

Committee of the Whole Report



Date: January 3, 2006
To: Mayor and Council
From: Cindy O'Regan, Manager Facilities and Operations
Department: Parks, Recreation & Community Development
Subject: Report on Community Discussions on Next Steps for Recreation and Community Services System

Executive Summary:

Ten community consultation sessions were held during the fall of 2004 to provide a forum for community associations and other groups to provide feedback to Mayor and Council on the recreation renewal proposal. The process was designed to:

- Hear the specific concerns from community association staff, board members, facility users, and community members regarding recreation renewal
- Better understand community association needs; and
- Explore potential benefits of the recreation renewal proposal.

The findings of this process were included in an earlier report to Council with a key recommendation to go back to community groups through their decision makers, including board members and senior staff, to ensure that the concerns expressed by participants during the fall sessions were accurately reflected in the report and to determine whether these concerns and issues could be addressed.

Throughout May and June of 2005, City Recreation staff and consultants met with Community and Senior Associations and other stakeholders with the following specific objectives:

- Review what was heard and learned during the fall consultations
- Review the key themes from each neighbourhood
- Review each community/organization's specific focus and service priority
- Discuss possible next steps
- Agree on next steps – if any – for follow up

During these meetings, participants seemed satisfied that the specific concerns and issues of their community had been heard with only a few minor additions from two groups. The majority of the association boards and senior staff expressed an interest in moving forward by exploring the next step in the change process. The associations want to be part of an ongoing dialogue on vision and values and developing common understanding.

At Committee of the Whole on September 8, 2005, City Recreation staff and consultants presented the findings from these meetings in a report titled "Report on the Community Association discussions on next steps for Recreation and Community Services System". The report, with recommendations, was then circulated to all stakeholder groups for comment and feedback. Over the past 10 weeks the feedback received included the concerns raised at the CAN meeting on October 19 and a letter of support from the Victoria Curling Club.

Subsequent to this feedback and the feedback received from the 17 stakeholder groups in the spring, staff presented recommendations for Council's consideration at their Committee of the Whole meeting December 8th. At this meeting the report was tabled to allow the new Council Liaison an opportunity to be briefed on the subject. Following this briefing, staff made minor changes to the report for clarification on definitions and submit the following recommendations for Council's consideration.

Recommendations:

1. City Council receives the Indaba Report of August 20, 2005 on the Community Associations discussions on next steps for recreation and community services system for information.
2. City Council reaffirms its long held vision of support of the delivery of recreation and community services at the local/neighbourhood level.
3. That City Council consults with the Learning Centre Task Force on the inclusion of representation from the City Recreation/Community Development staff on the Learning Centre Task Force.
4. That interested stakeholders, including community and senior centre board members, centre staff, community association members and user group representatives along with City staff and representatives of Council, be invited to a community forum to establish common ground on the vision, values and key underlying assumptions on a City wide Recreation and Community Services Delivery System as referenced in the Indaba Report August 20, 2005.
5. That the outcomes be used as the foundation for proceeding with a planning process for:
 - a. Neighbourhood and Community centres and the development of associated policies and strategies, co-operation agreements, facility upgrades and other elements necessary to meet community needs.

Neighbourhood Centres are defined as smaller facilities that offer neighbourhood programs and services.

Community Centres are defined as medium size facilities that offer neighbourhood and broader community programs and services. Potentially provides space/support to adjacent neighbourhood associations

- b. The City Centre, taking into consideration regional needs and interests, neighbourhood needs, public use and potential partnerships.

City Centre is defined as a larger facility or combination of facilities which are centrally located and which serve neighbourhood, community and regional needs. Potentially provides space/support to adjacent neighbourhood associations. Programs and services would include: aquatics, fitness, health and wellness, artificial turf fields (with some spectator capacity), and possibly curling, seniors programming and other possible programs and services offered through potential partners such as Health, Learning Centre, Library

Respectfully submitted:

Signed

Cindy O'Regan,
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Recreation Division

signed

Donna Atkinson
Director
Parks, Recreation & Community Development

Background:

Spring 2005 Consultation Meetings – Key Discussion Areas with Community Groups

1. Confirm what was heard in the fall 2005 sessions

- A sense of community, place and belonging
- Accessibility and transportation or proximity
- Governance, decision making and partnerships
- The concept of recreation
- The role of the volunteer
- Projections, financial viability, options and funding sources
- Benefits of the Hub
- The Process

2. Discussions with Community Decision Makers

- Review impact of fall consultation sessions on addressing the needs of the Recreation and Community Services System
- Review each community/organization's specific focus and service priorities
- Discuss possible next steps
- Agree on next steps, if any, for follow up

3. The Need for Change

- There was a general acknowledgement from the community of both anticipated future demand and limitations of current infrastructure, and funding to meet needs

4. Changes to the Vision

- Victoria is a dynamic city where communities of shared interest, working together, offer quality of life activities and services so people enjoy active, healthy lifestyles. (Add to it) The system will be celebrated as Canadian Best Practice model and will provide a strong link to social programs and community services networks and organizations.

5. Adding and Clarifying Values

Original Values:

- Accessibility
- Balanced
- Community
- Involvement
- Flexibility
- Healthy
- Partnerships
- Reflecting the Victoria community
- Sustainability
- Transparency

Added:

- Physical proximity
- Reflecting neighbourhood community

6. Revised/clarified Definitions

Neighbourhood Centre Definition:

- Smaller facilities that offer neighbourhood programs and services. A neighbourhood community association could be responsible for the operation of the centre or it could be operated by a community centre or City Centre.

Community Centre Definition:

- Medium size facilities that offer neighbourhood and broader community programs and services. Potentially provides space/support to adjacent neighbourhood associations. A Community Association could be responsible for the operation of the centre or it could be operated by the City Centre. It could possibly be an operator for neighbourhood centres.

City Centre Definition:

- A larger facility or combination of facilities which are centrally located and which serve neighbourhood, community and regional needs. Potentially provides space/support to adjacent neighbourhood associations. Will be operated from within and could possibly be an operator for neighbourhood or community centre.
- Programs and services would include: aquatics, fitness, health and wellness, artificial turf fields (with some spectator capacity), and possibly curling, seniors programming and other possible programs and services offered through potential partners such as Health, Learning Centre, Library.

Recreation Definition:

- The concept of social recreation that occurs when people interact at a community facility along with enjoying a sense of place belongs equally with the concept of physical recreation

7. General Service Delivery Challenges and Principles for Possible Change

Current Demographics: Compiled from 2001 Statistics Canada data

Total population of City of Victoria is 74,125

- 0 – 19 years accounts for 10,655
- 20 -49 years accounts for 36,865
- 50 years plus accounts for 26,600

Future Demographic Challenges Facing Services, Programs & Activities

As the City approaches the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, projections suggest that less than 6,000 Victoria residents will be 19 years old or younger. Assuming a relatively stable population base, that means that more than 90 per cent of Victoria's population will be 20 years of age or older, with the majority being in the 45-70 years age categories. For example:

Age	1978	2003	2013 - estimated
Under 19	45% of population	13 % of population	6% of population
19 to 54 years	34% of population	59% of population	56% of population
55 years plus	17% of population	28% of population	38% of population

Victoria's aging demographic composition translates into an increased demand for programs and services that serve the active older adult and seniors while still meeting the needs of youth, children

and families. With active adults dominating the Victoria market, new quality of life programs will be in high demand while we continue to strive to meet the future needs of all generations.

For example:

- expect an increase in program activities such as yoga, Pilates, boot camps, fitness, outdoor pursuits, adventure programs, languages, running, sports and the arts
- children and youth programs will focus on combating childhood obesity, getting children more active on a regular basis, and outdoor pursuits.

Current Challenges Facing Facilities re: Infrastructure & Funding

- Nine of thirteen facilities are requesting major capital development improvements to their facility.
- The majority of facilities face sustainable and self sufficiency limitations in terms of lack of multipurpose, storage, and activity space and inefficient and aging mechanical systems.
- Need to assess the ongoing maintenance and upkeep costs of each facility against improved services through capital redevelopment or replacement.
- Many of the facilities operate with limited evening and weekend hours and as a result, facility capacity is not realized and the public does not have access to services.
- Competition for capital improvements to facilities and equipment and setting of overall priorities.
- School reconfiguration and Provincial Government funding reductions will have a significant impact on community and senior centre operations.
- Increasing liability insurance premiums.
- All facilities are competing for funding from governments, foundations, and local businesses.

Current Challenges Facing Facilities re: Services, Programs & Activities

Aging infrastructure and current program growth pressures have led to deficiencies that need to be addressed. Example:

- The main building for Fairfield Community Place lacks adequate program space. They would like to add additional space to the rear of the facility.
- The participants at James Bay New Horizons are requesting additional programs and services and these program needs cannot be met in their present facility. They have requested an additional 6m000 sq ft of program space.
- Oaklands Community Centre is operating at maximum capacity with no room for expansion.
- Blanshard programs and services are limited by the centre size and programmable space.
- Victoria West Community Y is operating at maximum capacity with no room for program or service expansion. They are requesting an additional 16,000 feet of program space.
- Fernwood lacks adequate and appropriate space for programs and services. They have requested that existing spaces be renovated and additional program space be added.
- Fairfield New Horizons Seniors Centre is operating at maximum capacity with no room for program expansion. They are requesting an additional 2,500 sq ft of program space.
- James Bay Community Centre's programs and services are limited by centre spaces and quality and quantity of programmable spaces.
- Much of Royal Athletic Park is consumed by underutilized bleachers that were once used for large spectator event. Field closures due weather and drainage are an issue for users and points to the need for all weather fields.
- The Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre has reached its life expectancy from both an infrastructure and a program and service perspective. The bleacher area is underutilized, the fitness and weight room areas require expansion, there is a need for additional areas for play and indoor sports, a need for increased parking. Substantial improvements are needed in the change facilities to include the addition of family and disabled change rooms. The entire facility is not handicap accessible and there is no gymnasium or multipurpose space to allow for program growth. The building systems are failing and require attention.