand the Department's web site and implement a web site management plan to ensure information is clear, complete, easily accessible, fresh and engaging, and updated in a timely fashion. Introduce social media technologies to modernize community connections.
- **Document library** - Establish a web based comprehensive document library and archive.
- **Active Living Guide** – monitor use of online and paper versions to ensure wide availability is maintained.

Links to sections and policies of the OCP

A key community value (5.2) is *Effective access to information and communication between the Municipality and residents.*