

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

MASTER PLAN

Professional Environmental
Recreation Consultants Ltd.

Lanarc Consultants Ltd.

February 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IT IS A PLEASURE TO PRESENT the final version of the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

The document was prepared by Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd., in cooperation with Lanarc Consulting Ltd.

The consultants would like to express appreciation to the many interested residents and organizations who participated in the planning process, as well as the members of the Project Advisory Committee, which was representative of the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and staff. This group met with the consultants on several occasions, and provided valuable insights and suggestions related to the Plan's direction and recommendations.

We trust that the recommendations accurately reflect the needs of the community, and that the implementation of the Plan will ensure the effective delivery of leisure service in the City.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NANAIMO PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE Master Plan was undertaken to identify current and future requirements related to the provision of leisure services in the City.

METHODOLOGY

The planning process involved a number of steps, including a review of recent planning studies, identification of existing services, input from the general public and community organizations and a review of general trends related to the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services.

Following the completion of the data collection phase of the project, the consultants met with representatives of the City, in order to clearly identify issues and priorities prior to completion of the draft and final report. A number of key steps in the planning process are described below.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement was a critical part of the planning process and was encouraged wherever possible. Specific ways in which local residents were invited to participate included:

- **Public Survey:** A mail-out / mail-return survey of 3,000 City households was administered in the spring of 2004. The purpose of the survey was to determine the attitudes and opinions of residents regarding parks, recreation and culture services.
- **Public Meetings:** The public was invited to attend information meetings in three geographical areas of the City, to provide input into the planning process, and to offer suggestions related to future parks, recreation and cultural services. Comments and suggestions gathered during these events were considered by the consultants, and incorporated into the document as appropriate.
- **Stakeholder Input:** In discussion with the client, the consultants identified a number of organizations and individuals who make use of the City facilities and services, and facilitated information gathering sessions related to the need for new and improved facilities. The results of these sessions confirmed many of the needs that had been expressed in discussions with stakeholders, as well as the results of the public survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PLAN

The Plan is organized as follows:

- The **Introduction**, which outlines the purpose and scope of the report, as well as a number of trends affecting the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural services and an overview of the “benefits of parks and recreation” which are used by many leisure service agencies in the promotion and marketing of various services.
- The **Study Methodology**, which provides an overview of each of the steps included in the planning process.
- The **Key Findings**, which includes the results of a planning workshop conducted early in the planning process with the Commission, the detailed results of the public survey, and a summary of input from various community organizations.
- Information and recommendations related to current and future **Recreation and Culture Facilities**.
- Information and recommendations related to **Service Delivery**.
- Information and recommendations related to current and future **Parks and Open Space** requirements.

The intent of the draft report is to ensure that the client and local residents have an opportunity to review the recommendations and to ensure that they are based on accurate and complete information.

1. INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF NANAIMO retained the consulting team of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. and Lanarc Consulting Ltd. in the spring of 2004 to complete a 10 year Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The plan is expected to guide City Council with the development of facilities, parks and open spaces and the delivery of services that best meet the needs of the community.

More specifically, the project objectives included:

- Identification and evaluation of community attitudes toward current services and facilities.
- Identification and evaluation of how City services and facilities work with other community agencies and businesses.
- Identification and evaluation of emerging trends and needs for Parks, Recreation and Culture facilities and services in the community.
- Preparation of a 10 Year Facility Development Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture.
- Development of service delivery strategies to meet the needs of the community for the next 10 years.

In order to achieve the project objectives, the study was divided into three phases and a number of specific activities. These are outlined in FIGURE ONE on page 3 and described in greater detail in Chapter Three.

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As with other government services, the evolution of parks, recreation and cultural services in Nanaimo has been based on the preparation of several planning documents. The most relevant of these were reviewed by the consultants and are listed below.

- City of Nanaimo 2004 – 2008 Financial Plan; prepared by the City of Nanaimo Finance Department (2004)
- Social Development Strategy for Nanaimo; prepared by the City of Nanaimo Social Development Strategy Steering Committee (2004)



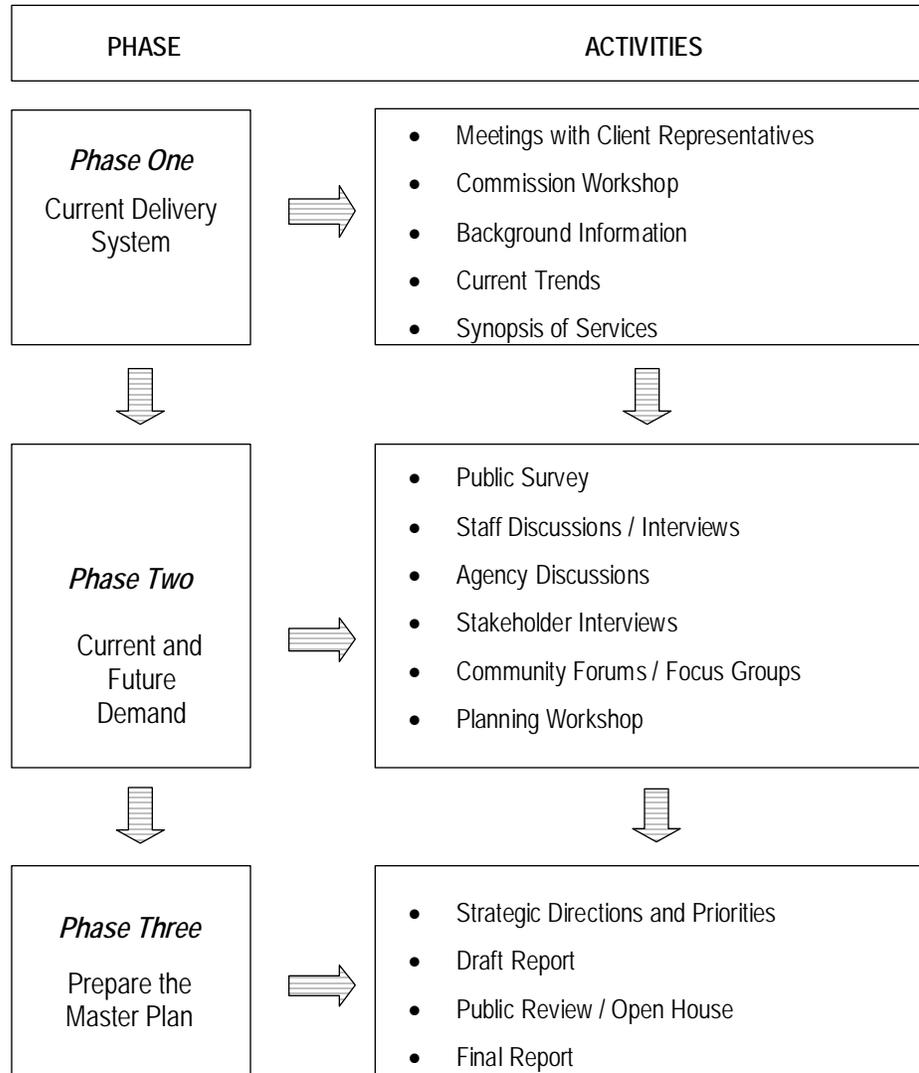
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- Nanaimo Now! Image and Reputation Plan; prepared by Nanaimo Now! (2003)
- City of Nanaimo Trail Implementation Plan; prepared by the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (2002)
- Nanaimo Cultural Strategy – A Cultural Strategy for Nanaimo; prepared by the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (2001)
- Progress Nanaimo: Monitoring Achievements of Plan Nanaimo Goals; prepared by the Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee (1998)
- City of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan; prepared by Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (1993 / 1994)

It is important to note that the 1993 / 1994 Master Plan contained a number of recommendations related to the provision of recreation and cultural facilities, parks and open space, recreation services and administration.



FIGURE ONE
PROJECT PHASES AND ACTIVITIES



Prior to the initiation of the current Master Plan study, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department prepared a status report regarding each of the recommendations included in this document, along with an explanation related to the implementation of each



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recommendation. This information was very useful in the completion of the current document. A copy of the report is included in Appendix One of the report.

1.3 TRENDS AFFECTING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

Over the years, PERC has actively engaged in information gathering related to trends in the delivery of parks and recreation services. Based on current information, the following trends are expected to impact the delivery of services in Nanaimo during the next decade and beyond.

1.3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population Growth:** As indicated in Chapter Two, the population of Nanaimo will continue to increase and put pressure on existing leisure services and result in greater demand for more facilities and leisure opportunities.
- **Aging Population:** The City's aging population has been perhaps the most stated planning trend over the past decade. The number and proportion of older people in Nanaimo and across the province will continue to increase. With age, both the preferences and the capability of the recreation participant to engage in certain activities will change.

The next decade of retirees will be more active than previous generations, and at the same time will be driven by three factors: (1) the anticipation that the new retiree will be desirous of continuing with current levels of activity, (2) the desire to "postpone" aging, and (3) the desire to receive the health benefits of active living. Interestingly, many in this new generation of retirees are unlikely to want to be accommodated by seniors centres, but will prefer to remain integrated in mainstream centres and programs.

- **Access:** The gap between those who have resources and those who do not is polarizing Canadian communities. Those who lack resources are becoming increasingly marginalized and less able to access recreation services.

On the "have" side of the equation, approximately 60% of wealth is controlled by those who are over 50 years of age – and this is increasing dramatically. Local parks and recreation agencies, which in many instances have offered discounts to seniors have recently developed strategies to change this pattern of subsidizing people who are most able to pay for services. The trend is to shift access benefits



from the new cohort of seniors with healthy discretionary incomes to the disadvantaged groups with greater need for the access discount.

1.3.2 ACTIVITY CHOICES

- **Individualism:** Values have shifted and have become more diverse, resulting in increased demands for meeting the needs of individuals in addition to new market segments. People are looking for services that meet their individual needs, that can be accessed any time of the day or week, that are in many cases unstructured and involve less time and commitment.

Within this individualism, the social values of Canadians are changing. The pursuit of pleasure and stimulation of the senses has become a significant factor in leisure program development. The private sector, in particular, understands the importance of selling small indulgences. The delivery of programs and services in Nanaimo, particularly to adults, needs to address these factors through design of program environments, skill and style of instructors, and the type of marketing that resonates with and attracts members.

- **Search for Meaning:** The current limitations to upward mobility created by the large numbers of relatively young (45 – 55 years) middle to upper level professionals / business owners and managers, has shaped the perspectives of younger people in the workforce. In the past decade, there has been a shift to achieving self-satisfaction outside of work, particularly in leisure and recreation.

Although this 45 – 55 year cohort is moving into retirement in the next decade (and thus removing themselves as a barrier to upward mobility), the habits of the younger population are predicted to continue. Leisure services will become an increasing focal point for many young adults for life meaning, versus extended hours of work. On the other extreme, many of the “work-too-hard” professionals are also reflecting on the meaning of their focus and looking for increased leisure.

Both of these social realities are behind the eco-tourism and environmental awareness movement, along with extreme activities and adventure challenges.

People are looking for meaning in their lives and are searching for answers by re-connecting with nature or facing extreme leisure



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challenges, such as climbing a mountain or running a triathlon. Again, Nanaimo recreation programs will need to address this trend.

- **Shift from Structured to Unstructured Activity:** Team sports are generally in decline throughout Canada, although still strong in many communities. Twice as many Canadians own in-line skates than ice skates – applied to use on trails and leisure on the individual's schedule, rather than the arena schedule.
- **Lifestyle Promotion:** Increased importance is being placed on the value of participation in leisure and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle and as a way to prevent disease and reduce health care costs. If efforts to change behaviour and promote greater participation are successful, there will be increased demand for programs to support this trend to more active lifestyles.
- **Leisure Habits in Children and Youth:** While the fitness and activity behaviour of adults in British Columbia is improving (as measured by time spent in active recreation (BC has the highest level in Canada), the level of physically active leisure by our children and youth, especially girls, is decreasing dramatically – 50% in a decade. In 1998, one-third of Canadian children did not have the minimum amount of activity required to sustain basic health. In 2000, two-thirds did not have sufficient activity for basic health.

In looking at youth, there is a trend of diversity of values into distinct segments of youth culture. One leisure program or facility (e.g. a skateboard park), or approach by a youth worker, does not meet everyone's needs.

- **Activity Trends:** Low cost, spontaneous, individual and less structured activities are becoming more popular. People are looking for experiences. As noted above, younger people will look for extreme activities and the new generation of older people will seek safer versions of adventure activities. Participation in physical activities will continue to grow, although there will be a switch to less strenuous activities by aging baby boomers. Access to safe and convenient facilities will be an important factor in increasing activity levels.

1.3.3 GOVERNMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **Service Demands:** Throughout British Columbia, local Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are an integral part of social service delivery, responding to homelessness, drug use, child care



needs, and a myriad of community-based social issues traditionally responded to by Provincially sponsored programs. In many communities, recreation personnel are working more closely with social service personnel in responding to these needs, the result being a need for new and different skills, different program and service design, and the re-allocation of resources. It is likely that this trend will continue.

Funding issues aside, however, leisure is becoming more widely recognized as a tool for social change. Its potential for improving the quality of life for local citizens is significant. There is a growing trend to advocate the use of leisure programs and services to reduce crime, to reduce risk factors for youth at risk and to break down ethnic divisions and create better understanding between different cultures.

- **Local Finances:** Throughout British Columbia, budget pressures have resulted in reduced funding for programs, facilities and maintenance. At the same time, it is frequently expected that increases in labour and other costs will be absorbed and service levels will not be decreased ... and equally important, the demand for parks, recreation and culture services is increasing.
- **Relationships and Partnership Building:** There is a trend around the province toward an increase in serving the leisure needs of a diverse community through a collaborative approach. It is based on the premise that the understanding of various groups and individuals and working together will result in positive outcomes. Alternate service delivery, including partnerships, contracting and privatization have become a greater part of the public dialogue as community services strive to meet the community needs within budgetary constraints.
- **Volunteerism:** Volunteers continue to be important for the leisure sector. There is a distressing Canadian trend, however, related to a decrease in volunteerism. In a recent issue of PROfile, the 2000 Statistics Canada survey on volunteerism reported a dramatic decline in volunteer hours in Canada. From 1997 to 2000, Canada lost one million volunteers and 53 million volunteer hours.

The retirement of the baby boomers may result in a greater number of available volunteers – but while volunteers over the age of 65 contribute the greatest number of hours, they have the lowest rate of volunteerism. The trend to attract and keep volunteers, vital to leisure and community development, is highly related to the quality of the volunteer management culture within a Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.



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1.3.4 FACILITY FACTORS

- **Facility Trends:** Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities are changing in several key areas:

Community leisure facilities are taking on a greater role in attracting tourism and economic development. In particular, games and tournaments, cultural events, and heritage and agricultural activities are regarded as a means for economic growth and development. In fact, larger events have the benefit of providing the impetus and funding for facility construction and renovation.

Multi-purpose facilities are becoming more popular. They are designed to provide more options for users, to provide access to the broadest range of customers, and to serve all ages and both genders. Multi-purpose facilities are often designed to meet the activity trends that have been emerging – individual, less competitive, more spontaneous and more flexible.



Public facilities of all types are becoming community places – aesthetically pleasing, quality indoor environments – that meet a number of community needs.

Partnerships are becoming essential to community facilities, ranging from the sharing of capital costs to the operation of entire facilities, to program operation, to sponsorship, to contracting of food services. Potential partners may be private businesses, non-profit organizations,



special interest groups and societies established specifically to manage the partnership.

A growing concern about the environment and conservation will result in increased use of passive parks and natural areas. This has resulted in an increase in interest and action by residents related to the need for preserving existing green space and more citizen interest in green space preservation.

Increasingly, management techniques have to be developed and implemented that emphasize green space preservation and nature-based recreation.

- **Ability to Respond to Demand**

Government's ability to respond to changing leisure needs may be affected by fluctuations in economic growth, increasing costs for facilities, the need to address current facility lifestyle maintenance and concerns over increased taxation. This may require policy changes to compensate for higher costs. As developed above, it will also require a continued emphasis on marketing leisure services to ensure high levels of participation in order that the products and services continue to meet user needs.

1.4 BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

In the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan completed in 1994, PERC mentioned that in recent years, a great deal of consideration and research has been focused on identifying meaningful benefits as a result of providing parks, recreation and culture spaces, facilities and programs.

Initial work, in this regard, was undertaken by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, and resulted in the eight statements listed below which outline a number of benefits related to parks and recreation services.

- Recreation and active living are essential to personal health – a key determinant of health status.
- Recreation is a key to balanced human development – helping Canadians reach their potential.
- Recreation and parks are essential to the quality of life.
- Recreation reduces self-destructive and anti-social behaviour.



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- Recreation and parks build strong families and healthy communities.
- Recreation reduces health care, social service and police / justice costs.
- Recreation and parks are significant economic generators in each community.
- Parks, open space and natural areas are essential to ecological survival.

In fact, parks, recreation and culture plays a critical role in the building of healthy communities in British Columbia. These services enhance the health and well-being of BC residents, contribute to the local economy and protect the environment.

An increasing number of Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments are making use of “benefits messages” in their marketing materials, and the public is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of parks and recreation services in building strong and vital communities.

1.5 NANAIMO DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Nanaimo is the second largest municipality on Vancouver Island with a projected 2004 population of 77,107. It covers 88.19 square kilometers, and while it makes up only 4.3% of the total land area of the Nanaimo Regional District, it includes 57.5% of the Regional District’s population of 127,016. Census Tract data for the City from 1986-2001 are found in FIGURE TWO.

FIGURE TWO
POPULATION GROWTH LEVELS FOR NANAIMO SINCE 1986

Census Year	Population	Five Year % Change
1986	49,029	4.2 % (from 1981)
1991	60,130	22.6%
1996	70,130	16.6%
2001	73,000	4.1%

Source: Statistics Canada

Nanaimo experienced very rapid growth levels between 1986 and 1996 when the average annual growth rate was 4.3%. Population growth in Nanaimo is dependent upon immigration from other parts of BC (60%), other provinces (32%), and other countries (8%). Growth slowed dramatically between 1996-2001 to .8% a year. While Nanaimo continued



to have an overall positive inflow of migrants during this period, it did experience the first major net inter-provincial out-migration between 1997 and 1999; the greatest loss was in 18-24 age category as young people followed jobs to Alberta and other provinces. This outflow to other provinces turned around in 2000. FIGURE THREE shows the age distributions for Nanaimo, the Regional District, BC, and Canada.

**FIGURE THREE
AGE DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE IN 2001 CENSUS**

Age Range	Nanaimo	Nanaimo RD	BC	Canada
<5	4.9	4.5	5.3	5.7
5-9	6.0	5.8	6.2	6.6
10-14	6.6	6.5	6.6	6.8
15-19	7.2	6.7	6.9	6.8
20-24	6.0	4.8	6.2	6.5
25-34	11.4	9.8	13.3	13.3
35-44	15.3	14.8	16.8	17.0
45-54	15.4	15.6	15.3	14.7
55-64	10.2	12.0	9.7	9.6
65+	16.8	19.5	13.8	13.0
Average Age	39.3	41.5	37.8	37.0

Source: Statistics Canada

The population in Nanaimo is slightly older than those of British Columbia and Canada, but is younger than that of the Regional District. The most significant differences between Nanaimo, BC and the rest of Canada are for those between 25 and 44 and for those 65 and older. This reflects the loss of young people to other provinces between 1997 and 1999, as well as the attractiveness of Nanaimo as a place to retire.



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1.5.1 OTHER POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

- **Households:** The average household size in Nanaimo is 2.3 persons, which is slightly less than the 2.5 person average for British Columbia. The breakdown for the 30,670 households in 2001 is as follows:

1 Person	29%
2 Persons	37%
3 Persons	14%
4 – 5 Persons	18%
6+ Persons	2%

- **Ethno-cultural Background:** Nanaimo is a fairly diverse community with a rich and long heritage of many cultures. Of the 71,805 residents who responded to Census questions of ethnicity, 3,380 or 4.7% of residents indicated they were of Aboriginal Identity Origin. A further 4,885 or 6.9% were from visible minorities. The four largest visible minority groups were:

South Asian	1,265 or 1.76%
Chinese	1,065 or 1.48%
Southeast Asian	1,050 or 1.46%
Japanese	385 or .54%

While many of the South Asian and Southeast Asian residents are fairly recent immigrants, the Chinese and Japanese communities have played a long and significant role in Nanaimo's history and heritage.



- **Income Levels:** At \$47,973, the average Year 2000 household income in Nanaimo was lower than that for British Columbia (\$57,593) and Canada (\$58,360). This is attributable to a number of factors: there are more pensioners and people living alone; more residents are on BC Income Assistance and Employment Assistance (8.1% as opposed to 5.1% for the Province); and, there are relatively fewer households with higher incomes over \$100,000, driving the average down.

There are also geographical differences in income distribution within the City. Average personal incomes in the two postal code areas in the North, (V9T and V9V), are respectively 6.7% and 17% higher than BC average, while incomes in the Central area (V9S) and South area (V9R) are 16% and 23.4% lower than BC's.

1.5.2 POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

There are a number of positive indicators that the rate of population growth in Nanaimo is increasing again, including a large number of development permit applications for both single family and multi-unit projects. The majority of newcomers to Nanaimo are between 45 and 64.

The annual growth rate is expected to climb from .8% in 2001 to 1.8% by 2011 and then stabilize to approximately 1.5 to 1.6% by 2016. FIGURE FOUR on page 14 shows the population projections and median ages for the period of 2004-2016. The projections include a 3.45% undercount estimated for the 2001 Census date.



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FIGURE FOUR
POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Year	Population	Median Age
2002	76,050	40.7
2004	77,107	41.6
2006	78,874	42.3
2008	81,519	42.6
2010	84,447	42.7
2012	87,358	42.9
2014	90,208	43.1
2016	93,058	43.1

Source: BC Statistics

In the 2001 Census, the median age in Nanaimo was 40.4, which was slightly older than BC at 38.4 and Canada at 37.6, but lower than the Nanaimo Regional District at 41.4. FIGURE FIVE on page 15 examines the breakdowns in age groups for the period of 2002 to 2016.



**FIGURE FIVE
AGE BREAKDOWN FROM 2002 TO 2016**

Year	0 – 17	18 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 +
2002	15,591	7,015	20,385	20,379	12,330
2004	15,366	7,328	20,109	21,585	12,719
2006	15,104	7,426	20,341	22,790	13,212
2008	15,174	7,406	21,109	24,025	13,805
2010	15,336	7,446	22,057	25,206	14,403
2012	15,567	7,524	23,141	25,793	15,332
2014	15,881	7,581	24,097	26,353	16,296
2016	16,553	7,517	25,012	26,857	17,372

Source BC Statistics in Nanaimo Community Profile

David Foot, the author of *Boom, Bust & Echo 2000*, based his book upon the impact that changing demographic patterns would have on Canadian society and institutions. He identified a number of age cohorts based on major increases or declines in the number of births in Canada. These cohorts, based on years of birth, were: The Baby Boom, 1947-1966; the Bust Generation, 1967-1979; the Baby Boom Echo, 1980-1995; and the Millennium Busters, 1996-2010.

FIGURE FIVE shows that population shifts in Nanaimo are fairly consistent with the patterns Foot identified. There will be a drop in the number of elementary school-aged children (the Millennium Busters) in the next few years, and a number of elementary schools will be considered for closure. In fact, the number in the 17 and under age category will decline considerably in the next decade and will not rebound to the 2002 level until 2015. This drop will also suppress growth in the now healthy secondary school population as these children age. While there are a number of factors that affect participation levels in various sports, the decline in the number of young people should emphasize caution, for example, in adding more than one new arena in the near future.

The highest growth rates over this period will be 41% for those 65 and over, 32% for those aged 45-64, and 23% for those aged 25-44. As more Baby Boomers reach retirement age, they are more likely to continue to use mainstream facilities than to



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choose seniors centers. Increases in day-time uses of facilities can be anticipated as people retire. Overall, more adults are engaging in physical activities for health and personal benefits; this will place increasing demands on both indoor fitness facilities and active transportation opportunities to walk and cycle. Baby Boomers are also showing increased interest in cultural and outdoor pursuits.

Areas of Growth: Residential construction activity has steadily increased since 2000. The residential building permits issues over the last four years are:

2000	217
2001	219
2002	365
2003	569

The major development areas have been in the North, especially the northwest corner, and in the Chase River area in the South.

Recently, the number of development permit applications has risen dramatically. While the 900-1,000 applications don't necessarily translate into actual building permits, the signs of increased activity are clearly there. The applications are for a mixture of single family and multi-unit development. The two largest multi-unit projects are for two major condo projects of 157 and 90 units in the downtown area. If constructed, they will attract owners from a number of areas, including retirees from the Lower Mainland. The infusion of new residents into the downtown will support further revitalization and development in the core. Other future development areas will be infill and allowed cluster housing in steep slope areas in the North, and infill in the Central and South areas, with some potential conversion of some A2 (non ALR) lands to single family.

1.5.3 IMPLICATIONS FROM DEMOGRAPHICS

- There are indications of increased growth in Nanaimo between 2004 and 2016, with the greatest growth occurring for those 65 and older (41%) and those aged 45-64 (32%). Facilities in Nanaimo should anticipate additional use levels, especially during daytime hours as more people have flexible leisure time-patterns due to retirement and/or self-employment.
- The reduction of the number of children 17 and under over the next few years will likely lead to some elementary school closures. The City should meet with the School District to examine options and impacts.
- The numbers of school aged children will not reach 2002 levels until 2014/2015 unless greater numbers of young families than expected



move to Nanaimo. Care must be taken as new facilities and services are considered to address the City's changing demographics.

- The average household income level in South Nanaimo is considerably lower than in North Nanaimo. The Department should review its policies and services to ensure that access to public services is readily available in this area.
- The growth that will occur in the North reinforces the need to construct the Oliver Road facility. Growth patterns in the Central and South areas need to be monitored to ensure that quality facilities are available to a growing population, either through upgrades and additions to existing facilities such as the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and Bowen Park, or a new facility in the South when warranted by growth.



2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

THE PREPARATION OF THE MASTER PLAN involved a considerable amount of data collection, including the administration of a public survey, interviews with a number of organizations in the community, an inventory of recreation and culture facilities and programs and an analysis of current services.

The following specific steps were undertaken.

2.1 MEETINGS WITH THE CLIENT

The consultants met on several occasions with the Project Steering Committee and Parks, Recreation and Culture staff throughout the planning process. These meetings were invaluable in clarifying the objectives of the study, in ensuring that the public and stakeholders were able to be active participants in the process and in clarifying issues that arose as the study evolved.

2.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WORKSHOP

Early in the study, the consultants facilitated a planning workshop with members of the Project Steering Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission. During the workshop, the discussion focused on the project methodology, goals and objectives, and current priorities, as well as an overall rationale for the delivery of services.

2.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The participation of Nanaimo residents was critical to the success of the planning process. The community was provided with several opportunities for involvement.

2.3.1 PUBLIC SURVEY

A mail out / mail return survey of 3,000 Nanaimo residents was conducted in order to determine attitudes about parks, recreation and culture services, the need for new or improved facilities, limitations to participation and willingness to pay additional taxes in order to support new or improved amenities. The methodology involved the following steps.



- A comprehensive list of residents and addresses was provided by Dominion Directory
- The sample of 3,000 residents was randomly selected from the database
- The questionnaire was prepared in consultation with the Project Steering Committee
- The survey was mailed to the resident sample, along with a personal letter and self-addressed return envelope
- A reminder notice was sent as a follow-up to those who had not responded to the initial mailing

A total of 1,237 completed surveys were returned. This response represents a 95% confidence level, +/- 4.8%. In other words, if all of the residents of Nanaimo were contacted, the results of that survey would be within 4.8 percentage points of the results of this one, 19 times out of 20. The results of the survey are discussed in later sections of the report and detailed information is included in Appendix Two.

2.3.2 MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS / INTEREST GROUPS

Meetings were conducted with a large number of community organizations, representatives of special interest groups and City staff. Information gathered from these discussions included a description of the services offered by local organizations, and problems the groups currently perceive that affect their ability to achieve their objectives. A listing of the organizations is included in Appendix Three.

2.3.3 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The general public was invited to attend meetings with the consultants and discuss the overall process and findings. Meetings were held in three geographical locations, and focused on areas in which participants feel that new or improved facilities and services are required.

2.4 INVENTORY OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The existing inventory of parks, recreation and cultural facilities and services was undertaken in cooperation with City staff.



STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.5 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

The research component of the study resulted in the identification of a number of issues and concerns related to the provision of parks, recreation and cultural services. The issues were reviewed with the Project Steering Committee and elected officials during a meeting in October, and in subsequent meetings with staff. At that time, it was determined that the report would focus on the following areas.

- Recreation and Culture Facilities
- Parks and Open Space
- Service Delivery

An overview of key findings and an analysis of each issue was also undertaken. This was done in consultation with staff and incorporated data from the surveys, interviews and workshops.

Finally, recommendations were formulated for each issue, along with the preparation of a proposed timeline for implementation.

2.6 DRAFT AND FINAL REPORT

Following the review of issues that had been identified during the research phase of the study, the consultants prepared a draft version of the report for discussion with the Steering Committee and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. The draft was presented to the general public in early 2005, following which, a number of adjustments were made.



3. KEY FINDINGS

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SUMMARIZES the results of several of the key steps undertaken during the data collection phase of the study. This information was used by the consultants in addressing the issues that are discussed in the remaining chapters of the report.

3.1 RATIONALE FOR DELIVERY OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

The consultants facilitated a workshop with the Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and senior staff that outlined a framework for decision making that can be applied to a variety of planning and budgeting processes. It consists of a Mandate, a commitment to a benefits based approach in the delivery of services, a series of benefits that would act as goals and objectives and a process for using them on an ongoing basis to support future decision making.

3.1.1 MANDATE

During the workshop, the following mandate was identified: City Council will use public leisure services as a vehicle for achieving certain socially worthwhile goals and objectives, where such achievement clearly results in indirect benefit to all citizens.

3.1.2 THE BENEFITS BASED APPROACH

The benefits based approach recognizes that public goods are focused on indirect benefit to all citizens rather than the direct benefit to users of services. In other words, a City of Nanaimo public leisure service, in addition to providing some direct benefit to users, must clearly demonstrate that there is some indirect benefit to the entire community, even if some community members haven't used the service.

This indirect benefit to all citizens, from which they cannot escape, is sometimes called "public good" and justifies public sector involvement in the delivery of the service, if such involvement is needed in order to ensure the good. In this approach, decisions are focused on achieving the greatest amount of public good or indirect benefit at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.



KEY FINDINGS

3.1.3 THE BENEFITS

Workshop participants agreed on two categories of benefits which could be labeled as goals. They are as follows:

- **To use leisure services to foster a sense of community identity, spirit and pride**

Publicly sponsored parks, recreation and culture services should be used as a vehicle to connect local citizens more positively to their community and enhance their sense of comfort with it. When such initiatives require tax support, it will be considered in terms of the amount of public good created in relation to the cost to the taxpayers. The success of such initiatives will clearly benefit all citizens.

It should be noted that “community” is a concept that exists on a variety of levels. One’s community can be the neighbourhood or region of residence, or it can be a community of interest that does not have geographic boundaries.

- **To use leisure services to foster growth of individuals to reach their full potential**

Publicly sponsored parks, recreation and culture services can help individuals to grow physically, emotionally, morally and creatively. Where tax support is needed to ensure such success, it will be considered within the cost / benefit framework referred to above. Healthier, more responsible citizens will be better contributors to community life, better leaders in the community, will require less social service, health service and justice service, and therefore, there is clear benefit to the entire community.



3.1.4 SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Commission workshop participants also reviewed a number of service objectives that are consistent with the two benefits described above.

All publicly sponsored parks, recreation and culture initiatives directed toward achieving the two goals could be categorized under one or more of these objectives, or support other initiatives that do. There are both direct and indirect benefits. They contribute to the public good, economically, environmentally, personally and socially.

The goals and service objectives are summarized in FIGURE SIX on page 24, and presented in greater detail in APPENDIX FOUR.



KEY FINDINGS

FIGURE SIX
COMMISSION WORKSHOP – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOALS	SERVICE OBJECTIVES
To foster a sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage special events / festivals • Support local groups • Facilitate spectator experiences at sporting events • Facilitate spectator experiences at cultural events • Facilitate opportunities for social interaction • Protect natural resources • Beautify the community • Support family-oriented leisure opportunities • Integrate generations and sub-groups
To foster individual citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster fitness and overall well-being • Foster pre-school opportunities • Foster basic skill development for school age children • Foster advanced skill development for school age children • Foster social/leadership opportunities for teens • Foster basic skill development for adults • Foster advanced skill development for adults • Foster leisure opportunities for seniors • Interpret the environment • Foster reflection and escape • Educate individuals about leisure opportunities and the use of leisure time • Foster communication regarding leisure opportunities • Foster volunteerism



3.1.5 USING THE BENEFITS BASED APPROACH

It is suggested that each year, staff should prepare an outline of goals and objectives for discussion, along with a subjective evaluation of the extent to which each has been met during the previous twelve months. The Commission and staff, collectively, could then determine if there is a need to provide more or less resources to each during the following year.

An exercise similar to that facilitated by the consultants could be followed in order to determine specific priorities.

A final step in this process would be to determine means of ensuring that the highest ranked priorities are achieved. In this regard, the Commission might brainstorm new ideas for achieving a specific objective, prioritize them, and implement only those that are the most cost effective. At the end of the year, the evaluation process would either reveal success or lack thereof in achieving a specific objective.

3.2 PUBLIC SURVEY

As noted earlier, a survey of the general public was conducted to gather information regarding residents' needs, concerns, opinions and behaviour related to current and future parks and recreation services and facilities.

The following information provides an overview of the survey results.

3.2.1 THE RESPONDENTS

The survey included four demographic questions – gender, age, type of household and area of residence.

- 50.5% of the respondents were male, and 49.5% were female
- The age breakdown of the respondents indicated that 18% were 39 years of age or younger, 41% were between the age of 40 and 59, and 40% were 60 years of age or older.
- 32% of the respondents live in postal codes beginning with V9R, 20% in V9S, 31% in V9T, 14% in V9V and 3% V9X.
- 28% of the households surveyed are comprised of one or more single adults, 42% represent couples with no dependent children, 24% were



KEY FINDINGS

couples with dependent children, and 5% were single parents with dependent children.

3.2.2 BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

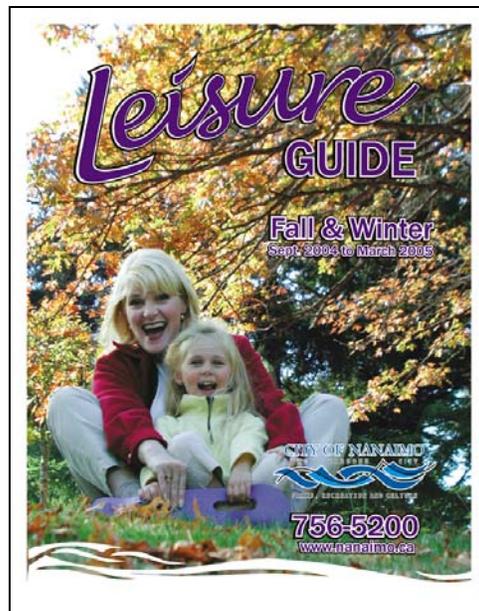
Sixty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they feel their **household** benefits from parks, recreation and cultural services in Nanaimo. Only 11% feel that they receive limited benefits.

A much larger number of respondents -- 89% -- indicated that parks and recreation services benefit the **community** somewhat to a great deal.

These results show a strong affinity to the notion of indirect benefits or public goods derived from public leisure services.

3.2.3 AWARENESS OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

As indicated in FIGURE SEVEN on page 27, the Leisure Guide and local newspaper are the most common means of learning about Parks, Recreation and Culture Department services. The percentage of respondents who learn about leisure opportunities from the Leisure Guide is significantly higher than in most communities.



**FIGURE SEVEN
LEARN ABOUT DEPARTMENT SERVICES**

Information / Publicity	Percent
Leisure guide	81%
Newspaper	64%
Word of mouth	40%
Posters / Flyers	19%
Limited Info	13%
Radio	13%
School Notices	8%
City Website	7%

3.2.4 LIMITS TO HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION

FIGURE EIGHT provides an overview of respondents' limitations in terms of participating in leisure activities. The only significant limitation to household participation is the cost / fees for access. The one in four households that felt cost was a barrier to participation is of some concern.

**FIGURE EIGHT
LIMITS TO HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION**

Limitations	Percent
Little / No limits	54%
Cost / Fees	25%
Time / Schedule	17%
Lack of Info	12%
Location of Facilities	12%
Lack of Facilities	9%
Transportation	6%
Lack of Childcare	2%
Registration Process	2%



KEY FINDINGS

3.2.5 SATISFACTION WITH NUMBER OF FACILITIES

As indicated in FIGURE NINE, satisfaction levels with the number of existing facilities are quite high. It would appear that respondents are most satisfied with the facilities in which Nanaimo has invested most significantly in the recent past. While the number of arenas scored highest in terms of dissatisfaction, it is still only about one in four respondents, with close to twice as many satisfied than dissatisfied.

FIGURE NINE
SATISFACTION WITH NUMBER OF FACILITIES

Facility	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Performing Arts	60%	33%	7%
Rehearsal	33%	55%	12%
Gymnasiums	42%	44%	14%
Museums	42%	37%	21%
Arts Centres	43%	43%	14%
Arenas	46%	27%	27%
Pools	68%	22%	10%
Fitness Centres	59%	31%	10%
Community Centres	47%	39%	14%
Art Galleries	46%	39%	15%



3.2.6 SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF FACILITIES

FIGURE TEN indicates that respondents are even more satisfied with quality than they were with quantity of facilities. This suggests that what the City has invested in, has been well done. Again, satisfaction levels are highest in areas where the City has invested recently.

FIGURE TEN
SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF FACILITIES

Facility	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Performing Arts	68%	27%	5%
Rehearsal Space	36%	53%	11%
Gymnasiums	46%	45%	9%
Museums	48%	38%	14%
Arts Centres	46%	44%	10%
Arenas	52%	29%	19%
Pools	77%	18%	5%
Fitness Centres	62%	32%	6%
Community Centres	50%	40%	10%
Art Galleries	48%	41%	11%

3.2.7 SATISFACTION WITH THE NUMBER OF PARKS

As with the previous questions about indoor facilities, FIGURE ELEVEN on page 30 suggests that satisfaction levels are very high with regard to outdoor amenities. Also, satisfaction levels are highest among the two areas that have been most heavily invested in over the past ten years; those being trails and waterfront access. It might be noted that while the general public is satisfied with the number and quality of sports fields, the sport user groups that were interviewed, had a somewhat different opinion. The greatest of dissatisfaction was related to off leash areas for dogs.



KEY FINDINGS

FIGURE ELEVEN
SATISFACTION WITH NUMBER OF PARKS

Facility / Service	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Sports Fields	60%	30%	10%
Sport Courts	48%	36%	16%
Neighbourhood Parks	54%	27%	20%
Trails	70%	21%	9%
Off Leash Areas for Dogs	40%	33%	27%
Waterfront	67%	21%	12%
Natural / Passive	60%	30%	10%
Environmentally Sensitive	48%	34%	18%
Playgrounds / Water Parks	48%	39%	13%
Art in Public Places	35%	42%	23%

3.2.8 SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF PARKS

As indicated in FIGURE TWELVE on page 31, satisfaction levels related to quality are even higher than for quantity, with particularly high levels of satisfaction related to the waterfront, trails, natural / passive areas and sports fields. Art in public places received the lowest level of satisfaction.



FIGURE TWELVE
SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF PARKS

Facility / Services	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Sports Fields	64%	31%	5%
Sport Courts	55%	35%	10%
Neighbourhood Parks	55%	30%	15%
Trails	74%	21%	5%
Off Leash Areas for Dogs	46%	38%	16%
Waterfront	76%	19%	5%
Natural / Passive	65%	30%	5%
Environmentally Sensitive	54%	36%	10%
Playgrounds / Water Parks	55%	36%	9%
Art in Public Places	42%	41%	17%

3.2.9 NEED FOR NEW / IMPROVED FACILITIES

As FIGURE THIRTEEN on page 32 suggests, while a very high proportion of the sample indicated that one or more additional spaces were needed (86%), there was no clear majority for any single type of space. Waterfront parks and trails, however, continue to be of great interest. It is also clear that need for additional outdoor amenities is higher than for indoor spaces.



KEY FINDINGS

**FIGURE THIRTEEN
NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FACILITIES**

Facility	Percent
Waterfront Parks	43%
Trails/Pathways	39%
Arenas	33%
Environmentally Sensitive	33%
Natural / Passive	29%
Off Leash Dog	26%
Neighbourhood Parks	23%
Playgrounds/Water	22%
Sport Courts	16%
Swimming Pools	16%
Art in Public Places	16%
Community Centres	16%
Museums	14%

3.2.10 SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF PROGRAMS

As seen in FIGURE FOURTEEN on page 33, satisfaction levels for programs were very high – especially related to staff helpfulness and instructor quality. Even in the area of publicity, which had the lowest satisfaction level, the ratio of satisfied to dissatisfied was five to one.



FIGURE FOURTEEN
SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF PROGRAMS

Program / Consideration	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Program Price	62%	32%	6%
Program Variety	64%	30%	6%
Program Location	66%	27%	7%
Publicity	51%	38%	11%
Registration Process	70%	25%	5%
Staff Helpfulness	80%	16%	4%
Instructor Quality	76%	18%	6%
Quality of Equipment	65%	28%	7%



KEY FINDINGS

3.2.11 OLIVER ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE

FIGURE FIFTEEN suggests that there is considerable interest in unstructured, multi-use spaces in the proposed Oliver Road Community Centre, as well as in space for health and wellness, and outdoor areas, such as trails and a playground.

**FIGURE FIFTEEN
OLIVER ROAD AMENITIES**

Amenity	Percent
Multi-purpose Space	61%
Wellness Space	42%
Trails	42%
Playground	41%
Indoor Pool	41%
Fitness Space	39%
Ice Arena	39%
Community Police Station	38%
Gymnasium	34%
Meeting Space	34%
Pre-School / Daycare	30%

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

- Large numbers of survey respondents feel their household and the community benefit from the provision of public parks, recreation and cultural services.
- The seasonal Leisure Guide, prepared and distributed by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, provides a large number of residents with information regarding leisure services. A very high percentage of the survey respondents (81%) indicated that they learn about programs and activities from this source.



- Almost 25% of the respondents indicated that the cost of programs and registration fees limited their participation in leisure activities.
- Satisfaction with the **number of leisure facilities** in the City is quite high. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the number of arenas and 21% with the number of museums.
- Satisfaction with the **quality of facilities** was even higher – particularly with new facilities such as the Performing Arts Centre and the City's aquatic centre.
- Satisfaction with the **number of parks** was also high, and in particular, with sports fields, trails, natural areas and the waterfront. There was less satisfaction with off-leash areas for dogs, art in public places and neighbourhood parks.
- The public suggests that additional waterfront parks and continued trail development are most needed in terms of new and improved facilities, followed by arenas, environmentally sensitive areas and natural / passive spaces.
- In terms of program services, the public is very satisfied with the quality of instructors and staff helpfulness, and generally satisfied with program costs, variety and location.
- Facilities suggested for the proposed Oliver Road facility included multi-purpose space, followed in order by wellness space, trails, a playground and an indoor pool.

3.3 STAKEHOLDER / AGENCY INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with representatives from 73 organizations involved with the delivery of leisure services in Nanaimo. The majority of groups represented active leisure pursuits such as minor sport, cultural and community organizations; however, a variety of other interests were also represented.

These discussions determined:

- Services currently provided by each of the groups, participation levels, facilities used and facility requirements
- What the organization's goals are related to the services they provide
- Problems the group received that prevent it from achieving its objectives



KEY FINDINGS

- Perceived strengths and areas of suggested improvement in the current delivery system

3.4 COMMISSION AND STAFF INPUT

As noted earlier, the consultants facilitated a workshop with the Commission and staff, during which the discussion focused on the development of goals and objectives related to the provision of parks and recreation services. A number of issues were raised during the discussion, and are summarized below.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER / COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

- **Parks, Open Space and Trails**
 - Additional parkland acquisition
 - Partnerships in the protection of open space
 - Continued trail development linking key areas of the City
 - A Nanaimo Paddling Centre
 - A strategic plan for parks, open space and trail linkages between the Oliver Road Park area and Hammond Bay Road
 - The continued development of Third Street Park
 - Improvement of the Trans Canada Trail from Maffeo-Sutton Park to the Millstone River and Malaspina University College
 - Cooperative planning with the District of Lantzville toward public access to beaches
 - Completion of an Urban Forest Master Plan
 - Creation of integrated park site, management and maintenance plans, with an emphasis on Beban Park, Bowen Park, Maffeo-Sutton / Swy-a-Lana and Third Street Park
 - A review of the City's role in lake use management
 - Accommodation of dogs in City parks
 - Continued improvements to City parks, sports fields and support amenities
 - Continued enhancement and beautification of existing park sites



- Provision of additional youth / skateboard parks
- **Recreation and Culture Facilities**
 - Development of a twin arena complex at Third Street Park
 - Construction of the Oliver Road Community Centre
 - Renovate / improve the Bowen Park Complex
 - Renovate / improve the Beban Park Recreation Centre
 - Explore options to improve and expand Centennial Building at Beban Park
 - Meet with Nanaimo Aquatic Centre User Groups to discuss operating concerns
- **Service Delivery**
 - Development of a Sport and Cultural Tourism strategy
 - Update current Departmental marketing initiatives
 - Identify new events for the City, and means of improving existing events
 - Implementation of cultural strategies
 - Development of a youth services plan
 - Ensure planning efforts are linked with the Department's annual strategic planning process
 - Development of a new Partnership agreement with School District # 68
 - Continued development of partnerships with Nanaimo organizations



4. INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

A NUMBER OF INDOOR FACILITY ISSUES emerged from public and user group consultations, demographic and leisure trends in Nanaimo, as well as from the review and analysis of existing facilities.

While many of these facility issues are new and reflect the growth of Nanaimo over the last ten years, some were first identified in the 1994 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan. That plan made a number of indoor facility recommendations, some of which were subsequently carried out, including the development of the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and the Port Theatre. Other recommendations in the 1994 Master Plan, such as the renovation and expansion of the Beban Park and Bowen Park community centres, remain valid and have increased in importance because of community growth and change.

It is important to note that in November 2004, Nanaimo residents were asked to approve a referendum authorizing the City to borrow funds to construct the New Nanaimo Centre and enter into an agreement with Triarc International Inc. to provide a number of public and private amenities. The referendum was approved and detailed planning has since been initiated.

Public facilities will include conference space designed for local, regional and provincial conferences, a 225 seat "theatre style" community meeting room and a new home for the Nanaimo District Museum. Construction will begin in 2005, and upon completion, the City will own the conference centre, the auditorium and the museum.

This project also includes the enhancement of Maffeo Sutton Park as well as some new residential and commercial space in this area. This phase of the development will ultimately result in the demolition of the Civic Arena and, as discussed later in this section, the construction of twin ice sheets on Third Street, opposite the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre. The Civic Arena will only be demolished after the new ice surfaces become usable.

The existing museum has been in need of additional space for years. A study commissioned in 1991, and updated in 2003, recommended larger space. 13,000 sq. ft. was initially planned for the New Nanaimo Centre; however, an expansion is being considered to ensure that the public is able to enjoy the museum's collection and provide opportunities to host touring shows. The new facility will provide a major boost to tourism activity in the City, offer additional options for meeting space and result in a modern and conveniently located museum.

4.1 INDOOR ICE

The last ice surface constructed in Nanaimo was in late 1994 when a second surface was added at Beban Park. It was noted at the time that additional ice surfaces would be needed



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

in the future. There is a clear need for one additional ice surface in Nanaimo to address the reported waiting lists in minor hockey and the anticipated growth in women's hockey.

The addition of more than one ice surface, however, is not recommended. It should be noted that the number of children 0-17 in Nanaimo will actually decrease by over 800 in the next few years and will not hit its 2002 level again until 2015. The Civic Arena has reached or exceeded its useful lifespan and needs to be replaced. It is logical that a replacement for Civic Arena be combined with the new additional ice surface in a twinned complex. The project should be carried out as soon as possible and the Civic Arena closed upon the project's completion. Twinning has operational and programming benefits, and is much more cost effective than constructing stand-alone arenas.

Third Street Park is the recommended site because of its size and location. One of the ice surfaces should be of Olympic size to facilitate figure skating and short-track speed skating in addition to hockey and other ice activities.

Recommendation

Develop a twinned arena complex at Third Street Park opposite the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre.

Rationale

- The last new ice surface constructed in Nanaimo was in 1994. The current waiting lists for minor hockey and anticipated further growth in women's hockey justify the need for one new additional ice surface.
- The demographic trends in Nanaimo, particularly the decline in school aged population, means that adding more than one ice surface in the medium term would exceed demand. The result of adding more than one ice surface would primarily improve ice times for current users, but would reduce the operating efficiency of all arenas.
- The Civic Arena has reached the end of its useful lifespan and will require costly repairs in the next few years to remain operational.
- The operating efficiency of twinned ice surfaces far exceeds stand-alone arenas. The new ice surface, twinned with the replacement of the Civic Arena would produce significant cost savings over constructing a new single arena and maintaining and renovating the Civic Arena.
- Twinning the arenas at the Third Street site will enhance sport tourism as a tournament location.



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

- Third Street Park offers excellent transportation access from other areas of Nanaimo and for visitors off the Parkway.



4.2 MULTIPLEX

There has been discussion in the community regarding the possible construction of a multi-purpose arena / entertainment complex.

At Council's direction, staff has had discussions with private sector interests regarding the possibility of a partnership with the City. During these discussions an "immediate" site for such an amenity was not identified and it appeared that there was no interest by the private sector organizations in taking any equity position in this facility.

A number of communities have built these larger venues, including Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna and Cranbrook, each of which hosts a Western Hockey League franchise. A new complex is also nearing completion in Victoria. These venues generally include a regulation size ice sheet with fixed seating for 5,000 to 6,000 people. The buildings are multi-use in that they are used for entertainment venues, trade shows, conferences and other events attracting large numbers of spectators. A hockey franchise is the anchor tenant as it generally generates a minimum of 40 games per year.



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

These facilities do not necessarily provide a significant contribution to additional ice time for local sports organizations such as minor hockey and figure skating. This is due to the need for flexibility in scheduling of events and cancellations that result when major performances are booked.

The cost of operating such a venue is significantly more expensive than community use arenas. The development of these facilities is seen, however, as an economic generator. In the case of Kelowna and Kamloops, the complexes contribute financially to downtown businesses and make use of public parking facilities during non-prime hours.

In review of both private (Kelowna and Victoria) and public (Prince George and Kamloops), the cost to operate and build these centres appears to be similar. In all cases, taxpayers make a significant contribution to the facility through a combination of capital, loan repayments or facility licensing agreements.

Recommendation

That the City research options for a multiplex facility, identify prospective tenants and consider opportunities for land acquisition, parking availability and financing options which may include contributions of private capital to the facility.

Rationale

- While a complex of this type is not currently on Council's list of priorities, it is the type of facility that can be investigated at any time.
- Since many of the facilities mentioned above have been in operation for several years, there is undoubtedly much that Nanaimo officials can learn from the experience of current owners and operators, in terms of construction, operations and potential partnerships.
- It would be wise for the City to have as much information regarding this type of amenity as possible.

4.3 OLIVER ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE

This project proposal was well received during consultations. The north area of the City will continue to grow and a new facility in this area is clearly needed. A number of user groups spoke to the need for more gymnasiums in Nanaimo and supported their inclusion in the project. The other spaces identified in the preliminary designs are considered to be appropriate. In the conceptual design, however, the fitness and wellness areas appear to be considerably smaller than those built and considered adequate at comparable venues.



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

Consideration should also be given to ensuring that at least one of the multi-purpose spaces can be used for arts programming.

Recommendation

Proceed to the design and construction stages of the Oliver Road Community Centre, and consider enlarging the fitness and wellness spaces.

Rationale

- The north area of Nanaimo will continue to be one of the fastest growing areas of the City.
- The public survey identified support for multi-purpose program spaces in the proposed facility.
- Interviews with many user groups identified the need for additional gymnasiums for rental and drop-in use, beyond those available through the School District.
- The project funding is in place and the conceptual design is considered appropriate. Consideration should be given to enlarging the fitness/wellness area to match anticipated levels of demand and changing demographics.
- The catchment area for the Oliver Road site complements the location of the Beban and Bowen community centres.
- That art programming capacity be included in the design of at least one multi-purpose space.
- The Oliver Road facility should be considered as a potential location when a new branch library is added in the north.

4.4 BOWEN PARK COMPLEX RETROFIT

The central area of Nanaimo will see additional population growth, especially with large multi-unit developments in the downtown and other infill projects. Bowen Park is showing its age and needs to be upgraded and expanded to meet current and future demands. This need was also identified in the 1994 Master Plan recommendations. The retrofit includes more multi-purpose spaces, a fitness room, improved parking lot lighting and entry and a centralized administrative area for the Department staff. This facility will also serve as a major hub for older adults who wish to recreate in a multi-generational facility; this age group will be the fastest growing segment of the Nanaimo population.



Recommendation

Carry out an upgrade and expansion of the Bowen Park Complex to include the addition of multi-purpose, art program, fitness and administrative spaces.

Rationale

- The Bowen Park Complex requires upgrading and additional spaces, as noted previously in the 1994 Master Plan.
- The population of the central area of Nanaimo will grow with the development of multi-unit projects in the downtown. The growth in population will primarily be for those who are retired or near retirement.
- As Baby Boomers age and retire, they will tend to remain users of multi-generational recreation facilities that are in reasonable proximity.
- There is a need for fitness/wellness spaces at Bowen to address the population growth and increased concerns for healthy lifestyles.
- The existing multi-purpose spaces need to be upgraded and new multi-purpose spaces added, including those with art programming capacity to reflect the growing interests in this area.
- The Departmental administrative area needs to be expanded and centralized.
- Access for persons with a disability needs to be improved.
- Care needs to be taken to minimize the impact of additional spaces on the park area.

4.5 BEBAN PARK RECREATION CENTRE RETROFIT

The 1994 Master Plan recommended additions and renovations to the Beban Park Recreation Centre; the recommendations are still valid. In addition, the use levels of the pool have been adversely impacted by the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and the pool needs to be updated with new lighting and pool toys; the focus should be on family recreation and potentially include rehabilitation elements.

The area between the two buildings (pool / arenas and social center) should be enclosed resulting in the creation of new program and administrative spaces.

This project should also create a new entry, office area and control point. Other existing areas should be renovated including existing multi-purpose areas in the social center. The



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

existing fitness area is small and not easily accessible. It should be expanded and given a higher profile, using a common control point. Consideration should be given to the potential impact of the Conference Center when the re-design is carried out.

Recommendation

Carry out improvements to the indoor pool, and an expansion and retrofit of existing spaces at the Beban Park Recreation Centre.

Rationale

- The needs identified in the 1994 Master Plan for renovations and additions are not only still valid, but have also become greater due to aging of the facility and population growth in the service area.
- The use levels of the pool have decreased because of popularity of the Nanaimo Aquatic Center; the Beban pool needs to be improved to build on a family focus and the inclusion of rehabilitation elements.
- The fitness area needs to be enlarged and moved to the main level to be made more visible and accessible.
- A better aligned entry and control point will add to the facility's attractiveness and cost effectiveness.
- The multi-purpose spaces need to be updated.

4.6 SOUTH NANAIMO COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Chase River area and other parts of South Nanaimo will see considerable growth and infill. A new community leisure centre will eventually be needed in this area. In the 1994 Master Plan, the need for a new aquatic center and multi-purpose spaces was identified for south-central Nanaimo. As a result, the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre was constructed. This facility did not include all of the multi-purpose spaces needed for this area and a new facility further south should be considered within an 8-12 year time frame. It should be designed so that a smaller leisure pool could be added as a second phase. A third pool, however, would fall outside of the timelines for this Master Plan, and the two existing pools are sufficient to meet the aquatic needs of Nanaimo residents for a considerable time to come.

Recommendation

Develop a community recreation centre in south Nanaimo within an 8-12 year time frame.



Rationale

- Considerable population growth is forecast in the south Nanaimo area within the next ten years. While the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre is reasonably accessible to residents in the south, there will be a need for additional multi-purpose program spaces in Chase River and other areas.
- Because residents in south Nanaimo have lower average incomes than residents of north Nanaimo, care will need to be taken to ensure that access issues are addressed in programming and fee structures.

4.7 BEBAN PARK – CENTENNIAL BUILDING

A number of user groups mentioned that the Centennial Building has potential for greater use. This included gymnastics and sport field users. Various options should be explored, but the Centennial Building already has a number of current user groups, with the Kennel Club being the largest user. There may be an opportunity to add a multi-purpose synthetic surface that could be used for indoor soccer, baseball practice and certain types of trade shows and special events. This needs further exploration, as does the potential need for another structure with a higher ceiling to accommodate additional needs in the community.

Recommendation

Explore options to improve the Centennial Building and potentially add another large multi-purpose space at Beban Park capable of hosting sport activities, trade shows and special events.

Rationale

- The Centennial Building requires exterior and interior upgrading.
- It is worthwhile to both explore options for redevelopment of the space and the addition of another large multi-purpose space in Beban Park.

4.8 AQUATIC FACILITIES

During interviews with aquatic users groups, a number of concerns were expressed regarding the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre. These included poor air quality, difficulty in moving the bulkheads, problems with the moveable floor, lack of spectator space, poor sound quality and the cleanliness of the change rooms. The Aquatic Centre has been an



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

outstanding success, especially in terms of public use. The Department should host a meeting with the aquatic user groups to clarify their issues and identify how the department is addressing them.

In discussion with aquatic organizations, it was mentioned that in the future, there may be a need for a new outdoor swimming pool in the community. There is no question that the existing outdoor pool is aging and it should be anticipated that an increasing number of mechanical and/or structural improvements will be necessary. It is the consultant's opinion, however, that Nanaimo has ample swimming pool capacity at present, and will, well into the future.

Since the cost of building and operating pools is significant, making better use of existing capacity is more prudent than new construction.

Recommendation

The Department should hold a meeting in the near future with the aquatic user groups to clarify and discuss their concerns.



4.9 REHEARSAL SPACES

Arts organizations listed a number of space needs including a new dance centre, new downtown arts complex, a larger museum and more rehearsal spaces. The need for rehearsal spaces was mentioned by more organizations than any other space requirement.



The consultants have reviewed the inventory of existing spaces suitable for use as rehearsal venues, and would agree that more is required in this area. In fact, various kinds of rehearsal spaces are needed. Some is needed for “one off” rehearsals, where only one or two “pre dress rehearsals” are required. Some is needed for ongoing weekly use by groups which require a space on a regular basis for an entire season at a time. Also, some is needed for dedicated use for a month or so in advance of the beginning of a new production. All these types of needs cannot be accommodated in one or two spaces. A variety of space types and formats need to be provided. Many may be provided in private spaces that arts groups can rent as required. Some should be provided by the public sector and made available to arts and cultural organizations on an “as required basis”.

The consultants see real opportunities for such spaces to be accommodated in two projects which are described elsewhere in this report. They are the retrofits of the Beban Park and the Bowen Park complexes. In both of these projects, new multipurpose spaces will be provided and should accommodate requirements for one-off rehearsals or ongoing weekly use. An opportunity exists to provide some ongoing and dedicated rehearsal space by securing the Harewood School gymnasium as a community arts space.

Recommendations

Ensure the inclusion of arts space in improvements to the Bowen Complex and Beban Park Recreation Centre.

Secure the Harewood School gymnasium as community arts space.

4.10 ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

Very modest recent attempts at using art to improve the visual appeal of Nanaimo and illustrate the essence of the City have been well received. Although increased art in public places was not a need expressed by a majority of city residents in the public survey, it received broader support than any other type of art and cultural infrastructure. The consultants believe that further modest investments in public art will be beneficial to the entire city, will be well received by the residents and will prove to be a very worthwhile investment.

Recommendation

Review options for supporting and increasing public art.



INDOOR RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES

4.11 OTHER CULTURAL FACILITIES

While the Master Plan recommends additional Art in Public Places, as well as rehearsal spaces at Harewood School and Beban Park, the report is silent on the construction of a small theatre, a Class "A" art gallery, a conservatory of music, live/work studio spaces and a dance centre. These are spaces that arts organizations indicated are needed in the community. Based on the results of the public survey, the consultants believe there is limited broad based support for new public debenture debt to finance such significant projects.

Although there is no justification for major public investment in new arts facilities at this time, it is still possible to make progress on this front. From time to time, opportunities may arise to acquire this type of space without significant amounts of City financing being required. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission should be vigilant in this regard; and the City should remain poised and ready to take advantage of opportunities that may arise.

One current example may be the Caprice Theatre. It is well located in the downtown area and is currently "on the market". A non-profit organization could possibly acquire and retrofit the facility at a price that is significantly below replacement cost and operate it cost effectively. This will meet a number of the expressed needs of arts organizations, which cannot otherwise be justified by significant community funding.



5. SERVICE DELIVERY

A NUMBER OF OTHER ISSUES were identified and addressed under the heading of “service delivery”.

5.1 SPORT AND CULTURAL TOURISM

The City should work in partnership with Team Nanaimo and other community organizations to support sport and cultural tourism. The City could support the development of a Sport and Cultural Tourism Strategy through these partners. The development of a strategy was previously recommended in the 1994 Master Plan. The City should also coordinate the development of a “civic hosting support package”. There was interest among many sport groups to create a Nanaimo Sports Council to foster a more coordinated approach by the volunteer sport sector.

Recommendations

Work with Team Nanaimo and other partners to develop a Sport and Cultural Tourism Strategy.

Support the development of a Nanaimo Sports Council by bringing local sport organizations together to explore the option.

Rationale

- The need for a planned approach to sport and cultural tourism was noted in the 1994 Master Plan.
- The Team Nanaimo includes key community and business leaders who have an interest and mandate for sport and cultural tourism. Other major community organizations also have an interest and should be included in the development of a strategy.
- Having the City develop a civic hosting support package would provide greater certainty to organizations that are considering bidding for a sport or cultural tourism event.
- Local sport field organizations identified the need to more closely cooperate with each other, and stated that a broader Sports Council would create a more cooperative approach to sport development and advocacy.



SERVICE DELIVERY

5.2 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

A number of community organizations identified the value of exploring joint marketing of programs, services and special events with the City. While many of these organizations focused on web-based ties, others looked at inclusion within the Leisure Guide or other forms of combined brochures.

Parks, Recreation and Culture Department marketing has improved since the 1994 Master Plan and has included new tools such as park and trail guides. An updating of the marketing plan may be beneficial and should include the consideration of co-marketing. Several organizations expressed their appreciation with being consulted. They would like on-going (annual) opportunities to meet with their colleagues and the Department. They also identified the desirability for a comprehensive e-mail list for organizations, but acknowledged the challenge of keeping it updated.

Recommendation

Update the Department Marketing Plan and explore opportunities for co-marketing with other major community partners.

Rationale

- The Department has made significant strides in its approach to marketing since 1994 and the Leisure Guide was identified as a very effective marketing and communications tool in the public survey.
- The time for updating the Marketing Plan is now appropriate and co-marketing opportunities should be considered.
- There are opportunities for co-marketing with organizations such as Tourism Nanaimo and the Chamber of Commerce, particularly for brochures and promotions for special events and major initiatives. This approach would be cost effective for the Department and partner organizations.

5.3 CULTURAL SERVICES

Over the past ten years the City of Nanaimo has pursued a wide variety of major enhancements to its leisure services. A great many of these have been in the area of cultural services. The new Port Theatre has been developed and is operating to the benefit of local citizens. A new downtown Arts Centre is in place and provides exhibit areas as well as administrative space. A Cultural Committee has been established and an associated budget for grants to cultural groups is in place which provides more financial support for local cultural groups than ever before. As part of the new Nanaimo



Centre, a larger, more accessible museum is included. There are more arts organizations now than there were ten years ago, including some new professional performing arts groups. In addition, private schools for dance, theatre and music are thriving as never before.

During the Master Plan process, the consultants solicited input from arts and cultural organizations in a variety of interest group meetings. A total of twenty-five groups provided input in this way. They documented a wide variety of additional needs for consideration in the planning process.

The consultants also gained input from the general public through the public survey. The public was clear about what they thought the needs were in the City. Unfortunately, there is some clear discrepancy between what the interest groups felt was required and what the public seemed prepared to support.

While the interest groups wanted continued enhancements to cultural services on a scale experienced over the past ten years, the public seemed quite satisfied with the progress over the last decade and were prepared to support other types of initiatives that had received less attention in the recent past. That said, there is much that can be done to refine and modestly enhance cultural services in Nanaimo over the next ten years.

5.3.1 SPECIAL EVENTS

Nanaimo has a long history of using special events to foster community identity, spirit, pride and culture. As the city has grown, it has become harder to maintain the viability and momentum of such special events. It is important to renew efforts to use special events in this way. Ideally, these special events should:

- Be very inclusive with appeal to all elements of the community
- Be accessible physically and financially so that all can attend and benefit
- Be consistent so that momentum is realized and each event can be leveraged by expectations from a previous year
- Include at least an element of the arts (if not a focus on the arts).

The City has a clear role to play in providing leadership to conceive of events, support them and monitor their success.

Recommendation

Place greater emphasis on special events in the future to ensure that their potential to foster community identity, spirit, pride and culture is maximized.





5.3.2 CO-ORDINATION OF EFFORT AND COMMUNICATION

In Master Plan focus groups many of the arts and cultural organizations talked about the fragmentation of the arts delivery system in Nanaimo, and they expressed the need for more coordination.

The consultants believe the above defined need for enhanced coordination is valid and is a priority worthy of some focus over the next ten years. However, it should not be coordination “from the top down”. No single player in the Nanaimo market is well enough positioned to impose coordination on others. It must be coordination “from the group up”. This means that coordination will most likely come in the form of pilot projects and individual initiatives that gain support from others and gradually build momentum within the arts and cultural community to the point whereby it becomes more powerful and effective.

The City of Nanaimo can provide leadership in this regard, but should not assume responsibility for effecting the coordination.

Recommendations

Ensure greater coordination of program delivery - where the City and non profit groups are aware of what each other is doing and provide a more cohesive service offering of programs and opportunities, with each party doing what it is best positioned to do.



Ensure greater coordination of communication internally - where all arts organizations are aware of what each other is doing, and identify all opportunities to work together on projects and to stay out of each others way.

Ensure greater coordination of communication to the public - which might result in some form of "one stop shopping" for information about what is available in the Nanaimo area in terms of arts organizations, programs, opportunities, special events, shows and performances.

Ensure greater coordination in terms of advocating for the arts than is the case at present with groups generally doing their own thing at best, or working in competition with each other at worst.

Host an annual or semi-annual arts coordination workshop where interested groups send representatives to outline what is going on, what opportunities there are for working together on projects, for joint marketing and advocacy efforts and for coordinated scheduling of events and programs. Out of these events will come increased coordination on a scale and at a pace that the groups find useful and practical.

5.4 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

A number of individuals and organizations would like to see more festivals and special events. In the cultural area, suggestions included a major annual Arts Festival, (using a format similar to the BC Festival of the Arts), more concerts in parks, and heritage themed events and historic walks, perhaps building on the coal mining history of Nanaimo. Other groups felt that major runs or cycling events would fit with the extensive trail opportunities in the City. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department already plays a significant role in hosting and partnering on these activities.

Recommendation

As part of the development of previously identified Sport and Cultural Tourism Strategy, host a meeting of special event providers to identify opportunities for new events and cooperation on existing ones.

Rationale

- Bringing special event organizers together, as part of the Sport and Cultural Tourism Strategy process, will help these organizations to identify new opportunities.
- A number of special events focus on residents rather than tourists, and can benefit from co-marketing and other forms of cooperation.





5.5 PARTNERSHIPS (SCHOOL DISTRICT #68 AND OTHERS)

The relationship with the School District is not seen as being particularly strong. A new Partnership Agreement should be developed to expand joint-use, the joint development or re-development of indoor and outdoor facilities, and cooperative programming and marketing.

Outdoor sport field groups were concerned with the quality of District fields and saw the need for more joint development and maintenance. Indoor groups experience difficulties in obtaining gymnasium space and would like the City to have greater influence. With the diminished enrollments in some elementary schools, there may be opportunities to look at shared uses as an alternative to closures. It is recommended that the City make the development of a stronger partnership a priority.

In addition to the School District, there are a number of other partnerships that the City has engaged in. A number of communities have developed a set of "partnership guidelines" to guide the creation of partnership agreements and establish protocols for projects on public land.



Recommendations

Proceed to develop a new Partnership agreement with School District #68 as a high priority.

Develop a set of Partnership Guidelines to develop a protocol to enter into specific agreements with other potential partners on projects where public lands or funds are involved.

Rationale

- The need for a stronger relationship with School District #68 was noted in the 1994 Master Plan.
- Currently, there is not an effective sharing of resources between the District and the City.
- User groups have noted difficulties in accessing District facilities and look to the City for leadership in developing a better relationship.
- There are opportunities for the cooperative development of indoor and outdoor amenities that should be explored.

5.6 YOUTH SERVICES

A number of youth and community groups identified the need for additional youth services and opportunities. This included the development of more “learn-to” classes in areas such as yoga, ceramics and kayaking that are directly marketed through schools, as well as more youth oriented facilities.

The recent additions of the beach volleyball courts (Bowen) and the skateboard park (May Richards Bennett Pioneer) were well received. It was felt that a skateboard facility in the south was needed as well as indoor facilities. The 1994 plan also looked at this area. A stand-alone youth center is not recommended, but a youth room could be considered either within one of the capital projects or in conjunction with the School District. It is important to have fairly direct access to a gymnasium from a youth room to make this work.

Recommendation

Develop a Youth Services Plan to extend youth opportunities and identify needs for youth oriented indoor and outdoor facilities.

Rationale

- The need for additional youth opportunities was noted in the 1994 Master Plan.



SERVICE DELIVERY

- While the Department has made significant strides, the need for more youth opportunities was noted in all three Community Forums and in interviews with youth and other organizations.
- The development of a stronger partnership agreement with School District #68 would facilitate better cooperative marketing and youth programming.
- Including a youth room in one or more of the capital projects should be considered.
- Outdoor youth spaces have been well received; there is a need for outdoor youth areas in south Nanaimo.

5.7 LINKS TO OTHER DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

As the Department identifies new initiatives within its annual strategic plan, it is important to link these with the Master Plan, and the major initiatives of other key community partners. For example, if the City develops an overall Active Living thrust, it needs to link this with capital development (indoor and active transportation), a corporate wellness program, special events, provincial initiatives such as Active Communities (BCRPA) and the 2010 Olympics.

Recommendation

Ensure that the Master Plan and subsequent planning efforts are linked with the initiatives identified in the City's annual strategic planning process.



6. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE CITY OF NANAIMO has been established, developed and maintained for a variety of functions including formal and informal play opportunities, environmental interpretation and protection, urban beautification and the accommodation of multipurpose parks, recreation and cultural facilities.

The type and design of open space varies depending on the function and objectives for which it is established. Traditionally, open space is provided for two principal reasons:

- **Open space may be justified in terms of parks, recreation and culture objectives:** This type of open space is provided to accommodate passive or active leisure pursuits. Sites are designed to meet the leisure needs of the community, to satisfy aesthetic requirements and to protect natural areas.
- **Open space may be justified to meet other land use objectives:** This type of open space is primarily used for non-recreational use, but may also permit leisure opportunities as a secondary activity. This may include open space to buffer conflicting land uses and to accommodate easements or environmental objectives. In these situations, leisure activity is not the primary purpose but represents a bonus to the existing open space system.

This section of the Master Plan addresses both types of open space.

A total of 13 Parks and Open Space major Strategic Issues were identified, along with 8 other issues or special projects.

6.1 UPDATE OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

When planning a public open space system, it is important to establish a framework upon which information may be superimposed and guidelines developed. This framework or classification system guides minimum standards for similar types of parks, while at the same time, recognizing the unique nature and potential of a particular site. It also allows for consistent planning and budgeting, as well as public expectations. The caution, however, is that the system should not limit the design potential of any one site but rather should be used as a basis to meet minimum standards of development.

The public open space system in Nanaimo includes 5 key areas: City parks, neighbourhood parks, sport fields, trails and greenways and boulevards.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- **City Parks** - City level parks are destination facilities that serve the needs of the entire community, and may include a mix of many different functions and provide significant protected environmentally sensitive areas. Maffeo Sutton Park, Westwood Lake Park and Beban Park are examples of City Level Parks.
- **Neighbourhood Parks** - Neighborhood Parks typically provide a broad range of leisure opportunities for a local area. They are designed to include natural and play areas, seating, sport courts, trails and various programs. Neighborhood parks can be walk-to destinations within an 800m radius of local homes and without parking, or they can be drive-to destinations with small-scale parking to serve larger areas. When provided, neighborhood parks can become the hearts of subdivision or housing development, should be directly accessible by walking or cycling, and should be highly visible. Woodstream Park and Gyro Park are two examples of Neighborhood Parks.
- **Sport Fields** - Sport Fields are developed to accommodate league play, recreational play, school physical education classes and tournaments. Sport fields are generally centralized wherever possible to avoid duplication and include high quality support facilities (e.g. concession, dressing rooms, public address systems, etc.). May Richards Bennett Pioneer Park and Trofton Park are examples of sports fields.
- **Trails and Greenways** - Trails and Greenways include the system of multi-use trails that are being developed around the City as well as significant environmentally sensitive corridors. The E&N trail and Chase River corridor are examples of trails and greenways.
- **Boulevards** - Boulevards consist of many forms of public planting situated along roadway edges and medians. Plantings vary from highly visible gateways, treed corridors and grassy verges to hard landscaped medians and are part of both the City's beautification and urban forest initiatives. The South end Gateway and Uplands Drive are two boulevard examples.

Recommendation

Adopt a Parks and Open Space Classification System as indicated above.

6.2 MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION PRIORITIES

With the addition of new parklands over the last ten years, Nanaimo is generally well supplied with active park space. However, the public wishes more and better access to



the City's waterfront. Nanaimo residents also take great pride in the evolving trail system that gives them access to parks and open spaces and supports healthy lifestyle and transportation choices.

Parks and open spaces are very beneficial to the community. They provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and its associated physical, psychological and social benefits. They also afford opportunities for spiritual renewal, a retreat from urban bustle and daily cares, and a chance to restore links with nature. Parks and open spaces enhance the community, providing economic returns in increasing property values and attracting visitors, new residents and prospective business. A park and open space system can also play an important role in maintaining natural areas and all the values and benefits that they represent.

As indicated in FIGURE SIXTEEN on page 60, Nanaimo's parks total approximately 589 ha, or about 6.6 percent of the City's land base. There are also other properties that are protected by other agencies. These comprise about 588(1,636 acres), representing an additional 5 percent of Nanaimo's land base. In total, about 13 percent of Nanaimo is protected as open space.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

FIGURE SIXTEEN
TYPE AND OWNERSHIP OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE CITY OF
NANAIMO

Type and Ownership	Area (hectares)	% of Total Protected Area
City Parks (City of Nanaimo) 475 in 1994 therefore a 10 year increase of 114 ha	589	50
Newcastle Island Provincial Park	300.8	26
Petroglyph Provincial Park (BC Government)	1.2	0.1
Buttertubs Wildlife Sanctuary (Nature Trust of BC)	22	2
Morrell Nature Sanctuary (Nature Trust of BC)	89	8
Nanaimo River Estuary (Pacific Estuary Conservation Program)	175	15
Total Protected Area	1177	13 of total land area of Nanaimo is protected area.
Total Land Area of Nanaimo	8863 (not including lakes)	

The above open space numbers do not include open space areas such as portions of the parkway trail, the E&N trail, portions of the Harbourfront walkway, plazas and ocean beaches.

A minimum of 5.0 ha per 1,000 people is a common "rule of thumb" as a minimum area for parkland / open space in urban areas. At a population of approximately 77,000, the 589 ha of City parks provide about 7.0 ha of parkland for every 1,000 residents in Nanaimo. This exceeds the minimum guideline and compares favorably with other municipalities. Some proportion of the 589 ha is occupied by indoor and outdoor facilities,



but as already shown in FIGURE SIXTEEN above, other protected space exists in Nanaimo and contributes to the overall parks and open space system.

The City of Nanaimo has several roles to play in acquiring land for parks and open space. The 1994 Master Plan identified about 30 areas within the City that were considered to be environmentally significant and/or valued for their recreational, natural or green space features. The 2004 Master Plan identifies another 20 properties that should be acquisition and management priorities for the coming years. FIGURE SEVENTEEN provides details and proposed actions for these priority areas.

**FIGURE SEVENTEEN
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION PRIORITIES**

Priority Class	Site	Proposed Action	Options
A	Additional seaside parks ie. Small Beach on Nanaimo Harbourfront Chase River	Acquire	Seek opportunities to acquire key waterfront properties and access to ocean shoreline as public open space.
A	Brannen, Diver, Green, Long and Westwood Lakes	Acquire	Increase parkland near lakes and, where appropriate, increase access to the water and along the shore.
A	Buttertubs Marsh and wetlands to west and south	Co-manage	Recognize entire areas as environment-ally sensitive. Work with landowners, <i>Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks</i> and BC Nature Trust to determine appropriate measures to protect the hydrological regime and aquatic habitat in Buttertubs Marsh.
A	Harewood Plains	Acquire	Seek to acquire as park and to develop funding partners.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

FIGURE SEVENTEEN (Continued)

Priority Class	Site	Proposed Action	Options
A	Linley Valley	Acquire	Work with the BC Government, Crown Lands Division to acquire DL 56 for park purposes. Develop a comprehensive plan that provides the context for a city park. Consider a plan that protects key areas in exchange for limited housing development on remainder. Conduct an inventory of significant environmental resources within parkland designation.
A	Millstone River	Acquire or Co-manage	Acquire lands to complete the walkway. Alternatively, designate shoreline leave strips as environmentally sensitive areas and regulate land use accordingly; and/or negotiate covenants with landowners for the retention and dedication of shoreline leave strips as natural areas. Coordinate with Regional District of Nanaimo to protect the river course across city and regional district boundaries.
A	Nanaimo Correction Centre Lands on Brannen Lake	Acquire	Negotiate with BC Government on possible future acquisition for park purposes should the centre be moved.
A	Properties adjacent to Westwood Lake Park	Acquire	In order to maintain and enhance the park character, seek to acquire properties that enhance park buffers.
A	Walley Creek	Acquire or Co-manage	Continue to acquire streamside dedications for park/trails through subdivision and development applications. Work with neighbouring residents and the Hammond Bay Neighbourhood Association to rehabilitate and enhance.



FIGURE SEVENTEEN (Continued)

Priority Class	Site	Proposed Action	Options
A	Waterfront Access points	Acquire	Provide waterfront access (access minimum of every 500 m); where coast is too steep to allow access to the shore, access should provide viewpoints with rest areas that welcome users to enjoy the view in a quiet setting.
B	Millstone Bluffs	Co-manage or Acquire	Continue to work with the provincial <i>Ministry of Transportation and Highways</i> to protect the bluffs and trail along the Nanaimo Parkway.
B	Northfield Marsh	Acquire or Co-manage	Designate as an environmentally significant area. Negotiate with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways to mitigate impacts of the parkway and Northfield connector. Acquire remaining wetlands as an ecological park.
B	Provide neighborhood-type park in industrial zoned lands, to provide employees of businesses with green space and activity areas.	Acquire	To increase greenspace for recreation and environmental benefits in industrial areas.
B	Robin's Gardens	Acquire	Acquire as future community or city park in collaboration with South End Citizens Association. Ensure that sufficient land use is present in the neighbourhood to provide on-going security to the site.
B	Up to 2 ha of neighbourhood parks in Westwood Lake area (linked to Westwood Lake Park).	Acquire	To ensure adequate neighborhood park space in the area.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Recommendations

Implement the actions presented in FIGURE SEVENTEEN regarding parks acquisition and open space co-management.

Focus on the following features in future acquisition of lands for public open space in order of priority:

- *Waterfront and shoreline areas*
- *Lakes, streams and river courses*
- *Woodlands with extensive natural areas*

Consolidate future acquisitions and dedications to achieve areas larger than totlots.

6.3 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE OUTSIDE CITY BOUNDARIES

City residents make recreational and visual use of many natural areas immediately outside the City boundary. Several of the prime recreational sites are under immediate threat and loss of the recreation and aesthetic benefits of these areas could have long-lasting impacts on the attractiveness of Nanaimo to residents and tourists. Furthermore, many activities such as rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking and nature appreciation in a wildlands setting cannot be provided effectively within the City boundary. Despite the fact that costs of land acquisition outside the City are substantially lower on a unit basis than the purchase of serviced land within the City boundary, adjacent Electoral Areas (e.g. Area C or D) do not have sufficient population or financial resources to protect these key areas on their own.

The City of Nanaimo already owns several properties outside the City boundary, including lands around Witchcraft Lake and a large property immediately south of the South City Boundary. Future acquisition of park space could occur outside the City boundaries to meet recreational and aesthetic needs.

Properties and areas outside of the City boundaries that might be considered for acquisition include:

- Diving activity at Snake Island
- Hiking and mountain biking on Westwood Ridges
- Nanaimo's visual backdrop and hiking paradise – Mt. Benson
- Hiking and spectacular scenery at Benson (Ammonite) Falls
- Appreciation of native wildflowers at Harewood Plains
- Salmon spawning and swimming at Nanaimo River



- Rock climbing at Westwood Ridges and Mt. Benson

In interviews with stakeholder groups and residents for the 2004 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, it was surprising how many respondents were not aware that these recreation resources are outside the City.

Many groups also make a strong case that these recreational features cannot be provided in Nanaimo, since they are based on the characteristics of the land, but that it is mainly Nanaimo residents and tourists staying in Nanaimo who are using these sites.

Respondents also reported that a lack of protection and management of these sites is hurting Nanaimo's opportunities for economic and tourism development.

The Regional District of Nanaimo is active in acquiring or managing some of these sites (e.g. Benson Falls). Local non-government organizations have expressed interests concerning some of the other sites as well. However, it is unlikely that non-government organizations or the Regional District, operating alone, will have the resources to effectively acquire or co-manage these important recreation features.

Recommendations

As part of the open space planning and land acquisition process consider the opportunities of co-management of recreational lands outside City limits with the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Prepare open space and environmental management plans for lands owned by the City outside the City boundary (e.g. Witchcraft Lake).

6.4 EXPAND AND IMPROVE TRAIL AND GREENWAY SYSTEM

As set out in the 1994 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, there has been excellent progress at completion of a major trail system, in particular along the Nanaimo Parkway and the E&N railway.

The rapid implementation of Nanaimo's trail system is becoming a factor in new residents choosing Nanaimo as a place to live. Similar to the results in 1994, the 2004 public survey showed that of those recipients who saw a need for additional outdoor facilities, a considerable number favored more trails for walking and cycling – making trails the most requested outdoor facility. The popularity of trails for walking and cycling is rapidly increasing, not only for recreational use but also as alternative means of getting from place to place. People want to get out of their cars and onto footpaths and bike trails for their own health, as well as the health of the environment.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Recommendations

Continue to update and implement a comprehensive system of linked trails in accordance with the policies of this plan and the Trail Implementation Plan.

Add guidelines to the Trail Implementation Plan regarding the trail planning and design process to ensure that trail implementation standards are appropriate for the intended user, and ensure high construction standards to extend facility life and reduce maintenance costs. The design guidelines should provide standards for various forms and surfaces of trails, as well as the design of trailside buffers.

Create a trail signage strategy including interpretive signage, public information and way finding signage, and provisions for special events (e.g. running events).

Implement the trails and greenway systems with the general priorities as follows:

- *Connections from neighbourhoods to the E&N trail*
- *Departure Bay Trail*
- *Walley Creek System (completion)*
- *South end E&N trail system*
- *Brannen, Divers and Green Lakes shorelines*
- *Trails and management near Westwood Ridges and Mt. Benson*
- *Planning of trail connections from the Oliver Road park through the Linley Valley*
- *Trails around Diver Lake.*

Continue to develop the trail system using a greenways approach in serving recreation, transportation and/or conservation functions. Place emphasis on:

- *Connections between parks and protected areas*
- *Foreshore and beach access*
- *The use of natural corridors, such as waterways and ridges*
- *Use of treed and quiet streetscapes through residential areas*

Plan trails along waterways to avoid detrimental impacts on riparian habitat; where possible, a further setback beyond the leave strip required to protect fisheries and habitat values should be acquired for use as a trail.

Extend the trail along the Esquimalt-Nanaimo rail right-of-way as a trail / cycle path connecting the City from south to north.

Develop trails in an environmentally friendly manner to avoid detrimental impacts on waterways, sensitive habitats, steep slopes and vegetation; and to provide users with a safe, enjoyable experience.

Expand information on walking routes to show linkages among the parks and other open spaces and neighbourhoods allowing users to access a wider range of interconnecting walking and cycling opportunities.



Emphasize acquisition and development that provide trails to the waterfront, providing for "nodes" along trails for resting, sitting and picnicking in natural settings and/or at viewpoints (e.g. Provide a trail through vacant lands north of Brickyard Road to waterfront access at Icarus, Rafter and Sealand Parks).

6.5 ATTRACT SPORTS AND CULTURAL TOURISM

Nanaimo's parks, culture and open spaces can be a major attraction to visitors, as well as residents. As a regional centre, Nanaimo is the logical location for regional-scale events and for hosting rotating Provincial scale sports and cultural events.

Parks are an important and powerful tool in generating, understanding and appreciating the natural and cultural world around us. Eco-tourism, Adventure Tourism, Sports Tourism and Cultural Tourism are important for Nanaimo's economic future.

Recommendations

Ensure that Nanaimo's major park facilities are planned with provisions for special sport and cultural events.

Support a program of temporary and permanent public art in Nanaimo's parks and public areas, with a focus on the downtown cultural district.

6.6 PARTNERSHIPS

Nanaimo has a long history of parks and open space projects being supported by volunteers and a variety of partnership agreements. The use of volunteers and partnerships extends the reach of limited City resources, and equally important, provides opportunity for community involvement.

Recommendations

Continue and expand the Volunteer in Parks Program (VIP)

Continue to work with neighbourhood groups, volunteers, community organizations and other agencies in the acquisition and development of Nanaimo's parks, open spaces and special places.

Continue to develop partnerships with the Regional District of Nanaimo, the School District and BC Parks that help to fulfill the City's goals, as well as the respective mandates of those agencies regarding parks and open space.

Focus acquisition on extending open space adjacent to elementary school sites where adjacent vacant land exists. The City should work cooperatively with local schools so they can serve the surrounding communities.



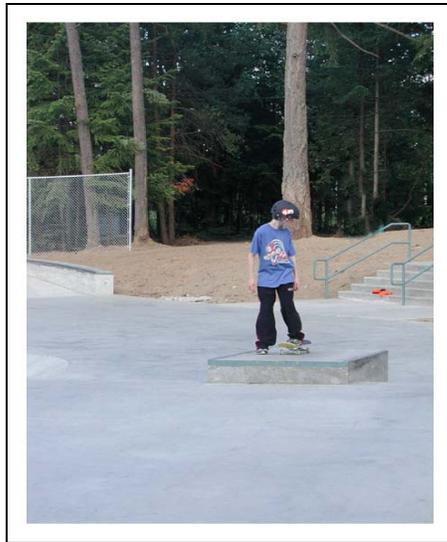
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Continue to develop partnerships with federal agencies, such as the Port of Nanaimo, the Department of National Defence and the Snuneymuxw First Nation to fulfill goals and objectives respecting parks and open space.

Explore the range of opportunities by which the City can work cooperatively with landowners to provide public access to open space or to protect significant areas.

6.7 YOUTH PARKS

New achievements in youth parks have included the opening of the skateboard park at May Richards Bennett Park. This complements the Skate Park at the Curling Rink and the Maffeo Sutton Skate Park. However, there is still a need to extend the facilities for youth throughout the City.



Recommendations

Consider smaller scale youth/skateboard facilities distributed across the City, (e.g. Cinnabar/Chase River, Harewood, Downtown, Beban, to supplement the existing facilities at Curling Rink and May Bennett). These new facilities may be a combination of paved multi-purpose space and built-up skateboard ramps, as opposed to in-ground skateboard facilities.

Consider provisions in major playgrounds or parks for 'tween' facilities – sections or playgrounds or parks designed specifically to be appropriate to the social development of young teens.



6.8 SPORT FIELDS AND AMENITIES

In the period between 1994 and 2004, the City has met its sport field needs with major athletic parks at Trofton, Harewood Centennial, Robins, Gyro, Beban, Pleasant Valley, McGirr and May Richards Bennett Parks. Land has been acquired for a major new sports facility at the Third Street property. A field house has been installed at Beban Park. Land and funding has also been put in place to support many future sport field projects.

Recommendations

Proceed with the following sport field projects:

- *Detail design and implementation of the Third Street sport field complex, with a focus on the needs of baseball and soccer.*
- *Completion of the field house at McGirr Park.*
- *Installation of an artificial turf sport field at Beban Park.*

Update the Beban Park Master Plan to determine the ultimate site build-out that integrates and completes construction and upgrades of sport fields, field house, related trails and verge areas and adjacent park uses.

Instigate a co-operative program with SD #68 and Malaspina University College for improved joint use of existing and proposed facilities.

6.9 WATERFRONT AND LAKE ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT

Nanaimo's recreation use of water is concentrated on Long Lake, Brannen Lake and the sheltered marine waters of Newcastle Channel, Departure Bay and Nanaimo Harbour. Non-motorized use occurs on Westwood Lake and Diver Lake.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

With population growth and new water-based sports, crowding and conflict on Nanaimo's lakes and sheltered marine areas appears to be growing. There is a need to start managing this asset in order to avert these conflicts. Similarly, while numerous public access points now exist within the park system, they seem to be little known. Some respondents noted that these accesses are often difficult to find or appear to have been "taken over" by neighbouring properties. Access to the waterfront is a high priority in terms of outdoor recreation and appreciation, as shown by both public comments and survey results. Nanaimo is, indeed, the Harbour City, and access to water is a fundamental reason for living in the community.

For the most part, waterfront accesses have been developed primarily for neighbourhood use in terms of providing a simple path, with no adjacent parking, to which local residents can walk. However, to take some of the pressure off waterfront parks such as Pipers Lagoon and Kinsmen Park, it becomes necessary to provide for more extensive use of at least a number of waterfront access points.

Some existing access points could be developed for heavier use (e.g. by upgrading trails and providing parking space) based on the following criteria:

- The availability of land area required.
- The capacity of the path/access to withstand additional use without jeopardizing the surrounding environment or public safety.
- The proximity of private residences to the path/access and to the waterfront; if adjacent residences are close to the path or the waterfront, then further development is likely not desirable.

Ideally, waterfront access points should be provided, on average, every 500 metres. This would allow access within walking distances for most local residents while providing ready opportunities for access for residents from other parts of the City. Much of the coastline, particularly in the north end, is very steep and erodable, making it costly or impossible to provide safe, direct access to the foreshore. In such cases, waterfront access should take the form of viewpoints with limited parking, benches or picnic tables and buffering vegetation that welcome users to enjoy the view in a quiet setting.

Recommendations

Review the role that the City of Nanaimo can play in Lake Use Management, with attention to gaps in existing practice by other agencies.

Develop a City policy on Lake Use Management to address:

- *Access, on-water conflicts, use management*
- *Coordination of user groups*



- *Regulation role*
- *Policing role*
- *Mandate – legal and responsible*
- *Multi-agency liaison*

Provide waterfront access every 500 metres where possible.

Develop existing and future waterfront accesses for more extensive use where:

- *Land is available to do so*
- *The capacity exists to withstand use without jeopardizing environmental integrity or public safety*
- *Private residences are not too close to the access and waterfront*

Provide viewpoints with sitting areas where shorelines are too steep to allow access to the foreshore itself.

Ensure all existing and future public accesses are readily identifiable from the adjoining road.

Ensure that adjacent private properties are appropriately screened.

Indicate the location of all public access in park guides and brochures.

6.10 ACCOMMODATING DOGS IN PARKS

Pets are a key part of people's families. This creates much emotion around the issue of places for dogs, in particular, to run free. In addition, dogs often create conflicts with people in parks and trails; and pets have impacts on the environment. As a service to the public and the environment, the City needs to find a creative balance to the opportunities and issues that dogs and other pets present.

Dog off-leash sites presently exist at Beban Park, the Westwood Lake power line trails and at Cable Bay trail. The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is now developing plans for the phased 'closing and adaptive re-use' of the Cedar Road landfill. Passive park uses including dog off-leash areas are part of this plan.

Recommendations

Encourage and support the RDN in creating a large (soccer field size) dog-off leash area as the Cedar sanitary landfill is closed and adapted to parks and open space use.

Review and write, with public input, a comprehensive policy and education program on dogs in parks. This program should include:

- *Identification of proposed dog off-leash parks, with a goal of finding a suitable location near Nanaimo's north end to supplement existing off-leash areas.*
- *Identification of trail segments that may be suitable for dog off-leash status.*



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- *Review challenges associated with pets in public areas, including personal safety; comfort; dog interaction; trail or park crowding; impacts on birds, wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas; dog litter policies; and amenities for pets.*
- *Design guidelines for dog off-leash areas and for dog off-leash trails.*
- *Education materials for pet owners on ways to minimize the impact of their pet on other people and the environment.*

Consider role of the private sector in the development of dog off leash areas.

6.11 URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN

Forests are a significant part of the heritage and setting that gives Nanaimo its character and attractiveness. Nanaimo's existing policies on trees have been focused on protection, but this protection does not extend to individual lots – tree policies have administrative challenges and may prevent seeing 'the forest for the trees'. Recent information on the environmental values of urban forests, and on management tools for urban forests, provide opportunities for more effective programs. Completion of utility upgrades in the Old City, and construction of boulevards in new subdivisions, provide opportunities to embark on an organized street tree program.

In addition, public input results show continuing support for protection of the natural environment, as well as beautification of Nanaimo. The City's Tree Protection Bylaw is established, but could use a review and fine-tuning. The consultants' work in other communities has shown a benefit:cost ratio of up to 5:1 for public street tree programs.

Recommendations

Complete an Urban Forest Master Plan that includes:

- *A review of the objectives and implementation of the Tree Protection Bylaw.*
- *Review of other regulations and policies concerning the management of trees and forests in parks and other protected lands.*
- *An investigation of the role of trees in stormwater management, energy use, air quality, habitat, views, aesthetic and property values.*
- *A vision, supported by staff and public process, for the role and form of the desired urban forest in Nanaimo.*
- *Recommended strategies, implementation tools, and budgets for tree protection, planting, maintenance and removal.*
- *Planning and budgeting for the installation and maintenance of street trees.*



6.12 LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION AND NATURALIZATION, MAINTENANCE PLANNING

In the last ten years, the completion of the Nanaimo Parkway, Third Street and other major new roadways have changed the traffic pattern and location of entrances to the City. Horticultural display sites may need to change because of varied road and circulation patterns. Areas which are low profile may be suitable for naturalization. Proper planning of maintenance and priorities may improve overall efficiency and effectiveness.

During recent open houses, concerns about the appearance and level of maintenance extend to streetsides and 'garden parks' around the City, in particular at highly visible entrances and public sites. There is also a public perception that maintenance levels have been inadequate in some areas. This is most often stated about the downtown area. A current trend in park management is to consider areas that are appropriate for a lower standard of landscape maintenance or that should be designated for naturalization.

Recommendations

Undertake a complete review of horticultural display sites in the City.

Refocus priorities given new traffic patterns and new developments.

Prepare parks maintenance plans that clearly determine maintenance levels for different areas within parks; organize these into a City-wide program with related funding and priorities to optimize effectiveness.

Initiate a naturalization program for non-priority areas where there is a natural backdrop.

Implement a comprehensive signage and visual identity program, including explanation of the naturalization program.

Review the City's land use planning and regulatory mechanisms in the ways suggested to enhance the identification and protection of Nanaimo's environmentally significant features.

Support programs to educate and encourage voluntary stewardship actions on private lands (e.g. appropriate landscaping on steep slopes; creating or maintaining ponds and marshes; environmentally friendly tree pruning).

6.13 INTEGRATED PARK SITE, EVENT AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

There have been concerns about maintenance standards in existing parks, as well as areas in parks between developed facilities that are not "finished". There is public dissatisfaction with levels of maintenance of highly visible areas, particularly in the downtown. These are signs of a parks system and City that is changing and growing faster than the organization's ability to keep-up.



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Since resources will always be limited, horticulture and maintenance priorities need to be carefully defined. In addition, special events will create special challenges for maintenance and space. Planning for parks facilities and maintenance needs to anticipate the needs of special events. A key to success is to ensure that funding is in place to complete verge areas and "the commons", and that standards of maintenance are clearly spelled out, and adequate maintenance funding provided given the proposed standards. For example, areas of parks may be designated for various maintenance levels as specified in the BC Landscape Standard. These levels vary from 'Appearance' to 'Background'.

Recommendation

Create Integrated Park Site, Event and Management Plans:

- *To identify planned improvements to facilities and verge areas.*
- *To plan how the facilities would operate both during regular and special events.*
- *To identify design / maintenance standards for various areas.*

Include estimates for capital and operating funds, with recommendations to Council for an organized program of implementation.

Establish priorities for Integrated Site, Management and Maintenance Plans including the Third Street Park, Beban Park, Bowen Park, and Maffeo-Sutton/Swy-a-Lana. Integrated plans for other parks would follow.

Create an Integrated Site, Management and Maintenance Plan for the Downtown Cultural District, when further improvements are undertaken at this location.

6.14 OTHER ISSUES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Several other issues are worthy of action. The public wishes to see greater cooperation and efficiency in the use of recreation resources by the City and other public agencies such as SD #68 and Malaspina University College. Joint planning and development will allow optimum efficiency in use of land, and will offer opportunities for shared parking, trail linkages, washrooms, concessions, utilities, and the like.

The items below may be viewed as Special Projects that are priorities for the next ten-year period.

6.14.1 NANAIMO RECREATION CAMPUS

The 1994 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan recommended the acquisition of the Third Street property. This has been accomplished. Planning of play fields and a twin ice arena, as well as extensive environmental protection areas, is well advanced with good prospects for implementation.



Malaspina University-College and the Third Street corridor are now an important gateway to Nanaimo's downtown and their appearance and resources affect the rest of the City. As Malaspina contemplates University status, it is important to create a physical presence that solidifies its image to the students, residents and visitors.

Recommendations

Develop the Third Street Park in central Nanaimo to create a 'campus-like' entrance for central Nanaimo.

Develop playing fields and twin arenas in this area to integrate with improvements to adjacent School District lands (e.g. Serauxmen Stadium parking) and Malaspina University College Lands to create a seamless open space amenity surrounding Third Street.

Provide careful integration of recreational facilities and an open grass campus, environmentally protected areas, trail systems, street trees, streetscape and parking area buffering, stormwater and watershed management, signage systems (informational, directional, interpretive) and overall parks and open space aesthetics.

Seek partnerships in planning, implementation, facility use and maintenance to optimize the use and beauty of this important new 'campus'. Such partnership may serve as a model for other co-operative ventures among the City, School District, University College and others.

6.14.2 DOWNTOWN / MALASPINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TRAIL

New housing developments, and potentially a Convention Centre and hotel, are currently planned for downtown Nanaimo. This will create additional population in the downtown centre. Improvements at the harbourfront open space system merit strengthening the trail link for the existing and new population to and from the Third Street recreation campus, Bowen Park and the Downtown waterfront for both for residents and tourists. This link would also improve non-motorized access for College and Harewood residents to downtown and the waterfront.

Recommendations

Give priority to completing and enhancing the Trans Canada trail from Maffeo Sutton Park up the Millstone River through Bowen Park, extending to the Aquatic Centre, Third Street Campus and Malaspina University College.

Investigate the feasibility of a trail underpass at the railway embankment, with an improved connection from Maffeo Sutton to Caledonia Park.

Develop a plan for a complementary linkage along Third Street from Wakesiah Avenue to Downtown, that would allow a loop walking or cycling circuit, and would provide, in the long term as adjacent redevelopment occurs, a streetscape fitting for this major entrance.



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6.14.3 LINLEY VALLEY STRATEGIC PARKS AND TRAIL PLAN

The implementation of a new community centre at Oliver Road is funded and imminent. The new centre is in an area of land that was acquired by the School District for a secondary school, and that proposal has since been abandoned. The 1994 Master Plan showed schematically the idea of an open space link from the Oliver Road/Rutherford Area down the Cottle and Linley Valley to Hammond Bay Road. The opportunity still exists to plan strategically for this link before the Oliver Road centre site plan is finalized, and before there is land ownership change or development in the area.

Recommendations

Complete a strategic plan for parks, open space and trail linkages between the Oliver Road Park area and Hammond Bay Road, along the Linley Valley corridor.

Identify, conceptually, locations for trails and open space linkages in relation to ridges, watercourses and environmentally sensitive areas, existing and proposed parklands and planned major road networks.

Use the plan as input to development, park and roadway planning for the Valley.

6.14.4 NORTH NANAIMO & LANTZVILLE JOINT WATERFRONT ACCESS PLAN

Waterfront access was a key recurring theme in public input to the Master Plan. In North Nanaimo, there are steep waterfront access stairs at Icarus Drive and at Eagle Point. However, the high, unstable shore cliffs restrict additional access from the housing areas there to the waterfront at Eagle Point, which includes attractive beaches at low tide. The shore cliffs become less steep at the north end of the beaches, in the new District of Lantzville. Improving waterfront access in the North end of Nanaimo benefits residents within the City as well as citizens of Lantzville.

Recommendation

Pursue, in co-operation with the District of Lantzville, a design and implementation plan to increase public access for both Nanaimo and Lantzville residents to the beaches of Eagle Point.

Consider the creation of a comfortable loop walking circuit to enjoy the beaches and upland ridges.

6.14.5 MOUNTAIN VIEW OPEN SPACE PLAN

The review of park and trail coverage indicates a deficiency of parks and trails in the Mountain View Elementary School catchment area. Although this area is low density at



present, there is the possibility of increases in density in the long term and failure to plan now for parks and open space may make it unachievable at a later date.

Recommendations

Prepare a parks and open space acquisition plan for the Mountain View Neighbourhood.

Pursue parks acquisition in this neighbourhood as opportunities arise.

6.14.6 CHASE RIVER / SOUTH NANAIMO OPEN SPACE PLAN

The review of park and trail coverage indicates a deficiency of parks and trails in the South Nanaimo area, including most of the Inukan future development lands. Although this area is not developed at present, there is the likelihood of development applications in the future. In addition, the phased closing of the Cedar Sanitary Landfill and its conversion to parks use creates a new variable in open space planning for this area. In that context, it is important for the City to identify the amount, type and conceptual location of parks and open space that it expects during development. Failure to plan now for parks and open space may make it unachievable at a later date.

Recommendations

Prepare a parks and open space acquisition plan for the South Nanaimo area.

Pursue parks acquisition in this neighbourhood if opportunities arise.

6.14.7 NANAIMO PADDLING CENTRE

Local groups are coalescing to support the development of a Paddling Centre on Nanaimo's marine waterfront.

Partners include local rowing and paddling clubs, as well as the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Discussions have begun with the Port Authority concerning location, with the Brechin Boat Ramp area being one alternative.

The objective is to have a two kilometer rowing course in Newcastle Channel – and this would fit between Brechin Point and Swy-a-Lana Lagoon. The paddling centre development may be a key part of Nanaimo's eco-tourism marketing strategy; however, there are potential issues of congestion around mixing rowing craft, seaplanes and other craft in the channel. Any public development on the waterfront should be of a high caliber of design, and should be a public attraction to add to Nanaimo's appeal.



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Recommendations

Lead the planning and design process to determine the feasibility and cooperative funding for the development of a Paddling Centre and rowing course on Nanaimo's Marine Waterfront.

Work with the Port of Nanaimo and BC Parks to determine the best location for rowing activity in the harbour and the best waterfront location for on-land facilities.

Design the Paddling Centre and rowing course to recognize the high-value of any waterfront location, and create a structure and program that adds to Nanaimo's tourism appeal while serving the needs of local paddlers, viewers and marine support services.

6.14.8 NEW NANAIMO CENTRE / COMMERCIAL ST. PIPER PARK LINKAGE

The new convention centre and hotel proposal in downtown Nanaimo is an opportunity to more effectively link Commercial Street to the waterfront. The New Nanaimo Centre will become the symbolic and physical heart of the City, and is thus a symbol of Nanaimo's heritage, civic pride and future. The public appeal of the spaces between the waterfront and Commercial Street is critical to the circulation of pedestrians past retail areas on Commercial Street.

Recommendation

Implement a design for Piper Park and the adjacent Museum Way in tandem with the design of the proposed Convention Centre and new Museum that conveniently links the waterfront walkway system and Commercial Street for pedestrians, while recognizing and enhancing the heritage appreciation of this area and Nanaimo in general.



7. IMPLEMENTATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and Department should use the Master Plan as the basis for decision making over the next ten years. The document should be referred to on a regular basis, and should provide guidance on a wide range of issues related to the delivery of leisure services. Each of the recommendations should guide the City in implementing the Plan.

Some recommendations will have little or no budget impact, while others will be used as the basis for budget submissions in future years.

At the end of each year, the Department should prepare a brief report outlining those areas in the Plan that been implemented in the previous twelve months, and providing details regarding revisions that may be necessary for the continued implementation of the recommendations.

It is recognized that as time goes on, there may be other projects and priorities that arise that will take precedence over the current recommendations. These may arise as a result of changes in forecasted population growth and the City's demographics, continued development opportunities, or other circumstances. It is important to note that any amendments to the Plan should be documented and appended to the final report.

The information on the following page summarizes recommendations related to each of the recommendations related to new and improved community facilities.

It should be noted that the cost of construction has undergone a dramatic increase in the past two years, and it is anticipated that costs will continue to increase significantly for the immediate future. The consultants have been provided with information from architects and construction management firms in order to identify the cost per square foot to build and/or renovate facilities. The estimates are provided below.

Aquatic centre improvements / retrofits

- \$230 - \$300 per sq. ft.

Community recreation centre improvements / retrofits

- \$200 - \$300 per sq. ft.

The City has funds in place for the construction of two of the facilities recommended in the Plan – the twin arenas at Third Street, and the Oliver Road Community Centre. The consultants have used construction cost estimates provided by the City for these amenities.



IMPLEMENTATION

The following construction costs and priorities are presented for the City's consideration. It should be noted that estimates are based on 2005 dollars, and the annual cost of inflation will have to be built in.

**FIGURE EIGHTEEN
CAPITAL COSTS - PROPOSED INDOOR FACILITIES (2005 - 2014)**

PROJECT INITIATION	PROJECT	COST	COMMENT
Ongoing	Art in Public Places	\$ 100 k / yr	Funded in cooperation with current / future development
2005	Twin Ice Rinks	\$ 10 m	Funds in place, and planning currently underway
2005	Oliver Road Community Centre	\$ 7.25 m	Funds in place
2005	Arts Rehearsal Space	--	Project assumes land can be acquired in an exchange with School District #68
2006	Museum	\$ 4 - 5 m	Funds in place and planning currently underway
2008/09	Beban Park Multi-Purpose Hall	\$ 1.6 m	In partnership with community organizations
2009	Bowen Park Community Centre	\$ 2.6 m	Facility expansion and retrofit
2010	Beban Park Community Centre / Beban Aquatic Centre	\$ 5.5 m	Facility expansion and retrofit
2014 & beyond	South Nanaimo Community Centre	\$ 7 m	Facilities to be determined through public consultation process



Please Note:

- The project costs listed above include the cost of construction, as well as soft costs for professional fees (architects, engineers, electrical consultants, and mechanical consultants), building permits, FFE (furniture, fixtures and equipment), and the like.
- Several of the projects will likely require some degree of public consultation, as well as input from City officials, in order to determine the exact building components, size and program requirements. This process could well result in facilities that are larger (or smaller) than currently anticipated.
- The Master Plan includes mention of the need to address operating considerations and potential improvements suggested by aquatic organizations and staff, related to the operation of the Nanaimo and Beban Aquatic Centres and the outdoor pool. It is anticipated that these improvements will be financed through current capital allocations.
- It is anticipated that improvements to the Harewood gymnasium will be relatively minor.
- Improvements to the facilities at the Bowen and Beban Community Centres are intended to provide additional meeting and multi-purpose space, as well as space for arts programming.
- As noted, in some instances, financial assistance will be sought through partnerships with community organizations. Grant programs from senior levels of government should also be explored.

