



**VICTORIA'S RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES
DELIVERY SYSTEM**

**Strategic Foundations Forum for Establishing Common
Ground on Vision, Values & Key Beliefs
June 20, 2006**

Proceedings & Recommendations

June 29, 2006

I Introduction

The purpose of the June 20th forum (the Forum) was to establish common ground, among all stakeholders, on the vision, values and key beliefs for Victoria's Recreation & Community Services System (the System). Agreement on these strategic foundations would provide a foundation for the planning process to begin in September.

This document includes the Forum proceedings in Section II, a set of recommendations in Section III, and 3 appendices:

- Appendix A: *Victoria's Recreation & Community Services System, Community Forum Document, May 2, 2006*
- Appendix B: *Forum Agenda & Small Group Activities*
- Appendix C: *Victoria's Recreation & Community Services System: Establishing Common Ground On Vision, Values & Key Beliefs, June 20, 2006*

Prior to the Forum, in early May, 29 stakeholder groups were asked to respond to a number of questions about the System's past, present and strategic foundations, as well as some questions related to the September planning process (see Appendix A). Their responses to the former questions were collated and used by the June 20th forum participants (see pp. 3-9, Appendix C). The planning questions responses will be brought forward to the start of the planning process in September.

The context, principles, rationale, roles and responsibilities for the Forum are outlined on pp. 1-2 of Appendix C.

II Proceedings

The 41 participants were divided up among 7 tables with a diverse range of stakeholder group representatives at each. These "small table groups" were asked to respond to a series of 5 questions (see i) – v) below), using the pre-Forum information provided by stakeholders (see Appendix C, pp. 3-9) and record their group's responses on flip chart paper. Following a brief small group discussion of each question, the responses of each table group were posted at the front of the room for viewing and discussion by all participants.

i) System Milestones: What do the milestones suggest re: the 2-5 key assumptions (i.e., values &/or beliefs) that have guided the development of the System from 1966 to today?

- Value on meeting community requirements
- Value on mix
- All about buildings
- Belief that without Federal dollars, no interest in seniors
- Belief that without Federal dollars there was still an interest in seniors
- Recreation is more than just sports

- Community involvement
- Physical proximity to facilities
- Belief that community facilities are self sustaining
- Belief that regional facilities may require a different funding model and/or partnerships to deliver services/facilities
- Importance of community and delivering services closer to home/tailored to neighbour needs and uniqueness
- Initial desire for change, plans, action morphed into policy driven vs. action
- Politically & neighbourhood insulation “territorial”
- Financial abundance/restrictions
- Short term/reactive planning (missing long term vision)
- Initial “city” focus as community
- Value of sustainability
- Value of accessibility
- Value of flexibility
- Value of inclusion
- Community self determination
- Neighbourhood focus
- Increased centralization
- Accessibility considered
- Replacement/additions
- Economic accessibility (L.I.F.E.)
- Facility – based
- Combination of traditional recreation services with community services
- Throughout the past 40 years, there has been a value placed on central facilities
- The city has responded to diverse needs of neighbourhoods
- Programs are neighbourhood/community based
- Federal-provincial funding critical to new facilities
- Wide geographical dispersal of facilities

ii) Significant trends of external forces What 2-5 trends impacting the System are of particular concern?

- Decreased dollars
- Decreasing dollars e.g. Funding – federal & provincial
- Financing challenges – capital and operating
- Increased costs
- Increased instability
- Increasing cost of living results in decreased use of facilities that have user fees/increased demand for family social type services provided by community centres
- Uncertainty of all levels of funding
- Increased cost of transportation as well as lack of access for some
- Downloading fed/province to local government

- Shifting financial economics
- Increased aging infrastructure
- Infrastructures aging
- Aging facility infrastructure
- Aging/ or inadequate facilities
- Aging infrastructures & rising construction costs
- A strain in financial sustainability of infrastructure
- Lack of funding combined with increased costs of building/maintaining facilities
- Increasing strain
- Lack of investment in multi-use city wide facility
- Increased aging population
- Demographics e.g. Aging population
- Aging population
- Aging population•
- More active and aging population
- More diverse & special need clients add pressure to facility operations (downloading!!)
- Reflection of cultural differences & diversity
- Family/work schedule challenges
- Demographic changes – aging population, young families
- Changing demographics
- Increased demands on organization
- Decline of service clubs (loss of facilities)
- Change face of volunteerism
- Increased physical inactivity
- Decrease in physical activity – youth
- Lifestyle/obesity trend will impact demands on recreation system
- Health concerns
- Increased gap between haves & have-nots
- Shift to user pay – more gap between rich & poor
- Financial accessibility
- More inclusive of all ages & needs
- Shifting political agendas

iii) Preferred Future Vision a) What changes could be made to make the vision statement (more) meaningful for your table group? b) What changes or additions are needed in the vision statement to ensure it captures your table's aspirations for the System and evokes a sense of ownership by your table group?

- Victoria is a dynamic city where diverse communities of shared interest, working together, offer accessible quality of life activities and services so all people can enjoy healthy & active lifestyles
- Victoria is a city of dynamic, local, diverse communities of shared interest that acknowledge the value/difference of both local and regional facilities. Working

together to offer accessible and convenient quality of life activities and services so all people, regardless of social or economic status enjoy

- Victoria is a city of dynamic local communities which maximize opportunity for all residents to develop a healthy lifestyle and sense of wellness and belonging
- Victoria is a city of diverse communities who share interest in working together to offer quality of life activities and services so everyone can enjoy healthy, active lifestyles
- Victoria is a dynamic city, where diverse communities of shared interest, working together, offer accessible, within walking distance, quality of life activities and services, so all people, regardless of social or economic status, enjoy healthy & active lifestyles. Honoured by a commitment to adequate funding, the recreation and community services system will improve & enhance our citizen's health, wellness, community connections and community well-being, and inclusive of social programs & community services networks & organizations. *when!!*
- Too long trying to accomplish too much – liked vision revision draft (1)
- Okay with editing/word smithing likes dynamic city where diverse communities
- Must include: accessible, diverse, community connections, creative
- Quality of life activities, health & wellness
- This recreation system offers an accessible & sustainable network of services which support healthy lifestyles to our population
- Healthy – active, well being, psych, physical, spirit etc.
- Population includes – ethnic division, age, social/economic, ability
- Sustainable – financial support – region, adaptable, flexible, diverse
- Accessible – financial, physical – ability, local, infrastructure, transport, safety
- Victoria is a city made up of communities working together to offer quality of life activities and services that are affordable and accessible to all
- Honoured by a commitment to adequate funding the recreation & community service system will improve & enhance our citizens health, wellness and community well-being and will provide a strong link to creative social programs and community service networks & organizations
- Healthy and active lifestyles committed to adequate funding the system will improve and enhance our community and cultural well-being, by providing a diversity of social programs and community services

Following the posting of the (above) small group responses, the “revised draft based on pre-forum input” vision statement (pg.7, Appendix C) was displayed on the screen:

[(Victoria is a dynamic city where (diverse) communities) (Victoria is a city of dynamic local communities)] of shared interest, working together, offer [(accessible) (within convenient walking distance) (the best possible)] quality of life activities and services so (all) people (regardless of social or economic status) enjoy healthy and active lifestyles. (Honoured by a commitment to adequate funding) the (recreation & community services) system will improve and enhance our citizens health, wellness, (community connections) and community well-being and will [(provide a strong link to) (is inclusive of)] (creative) social programs and community services networks and organizations

The larger group (of 41) was asked to indicate what words or phrases could be deleted; they all agreed to; and/or, they didn't agree on. A common ground vision statement is provided in Recommendation i.

iv) Vision-critical values What are 2-4 important (i.e., vision-critical) values for realizing the vision statement?

- Accessible/inclusive
- Balanced
- Reflecting neighbourhood community
- Flexible(ity)
- Sustainability
- "Place based" neighbourhood services
- Flexible approach
- Sustainable
- Partnerships/reflecting neighbourhood community
- Parking lot
- Flexible approach
- Financial sustainability
- Accessible/inclusive
- Community
- Sustainable (financial, environmental (proximity), organizational, social
- Healthy

Following the posting of the (above) small group responses, the larger group was asked which vision-critical values seemed the most widely shared. These included:

- Flexible approach
- Accessible & inclusive
- Sustainability – Dollars, environmental, human resources
- Partnerships

A common ground set of vision-critical values is provided in Recommendation ii.

v. Vision-critical beliefs What are 2-4 important (i.e., vision-critical) beliefs for realizing the vision statement? [1 . & revised #2 refer to page 9, Appendix C:

1. A sustainable recreation & community services system requires tapping all revenue sources and exploring all partnerships, provided that one partnership is not at the expense of another.

revised #2. Meeting neighbourhood & city interests in a regional (adjacent municipalities) context is the primary focus of service planning and delivery]

- That we should explore all appropriate revenue sources and partnerships with compatible values
- That meeting neighbourhood and city interests in collaboration with the region is the primary focus!
- #1 – community partnerships
- revised #2
- The goal of recreation services is to serve ‘local’ community
- #1 is just fine ...
- Service planning & delivery is responsive to the population by it’s fundamental nature
- System sustainability is maintained by a cooperative approach to planning & delivery
- A sustainable recreation system requires a creative and balanced approach to access revenue sources and develop partnerships
- Okay with revised #2
- A sustainable recreation system requires exploration of all revenue sources ... etc.
- Meeting neighbourhood, city and regional interests ... etc.
- Non profits should not be expected to carry a disproportionate load to fulfill city & regional interests
- A sustainable recreation system meeting the needs of neighbourhood, city and regional interests is the primary focus of service planning and delivery based on continuing community input and involvement
- The belief that ... a sustainable recreation system requires accessing all possible resources (human, \$) and developing diverse & equitable partnerships.
- Revised #2

A common ground set of vision-critical beliefs is provided in Recommendation iii.

III Recommendations

The strategic foundations of Victoria’s Recreation & Community Services System, its vision, values & key beliefs, are interdependent and self-reinforcing core documents. Collectively, they need to form a coherent and integrated whole. This requirement, along with other considerations outlined in the rationale, is reflected in the following recommendations:

i) That the following vision statement* be adopted:

The City of Victoria’s diverse communities of shared interest, working together, offer accessible quality of life activities and services so all people enjoy healthy and active lifestyles. The recreation and community services system improves and enhances our citizens’ health, wellness and community well-being, is inclusive of cultural and social programs, and provides a strong link to key external networks and organizations.

*The preferred and possible future for the City’s Recreation & Community Services System that stakeholders collectively aspire to and intend to, over the long term, make a reality.

Rationale:

- The above vision statement is based on the input provided by participants, as a large group, in their review of the revised draft based on pre-Forum input and the suggestions made by each of the table groups at the Forum.
- “*The City of Victoria’s local communities of shared interest, working together, offer accessible*” highlights Council’s recommendation #2 (from COW Report January 3, 2006): City Council reaffirms its long held vision of support of the delivery of recreation and community services at the local/neighbourhood level.
- The 1st sentence of the vision statement reflects the active role of communities (i.e., offering activities and services so all people enjoy healthy and active lifestyles). The 2nd sentence reflects the active role of the City at the level of overall system (i.e., ensuring that the System improves and enhances our citizens’ health, wellness and community well-being and has strong links to key, relevant external networks and organizations).
- Re: *the concern that the vision statement was “too long, too many repetitive words”*. (pg. 7**). As to the criterion of brevity, it’s probably unnecessary to say that the recreation & community services system is “inclusive of social programs”, just as it is unnecessary to say that it is inclusive of recreation programs. A “recreation and community services system” is, by definition, inclusive of (i.e., includes) community services (e.g., social programs) *and* recreation services (e.g., health and wellness programs). However, since the System stakeholders agreed that it should be retained, along with the addition of “cultural”, it’s included. The specific components included in the System are listed on page 10 of Appendix C

** Page numbers refer to the handout document provided to Forum participants (Appendix C): *Victoria’s Recreation & Community Services Delivery System: Establishing Common Ground on Vision, Values & Key Beliefs, June 20, 2006*

ii) That the following be adopted as the most important values (i.e., vision-critical) for stakeholders to collectively see the world through and think from in order to realize the vision:

1. Accessible and Inclusive – all people, irrespective of age, race, income or gender, are able to access and participate in a wide choice of activities and services
2. Sustainable – a system for providing activities, services and programs that is economically and environmentally sustainable over generations to come
3. Flexible approach – the system can adapt to changing needs in the community and different models can co-exist in the system
4. Partnerships – relationships built by people and organizations to work cooperatively to meet the system needs
5. Balanced – provides activities and services for all people with all interests and abilities.
6. Reflecting neighbourhood community -- Victorians take ownership and show pride in their neighbourhood; there is a strong sense of local community, place and belonging.

Rationale:

- The above values are based on the input provided by participants at each of the seven “small table groups”.
- Accessible & inclusive. “All people” is elaborated on using pre-Forum input (e.g., “irrespective of age, race, income or gender”). With this elaboration, accessibility includes ensuring that all people, irrespective *specifically* of age or income, are able to get to the activities and services.
- Re: *the suggestion of combining “the categories of 1 & 12 (inclusion & inclusive), 7 & 11 (sustainable & financial sustainability)” (pg.8) has been addressed*

iii) That the following be adopted as the most effective beliefs (i.e., vision-critical) for stakeholders to collectively see the world through and think from in order to realize the vision:

1. A sustainable recreation & community services system requires exploring all revenue sources and partnerships, provided that one partnership is not at the expense of another

2. Meeting neighbourhood and city interests within the context of adjacent municipalities is the primary focus of service planning and delivery

Rationale:

- In #1, replacing “tapping all revenue sources” with “exploring all revenue sources” addresses the concern that due consideration be given to the “appropriateness” of the revenue source.
- Re: *the “qualified yes” to #1 (pg 9) provided “language around accountability & monitoring, who decides if one partnership at expense of another.* Exploring (vs. tapping) would allow for including a careful assessment of the risk that one partnership might be at the expense of another.
- Rewording #2 with “within the context of adjacent municipalities” addresses the concern of regional concerns getting too much focus.
- One table’s recommendation that “service planning and delivery be based on continuing community input and involvement” be incorporated into key beliefs pertains more to planning process assumptions (i.e, See Questions 7a. re: Planning Process Assumptions, 8a. and 8b., pg.10, Appendix A) rather than the System’s strategic foundations.

Appendices

Appendix A: *Victoria's Recreation & Community Services System, Community Forum Document, May 2, 2006*

Appendix B: *Forum Agenda & Small Group Activities*

Appendix C: *Victoria's Recreation & Community Services Delivery System: Establishing Common Ground on Vision, Values & Key Beliefs, June 20, 2006*