



Town of Ladysmith
Parks, Recreation & Culture Department

Request for Proposals
No. 2015-PRC-10

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

For further information please contact:

Clayton Postings
Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
250.245.6421
cpostings@ladysmith.ca

RFP Issue Date: **September 16, 2015**
RFP Closing Date: **October 8, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.**
Location of Bid Opening: **Ladysmith City Hall**



1. Introduction

The Town of Ladysmith is seeking a qualified consultant to develop a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

Ladysmith is located approximately 90 km. north of Victoria and 23 km. south of Nanaimo on the eastern shores of Vancouver Island. The population is 8,328 (BC Stats 2011) with approximately 3,000 households located within the Town boundaries. The community is proud of its rich heritage, natural environment, and sustainability vision with additional access to services found in the nearby cities of Duncan and Nanaimo. Ladysmith has also established a community accord with its neighbour, the Stz'uminus First Nation. These priorities are captured in the Town's mission statement: "Ladysmith is a spirited community that values its small town quality of life, where we work together as stewards of our heritage, environment and economy."

The "Town of Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan", completed in July 2001, included a number of recommendations for the following decade which have since been completed, are in progress, or have not been pursued. There have been many changes in the Town of Ladysmith municipal structure and the community as a whole since 2001, and it is now necessary to review the existing Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan in order to guide current and future operations and planning of existing and potential programs, services, facilities, and amenities within the scope of the department. A revised plan must be consistent with existing Town of Ladysmith planning documents, will reflect the "Community Vision", and will ultimately be a key driver in developing comprehensive parks, recreation and culture resources to improve the quality of life for Ladysmith area residents and visitors.

2. Background

Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture was established as a full-service municipal department in May, 1982, with the opening of a Community Centre which has been renamed the "Frank Jameson Community Centre"(FJCC). When built, the facility included a 4-lane, 25-metre swimming pool, sauna, and hot tub, as well as a gymnasium, program room, and offices. In 1994, a leisure/therapy/teaching pool facility was added to the facility. Subsequent renovations to the FJCC include improved office space, a public fitness centre, and a youth centre replacing a private fitness centre downstairs.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department currently offers a wide variety of aquatic, fitness, and general recreation programs and special events, and is responsible for booking and maintaining a variety of community facilities, parks, and fields. The department has full-time, part-time, casual, and seasonal staff, as well as independent contract instructors. The Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission provides advice to the Town Council on specific matters referred to it by the Council. Volunteers of all ages supplement the delivery of programs and special events. The department has a variety of partnerships in the community, including relationships with other governmental agencies, education institutions, non-profit societies, and business entities.

The Town's parks system includes over 110 hectares of parks and open spaces offering seaside facilities, nature experiences, playgrounds, playing fields, and natural linear parks with access to the Holland Creek, Stocking Lake and Heart Lake Trails. Major parks include the well-known regional destination waterfront park at Transfer Beach with a large amphitheatre, picnic shelters, concession stand, swimming area, kayaking, spray park, playgrounds, and an off-leash dog park. Forrest Field is an outdoor sports complex built in 2010 with a synthetic turf soccer field and playground, and future plans include the development of two ball fields, fitness track, and a field house.

The department manages operations relating to all municipal parks facilities, shelters, and washrooms. The facilities maintenance section of the department manages maintenance requirements including capital for all of the Town of Ladysmith buildings including City Hall and the "Aggie" community hall.

3. Project Deliverables

- a) Public consultations are required to clarify and confirm the vision "see list of key documents", including, but not limited to, consultation with residents, community groups, other agencies and institutions, adjacent local and First Nation governments, Town of Ladysmith staff and other stakeholders.

Note: Town of Ladysmith staff will assist with the development of a comprehensive stakeholder inventory.

- b) The successful proponent will conduct a situation analysis including review of the current and any potential service delivery model, existing and future demand/need for services, marketing of current/future services, partnerships, collaboration, and joint use agreements (e.g. education, health, non-profit sectors), and current issues (e.g. youth services, seniors services, dog parks). The process will yield recommendations and priorities for allocation of resources, considering societal trends, community benefits, service delivery models and levels of service.
- c) A strategy addressing the life cycle of department infrastructure assets (e.g. the community centre) and recommendations on renewal and/or replacement must be included in the plan. In addition, facility utilization, functional capacity, and gaps in neighbourhood area services should be addressed.

Note: the Town is in the process of developing an Asset Management Plan. This includes the Town-owned buildings and facilities such as the recreation centre. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan is expected to include an overview of existing facilities and future development of new or renovated facilities.

- d) An analysis must be completed relating to the existing park system, reviewing what facilities and services within the park system are required or need to be considered with recommendations relating to future growth, where parks could be located in the future, and where new trails could be located keeping in mind both recreation and commuter needs.

- e) The recommendations in the 2001 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan must be reviewed to determine which projects have been completed, partially completed, are valid or possibly not valid, or might need to be added.
- f) Recommendations in the updated Master Plan should include a plan which outlines priorities and an implementation plan, which is a clear, concise, user friendly, flexible, and useful planning tool.
- g) Final Plan to be completed by February 2016.

4. Key Links and Planning Documents:

[Town of Ladysmith \(www.ladysmith.ca\)](http://www.ladysmith.ca)
[2014 Annual Report](#)
[Parks, Recreation and Culture](#)
[Fall 2015 Activity Guide](#)
[Official Community Plan](#)
[Community Vision Report](#)
[Public Preference Handbook - overall](#)
[Public Preference Handbook - downtown](#)
[Public Preference Handbook - Holland Creek](#)
[Public Preference Handbook - waterfront](#)
2001 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (attached)
[Bicycle Plan](#)
Town of Ladysmith base maps will be available as required

5. Response Content

All respondents should include the following information in their proposal:

- Detailed breakdown by project component contract price including a subtotal price, applicable taxes, and total price in your bid.
- Draft project schedule including timelines relating to stages of the project
- Three applicable references
- Qualifications/experience of the consulting team.

6. Evaluation Criteria

The Town will evaluate Proposals based upon but not limited to, the following:

- Quality of the proposal
- Demonstrated experience
- Methodology & proposed schedule
- Quality of consultation
- Innovation
- Cost
- Reference checks

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee of Town staff. During the evaluation process any or all of the proponents may be invited to give written or oral presentations and/or participate in interviews with the committee.

7. Enquiries

All enquiries related to this “Request for Proposal” are to be directed to:

Clayton Postings, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
Town of Ladysmith
Phone: 250.245.6421
Email: cpostings@ladysmith.ca

Enquiries and responses will be recorded and will be made available, by request, to all proponents for examination.

8. Proposal Submissions

Proponents are requested to submit their proposals **no later than 2:00 p.m. local time on October 8, 2015** to the attention of:

Sandy Bowden, Director of Corporate Services
Town of Ladysmith
410 Esplanade - P.O. Box 220
Ladysmith, BC V9G 1A2
Email: sbowden@ladysmith.ca

Proposals may be submitted in hard copy or by email. The Town is not responsible for the timely receipt or adequacy of any electronic transmissions, and late receipt of Proposals via email or facsimile will be cause for rejection of a Proposal.

All submissions must be clearly marked “Request for Proposals No. 2015-PRC-10 – Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan”.

The successful bidder will be required to obtain and provide proof of the following:

- A current business licence for operating in the Town of Ladysmith
- A Clearance Letter from WorkSafe BC that confirms they are registered and in good financial standing with WorkSafe BC
- Minimum \$2 million liability insurance with the Town of Ladysmith named as additional insured
- Federal, provincial and municipal permits when and where applicable

Submissions in response to this RFP will be opened publicly at the Town of Ladysmith City Hall on **October 8, 2015 at 2:15 p.m.**

The Town reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Proposals either in whole or in part at any time, or waive formalities in, or accept a Proposal either in whole or in part which is deemed most favourable in the interest of the Town. The Town will be under no obligation to proceed further with any submitted Proposal and, should it decide to abandon same, it may, at any time, invite further proposals for the supply of the described services or enter into any discussions or negotiations with any party for the provision of the services. No alterations, amendments or additional information will be accepted after the closing date and time unless invited by the Town.

The lowest or any submission in response to this RFP will not necessarily be accepted. The bids will be considered on their merits and it is not the intention of the Municipality to buy on price alone.

The Town of Ladysmith Purchasing Policy entails the following Principles of “Best Value”:

- Procure the goods and services requirements of all departments in an efficient, timely and cost effective manner while maintaining the necessary controls;
- Engage in an open bidding process wherever practical;
- Ensure maximum value is obtained during the acquisition of goods and services. Where applicable, the total cost of the goods and services purchased should be taken into account. Total cost may include but not be limited to acquisition cost, disposal cost, residual value, training cost, maintenance cost, product performance and environmental impact;
- Take into account wherever practical the commitment to protection of the environment, and energy conservation;
- Ensure the acquisition of goods and services meets the requirements of applicable legislation and trade agreements, including the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, and the Agreement on Internal Trade; and
- Ensure that maximum value is realized when disposing of surplus goods, materials and equipment.

9. Ownership of Proposals

All Proposals and subsequent information materials shall become the property of the Town of Ladysmith after the closing date and time and will not be returned.

The Proposals will be held in confidence by the Town subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This Request for Proposals and all associated documentation is the property of the Town of Ladysmith and shall not be copied or distributed without the prior written approval of the Town.

⋮

Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd.

**Town of Ladysmith
Parks, Recreation & Culture
Master Plan**

⋮

**Submitted to: Town of Ladysmith
Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission**

⋮

December, 2000

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<i>i</i>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose and Objectives	1
1.2 Preparation of the Plan	1
1.3 Societal Forces Affecting Leisure Services	3
1.4 Benefits of Parks and Recreation	5
1.5 Assumptions	6
2. STUDY METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Citizen Involvement	7
2.2 Planning for Parks, Recreation and Culture	11
2.3 Level of Service for Ladysmith	11
2.4 Preparation of the Report	12
3. GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY	13
3.1 Relationships with the Private Sector	13
3.2 Services to Participants at all Levels of Ability	14
3.3 Variety and Quantity of Opportunities	14
3.4 Direct and Indirect Programming	14
4. PARKS AND GREEN SPACE	16
4.1 Park Categories and Guidelines	16
4.2 Park Service Area Guidelines	19
4.3 Issues	19
5. INDOOR FACILITIES	27
5.1 Issues	27
5.2 Improved Facilities	30
5.3 Operation and Maintenance	32
5.4 Location	33
6. RECREATION PROGRAM DELIVERY	35
6.1 Approach to the Delivery of Recreation Services	36
6.2 Attitudes Regarding Recreation Program Opportunities	37
6.3 Promotion	38

Table of Contents - Continued

7.	PARTNERSHIPS	40
7.1	Public / Private Partnerships	40
7.2	Public / Public Partnerships and Joint Use Agreements	41
7.3	Community Partnerships	42
8.	ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	44
8.1	Issues	44
8.2	Attitudes of Residents	45
8.3	Official Community Plan	45
8.4	Financial Considerations	48
8.5	5% Dedication of Land or Cash-in-Lieu	49
8.6	Development Cost Charges	50
8.7	Disposition of Park Land	51
8.8	Implementation and Evaluation	52

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Project Methodology	2
2.	Public Survey Returns	8
3.	Use of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Spaces	9
4.	Use of Indoor Recreation Facilities	10
5.	Support for New and Improved Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	21
6.	Need for New or Improved Outdoor Facilities	22
7.	Support for New Recreation Facilities	28
8.	Suggested Improvements for Indoor Facilities	31
9.	Limitations to Participation	38
10.	Information Regarding Program Opportunities	39
11.	Support for Tax Increases to Provide New / Improved Facilities	48
12.	Preferred Funding Methods	49

APPENDICES

1.	Survey Questions and Results
2.	Groups Providing Information
3.	Parks and Facilities

Executive Summary

THE TOWN OF LADYSMITH Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan was initiated in the spring of 2000. The purpose of the planning process was to provide the Town with recommendations for the continued delivery of leisure opportunities over the next ten years (2001 to 2010). It is anticipated that the report will be used on an annual basis to determine priorities and to allocate resources.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

A key component of the study involved the completion of extensive background research to establish a foundation and framework for the Plan. This work included a review of previous reports related to parks and recreation services in the community; a review of the existing Official Community Plan and the current inventory of open space and facilities; and a general review of existing literature with regard to societal trends, parks and recreation benefits and levels of service.

It is important to note, also, that the Master Plan was undertaken at the same time that a new Official Community Plan was being prepared, and that specific policy recommendations related to Parks, Recreation and Culture would be consistent in the two documents.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The involvement of Ladysmith residents was critical to the success of the planning process. Specific ways in which the community participated included a mail return survey, discussions with a variety of community organizations, participation in a Public Open House, a Community Workshop and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff.

PARTNERSHIPS

The report makes frequent reference to partnerships and cooperative relationships. It is the feeling of the consultants that Ladysmith should continue to work closely with other levels of government, as well as with representatives of the Nanaimo School District, local organizations and where possible, the private sector, in order to optimize the use of facilities and services, and to ensure the appropriate allocation of limited resources.

Recommendations included in the report are intended to ensure the active involvement of related organizations in the decision-making process and in the delivery of services.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The report is divided into several sections which initially provide an overview of existing services, and ultimately identify a number of issues and recommendations for the Town to consider. Recommendations focus on parks and green space, indoor facilities, recreation program delivery, partnerships, and finally on administration and finance.

The final section of the Plan provides an outline of recommended priorities, and a number of “action steps” intended to guide the implementation of the report.

CONCLUSIONS

While the report identifies a number of issues, it is important to note that the public is generally satisfied with current services, and makes extensive use of available opportunities and facilities.

In the public survey, for instance, most respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality and maintenance of parks and indoor facilities, as well as with the quality of program personnel, and the availability of information necessary to publicize various recreation programs in the community.

The consultants have identified a number of conclusions related to the current and future delivery of leisure services.

- There is no significant need, at the present time, for additional indoor facilities in Ladysmith. While the community lacks an ice arena and performing arts center, this type of amenity is located within a 15 minute drive, in Chemainus, North Cowichan and Nanaimo.
- The most immediate needs, in terms of indoor facilities, are related to improvements and the potential expansion of the Frank Jameson Community Centre and Swimming Pool.
- There is considerable interest in the continued development of a comprehensive trail system in the community, that can be used for hiking and cycling.
- There is also a significant amount of interest in greater public access to the waterfront, and concerns regarding the impact of the Granby development.
- There is an interest in an expanded system of parks and open space, that includes a balance between active and passive recreational pursuits; and a maintenance program that addresses community parks and schools in a consistent manner.

- There is a strong feeling in the community that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department should continue to focus on a “community development” role, working closely with local organizations in the provision of services.
- There is a need for the Department to consistently promote the benefits of recreation in marketing leisure services to the general public.
- The Department should continue to work with local organizations to publicize the availability of recreation and cultural services. In addition, the seasonal brochure and other techniques such as the internet, should be used.
- There is a substantial amount of interest in the community in the provision of additional services and facilities for youth. The Town should play a leadership role in this regard, and work with related agencies to ensure that effective and consistent communication occurs.
- Residents recognize the need for new and improved services. At the same time, there appears to be a reluctance to pay additional taxes. Other revenue generating options, such as commercial advertising, corporate sponsorships, and donations should be considered.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following information highlights each of the recommendations included in the report.

PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

1. Organize parks and open spaces in Ladysmith into the following classification system: community feature park, community active park, neighbourhood park, special area, linear park.
2. Include the recommended park classification system in the Official Community Plan.
3. Ensure that every household in Ladysmith is within .5 kilometers of at least one category of park.
4. Include the recommended park service area guidelines in the Official Community Plan.

5. Acquire additional parkland:
 - For a neighbourhood park in the area of Lot 108 and Holland Creek
 - To develop a sportsfield complex
 - To increase residents' access to the waterfront
6. Identify proposed park sites in the new Official Community Plan.
7. Continue to develop a comprehensive trail system for walking and cycling with connections to:
 - Significant parks, community facilities and the Trans Canada Trail
 - The waterfront
 - The downtown commercial area
 - Trail systems in adjacent communities
8. Identify trail possibilities in conjunction with the Official Community Plan, the Transportation Plan and the proposed Bicycle Plan.
9. Review the condition of each sportsfield in the community in cooperation with local sport organizations and School Board officials, and identify priorities for improvement.
10. Develop a 10 year plan for upgrading existing school and park fields in cooperation with the School District.
11. Negotiate an agreement with the School Board for the ongoing maintenance of school fields.
12. Continue to upgrade existing playgrounds and install new facilities as the need arises.
13. Initiate discussions with dog owners regarding the need and possible site for a leash-free facility in the community.
14. Initiate discussions with local service clubs related to the construction of a water park in one of the community parks.
15. Initiate discussions with local youth regarding the need for and location of a youth park.
16. Address the need for natural areas within parks, including seating areas, picnic shelters and signage highlighting the history of the community.
17. Initiate meetings between minor baseball and the Golf Course Society regarding overlapping facilities.

INDOOR FACILITIES

18. Do not consider the construction of a new arena, cultural facility, seniors centre or curling rink during the timeframe of the current Master Plan.
19. Initiate discussions with the Nanaimo School District regarding the joint construction of a performing arts centre at Ladysmith Secondary School.
20. Conduct a feasibility study into the need for improved facilities, as well as the capital and operating costs, at the Frank Jameson Community Centre and Pool.
21. Depending on the results of the feasibility study, consider undertaking improvements in three stages:
 - Improvements to the water treatment system in the indoor pool and improvements to the change room facilities
 - Improvements to and expansion of the community centre
 - Improvements to and expansion of the swimming pool
22. Continue to work with the public and community organizations in order to ensure the most efficient use of facilities.
23. Continue the current program of facility maintenance in order to ensure the availability of quality facilities and to ensure that deficiencies are identified and corrected as early as possible.
24. Conduct a study into the replacement of the existing Frank Jameson Community Centre and Pool, considering location, facilities required, capital and operating costs, and the potential for partnerships with the private sector or other public sector agencies.

RECREATION PROGRAM DELIVERY

25. Continue to work with community organizations to ensure the availability of a broad range of recreation opportunities, and to minimize duplication in the delivery of programs.
26. Approve Guidelines for Programming that provide direction to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in the overall approach to the delivery of program services.
27. Facilitate discussions with youth and youth organizations related to the development and implementation of a broad range of youth activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

28. Facilitate sessions / workshops with families in the community in order to identify program needs and assist in the development of program opportunities.
29. Continue to make use of existing systems for the promotion of local recreation services.
30. Enhance the seasonal brochure with information regarding parks and facility projects and events.
31. Develop and maintain a web page on the Internet to assist in the promotion of Ladysmith parks, recreation and culture services.

PARTNERSHIPS

32. Recognize public / private partnership (P3) as one means of delivering a service to the community.
33. Develop a P3 policy which outlines cases in which the Town will consider P3 as an alternative service delivery mechanism.
34. Establish a P3 leader who will ensure that a central source of expertise and support exists within the Town.
35. Ensure that a clear business case is made that supports a public / private partnership as a means to deliver a service to the community. (It is imperative that the appropriate service delivery model is selected based on the service to be provided.)
36. Maintain existing agreements and seek additional opportunities for partnership and joint use arrangements with the School District.
37. Initiate discussions with public health agencies regarding the cooperative promotion and delivery of services.
38. Develop a handbook that identifies priority projects and opportunities for community involvement.
39. Develop a public education program that articulates the benefits of community partnerships with respect to parks, recreation and cultural projects.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

40. Incorporate the proposed vision, goals and policies into the Official Community Plan.

41. Explore alternative ways of funding parks, recreation and culture services including corporate sponsorships, donations and more extensive commercial advertising.
42. Review and update policies related to fees and charges for programs and facility use.
43. Acquire land for new neighbourhood parks using 5% dedication of land or cash-in-lieu. Where practical, acquire land adjacent to school sites to maximize the usability of the larger open space.
44. Identify lands it wishes to acquire through park land dedication.
45. Request cash-in-lieu of parkland if the lands being subdivided are not consistent with the park land dedication plan.
46. Establish a DCC policy for parks.
47. Include the following criteria in the policy:
 - That DCC's be collected from the owners / developers of properties that are being developed for residential use.
 - That the DCC's be used for the acquisition and development of community parks and athletic parks, and for the development of new neighbourhood parks (the acquisition of neighbourhood parks will be accomplished using the 5% dedication on subdivision policy), to the benefit of new residents.
48. Conduct an assessment of undeveloped park lands and other open space owned by the Town to determine if they should be retained for park and recreation purposes or whether they should be disposed of.

That the criteria for assessing these parcels include:

- The presence of developed park land adjacent or nearby
- Established or informal trails through the site
- The ecological value of the site
- The value of the site to the community or neighbourhood for the cost required to maintain it
- The potential of the site for alternative forms of development (e.g., size, slope, access, servicing, land use)
- No net loss of publicly accessible waterfront
- Satisfactory return on sale of the parcel to justify the costs to make the parcel market ready (e.g., re-zoning, servicing, etc.)
- A greater good (e.g. waterfront parkland) could be served by selling it

49. Dispose of unsuitable properties by:
 - Selling as residential or other use for market value
 - Selling to an adjacent landowner for what they are willing to pay
50. Apply revenue from the sale of disposed park land toward the acquisition and / or development of park land in the immediate area.
51. Prepare an annual report card related to Master Plan recommendations.
52. Initiate a system to gather information from the public regarding facilities and Department services.
53. Conduct a survey of the general public every three or four years to determine opinions and attitudes regarding Parks, Recreation and Culture services.

SUMMARY

In closing, PERC has developed a Plan that achieves the purpose of the Town by:

- Addressing the need for further acquisition and development of parks and open space
- Outlining proposals for the improvement and expansion of recreation facilities
- Developing recommendations related to the successful delivery of recreation programs

Although a great deal of support and input was received from the general public, interest groups, staff and elected officials, the consultants take full responsibility for the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

THE TOWN OF LADYSMITH RETAINED the services of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC) in the spring of 2000 to prepare a Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Cultural services.

1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the study was to assess parks and open space, recreation and cultural needs and interests and to translate that information into a realistic program of improvements, additions and services that reflect local preferences and values.

The study involved an interactive process of citizen participation and understanding which has allowed residents to act as true stakeholders in their parks, recreation and cultural delivery system.

This process has resulted in a number of recommendations that demonstrate a clear understanding of the community's needs by:

- Clarifying and defining the pertinent issues confronting the continued development of the parks, recreation and cultural delivery system.
- Establishing goals and objectives which reflect the desires of the community and provide direction for action.
- Presenting realistic, affordable and justifiable recommendations for the continued development and improvement of the parks and recreation system.

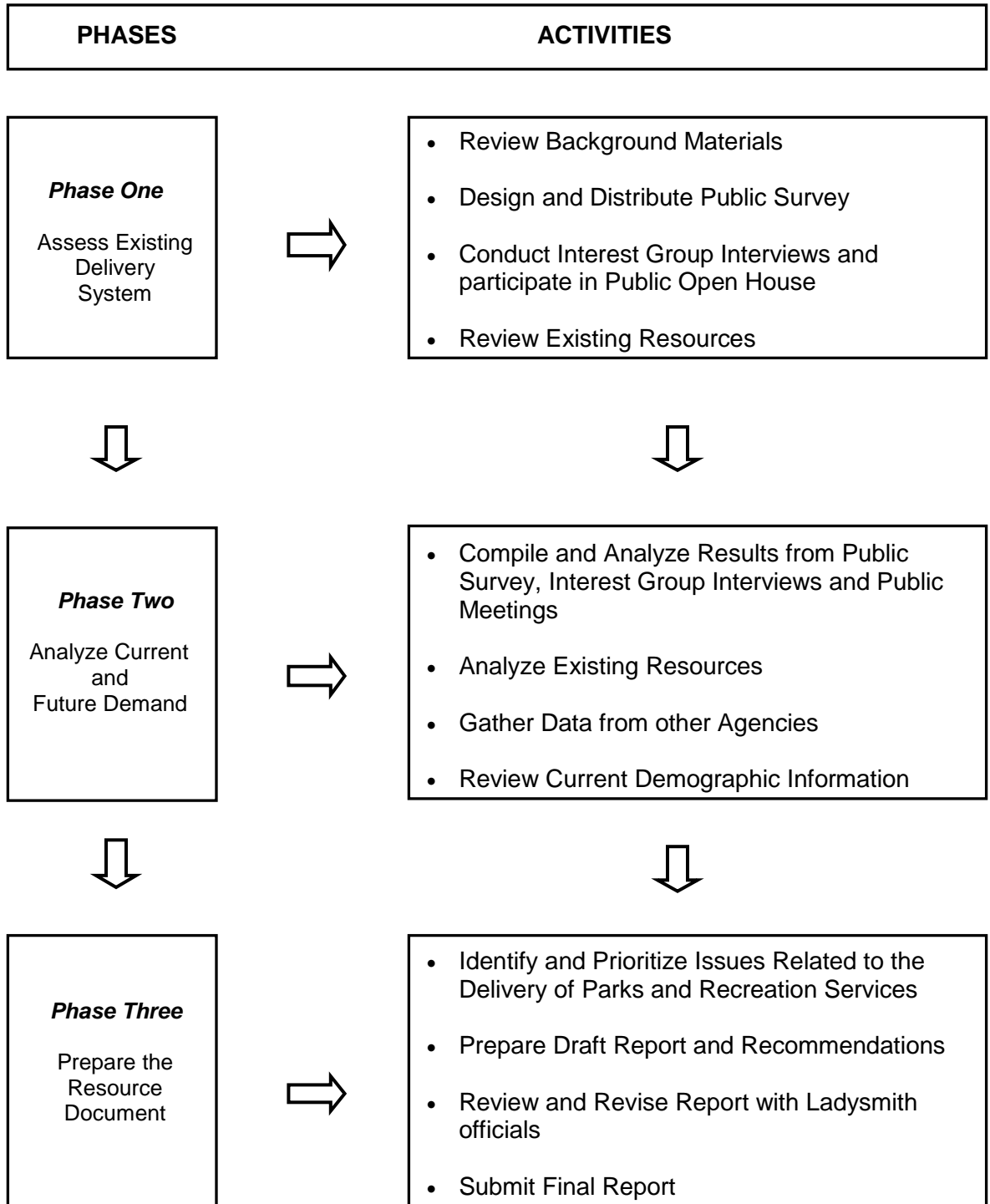
1.2 PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

In completing the report, the consultants set out to achieve the following three objectives:

- To **assess** existing parks, recreation and cultural services and the resources allocated to the delivery of those services.
- To **analyze** existing and future demand and need for services.
- To **synthesize** the results of the data collection into **practical recommendations** that reflect the financial resources of the community.

As summarized in **FIGURE ONE** on page 2, these objectives were formulated into a number of phases and activities.

**FIGURE ONE
PROJECT METHODOLOGY**



1.3 SOCIETAL FORCES AFFECTING LEISURE SERVICES

During the past decade, numerous forces have developed that have had a profound impact on the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural services. These include:

- **Municipal Budgets**
Budget pressures on local government have resulted in the reduced availability of funds for programs, services, facilities and maintenance.
- **Demand**
There has been an increasing demand for leisure services at the same time that there has been decreasing fiscal resources.
- **Accountability**
The public has demanded greater accountability from elected officials and administrative staff to justify expenditures and demonstrate fiscal responsibility.
- **Cost of Land**
The cost of acquiring land has placed a significant strain on local government to expand the amount of parks and open space.
- **Preservation of Green Space**
There has been an increase in interest and action by residents related to the need for preserving existing green space. In many communities, there has been recognition that there may be more citizen interest in green space preservation and nature based recreation than in the more traditional menu of services.
- **Maintenance of the Natural Environment**
There has been a move in recent years toward the use of natural plant material in the improvement of parks, and toward leaving green space in a more natural state.
- **Traditions**
There has been increased interest in preserving the history, culture and natural heritage of most communities.
- **Partnerships**
There has been considerable growth in the development of public / private partnerships to provide parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities; and at the same time far greater cooperation between municipal government and local community organizations.
- **Equity**
There are increasing demands from all sectors of the community for equity in the provision of parks, recreation and cultural resources and facilities.

- **Planning**
A shift to a different planning process has occurred which provides a wider range of opportunities for citizens to become active stakeholders in their community and more involved in the decision making process.
- **Ethnic Diversity**
In many communities, an increasingly multi-cultural population with different values and leisure interests has had a great impact on the planning and delivery of leisure services.
- **Multiple Services**
Various municipalities have incorporated an array of local government and non-government services into community centre operations, in order to provide convenient, one-stop shopping for local residents. Examples include the ability to pay property taxes, to access social services, to talk to someone in the community policing office and to inquire about the availability of a playfield.
- **Automation**
Most parks and recreation jurisdictions have become highly automated to enhance customer service, improve management decisions and reduce costs. Recent advances include computerized registration and scheduling, maintenance management, information kiosks, energy management, project management and websites.
- **User Pay / Provision for All**
During the 90's, the trend was toward greater emphasis on user pay rather than subsidies. There has emerged, however, a strong concern that those who are unable to pay may be left out. This has resulted in policy development which focuses on facilitating participation while being respectful of one's ability to pay.
- **Rationale for Fees and Charges**
With the shift in attitude toward a "user pay" philosophy, municipalities have begun to examine the need for a rational, consistent approach to fees and charges.
- **Quality Services**
Government has placed a greater emphasis on dealing with citizens' expressed needs for quality recreation, resources and facilities, and on the provision of quality customer services.

These forces have been considered throughout the planning process, and have been of assistance in developing the recommendations contained in Chapters Four through Seven.

1.4 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Traditionally, the benefits of providing parks and recreation services in a community were given superficial consideration and were often characterized by phrases such as “recreation helps keep kids off the street” or “exercise is good for you”.

In recent years, careful consideration and research has been focused on identifying meaningful benefits to the community as a result of providing parks and recreation opportunities, facilities and services. When addressing the full range of municipal services required to provide those services, it is important that elected officials consider the value of investing appropriate resources toward the provision of leisure opportunities.

This value is reflected in the following statements developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association to best describe the benefits of parks, recreation and cultural services to the community.

- Recreation and active living are **essential to personal health** - a key determinant of health status
- Recreation is a key to balanced **human development** and to helping local residents reach their potential
- Parks, recreation and culture are essential to the overall **quality of life**
- Recreation reduces **self-destructive and anti-social behaviour**
- Parks, recreation and culture helps build **strong families and healthy communities**
- **Pay now or pay later!** Recreation reduces healthcare, social service and police / justice costs
- Parks, recreation and culture are significant **economic generators** to the community
- Parks, open space and rural areas are essential to **ecological survival**

Many Canadian communities have embraced these statements, and utilize benefits based research in promoting parks, recreation and cultural services.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS

In addition to the overall methodology, the final report is based on the following assumptions.

- The Town of Ladysmith subscribes to the basic principles of the “Benefits of Parks and Recreation”.
- The population of Ladysmith will likely grow at a rate of 2.5% per year over the next 10 years.
- The population of the community will continue to age.
- Recreation needs are changing (i.e. trail systems and passive park areas are more in demand than in the past).
- While the cost of property acquisition is a legitimate concern, the public will want more access to the waterfront and trails.
- No major new indoor facilities will be needed before 2010.

2. *Study Methodology*

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, THE DEVELOPMENT of the Master Plan involved a considerable amount of data collection, the administration of a public survey and input from a large number of Ladysmith organizations. The following specific steps were undertaken in the completion of the study.

2.1 CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The active participation of Ladysmith residents was critical to the success of the planning process. Specific ways in which the community participated included:

- **Public Survey**
A survey of 900 Ladysmith residents was conducted, in order to determine attitudes about parks and recreation services, as well as to gather information related to facilities and participation in recreation programs.
- **Input from Community Organizations**
Interviews were conducted with a number of organizations, concerned citizens, representatives of special interest groups, members of Council and staff.
- **Meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission**
The consultant met on several occasions with the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. The first of these meetings was scheduled at the beginning of project, primarily to review the proposed methodology, and to discuss the administration of the public survey.

The second meeting was designed to discuss the major issues that had been identified during the data collection process, and to identify any other issues and concerns.

During the third meeting, the consultants presented a preliminary draft of the report and invited comment and additional input regarding the issues and recommendations, prior to preparing for a meeting with the general public.

- **Public Open House / Community Workshop**
A Public Open House was conducted in May, focusing primarily on the preparation of the Official Community Plan. Information regarding the Master Plan was also displayed and the public was invited to indicate their preferences in terms of existing services and future requirements.

Participants in the Community Workshop were asked to respond to questions regarding the need for and location of new parks and the

need for improvements to the Frank Jameson Community Centre, and to suggest ways in which services for youth might be improved.

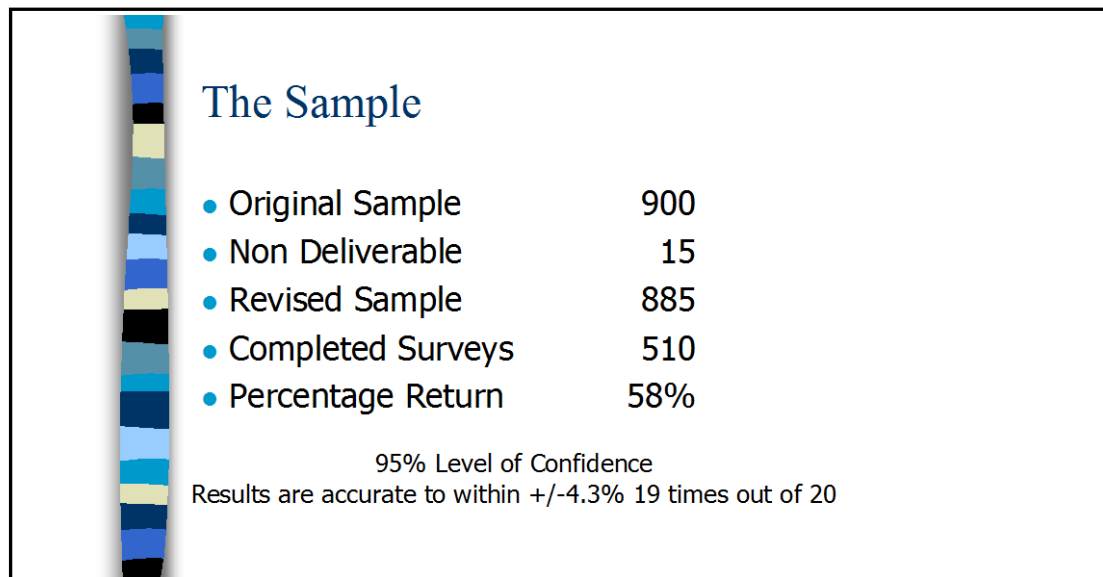
2.1.1 PUBLIC SURVEY

In the spring of 2000, a community needs assessment and preference survey was administered as part of the planning process. The methodology involved a mail return technique utilizing the following format:

- To obtain the most comprehensive list of residents and addresses, the consultants used mailing lists provided by Dominion Directory.
- To ensure that a statistical sample was obtained, 900 names were randomly selected from the database.
- A questionnaire was prepared, in consultation with staff, to determine behaviour patterns, attitudes about parks, recreation and culture, and a demographic profile of the respondents.
- The survey package was mailed, along with a personal letter, to each of the households in the sample.
- Seven days following the initial distribution, a postcard was mailed to all of the households in the original sample, other than those returned by the post office as undeliverable. The postcard thanked those who had already completed and returned the survey, and urged others to do so as soon as possible.

As indicated in **FIGURE TWO**, a total of 510 completed returns (58% of the revised sample) were received.

**FIGURE TWO
PUBLIC SURVEY RETURNS**



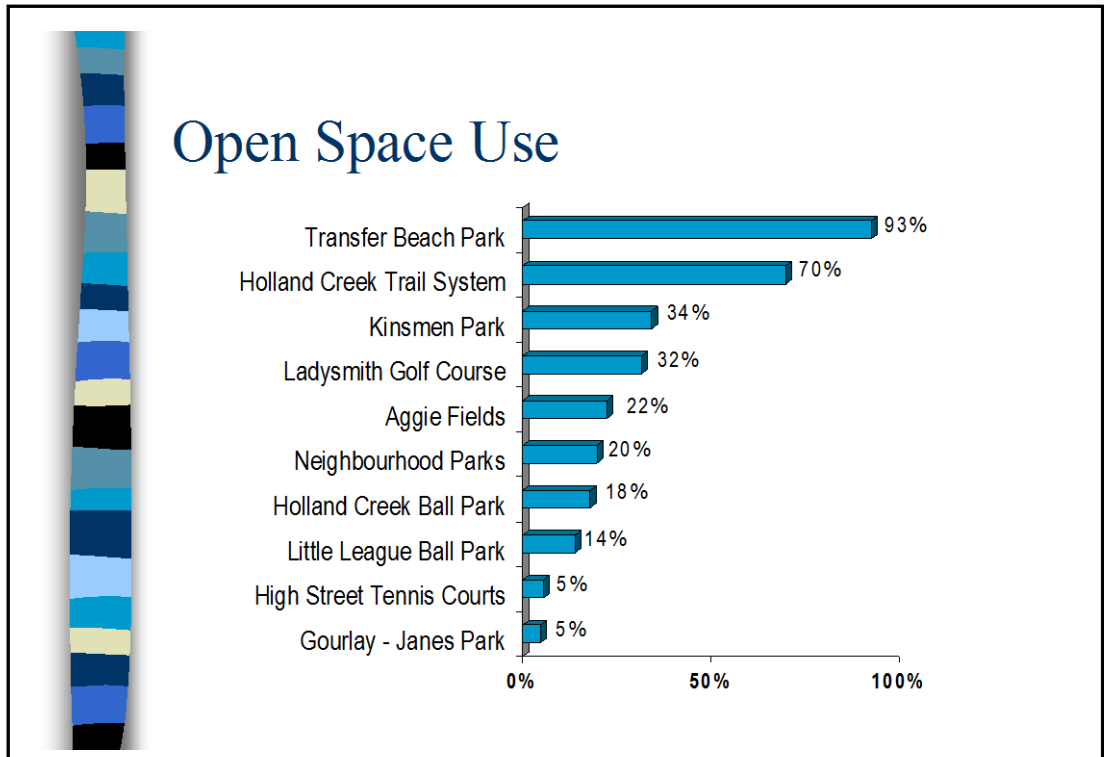
The margin of error for the survey is +/- 4.3%. In other words, if all of the residents in the community were contacted, the results of the survey would be within 4.3% of this one, 19 times out of 20.

A copy of the survey, along with the complete survey results, is included in **APPENDIX ONE**.

It should be noted that Ladysmith residents are very active in their use of local parks and recreation facilities. Ninety-three percent of the respondents to the survey indicated that they had made use of one or more of the Town's facilities in the past year.

As indicated in **FIGURE THREE** and **FOUR**, the facilities used most frequently include Transfer Beach, the Holland Creek Trail System and the Aquatic Centre at Frank Jameson Community Centre.

FIGURE THREE
USE OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION SPACES

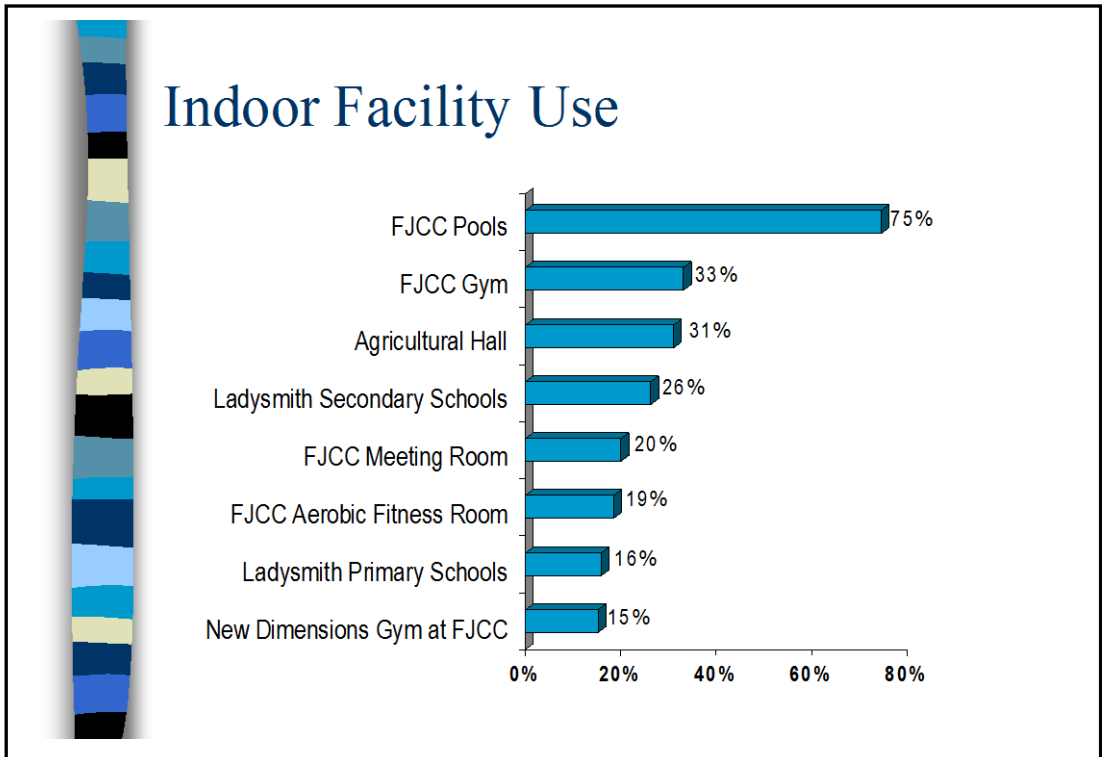


2.1.2 INPUT FROM COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Input from representatives of local organizations was requested in order to determine:

- Services the groups currently offer, membership and participation levels, and facilities served.
- What the group would like to attain in terms of the above variables.
- Problems the group perceives that prevent it from achieving its objectives.

**FIGURE FOUR
USE OF INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES**



Several of the representatives interviewed commented about the positive aspects of leisure services in Ladysmith, while others responded with specific concerns and problems. These have been synthesized below into a number of “themes”. Major requirements include the need for:

- Public access to the waterfront
- An emphasis on natural areas and the environment
- Long term planning and improvements to the seniors centre

- Policy development related to fees and charges
- Continued development and improvements to local parks, emphasizing quiet areas, as well as new and improved sport facilities
- Improved park amenities, including restrooms and playgrounds
- General improvements to the Frank Jameson Community Centre

A listing of all of the groups providing information to the consultants is included in **APPENDIX TWO**.

2.2 PLANNING FOR PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

As with other services, the evolution of parks and recreation in Ladysmith has been based on the preparation of several planning documents. A number of these studies were reviewed, including:

- Town of Ladysmith, Waterfront Area Plan (1997)
- Town of Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture, Needs Assessment Survey (1996)
- Ladysmith Parks and Recreation, Needs Assessment Survey (1995)
- Town of Ladysmith, Official Community Plan (1994)
- Town of Ladysmith, Needs Assessment for the Ladysmith Resource Centre Association (1994)
- District 68 - Vancouver Island, Seniors Health and Social Service Needs Assessment (1991)
- Town of Ladysmith, Sportsplex Deficiencies (1982)

2.3 LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR LADYSMITH

The public survey, interviews and other research techniques were designed, in part, to measure Ladysmith residents' satisfaction with current parks, recreation and cultural services.

Results indicated that there are a number of concerns among Ladysmith residents regarding current levels of service and taxation. Some people are concerned, for instance, with the number and quality of sportsfields, while others expressed the need for improved indoor facilities.

Most comments, however, involved requests for increased, rather than reduced, services. PERC, therefore, has determined that existing levels of service should be used as the basis for setting guidelines for the future provision of park and recreation opportunities.

In summary, the Master Plan recommendations are based on the needs and requests of residents and community organizations, the experience of the consultants in preparing numerous reports of this type, and practical considerations related to capital and operating costs.

2.4 PREPARATION OF THE REPORT

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. While the identification of these issues does not automatically guarantee that change will be recommended, it does nonetheless provide a framework for the organization of the Plan. In subsequent sections of the report, the various issues are discussed from the perspective of parks and open space, recreation facilities, recreation program services and administrative concerns.

3. *Guidelines for Service Delivery*

THE MOST IMPORTANT PRACTICAL LIMITATION related to the delivery of leisure services will be financial resources. Obviously, local taxpayers can only provide a level of service that is consistent with their ability to fund those services. Because funds are typically limited, certain priorities have to be established.

The following sub-sections are intended to (1) address the importance of establishing a clear philosophical statement related to the delivery of parks and recreation opportunities, and (2) to provide guidelines to direct the activities of the Town and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

3.1 RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

There are occasions when the goals of the private sector are similar to those of the public sector. In those instances, even though the underlying incentives may be different, the two jurisdictions may overlap.

This gives rise to the potential for cooperation and competition. As a result, it is suggested that criteria be defined for the provision of leisure services that maximize the potential of those services to meet socially worthwhile goals and objectives. Those criteria may include:

- **Quality**
Program opportunities of a certain quality are required in order for the service to be useful in achieving established goals.
- **Quantity**
A certain amount of service is required before it is useful in meeting established goals.
- **Consistency**
In order to be developmental, a service should be offered consistently rather than intermittently.
- **Cost**
Consideration should be given to offering services in a manner that maximizes the ability of all residents to participate.

If other jurisdictions can offer the service within the criteria established by the Town, then the two should not compete; rather, the Town should monitor the services to ensure its objectives are being achieved. If, however, other agencies are unable or unwilling to offer the services in a manner required to meet public objectives, the Town should consider becoming involved in sponsoring the service.

Once it has been determined that public sector involvement is necessary to meet the socially worthwhile goals and objectives, the Town should work with and help other

agencies to provide services in a manner which will achieve its objectives, or directly sponsor the service when it is more cost effective to do so.

3.2 SERVICES TO PARTICIPANTS AT ALL LEVELS OF ABILITY

Leisure opportunities supported by the Town should be developmental. As far as is reasonably possible, public leisure services should allow a person to initiate his / her involvement in the system at a level appropriate to his / her ability.

When the cost of accommodating individuals at advanced levels of participation (i.e. elite artists or athletes) becomes onerous, the following policy guidelines are suggested:

- The public sector should encourage the delivery of services to all citizens at all skill and ability levels.
- The public agency must make decisions, however, on a cost / benefit basis; therefore, if the cost of serving advanced participants is significantly higher than meeting the needs of “beginners”, the agency should allocate fewer resources to serving the advanced participant.

3.3 VARIETY AND QUANTITY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Residents of Ladysmith have a wide variety of leisure interests. If the Town is to use leisure services as a vehicle to meet public goals, it must ensure that varied opportunities are available to the public.

In providing these services, there is often a trade-off between quantity of services and variety of services. As additional resources become available, choices must be made between providing more of what is already available and providing something entirely new.

Typically, larger interest groups are served first. Groups not yet accommodated are, therefore, usually smaller and less vocal. Consequently, pressure often exists to sacrifice variety (i.e. the smaller interest groups not yet serviced) in favour of quantity.

When a choice must be made between providing services to those already receiving some service, and providing services to those not yet receiving any, higher priority should be given to the latter.

3.4 DIRECT AND INDIRECT PROGRAMMING

Although local authorities should assume responsibility for ensuring that leisure opportunities exist which meet stated objectives, this by no means requires that the

Town must organize and sponsor the delivery of all such services. Rather, it means that the Town should:

- Evaluate which leisure opportunities are available.
- Monitor the provision of leisure services by other service providers.
- Contribute to the quality of service provided by other groups or agencies.
- Deliver services to fill in the gaps left by other service providers.

The preceding guidelines do not determine how much money taxpayers should allocate to the delivery of public parks and recreation services. Instead, they provide a framework within which decisions may be made, no matter what level of service is supported by local taxpayers. **The ultimate objective is to make the most effective use of resources by providing services in a rational, consistent and equitable manner.**

4. *Parks and Green Space*

THE FOCUS OF THIS CHAPTER IS ON the current supply of parks and green space in Ladysmith, as well as on a review of objectives and policies that can ultimately be included in the Official Community Plan.

4.1 PARK CATEGORIES AND GUIDELINES

4.1.1 PARK CATEGORIES

At the present time, there are approximately 25 hectares of parks and open space in Ladysmith. This amount of land, combined with its variety (e.g. changes in topography, treed, urban / rural, active / passive) suggests that there are several different types or categories of parks and open space. In addition, each has different functions, use patterns, needs and requirements.

For the purpose of the Master Plan, therefore, parks in Ladysmith were divided into the following categories. These categories are described below, and are used throughout this Section in relation to park service guidelines and amenities.

- **COMMUNITY FEATURE PARK**

- Description Features special horticultural, natural or other characteristics that are of interest to all residents. Examples include urban plazas, cultural and historical facilities, places of community identity and beautification initiatives.
- Amenities Typical amenities include feature areas such as horticultural areas, beaches, play areas, pathways and passive areas.
- Size 2 – 20 hectares
- Service Area Within 3 km of any residential property in the community
- Example Transfer Beach

- **COMMUNITY ACTIVE PARK**

- Description Features sportsfields and amenities that support the community's needs for active recreation and organized sport. (School sites can function as an active park provided adequate facilities are in place and there is a joint-use agreement in place.)

- Amenities Typical amenities include sportsfields (with lighting); a fieldhouse with dressing rooms, concession and washroom; tennis, basketball and volleyball courts; and a youth park with a site for skateboarding and other youth-oriented activities.
- Size 2 – 20 hectares (The size will vary, depending on the availability and development potential of land and on the type and number of sportsfields that need to be provided.)
- Service Area Within 1 – 2 km of any residential property in the community
- Examples Aggie Fields, Holland Creek Ballpark, Little League Ballpark

- **NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK**

- Description Features informal open space, passive recreation amenities and sportsfields which are generally of a lower standard than fields in a community park. In higher density neighbourhood, the level of service and intensity of park development should be higher than in lower density neighbourhoods. Elementary school sites can also function as neighbourhood parks provided adequate facilities are in place and there is a joint-use agreement.
- Amenities Space for quiet activities, children playground, hard and / or soft play surfaces, picnic tables and benches, sportsfield(s)
- Size 1 – 4 hectares
- Service Area Within 1 km of any residential property in the community
- Examples Root Street Park, Kinsmen (Brown Drive) Park

- **SPECIAL AREA**

- Description Include areas such as streetscapes and natural areas which may have a variety of functions including ecological conservation, environmental stewardship and view protection. In some cases, there may be some improvement of the site, while in others, they are likely to remain in a natural condition.

- Amenities Ornamental landscaping, site furnishings, natural vegetation
- Size Not applicable
- Service Area Within 1 km of any residential property in the community
- Example Gourlay-Janes Park

• **LINEAR PARK**

- Description A pedestrian and / or cycling trail that is typically located in a linear park system. Provides off-road transportation linkages, and include developed and useable trails and pathways on public land, utility rights-of-way and in some instances, across private property.
- Amenities Natural areas, linear landscaping, improved pathways, benches / rest areas and signage
- Size Length should be as long as is necessary to establish an accessible linkage between 2 or more key destinations. The width of a linear park may vary, but a minimum width of approximately 3 meters is preferred, in order to provide safe and pleasant experience for the user, and to minimize potential impact on adjacent land uses.
- Service Area Within .5 km of any residential property in the community
- Examples Holland Creek Trail

RECOMMENDATION #1

Organize parks and open spaces in Ladysmith into the following classification system: community feature park, community active park, neighbourhood park, special area, linear park

RECOMMENDATION #2

Include the recommended park classification system in the Official Community Plan

4.2 PARK SERVICE AREA GUIDELINES

As discussed in Chapter Two, the approach used to assess parks and green space in the Plan is based on levels of service rather than on a comparison with traditional standards.

The consultants have determined that proximity of households to parks would serve as the most appropriate service level measurement. Based on information gathered during the research phase of the project, it was concluded that the ability to conveniently access a nearby park, and the amenities available in the park, are more important to residents than the size of the park or the total number of hectares in the community.

An analysis of the “service area” for each park category was carried out and resulted in the formulation of 2 overall park guidelines. These are intended for use as the basis for future park planning and acquisition.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Ensure that every household in Ladysmith is within .5 kilometers of at least one category of park

RECOMMENDATION #4

Include the recommended park service area guidelines in the Official Community Plan

The current Official Community Plan defines standards for the provision of park space. There are a variety of conditions in Ladysmith that affect the ability to establish and adhere to rigid standards. These include the topography of the community, the Forest Land Reserve, historical development patterns, the potential for open space within multi-family developments and the availability of Regional parks in the immediate area.

In order to be consistent with the discussion in other sections of this chapter, the consultants suggest that guidelines rather than standards be used to direct the planning, acquisition and management of parks. The guidelines mentioned above may be used to set targets for the provision, size and function of parks and open space in Ladysmith. Where appropriate, they should also be used to ensure that public and site-specific issues are adequately identified and addressed.

4.3 ISSUES

The following questions summarize many of the issues regarding parks and green space that were raised at the outset of the planning process.

- Is there adequate parkland in Ladysmith for present and future generations?

- Are there specific areas or types of parks that should be pursued in future acquisition efforts?
- Are residents currently satisfied with the level of maintenance in the parks system?
- Are there amenities that are not currently available in Ladysmith parks that should be considered in future park developments?
- Is there a need to upgrade, renovate or replace any existing park amenities?
- Is there an interest in further developing the community's trail system

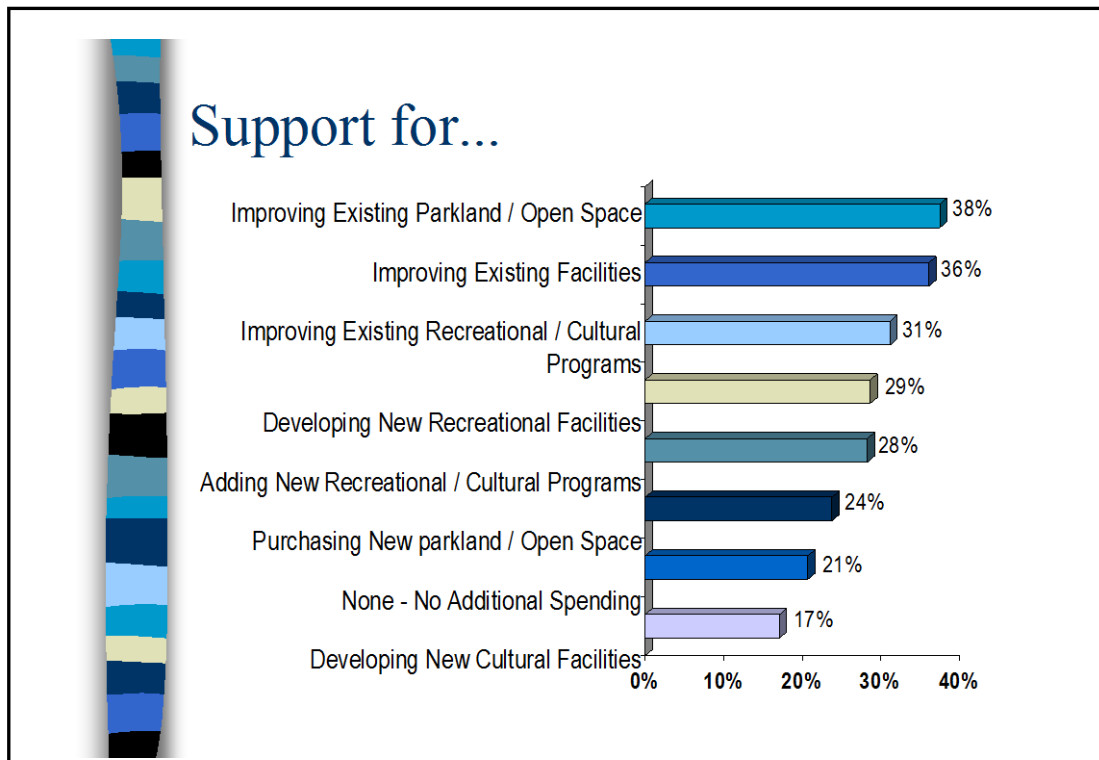
4.3.1 PARK SUPPLY AND ACQUISITION

There are a number of factors that affect the acquisition of park space. These include:

- The existing inventory (both size and location)
- The cost and availability of land
- The distance from households to park and trail sites
- The level of public support for additional park sites
- The municipality's commitment to ongoing maintenance

It is interesting to note that when the public survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for parks and recreation services, the acquisition of new parks and open space ranked sixth among seven suggestions. As indicated in **FIGURE FIVE** on page 21, improvements to existing parks, facilities and programs were favoured over any new developments.

**FIGURE FIVE
SUPPORT FOR NEW AND IMPROVED
PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES**



- Acquisition**
As the population of Ladysmith grows, however, there will be a need for the acquisition of additional parks and open space. In particular, since the boundaries of the community have recently been expanded into Lot 108 and Holland Creek, it will be important, as development occurs, to ensure the availability of an additional neighbourhood park site in this area.
- Sportsfield Complex**
In addition, it is apparent that many sports organizations in Ladysmith feel that there is a need for a centralized complex of sportsfields and diamonds, complete with lighting, as well as a fieldhouse with change facilities, a concession and washrooms. A facility of this type, similar to the McGir Road development in Nanaimo, would require a minimum of 15 to 20 acres of land that can be developed for these purposes.
- Waterfront Access**
It should also be noted that there is considerable interest among Ladysmith residents in access to the waterfront. While Transfer Beach serves this purpose very well, numerous individuals and organizations expressed concern that developments adjacent to the park might result in restricted access. As planning progresses, the

public should be assured that a reasonable amount of park space will be available, and that their access to the water will be enhanced.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Acquire additional parkland:

- For a neighbourhood park in the area of Lot 108 and Holland Creek
- To develop a sportsfield complex
- To increase residents' access to the waterfront

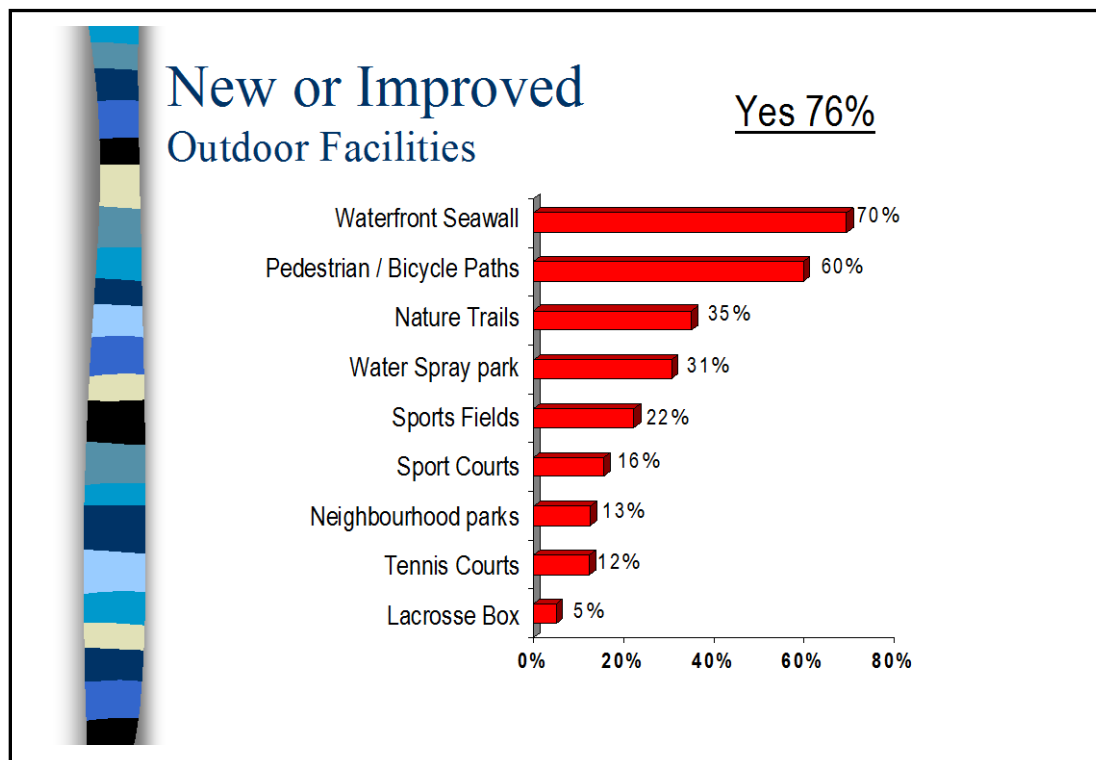
RECOMMENDATION #6

Identify proposed park sites in the new Official Community Plan

4.3.2 PARK MAINTENANCE AND AMENITIES

As indicated in **FIGURE SIX**, 76% of the survey respondents feel that there is a need for new or improved facilities in Ladysmith Parks. A waterfront seawall is at the top of the list, followed by pedestrian / bicycle paths and nature trails.

**FIGURE SIX
NEED FOR NEW OR IMPROVED OUTDOOR FACILITIES**



- **Trail System**

One of the most desired enhancements requested by those surveyed and interviewed was related to the continued development of Ladysmith's trail system. Specific suggestions included access to the waterfront, and connections to various parks and recreation facilities, and the continuation of the existing system to form a series of inter-connected loops throughout the town.

It should be noted that the Trans Canada Trail will travel through Ladysmith and add to the recreational opportunities of local residents. Ideally, this amenity will link with other parts of the community's trail network.

- **Sportsfields and Diamonds**

With the exception of the community's diamonds and sportfields, the overall maintenance of Ladysmith's parks is quite adequate. The condition of most of the fields, however, is less than satisfactory, and efforts should be initiated to improve their quality and overall playability.

This work should involve discussions with local sport organizations, and should focus on the provision of at least one lighted all-weather field, as well as the upgrading of other fields and diamonds to meet modern requirements for use with improved soils, drainage and irrigation.

In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that soccer fields and ball diamonds do not overlap. If this can be achieved, existing fields will be given the opportunity to recover from a season of play, and be in far better condition than in the past.

- **School Fields**

It is also suggested that Ladysmith officials initiate discussions with the Nanaimo School Board regarding the condition of existing school fields, and the cooperative development and maintenance of new fields.

It is recognized that schools are hard pressed to accommodate classroom needs, and that fields and play areas have a lower priority in terms of community use. Regardless, these facilities are an important component of the community's open space system and should be developed and maintained to standards that are consistent with municipal parks. An objective of the proposed discussions should be to seek agreement regarding Ladysmith's direct involvement in field maintenance.

- **Playgrounds**

In recent years, there have been several new playgrounds installed in the community. Many residents expressed a desire to have playground equipment suited to different age groups available in every park. The consultants recommend a continuing program of

maintenance and renewal, in order that standards established by the Canadian Standards Association are met.

- **Dog Parks**

There were numerous suggestions related to the need for one or more off-leash areas in the park system. There has been increasing interest in these facilities across Canada, and there are many excellent examples of Parks Departments working in cooperation with dog owners to develop and maintain sites of this type. While Council has recently adopted a Dog-Use Bylaw, officials are encouraged to work with these individuals to find a suitable location for this purpose, and to develop appropriate regulations related to its use.

- **Water Park**

The construction of a water park was suggested by 31% of the survey respondents. These facilities were introduced to British Columbia in the early 1980's, primarily as a means of replacing outdated wading pools. Since that time, they have been constructed in many communities, and have proven to very popular with younger children and families.

- **Youth Park**

A skateboard park was constructed adjacent to the community centre in 1998, and provides a recreational opportunity for youngsters who might otherwise use streets, sidewalks and parking lots.

In the past few years, a number of communities have built youth parks which are designed to provide additional facilities for youth – and include hard surface courts for activities such as basketball and street hockey, and in some instances, climbing walls, seating areas and other features.

The location of the Ladysmith facility may dictate against the addition of other amenities, but it would be a useful exercise to initiate discussions with those who use the park, to determine the need for and interest in other facilities.

It is also suggested that the maintenance of the park be addressed. Numerous people mentioned that the site is somewhat unsightly and that litter removal and graffiti control should be given a higher priority.

- **Natural Areas**

Ladysmith is fortunate to have a number of natural areas adjacent to and within its parks. These add a great deal of balance and diversity to the system, and offer residents numerous opportunities for relaxation and social interaction.

In an effort to take greater advantage of these natural amenities, it is suggested that the Parks Department install or provide additional picnic shelters, benches and signage highlighting the history of the area in each of the community park sites.

- **Golf Course**

The pitch and putt golf course is a wonderful addition to the community's network of parks and recreation facilities. It is easily accessible and inexpensive, and provides a large number of people with an opportunity to engage in a "day on the links".

Unfortunately, the ball diamonds at the Little League Park and the golf course overlap somewhat, posing a significant problem in terms of expansion. This situation has resulted in a "dispute" between the parties that should be addressed at the earliest possible date.

RECOMMENDATION #7

Continue to develop a comprehensive trail system for walking and cycling with connections to:

- *Significant parks, community facilities and the Trans Canada Trail*
- *The waterfront*
- *The downtown commercial area*
- *Trail systems in adjacent communities*

RECOMMENDATION #8

Identify trail possibilities in conjunction with the Official Community Plan, the Transportation Plan and the proposed Bicycle Plan

RECOMMENDATION #9

Review the condition of each sportsfield in the community in cooperation with local sport organizations and School Board officials, and identify priorities for improvement

RECOMMENDATION #10

Develop a 10 year plan for upgrading existing school and park fields in cooperation with the School District

RECOMMENDATION #11

Negotiate an agreement with the School Board for the ongoing maintenance of school fields

RECOMMENDATION #12

Continue to upgrade existing playgrounds and install new facilities as the need arises

RECOMMENDATION #13

Initiate discussions with dog owners regarding the need and possible site for a leash-free facility in the community

RECOMMENDATION #14

Initiate discussions with local service clubs related to the construction of a water park in one of the community parks

RECOMMENDATION #15

Initiate discussions with local youth regarding the need for and location of a youth park

RECOMMENDATION #16

Address the need for natural areas within parks, including seating areas, picnic shelters and signage highlighting the history of the community

RECOMMENDATION #17

Initiate meetings between minor baseball and the Golf Course Society regarding overlapping facilities

5. *Indoor Facilities*

LADYSMITH IS SERVED BY A NUMBER of recreation facilities, most of which are in public ownership. Facilities include:

- The Frank Jameson Community Centre, which includes a 4 lane, 25 meter swimming pool and leisure / therapy pool, gymnasium, several meeting rooms, a kitchen and a privately operated fitness centre.
- The Agricultural Hall, which includes a large meeting room and kitchen.
- The Ladysmith O.A.P.O., which is separate from the community centre and includes a number of small meeting rooms.
- The Ladysmith Youth Centre, again separate from the community centre and inclusive of a relatively large activity space.
- Ladysmith Secondary School, located adjacent to the community centre. The school has several spaces, including a gymnasium and activity room that is available for public use.
- Three elementary schools, each of which includes activity rooms and a gymnasium which can be used by the general public.

5.1 ISSUES

In addressing facility requirements, the consultants have attempted to address the following questions:

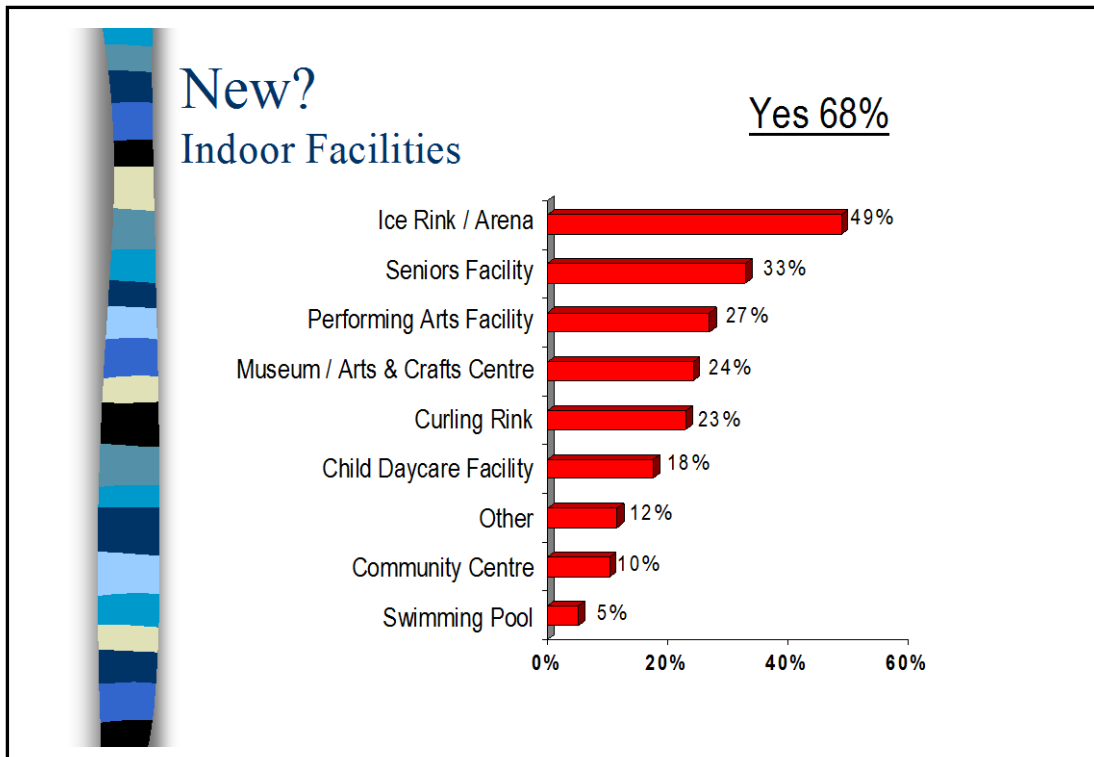
- **Facility Supply / Improvements**
 - Are present recreation facilities adequate to meet current and future demands?
 - What new facilities should be added during the timeframe of the Plan?
 - Are there any facilities that require improvements or additions?
- **Location**
 - Do residents find present facilities to be well located?
- **Operations**
 - Does the general public find current hours of operation adequate and convenient?

- Does the public support corporate involvement or partnerships in the construction and operation of future facilities?

5.1.1 FACILITY SUPPLY

In the consultant’s opinion, the community has a reasonable level of facility supply. As indicated in **FIGURE SEVEN**, however, 68% of the public survey respondents feel that new facilities are needed, with an ice rink / arena topping the list.

**FIGURE SEVEN
SUPPORT FOR NEW RECREATION FACILITIES**



The remainder of this chapter focuses on the need for new indoor facilities.

- **Ice Rink / Arena**
At the present time, there are no ice facilities in Ladysmith. As a result, it is necessary for figure skaters, minor hockey players and adult hockey players, and for those interested in recreational skating to travel either to Nanaimo or to North Cowichan for these activities. Trips to these communities take approximately 15 minutes.

A study completed by PERC several years ago concluded that the next arena in the Cowichan Valley Regional District should be built in the North Cowichan / Duncan area, thereby reducing costs related to operations and management, and increasing the rinks’ capacity to host tournaments.

Since Ladysmith's population is likely to increase by no more than 2,000 people in the next decade, the consultants cannot justify a recommendation to build a separate facility in Ladysmith.

If a new arena is built in the North Cowichan / Duncan area, however, Council should be prepared to discuss the possibility of Ladysmith residents making a financial contribution toward capital and operating costs.

- **Seniors Facility**

Ladysmith seniors currently lease a building from the Town for recreation activities. While it is not a large facility, it meets the needs of its members well, with the exception of parking. Due to its hillside location, it is difficult for some of the members to park their vehicles and get out of the car.

It has been suggested that additional space behind the facility be allocated for a parking lot. Although the space is not large, it would likely be able to accommodate up to 10 vehicles.

The Town has recently committed resources to secure additional parking on-site and off-site around the centre when re-development occurs in the next two years.

It is anticipated that the facility will continue to serve the needs of the community's seniors for some years to come. It is possible, however, that prior to the end of the end of the Master Plan timeframe, that an addition will be needed.

- **Cultural Facilities**

As indicated in **FIGURE SEVEN**, 27% of the public survey respondents suggested that there is a need for a performing arts centre in the community, and 24% suggested that there is a need for a museum / arts and crafts centre.

It is PERC's opinion that it would be a mistake to consider new facilities specifically for these purposes within the timeframe of the Plan. Similar to arena facilities, Ladysmith is in close proximity to cultural facilities in Chemainus, Duncan and Nanaimo, and it could be a very expensive undertaking to build and operate a facility of this type.

Ladysmith officials are encouraged, however, to consider a long range plan for this type of amenity, either as a "stand-alone" amenity, or as a cooperative effort with the Nanaimo School Board.

- **Curling Rink**

Twenty-three percent of the survey respondents mentioned that there is a need for a curling rink in Ladysmith.

The consultants cannot recommend that the Town become involved in the construction of a curling rink. Most communities in British Columbia have found that participation in curling is stable at best, and that it has become increasingly difficult to make efficient use of existing facilities.

It is suggested, therefore, that Ladysmith should not financially involved in planning or developing a rink at this time. It is also suggested that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department monitor the interest in the sport, and attempt to determine the number of people in the community who would be interested in participating in the activity, and the cost of constructing and operating a facility of this type.

A number of communities have provided land to non-profit curling clubs, which have then embarked on campaigns to raise sufficient funds to undertake construction. This option may be viable.

RECOMMENDATION #18

Do not consider the construction of a new arena, cultural facility, seniors centre or curling rink during the timeframe of the current Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION #19

Initiate discussions with the Nanaimo School District regarding the joint construction of a performing arts centre at Ladysmith Secondary School

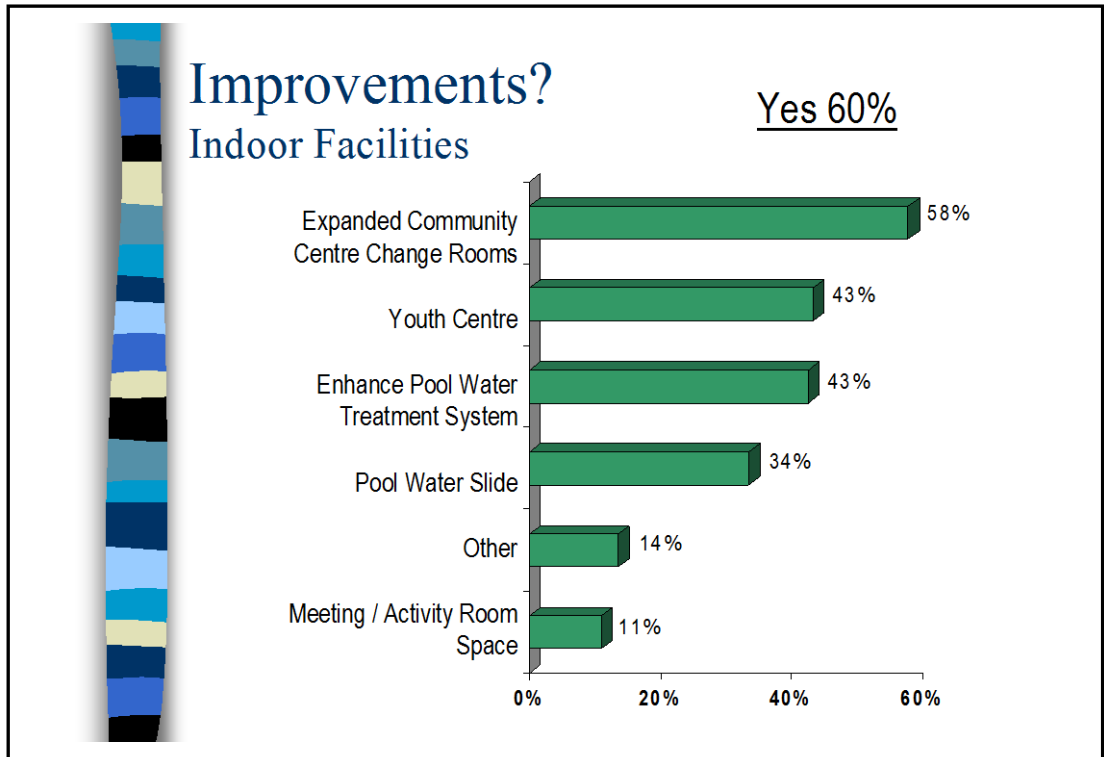
5.2 IMPROVED FACILITIES

There were a number of suggestions for improvements or additions to existing indoor facilities, and in particular to the Frank Jameson Community Centre. Specific suggestions included:

- Expanding the change rooms at the community centre, and providing additional meeting and activity space
- Enhancing the water treatment system, and providing a water slide at the indoor pool
- Improving the facilities at the youth centre

This information is summarized in **FIGURE EIGHT** on page 31.

**FIGURE EIGHT
SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR INDOOR FACILITIES**



In recent years, there have been several improvements made to the community centre, including the addition of a leisure / therapy pool as well as the provision of additional space for lifeguarding staff.

In addition, architectural sketches have been prepared that suggest how the overall facility could be expanded to provide a more comprehensive multi-purpose centre for the general public.

The consultants support the need for the following improvements to the facility as a high priority:

- An expanded entrance / foyer
- Improved office space, including the re-location of administrative personnel to the front of the building
- Additional multi-purpose activity rooms and space that could accommodate related organizations
- Improved and expanded change facilities and family change rooms
- Improved storage

Studies undertaken in the last few years suggest that the community centre likely has a “life expectancy” of approximately 15 to 20 years. With this in mind, the improvements suggested above seem reasonable, and would result in a much more attractive facility that would provide a broader range of activities than it does at the present time.

It is suggested, therefore, that architects / planners be retained to undertake a feasibility study specific to the needs of the centre, and inclusive of capital and potential operating costs.

The feasibility study should also address requirements related specifically to the pool. While improvements to the water treatment system have been suggested by numerous facility patrons in the past, it is unclear, at the present time, as to the best solution for this problem.

In addition, it should be noted that the construction of a 50 meter pool in Nanaimo will likely have an impact on the Ladysmith facility. The extent of that impact is unknown at the present time, however, it should be anticipated that a number of people may choose to travel to Nanaimo to participate in competitive swimming and diving, as well as the wider array of leisure components. This information should be factored into the study, prior to decisions being made regarding the viability of any expansion to the aquatic centre.

RECOMMENDATION #20

Conduct a feasibility study into the need for improved facilities, as well as the capital and operating costs, at the Frank Jameson Community Centre and Pool

RECOMMENDATION #21

Depending on the results of the feasibility study, consider undertaking improvements in three stages:

- *Improvements to the water treatment system in the indoor pool and improvements to the change room facilities*
- *Improvements to and expansion of the community centre*
- *Improvements to and expansion of the swimming pool*

5.3 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

There were very few suggestions from those surveyed or interviewed regarding changes to hours of facility operation. In addition, all of the groups interviewed indicated that staff members were helpful and cooperative. These positive remarks serve to emphasize the level of commitment by staff to excellent customer service.

While there was some mention of the need for improved maintenance at the Aggie Hall, the consultant generally found that the upkeep of recreation facilities to be thorough and well organized. Areas in need of repair are immediately attended to, resulting in clean, well kept buildings.

While this reflects a positive reaction to the manner in which the facilities are cared for, it should be noted that their age and continued high use will likely lead to more significant maintenance requirements in future years.

RECOMMENDATION #22

Continue to work with the public and community organizations in order to ensure the most efficient use of facilities

RECOMMENDATION #23

Continue the current program of facility maintenance in order to ensure the availability of quality facilities and to ensure that deficiencies are identified and corrected as early as possible

5.4 LOCATION

One of the issues that Ladysmith must address is the long-term location of its major recreation facilities.

As mentioned above, the Frank Jameson Community Centre is likely to remain operational for at least 15 years, following which a replacement will be necessary. As the year 2015 approaches, therefore, decisions will have to be made regarding the amenities to include in a new facility, and more important, the best location for new facilities.

It is the consultants' opinion that while the current building is close to several schools in the community, the site may not be large enough to accommodate expansion as well as increased parking.

It is suggested that as long term objective, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and Department, review these concerns, and explore other potential locations bearing in mind the following criteria:

- The site should be large enough for the existing facility, and accommodate future additions as the population of the community increases
- The site should be large enough to accommodate sufficient parking for the largest number of patrons anticipated to use the facility
- The site should be such that Ladysmith can enter into a partnership with the private sector or other public sector agencies, such as the School District
- The site should be easily accessible by car, as well as by public transit

RECOMMENDATION #24

Conduct a study into the expansion / replacement of the existing Frank Jameson Community Centre and Pool, considering location, facilities required, capital and operating costs, and the potential for partnerships with the private sector or other public sector agencies

6. *Recreation Program Delivery*

THE PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT, in cooperation with a number of partners, offers a wide variety of recreation programs through the efforts of staff and volunteers. These opportunities are available on a year-round basis, and include courses, workshops, drop-in programs and special event.

In addressing the delivery of program services, the following questions were addressed:

- What recreation opportunities are generally available in Ladysmith?
- Does the public feel that there are sufficient opportunities in which to participate?
- Are there any limitations to participation in recreation activities?
- How does the public learn about recreation programs in Ladysmith?
- Are there other means of promoting recreation services that should be utilized?

The following information provides a general overview of the programs offered:

- **Aquatic Programs**
Recreational swimming, public swimming lessons, aquatic fitness and rehabilitation programs and special events are offered at the Frank Jameson Community Centre Pool.
- **Fitness Programs**
Aerobic fitness and rehabilitation programs are available at the Community Centre, and at other locations throughout the community.
- **Seniors Programs**
Seniors programs are offered primarily at the Ladysmith Seniors Centre and through the Ladysmith Community Services Society.
- **Youth Services**
The Department works with schools and other agencies to provide youth programs, summer camps, leadership programs, special events and other recreation activities at the Ladysmith Youth Centre and in other community facilities.
- **General Recreation Programs**
As mentioned above, many program opportunities are offered at the Community Centre, in cooperation with a number of partners.

6.1 APPROACH TO THE DELIVERY OF RECREATION SERVICES

Several years ago, Ladysmith adopted an approach to the delivery of recreation services that was closely aligned with local organizations. Basically, the approach involves a close working relationship with a number of partners, in which the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department provides consultative services, in order to enhance the provision of recreation opportunities.

This “community development” model supports the premise that the Department has a responsibility for ensuring that leisure opportunities are available for local residents, but does not suggest that local government must organize and sponsor all such services. It does, however, imply that Guidelines for Programming need to be established which suggest that programs:

- Serve all segments of the community without discrimination in terms of gender, age, disability and the like
- Provide positive leisure opportunities that meet significant community needs
- Provide a varied range of activities, as well as diversity and balance in leisure opportunities
- Involve community residents and organization members in setting policies and in conducting activities
- Serve groups and individuals with special needs
- Be flexibly scheduled to meet the time commitments of potential participants
- Make the fullest possible use of available community facilities
- Are supervised and administered by qualified personnel
- Are regularly evaluated to determine whether they are meeting appropriate goals and satisfying community needs
- Are promoted to the public through the media and other channels

RECOMMENDATION #25

Continue to work with community organizations to ensure the availability of a broad range of recreation opportunities, and to minimize duplication in the delivery of programs.

RECOMMENDATION #26

Approve Guidelines for Programming that provide direction to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in the overall approach to the delivery of program services

6.2 ATTITUDES REGARDING RECREATION PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Respondents to the public survey were requested to indicate whether or not they feel there are sufficient program opportunities for Ladysmith residents.

Seventy-two percent of the respondents suggested that more programs were needed for youth and 60% suggested that additional services were needed for younger adults. It is the consultant's opinion that there are, in fact, many recreation opportunities for youth in Ladysmith, and that they appeal to a wide variety of skill levels and interests. Typically, these opportunities are offered by various community organizations, church groups, and other agencies including the Boys and Girls Club and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

The Department has an important role to play in this area, but it is a role that must involve other organizations to ensure that duplication of services are limited, and that the synergy of several organizations working together is achieved.

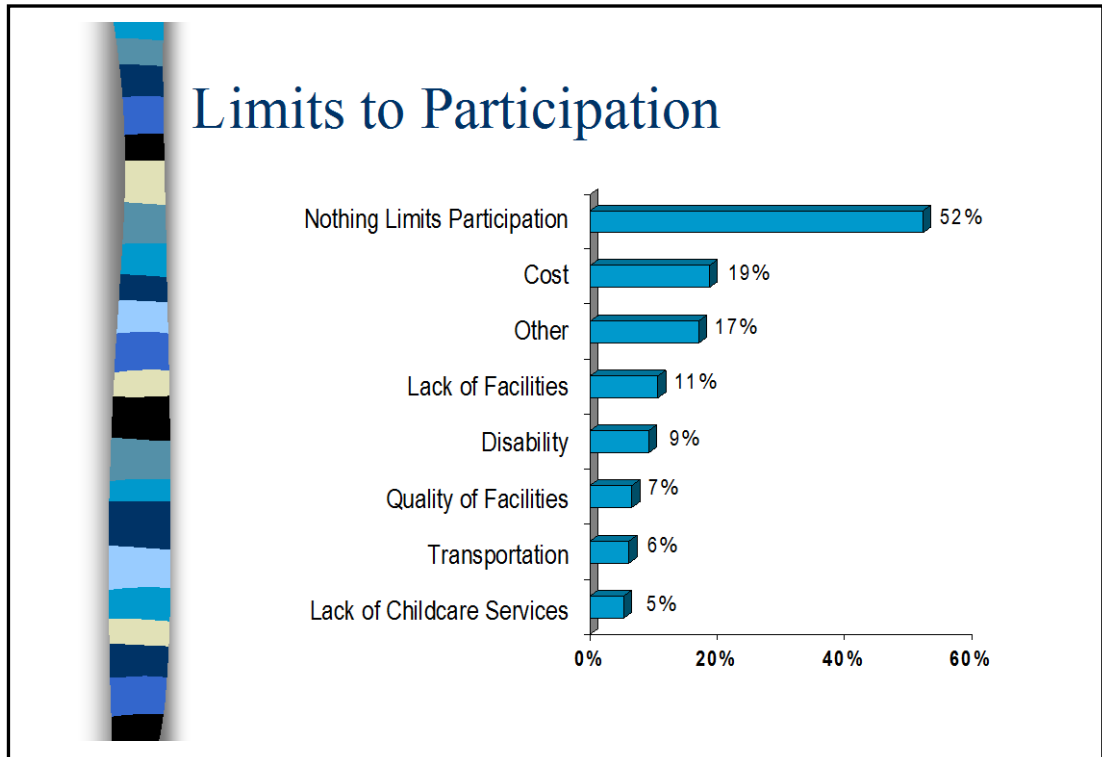
A lack of facilities is frequently mentioned as a problem in the area of youth programming, and there is a need to ensure that safe, attractive facilities are available that appeal to youth interests. At the same time, however, it should be a high priority for the Department to focus attention on communicating directly with youth groups in order to best determine their needs and potential ways of addressing their recreation requirements.

Specifically, it was suggested that a "Youth Community Social Planner" was needed to fill the gap for services not currently provided for youth. In addition, it was suggested, also, that the Youth Centre provides a valuable service for its clients, but falls short in terms of providing opportunities for the majority of mainstream youth in the community.

It should be noted, also, that there is increased interest in family-oriented recreation opportunities. This may mean that there is a need for additional and more convenient programming, and suggests that the Department could take a leadership role in administering occasional surveys and in facilitating focus group discussions in order to gather as much information about the needs of this group of residents.

The public survey also included a question regarding factors that limit the public's ability to participate in recreation programs. As indicated in **FIGURE NINE** on page 38, there relatively few limitations were mentioned. In fact, over 50% of the respondents suggested that there were no limitations to their involvement in recreation programs.

**FIGURE NINE
LIMITATIONS TO PARTICIPATION**



RECOMMENDATION #27

Facilitate discussions with youth and youth organizations related to the development and implementation of a broad range of youth activities.

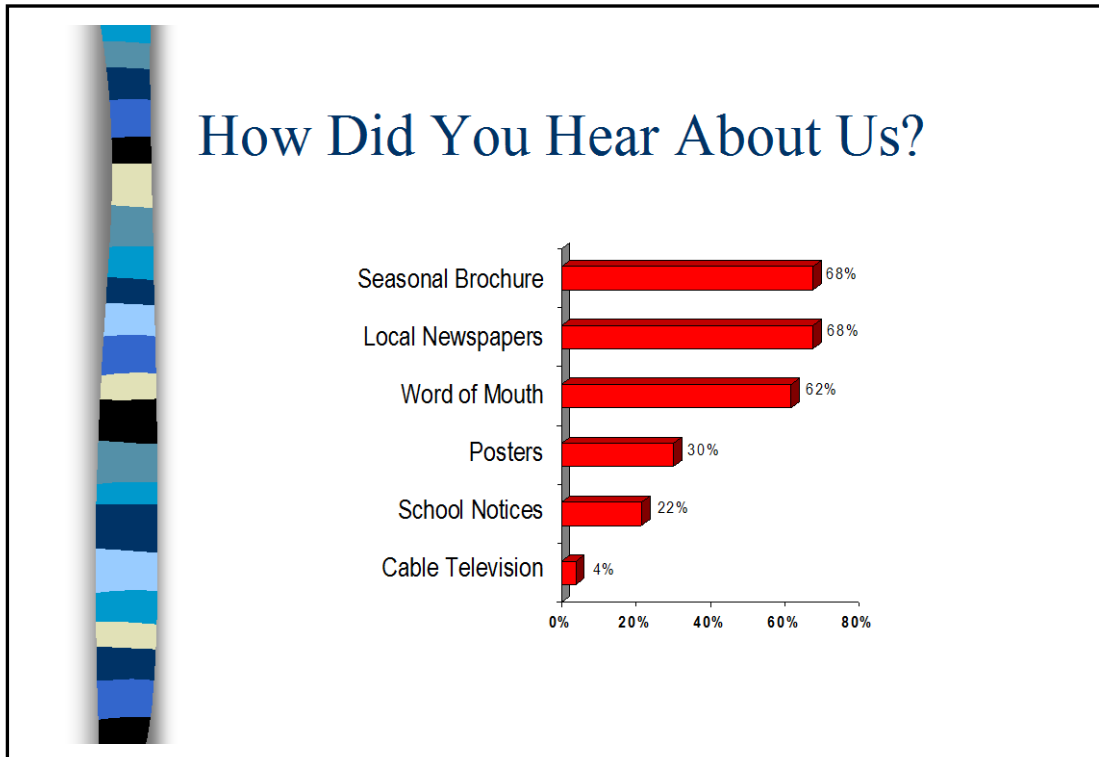
RECOMMENDATION #28

Facilitate sessions / workshops with families in the community in order to identify program needs and assist in the development of program opportunities

6.3 PROMOTION

As outlined in **FIGURE TEN** on page 39, residents generally learn about recreation activities through a variety of sources, including the Department's seasonal brochure, the local newspaper and word-of-mouth.

**FIGURE TEN
INFORMATION REGARDING PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES**



It should be noted that an increasing number of Parks and Recreation Departments are making extensive use of web pages and the Internet to advise the public about various services. There are numerous departments as well, that make use of “city pages” in local newspapers to provide information regarding current projects, upcoming events and the like. The Department should explore these tools and others in order to ensure that news about program opportunities is readily available to the public.

RECOMMENDATION #29

Continue to make use of existing systems for the promotion of local recreation services

RECOMMENDATION #30

Enhance the seasonal brochure with information regarding parks and facility projects and events

RECOMMENDATION #31

Develop and maintain a web page on the Internet to assist in the promotion of Ladysmith parks, recreation and culture services

7. *Partnerships*

IN THE PAST DECADE, PUBLIC parks and recreation agencies have become increasingly involved in a variety of partnerships -- with the private sector, local community organizations and related agencies. This Chapter addresses these relationships and the potential for their increased use in Ladysmith.

7.1 PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public / private partnerships (P3's) in recreation are not a new phenomenon. However, full-scale partnerships that involve local governments in British Columbia and the private sector have been constrained by provisions in the ***Municipal Act***. In the past, these constraints rendered some innovative P3 arrangements expensive and time consuming to develop and administratively cumbersome to manage.

In 1988, constraints to P3 were removed through changes to the ***Municipal Act*** enacted through the adoption of *Bill 31*, the ***Local Government Statutes Amendment Act***. Since that time, a number of local governments in BC have entered into or are contemplating P3 arrangements for recreational facilities such as arenas, theatres and pools.

Generally, true public / private partnerships will only generate private sector interest if there is a growing market demand that will result in an ongoing revenue stream. As such, public / private partnerships may only be viable for large-scale recreation facilities (aquatic centres, arenas, etc.) where users can clearly be charged for the programs they use. Other partnerships also offer viable alternatives to traditional local government service delivery, including:

- Public / public partnerships (e.g. the Town and the School District for the joint use of playing fields and school facilities)
- Public / non-profit partnerships (e.g. Boys and Girls Club)
- Community partnerships (trails development, Partners in Parks)

Despite the growing popularity of P3s, especially for large facilities, they are not always the best option for local governments contemplating recreation facility development. It is important to understand the nature of the service and all of the options for service delivery before a P3 is contemplated for project delivery.

RECOMMENDATION #32

Recognize public / private partnership (P3) as one means of delivering a service to the community.

RECOMMENDATION #33

Develop a P3 policy which outlines cases in which the Town will consider P3 as an alternative service delivery mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION #34

Establish a P3 leader who will ensure that a central source of expertise and support exists within the Town.

RECOMMENDATION #35

Ensure that a clear business case is made that supports a public / private partnership as a means to deliver a service to the community. (It is imperative that the appropriate service delivery model is selected based on the service to be provided.)

7.2 PUBLIC / PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS & JOINT USE AGREEMENTS

Section 176(1)(b) of the **Local Government Act** allows local governments to enter into agreements with a wide variety of public authorities to develop infrastructure and works and to enter into servicing arrangements. Public authority is defined as:

- Other local governments (municipalities, Regional Districts)
- School Boards and other educational bodies (universities and colleges)
- Public health care bodies
- Provincial governments
- Federal government

Generally speaking, public / public partnerships are perceived to involve less risk to a local government than public / private partnerships. The key factor behind this perception is that public bodies, unlike their private sector counterparts, are not subject to bankruptcy, and are less likely to leave local government with servicing responsibilities in the case of private partner insolvency.

It should be noted that an increasing number of Parks and Recreation Departments have initiated discussions with local health organizations regarding the possibility of cooperative efforts in the area of health promotion, and the delivery of integrated services. The possibility of this type of relationship in Ladysmith should be explored.

RECOMMENDATION #36

Maintain existing agreements and seek additional opportunities for partnership and joint use arrangements with the School District.

RECOMMENDATION #37

Initiate discussions with public health agencies regarding the cooperative promotion and delivery of services

7.3 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

As pressure on local governments intensifies with respect to limiting tax increases, local governments have sought innovative means of funding services such as parks and recreation. Numerous communities, for example, have developed highly successful Partners in Parks programs. These programs have been designed to seek community involvement (e.g. fundraising, labour, materials contribution, and even land donations).

Partnerships can be tailored to maximize the skill benefit offered by each group. Examples of goals of community partnerships for leisure and parks include:

- To provide community development opportunities
- To provide opportunities with other groups to share resources toward common goals
- To improve prospects for equitable and integrated planning, implementation and operation of park issues
- To support effective and efficient use of municipal staff and resources
- To increase the potential for expanded representation, a higher profile and stronger voice for community services
- To recognize challenges associated with partnering
- To maintain program flexibility which will ensure effective public input and a diversity of partnerships
- To create prototype projects and build on successes

RECOMMENDATION #38

Develop a handbook that identifies priority projects and opportunities for community involvement.

RECOMMENDATION #39

Develop a public education program that articulates the benefits of community partnerships with respect to parks, recreation and cultural projects

8. Administration and Finance

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE departments varies, to some extent, from one community to another. Generally speaking, however, the function of the Department will include the following tasks:

- The management and maintenance of a variety of recreation / cultural facilities
- The planning, development and maintenance of parks and open space
- The coordination and delivery of recreation and cultural programs and services

Each of these functions involves the management of full and part-time staff, the preparation and management of budgets, long and short-term planning, and the marketing of various services to the general public.

In the most successful departments, managers and supervisory personnel recognize and acknowledge the value of each employee, and understand that they are the key to the organization's success. In these instances, the philosophy of "giving people the opportunity to do the job" filters down to front line staff, who provide services directly to the public. These staff members, in turn, are given the opportunity for input, are encouraged to make decisions, listen to facility users and program participants and understand customer needs. As a result, employees perform at a high level, make decisions on their own, take initiative and perform quality work.

This type of system allows staff to act quickly in response to suggestions, requests and concerns, and to respond to trends taking place in the field.

In the end, this approach results in a delivery system in which all employees work together toward a quality, customer focused operation.

8.1 ISSUES

A number of additional issues were raised throughout the planning process that are best categorized under the heading of "administration". Specifically, they address topics related to the Official Community Plan, levels of satisfaction, tax increases, and overall support for future improvements.

The following questions summarize the major issues related to administrative matters that were raised at the outset of the planning process.

- **Attitudes of Residents**
 - What is the public's level of satisfaction with the current delivery of parks and recreation services?

- **Financial Considerations**

- What amount of tax increase, if any, would be supported to maintain or increase services?
- Does the public support reductions in service in order to meet financial objectives?
- If service reductions are necessary, where and how should they take place?

8.2 ATTITUDES OF RESIDENTS

In conducting research related to the Plan, the consultants were given the impression that there are mixed feelings among Ladysmith residents regarding the delivery of parks and recreation services. On the one hand, there are many organizations that are prepared to work cooperatively with the Department in the provision of facilities and services; and on the other hand, there are others with demands regarding the need for facility development and improvements.

Nevertheless, most of the survey respondents expressed satisfaction with current service levels, compared to relatively few who were dissatisfied.

8.3 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The current Official Community Plan includes a section entitled *Parks and Open Space Objectives and Policies*. In reviewing the information contained in the document, the consultants concluded that there is a need for several adjustments to the text in order to reflect the community's requirements in terms of Parks, Recreation and Culture. Accordingly, the following wording is suggested for consideration by Council and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission.

8.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ladysmith has a number of parks, recreation and culture facilities available to meet the needs of local residents. These include:

- Approximately 25 hectares of parks and open space
- A community centre and an indoor swimming pool, in addition to a seniors centre and a youth centre

While these amenities generally meet the needs of current residents, there will be an ongoing need to address the amount of parks and open space, and the availability of indoor facilities.

8.3.2 VISION

- To be responsive to the needs of the community, to be innovative in the delivery of services and to provide a well maintained network of parks, facilities and programs

8.3.3 MISSION

- To provide quality leisure opportunities that meet the needs and preferences of the local residents by offering creative, innovative and accessible parks and open space, facilities and services which improve the quality of life in the community

8.3.4 GOAL

- To offer services that will make a significant improvement to the community

8.3.5 STRATEGIES

- To provide quality services which recognize the varied interests and needs of the community
- To provide comprehensive parks, recreation and culture services which are supported by the community
- To ensure that parks and facilities are centres of activity and interest in the community
- To work closely with community organizations and to assist the public in becoming self-sustaining in their leisure pursuits
- To provide a comprehensive parks and open space system that meets the requirements of present and future generations and preserves the natural environment for casual recreation use
- To develop and maintain parks and recreation facilities and landscaped areas to a high degree of excellence

8.3.6 PARK CLASSIFICATION AND GUIDELINES

- Categories for parks and open space will include community feature parks, active community parks, neighbourhood parks, special parks and linear parks

- The Town will strive to maintain the following park and open space guidelines in terms of park size:
 - Community Feature Parks 2 to 20 hectares
 - Community Active Parks 2 to 20 hectares
 - Neighbourhood Parks 1 to 4 hectares
 - Special Areas Not applicable
 - Linear Parks As long as necessary to establish appropriate linkages in the community

- The Town will strive to maintain the following park and open space service area guidelines:
 - General Every household should be within 0.5 km of at least one category of park

 - Community Feature Parks and Community Active Parks Every household should be within 1.0 - 2.0 km of a community park

 - Neighbourhood Parks Every household should be within 1.0 km of a Neighbourhood park

8.3.7 POLICIES

- Parks, open space and facilities for recreation and culture shall be provided to serve all residents of the community.

- Parkland shall generally be acquired through land dedication or cash-in-lieu of land payment, to be exercised at the municipality's discretion, or at the subdivision stage based on the maximum 5% dedication provided for by the Municipal Act. The municipality reserves the option to impose a development cost charge for parkland dedication in lieu of the 5% dedication.

- When applications for subdivision are circulated for comment, the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture shall be consulted in regards to satisfying parks and open space requirements.

- The municipality shall endeavour to establish new neighbourhood and community parks on the basis of future development and increases in population.

- The development of sportsfields facilities should occur in conjunction with School District #68 (Nanaimo) at school sites in the community.

- The municipality shall continue development of a comprehensive community-wide trail system for pedestrians and cyclists.

- The Frank Jameson Community Centre shall continue to be maintained as the community's primary indoor recreation facility.

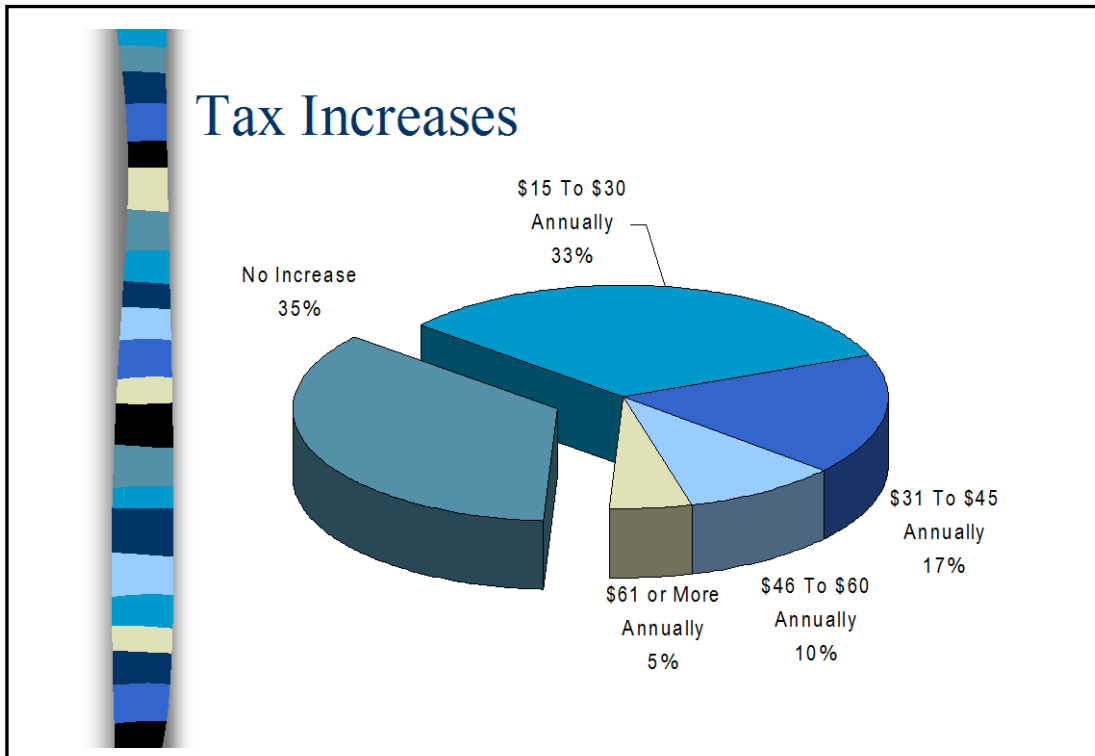
RECOMMENDATION #40

Incorporate the proposed vision, goals and policies into the Official Community Plan

8.4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

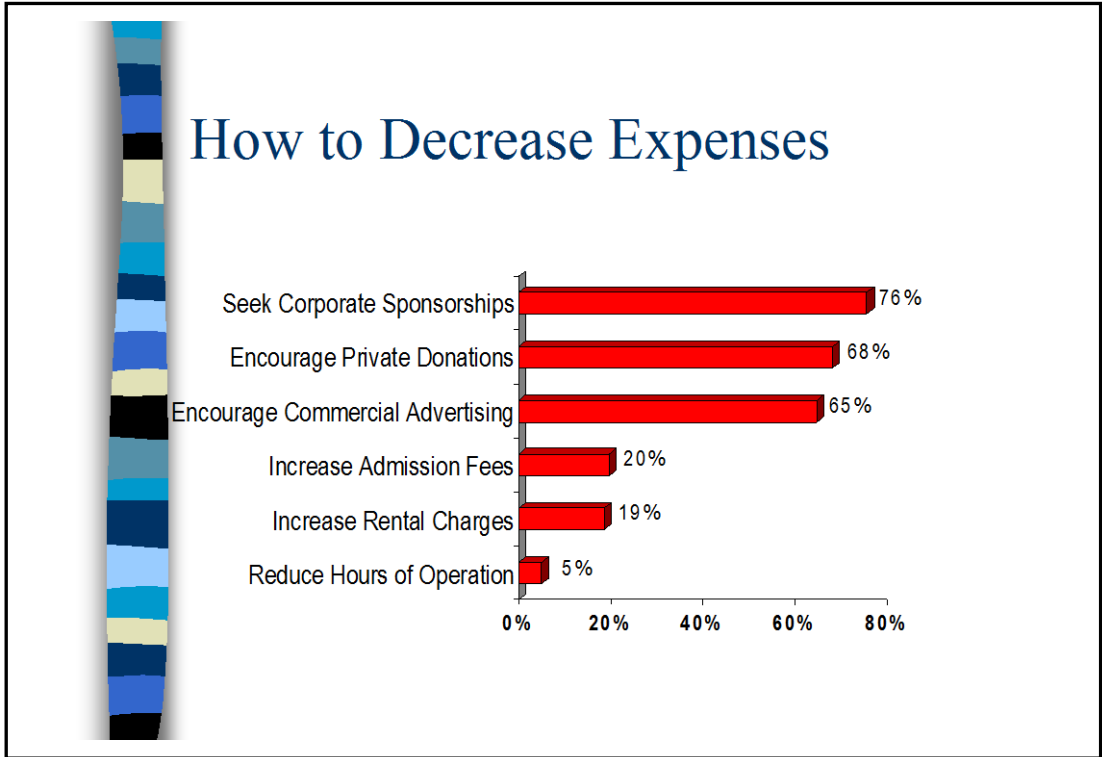
In the public survey, a question was asked regarding the maximum amount respondents were willing to pay to provide new or improved parks and recreation facilities. As noted in **FIGURE ELEVEN**, 65% expressed support compared to 35% who were unwilling to pay additional taxes.

**FIGURE ELEVEN
SUPPORT FOR TAX INCREASES TO PROVIDE NEW / IMPROVED FACILITIES**



It is important to note that 35% is a relatively high percentage of residents who do not support an increase in taxation. There are undoubtedly a variety of reasons for this (i.e. taxes are already too high; the household does not participate in recreation activities or use existing parks and open space; user pay rather than subsidies are preferable). In fact, as outlined in **FIGURE TWELVE** on page 49, it appears that the public is considerably more supportive of non-traditional means of decreasing expenditures.

**FIGURE TWELVE
PREFERRED FUNDING METHODS**



As indicated above, the greatest amount of support is related to “new” money – corporate sponsorships, private donations and commercial advertising – and there is considerably less support for increased admission fees and rental charges, and especially, for reducing the hours of facility operation.

RECOMMENDATION #41

Explore alternative ways of funding parks, recreation and culture services including corporate sponsorships, donations and more extensive commercial advertising

RECOMMENDATION #42

Review and update policies related to fees and charges for programs and facility use

8.5 5% DEDICATION OF LAND OR CASH-IN-LIEU

Local governments are empowered by the **Local Government Act** to require the dedication of park land upon subdivision. The dedication of this park land may be for up to 5 % of the land in question, or, at the municipality's discretion, the equivalent value of cash instead of land. If cash is collected, it may only be applied to the purchase of land for park purposes.

RECOMMENDATION #43

Acquire land for new neighbourhood parks using 5% dedication of land or cash-in-lieu. Where practical, acquire land adjacent to school sites to maximize the usability of the larger open space.

RECOMMENDATION #44

Identify lands it wishes to acquire through park land dedication.

RECOMMENDATION #45

Request cash-in-lieu of parkland if the lands being subdivided are not consistent with the park land dedication plan.

8.6 DEVELOPMENT COST CHARGES

Section 933(2)(b) of the **Local Government Act** provides a local government with the authority to establish, by bylaw, development cost charges (i.e., DCC's) for the purposes of providing and improving parkland. Money in a parks DCC reserve fund may be used to pay the capital costs of:

- Acquiring park land or reclaiming land as park land
- Providing fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, restrooms, changing rooms, playground and playing field equipment on park land
- The term "capital costs" also includes planning, engineering, and legal costs directly related to the acquisition or improvement of the park land

The following points summarize some additional key issues with respect to a DCC policy:

- Interest earned on money in the park land DCC reserve fund may be used for improvements on park land owned by the local government, or owned by the Crown and managed by the local government.
- DCC's are developed based on the principle that no one is to be double charged for services. That is, if there are other charges which are for functions or services already included in a DCC charge, the value of that charge must be deducted from the DCC rate.
- DCC's are applied to specific land uses (e.g., residential) in a defined geographic area at the time of development / subdivision.
- Where DCC reserves are used to acquire or develop parks, the cost of these parks must be allocated proportionately between existing

residents and future benefiting residents. The contribution of existing residents would come through taxation with the portion allocated to new development recovered through DCC's.

- The DCC reserve funds may be used for acquisition and / or development of park land only to the extent that it covers the proportional cost of the new development. Where existing residents benefit from a park acquired or developed using DCC funds, the proportion of that benefit must come from taxes or other revenue sources.
- A clear and cohesive strategy including the combination of park land acquisition and / or development through subdivision and DCC's can be effective in the acquisition and development of park land.

Development cost charges for parkland acquisition and development should be considered as part of an integrated financing strategy for the Ladysmith Parks and Recreation Master Plan area.

RECOMMENDATION #46

Establish a DCC policy for parks

RECOMMENDATION #47

Include the following criteria in the policy:

- *That DCC's be collected from the owners / developers of properties that are being developed for residential use.*
- *That the DCC's be used for the acquisition and development of community parks and athletic parks, and for the development of new neighbourhood parks (the acquisition of neighbourhood parks will be accomplished using the 5% dedication on subdivision policy), to the benefit of new residents.*

8.7 DISPOSITION OF PARK LAND

to come....

RECOMMENDATION #48

Conduct an assessment of undeveloped park lands and other open space owned by the Town to determine if they should be retained for park and recreation purposes or whether they should be disposed of.

That the criteria for assessing these parcels include:

- *The presence of developed park land adjacent or nearby*
- *Established or informal trails through the site*
- *The ecological value of the site*
- *The value of the site to the community or neighbourhood for the cost required to maintain it*
- *The potential of the site for alternative forms of development (e.g., size, slope, access, servicing, land use)*
- *No net loss of publicly accessible waterfront*
- *Satisfactory return on sale of the parcel to justify the costs to make the parcel market ready (e.g., re-zoning, servicing, etc.)*
- *A greater good (e.g. waterfront parkland) could be served by selling it*

RECOMMENDATION #49

Dispose of unsuitable properties by:

- *Selling as residential or other use for market value*
- *Selling to an adjacent landowner for what they are willing to pay*

RECOMMENDATION #50

Apply revenue from the sale of disposed park land toward the acquisition and / or development of park land in the immediate area.

8.8 IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The Master Plan should be used as the basis for determining direction and projects to be undertaken annually by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. Recommendations should be referred to on a regular basis, and will provide guidance on a wide range of issues related to the effective delivery of leisure services in the community.

Some recommendations will have little or no impact on staff and financial resources, while others will require extensive planning and the commitment of additional resources.

Each year, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission and staff should review the Plan, and prepare strategies for the implementation of specific recommendations. In each case, discussions with Council will be necessary, particularly when additional financial resources are necessary.

As part of the annual budget process, staff should prepare a "report card" addressing the status of specific recommendations that have been addressed in the previous twelve months.

This process should address each specific recommendation, steps that have been taken in its implementation, and analyze the Department's success in addressing issues related to the recommendation.

In addition, the Department should implement a system of communication with residents and patrons whereby information is regularly gathered regarding parks, recreation and cultural services. For example, staff should:

- Contact facility users on a random basis to inquire about levels of satisfaction with facilities and programs
- Conduct short surveys with facility patrons and program participants
- Facilitate focus group workshops with a cross section of Ladysmith residents and specific interest groups to determine programming requirements and satisfaction with facilities
- Conduct a random survey every three or four years to measure overall levels of satisfaction with various Department services. A survey of this type should be similar to the one administered during the completion of the current Master Plan, and can be used to compare opinions of residents on an ongoing basis

RECOMMENDATION #51

Prepare an annual report card related to Master Plan recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #52

Initiate a system to gather information from the public regarding facilities and Department services

RECOMMENDATION #53

Conduct a survey of the general public every three or four years to determine opinions and attitudes regarding Parks, Recreation and Culture services