

ADOPTED BY SCRD BOARD
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Sunshine Coast Regional District Parks and Recreation Master Plan

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Executive Summary

The Sunshine Coast is a naturally and culturally rich coastal area comprised of vibrant communities in urban, rural, and island settings. Its population of 30,000 full-time residents and a segment of part-time residents value a healthy, active lifestyle and embrace a variety of recreation opportunities. Parks and recreation facilities, services, special events, and community engagement opportunities help build stronger communities by providing enjoyment and social connections and encouraging physical activity among people of all ages and ability levels.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to define a collective vision for parks and recreation in the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) for the next 10 years. The Master Plan is a succinct, accessible, practical document for the SCR D Board, SCR D staff, the Recreation and Parks Services Advisory Committee (RPSAC), and members of the community. It responds to the needs, expectations, and priorities of the community, with information gathered through telephone surveys, focus groups, community meetings, and workshops.

The Master Plan outlines four basic goals for parks and recreation in the region, as well as how these goals will be achieved, the roles the SCR D should play to support those goals, and what guides the decision-making process.

The goals of the Master Plan are (1) to strengthen community fabric throughout the SCR D, providing indoor and outdoor spaces where community members can connect; (2) to motivate individuals and families to be healthy and active by facilitating a variety of recreational opportunities while removing barriers to participation; (3) to achieve environmental stewardship through education as well as protection and management of natural environments, including landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems; and (4) to contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy by supporting local businesses, providing employment, purchasing goods and services, and encouraging volunteerism. Specific recreation activities are linked to each goal to provide guidance on how day-to-day priorities will benefit Sunshine Coast residents and visitors in the long term. The Plan defines four roles (planner, protector, provider, and community builder) for the SCR D to play in order to meet the above-stated goals and deliver services effectively. A framework to guide decisions in a logical manner is also suggested. The framework defines three service levels ranging from “small-community service level” to one that encompasses the entire regional population. These levels are specific to the Sunshine Coast and are based on geography, topography, social infrastructure, recreation-behaviour patterns, people’s preferences for specific types of opportunities close to home, the number of users residing in the service area, and the number of users required for financial viability. Specific strategies related to each are outlined in Chapter 6: Recreation Programs and Special Events.

The Master Plan is grounded by a vision and mission statement, stated in the Introduction, for parks and recreation in the SCR D; these guiding statements reflect discussions with the community,



RPSAC, and SCR D staff. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the socio-demographic data for the region and outlines specific parks and recreation trends. Chapter 2 outlines the decision-making framework, including the desired outcomes for the next decade. Chapters 3 through 8 describe specific plans and recommendations for a wide range of facilities and services, while Chapter 9 outlines the financial requirements needed to fund the programs, facilities, and services outlined in the previous chapters. Here are the key topics and recommendations presented throughout the Plan:

- **Chapter 3** lists 30 core recreation activities fine-tuned to the needs of Sunshine Coast residents, including spectator sports, outdoor walking and cycling, outdoor play and social activities for children and youth, indoor fitness and sports including aquatics, and inclusive recreation for people who experience barriers. These activities are all designed to meet the four goals outlined above, and the compilation of this list is informed by the results of the 2011 Master Plan telephone survey. It is recommended that the opinions of SCR D residents should take priority in decisions related to the improvement of parks and recreation.
- **Chapter 4** addresses all the areas that support outdoor recreation, including the ocean, beaches, forests, rivers, lakes, and meadows, as well man-made facilities and amenities such as parks, trails, playgrounds, sports fields, and boat launches. Because residents of the Sunshine Coast are extremely active, they place very high value on outdoor recreation and the natural environment, with trail use being the most prominent among all outdoor and indoor activities. Recommendations in this chapter focus on developing more trails and bike paths, acquiring parkland where needed to protect environmental or recreation resources and to meet neighbourhood needs, and increasing public access to the shoreline. There are also recommendations to improve sports fields and park amenities, support environmental stewardship, and manage parks to improve user experiences, safety, and public awareness.
- **Chapter 5** discusses the SCR D’s responsibility for the public indoor facilities, including the two new complexes that have been constructed under its authority. Public survey results and, more importantly, strong attendance records indicate that these new buildings have been well received; however, the two older recreation facilities are operating well below capacity. It is recommended that organizational energy should now focus on building participation rates in these older buildings before contemplating any significant changes. To respond to the demand for more “closer to home” recreation opportunities, the recommendations include a higher utilization of community halls.
- **Chapter 6** presents strategies to strengthen recreation programs and special events that are planned, promoted, and delivered at SCR D facilities. Community members rate indoor recreation opportunities favourably and are avid users of indoor facilities. Recommendations in this chapter focus on general recreation programs close to home, outdoor recreation, a health and wellness strategy, activities for children ages 6 and under, youth activities outside of Gibsons, family-centred programming, special events, and programming design considerations.



- **Chapter 7** discusses volunteers, the primary providers of recreation opportunities on the Sunshine Coast. Among the most cost-effective strategies for the SCRD would be to expand volunteer programs and provide greater support for volunteers. Recommendations in this chapter focus on actions to support for volunteerism on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Chapter 8** outlines the four key focal areas—policies and programs, marketing and communications, sponsorship and grants, and partnerships and collaboration—that will further strengthen recreation services in the SCRD. Recommendations in this chapter focus on fine-tuning the fees and charges policy to facilitate greater participation and a stronger financial position, reviewing the commitment to and the name of the Leisure Access Scholarship, strengthening marketing and communication efforts, establishing grant programs to leverage local resources, and forming a task force to improve community access to facilities.
- **Chapter 9** provides relevant historical financial data, defines the magnitude of costs associated with implementing the Master Plan recommendations, and outlines how to secure adequate funding to support these recommendations. It proposes new investments with a focus on improving outdoor recreation opportunities, maintaining the indoor facilities, and supporting the annual operating budget by building participation and increasing revenues.

Key Recommendations

From Chapter 2—“The Decision-Making Framework”:

1. Adopt the following Master Plan goals to guide the SCRD now and into the future:
 - One: Strengthen community fabric throughout the region.
 - Two: Motivate individuals and families to be healthy and active.
 - Three: Be stewards of the environment.
 - Four: Contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy.
2. Assume the roles of planner, provider, community builder, and protector.
3. Work within a community-development philosophy, train staff in community engagement and facilitation, and include performance measures that recognize the community-building role.
4. Adopt three service levels (small-community service level, medium-catchment-area service level, and regional service level) to guide the planning and delivery of parks and recreation services on the Sunshine Coast.



From Chapter 3—“Opportunities That Foster Healthy People and Community”:

5. Consider the 30 core activities and opportunities as a way to provide specific guidance for achieving the Master Plan’s four goals. At the same time, what members of the community think should take priority in terms of improving parks and recreation.

From Chapter 4—“Outdoor Recreation and the Environment”:

6. Continue, as a high priority, to collaborate in the development of trails and bike paths to meet the community’s needs for recreation and alternative transportation. Focus on connectivity and safety, including trails within and between neighbourhoods, to schools, and bike paths along roads.
 - Establish criteria for trails and bike paths, and use these to evaluate and guide trail/bike path development (see Appendix I).
 - For Area A, initiate a SCRDP process to participate in trails and bike path, establish a legal functional structure for this, and build trails and bike paths.
 - Identify and acquire trail corridors in subdivision and rezoning processes.
 - Acquire access to undeveloped road rights-of-way that provide access to the beach or to ocean views.
 - Facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections for trails.
 - Identify and establish a plan to complete the southern legs of the Suncoaster Trail.
7. Support the development of a Trail Strategy for the Sunshine Coast in collaboration with the Province, Sechelt, Gibsons, SIGD and the Squamish Nation, and volunteer trail and tourism stakeholders (see Appendix I for more details).

Parkland Classification and Supply

8. Establish criteria and acquire additional parkland where environmental and recreation resources need to be protected and where there are gaps in park-related services (see Appendix I for draft criteria).
 - Adopt and implement the proposed park-classification system, and use it as a tool to guide parkland acquisition, planning, design, and management.
 - Establish a development cost charge (DCC) program for parkland acquisition and development.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
9. Increase the number and quality of shoreline-access parks (e.g., Area F) including shoreline (beach) access trails.



- Conduct a review of designated shoreline-access parks and road rights-of-way that end along the shoreline to determine the potential for upgrading them (see Appendix I for the criteria).
- *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*

Park Amenities

10. Upgrade facilities and procedures, including Joint Use, related to the use of sports fields.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
11. Upgrade amenities, and add new amenities in parks where needed to meet community interests and needs.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*

Management and Maintenance

12. Increase efforts related to environmental stewardship and environment management, such as treatment of invasive species and shoreline protection. For specific, more busy, sensitive, or complex parks, consider individual parks management plans, such as Cooper's Green.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
13. Develop management strategies for recreation uses in parks and trails as required to improve user experience and reduce conflicts.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
14. Prepare signs, maps, brochures and programs to provide more information to the public regarding parks, trails, and outdoor-recreation opportunities.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
15. Improve procedures and adjust maintenance levels of some parks and trails.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*

From Chapter 5—“Indoor Facilities”:

16. Collaborate to develop tools that result in annual reports and/or work plans (which contain measurable objectives) from each of the contract providers at SCRCD facilities.
17. Initiate community-outreach programs/community-development plans in collaboration with other local governments and other partners. The purpose of this is to build the profile and the attendance for all indoor-recreation facilities and the associated programs of each.
18. Proceed in a timely fashion with the capital expenditure programs as noted in the capital plan for the GACC and the Sechelt Aquatic Centre.



19. Assign sufficient resources to program the two ice rinks for five years. Set measurable outcomes that are reviewed annually.
 - At the conclusion of a five-year period, review the operations of the two arenas before determining the future of the Sechelt Arena.
 - At the conclusion of the proposed ice-rink operations trial, consider calling for expressions of interest to operate the second-floor lounge at the Sechelt Arena as a commercial operation.
 - Review the ice-allocation policy in consultation with ice users and prepare amendments conducive to creating additional ice usage while maintaining the local service focus.
20. Maintain the Sechelt Arena so that it's safe and functional, and do this through minimal and prudent capital works over the next five years.
21. Proceed in a timely fashion with a minimal capital maintenance expenditure program for the Gibsons Pool sufficient to maintain the building.
22. Assign sufficient resources to increase attendance/participation at the Gibsons Pool. Set measurable outcomes that are reviewed annually and are considered in the context of the activities at the other two pools on the coast.
23. Program community-halls consistent with the Master Plan community building philosophy.
24. Revise the SCRD hall-rental policy to give preference to neighbourhood groups that are willing to develop neighbourhood recreation programs.
25. Develop a full building assessment of all SCRD halls. Plan for renovation, replacement, and decommissioning or ongoing maintenance, with an associated 10-year program where applicable.
26. Complete a full accessibility audit of all public recreation buildings, and initiate alterations in a planned and timely manner.

From Chapter 6—"Recreation Programs and Special Events":

Service Levels

27. Deliver the small-communities service level by facilitating spaces for local programs, being a resource to local groups to provide local programs and responding to the specific priorities for small communities identified in the Master Plan.
28. Assign sufficient resources to collaborate with local groups and host annual community meetings to fine-tune programs and to be a program-design resource.
29. Deliver the medium-catchment area service level by providing or facilitating opportunities that reflect the general characteristics of this level of service and are typically offered in



community centre/secondary school type facilities and by responding to the specific community priorities identified in the Master Plan.

30. Deliver the regional-catchment area service level by providing, facilitating or assisting with opportunities that reflect the general characteristics of this level of service and provide benefit to residents throughout the region, and by responding to the specific regional priorities identified in the Master Plan.

Interest Areas

31. Promote and support more outdoor recreation.
32. Create a health and wellness strategy to promote the health benefits of those indoor and outdoor activities that the community already does more than three times a week (e.g., dog walking, running, jogging, walking, hiking, biking, and field sports), motivate more frequent activity or those who are inactive and to integrate the numerous ways to make health and wellness more convenient and accessible.
33. Facilitate and promote more special events in all areas throughout the year, and in particular family-oriented events in regional facilities and parks, and ensure events accommodate those with mobility challenges.

Age-Specific

34. Facilitate more preschool programs in small communities where there is a need, and when designing programs, consider the community's feedback identified in the Master Plan.
35. Provide or facilitate, in collaboration with community agencies, a greater number and variety of children's programs, coordinated promotion and ways to address the barriers.
36. Continue to engage appropriate and connected service providers, decision makers, and youth (from different communities and of different ages and perspectives) to fund, plan, deliver, and promote youth opportunities within youth centres in Sechelt (proposed) and Gibsons, in school and other suitable locations.

Program Design

37. In the short term, refer to the 2011 Master Plan Survey and focus-group notes for specific program ideas (from a variety of communities, age groups, and perspectives), ideas for promoting and delivering programs and ways to resolve stated programming concerns and barriers to participation.
38. Work with people with special needs and service providers (who have trusted relationships with those with special needs) to identify adaptive equipment, adjust rules that impact those with special needs and design programs and venues to be inclusive.



39. Use a family-centred approach when designing programs.
40. Design activities and opportunities specifically for tweens.
41. Monitor the needs of the population over 55 years of age (including those over 70) to determine where there is a lack of activities and opportunities for this age group and provide age-specific opportunities.
42. Plan and promote programs for older adults (ages 55 to 70) based on different levels of ability and avoid marketing this group as “seniors.”
43. Continue to provide sensitivity training for staff and volunteers, and create strategies for patrons to embrace respect to all users.
44. Incorporate more flexibility in activities and opportunities, e.g., drop-in spaces in registered programs, punch-card payments, and compressed sessions.

From Chapter 7—“Volunteer Resources Plan”:

Volunteerism

45. Develop a vision, policy, and set of strategies pertaining to SCRD volunteers based on current needs, volunteer trends, and liability concerns and future directions as outlined in the Master Plan, and continue to enhance the volunteer appreciation program.
46. Review all policies and practices to ensure that they enrich and support community-group services and development.
47. Build a new volunteer corps by working with Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre to leverage the centre’s marketing efforts.
48. Build and facilitate stronger working relationships with groups who provide organized recreation services, and facilitate communication between volunteer groups and the SCRD, and among volunteer groups themselves.
49. Structure annual meetings with community sports groups to include all of the government service providers. Concerns and solutions can then be addressed in an integrated way, for example, a sports field users meeting with the SCRD, Gibsons, Sechelt, SIGD, and School District #46.
50. Expand the parks and trails volunteer program, consider ways to do this efficiently, and increase support for volunteers working on trail development and trail/environmental stewardship.
51. Pursue “Adopt a Park” and “Adopt a Trail” programs.
52. In consultation with community sport groups consider ways to offer registration services to sports groups if so desired on a cost recovery basis.



53. Re-examine the role of RPSAC as part of the regional recreation governance review earmarked for 2015.

From Chapter 8—“Support Strategies”:

Fees and Charges

54. Review the Fees and Charges Policy to identify the admission, program, and rental fees that would meet net-budget targets and foster more participation.
55. Review the indoor- and outdoor-facility allocation policy for alignment with the Master Plan goals and service levels.

Financial Assistance

56. Reaffirm with staff, RPSAC, and the SCRD Board that the Leisure Access Scholarship program is an essential way SCRD contributes to creating a healthy community.
57. Rename the *Leisure Access Scholarship* in collaboration with those with low income.
58. Review, assess, and redesign the program in collaboration with relevant service providers to increase access to the program and to identify creative and respectful ways to remove barriers to participation, such as renaming the program in collaboration with program beneficiaries.
59. Develop an outreach-and-awareness strategy to increase participation in the rural areas that contribute to the program.

Marketing and Communication

60. Share Master Plan data with key service providers. Work together to strategize how to address overlaps and gaps.
61. Collaborate with key service providers to track and strategize ways to address leisure needs.
62. Offer SCRD’s registration and booking services to other service providers for a reasonable fee.
63. Refer to the Master Plan data (in the short term) as the basis for service adjustments.
64. Continue to engage the community in the process to design, deliver, and evaluate services.
65. Create a process to confirm Active Network data integrity.
66. Prepare a marketing and communications plan including the use of social media.
67. Collaborate with other service providers including local government to promote the Sunshine Coast’s outdoor and indoor assets for recreation and sports tourism opportunities and events.



68. Work toward providing “one-stop-shopping communication tools” which lists all leisure opportunities, outlines registration options and provides regional maps of parks, trails and beach accesses.
69. Create a building-signage plan and seek out sponsors and Ministry of Transportation to assist with highway and exterior-building signage for SCR D facilities.

Sponsorship

70. Call for proposals to develop a sponsorship program.

Grants

71. Establish a grant-allocation policy, a set of criteria, an application process, and a budget to provide seed money to support groups and organizations who support the achievement of the Master Plan’s goals and service level requirements.

Culture

72. Work with the Arts and Culture groups/individuals to integrate arts and cultural opportunities into the three service levels.
73. Explore ways in which the SCR D can support the success of arts and culture across the region including contract relationships.

Joint Use

74. Form a task force with representatives from SCR D, School District #46, SIGD, and RPSAC with a mandate to develop strategies (see next).
75. Develop strategies that will lead to a better sharing of resources, identification of new sources of funding, and more community use of schools and of community facilities for the maximum benefit of the residents of the Sunshine Coast.

From Chapter 9—“Financial Implications”:

76. Secure adequate funding to support the Master Plan recommendations.



Introduction

Parks and recreation is essential to the quality of life in communities. The spaces, services, and facilities—both indoor and outdoor—provide enjoyment, allow a sense of belonging for all ages and abilities, encourage physical activity, and foster social connections. They contribute to our well-being and make our communities attractive places in which to live, work, play, and invest.

This Master Plan defines the collective vision for parks and recreation in the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) for the next 10 years. It describes the goals, the key strategies to achieve these goals, what guides the complex process of decision making, and the indicators to track the successful implementation of the Plan.

Several things were considered to create this plan: characteristics unique to the region, the current services provided in the SCRD, the current resources (physical, fiscal, and human), potential best practices, the potential impact of trends, the region's needs, and the region's opportunities.

As mentioned, this plan has a 10-year horizon. (The plan may of course be updated within this time frame if significant or unforeseen changes occur.) Typically, Master Plans contain broad objectives, which are translated into more detailed two- or five-year Strategic Plans that contain more specific objectives, initiatives, tasks, and performance targets and are organized by strategic directions or functions. These plans work together so that effective changes are made, results accomplished, day-to-day learnings addressed, and regular evaluations conducted.

(Note: There were components that were beyond the scope of this plan. The plan does not include municipal parks in the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, or SIGD (but the linkages with these assets have been considered), the Dakota Ridge winter recreation area, or cemeteries. Furthermore, it does not include an organizational review, which is a separate process; a joint-use review (although strategic recommendations have been included); or cultural services—but the consultants have included recommendations to support and facilitate this sector.)

1 Philosophy for Investing in Public Parks and Recreation

Recreation is defined as “all those things a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable, and more personally satisfying.”¹

Recreation is “not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs, but includes artistic, creative, cultural, social and intellectual activities.”²

1. Action Challenge Committee (1990).

2. Canada's Federal and Provincial Recreation Ministers (1987), *The National Recreation Statement*.



There are eight primary benefits associated with recreation that are substantiated by rigorous research.³ They provide a strong rationale for investing in recreation as well as the venues for recreating (e.g., parks, trails, and indoor facilities):

- Recreation and active living are *essential to personal health*, a key determinant of health status.
- Recreation is key to balanced *human development* and helps individuals reach their potential.
- Recreation and parks are essential to *quality of life*.
- Recreation reduces self-destructive and anti-social behaviour.
- Recreation and parks build *strong families* and *healthy communities*.
- *Pay now or pay more later!* Recreation reduces health care, social service, and police/justice costs.
- Recreation and parks are significant *economic generators* for communities.
- Parks, open spaces, and natural areas are *essential to ecological survival*.

It's obvious that those who use recreation facilities, spaces, parks, and trails gain direct benefit from these venues and the activities offered within. What is sometimes less recognized is that those who don't make use of these facilities *also* gain a benefit, albeit indirectly. (This will be discussed later on.) Therefore, the rationale for investing in parks and recreation is simple in that it benefits *all* residents in the region.

2 The Format, Reference Points, and Principles of the Master Plan

Format of the plan

The Master Plan has been designed to be a succinct, easy-to-reference document for the SCRD Board, SCRD staff, the Recreation and Parks Services Advisory Committee (RPSAC), and members of the community. The graphic above represents the plan's building blocks.



3. National Benefits Catalogue.



The structure of the plan is as follows:

1. The plan begins with the vision for parks and recreation on the Sunshine Coast as defined by the community. It then defines the SCRCD's mission statement, how the mission statement contributes to this vision, and how the SCRCD conducts its business in a values-based manner (Introduction).
2. After this is an overview of relevant socio-demographic data and trends in service delivery. Other existing plans that inform or influence it are summarized (Chapter 1, "Context"; and Chapter 2, "The Decision-Making Framework.")
3. The plan defines four goals—or desired outcomes—that parks and recreation is expected to achieve. It also describes the roles the SCRCD should play in support of these goals. (Chapter 3, "Opportunities That Foster Healthy People and Community.")
4. The next five chapters define the appropriate levels of service (whether in small communities or a larger, region-wide catchment area) and the assets required to support the delivery of services. At the core of this is the particular *services and activities*. It is through services and activities that we foster healthy, active, and socially connected people, vibrant communities, environmental sustainability, and a diverse economy. (Chapter 4, "Outdoor Recreation and the Environment"; Chapter 5, "Indoor Facilities"; Chapter 6, "Recreation Programs and Special Events"; Chapter 7, "Volunteer Resources Plan"; and Chapter 8, "Support Strategies.")
5. The final section outlines the key funding requirements to accomplish the Plan (Chapter 9, "Financial Implications of the Master Plan Recommendations").



Appendices include important and detailed information. They form the foundation of the plan, and the reader is strongly encouraged to review them:

Appendix I: Detailed Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on outdoor recreation and the environment recommendations
Appendix II: 2011 Master Plan Survey Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • Research objectives • Results • Survey methodology
Appendix III: Background Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions • Roles of regional districts • Parks and recreation's contribution to region's principles • Trends
Appendix IV: Focus Group Information—Geographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from focus groups summarized by region-wide themes and community-specific themes
Appendix V: Focus Group Information—Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from focus groups summarized by specific service delivery elements (i.e., facilities, age groups, and barriers)
Appendix VI: Youth Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of the feedback derived from youth in an additional youth survey designed by the Consulting Team and distributed by SCRD staff
Appendix VII: Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of community feedback on the Master Plan document

Process for the plan

The Master Plan process was designed to be *community-based*, that is, responding to the needs, expectations, and priorities of members of the community; *defensible*, in that it accurately represents the community's perspective; and *practical*, taking into account the resources and service levels relevant to the region.

Information came directly from the community in the following three ways:

1. 2011 Master Plan Survey, conducted by telephone (Appendix II)

This telephone survey provided representative data on the recreation behaviours and priorities of Sunshine Coast residents. The sample size was 432, and the survey was conducted from June 20 through July 7, 2011.

The results were analyzed and reported for the total sample and for each of seven areas: “Electoral Area A” (Egmont/Pender Harbour area); “Electoral Area B”



(Halfmoon Bay area); “Electoral Area D” (Roberts Creek area); “Electoral Area E” (Elphinstone area); “Electoral Area F” (West Howe Sound area including the islands); the District of Sechelt and Sechelt Indian Government District (SIGD) combined; and the Town of Gibsons.

A sample of 432 yields reliable results that can be expected to be accurate at least plus or minus 4.68 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. (Results for areas of residence and demographic sub-groups were less reliable due to the smaller sample size.)

2. Focus groups and community meetings (Appendices IV, V, and VI)

These focus groups and community meetings worked in tandem with the telephone survey. The purpose was to provide additional details to augment the understanding of the telephone survey data. The type of information gathered at these meetings included thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values, and suggestions.

Approximately 272 people attended these meetings, which were held November 1 through December 5, 2011 (right after local elections). Community meetings were hosted in Egmont/Pender Harbour, Sechelt, and Gibsons.

Focus groups were also held, with groups being divided into the following segments:

- Families with young children (12 and under), youth (13 to 18 years of age), young adults (19 to 34 years of age), adults (35 to 59), older adults and seniors (60 years and older). A web-based survey of the youth demographic was also conducted (Appendix VI).
- Community members who participate in indoor and outdoor/structured and unstructured sports, recreation, and leisure activities.
- Staff who work within parks, trails, tourism, the private sector, and community sectors (e.g., public health, education, arts, culture, and early-childhood development) as well as those who advocate for people with special needs.
- Representatives from the school district (staff), SIGD, RCMP, local councils, local government (senior staff), and the Health Officer.
- Non-users of recreation services.

3. Meetings and workshops with RPSAC

These meetings and workshops provided more advice for this plan and helped shape the process even further. This committee comprises community members with knowledge and appreciation of all indoor and outdoor leisure services. It represents the general public, the Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, and, for this project, three SCRD Board members.

A preliminary survey report was posted on the SCRD website and a comment form was made available.



Related documents and initiatives

The Master Plan builds on other SCRCD plans and strategies that are already in place, including the following:

- ***RPSAC Strategic Plan (updated 2010)***. This plan outlines RPSAC’s decision-making model, core values, goals, and key strategic activities.
- ***Strategic Parks Master Plan (2004)***. This plan includes a strategic vision and recommendations for community partnerships, trail connections, park acquisition, fields and sports facilities, environmental management, operations, staff resources, and governance. The SCRCD has made progress on many of the suggested focus areas.
- ***Trail Network Plan (2007)***. This plan identifies goals, criteria, and pathway types, as well as priority routes and funding options. It also provides recommendations for trail connections within and between communities, as well as beach accesses. Following the plan, funds have been allocated to the development of trail projects.
- ***Sunshine Coast Vital Signs (2011)***. This report provides a socio-demographic profile of the region and an assessment of the strengths and challenges across key dimensions, including learning, the environment, health and wellness, young adults, housing, arts and culture, low income, safety, and economic health.
- ***Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy (2007)***. This strategic plan identifies the region’s cultural strengths as well as its gaps and issues. It also articulates a region-wide vision and purpose, prioritizes key strategies and objectives integral to the region, and offers an action plan for each objective.
- **Official community plans (OCPs)**. OCPs exist for “Area A” (adopted in 1998; updated for convenience in 2009); “Area B” (adopted in 1990; updated for convenience in 2009); “Area D” (first reading was done in 2011); “Area E” (adopted in 2008; updated for convenience in 2011); and “Area F” (2011). OCPs also exist for Hillside Industrial Area (adopted in 1995; updated for convenience in 2006) and Twin Creeks (2005).

Most OCPs address outdoor recreation, parks, alternative transportation and trails (greenways), shoreline access and boat launches, protection of environmentally, visually, and culturally/historically important areas, and coordination with School District #46. Most OCPs also address working with the Province to protect areas for “Use, Recreation, and Enjoyment of the Public” (UREPs) and Crown land. Most OCPs also have population-based standards and service-area guidelines for provision of community- and neighbourhood-level parkland.

We Envision core values for a sustainable community - see Page 11.



Planning principles

A series of principles guide the Master Plan. The plan and recommended strategies should achieve the following:

- **Provide benefits (direct or indirect) to the citizens of the Sunshine Coast.** If there is no indirect benefit to the region (e.g., conducive to increased quality of life, inclusivity, protection of the environment, healthy, active, and well-rounded citizens, strengthening of families), the SCRD should not be involved.
- **Define service levels for parks and recreation at three levels: local, community, and regional.** This sets realistic expectations for services and spaces at these three levels, and defines the ideal customer base to make the service or space financially viable.
- Support investments based on what is acceptable to taxpayers.
- **Provide equitable (not necessarily equal) services to recognize the uniqueness of each community.** The plan supports decisions made based on the “need” of a community (including technical and financial considerations), rather than justifying services because they are offered in other communities.
- Be centred on community values that are vital to and shared by community members. The following values are central to Sunshine Coast residents:
 - Their region’s status as a “community of communities.”
 - Their region’s natural and built parks and recreation infrastructure (which are perfect for connecting with nature). They also value their region’s high-quality, safe, and well-used indoor and outdoor spaces in which to recreate, as well as a system that offers opportunities not just at home or close to home but also in other communities, and regional services serving the entire Sunshine Coast.
 - Their region’s ability to offer residents and visitors a variety of recreation, cultural, and heritage opportunities. (That is, spaces, services, and special events that foster social connections, encourage health and wellness, strengthen families, create a strong sense of community, and support a diverse economy.)
 - Self-sufficiency and the sense of contribution made through volunteering.
 - Affordability. (Note: fiscal prudence of the SCRD and removing financial barriers to participation are key.)
 - Sustainability. (Note: services and facilities must make the best use of tax dollars for the long term, and maintenance must be included in the cost/benefit analysis valuation.)
- **Aim to be relevant into the future.** A plan that only responds to a current snapshot of needs, issues, and opportunities will quickly become out of date. In fact, several service adjustments have already been implemented by SCRD staff, based on the learnings from the plan’s community research.



The Master Plan defines a vision for the future, attempting to predict needs, issues, and opportunities through a 10-year period. It makes recommendations to support the achievement of the vision and to respond to future pressures. If circumstances change—and as priorities are accomplished—SCRD’s focus should be adjusted.

3 Vision and Mission

Vision statement

A vision statement is an important planning tool because it provides clarity as well as a rallying point for the community and service providers. The following vision statement created by Jennifer Wilson Consultants Ltd. paints the ideal future picture of the Sunshine Coast community and details how parks and recreation play an essential role in creating that future. This vision statement, together with the mission statement, reflects the discussions with the community, RPSAC, and SCRD staff.

The Sunshine Coast region is a place where—

- All residents and visitors are healthy and active.
- The breathtaking outdoors and high-quality facilities are part of people’s daily lives.
- Services reflect the core values of inclusivity, accessibility, transparency, and equity.
- Residents have a deeply rooted community pride and a strong sense of belonging.
- Leisure activities contribute to a vibrant community, diverse economy, and a sustainable environment.

Mission statement

The following mission statement created by Jennifer Wilson Consultants Ltd. describes what the SCRCD needs to do to bring its vision to reality:

The SCRCD plays a variety of roles—planner, protector, provider, and community-builder—in collaboration with volunteers, other service providers, community groups, and partners to provide . . .

. . . a system of high-quality and accessible parks, trails, beach access, facilities, recreation services, volunteerism, and special events . . .

} *what*

. . . in a manner that is integrated, thoughtfully planned, responsive, well maintained, and fiscally responsible . . .

} *how*

. . . to benefit the health and vitality of all individuals, families, communities, and the region as a whole.

} *for whom*



4 Values

Values depict the heart and spirit of an organization. The SCRDR's Community Programs and Services Advisory Committee has carefully considered how the SCRDR will expend resources for parks and recreation, choose between competing priorities, protect certain programs and services under any circumstance, and conduct its work.

The SCRDR is community centred. It believes in the unique contributions of individuals and groups and in welcoming diversity of input in the best interest of the whole community. It also believes that action arising out of consensus is most effective.

The SCRDR also believes in the following values (taken verbatim from RPSAC's *Strategic Plan* and SCRDR's Community Programs and Services Advisory Committee):

Trust and accountability

This means being accountable to the community and local governments. The SCRDR ensures that issues have been researched and well considered. It also ensures that any advice it gives is based in fact.

Inclusion and accessibility

Programs and services must be designed to promote the inclusion of all in the community regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, culture, or economic means.

Partnerships and collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration hold great power and benefit everyone in the community.

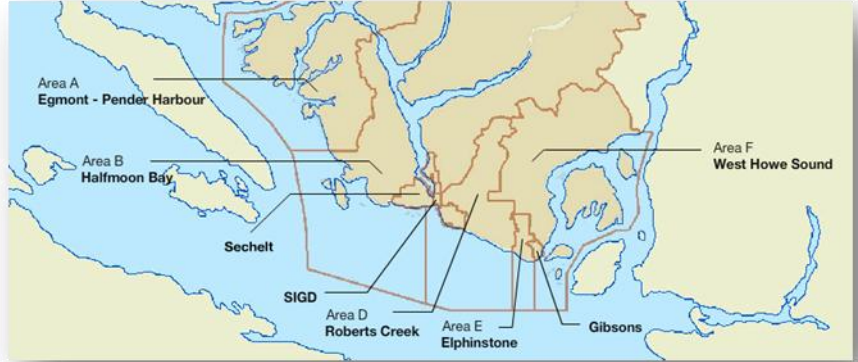
Environmental stewardship

This means promoting and supporting the goals of sustainability. The SCRDR believes in protecting green space and wildlife corridors.



Chapter 1: Context

The Sunshine Coast is located on the southern coast of British Columbia, within the traditional lands of the Squamish and Sechelt First Nations. It is a breathtaking coastal area bound by Jervis Inlet on the northwest, Howe Sound on the southeast, and rugged mountains to the northeast. It can only be reached by water or air.



Comprising unique municipalities, rural areas, and islands, it is a “community of communities.” The population is a blend of 30,000 full-time residents and a segment of part-time residents. Major communities include Gibsons (near the Langdale BC Ferries Terminal), Roberts Creek, Sechelt, Halfmoon Bay, Secret Cove, Pender Harbour, and Egmont (near the Earls Cove Ferry Terminal). It is a highly popular tourist-destination area.

Residents and visitors value a healthy and active lifestyle, embracing a variety of water- and land-based outdoor recreation opportunities, spectacular landscapes and beaches, new and well-established indoor-recreation facilities, First Nations history and art, quaint shops, waterfront restaurants and accommodations, special events, and talented artists, crafters, and artisans.

1 A Strategic Plan to Support Valued Lifestyles in the Region

The SCRCD comprises three municipalities: the Town of Gibsons (Gibsons), the District of Sechelt (Sechelt), and the Sechelt Indian Government District (SIGD). It comprises five electoral areas: Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound. There is one school district with four secondary schools and nine elementary schools spread throughout the region.

The SCRCD strategic plan supports the parks and recreation Master Plan. The SCRCD draws on its *We Envision* document as critical to

The Strategic Plan’s Vision

“The Sunshine Coast is a community of communities creating a sustainable way of life through a collaborative decision-making process. We are committed to an enhanced natural context, local control over local resources, a vibrant economy and an enriched cultural fabric.”



formulating strategic directions. *We Envision*, based on a community process, outlines core values for a sustainable community and contains 13 interconnected directions to achieve a vision for 2060 and has shorter-term intermediate targets (2020).⁴

We Envision core values are—

- Economic vitality
- Health and social well-being
- Cultural vitality
- Environmental responsibility

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan complements several of the 13 directions in *We Envision*, including health and social services, arts and culture, natural spaces, and parks and recreation.

Another policy foundation for other plans is the SCRD *Draft Strategic Plan 2012–2014*. It focuses on three key strategic directions:

- Culture, social, environmental, and economic sustainability
- Financial sustainability
- Collaborative leadership

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan touches on all of the above key directions. The values in the *Draft Strategic Plan 2012–2014* interconnect with this master plan. In addition, the *Draft Strategic Plan 2012–2014* includes a corporate objective “to complete and implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan” and to begin by bringing forward “special recommendations for the 2013 budget.”



2 An Aging Population and a Resilient Business Sector

A summary of the key dynamics of the Sunshine Coast is based on several sources, all of which have particular strengths:

- **Statistics Canada data** is collected every five years and is the most comprehensive database available on socio-demographic attributes and changes in a community. This Master Plan uses census information on population- and dwelling-counts mostly from 2006 since more recent data is not available. (The 2011 data, broken down by age and gender, families, households, marital status, structural type of dwelling, and language will

4. To view *We Envision*, go to www.scrd.ca/Regional-Sustainability-Plan.



not be released by Census Canada until later this year—and because much has changed in the global economy in the past six years, the 2006 data should be used with caution.)

- **BC Stats** provides population projection data based on 2006 data from Statistics Canada.
- **The Sunshine Coast’s *Vital Signs* report (2011)** provides a snapshot of the community. Some data from the Social Planning and Research Council of BC and *Vital Signs* is included.

Key population characteristics and trends

The SCRCD’s current population (2011) is 28,619, which represents a 3.1% increase from 2006.⁵

In comparison, Canada’s population between 2006 and 2011 grew by 5.9%. This is a slightly higher rate than its 2001–2006 period (and the highest of all the G8 countries). In BC, the population grew by 7.5%. BC Stats projects the SCRCD population to be approximately 33,600 in 10 years.

The highest growth rates were in the urban areas of Sechelt and Gibsons, while the largest population decline was in the West Howe Sound area.

SCRCD’s population is distributed as follows:

Community	2006	2011	% Change
Egmont/Pender Harbour (“Area A”)	2,624	2,678	2.1
Halfmoon Bay (“Area B”)	2,558	2,675	4.6
Sechelt	8,454	9,291	9.9
Sechelt Indian Band (SIB)	827	797	-3.6
Roberts Creek (“Area D”)	3,307	3,244	-1.9
Gibsons	4,182	4,437	6.1
Elphinstone (“Area E”)	3,552	3,482	-2.0
West Howe Sound (“Area F”)	2,235	2,015	-9.8

The population served by regional services is anticipated to be much higher than official population figures because of the number of part-time residents/absentee owners and visitors to the area. Because data is not collected on these populations, the exact number is not known. It appears to be quite significant, however, since 54% of homeowners have property elsewhere,⁶ and Pender Harbour data confirms that its population spikes in the summer by almost 100%.⁷

5. Statistics Canada, 2011 census of population.

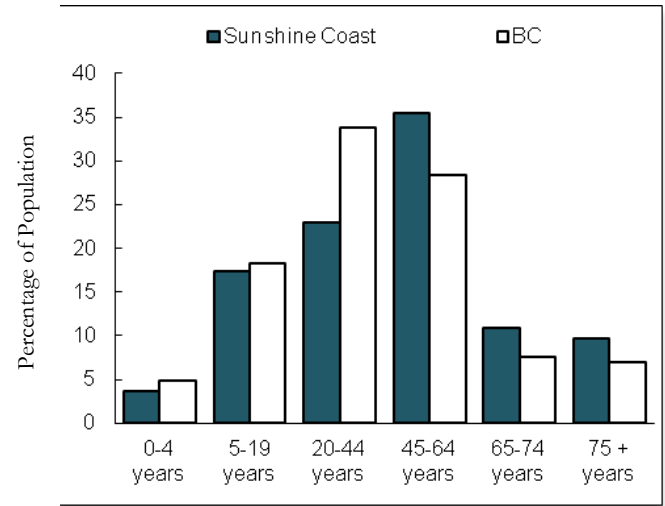
6. *Vital Signs* (2011).

7. www.penderharbour.org/html/demographics.html, accessed January 2012.

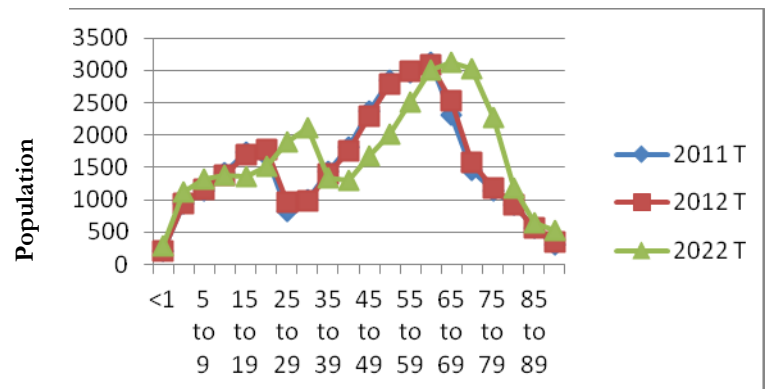


The SCRD population is characterized by the following:⁸

- A growing population that has seen a 3.1% increase since 2006. (The growth rate has been slowing down, however: the annual growth rate was 2.1% in 2008 and 1.3% in 2011, according to BC Stats.)
- A population composed predominantly of adults between the ages of 45 and 65, a higher proportion of older adults and seniors than the general BC population. And this segment is growing. (See graph.)
- A lower number of preschool, school-aged children, and youth than the general BC population. (See graph.)
- A primarily non-immigrant population (95% versus 75% for the general BC population), which increased by 12.9% (4,785 people) between 2001 and 2006.
- A lower prevalence of low-income families, although this appears to be changing. In 2005, low-income families made up just 7.6% of the SCRD's population versus 13.3% for the general BC population; however, in 2010, Food Bank statistics indicated that annual visits to SCRD food banks had risen by 39%, to 12,146.
- An economy largely driven by logging, pulp and paper, tourism, and retirement-related services. Economic sectors experiencing declines in recent years include the construction industry and forestry, with the latter decreasing by 33% in 2010. Economic sectors experiencing improvements in recent years are local retail businesses and hotels (not including bed and breakfasts). This compares favourably to the situation for BC hotel revenues as a whole, which have dropped in recent years.
- A greater percentage of homeowners (81% versus 70% for the general BC population).



Age Distribution for the SCRD Broken Down by Years



8. BC Stats Community Facts.



BC Stats projects the SCRD population to not only grow but also continue to shift toward an older population, that is, fewer youth and more adults and seniors. While the BC Stats projections are considered fairly accurate, its model overestimated the 2011 and 2012 population when compared to the actual. So the projected number for 2022 may also prove to be an overestimation.

Growth rates vary by community, and future growth will not be evenly distributed. In addition, any new developments that take place in the region will affect the projection model, as well as where the growth will occur.

3 Parks and Recreation Trends

When studying trends, the information should not be used to *determine* decision making but rather to *influence*. Trends provide insight into potential opportunities and challenges. The information below is based on the consultants' extensive work in monitoring trends, researching best practices, facilitating thought-leader forums, hosting hundreds of community-focus groups, facilitating and attending trend discussions at provincial, national, and international conferences, and tracking census data.⁹

While the following is a list of national and provincial trends, our research confirms that they apply just as much to the SCRD. (Appendix I provides a detailed description of each trend.)

Community trends

- Increasing disparity between the “haves” and “have-nots”
- Perception of being rushed
- Shift in demand from formal to informal activities
- Need for residents to be more involved
- Dramatic decline in volunteerism

9. Socio-demographic information is based on an analysis of BC Stats and Census information. Youth inactivity data is derived from *Child and Youth Report Card on Physical Activity* (2009). Preferences and expectation information is based on many needs assessments conducted by JW Consultants Ltd. and POV Ltd.



Age-specific trends

- Patchwork of early-childhood-development programs and supports
- Uniqueness of “tweens”
- Youth physical inactivity epidemic
- Family-centred activities
- Healthier aging population

Service-delivery trends

- Requirement of integrated solutions
- Connections being made between health and recreation
- Changing preferences in recreation and cultural activities

Outdoor-recreation trends

- Trail uses are the most popular activity
- Challenges related to parkland supply
- Increase in dog ownership and resulting service demands
- Growing interest in urban agriculture
- Outdoor activities gaining in popularity

Indoor-recreation trends

- Shift in demand for activities within indoor spaces
- Expectation for green buildings and sustainable design
- Shift toward a variety of facility-provision strategies (i.e., collaboration with not-for-profits, the private sector, etc.)
- Aging infrastructure

Parks and recreation workplace trends

- A focus on delivering benefits
- Lack of instructors
- Greater expectations for excellence
- Highly fragmented consumer demand
- Increased accountability to community



Chapter 2: The Decision-Making Framework

The SCRD's parks and recreation divisions are in the business of developing the potential of people, strengthening community fabric, and being stewards of the environment. Healthy people, strong communities, and a sustainable environment are assets that lead to a diverse economy and investments being made (visitors and businesses).

The SCRD, as an organization in the public sector, is distinct from private-sector businesses in the following ways:

- It is driven to meet the needs of the community as a whole¹ (including people who experience barriers to participation) rather than focusing only on customer demand, as the private sector tends to do.¹⁰
- It offers a range of services that leads to both personal development and community development.
- It designs services in a way that removes systemic barriers to participation.

1 Goals

There are four specific goals or desired outcomes of this Master Plan:

One: Strengthen community fabric throughout the region

The SCRD provides indoor and outdoor spaces and opportunities where members of the community can connect. High-quality parks, recreation, and cultural assets foster community pride and identity.

Two: Motivate individuals and families to be healthy and active

The SCRD plays a central role in the physical, social, creative, intellectual, and emotional health of the community. The SCRD accomplishes this by providing, facilitating, or supporting a variety of recreation opportunities and spaces, effectively communicating these opportunities, motivating people to participate, removing barriers to participation, and encouraging families to recreate together.

Three: Be stewards of the environment

The SCRD is an educator, protector, and manager of significant natural environments, which include the landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems we all enjoy and are proud of. The

10. Community needs were identified through the Master Plan survey and focus groups.



SCRD provides local solutions to global issues. SCR D supports outdoor recreation as a result of valuing the natural beauty of the outdoors.

Four: Contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy

The SCR D contributes to the regional economy by supporting local businesses, providing employment, purchasing goods and services, encouraging volunteerism, and contributing to the quality of life of community members. All this, in turn, attracts investment and visitors to the region.

2 Roles

The SCR D must play four roles in order to meet the above-stated goals and deliver services effectively. The most appropriate role will depend on the particular situation. For example, if another service provider is better positioned to provide a specific activity or opportunity and can provide similar benefits, then the SCR D should shift from being a *provider* to also being a *facilitator* as described under the community-builder role.



Planner

The SCR D is responsible for defining the short-, medium-, and long-term direction for parks and recreation and for working with other groups and organizations to implement the Master Plan. It must do this through conducting research, analyzing data, getting input from the community, and seeking technical expertise.

Protector

The SCR D protects, preserves, maintains, and manages important indoor and outdoor spaces, and in a manner that supports

community participation. Parks and facilities aren't an abstract idea but actual venues that people make use of and enjoy.

Provider

The SCR D delivers services directly where needed. However, there may be occasions where this is only in the short term until another service provider becomes available



Community builder

The most important role the SCRCD plays is that of a community builder which includes being a facilitator, connector and partner with other service providers and local governments.

The Sunshine Coast is well served by a system of leisure services provided by non-SCRCD

Community building is “a field of practice among individuals within a regional area (such as a neighbourhood) or among those with a common interest. It is sometimes encompassed under the field of community development” and “being a catalyst for change that results in a positive impact.”

—Hershmer, *Community Building for Recreation Practitioners*, 2012

community groups, the private sector, and not-for-profits. The 2011 Master Plan Survey confirmed that 35% of households participate in programs and activities not provided by the SCRCD, and that many are regular users of these programs: 40% of those who participate in non-SCRCD programs—14% of the population—participate three times a week or more. (See Appendix II, page 53.)

As a “facilitator, connector and partner”, the SCRCD helps to build the capacity of non-SCRCD entities (e.g., community groups, the private sector, not-for-profits,

societies, contractors, and individuals) by providing information, hosting community conversations, helping to navigate through regulatory requirements, sharing data, providing seed money, providing access to registration and marketing tools—as long as their visions, goals, and principles are complementary to SCRCD’s. Working together like this helps to build community capacity and skills, broaden leadership in the community, tap into new expertise and new connections with people, and leverage resources not funded by taxpayers.

To be an effective facilitator requires SCRCD staff to embrace a “community builder” philosophy and be competent in community engagement practices. Community building requires a commitment and the patience to do it right. It takes effort, time and authenticity to build trust, to reach out to the community, and to mobilize a diverse group of laypersons. Participation in these groups tends to ebb and flow, and therefore different skills and approaches are required over time.

When the SCRCD requires staff members to work as facilitators, expectations must be adjusted. The SCRCD has to be comfortable with longer timelines, with shifting control to other entities, and with measuring success differently (e.g., performance measures should include the process of building community capacity).

Community-Building Roles

- strengthening community identity and a sense of place
- fostering human development and lifelong learning
- promoting health and wellness
- strengthening safety and security
- increasing social inclusion and cultural unity
- facilitating community capacity building
- promoting citizenship and community leadership
- promoting social marketing and public communications
- protecting natural capital
- fostering stewardship and nature appreciation

—Hershmer, *Community Building for Recreation Practitioners*, 2012



3 Three Service Levels

The SCRDR community values a system that provides a range of activities, where people can access services locally *and throughout* the Sunshine Coast¹¹ (a person is in a range of catchment areas), and where people can use a range of service providers—services are provided by not-for-profits and the private sector, not just the SCRDR.¹²

This Master Plan recommends making decisions based on a continuum of service levels, ranging from a “small-community service level” to one that encompasses the entire regional population. As discussed later on in this chapter, these service levels are specific to the Sunshine Coast and are based on geography, topography, social infrastructure, recreation-behaviour patterns,¹³ people’s preferences for specific types of opportunities close to home,¹⁴ the number of users residing in the service area, and the number of users required for financial viability.

It is not feasible to provide an arena in each neighbourhood. Nor is it feasible—or reasonable—to provide one playground for a large geographic area. A “systems approach” (thinking about the system as a whole) emphasizes that the service level for a small community should reflect local characteristics and such services be equitably distributed among communities (though not necessarily duplicated in each community). However, where there are similar activities and opportunities justified in different communities, residents should have access to options elsewhere in the region when a service becomes temporarily unavailable (e.g., when the Pender Harbour Pool temporarily closed in 2009).

This is not to say that all parks and recreation services fall into these categories. There will be exceptions. However, conceptualizing these three levels of service will help guide the planning and provision of parks, facilities, and services as well as set realistic expectations.

The SCRDR should be proud that many components of this system are already in place. The region is well served by its facilities, and the focus at this time should be on fine-tuning the program offerings, removing barriers, partnering with other service providers, and building a larger constituency for programs, rentals, special events, and volunteerism.

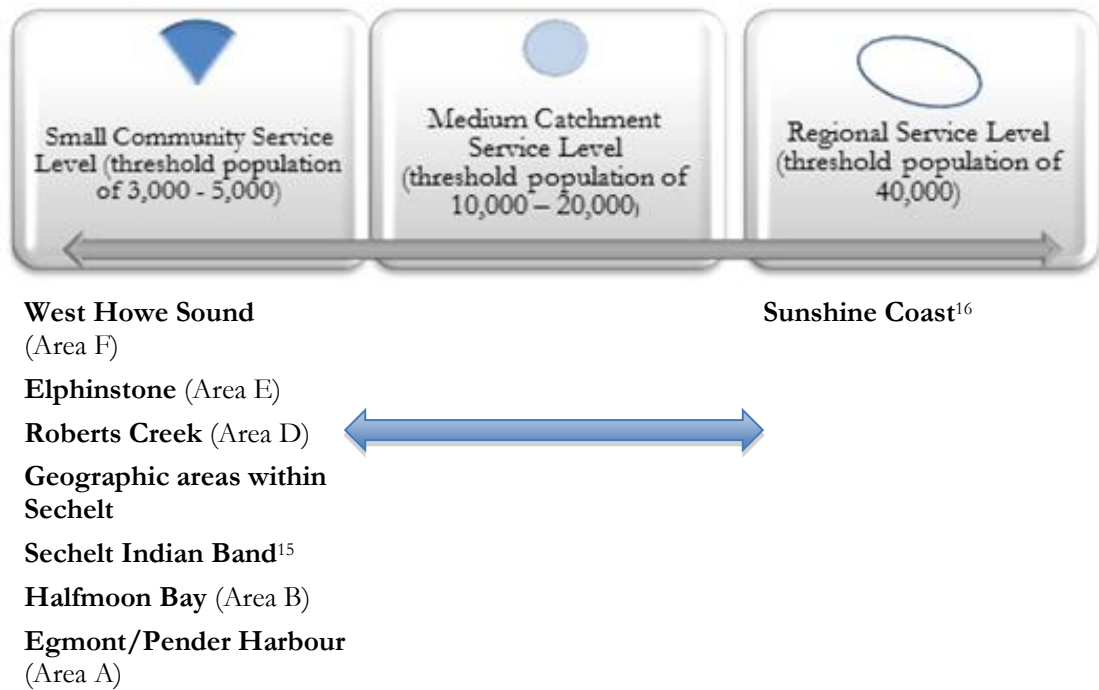
11. 2011 Master Plan Survey, “Willingness to Travel.”

12. Ibid. The survey confirms that 35% of households participate in programs or activities not located in SCRDR facilities, including community halls (some of which are managed by SCRDR) and community schools (which receive grants from the SCRDR).

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid. The survey confirms that people want more walkways, roadside bikeways, beach access, and general recreation programs as well as indoor-sports programs and children’s programs located close to home (e.g., in local schools and community halls).





Small-community service level

Benefits	Services at this end of the continuum provide direct and indirect benefits to individuals and groups within a neighbourhood or small community. Services are not focused on drawing people from the region as a whole.
Threshold Population	Population base of 3,000–5,000. Serves the immediate neighbourhood or small community. Local residents can connect with each other at the same elementary schools their children go to. Reflects the specific interests of local residents.
General Characteristics	Must be viable for low participation rates, i.e., can't be dependent on high numbers of participants because of the small number of residents (even fewer when broken down by segments).
Access	Easy to walk or cycle to. Usually within a five-minute walking distance.

15. Sechelt Indian Band has a separate government but is part of the population who uses SCR D parks and recreation opportunities.

16. SCR D's current population is 28,619. BC Stats projects its population to be approximately 33,600 in 10 years. The threshold of 40,000 is established to reflect the ideal population to sustain regional services.



Activities	<p>Offers general activities designed to appeal to a broad range of local residents.</p> <p>Activities cannot require specialized space, instructors, or equipment due to limited catchment area and low numbers of participants.</p> <p>Outdoor play.</p> <p>Walking, dog walking, and biking.</p> <p>Local use of community schools, churches, and community halls as hubs for special events, social gatherings, and staging areas for outdoor activities, and as meeting spaces for local groups and organizations to plan and deliver leisure services, after-school programs, and general recreation programs.</p> <p>Local outdoor education and summer programs.</p>
Target Groups	<p>Local residents.</p> <p>Families.</p> <p>A mix of different age groups, cultures, abilities, and life experiences.</p> <p>Groups—including children, youth, and seniors—with transportation barriers.</p>
Facility Characteristics	<p>Local community spaces such as community schools, churches, or community halls, which are conducive to community use and offer multi-purpose and shared spaces.</p> <p>Local neighbourhood parks with play areas.</p> <p>Local trails.</p>
Service Provision/ Funding	<p>The limited size of this market (number of people and the fees that can be charged) makes provision of programs and services difficult at this level.</p> <p>Services are offered in each community through local volunteers and grants-in-aid, providing support services (such as marketing and programming expertise) to local groups, or—when that is not possible—through direct provision.</p>

Regional service level

At the opposite end of the continuum is a *regional service level*.

Benefits	<p>Services at this end of the continuum provide broad benefits both directly and indirectly to residents throughout the region by contributing to the health and vitality of the region as a whole. These services also directly benefit those in the immediate catchment area.</p>
Threshold Population	<p>Population base of 20,000–40,000.</p> <p>Accessible by several communities.</p>
General Characteristics	<p>Larger facilities or specialized services that require a larger population base and more visits per day to support capital and operating costs.</p> <p>Services that can't be provided in each community.</p> <p>Provides a unique (extended or daylong) destination or a place where all age groups can recreate at the same time.</p>
Access	<p>Accessible generally by private vehicles and—ideally—by public transit.</p> <p>Accessible from outlying areas (i.e., a less-than-30-minute drive via highway; arterial street; and transit and trail linkages).</p>



Activities	<p>Outdoor-recreation experiences for all age groups, with multiple options.</p> <p>Major hiking and biking excursions.</p> <p>Sports tournaments.</p> <p>Highly specialized and competitive activities that appeal to a relatively low proportion of the population but that draw users and participants from across the region and beyond.</p> <p>Serves the entire region.</p> <p>Formalized and organized activities such as squash, badminton, and tennis.</p> <p>May include major special or cultural events.</p>
Target Groups	Segments of the population with specialized, advanced, or highly competitive skills.
Facility Characteristics	<p>Destination parks that include forests, beaches, and parks, with major and multiple outdoor facilities.</p> <p>Major trails and bikeways.</p> <p>Larger spaces with specialized instructors and equipment.</p>
Service Provision/ Funding	<p>Multi-level government funding.</p> <p>Corporate sponsorship or other funding sources.</p> <p>Service provision by SCRD and partnerships with other senior levels of government and service providers.</p>

Medium-catchment-area service level

Between the *small-community service level* and *regional service level* is the *medium-catchment-area service level*.

Benefits	Services provide direct benefits to the community as well as an option for people from other areas in the region to participate.
Threshold Population	<p>Population base of approximately 20,000.</p> <p>Residents relate to each other in terms of major shopping areas, municipal and social services, and a common secondary school.</p> <p>Draws people from adjacent small communities and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Reflects the priority interests of the entire community.</p>
General Characteristics	<p>Contributes to community cohesion.</p> <p>Multi-generational and multi-interest.</p> <p>Larger tax base enables more market segmentation, as well as specialized spaces, instructors, and equipment.</p> <p>Services that can be replicated in each community.</p> <p>Primary level for delivering the greatest variety of activities to the most people.</p> <p>Can accommodate local competition but designed with recreation use in mind.</p>
Access	Accessible by walking and biking as well as by private vehicles and public transit.



Activities	<p>Gathering places and spaces for community events to foster a sense of community across neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Spaces that host a broad range of local user-groups.</p> <p>Activities that focus on beginner to intermediate skill-levels.</p> <p>Programs and activities include arts and crafts, appreciation of heritage assets, outdoor recreation, education, and skills development, indoor and outdoor sports, ice-based and aquatic sports, fitness, general recreation and summer camps, and adaptive spaces and equipment for people with special needs.</p> <p>Community sports.</p> <p>Play opportunities for multiple age groups.</p> <p>Hiking and biking (typically up to a few hours).</p>
Target Groups	<p>Newborn and preschool children.</p> <p>Children.</p> <p>Youth.</p> <p>Young adults and older adults.</p> <p>Seniors.</p> <p>People with special needs.</p> <p>Families.</p>
Facility Characteristics	<p>Principal spaces are found in aquatic/community centres. Other examples: kitchens to support large events, middle and secondary school gymnasiums, libraries, skateboard parks, smaller off-leash dog parks, unlit sports fields.</p> <p>Community parks.</p> <p>Community-level trails and bikeways.</p>
Service Provision/ Funding	<p>This is the level where resources are used most efficiently, where most SCRD indoor facilities exist, and where SCRD should therefore focus the greatest attention.</p> <p>Services and activities should be offered in each community by facilitating the success of local groups, coordinating service delivery with those who provide the same or similar services, partnering with local groups, and through direct provision.</p>

4 Applying Service Levels to the SCRD

Actual recreation behaviours

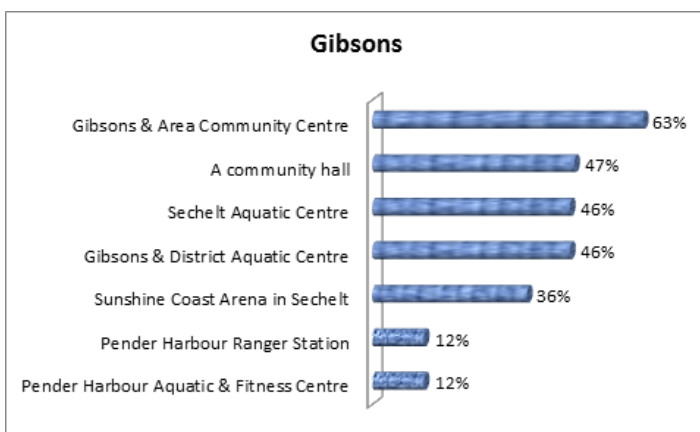
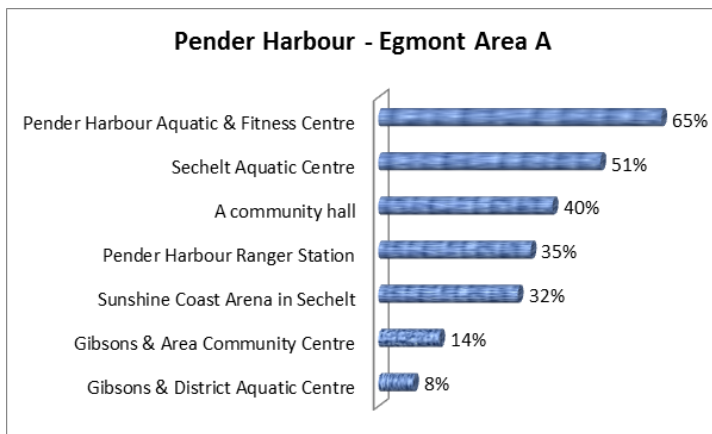
This section demonstrates how the population figures as defined by the three service levels align with the actual population served. It takes into account people who have travelled from another area to use facilities. Listed below are also general recreation-behaviour patterns of SCRD communities:¹⁷

- Egmont/Pender Harbour “Area A” residents travel to Sechelt to use the aquatic centre and arena, but a few go further south to Gibsons to use indoor-recreation facilities.

17. 2011 Master Plan Survey, “Willingness to Travel.”



- Halfmoon Bay “Area B” residents use the entire system of facilities and are highly likely to use the Sechelt facilities.
- Sechelt and SIGD residents mostly use their own community facilities, but some travel to Gibsons, and a few go north to use “Area A” facilities.
- Roberts Creek “Area D” residents use the facilities in Sechelt and Gibsons often. None who were surveyed travel north to use “Area A” facilities. However, anecdotal reports indicate that “Area D” residents do travel to “Area A” to use the parks and campgrounds and participate in its cultural activities.
- Elphinstone “Area E” residents are very likely to use Gibsons facilities, and many travel to Sechelt to use facilities in that community. Only a few use “Area A” facilities.
- Gibsons residents use the entire system of recreation facilities, although their use levels tend to be lower than those from “Area B.”
- West Howe Sound “Area F” residents have a similar pattern of use as their northern counterpart, Egmont/Pender Harbour. They are most likely to use nearby facilities and Sechelt facilities. Use levels drop significantly as distance increases.



What is also interesting to note is that the unique features of some facilities draw residents from the entire region (e.g., the small Gibsons Aquatic Centre and Pender Aquatic Centre are quiet, low-lit, intimate spaces that work better for people with special needs).

Implications

Major facilities appropriate for the medium-catchment-area service level exist and are located in urban centres. The current situation—with arenas in two communities—demonstrates the merit of establishing three service levels. The second ice sheet was built to address the distance between communities, and residents were willing to pay for its construction and



operation. However, the population that is required to support the operation of two ice sheets combined with a high degree of absentee residents (54%)¹⁸ create a challenge for cost recovery. SCRD staff are under a great deal of stress to increase rentals and to increase participation in programs, at special events, and at community gatherings.

This framework also reflects the common needs of the smaller communities.¹⁹ These needs include a central community hub, local special events, involvement with planning activities, access to indoor-recreation activities at local gyms (e.g., badminton, dancing, floor hockey), and summer activities for families, children, and seniors. And, at the small-community service level, community schools and community halls exist. Access to these spaces, general activities that respond to local interests, and local special events will provide health, wellness, and social benefits close to home. It should be noted that including smaller communities such as Egmont/Pender Harbour in the North Central community does not overshadow the unique needs of Egmont/Pender Harbour. Instead it clarifies what types of services and indoor and outdoor facilities are viable, given the catchment area.

This framework will serve the region well for the next 10 years. The coast will continue to experience some population growth, likely more so in urban areas and in Roberts Creek. This growth will be in areas where the major indoor facilities are located. The new growth will help to create more vibrancy in community facilities, increase participation rates, and improve the financial viability of existing facilities and programs.

18. *Vital Signs*.

19. 2011 Master Plan Survey, “Focus Groups and Community Meetings.”



5 Recommendations

1. Adopt the following Master Plan goals to guide the SCRCD now and into the future:
 - One: Strengthen community fabric throughout the region.
 - Two: Motivate individuals and families to be healthy and active.
 - Three: Be stewards of the environment.
 - Four: Contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy.
2. Assume the roles of planner, provider, community builder, and protector.
3. Work within a community-development philosophy, train staff in community engagement and facilitation, and include performance measures that recognize the community-building role.
4. Adopt three service levels (small-community service level, medium-catchment-area service level, and regional service level) to guide the planning and delivery of parks and recreation services on the Sunshine Coast.



Chapter 3: Opportunities That Foster Healthy People and Community

The four goals outlined in Chapter 2 defined the desired outcomes for parks and recreation. Discussion of three service levels led to the general direction of how to achieve these goals, while describing the activities, parks, trails, and indoor facilities specific to the catchment area.

This chapter links the full range of potential recreation typically offered in communities with the four goals. In other words, a thriving community can achieve its goals—social cohesion, active and healthy citizens, personal growth, strong families, environmental sustainability, and a diverse economy—through specific activities and opportunities, which are offered at the three service levels.

Before making these links, there are several distinctions that should be made.

First, facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are, simply put, venues for people to recreate. They must be operated in a manner that supports leisure pursuits. When you view facilities as places that provide leisure experiences, you see that a variety of spaces can host these experiences—SCRD facilities, school spaces, community halls. Facilities, too, need to be maintained in such a way to always meet this goal.

Second, staff, volunteers, and partnerships must be organized to run these facilities. And this doesn't necessarily mean that the SCRDR must directly provide the opportunities. Instead, the SCRDR should play a role in providing, facilitating, and supporting recreation opportunities (and help to remove barriers so that these opportunities may be offered).

The last section of this chapter goes over what the SCRDR needs to focus on, including which opportunities are the most pressing, the specific recreation needs for the region and the communities within.

1 Thirty Core Recreation Activities to Achieve Goals

Parks and recreation departments offer similar activities and opportunities, and in doing so contribute to healthy and active individuals, families, and communities. The 30 recreation activities listed below are the most common. The list has been fine-tuned to reflect the specific needs for the Sunshine Coast. They have been categorized under this Master Plan's four goals to show how the activities and goals link together.

Goal: Strengthen community fabric throughout the region

“The SCRDR provides indoor and outdoor spaces and opportunities where members of the community can connect. High-quality parks, recreation, and cultural assets foster community pride and identity.”



Core activities and opportunities

1. Special events and community gatherings
2. Thriving local community groups
3. Spectator sports
4. Exposure to arts
5. Protected natural and cultural/historic resources
6. Different segments (of all ages, cultures, abilities, and life experiences) coming together
7. Volunteerism
8. Community engagement in the design and/or evaluation of services

Goal: Motivate individuals and families to be healthy and active

“The SCRD plays a central role in the physical, social, creative, intellectual, and emotional health of the community. The SCRD accomplishes this by providing, facilitating, or supporting a variety of recreation opportunities and spaces, effectively communicating these opportunities, motivating people to participate, removing barriers to participation, and encouraging families to recreate together.”

Core activities and opportunities

9. “Active transportation,” that is, non-vehicular modes of travel within and between communities
10. Outdoor walking and cycling activities throughout the region
11. Outdoor walking and cycling close to home
12. Outdoor specialized activities such as horse riding, motorized trail use, dog walking in off-leash dog areas, and using fitness equipment
13. Water-related activities outdoors such as boating, swimming, and recreating on the beach
14. Outdoor play and social activities for children
15. Outdoor play and social activities for youth
16. Outdoor sports activities such as soccer, slo-pitch, courts, and track and field
17. Indoor fitness and sports, including aquatics
18. Family-oriented leisure services



19. Inclusive recreation for people who experience barriers
20. Preschool recreation and skill development
21. School-aged recreation and skill development
22. Youth recreation
23. Adult and older-adult recreation, health and wellness, and skill development
24. Recreation, health and wellness, social activities, and nutrition for seniors

Goal: Be stewards of the environment

“The SCRD is an educator, protector, and manager of significant natural environments, which include the landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystems we all enjoy and are proud of. The SCRD provides local solutions to global issues. SCRD supports outdoor recreation as a result of valuing the natural beauty of the outdoors.”

Core activities and opportunities

25. Healthy ecosystems
26. Scenic landscapes
27. Nature within communities
28. Education and interpretive experiences of the outdoors and waterfront areas
29. Maintenance of parks and trails
30. Access to beaches

Goal: Contribute to a diverse and sustainable economy

“The SCRD contributes to the regional economy by supporting local businesses, providing employment, purchasing goods and services, encouraging volunteerism, and contributing to the quality of life of community members. All this, in turn, attracts investment and visitors to the region.” Providing, facilitating, or supporting all 30 core activities and opportunities will allow SCRD to achieve this goal.

2 Priority Core Activities: 2011 Master Plan Survey Results

The following are highlights from the 2011 Master Plan telephone survey. There is a full spectrum of recreation activities, and this survey identified the recreation needs that must take priority. (Please see Appendix II: 2011 Master Plan Survey Report for details.)



Survey highlight: Outdoor recreation and the environment

- Residents are outdoor oriented and enjoy a wide variety of outdoor-recreation activities. The top three by participation level are 1) running, jogging, walking, and hiking (82% of respondents), 2) visiting a park for walking, picnicking, playing, or other informal activities (77%), and 3) going to the beach, for activities such as lounging, swimming, and snorkelling (72%).
- The highest levels of frequent outdoor activity are for dog walking, running, jogging, walking or hiking, wildlife viewing (e.g., bird watching), visiting a park, and beach use.
- Neighbourhood trails that are close to home (that don't have to be driven to) are used by 67% of households. Also popular are a major park in "Area D" (Roberts Creek area) and neighbourhood parks close to home. Half or more households have visited a major park or trail in Sechelt and Gibsons, a provincial park, or a major park in "Area B" (Halfmoon Bay area), "Area A" (Egmont/Pender Harbour area), or "Area E" (Elphinstone area).
- All types of outdoor areas or facilities are rated favourably. Highest ratings are given to natural parkland and nature trails, destination trails that must be driven to, destination parklands with major natural or built features, places for mountain biking, and neighbourhood parklands close to home. The lowest average ratings are given to outdoor courts for tennis, basketball, roller hockey, and volleyball, off-leash areas for dogs, boat launch facilities, outdoor fitness equipment, and roadside bikeways close to home and which connect to specific destinations.

Survey highlight: Indoor facilities, recreation programs, and special events

- Residents are avid users of indoor-recreation facilities. A large majority of households are SCRD facility users (82%), while only 35% are users of facilities, programs, or events offered privately or organized by community groups.
- The number of households that do not use *any* public, private, or not-for-profit recreation facilities or programs are very few (17%). Almost a quarter (24%) do not participate in programs or activities offered by the SCRD or programs or activities held in a public recreation facility or park.
- The three facilities visited by the most households are Sechelt Aquatic Centre (57%), any community hall (55%), and Gibsons and Area Community Centre (47%). In general, households are most likely to use the nearest facility. However, survey data on facility usage indicates there are people who do use the whole system of facilities.



- In terms of physical activities that improve health and fitness,²⁰ the most popular activities are working out at a fitness centre, gym, or weight room in a public facility; attending fitness classes, aqua fitness classes, or swim club; and attending stretching, balance, or relaxation classes.
- Indoor-recreation opportunities are rated favourably. In general, the facility ratings are better than the program and activity ratings, and respondents without children rate facilities higher than those with children. The types of indoor-recreation programs or facilities given the highest ratings:
 - Volunteering opportunities
 - Indoor pools, including public swimming lessons or programs
 - Public fitness facilities with exercise equipment, fitness programs, low-impact aerobics programs, and activities for adults (ages 60 and over)
 - Local recreation spaces such as community centres and halls
 - Health and wellness programs
 - The use of schools for community programs
- The lowest ratings are given to recreation programs and activities for youth (ages 13 to 18), spaces for youth activities and programs, and activities for children (ages 6 and under).
- More than half of households have attended special events. Additionally, about half have participated in public swimming or swimming lessons, joined child-care, parenting, family, or preschool programs, or taken fitness classes or worked out at a fitness centre, gym, or a weight room in a public facility.
- The most frequently mentioned barriers to participating are “no time” and “too busy with other things” (44%). Other barriers—mentioned by at least 20% of respondents—are “inconvenient timing of programs,” “cost,” “not interested in what’s available,” “inconvenient locations/too far,” and “can’t commit to a program that runs for several weeks.”

Survey highlight: What households consider priorities in order to improve parks and recreation

- Out of eight options for improvements, 34% of households did not choose a priority. When first, second, and third choices are considered, the largest percentage of respondents (40%) support improving indoor and outdoor recreation through more or better paths, trails, and roadside bikeways and walkways. The next three priorities are better maintenance of recreation facilities, parks, trails, and sports fields (23%), more or better beach-access points (22%), and more or better recreation programs, including

20. To improve health, physical activities must be engaged in with sufficient frequency, intensity, and duration, at least three times a week or more.



fitness, arts, crafts, and health and wellness for different age groups (21%). Community differences were also documented.

Survey highlight: Willingness to pay for improvements

- The survey sample splits evenly when it comes to willingness to pay additional taxes to support improvements: 48% of households are willing to pay more tax for recreation improvements, usually a modest amount.

Survey highlight: Effectiveness of communication

- Very few respondents (10%) have heard of the Leisure Access Scholarship program, which assists lower-income Sunshine Coast residents to participate in recreation programs and services. But most respondents (82%) do “feel informed” about indoor- and outdoor-recreation opportunities available on the Sunshine Coast. Between 50% and 75% of respondents report that both Sunshine Coast newspapers and the *Recreation Guide* are the most effective ways of finding information.

Survey highlight: Differences among area residents

- Many differences were found among residents from various areas when it came to indoor- and outdoor-recreation behaviours, satisfactions and dissatisfactions, and priorities for improvements. Please see Appendix II (2011 Master Plan Survey Report) for details.

There were only a few parks and recreation activities/opportunities that received very low ratings. The recommended strategies in the following chapters do take into account the activities/opportunities that received relatively lower ratings. They also consider the differences in responses among different age groups and geographic areas.



3 Recommendation

5. Consider the 30 core activities and opportunities as a way to provide specific guidance for achieving the Master Plan's four goals. At the same time, what members of the community think should take priority in terms of improving parks and recreation.



Chapter 4: Outdoor Recreation and the Environment

This chapter addresses the parks, open spaces, and natural areas that support outdoor recreation. This includes the natural features where human activity takes place—the ocean, beaches, forests, rivers, lakes, and meadows. It also encompasses all of the facilities and amenities that are built to enhance human enjoyment—the parks, trails, playgrounds, sports fields, boat launches, and so much more.

Residents of the Sunshine Coast are extremely active, and they place very high value on outdoor recreation and the natural environment. Of any recreation activity, using trails is the most popular; visiting parks and visiting beach/shoreline activities also see very high participation. (This is according to the telephone survey.) And satisfaction related to outdoor recreation is very high.

When talking more specifically about bike paths and walkways, however, people express significant levels of dissatisfaction. A particular concern is a perceived lack of safety on walkways and bike paths due to the proximity of roads and traffic. In terms of priorities for improvement in parks and recreation as a whole, the top priority is “more or better paths, trails, and roadside bikeways and walkways.” Trails are *very* important to the community.

Most of the trail uses are on foot or bicycle, but there is also some equestrian activity. This is focused mostly in Areas B and E, where 17% and 19% of households, respectively, have a horse rider. It is not clear how much of the horse riding occurs on trails; it is likely that it occurs mostly on private land. There are many horse trails in Roberts Creek and a private-sector riding ring for equestrian competitions and events.

Sechelt, Gibsons, and the SIGD share responsibility with the SCRCD to provide outdoor-recreation services. The public generally doesn't concern itself with distinguishing among the jurisdictions when seeking recreation opportunities. Below is a summary of the relevant park-related services and practices of these jurisdictions. (Note that the Province also offers recreation opportunities at its provincial parks, on trails, and at UREPs—protected areas for the Use, Recreation, and Enjoyment of the Public):

- The **Town of Gibsons** plans, programs, and maintains its parks and trails. Gibsons has two official dog-off-leash areas; in other areas, dogs are required to be on leash, but the Town does not enforce this. The SCRCD schedules the sports fields in Brothers Park for soccer and baseball; Gibsons maintains the fields. There are no development cost charges (DCCs) for parks, despite several attempts; a system for public amenity contributions has been adopted for new developments.
- The **District of Sechelt** plans and maintains its parks and trails. It also schedules and maintains its own sports fields, which support high levels of use. There are many trails in Sechelt, and about 50 beach accesses, one pier, and two wharfs. Sechelt has six dog-off-



leash areas and about the same number of parks where dogs are not permitted. Dogs are otherwise required to be on leash; however, this bylaw is not respected. Sechelt has a DCC bylaw for parkland acquisition and development.

- The **Sechelt Indian Government District (SIGD)** has two full-sized lit soccer fields, one youth sports field, a small basketball court, and three playgrounds. The SIGD maintains these amenities and schedules the sports fields. A small fee is charged for use of the fields. Trail uses and soccer are important activities for members of the Sechelt Nation; youth, men's, and women's leagues play in Native soccer tournaments, which are held in the spring and early summer. The SIGD is interested in collaborating with other governments to maintain and schedule fields, as well as to set up a coordinated trail system.
- The school district books its fields for community use.

1 Trails and Bike Paths

As mentioned, using trails is by far the most prominent activity of all indoor- or outdoor-recreation activities. The SCRDR has about 110 kilometres of trails, including 18 kilometres of paved bicycle/walking paths attached to the road edge, about 3 kilometres of separated paved bicycle/walking paths, and 35 beach-access trails. The Sunshine Coast is also known internationally for its outstanding mountain-biking opportunities, including the Sprockids program and the Capilano University program.

With the direction established by the *Trail Network Plan* of 2007, the SCRDR has been building neighbourhood connector trails, multi-use pathways and paved bicycle paths on or beside roadways. All areas have participated in these projects, except Area A (the Egmont/Pender Harbour area). In addition, some recreation trails have been built on the islands in Area F (West Howe Sound area). SCRDR shares responsibility with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) for providing road-side bike paths, as SCRDR has no jurisdiction over roads and highways.

The federal Gas Tax has been a significant source of funding for bicycle/walking paths, and borrowing is recommended in the 2004 Parks Master Plan for trail construction in Community Parks. Gas tax funding is secure until the end of 2014.

SCRDR staff are involved in implementing the trail network on an ongoing basis. Priorities for trails as listed in the *Trail Network Plan* are updated annually. An SCRDR committee also prepared a list of beach-access priorities for each electoral area, based on priorities received from committees for each area during the trail network planning process.

Significant challenges do exist. Easier routes and requested trails are getting constructed first, so the routes remaining to be built tend to be crossing more difficult terrain. Bike lanes are intermittent, some end abruptly, and some structures limit where bike paths can be built (e.g., retaining walls at driveways). The safety of bike paths and walkways that are along



roads is a concern to the public; finding remedies is difficult in many locations since there is insufficient space for separated paths. SCRD trails are generally shown on public maps; however, beach access locations and some local connector trails are not shown on public maps because of various neighbourhood concerns.

When it comes to the construction of trails and bike paths, the SCRD has two areas of focus:

- **Community parks.** This program includes construction and maintenance of recreation trails within SCRD parks or on land that has SCRD tenure, for example, shoreline-access trails on statutory rights-of-ways, trails built on Crown land with permits held by the regional district.
- **Bicycle/walking paths.** This program includes construction and maintenance of paved transportation paths, particularly for paved bikeways on or near roadways.

Trails or walkways that are not immediately adjacent to or beside a roadway can also be built within the auspices of “active transportation” (i.e., biking or walking to reach a destination) or if recommended in a guiding document such as the *Trails Master Plan* or the *Integrated Transportation Study*.

Area A does not currently participate in the improvement program for bicycle/walking paths, but due to the area’s high interest in trails as expressed in the telephone survey, they are expected to join it. The islands are anticipated to withdraw from the bicycle/walking paths program, in which case paths on the islands would be supported only under the community parks program.

Because of the very high importance of trails to the community, more work is needed to bring trail planning and design forward to achieve a fully integrated network of coast wide trails. All jurisdictions need to work together to update the inventory of trails and to establish common standards of design and infrastructure, especially directional signs. There are opportunities to involve the enthusiastic community of volunteers in the planning, implementation, and assistance with these value-added components.

2 Parkland Classification

The *Strategic Park Master Plan* (2004) described different types of parks and open spaces, but it is customary to review these categories during master planning. This Master Plan proposes a concise classification system of parks and open spaces that clearly identifies SCRD parks as distinct from those managed by other jurisdictions. The classification system enhances understanding of the park system, and it can guide park planning, design, management and maintenance. Because the SCRD is so spread out, with large rural areas, the classification system needs to be used with discretion. For example, the categories “community parks” and “local neighbourhood parks” are only relevant to locations with urban densities.



The classification system of parkland is related to the hierarchy of service levels described in Chapter 2 (regional, medium catchment area, and small community); however, the parks don't always fit into the service-level categories neatly. For example, destination parks cater to a regional population, but they also provide services to local neighbourhoods. And shoreline-access parks may fulfill any of the three service levels, depending on their size and importance of the shoreline.

At the regional service level

Destination Parks

Destination parks draw visitors from the entire region and beyond. People visit these parks because of the parks' natural or cultural features and recreation opportunities. Destination parks draw people who specifically travel to "spend time in the park," to participate in activities as diverse as hiking, mountain biking, enjoying the waterfront, and attending special events and sports. Most destination parks offer a wide range of activities.

Examples: Cliff Gilker, Shirley Macey Park, Connor Park, Katherine Lake, Sprockids, Lions Field, Roberts Creek Pier, Coopers Green, Ocean Beach Esplanade

At the medium-catchment-area service level

Community Parks

Community parks (an optimal size of 4 hectares at minimum) serve several neighbourhoods and are ideally within a 10-minute walk or 800 metres from residents. Community parks include a range of recreation facilities, such as play areas, beaches, viewpoints, significant walkways or trails, picnic areas, and sports fields, as well as parking lots. These parks are meant to form the visual, physical, and social focus of the community.

Examples: Soames Hill, Dan Bosch, Cedar Grove, Sprockids

Shoreline Access

Shoreline-access parks include small properties or road rights-of-way whose primary function is to provide public access to the waterfront. Some may have beaches and usable shoreline areas, and others may exist for access to the waterfront only.

Examples: Henderson Beach, Baker Beach, Po Road, Dan Bosch

At the small-community service level

Local Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks (an optimal size of 2 hectares at minimum) generally serve the catchment area of or similar to that of an elementary school and are ideally within a five-minute walk or 400 metres from residents. Neighbourhood parks typically include play



equipment, pathways, open grass, and picnic seating. They may also include other recreation or athletic facilities. These parks are meant to form the visual, physical, and social focus of the neighbourhood. Access is usually by walking so neighbourhood parks do not require parking lots.

Example: Whispering Firs, Maryanne West Park

Tot Lots

Typically under one-fifth of a hectare, tot lots serve small local areas, usually catering to residents within a two-block radius. Facilities may include some play equipment, benches, small open space, and trees. Tot lots are expensive to maintain for the benefits offered. They are often the result of the 5% park dedication received through the subdivision process.

Examples: Grandview Heights, Maple Park, Cedar Meadows

Green Space

Green space refers to all other SCRD parkland. This may include public land that is mostly natural and protecting environmentally sensitive areas, for example, forests and riparian areas. Facilities within green space may include trails and staging areas for trails that do not receive high levels of use. Other green spaces may include viewpoints or green space within communities that is not developed with any facilities.

Examples: Coopers Green Lagoon, Georgia Crest undeveloped green space from subdivision

3 Parkland Supply

The existing parkland supply is illustrated in the table at right. The SCRD does not use a specific standard or quantity of parkland as a target, except to guide the acquisition of parkland with new development, as identified in the OCPs (official community plans).

For information purposes only, the parkland supply is calculated here, using two methods—population-based supply and percentage of land area. This will enable the SCRD to make comparisons with other communities (keeping in mind that regional districts are extremely varied, making comparison difficult). What is important here is that these measures will provide the opportunity to track changes in parkland supply over time.

The SCRD has minimal resources available to purchase new parkland. Parkland is acquired through development, donation/bequest, or covenant. Staff are planning to prepare

Classification	Total Number of Parcels (2012)	Area ha (2012)
SCRD Parkland		
Destination Park	9	284.8
Community Park	17	129.1
Local Neighbourhood Park	10	21.3
Tot Lot	2	0.4
Shoreline Access	8	23.9
Green Space	88	697.8
Cemetery	2	3.0
Total - SCRD Parkland	136	1,160.3
Other Parks and Open Space		
Dock	12	4.1
Municipal Park (Sechelt, Gibsons, SIGD)	65	159.0
Provincial Park	58	12,235.9
School	13	45.2
UREP	86	1,810.3
Total - Other Parks and Open Space	234	14,254.4
TOTAL	370	15,414.7



a parks acquisition policy to guide acquisition through subdivision. There may be opportunities to increase donations and bequests by establishing and publicizing tools such as trust agreements.

Given the vast area of Use, Recreation and Enjoyment of the Public (UREPs) (over 1,800 hectares), the SCRCD is interested in protecting those sites, many of which are used for informal recreation. UREPs cannot be developed but can be logged. If an application is submitted to change the current status of the land from UREP, a public process is required. SCRCD staff currently feel that the UREP parcels are safe from development.

Ratio of parks to population

For the calculation of population-based supply, only active parkland is considered. Since detailed data is not available for Sechelt, Gibsons, and the SIGD, this analysis disregards those areas. In 2011, the SCRCD population (not including Sechelt, Gibsons, and the SIGD) was 14,094 and the amount of active parkland was 459 hectares, yielding a supply of almost 33 hectares per 1,000 people. This is an exceptionally high supply, as many communities strive to achieve 4 hectares per 1,000 people. The large supply of active parkland is due to the low population density and the extensive forested areas in some destination and community parks.

Percentage of parks and protected areas

In calculating parks and protected areas as a percentage of land area, the calculation includes the lands protected by all jurisdictions (outside of Sechelt, Gibsons, and the SIGD). With 16,139 hectares protected and a total land area of 377,800 hectares in the SCRCD, the area protected is 4.3%. This is a relatively low figure since many communities strive for the provincial standard of 12%. The low figure is likely due to the very large land area of the SCRCD, most of which is natural even though it may not be formally protected.

Shoreline access

Shoreline access is extremely important to the community, and there were significant dissatisfaction levels with existing beach-access points. (“Shoreline access” is used in this report rather than the current term “beach access” to reflect a broad range of shoreline conditions.) Although the table above indicates that there are eight shoreline-access parks, there are actually many more than that. Larger parks along the shoreline are classified as community parks. There are also many shoreline-access trails located on road rights-of-way; in these cases, the trails are mapped but the land areas are not identified nor mapped as parks. Focus-group participants indicated that many people want easy access to the shoreline; however, they are limited by the encroachments that make beach-access points



unavailable, the lack of information about the locations of shoreline-access points, and parking issues. Many of the available shoreline-access trails are not built for high levels of use. There are no shoreline parks or boat ramps in Area F.

4 Park Amenities

Sports fields and ball diamonds

Within the entire SCRD (including Sechelt, Gibsons, and SIGD), there are 33 park and school sites that contain sports fields; 26 of these sites support adult or youth soccer or ball (baseball or softball), which are scheduled by various agencies. One field is used for rugby and another for Ultimate.

The fields have been rated based on their condition and maintenance, and only nine of the fields have a score of seven or more out of 10. All four jurisdictions and the school district maintain their fields independently. The school fields are generally in poor condition because the school district has limited resources to upgrade and maintain fields.

The SCRD does have a joint-use agreement with the school district. Between 1983 and 2005, some joint-use construction projects were conducted on tennis courts, playgrounds, and sports fields at school sites. However, there have been no joint-use projects since 2005.

The SCRD has five grass sports fields and one gravel field. The newest field at Pender Harbour is a high-quality sand-based grass field appreciated by sports groups. The field is barely used during the summer. Other SCRD fields are in need of upgrading, in particular Shirley Macey because of drainage issues.

There is room for improvement when it comes to the process of booking fields. The booking system for fields owned by SCRD and the Town of Gibsons is the recreation software called ActiveNet (a basic version of CLASS); Sechelt and the school district book their fields independently. This means that some groups need to contact three different organizations to book fields.

There has been no integrated analysis of sports participation, trends, and needs throughout the coast. There are likely opportunities to increase efficiencies in scheduling, booking, and maintaining fields to better meet the needs of the community.

Other park amenities

The parks in the SCRD include a wide range of amenities. In addition to the paths, trails, and sports fields described thus far, amenities in the SCRD include 10 playgrounds, one water park, two campgrounds, two bike-skills areas, docks and floats, and the Dakota Ridge winter recreation area. The amenities in the SCRD are also complemented by those available in Sechelt, Gibsons, and SIGD, and on school sites. These include dog off-leash areas,



tennis courts (with private tennis clubs in Sechelt and Egmont), running and walking tracks, a basketball court, a volleyball site, and two skateboard parks.

One particularly popular park is Shirley Macey Park, where in addition to sports fields, there is an accessible playground, a water park, a frog pond, a maze garden, a nine-hole disc-golf course, and public art. There is also land available for a community garden.

There are three cemeteries in the SCRDR, one full service and two small ones, one of which is privately owned (though the owners would like to turn it over to the SCRDR). Cemetery services are being addressed in the *Seaview Cemetery Business Plan*.

The SCRDR also has six community halls (discussed in the next chapter) that are maintained by Parks staff.

The following are some of the desires and some of the concerns related to park amenities that respondents brought up in the telephone survey and during the focus groups:

- Aging infrastructure
- Community involvement in park planning and design processes (people expressed interest in getting involved)
- Universal accessibility
- The appropriateness of building new amenities if there is not sufficient budget to maintain them
- Environmental protection
- Dog off-leash areas
- Public art
- Multi-use courts as being more versatile than tennis courts
- Water parks (potentially in the north)
- Community gardens
- Outdoor exercise facilities
- Youth facilities

Also mentioned was an interest in increasing opportunities for launching boats, especially in the south portion of the coast. Boat launching is often provided by the private sector (at a cost), but availability tends to be limited.

5 Management and Maintenance of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

The assets in parks are extensive. Management of parks and outdoor recreation involves a wide array of tasks including protecting the environment, managing dogs in parks,



considering roadways to destination parks, disseminating information to the public, and managing operations with limited resources.

Protecting the environment

Residents of the Sunshine Coast appreciate the natural environment, and the environmental protection ethic is strong. This is true among Parks staff as well; with park development projects, they try to minimize impacts on natural resources. But there are a number of challenges. As the population and the use of parks increase, it becomes more difficult to protect resources. Invasive species are a major concern. Some shoreline treatments to address erosion cause problems along publicly owned shorelines. Trampling of vegetation by humans or dogs can have negative effects on habitats or important species.

The good news is that there have been some important successes in environmental protection. The *Cliff Gilker Park Management Plan* is a good example—a plan that addresses the topic and provides management strategies for that park; another good example is protection of turtle habitat at Katherine Lake and Klein Lake. There are also many organizations conducting environmental conservation and stewardship work, e.g., Lagoon Society, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, Coastal Douglas-Fir Conservation Partnership.

Managing park use

Management of dogs was a major concern expressed in the telephone survey and by the focus groups. This is a common theme in all communities, as more and more people own dogs, especially among older age groups. Aspects of dog walking can sometimes raise significant controversy. Dog owners generally want more off-leash opportunities, and non-dog-owners can sometimes be concerned about the inappropriate behaviour of some dogs and their owners.

The SCRDR requires dogs to be on leash in parks, but many dogs are off leash. The SCRDR has dog-waste-bag dispensers, and residents used 4,350 dog waste bags in 2010. Dogs on sports fields and in environmentally sensitive areas are particular concerns.

Dog off-leash areas are increasingly popular in urban areas, allowing dogs opportunities to run free and to socialize with other dogs. Because the SCRDR is so rural, parks staff have not seen a need for dog off-leash areas to date. Both Sechelt and Gibsons have dog off-leash areas to serve residents of the most dense communities. In the future, the SCRDR may need to consider some dog-exercise areas where population densities are the highest. These could be areas designated for dogs, with signs and bags; perimeter fences are not necessarily needed.

Another use-related concern raised by the public was the condition of roads leading to key destination parks that may or may not be managed by the SCRDR, such as Dakota Ridge,



Tetrahedron, and Mount Richardson. Active community residents and tourists want the opportunity to go to those destinations in regular vehicles. Addressing this issue is complex because multiple jurisdictions are sometimes involved in the management of these roads.

One of the difficulties of managing park use is the SCRD Parks Bylaw 356 (1992), which regulates uses and charges in parks. There have been major changes since that time and the bylaw is out of date.

Providing information to the public

Given the importance of parks and trails to the community, and their value to tourists, there is unfortunately very little information available for the public. Various community groups do provide maps of trails, including on websites (e.g., sunshine-coast-trails.com, sunshinecoastcanada.com, supermap.com), and maps are available through bike stores and walking clubs, but there is definitely room for improvement.

There are significant opportunities to raise the profile of the Sunshine Coast's park and trail resources through materials prepared collaboratively by all jurisdictions. These may include directional and interpretive signs, printed maps, brochures, website information, and potentially a smartphone "app."

Maintaining parks and trails

Maintaining the SCRD's parks and trails is a significant challenge. Some of the challenges include increasing use levels, more invasive plants, aging capital assets (some are in marginal condition in terms of safety but replacement funds are lacking), more infrastructure (including portable toilets), and long travel times for staff. The public did notice—the telephone survey yielded negative comments about maintenance.

This maintenance conundrum requires creative solutions. Reviewing procedures, linking maintenance with park classifications, and finding efficiencies, potentially in collaboration with other jurisdictions, are worthy of exploration. Improving the sustainability of operations would also be an important goal.

Volunteers can assist with maintenance. On park and trail projects, the SCRD has seen increased involvement from volunteers, including individuals, organized groups, schools, and corporate volunteer teams. Volunteer projects have included cleanup days, signage projects, trail hosting, Adopt-a-Trail, trail grooming, trail building and repairs, and major playground-development initiatives.



The value of volunteer work is significant in terms of the contributions to the park system and the benefits to those participating. The challenges are that these relationships and volunteer programs require significant staff resources to achieve results that are safe and positive for everyone. (Refer to Chapter 7 for more information related to volunteers.)



6 Recommendations

6. Continue, as a high priority, to collaborate in the development of trails and bike paths to meet the community's needs for recreation and alternative transportation. Focus on connectivity and safety, including trails within and between neighbourhoods, to schools, and bike paths along roads.
 - Establish criteria for trails and bike paths, and use these to evaluate and guide trail/bike path development (see Appendix I).
 - For Area A, initiate a SCR D process to participate in trails and bike path, establish a legal functional structure for this, and build trails and bike paths.
 - Identify and acquire trail corridors in subdivision and rezoning processes.
 - Acquire access to undeveloped road rights-of-way that provide access to the beach or to ocean views.
 - Facilitate inter-jurisdictional connections for trails.
 - Identify and establish a plan to complete the southern legs of the Suncoaster Trail.
7. Support the development of a Trail Strategy for the Sunshine Coast in collaboration with the Province, Sechelt, Gibsons, SIGD and the Squamish Nation, and volunteer trail and tourism stakeholders (see Appendix I for more details).

Parkland Classification and Supply

8. Establish criteria and acquire additional parkland where environmental and recreation resources need to be protected and where there are gaps in park-related services (see Appendix I for draft criteria).
 - Adopt and implement the proposed park-classification system, and use it as a tool to guide parkland acquisition, planning, design, and management.
 - Establish a development cost charge (DCC) program for parkland acquisition and development.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
9. Increase the number and quality of shoreline-access parks (e.g., Area F) including shoreline (beach) access trails.
 - Conduct a review of designated shoreline-access parks and road rights-of-way that end along the shoreline to determine the potential for upgrading them (see Appendix I for the criteria).
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*



Park Amenities

10. Upgrade facilities and procedures, including Joint Use, related to the use of sports fields.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
11. Upgrade amenities, and add new amenities in parks where needed to meet community interests and needs.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*

Management and Maintenance

12. Increase efforts related to environmental stewardship and environment management, such as treatment of invasive species and shoreline protections for specific, more busy, sensitive, or complex parks. Consider individual parks management plans, such as Cooper Green.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
13. Develop management strategies for recreation uses in parks and trails as required to improve user experience and reduce conflicts.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
14. Prepare signs, maps, brochures and programs to provide more information to the public regarding parks, trails, and outdoor-recreation opportunities.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*
15. Improve procedures and adjust maintenance levels of some parks and trails.
 - *See Appendix I for additional detail on the recommendation.*

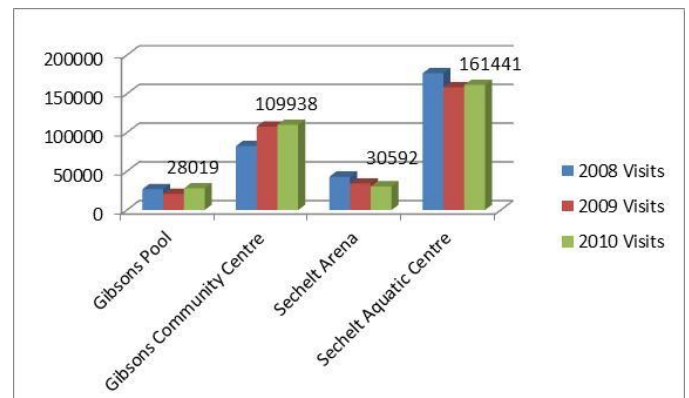
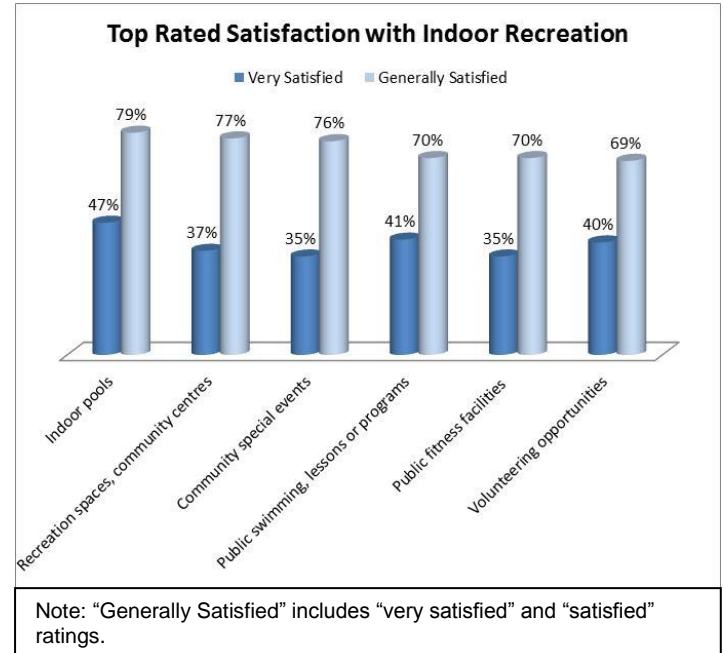


Chapter 5: Indoor Facilities

This chapter reviews SCRD’s facilities—the aquatic centres, fitness centres, ice rinks, and community halls—that support indoor recreation. These indoor facilities were studied using information from a variety of sources: the Master Plan Survey, comments gathered in the focus groups, professional building assessments, statistics, staff interviews, and general observations of the condition of the buildings and how they work.

On the whole, the public responses can best be summarized as being quite satisfied with both the number and also the general state of the five recreation buildings. (The chart below shows the number of visits to the facilities in 2008, 2009, and 2010, with the exact numbers for 2010 above the green bar.) Given these responses, as well as a review of the programming offered at these facilities and of the present infrastructure, no additional buildings are proposed in this Plan. What is being proposed is a number of alterations and actions to maximize the current facilities.

The main issue discussed in this chapter has to do with Gibsons Pool and Sechelt Arena, two buildings that are aging and are not operating at or near capacity. The challenging decision here is whether to focus on increasing attendance or to phase out one or both buildings. The Sunshine Coast is a highly active and “aquatic focused” set of communities, and that is something to keep in mind.



1 Regional-Catchment-Area Service Facilities

Gibsons and Area Community Centre (GACC)

- Built in 2007.
- Includes an NHL-sized ice arena, squash and racquetball courts, a fitness studio, multi-purpose rooms/child care, and a youth centre.
- Offers a variety of drop-in activities (including parent-, tot-, and seniors-drop-in programming), squash, racquetball, skating, hockey, fitness classes, and fitness equipment for workouts.
- A number of rentable rooms suitable for small to large gatherings—meetings, special events, and receptions. The ice rink is available for rent (and as a dry-floor arena in the summer).

In 2007, this new community centre opened in Gibsons, adding a second ice rink to the inventory of recreation facilities on the Sunshine Coast. It is a well-constructed and well-equipped centre. Despite its popularity, however, it is not yet functioning at or near capacity. The public did express a desire for more options in terms of the programs offered in the SCRCD. Additional programming would increase the activity in the centre's various rooms. We note below that some regional programs could possibly be incorporated into these facilities.

A best practice in the administration of recreation facilities is to combine facilities and manage them as “complexes.” While the two facilities in Gibsons are several hundred metres apart, there would be significant advantages to tying together the operations of this community centre with that of the Gibsons Pool. A coordinated fitness program could be marketed to Gibsons and surrounding areas, a program that would promote the fitness room, the pool, and the multi-purpose rooms as one bundle. Such a complex would mean it could act as more of a “centre” to the communities being served. This would necessitate the SCRCD to build stronger bridges with local governments and community providers.

Programming could also include additional “member partnerships,” active social-service organizations such as daycares, seniors' services, the curling club, private-sector employers, etc. The SCRCD has already developed a functional partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, Community Schools societies, Sunshine Coast Community Services Society and others; who produce quality programming that could be replicated in all recreation facilities.

Three services in the building are contracted out to not-for-profits: preschool, food concessions, and youth services. The three organizations appear to be providing good services; however, no measurement tools appear to be in place. It is essential that the management of these types of contracts be effective *and* efficient to help determine the value of the service.

Staff has proposed a 10-year capital maintenance program that is both prudent and appropriate for a building of this age, size, and function.



Sunshine Coast Arena (aka Sechelt Arena)

- Built in 1973.
- Includes an NHL-sized ice arena.
- Offers drop-in public skating and hockey.
- The ice rink is available for rent (and as a good dry-floor arena in the summer). A banquet room suitable for small- to medium-sized gatherings is also available for rent.
- The ice rink floor failed in the spring of 2012 . As a consequence the ice rink was closed for the 2012/13 winter and the floor was rebuilt relying primarily on coverage provided under the building insurance.

When the new community centre in Gibsons opened in 2007, there was a modest increase in overall ice activity for a few years. The basic result, however, was that many of the activities simply shifted from the Sechelt Arena to the new Gibsons rink.

In 2012 the arena slab had significant issues that required the closure of the facility. The repairs resulted in the loss of the 2012/13 ice season.

Prior to the closure a substantial amount of the ice “on the coast” was not being used fully. Most of this unused ice was at the Sechelt Arena. This is the problem of having two arenas. Not only is ice being “underutilized”—the cost of operating two arenas is relatively expensive and fixed, and the general trend in the country is a decline in team sports and ice-oriented activities. During the shutdown all programing was shifted to the Gibsons arena.

One possibility considered was to recommend the permanent closure of the Sechelt Arena. There has been a 29% reduction in ice usage at the Sechelt Arena from 2008 through 2010. The closure of this facility would result in substantial cost savings to the SCRCD.

There would, of course, be downsides to closing the Sechelt Arena. A closing would have a negative impact on the total number of arena-based activities, leading to an even further decline in ice activity. As well, a dry floor (the arena in the summer) is a significant amenity for a community. These two things would affect SCRCD’s mission to promote active living on the coast. The SCRCD made the decision to repair this 40-year-old building.

Building a New Market

Given the current population numbers of the SCRCD, it *is* possible to build a clientele to support two ice rinks. It will take considerable focus and resources to find and build new clients particularly after a one year closure in which, presumably, recreation patterns of historical users will have changed.

The current arena focused staff, positioned at GACC have a number of other important duties, such as managing the Gibsons recreation facilities that take them away from this major task.



A primary market would be the older adult. The opportunity exists to build adult-oriented hockey and pleasure skating. The adult population in SCRCD is generally older and includes a considerable number of shift workers. Activating this market would also mean filling up the daytime hours at a facility (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. are generally considered to be “non-prime hours”). As well, this market segment can afford these programs, which would mean further offsetting the costs of operating facilities.

These programs should include but not be limited to the following:

- Seniors’ drop-in hockey (65+)
- Seniors’ pleasure-skating clubs—couples and singles, with age-appropriate music
- Additional support for current leagues to build program and members, e.g., minor hockey
- Entry-level hockey for adults, as well as hockey leagues (corporate teams, church teams, etc.)
- Promotion of Sunshine Coast as a destination tournament centre, e.g., old-timers’ hockey
- Hockey or figure skating academy (in partnership with the school district)
- Adult figure-skating lessons and possibly a pleasure-skating club

As well, the current ice-allocation policy must be revised. Some of the suggested revisions include the following:

- Redefining “non-prime hours,” which currently means late night, early morning, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The daytime should now be considered “prime hours,” considering the new market of adults who would rent the rinks during the day
- Requiring children and youth groups who are receiving taxpayer subsidies to use more non-prime hours for practices (late night and early morning), thus freeing up prime ice time for adult rentals at both facilities
- Allocating ice times at both rinks in a manner that would help build and sustain leagues that attract the largest number of people

Building Dry-Floor Operations

The least-expensive and least-used portion of the arena program is the dry-floor-program season. Currently, there are several groups that use Sechelt Arena’s dry floor, including the “roller girls” club (roller derby) and lacrosse players. There are also several special events that rent the arena.

There is a real opportunity, though, to really build the dry-floor operations. The Sechelt Arena does not border on any residential neighbourhood, and therefore it is a potential venue for concerts and large-scale community events. As well, there are a number of dry-floor programs that could be introduced: gymnasium-type programs and roller hockey. And



the present roller-derby program can be enhanced—the roller girls are prepared to build their sport both as a reaction activity and also as a spectator event.

Increasing Usage of the Arena

There are two strategies to increase usage of arenas that have proved successful in other communities:

1. Follow the traditional route and hire an additional recreation programmer with sole responsibility for overseeing current programming. He/she would build new community programs as well.
2. Call for proposals from both the private and the not-for-profit sectors to take over the programming for a five-year period. Here are some successful examples of ice rinks in BC:
 - In Nelson, a fear of losing a second ice sheet led to the establishment of a contract with the local community sport council. They took over the management of one of the two ice facilities and increased participation.
 - In Richmond a similar situation resulted in the ice users forming a not-for-profit society and taking on the operation of several ice rinks.
 - Vernon contracted out the operation of an ice arena to a private operator and report great satisfaction with the results.

In the cases where a not-for-profit operates the rinks, the group receives a set subsidy from the local government and otherwise conducts operations at arm's length. They are responsible for managing their own budget. This provides a measure of certainty to the local-government budgets.

And when sports groups take over operations, they cooperate to build memberships and new programs. This results in increased ice usage and associated revenues.

The SCR D should consider all its options. Regardless of which path is chosen, it is imperative that current users participate in drafting policies and plans that support a five-year objective to increase arena usage. The SCR D may choose to continue maintaining the two arenas regardless of which option is selected in order to provide continuity and building protection.

Second-Floor Lounge and Multi-purpose Room

Another major issue to consider at the Sechelt Arena is what to do with the second-floor lounge and multi-purpose room.

The arena and the upstairs areas present a unique opportunity. They have potential as a great venue for social events and concerts as such events would not have a negative impact on a local neighbourhood (since there are no residential areas nearby). On the other hand it is a location that everyone has to make a special trip to.



The multi-purpose room has real potential to be a significant program room for the local community which is short of multipurpose rooms. It could host a wide variety of programs and community events (some of which could produce new revenues). Before this option can be seriously pursued, however, the room needs to be updated and made more attractive. The estimate to bring this room up to a quality standard is \$300,000.

The second-floor lounge could be operated as a neighbourhood pub by a private company. However, the costs to upgrade this lounge will be significant, estimated to be \$200,000. It would only make good business sense to a private operator to enter into a lease if the lease were long enough to build clientele and recover the upgrade costs.

Since we are recommending a five-year trial period to increase arena usage and to improve the operation of the overall facility, it would be fiscally prudent to delay some of the decisions that relate to the second floor. A call for expressions of interest should be issued only at the conclusion of the trial period. Similarly it would not be prudent to upgrade the activities rooms until the completion of this five-year trial period.

The capital maintenance program developed by staff identifies a number of important building-maintenance projects such as roof repairs, structural reviews, etc. It would be prudent to defer as many capital projects as possible until such time as the long-term future of the building is determined. It should also be noted that this building is 40 years old and will require additional maintenance.

Sechelt Aquatic Centre (SAC)

- Built in 2007.
- Includes a leisure pool, lap pool (25 metres), lazy river, waterslide, hot tub, steam room, sauna, gym, and fitness studio.
- Offers drop-in aquatic fitness classes, public, and lane swimming, a variety of drop-in activities, fitness classes, and fitness equipment for workouts.
- Includes a “community-use” room suitable for meetings and small receptions. The pool may also be rented for birthday or family parties and other groups.

This relatively new aquatic centre has certainly been well received by the entire coast and should be considered a success. It is the busiest of all the community facilities, and people from all areas of the SCRDC come here to enjoy the facility. The statistics are even more impressive given that the facility was closed several times for repairs—after closures, pools usually take a long period of time to rebuild patronage.

Although the building is in good condition, there are some design and construction issues yet to be resolved, issues that need to take precedence over other matters. Notably, the multi-purpose room needs a separate HVAC system so that it can be used 12 months out of the year.



In Chapter 6 we call for a redesign of the health and fitness program. This program is already contributing to the health and wellness of the community at many of the facilities and has the potential to serve a great many more persons. There is an opportunity at the SAC to produce more revenues. For example, most successful public and private fitness facilities have fitness consultants on duty during operating hours; these consultants provide general supervision and support clients during high-use times. Sechelt Aquatic Centre (SAC) doesn't have this, and the public has noted that such a service would make the facility more appealing. This additional staff could be funded by charging for one-on-one fitness consulting, circuit training/fitness classes, and additional memberships.

The public also indicated that SAC is one venue where a child-care service would allow more parents to participate in fitness programs.

The SAC could also be improved is increasing public access to the pool. Special-interest groups rent the pool during high-use times, and this limits public access. Given that these rentals are subsidized, rental policies should be reviewed to encourage higher public participation.

We also suggest that staff work with the community to explore the development of a swim club for young people. Residents are very "aquatic focused," and there are already a number of strong school swim programs. The Sunshine Coast has a successful winter swim club that is active for most of the year and serves more serious athletes. There are a large number of less-serious summer swim clubs throughout the province that are mandated to provide swimming opportunities for young people. Given the above interest, combined with the increase in population numbers in the summer, it is conceivable that a summer club would function on the Sunshine Coast and should be considered to augment summer participation in low use times.

Community outreach in Sechelt is necessary to build partnerships, learn more about client needs, and establish community outreach programming as requested in the community survey and focus groups. There are real opportunities for the SAC team to build a wider range of community programs. These programs can be quite inexpensive to operate, involve large numbers of people, and hence produce additional revenues. Part of the community outreach could include the establishment of programming in other community facilities, such as schools, churches, etc.

The SAC building is in a good state of repair with the exception of some matters that will be covered under the building warranty. Since June is the month that experiences the lowest attendance (due to general program changeover, busy school activities, etc.), this should be the season when any required maintenance is completed. If none is required, then special events, a summer swim club, and group functions could help build the attendance numbers.

The capital program proposed by staff over the next 10 years is conservative and practical.



2 Medium-Catchment-Area Service Facilities

Gibsons and District Aquatic Facility (aka Gibsons Pool)

- Built in 1978.
- Includes a main pool (4 lanes, 20-metre lengths), a tots' pool (10 feet by 16 feet with a depth of 12 inches graduating to 22 inches, with a water feature in the centre), a "Round Pink Pool" (15 inches deep), and a hot tub.
- Offers drop-in aquatic fitness classes, and public, length, and open swim sessions.

Overall, the aquatic services offered by the SCRD are highly valued by the residents, and while many persons noted that the Gibsons pool is in need of refurbishment, the improvement of this indoor facility was low on the public's priority list.

The SCRD has invested significant capital dollars to maintain and improve this 35 year old building. In 2010 the SCRD completed a facility audit (*Fame* report) of Gibsons Pool. It identified a number of deficiencies that require attention over the next several years. In response, the staff drew up an action plan, which was included in the 10-year capital budget. These various projects total \$1,187,800. Most of this work needs to be completed in the next two years.

The catchment area for this pool could best be described as the southern half of the Sunshine Coast. Attendance has shown some moderate improvement; however, the numbers are quite low in relation to the size of the facility and are well below capacity. Currently about 50% of the local active aquatic residents in and around Gibsons attend the Sechelt Aquatic Centre. Yet the Gibsons Pool does play an important role in the lives of those who come here and enjoy the facility. It has a loyal following. Gibsons Pool also supports the learn-to-swim school program.

The facility faces two major challenges: low attendance (and hence a low-cost-recovery rate) and an aging infrastructure.

The first challenge should be addressed immediately. The program offerings need to be improved and hours extended. The revised program plan should include special promotions and innovative ideas on how to meet the needs of catchment area residents. The pool also needs to engage in cross-marketing with GACC users and with businesses and not-for-profits.

After an appropriate period—five years, for example—the results of these new efforts should be evaluated against a set of performance objectives.

The second challenge deals with the aging infrastructure. This pool does require some immediate work to maintain the building, some of which has already been initiated by the SCRD. The more expensive longer term options should be considered after the proposed 5 year program expansion exercise.



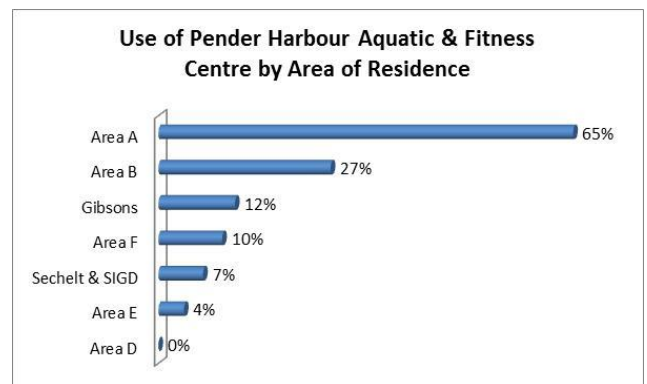
The SCRD Board has committed “to consult with the communities impacted to ascertain whether this facility will eventually be rebuilt or if upgrades to its present location will be planned.”

It was also noted that the landscaping and parking lot areas should be improved to make the building feel safer and be more appealing. It is understood that these responsibilities for areas outside the building are shared with the Town of Gibsons.

Pender Harbour Aquatic and Fitness Centre

- Built over 30 years ago, with a major revitalization in 2009.
- Includes a lap pool (20 metres), hot tub, sauna, fitness studio, and a weight room.
- Offers aquatic fitness classes, public, length, and open swim sessions, regular fitness classes, and fitness equipment for workouts.
- Pool may be rented for birthday or family parties and other groups.

Located on the lower level of Pender Harbour Secondary School, this centre is partnered with local community schools and the school staff to provide valuable programming to the local community. The students at the school make excellent use of the fitness and pool facility, and, like most students on the coast, they are more “water safe” than the general student population in BC.



There are a surprising number of clients that travel from other areas on the coast just to use this centre, probably because of the uniqueness of this pool.²¹ The aquatic programs here complement the other pool programs on the coast.

This pool is underused since it focuses its programming on a small catchment area. Building attendance is probably just a matter of additional “niche” programming aimed at a wider market—the venue is already of high quality. At those times when children and youth are not using the pool, the facility has a certain spa-type ambience that would appeal to certain latent markets. More coordination of programming and of marketing the variety of aquatic opportunities on the coast would build attendance, Pender Centre is a valuable amenity in the community and could definitely be better used.

21. Note that this facility was closed for a significant portion of the survey period; survey data may not reflect travel patterns prior to and after the facility was closed.



3 Small-Community Service Level Facilities

Community Halls—Cooper’s Green, Chaster House, Frank West, Eric Cardinal Hall, Grantham’s Hall, Pender Harbour Ranger Station

The SCRCD also manages a number of community halls. (Also forming part of the service-delivery infrastructure are other facilities not owned by the SCRCD, such as private community halls, facilities, and spaces.) Currently, the SCRCD halls are functioning at only about 30% capacity. The Master Plan Survey confirmed that the public is quite keen on using local halls (second highest participation) for recreation activities such as children’s after-school programs and neighbourhood gatherings.

These halls are rented to private individuals and organizations on an hourly basis at a very reasonable rate. The main tenants of these halls are non-profit organizations.

When the regional recreation centres—the Sechelt Arena and the Gibsons and Area Community Centre—first opened, the SCRCD moved all potentially “regional” programming into these centres. These regional complexes are very popular, so we can conclude that the public supported this transfer of specific programs. And so with neighbourhood SCRCD halls, it would be logical to shift the programs that have a regional rather than a local clientele to the regional facilities. This would result in better use of the regional facilities, reduce parking in neighbourhoods (whose main users would ideally be within walking distance), and clear valuable program time at community halls for more neighbourhood-focused programming. (It should be noted that some current hall programming *is* neighbourhood-focused and should remain in these venues.)

Neighbourhood programming is most effective when local residents—the potential consumers—determine the specific programs. As such, it is necessary to engage these people so this process can be set in motion. The creation of local “program committees,” either free-standing or tied to other community groups, would encourage the neighbourhoods to become relatively self-sufficient when it comes to creating and implementing recreation programs. Program fees would then have to cover only direct costs. The role of the SCRCD would be to maintain the SCRCD halls and give guidance and advice with programming.

It would appear that the halls are all in reasonable condition. However, a full and complete building assessment for all the SCRCD halls and an associated long-term maintenance program needs to be performed.

4 Facility Accessibility

The community indicated, through focus groups, that although most buildings were built to be accessible, people with mobility challenges still dealt with significant barriers that limited their participation. These barriers include the opening of change-room doors, heavy front



doors, etc.. The SCRCD is aware of these challenges and has begun to implement facility accessible building alterations at the SAC.

There are organizations that provide facility audits with building-accessibility tools. To ensure that all citizens can participate in leisure activities, it is very important that all public buildings are made as accessible as possible.



5 Recommendations

16. Collaborate to develop tools that result in annual reports and/or work plans (which contain measurable objectives) from each of the contract providers at SCRD facilities.
17. Initiate community-outreach programs/community-development plans in collaboration with other local governments and other partners. The purpose of this is to build the profile and the attendance for all indoor-recreation facilities and the associated programs of each.
18. Proceed in a timely fashion with the capital expenditure programs as noted in the capital plan for the GACC and the Sechelt Aquatic Centre.
19. Assign sufficient resources to program the two ice rinks for five years. Set measurable outcomes that are reviewed annually.
 - At the conclusion of a five-year period, review the operations of the two arenas before determining the future of the Sechelt Arena.
 - At the conclusion of the proposed ice-rink operations trial, consider calling for expressions of interest to operate the second-floor lounge at the Sechelt Arena as a commercial operation.
 - Review the ice-allocation policy in consultation with ice users and prepare amendments conducive to creating additional ice usage while maintaining the local service focus.
20. Maintain the Sechelt Arena so that it's safe and functional, and do this through minimal and prudent capital works over the next five years.
21. Proceed in a timely fashion with a minimal capital maintenance expenditure program for the Gibsons Pool sufficient to maintain the building.
22. Assign sufficient resources to increase attendance/participation at the Gibsons Pool. Set measurable outcomes that are reviewed annually and are considered in the context of the activities at the other two pools on the coast.
23. Program community-halls consistent with the Master Plan community building philosophy.
24. Revise the SCRD hall-rental policy to give preference to neighbourhood groups that are willing to develop neighbourhood recreation programs.
25. Develop a full building assessment of all SCRD halls. Plan for renovation, replacement, and decommissioning or ongoing maintenance, with an associated 10-year program where applicable.
26. Complete a full accessibility audit of all public recreation buildings, and initiate alterations in a planned and timely manner.



Chapter 6: Recreation Programs and Special Events

This chapter presents the primary strategies to strengthen recreation programs and special events that are planned, promoted, and delivered at SCRD facilities. These strategies are based on the degree to which recreation needs are being met in the SCRD (Chapter 3), the gap to meet recommended service levels (Chapter 2), and what SCRD staff confirm as the current service levels. Strategies are categorized by those related to the three service levels, those that are interest based and age based, and those that are associated with overall program design. Complementing SCRD's role are other not-for-profit and private service-providers that provide a wide range of recreation programs (such as health and wellness, fitness, and martial arts programs) and special events, and this is taken into account as well.

1 Strategies Based on Service Levels

Chapter 2 presented the rationale for and characteristics of a system of delivering services at three service levels.

Shifting to an approach based on three service levels is in response to the Master Plan process. It was discovered that the community values the current range of recreation opportunities but also wants more opportunities close to home. And to meet this desire doesn't necessarily mean that the SCRD has to directly provide these opportunities. Instead it means that the role of the SCRD's Recreation Division should include *outreach and facilitation* (as described in Chapter 1; see the discussion of the facilitator role). Staff become focused on addressing the specific needs, barriers, and assets within each catchment area (e.g. the North Central area and the South area) and become advocates in each. They collaborate with other groups, contribute to the community building, and engage people within their geographic area. As a result, recreation opportunities should be driven by the specific needs of the community. They should also follow the principle that services be equitable, that is, similar in scope and effort but not necessarily the same.

Small-community service level

To align small communities with this service level requires SCRD to adjust its focus, to include the following:

- Facilitate general recreation opportunities with school staff, church staff, families, and the SIGD to respond to the needs of those who find it difficult to travel, such as families with children, youth, and seniors.
- Review the use of community halls, and work with community schools, churches, and other organizations. Secure these spaces (halls, schools, churches, etc.) for local



programs and for neighbourhood meetings that would result in local recreation opportunities.

- Facilitate annual small-community meetings to identify specific gaps, and work with local service providers, neighbourhood-program committees, and other volunteers to address those gaps.
- Become a resource to local groups: assist with program design, outdoor programs (interpretive programs, safety programs), volunteer development, marketing, and registration services.
- Review the grants program and identify the feasibility of small grants to support sustainable and local recreation opportunities and for reaching the underserved.

There would also be adjustments made according to specific communities. These tasks are based on the recommended service level and the community's needs, satisfaction levels, and priorities:²²

- In the Egmont/Pender Harbour community (Area A), continue to provide or facilitate general recreation activities, indoor fitness and sports, summer outdoor programs for all ages, walking groups, day camps, arts and crafts, health and wellness activities, and activities for youth.
- In Halfmoon Bay (Area B), facilitate activities for preschool children and for youth.
- In Roberts Creek (Area D), facilitate activities for school-aged children and youth.
- In Elphinstone (Area E), facilitate activities for youth.
- In West Howe Sound (Area F), facilitate family programs as well as activities for preschool children, school-aged children, and youth.

Medium-catchment-area service level

To align medium-catchment areas (the North Central and South areas) with this service level requires these specific actions:

- Continue to offer the current suite of programs such as aquatics, skating, fitness, health and wellness programs, day camps, and community events.
- Increase efforts to promote and host activities at facilities in the North Central and East communities (at Sechelt Aquatic Centre and Gibsons and Area Community Centre in particular) to strengthen the facilities' function as hubs for community events, gatherings, programs, and meetings.

22. 2011 Master Plan Survey, pages 65 and 84.



- Work with School District #46 and other partners to provide more indoor-sports programs in school gymnasiums for children, youth, and adults and for people with special needs in the evenings and weekends.
- Continue to work with youth and other local service providers on youth opportunities in the youth centres located in North Central and South catchment areas.

Regional service level

To align the region with this service level requires these specific actions:

- Support regional-scale special events such the Sunshine Coast Art Crawl and family events such as events held on pro-d days. Schedule them year round. (See the section “Special Events” further on in the chapter for additional details.)
- Provide, facilitate, and/or support hiking, biking, and trail excursions, skill development (such as bike lessons, snowshoeing lessons), and outdoor-education programs. There are many groups or clubs that offer these types of services; however, people who are not currently linked to these groups or people new to the area are not aware of these programs. The SCRCD could play an important role in promoting these activities in a coordinated and complementary manner. More details on these types of programs are presented in the next section.

2 Strategies Based on Interests

General trends in recreation programming in Canada highlight the popularity of fitness, yoga, Pilates, Zumba, health and wellness, arts and cultural learning, and personal growth activities. “Programming” extends beyond the program itself to also include components such as child care, transportation, social interaction, and outdoor exploration.²³ These trends are relevant to the Sunshine Coast as well. In the SCRCD, the highest levels of participation were in public swimming sessions and swimming lessons; child-care, parenting, family, or preschool programs; and working out at a fitness centre, gym, or weight room in a public facility or taking fitness classes such as Pilates, Nia, etc.²⁴ When probed about priorities for the future, respondents mentioned wanting health and wellness and fitness classes in more locations, as well as nature-based programs.

The Division currently provides a suite of indoor- and outdoor-recreation activities and opportunities. The following outlines the current situation and makes recommendations relating to the core activities and opportunities—the activities and opportunities that support healthy and active residents and visitors to the Sunshine Coast.

23. See Appendix I.

24. 2011 Master Plan Survey.



Outdoor-recreation programs

The community values its outdoor recreation highly. Of those who wanted more recreation programs, the priority was for more *outdoor* programs. Most outdoor recreation is informal and not provided through programs, but people did provide suggestions. These included programs that educate participants on nature appreciation, safety, etiquette, being prepared, having the right equipment and clothing, and managing pets.

Overall, day camps were highly rated by community members. However, SCRD staff report the number of day camps has decreased and was centralized due to budget adjustments. Therefore this rating likely reflects a lack of awareness of this change in service. However, the community-specific data expresses a need for more summer activities (e.g., residents in Egmont/Pender Harbour and Halfmoon Bay rated day camps among the programs with the lowest satisfaction ratings), and the high value the community places on the outdoors justify an investment in day camps. The reduction in the number of day camps located in the smaller communities means the community must travel or not participate.

Activities that provide significant health benefits and revenue

Regular physical activity has significant and wide-ranging benefits.²⁵ These include increased life expectancy, reduced risk of disease, a non-medical alternative to drug therapies (therefore reducing drugs' side effects), healthy weight, stress reduction, and overall improved quality of life.

Parks and recreation departments recognize their pivotal role in facilitating healthy and active individuals. Progressive recreation departments focus on delivering health and wellness strategy that attract and sustain a larger customer base while also serving as sources for significant revenue. The process begins with working closely with private fitness providers to clarify market segments and, on that basis, focusing public resources on specific customers, geographic areas, strategies to remove barriers, and the “community fitness” experience—while avoiding duplication.

Health and Wellness Strategy

SCRD facilities must do the following and continue to do the following if they are to be successful:

- Appeal to non-private-sector clients (i.e., those who want a more informal and supportive atmosphere).

25. Public Health Agency of Canada, www.publichealth.gc.ca, April 2012.



- Direct current clients to less busy times and locations through pricing incentives, program design, and making specialty services such as fitness consultations available only at a certain time/location, etc.
- Package and promote in a sophisticated manner. (A good outside example is the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, whose Playcard, website, and posters are all complementary and deliver the same powerful messaging.)
- Be accessible 16 hours per day for the benefit of working parents, shift workers, and those with multiple jobs.
- Offer free programming opportunities for children along with child care at appropriate times.
- Offer a multitude of experiences, for example, lane swimming any time, weight room instructors, orientation programs, personal trainers (at a cost), access to most or all fitness classes, outdoor boot camps and fitness classes, running programs, etc.
- Provide 12-month access.
- Have a pricing strategy that encourages long-term commitment, for example, four quarters for the price of three, or a flexible program that allows for holiday extensions.
- Have uniformed staff, and a front desk that provides excellent support and customer service, for example, greeting everyone (ideally by name, which appears on the computer screen as people scan in).
- Provide exceptionally clean facilities (cleaned before every class).
- Offer well-maintained equipment (remove broken equipment from the floor and get it fixed).
- Create partnerships with community employers for employee-fitness programs.
- Offer joint memberships or membership privileges to not-for-profit clubs/organizations.

The merit of a health and wellness promotion strategy was strongly confirmed by the 2011 Master Plan Survey. Residents prefer the type of activities that provide significant health benefits—of sufficient intensity and duration and of a frequency of three times a week or more—and such a package would align with this preference as well as a missed opportunity to optimize attendance:

- Outdoor activities were the most popular of all the activities that were asked about. The more vigorous types that people participate in are dog walking (in 74% of households with dogs, someone walks the dog three times a week or more); running, jogging, walking, or hiking (70%); biking (46%); and field sports (44%). Popular indoor activities include working out at a fitness centre, gym, or weight room, and taking a fitness class (47%) and public swimming and taking lessons (23%).



- A review of the attendance data for SCRD facilities revealed the need to increase attendance at the various buildings. Some facilities close during periods when there are no bookings. Several strategies were noted in Chapter 5 to deal with pressing matters at the Gibsons Pool, Sechelt Arena, and Pender Harbour Aquatic and Fitness Centre.

Special Events

Special events provide an important opportunity for people of all ages and from across the entire region to recreate, meet new people, and foster a sense of community.

- The largest proportion of SCRD-facility-user households (64%) and the largest proportion of the total sample (53%) had attended special events between January to December 2010 held in community centres and recreation facilities or in public parks. Special events were amongst the highest ratings for satisfaction (76% were satisfied). When asked about priorities, 69% of respondents said they wanted more community festivals, special events, and outdoor spaces suitable for them.
- In particular, there is a desire for more frequent festivals and special events that are family-oriented, scheduled year round, wheelchair accessible (including better drop-off areas, accessible bathrooms, and plywood over electrical cables), and promoted well in advance.
- Consistent with staff's facilitation role, staff should support the success of special events by monitoring when they are offered and what interest area is being addressed. Where there are overlaps, staff could work with organizers to ensure they complement rather than compete. Staff can also provide advice on how to plan and execute special events including how to address transportation barriers and accessibility issues for those with strollers, scooters, and wheelchairs.

3 Strategies for Younger Participants

Preschool

Approximately one-quarter of Canadian children experience some learning or behaviour difficulty by age 6. Yet if the right programs were in place, we could reduce the prevalence and cost of behavioural and mental health issues. Exacerbating the problem is how the rate of decline accelerates as the child moves to higher grades. Studies have also shown the return on investment for programs is 8:1 for primary school education.²⁶ Children who have access to early-childhood-development assessment, support systems, and a suite of complementary programs do better in school.

26. Hon. M.N. McCain, Dr. F. Mustard, and Dr. S. Shanker, "Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action," Council for Early Child Development, 2007.



The Sunshine Coast is fortunate to have a well-established Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table, with a SCR D staff person as a member. Early-childhood development research, comments expressed in the 2011 Master Plan Survey, and focus-group discussions all support the need for a coordinated approach and having opportunities close to home.

Some of the concerns raised by participants:

- Lack of programs
- Need for more variety (ranging from creative to sports programs)
- High cost
- Inconvenient scheduling of programs for working parents
- Programs not being sensitive to different nap times for different ages
- The lack of a gym in Sechelt for drop-in play time
- Timing of marketing information

Children

Children are up to 40% less active than they were 30 years ago. Two-thirds do not have sufficient activity for optimal growth and development. Sedentary children are showing signs of a predisposition to chronic diseases including adult-onset type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Obesity in children aged 7 to 13 tripled between 1981 and 1996 and continues to increase.

Communities must find a way to re-engage children. If this trend of inactivity continues, the impact on individual health and on the health care system will be disastrous. Parks, recreation, and cultural services have a tremendous role to play in addressing this trend, working with parents to become role models of activity and creating family activities. In particular, everything from creative to sports-related recreation programs provide an important way for children to not only be active, but also develop skills, foster leisure literacy, develop social skills, learn in a fun environment, and be stimulated. (Note that parents/caregivers obviously place a great deal of importance on safety and safe environments for their children.)

One positive aspect is that the smaller communities on the Sunshine Coast rated the use of schools for community programs very highly (Areas A, D, E, and F). In other words, physical spaces close to home are available for children's programs. However, the community did express lower satisfaction ratings for day camps (particularly in Area A and Area B) and for programs and activities specifically for children 7 to 12 years of age (particularly in Area A and Area D). Specific comments relate to a lack of variety, lack of programs for those new to sports, poor timing of programs for working parents, the distance to travel, and programs costs especially considering travel costs.



Youth

Providing recreation opportunities for youth is a proven strategy for minimizing or removing risk factors. Recreation also improves self-esteem, confidence, physical and emotional health, academics, and relationships. And giving youth the responsibility of planning recreation activities and reaching out to other youth helps them develop social and leadership skills (a great asset for future employment and other pursuits in school).

Teenagers say they like to participate in recreation activities for the following reasons: to socialize (with students from other schools), have fun, learn something new, be involved with the community, volunteer, be positioned for future employment, hang out in a safe place (including well-lit outdoor spaces), to have the opportunity to do homework together, and visit communities outside their own. They want to learn to draw, sing, dance, cook and any number of other skills (including learning activities they may have missed as a child), go on field trips, and experience coed activities and a space to call their own. They value unstructured and informal activities as a counterpoint to the structure and demands of school. Spending time with friends is an important part of the experience, but programs of high-enough interest will draw them without their friends. Teens also mentioned the importance of having food as part of the recreation activity.

According to the 2011 Master Plan Survey, a separate youth survey, and focus groups, youth (ages 13 to 18) outside the Gibsons area are not well served: respondents gave the lowest average satisfaction ratings to youth recreation programs and activities, and the spaces for these programs and activities, available at these locations. High satisfaction levels were found in three areas: the town of Gibsons, West Howe Sound (Area F), and Elphinstone area (Area E). These are the three areas closest to the youth centre at Gibsons and Area Community Centre.

Currently in the SCRD, there are a number of initiatives for youth services. Egmont/Pender Harbour (Area A) funds a contract to the Pender Harbour Community School, which includes youth activities. Community schools in Sechelt and Gibsons play similar roles. There is a youth centre at the Gibsons and Area Community Centre. RPSAC recently recommended funding for a youth centre in Sechelt, and a Youth Issues Workshop was hosted by the SCRD in February 2012 to collaboratively position the new centre.

To reach more youth, a multi-pronged approach to youth services is necessary. Outreach to schools and school-based marketing and programming are key because students are a captive audience.

Even if the current general trend is that relatively few youth go to youth centres (and the current participation numbers on the Sunshine Coast reflect this trend), this doesn't diminish the importance of youth centres, as they provide a wide variety of positive experiences and supports.

A wealth of ideas for youth services were generated in the 2011 Master Plan Survey, a separate youth survey, and a youth focus group.



4 Strategies for Program Design

Programs responsive to needs

The Master Plan's community engagement process (survey and focus groups) identified ideas for programming, delivery, and promotion of recreation opportunities for specific geographic areas, age groups, and interest areas. The SCRD should review this information, incorporate it into programming efforts, and share it with other service providers to strengthen services.

- Conduct a detailed review of the current programs being offered and fine-tune the design of programs. This review should be based on the community's feedback that was collected during the Master Plan process, focusing on respondents' concerns on specific programs and on barriers to participation, such as the following:
 - Timing of programs for preschool children (getting them ready in the morning and working around the nap times for different ages), working parents, and working adults
 - Coordinating start and end times with bus schedules
 - Fees

And some of the respondents' desires included the following:

- More public swimming and skating sessions in facilities that don't offer these activities concurrently with other activities
- A greater variety of recreation programs such as socials, bus trips, photography, arts and crafts
- Different program formats, that is, the mix of drop-in, membership, and punch cards
- More summer activities, such as outdoor movie nights and camps

Inclusive recreation

A core principle of most parks and recreation departments is inclusivity—individuals of *all* ages and abilities participate in recreation. Parks and recreation departments must make special effort to remove barriers, use adaptive methods, and make accommodations.

Barriers That Limit or Prevent Participation

Many people (75% of households) on the Sunshine Coast experience barriers that limit or prevent participation; 19% mentioned one barrier and 56% said two or more barriers affected their own or another household member's participation in recreation programs and activities. The top-five barriers mentioned:

1. Inconvenient timing of programs



2. What I/we want to do costs too much
3. Not interested in what's available
4. Inconvenient locations, too far, and/or transportation difficulties
5. Can't commit to a program that runs for several weeks (e.g., eight sessions per program)

Of no surprise is that 60% of households with a total income of \$27,000 or less annually and 33% of those with household incomes between \$27,000 and \$45,000 said “what I/we want to do costs too much.”

There were also geographic differences. Residents of Area A (Egmont/Pender Harbour area) were more likely than residents of other areas to mention “inconvenient locations, too far, and/or transportation difficulties is a barrier” (55%) or the most important barrier (23%). A large percentage of Area B (Halfmoon Bay area) survey respondents also said this is a barrier (35%) and 11% said it was the most important barrier.

All these barriers can be substantially addressed by providing service in accordance with the recommended service levels, being mindful of these barriers when designing activities, and looking for creative ways to keep costs to a minimum.

People with Special Needs

While removing barriers to recreation is important to the general public, we also need to look at barriers experienced by those who have a history of being marginalized due to mental, physical, cognitive, or behavioural special needs. Recreation provides profound and life-changing experiences for these individuals. The benefits include improved health, enhanced skills, muscle development, reduced reliance on drug therapies (and therefore the side effects), a heightened sense of accomplishment, more social connections, and enjoyment.

On the Sunshine Coast, transportation difficulties or issues with physical health, mental health, mobility, or special needs make participation difficult for one in eight households. At the community meetings, specific ways to encourage and sustain participation were discussed. The methods include more adaptive equipment, greater access to smaller pools, more gym time for groups (i.e., support physical fitness in the comfort of a group setting), doors (including emergency doors) that people with physical disabilities can open, flexibility around “rules” that make it difficult for people with special needs to participate, special events that are accessible (e.g., ensuring electrical cords are covered by plywood), wheelchair-accessible parks and washrooms, and sensitivity training for staff, volunteers, and patrons.



Family-centred approach

Families value spending time with their children because they believe this makes them better parents, strengthens family bonds, and builds long-term trust between themselves and their child. Recreation is an effective and healthy way for families to spend time together.

Families on the Sunshine Coast experience significant barriers to recreating as a family. In the focus groups, families echo the general barriers experienced by everyone: being too busy, inconvenient timing of programs, locations that are too far/inconvenient, and transportation barriers.²⁷ And the particular concerns of families, as expressed in the survey and focus groups, include not enough family programs, lack of child care, programs that conflict with their children's nap times, cost of programs and the family rate, limited options close to home, and an absence of family-oriented and year-round special events.

The SCRD's approach to programming makes it difficult for families to recreate together. Family opportunities at SCRD facilities tend to focus on family drop-in skating and public swimming. Most SCRD recreation programs are designed for specific age groups, scheduled as discrete units (programs for adults and children scheduled separately), and located in the facilities based primarily on availability. This approach leaves families having to resolve the logistics of getting to the various locations, to occupy other members of the family who are not in programs offered at the same time, and to reorganize their busy lives to attend a program that is offered in only one time slot.

The ideal approach is to implement a family-centred practice when designing recreation programs. This requires a shift in focus. Programmers must consider the family holistically, keep in mind the barriers families face, and working with families to design these programs.

Tweens

The community did not identify this segment—those between 10 and 12 years of age—as a priority need. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the spending power and influence of tweens on family decisions is substantial. While tweens are often forgotten or lumped into the “children” category, this age group actually tends to reject the products and activities of children for more grown-up and sophisticated options. They want to be treated like young adults. They are savvy shoppers and have a tremendous amount of purchasing power due to a rise in disposable income and increased pampering from parents.

Older adults

Adults between 55 and 70 years of age do not think of themselves as “seniors” and do not feel comfortable going a seniors' facility. This age group is generally healthy, active, and about to retire or retiring (or in some cases, starting a new career). They relate to ability-

27. 2011 Master Plan Survey, page 58.



based descriptions as opposed to descriptions that refer to “seniors’ activities.” This group is highly demanding, typically has access to considerable disposable income, and may in fact remain in the labour force after 65 years of age.

While there is a Seniors Activity Centre in Sechelt to serve a relatively older population there, anecdotal information from the focus groups indicates the population in the Gibsons area is aging, and more older adults and seniors are living in this area.

Recommendations in this plan also address collaborating with older and more frail adults to address their needs.

Flexible format

There has been a shift in demand from formal to informal activities in communities all across Canada. This is due to a general lack of time (and not wanting more time commitments) and the need for flexibility. People’s lives have become more and more complex—work schedules, commuting time, and multiple responsibilities all play a part. As a result, informal activities—activities that people can do alone or with anyone, at any time and at any place—have become highly popular. Drop-in programs and programs with punch cards are good strategies that cater to these needs. Even registered programs are now being compressed (in terms of numbers of sessions) because of this trend.

Dynamics related to the format of programs are especially applicable on the Sunshine Coast, given the travel time between home, work, and places to recreate. Three of the top six barriers to participation have to do with the format of programs, that is, inconvenient timing of programs, inconvenient locations (or too far), and not being able to commit to a program that runs for several weeks.

This explains the high participation rates in informal activities that people can pursue on their own schedule and close to home, for example, running, jogging, walking, hiking, outdoor activities, going to the weight room, dog walking, etc. These informal activities also tend to be low cost or no cost to the participant.



5 Recommendations

Service Levels

27. Deliver the small-communities service level by facilitating spaces for local programs, being a resource to local groups to provide local programs and responding to the specific priorities for small communities identified in the Master Plan.
28. Assign sufficient resources to collaborate with local groups and hosting annual community meetings to fine-tune programs and to be a program-design resource.
29. Deliver the medium-catchment area service level by providing or facilitating opportunities that reflect the general characteristics of this level of service and are typically offered in community centre/secondary school type facilities and by responding to the specific community priorities identified in the Master Plan.
30. Deliver the regional-catchment area service level by providing, facilitating or assisting with opportunities that reflect the general characteristics of this level of service and provide benefit to residents throughout the region, and by responding to the specific regional priorities identified in the Master Plan.

Interest Areas

31. Promote and support more outdoor recreation.
32. Create a health and wellness strategy to promote the health benefits of those indoor and outdoor activities that the community already does more than three times a week (e.g., dog walking, running, jogging, walking, hiking, biking, and field sports), motivate more frequent activity or those who are inactive and to integrate the numerous ways to make health and wellness more convenient and accessible.
33. Facilitate and promote more special events in all areas throughout the year, and in particular family-oriented events in regional facilities and parks, and ensure events accommodate those with mobility challenges.

Age-Specific

34. Facilitate more preschool programs in small communities where there is a need, and when designing programs, consider the community's feedback identified in the Master Plan.
35. Provide or facilitate, in collaboration with community agencies, a greater number and variety of children's programs, coordinated promotion and ways to address the barriers.
36. Continue to engage appropriate and connected service providers, decision makers, and youth (from different communities and of different ages and perspectives) to fund, plan, deliver, and promote youth opportunities within youth centres in Sechelt (proposed) and Gibsons, in school and other suitable locations.



Program Design

37. In the short term, refer to the 2011 Master Plan Survey and focus-group notes for specific program ideas (from a variety of communities, age groups, and perspectives), ideas for promoting and delivering programs and ways to resolve stated programming concerns and barriers to participation.
38. Work with people with special needs and service providers including local governments (who have trusted relationships with those with special needs) to identify adaptive equipment, adjust rules that impact those with special needs and design programs and venues to be inclusive.
39. Use a family-centred approach when designing programs.
40. Design activities and opportunities specifically for tweens.
41. Monitor the needs of the population over 55 years of age (including those over 70) to determine where there is a lack of activities and opportunities for this age group and provide age-specific opportunities.
42. Plan and promote programs for older adults (ages 55 to 70) based on different levels of ability and avoid marketing this group as “seniors.”
43. Continue to provide sensitivity training for staff and volunteers, and create strategies for patrons to embrace respect to all users.
44. Incorporate more flexibility in activities and opportunities, e.g., drop-in spaces in registered programs, punch-card payments, and compressed sessions.



Chapter 7: Volunteer Resources Plan

Volunteers, those who work without the expectation of pay or other kinds of tangible gain, play a critical role in the vitality and health of communities. Their roles range from board and committee members, advocates for community issues, fundraisers, and providers of direct services. According to the 2010 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, more than 13.3 million people, or 47% of the population, volunteered their time through a group or organization.

The parks and recreation movement has been built on the efforts of volunteers, and in most communities, volunteer-driven organizations provide more recreation opportunities than do staff-driven operations. These volunteer organizations primarily provide sports, cultural, and outdoor-recreation activities and services.

The face of volunteerism is changing. The following are some trends, statistics, and basic concepts. (Note that these are trends from across Canada as revealed in a national report from 2010; they may not necessarily reflect volunteering trends in the Sunshine Coast specifically.)²⁸

- The number of volunteers is virtually unchanged between 2010 and 2007.
- The amount of time volunteers are prepared to offer is an average of 156 hours and is relatively unchanged from 2007.
- Volunteer roles are shifting from ongoing roles or long-term projects to “short hits” of effort.
- They have well developed skills to contribute.
- 10% of those who volunteer are “super-volunteers” and do three-quarters of all volunteer work. Super-volunteers tend to be adults, with a high level of education (and a great deal of wisdom), and often come from a religious context.
- Older adults volunteer at a lower rate than any other age group. However, when they do volunteer they provide more time than other age groups.
- Young people or those with children volunteer at a higher rate than other age groups. Young people’s interests, style, and attitude need to be considered when designing volunteering opportunities.
- People with disabilities experience barriers to finding satisfying volunteer opportunities. Volunteers add a tremendous value to the quality of life of those with special needs.
- Volunteers do think about whether the time commitment is worth it, if their contribution makes a difference, and what the personal rewards are.

28. Statistics Canada, 2010 Survey “Giving, Volunteering and Participating.”



- Experiences need to be designed to fit volunteers—not the other way around.
- Learning how to recruit, manage, incorporate, train, support, communicate with, and harness this resource is crucial.

Volunteering is valuable not only because of its contribution to communities but also because of the personal benefits experienced by the individual. The volunteer can develop new skills, gain work experience, meet new people, develop confidence, and influence the way in which their community evolves.

The SCRCD does recognize and rely on volunteers for both advice and direct services. The Sunshine Coast has a citizenry that has accumulated numerous skills and experiences that can improve (and are improving) the delivery of parks and recreation services. But because volunteerism in general is on the decline, it is essential that parks and recreation departments place a greater emphasis on all aspects of volunteer development and support. Departments must support the current volunteer efforts and encourage more of these need meeting and cost-efficient supports to leisure development.

This Master Plan has identified a number of areas where volunteers are capable of extending the leisure services to residents. These opportunities are sometimes occurring naturally.

A few volunteer groups currently volunteering for the SCRCD report that they are healthy and functioning well. Most groups that were interviewed were interested in helping to increase recreation activities, but they did desire a more functional working relationship with the SCRCD.

1 Building a Larger Volunteer Corps

There are a number of activities that individual volunteers can provide at both indoor- and outdoor-leisure venues. The SCRCD does have an organized work environment and labour force, and, as such, volunteers should complement the work of staff or perform work that is outside the responsibility of the SCRCD's organized staff. These services can enrich the experience of patrons—for example, leisure buddies, who enable persons with special needs to enjoy recreation activities, or volunteer workers at youth and seniors' services.

Local staff can work with the Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre to support the recruitment of these new volunteer crews. This centre—

- helps people find volunteer work,
- helps organizations find volunteers,
- promotes volunteering as a key benefit to the community, and
- works with agencies to create, improve, and maintain effective volunteer programs.



2 Supporting Groups That Currently Volunteer with the SCR D

As for the current system of volunteer groups, the SCR D would benefit from reviewing all of its volunteer policies. Volunteer-friendly practices and procedures can enhance volunteer services and remove any possible barriers that restrict volunteer involvement. Furthermore, the SCR D should look at all ways to maximize these efforts. As examples, many departments provide tools and materials to volunteer trail builders, other departments provide registration services to sports groups (whose organizers are volunteers), etc.

The primary challenge is the lack of close and ongoing communication between the SCR D staff and the individual groups, and lack of communication between these groups. Some groups did report that staff were easy to contact, but quite a number of other groups suggested this could and should be improved.

Most volunteer groups had not considered the possibility that SCR D resources could be accessed to make some of their tasks easier.

Groups also indicated that they would like to work more closely together to deal with some of the parks and recreation issues. For example, trail users are interested in building and extending the trail system (as discussed in Chapter 4), and users of the Gibsons and Sechelt arenas are interested in building participation in both arenas to ensure their long-term viability (Chapter 5).

3 Building Neighbourhood Organizations

In order to extend neighbourhood-focused recreation programming, Chapter 5 recommended the establishment of neighbourhood-based organizations, which could also take over the operations of aspects of community halls. Some of these organizations may already exist and simply require encouragement. In other neighbourhoods, it may be necessary to build new volunteer organizations.

Building or supporting these organizations will also require that the SCR D support the operation of these buildings, both in the initial stages and over the long term.

These efforts do require staff effort and will result in the addition of high-quality local programming that will make better use of these facilities and in a very cost-efficient manner.

4 Governance and Advice

A number of volunteers currently act in various capacities to provide direction and/or advice to the parks and recreation functions of the SCR D.

The SCR D is well served by the Parks and Recreation Services Advisory Committee (RPSAC). This group is currently made up of a number of highly skilled volunteers, who bring their expertise, community awareness, and commitment to the table to provide advice the SCR D on parks and recreation-related matters. This is an invaluable function. It is



consistent with this Master Plan's themes of partnership and development of neighbourhoods and communities. This Master Plan also encourages closer ties with existing community groups and recreation groups and suggests that the makeup and mandate of RPSAC should reflect this. The SCRD Board has earmarked an overall review of the regional recreation governance model for 2015 of which RPSAC will be part of.

The SCRD also enjoys the support of a number of community groups who meet regularly and provide input regarding specific functions associated with the delivery of parks and recreation services. These groups are mostly from the local indoor- and outdoor-sports community and include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Arena-sports groups:** adult hockey, women's hockey, roller girls, minor hockey, figure skating, Pacific Blades speed skating
- **Sports-field users:** youth soccer, minor softball, ultimate, slo-pitch, etc.
- Aquatic users: swim clubs

These groups attend facility-allocation meetings annually. They have expressed interest in becoming more involved in the consultation process. They realize that they play a role in the "success" of the various facilities that they utilize and they have offered to pay a stronger role in the facility operations. For example, the ice users and sports-field users would like to see an annual working session attended by all sport leaders and staff to plan and coordinate all the activities that the groups of ice users and sports-field users provide. And the sports-field users would also like to see resolved the inefficient system of booking fields, which was discussed in Chapter 4. (Fields on the coast are currently managed by three different organizations.)

It became apparent through the focus groups that other than annual meetings with staff the community sport groups did not feel as if they are part of the overall service delivery system but rather they focus only on their individual sport operations.

The youth-oriented arena users sometimes come together in pre-meetings without staff and then present proposals at the formal meetings. These proposals are integrated with requests made by other facility users.

The SCRD has gathered other advisory groups for specific services such as the Pender Harbour Fitness Aquatic and Fitness Centre.

The delivery of leisure services should be seen by all as more of a shared partnership. The sports community provides a significant number of recreation opportunities for the citizens of the coast. They are also the major facility users. The sports groups are not seeing increasing memberships on the whole and joint planning and the sharing of best practices should help build participation.



The delivery of leisure services should be seen by all as a shared partnership. The resources of the SCRDP could help build these volunteer organizations who are so important to the overall parks and recreation delivery system. As well, the SCRDP staff could support the establishment of new community organizations where gaps appear in services.



5 Recommendations

Volunteerism

45. Develop a vision, policy, and set of strategies pertaining to SCRD volunteers based on current needs, volunteer trends, and liability concerns and future directions as outlined in the Master Plan, and continue to enhance the volunteer appreciation program.
46. Review all policies and practices to ensure that they enrich and support community-group services and development.
47. Build a new volunteer corps by working with Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre to leverage the centre's marketing efforts.
48. Build and facilitate stronger working relationships with groups who provide organized recreation services, and facilitate communication between volunteer groups and the SCRD, and among volunteer groups themselves.
49. Structure annual meetings with community sports groups to include all of the government service providers. Concerns and solutions can then be addressed in an integrated way, for example, a sports field users meeting with the SCRD, Gibsons, Sechelt, SIGD, and School District #46.
50. Expand the parks and trails volunteer program, consider ways to do this efficiently, and increase support for volunteers working on trail development and trail/environmental stewardship.
51. Pursue "Adopt a Park" and "Adopt a Trail" programs.
52. In consultation with community sport groups consider ways to offer registration services to sports groups if so desired on a cost recovery basis.
53. Re-examine the role of RPSAC as part of the regional recreation governance review earmarked for 2015.



Chapter 8: Support Strategies

Implementing the Master Plan requires that the parks and recreation divisions focus their energies in four main areas:

- Policies and programs
- Marketing and communications
- Sponsorship and grants
- Partnerships and collaboration

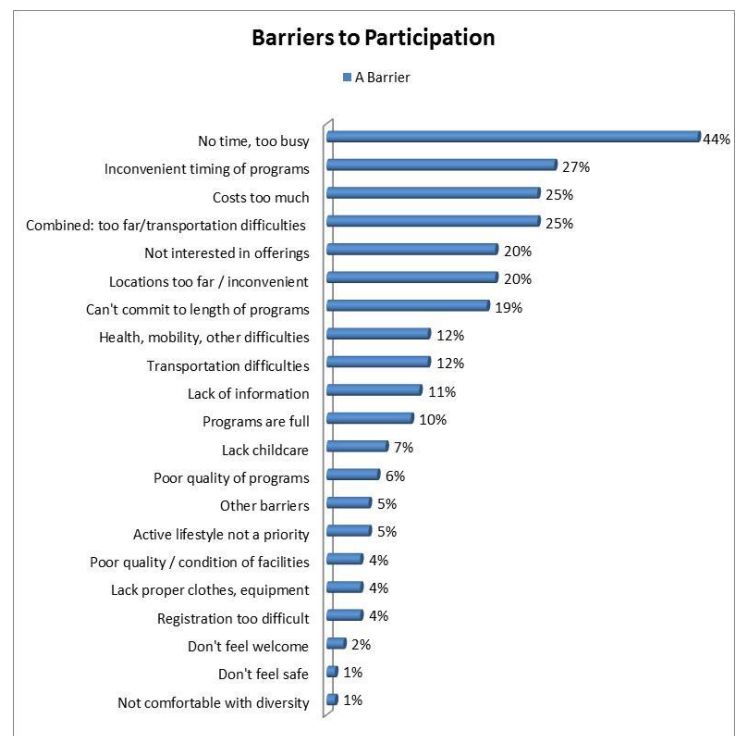
1 Policies and Programs

Fees and charges policy

Policies on fees and charges includes the rationale for fees and for subsidies for admissions, programs, and bookings (e.g., youth pay 25% of admission costs while adults pay 125%; non-profit youth groups pay 50% of the base rental rate while commercial groups pay 125%).

The SCRD has a policy for fees and charges, and the fees charged for recreation programs and admissions appear to be the primary way to generate revenue. This has been prohibitive in a number of ways. Best-practices research revealed that the SCRD's admission fees are the highest of the admission fees of other comparable regional districts.²⁹ The 2011 Master Plan Survey found that cost was a barrier for 25% of all respondents, for 60% of households with a total annual income of \$27,000 or less, and for 33% of households with an income between \$27,000 and \$45,000.

The current approach is not conducive to an optimum level of participation and is constraining the Department's financial position. It is a delicate balance to identify the ideal fee that both meets the net-budget targets and encourages participation.



29. 2012 SCRD Recreation Service Review (in progress)



There are serious consequences, however, when there is a large segment of people who aren't participating in programs or admissions because of the cost: revenues are not as high as they could be, programs get cancelled due to insufficient registrants (which further undermines participants from committing again), some facilities are left feeling empty, and segments of the community miss out on health benefits.

Most of the costs in the various facilities are fixed, the participation rates on the coast are moderate, the facilities all have significant additional capacity, and the assets of the facilities represent significant capital investments. Therefore, all efforts should be made to build participation rates and associated revenues—primarily by reducing fees and charges.

By also focusing more attention on the facilitation role and offering grants (versus shouldering the cost of providing programs), on other strategies to generate revenue (e.g., a health and wellness program, on charging groups for registration services, and on setting appropriate rentals rates in fields and halls), the financial position of the Divisions will improve.

The Leisure Access Scholarship program (financial assistance)

A core principle of public recreation is inclusivity—to purposefully reach people with low incomes in recreation. Especially for this segment of the community, feeling part of the community, being able to learn something new, and feeling a sense of accomplishment and joy, take on even greater significance. In addition, many who have regularly participated in recreation, go on to be involved in the community in other ways because of the skills, self-confidence, and sense of belonging that was nurtured through positive recreation experiences.

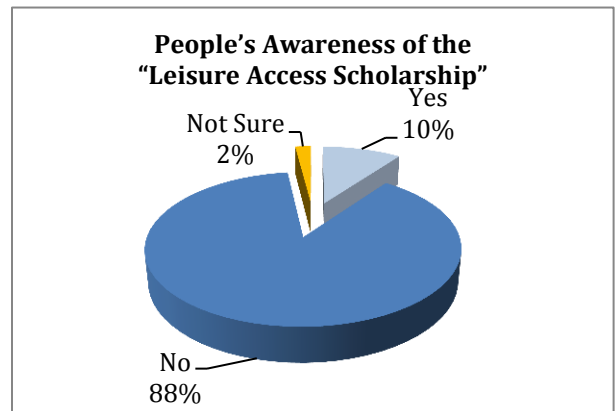
Most parks and recreation departments embrace this principle and have a variety of strategies to make services accessible. They include free or no-cost programs, outdoor venues so that people can easily pursue informal activities on their own, and financial assistance for those who have limited financial resources. These options have little or no financial impact. For example, there is no additional cost associated with adding more participants to a public swim or public skate. Programs that have sufficient numbers of participants to cover program costs aren't impacted by adding non-paying customers. Another strategy is to charge a slightly higher registration fee to offset the cost of providing a free spot. Trails and parks are free to use.

A more evolved way of embracing the principle of inclusivity is to view financial assistance as an investment in the health of the community as a whole. When the whole community is healthy and barrier-free then everyone benefits. This view is what distinguishes the public sector from the private sector. The shift means going beyond the strategies noted above to also provide access to programs and opportunities that reflect the person's interests and not restricting the activities to those who do not have a net cost associated.



In addition to the activities that are provided, it is also important to have a simple and respectful application process. Otherwise the application process itself will prevent people from applying; that is, departments need to be mindful that sharing personal information (due to a lack of trust with authority), mental health, and literacy are barriers to people applying.

In Pender Harbour, there is the Pender Harbour Scholarship program for pool activities. The SCRDR has a financial assistance program called the “Leisure Access Scholarship” program (LAS). The LAS provides a \$200 discount per person per year. It can be used to purchase memberships or programs. Sunshine Coast residents living on a low income or with a disability must make an application or go through one of the referral agencies. The scholarship is advertised in the *Recreation Guide* and on the website and is also well known by a number of agencies who refer people to the program. These are the Ministry of Housing and Social



Development, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, Sunshine Coast Community Living Society, the SIGD Vancouver Coastal Health, Mental Health and Addictions Services, School District #46, and the Salvation Army.

The need for this program is supported by data. While the Sunshine Coast has a lower prevalence of low-income families than BC as a whole (compare 7.6% in the SCRDR with 13.3% for the BC population), Food Bank statistics indicate that visits have risen 39% in one year to 12,146.³⁰

Unfortunately, the number of people who are aware of the program is at 10%, and this did not differ among income levels. The geographic areas with the lowest levels of awareness were Egmont/Pender Harbour (Area A) (4%), Halfmoon Bay (Area B) (6%), and Gibsons (10%). (It should be noted that Egmont/Pender Harbour does not contribute to the program at this time, but they do contribute to the Pender Harbour scholarship program for Pender Pool.)

The focus groups noted there was a need to have the program accessible to all Sunshine Coast residents and for all regional facilities. This means finding a mechanism to enable cross over between Pender Harbour residents getting financial assistance for accessing other SCRDR facilities and program and visa versa. The focus groups also mentioned that the name does not reflect the intent of the program and did suggest a name change.

30. *Vital Signs*, 2010 data.



In terms of other methods for removing financial barriers, the focus group consisting of service providers suggested other less formal or intrusive ways of providing leisure opportunities to those in need. One idea was getting the RCMP to hand out recreation passes to youth who they know would benefit.

2 Marketing and Communication

Marketing

Marketing is a process. Marketing of parks and recreation involves identifying the community's recreation needs, shaping the services (in response to those needs) to deliver real benefits to the community, making the community aware of what parks and recreation offers, and motivating the community to participate.

Success, for a service-oriented organization, means that its resources are used in a way that meets the community's needs. Successful marketing supports this happening over the long term. Successful marketing relies on reliable data that minimizes uncertainty and trial and error. Done well, marketing improves an organization's image—it motivates the organization to provide high-quality services, and the benefits and accomplishments of an organization become well known.

It is recommended that the SCRCD focus its marketing activities on supporting the marketing efforts of other service providers. By doing so, the community as a whole will be better served. The key tasks:

1. Share Master Plan data with other service providers and local governments.
 - The 2011 Master Plan Survey confirmed people on the Sunshine Coast access a variety of leisure opportunities including those not provided by the SCRCD.
 - The actual Master Plan data (the survey, the focus-group notes, the plan itself) would be highly valuable to other service providers. It would help them with their business decisions and the design of their programs. Therefore, the SCRCD should share this information to support the success of other service providers, and host a series of meetings. At these meetings, the SCRCD could also work with these other providers to strategize how to address service gaps and overlaps and identify which service provider is ideally suited to implement those strategies. These meetings could evolve to an annual meeting. This is consistent with the facilitator role for the SCRCD, and also fulfills a strong desire expressed across a number of focus groups for service providers to work together.
2. Offer registration and booking services and internet links to other service providers (i.e., SD 46 and the other local governments).



- This could be structured as a fee for service, which would be easy to implement since SCRD uses the software Active Network, which can track the number of transactions. SCRD's contract with Active Network is based on the number of transactions, which would increase as more service providers access this service. However, SCRD would need to customize the database to differentiate between service providers. It would need to define a procedure for transferring revenue and for providing reports.
- This would also be consistent with the SCRD playing a facilitator role. It allows other service providers to focus on designing and offering services by taking a sophisticated business process off their shoulders. Ideally, by registering and booking the programs and rentals of all key service providers, the department could report on registrations, bookings, customer attributes, and financial aspects across all key service providers (i.e., the entire service-delivery system). In other words, it would provide a holistic view of the entire service-delivery system, and help with the development of effective strategies in the future.

Marketing and Communication Plan

The Master Plan provides a solid foundation for the next step, which is to develop a marketing and communication plan. The SCRD is well positioned to move forward in this area for the following reasons:

- The Master Plan provides a foundation of rigorous and comprehensive data on SCRD communities: on key market segments, needs, who is well served and who is not, priorities, usage, satisfactions levels, barriers, level of awareness, and insight into how services and facilities could be improved. (Staff need to refer to the 2011 Master Plan Survey and focus-group notes for specific program ideas, but they will have to continue to engage community members (from a variety of communities, ages, and perspectives) to collect more data and use this to design, deliver, and evaluate activities and opportunities.)
- The Master Plan links its vision and four goals for parks and recreation with specific activities and opportunities to achieve the vision and goals.
- The SCRD uses Active Network, a recreation software that tracks standard registration, booking, and financial and customer data. (However, staff members need to create a process to clean up the data and identify a person to oversee data integrity.)

A marketing and communication plan must contain the following:

- A process to track and monitor the needs, preferences, and attributes of customers and non-users through Active Network, census information, surveys, feedback forms, and focus groups



- A list of key data-reports, and a process to report on what was learned and integrate learnings/adjust services
- The specific type of information that different segments would need in order to participate (ranging from the general information to motivational messages)
- Marketing messages that resonate with each target market (including specific promotional recommendations in Chapter 6 related to health and wellness)
- A suite of the most-effective communication tools
- Ways to generate customer loyalty

As mentioned above, part of developing the marketing and communication plan is to define a consistent set of marketing messages. Given the region's tremendous outdoor and indoor assets, one of SCRD's key messages would be that the Sunshine Coast is an outstanding venue for outdoor recreation and sports, including mountain-biking and road-bike events, ice hockey, and dry floor events. In the short term, the SCRD could partner with the Sunshine Coast Tourism Association and discuss promotion strategies related to the outdoors.

Communication

The need for improvements to communication was emphasized by participants of the survey and focus groups. Eleven percent (11%) said that the lack information is a barrier to their participation, and 15% said they don't feel well informed about indoor and outdoor recreation. While the percentages do not appear to be significant, it is a critical success factor for getting people to participate in activities and opportunities. Therefore, this section pays attention to the strengths and opportunities of SCRD's communication practices.

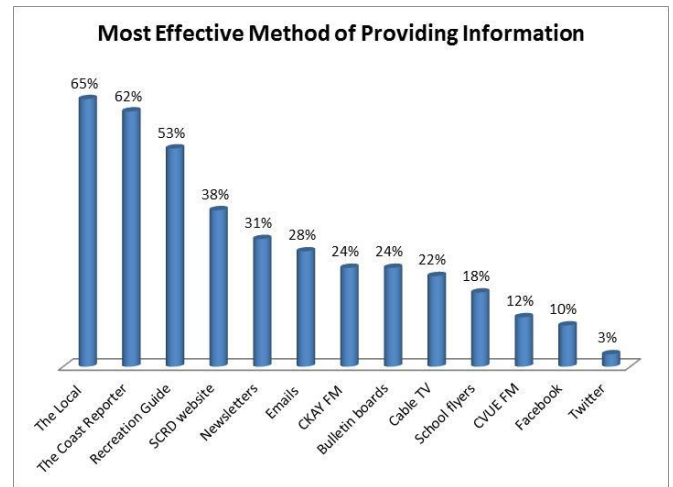
Communicating with Sunshine Coast Residents

Researching the most-effective method of providing information to Sunshine Coast residents makes it apparent that a suite of communication tools is required. This kind of information, along with the following findings, must be integrated in the marketing and communications plan:

- One-half to two-thirds of survey respondents said both Sunshine Coast newspapers and the *Recreation Guide* were the most effective ways of providing them with information. The Sunshine Coast Regional District website was effective for two in five, followed by newsletters and email, effective for three in ten.
- One or both local newspapers and the *Recreation Guide* are effective methods for the majority of all demographic groups. The *Recreation Guide* is effective for 40% of 65- to 74-year-olds, 20% of those 75 and older, 49% of those with no children in the home, and 34% of people who don't use SCRD facilities.



- The SCRD website is most effective with younger adults (59%) of 25- to 34-year-olds and 35- to 44-year-olds, households with children (45%), and SCRD facility users (41%).
- School flyers are effective for 34% of those with children, including 49% of those with children up to 6 years, 43% with children 7 to 12 years, and 30% with children 13 to 18 years. Other effective methods of communication for households with children are email (34%), the website (45%), the *Recreation Guide* (61%), and local newspapers.
- Like other particular groups, non-users of SCRD facilities can be reached through the two local newspapers, the *Recreation Guide* (34%), the local radio station CKAY FM 91.7 (34%), and cable TV (30%).



Social Media

In addition to traditional communication tools, many municipalities are broadening their communication techniques to include social media. Social media reaches very different segments and age groups compared with those reached using traditional tools. If used appropriately, social media is a highly effective way to showcase what SCRD is doing (e.g., YouTube videos on the website), to gather public input on new initiatives (e.g., Facebook), and to reach those who appreciate timely hits of current information (e.g., Twitter). Some municipalities have developed social-media policies to protect their image, mitigate risk, ensure the media is being managed and monitored, and make sure it is being used respectfully.

Smartphones

Other progressive communication tools include having information on parks, trails, and recreation opportunities easily accessed via smartphones. Smartphone users represent 40% of the Canadian population according to Internet World Stats. What is also interesting is that males spend more time than females on their smartphones, and that smartphone use cuts across all age groups. Ipsos Reid anticipates that in the near future, virtually all adult Canadians, and to a lesser degree tweens and teens, will use smartphones. Users access a variety of content; talking is secondary. A top app is maps and navigation (52% of users).³¹

Taking all these trends into consideration, it is prudent for the SCRD to have its content (and ideally its core business processes, such as registering for a programs or signing up for a

31. Ipsos, June 2011.



drop-in class) mobile-device friendly. This would significantly improve the access by all age groups (and males who are often more difficult to reach) to up-to-date information on parks, trails, facilities, recreation opportunities, and special events.

One-Stop Shopping

SCRD also need to focus on the community's desire for "one-stop shopping," that is, having similar things conveniently available in one place. In terms of parks and recreation communication tools, this would mean that printed materials, a website, and possibly a mobile app would include all parks and trails (including maps), a list of all leisure activities, and a way to register for programs.

One-stop-shopping was a consistent theme raised at all focus groups. Also part of the "one-stop shopping" experience would be the ability to register and book non-SCRD recreation services as well. The SCRDR's Active Network system could house the data electronically in one place and generate a variety of communication tools with different shelf-lives, for example, *Recreation Guides* (seasonal), newsletters (monthly), web-based (immediate), and customized emails that reflect the customer's interests (immediate).

Highway and Building Signage

Finally, many of the buildings, while well known by users, are effectively "hidden" from part time residents and tourists. As an example, the Gibsons Pool is hidden behind the community curling rink. At least two lit signs on the highway directing visitors to the Gibsons and Sechelt facilities would assist in building attendance. There are a number of private companies that may wish to sponsor the signage if the signs are strategically placed, which would reduce or eliminate the capital costs of installation.

3 Sponsorship and Grants

Sponsorship and grant opportunities were not included in the scope of work for the Master Plan. However, some observations have been included to help to move the plan forward. It was noted that the SCRDR currently provides funding to five community schools including a successful restorative justice program

Meeting budget targets may be a challenge for the SCRDR in the context of a highly demanding community. Therefore, additional sources of revenue and leveraging dollars are important, and some ideas are explored in this section.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a cash or in-kind contribution that a company pays to an organization in return for increased awareness or branding of the company. (Examples of sponsorship are often seen at sports, arts, and entertainment events.) Sponsorship would provide an extra



revenue source to the facilities, and should be considered. It wouldn't be difficult to attract sponsors, given the volume of traffic in the various SCRD recreation facilities. And signs on the main highway identifying the location of and one or more primary events at the Sechelt Aquatic Centre and the two facilities in Gibsons could be a platform for recognition of one or more sponsors.

Developing a sponsorship package requires a unique set of skills. These include identifying what products/opportunities would be suitable for sponsorship and setting a dollar value for them.

Grants

Grants are two pronged. One prong is at a regional level. At this level, funds encourage new programs and services that have a broad regional appeal or are better served by regional coordination. Funds at this level also enable the region to host major special events. Offering grants fosters new ideas, encourages the participation of a wider range of service providers in service delivery, builds community capacity, and creates new linkages and interdependencies across the region.

The second prong is at a smaller, local scale. At this level, funds are available to encourage new programs and services that balance inequities in geographic areas or in segments of the population that experience significant barriers. These funds also help areas where organized services are not possible (areas where there isn't a mechanism to plan or deliver services) nor feasible (because they are too cost prohibitive).

4 Partnerships and Collaborations

A partnership is a relationship where two or more groups that have compatible goals and values formally agree to work together for a common purpose. Partnerships are one of many tools for an organization when it operates under a community-development model. For the SCRD, partners are crucial when it comes to leveraging resources and encouraging the talents, skills, and resources of other service providers to collectively provide parks and recreation opportunities.

The parks and recreation divisions have already established some partnerships—staff sit at several community tables. It is very important for staff to be aware that partnerships are, at heart, a tool for community building. Having this in mind would help in the following cases where partnerships become challenging:

- Partners feeling that their skills and relationships with the community are undervalued by the department staff
- The perception that department staff come to community tables with their agenda already established



- Private businesses who are sponsors and partners feel they are only seen as sponsors, not as collaborators on service delivery

Part of this work requires an external focus. The department needs to raise awareness of its community-development philosophy and the ways in which department can work—with the community and with its partners—to strengthen relationships and extend the reach of services. The indirect benefit will be an improved image and broadened understanding of the value of parks and recreation services.

Culture

The term “recreation” typically includes cultural pursuits; however, this aspect was not part of the Master Plan’s scope of work. Despite that limitation, it is worthwhile to briefly note the importance of the sector and the general ways in which this sector can be supported by the SCRD.

The Sunshine Coast is very fortunate to have a well-established and vibrant arts and cultural community. There are 48 arts and cultural organizations listed on the website of the Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre, and 63 locations listed in the Coast Cultural Alliance’s “Purple Banner” index. Some well-established arts events routinely sell out their venues, such as the Coast Recital Society concerts, which had 1,890 attendees for seven events in 2010/11, and the Festival of the Written Arts, which had a total attendance of 8,588 in 2008, 8,356 in 2009, and 8,717 in 2010. All of this suggests the importance of programs, services, and major special events that support regional goals and deliver benefits to the entire region, as well as the importance of programs and services that address the uniqueness of communities and specific populations.

Much foundation work has been achieved. For example, the Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy was prepared in 2007, and through that process, a cultural scan was completed and a vision and mission was articulated. Some of the key issues:

- The need to integrate diverse communities (the biggest challenge)
- How the SCRD should facilitate the implementation of the Cultural Strategy

Local governments have greatly increased their grants for arts and culture over the years. According to Vital Signs 2011, the SCRD has more than tripled its arts grants in 2011 from 2010, to a total of \$44,350. The District of Sechelt also made a major increase in arts and culture grants this year: \$97,700, up from \$49,300 in 2010. The Town of Gibsons granted \$28,393 to the arts in 2007 and has increased that grant steadily since then, to a total of \$35,888 in 2010 (the totals for 2011 are not yet available).

There are several possibilities for the SCRD to contribute to this sector. The first is to work with the Arts and Culture groups/individuals to integrate arts and cultural opportunities into the three service levels.



The second is to identify strategies to integrate arts and cultural opportunities into the three service levels. A third is to consider providing spaces in SCR D facilities to display and promote local artists.

Joint-use agreement

In most jurisdictions in BC, there is some form of working agreement between the local school board and the local and/or regional government (through the local parks and recreation department). These agreements address community access to school fields and some indoor school amenities, particularly school gyms. In return, the school board usually receives some support for the maintenance of the specific indoor and/or outdoor facility, as well as some access to local community centres or municipal park facilities.

Public access is limited, however, and some of the amenities are in poor condition. The school playing fields, which are seen by the community as an important asset, are almost unplayable and, in fact, dangerous, both for the public and for schoolchildren. The school playing fields can be used in the summer for baseball activities, but they are no longer able to sustain play during the other three seasons. And currently the system for booking school fields is inefficient; groups are required to go to the different jurisdiction that operates the park to book fields.

School District (SD) #46 and the SCR D have what could be described as a “parked” joint-use agreement regarding sharing of facilities. The agreement in place is not active. The two organizations do have a number of working relationships outside of this agreement:

- Duplicate service responsibilities, for example, the maintenance of buildings and playing fields, facility bookings, and community-school activities (which functions differently across geographic areas)
- An agreement relating to Roberts Creek
- An agreement around the shared facility in Pender Harbour
- SCR D funding five community schools and a restorative justice program

There are school gymnasiums in SD #46, and the district has expressed interest in seeing them used more. SD #46 indicated an interest in looking at creative solutions with

The major challenge across BC is that school districts do not have sufficient funds prioritized to support the use of the school’s amenities by the community. Local/regional governments do not believe that they are in a position to pick up these responsibilities, although it is recognized that these facilities should support activities serving the broader population.

Both the SCR D and School District #46 have indicated that they share a desire to increase the fitness and wellness of children, youth in particular, and the community in general. (For example, the school district has been very supportive of the concept of classes



attending learn-to-swim programs during the school day.) There are a number of other parties that share in the vision of a healthier, more active community, including the First Nations, Vancouver Coastal Health, cultural organizations, and a number of private organizations. Perhaps they could become involved as potential partners.

Facility users, both indoors and outdoors, also have an interest in finding creative solutions. Perhaps they could support a partnership through additional fees for playing fields, volunteer efforts, community fund raising, and corporate sponsorship.

It would seem timely and in keeping with being good stewards of resources, if all parties worked toward finding creative solutions for the betterment of the lives of schoolchildren and the community.



5 Recommendations

Fees and Charges

54. Review the Fees and Charges Policy to identify the admission, program, and rental fees that would meet net-budget targets and foster more participation.
55. Review the indoor- and outdoor-facility allocation policy for alignment with the Master Plan goals and service levels.

Financial Assistance

56. Reaffirm with staff, RPSAC, and the SCRD Board that the Leisure Access Scholarship program is an essential way SCRD contributes to creating a healthy community.
57. Rename the *Leisure Access Scholarship* in collaboration with those with low income.
58. Review, assess, and redesign the program in collaboration with relevant service providers to increase access to the program and to identify creative and respectful ways to remove barriers to participation, such as renaming the program in collaboration with program beneficiaries.
59. Develop an outreach-and-awareness strategy to increase participation in the rural areas that contribute to the program.

Marketing and Communication

60. Share Master Plan data with key service providers. Work together to strategize how to address overlaps and gaps.
61. Collaborate with key service providers to track and strategize ways to address leisure needs.
62. Offer SCRD's registration and booking services to other service providers for a reasonable fee.
63. Refer to the Master Plan data (in the short term) as the basis for service adjustments.
64. Continue to engage the community in the process to design, deliver, and evaluate services.
65. Create a process to confirm Active Network data integrity.
66. Prepare a marketing and communications plan including the use of social media.
67. Collaborate with other service providers including local governments to promote the Sunshine Coast's outdoor and indoor assets for recreation and sports tourism opportunities and events.
68. Work toward providing "one-stop-shopping communication tools" which lists all leisure opportunities, outlines registration options and provides regional maps of parks, trails and beach accesses.



69. Create a building-signage plan and seek out sponsors and Ministry of Transportation to assist with highway and exterior-building signage for SCR D facilities.

Sponsorship

70. Call for proposals to develop a sponsorship program.

Grants

71. Establish a grant-allocation policy, a set of criteria, an application process, and a budget to provide seed money to support groups and organizations who support the achievement of the Master Plan's goals and service level requirements.

Culture

72. Work with the Arts and Culture groups/individuals to integrate arts and cultural opportunities into the three service levels.
73. Explore ways in which the SCR D can support the success of arts and culture across the region including contract relationships.

Joint Use

74. Form a task force with representatives from SCR D, School District #46, SIGD, and RPSAC with a mandate to develop strategies (see next).
75. Develop strategies that will lead to a better sharing of resources, identification of new sources of funding, and more community use of schools and of community facilities for the maximum benefit of the residents of the Sunshine Coast.



Chapter 9: Financial Implications of the Master Plan Recommendations

This chapter provides key historical data of relevance to the Master Plan as well as estimates for implementing the Master Plan recommendations. It serves three purposes:

- Summarizes the financial position of the Parks and Recreation functions between 2007 and 2011.
- Defines the magnitude of costs associated with Master Plan Recommendations.
- Informs at a high level the development of future capital plans and annual work plans.

1 Historical Data

Of the more than 100 individual services the SCRCD offers, the following are the functions relevant to this Plan:³²

- Community recreation
- Joint use of schools
- Bike and walking paths
- Recreation programs
- Community parks

Revenues for the above are raised from grants (e.g. gas taxes transfers), property taxation, user fees and donations. Taxation is the main revenue source (property tax and for recreation borrowing a parcel tax). Costs are paid for by each function (cross subsidization is not possible in a Regional District structure).

In June 7, 2007, the SCRCD assumed the operations of the Sechelt Arena from the District of Sechelt and the Gibson Aquatic Centre from the Town of Gibsons. The new Sechelt Aquatic Centre opened on November 10, 2007, and became a SCRCD direct operation. The Gibsons and Area Community Centre was added to SCRCD inventory of major facilities on March 28, 2008. The SCRCD has operated an extensive parks system for many years and

32. The SCRCD staff and Board often refer to the “functions” by code. For reference, the codes are—

- Community recreation: 615
- Arena: 620
- Community centre and arenas: 617
- Pools/fitness: 616, 621, and 625
- Joint use of schools: 630
- Bike and walking paths: 665/667
- Recreation programs: 670
- Community parks: 650



Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Update Prepared by SCRD

The following tables taken from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan have been updated by the SCRD to include 2012 financial results. This table replaces the stricken Exhibit 9.1 found on the next two pages.

Recreation Operating Revenues and Expenditures by Facility

Exhibit 1 SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT Summary of Recreation Revenue and Expenditures by Facility For the Years 2005 to 2012									
Operating	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total 2005 - 2012
Revenues Excluding Taxation, Parcel Tax and Surplus									
615 Community Recreation Facilities	(170,029)	(140,823)	(108,571)	(80,304)	(61,736)	(524,790)	(676,275)	(78,214)	(1,840,742)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(114,073)	(112,269)	(135,428)	(102,439)	(84,282)	(164,663)	-	-	(713,154)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(645,564)	(542,256)	(554,144)	(514,775)	(483,502)	(1,734)	-	-	(2,741,975)
620 Sechelt Arena	(94,819)	(184,074)	(143,650)	(154,245)	(227,213)	(447,878)	-	-	(1,251,879)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(786,774)	(852,123)	(807,034)	(809,060)	(916,147)	(184,917)	-	-	(4,356,055)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	(77,657)	(78,379)	(65,121)	(44,172)	(73,519)	(84,002)	(75,572)	(75,089)	(573,511)
670 Regional Recreation Programs	(22,693)	(12,661)	-	(44,998)	(122,537)	(136,265)	(159,508)	(125,757)	(624,419)
	(1,911,610)	(1,922,585)	(1,813,948)	(1,749,993)	(1,968,936)	(1,544,249)	(911,355)	(279,060)	(12,101,736)
Expenditures Excluding Transfers, Surplus and Deficit									
615 Community Recreation Facilities	1,748,092	1,717,882	1,686,803	1,662,225	1,648,486	1,653,363	1,680,659	236,111	12,033,621
616 Gibsons Aquatic	720,868	662,446	569,184	534,609	552,192	635,474	371,432	-	4,046,205
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	1,807,877	1,730,816	1,646,087	1,456,293	1,118,344	191,552	78,309	40,239	8,069,517
620 Sechelt Arena	460,719	615,560	565,005	482,818	589,597	649,187	193,560	-	3,556,446
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	1,925,402	1,910,920	1,901,825	1,832,565	1,734,702	495,117	58,706	5,228	9,864,465
625 Pender Harbour Pool	502,877	503,181	440,667	312,274	351,944	363,611	370,637	336,883	3,182,074
670 Regional Recreation Programs	50,025	11,341	84,889	392,508	517,466	577,337	581,960	526,657	2,742,183
	7,215,860	7,152,146	6,894,460	6,673,292	6,512,731	4,565,641	3,335,263	1,145,118	43,494,511
Operating taxation subsidy	5,304,250	5,229,561	5,080,512	4,923,299	4,543,795	3,021,392	2,423,908	866,058	31,392,775
Capital Results									
Capital Revenues									
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	-	(75,645)	(14,479,333)	(4,868,122)	(127,625)	(19,550,725)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(814)	(178,981)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(179,795)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(126,524)	(12,662)	(24,289)	(52,618)	(3,569,101)	(170,470)	(110,169)	-	(4,065,833)
620 Sechelt Arena	(389,862)	(64,160)	-	-	(2,131)	(42,170)	-	-	(498,323)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(945,726)	(361,720)	(76,342)	(351,834)	(344,927)	(40,556)	(140,034)	-	(2,261,139)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	-	(7,224)	(604,182)	(1,265,055)	-	(5,267)	(3,209)	(5,000)	(1,889,937)
	(1,462,926)	(624,747)	(704,813)	(1,669,507)	(3,991,804)	(14,737,796)	(5,121,534)	(132,625)	(28,445,752)
Capital Expenditures									
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	-	75,645	-	35,616	-	111,261
616 Gibsons Aquatic	814	178,981	-	-	-	-	-	-	179,795
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	126,524	12,662	24,288	52,619	3,569,101	7,414,908	2,443,039	70,250	13,713,391
620 Sechelt Arena	389,862	64,160	-	-	2,131	42,170	-	-	498,323
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	945,726	361,720	76,340	351,834	344,926	7,275,451	2,639,670	57,375	12,053,042
625 Pender Harbour Pool	-	7,224	604,181	1,265,056	-	5,267	3,209	5,000	1,889,937
	1,462,926	624,747	704,809	1,669,509	3,991,803	14,737,796	5,121,534	132,625	28,445,749
Net Capital	0	-	(4)	2	(1)	-	-	-	(3)
NOTES: Figures from Internal GL accounts The Gibsons Aquatic Centre and the Sechelt Arena were operated by the respective municipalities prior to 2007 The first full year of operation by the SCRD was 2007 The Sechelt Aquatic Centre and the Gibsons & Area Community Centre were new facilities The Sechelt Aquatic Centre opened in November 2007 The Gibsons & Area Community Centre opened in March 2008 ie first full year 2009 The revenues in 615 are from Investment Interest and actuarial adjustments to debt financing									

more recently undertook services for bikeways and walkways. Joint use of schools has historically facilitated some services (building enhancements for schools) and has been less active lately.

The following three exhibits prepared by SCRD staff present the summary operating and capital revenues and expenditures for major Recreation and Parks functional/accounting areas. Two procedural changes were instituted for 2010 and subsequent years.

1. Property Tax Requisition amounts were no longer recorded in Function 615—community recreation facilities, but were allocated directly to the four primary recreation facilities—Functions 616, 617, 620, 621.
2. Regional recreation programs (Function 670) stopped receiving significant Property Tax Requisition amounts in 2010 and later years. However, the Board has subsequently decided to allocate small amounts for regional recreation programs. For example, \$23,708 has been allocated in 2012 for the Sechelt Youth Centre. Pender Harbour (Function 625) and the two park functions (Functions 650 and 665) have received Property Tax Requisition amounts directly for all years on the schedule. Property Tax Requisition and Specific Parcel Tax amounts largely finance the Recreation Functions.

With the extensive additions to the recreation facilities (four buildings), the functions have experienced some operating revenue growth since 2008.³³ Operating revenue, excluding

Exhibit 9-1								
SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT								
Summary of Recreation Revenue and Expenditures by Facility								
For the Years 2005 to 2011								
Operating	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total 2005-2011
Revenues Excluding Taxation, Parcel Tax and Surplus								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	(440,823)	(408,574)	(80,304)	(61,736)	(524,790)	(676,275)	(78,214)	(1,670,713)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(112,269)	(135,428)	(102,439)	(84,282)	(164,663)	-	-	(599,081)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(542,256)	(554,444)	(544,775)	(483,502)	(1,734)	-	-	(2,096,441)
620 Sechelt Arena	(184,074)	(143,650)	(154,245)	(227,213)	(447,878)	-	-	(1,157,060)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(852,123)	(807,034)	(809,060)	(916,147)	(184,917)	-	-	(3,569,281)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	(78,379)	(65,121)	(44,172)	(73,519)	(84,002)	(75,572)	(75,089)	(495,854)
670 Regional Recreation Programs	(12,661)	-	(44,998)	(122,537)	(136,265)	(159,508)	(125,757)	(601,726)
	(1,922,585)	(1,813,948)	(1,749,993)	(1,968,936)	(1,544,249)	(911,355)	(279,060)	(10,190,126)
Expenditures Excluding Transfers, Surplus and Deficit								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	1,717,882	1,686,803	1,662,225	1,648,486	1,653,363	1,680,659	236,111	10,285,529
616 Gibsons Aquatic	662,446	569,184	534,609	552,192	635,474	371,432	-	3,325,337
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	1,730,816	1,646,087	1,456,293	1,118,344	1,155,522	78,309	40,239	6,261,640
620 Sechelt Arena	615,560	565,005	482,818	589,597	649,187	193,560	-	3,095,727
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	1,910,920	1,901,825	1,832,665	1,734,702	495,117	58,706	5,228	7,939,063
625 Pender Harbour Pool	503,181	440,667	312,274	351,944	363,611	370,637	336,883	2,679,197
670 Regional Recreation Programs	11,341	84,889	392,508	517,466	577,337	581,960	526,657	2,692,158
	7,152,146	6,894,460	6,673,292	6,512,731	4,565,641	3,335,263	1,145,118	36,278,651
Operating taxation subsidy	5,229,561	5,080,512	4,923,299	4,543,795	3,021,392	2,423,908	866,058	26,088,525
Capital Results								
Capital Revenues								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	(75,645)	(14,479,333)	(4,868,122)	(17,381,014)	(36,804,114)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(178,981)	-	-	-	(170,470)	(10,169)	-	(178,981)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(12,661)	(24,289)	(52,181)	(53,500)	(10,470)	(10,169)	-	(3,939,309)
620 Sechelt Arena	(64,160)	-	-	(2,131)	(42,170)	-	-	(108,461)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(361,720)	(76,342)	(351,834)	(344,927)	(40,556)	(140,034)	-	(1,315,413)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	(7,224)	(604,182)	(1,265,055)	-	(5,267)	(3,209)	(5,000)	(1,889,937)
	(624,747)	(704,813)	(1,669,507)	(3,991,804)	(14,737,796)	(5,121,534)	(17,386,014)	(44,236,915)
Capital Expenditures								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	75,645	-	35,616	17,253,389	17,364,650
616 Gibsons Aquatic	178,981	-	-	-	-	-	-	178,981

33. 2008 is the baseline as it represents the first year of substantial operations for both CACC and SAC.

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT
Summary of Recreation Revenue and Expenditures by Facility
For the Years 2005 to 2011

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Operating	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total 2005 - 2011
Revenues Excluding Taxation, Parcel Tax and Surplus								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	(40,823)	(88,571)	(80,304)	(61,736)	(524,790)	(676,275)	(78,214)	(1,670,713)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(2,259)	(35,428)	(12,439)	(84,282)	(64,563)	-	-	(599,081)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(542,256)	(554,144)	(514,775)	(483,502)	(1734)	-	-	(2,096,411)
620 Sechelt Arena	(64,674)	(4,160)	(1,414)	(21,916)	(47,876)	-	-	(1,157,060)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(852,123)	(807,034)	(809,060)	(916,147)	(84,917)	-	-	(3,569,281)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	(7,316)	(1,511)	(1,072)	(5,514)	(6,007)	(5,302)	(7,038)	(495,854)
670 Regional Recreation Programs	(12,661)	-	(44,998)	(122,537)	(136,265)	(159,508)	(125,757)	(601,726)
	(1,922,565)	(1,813,948)	(1,749,993)	(1,968,936)	(1,544,249)	(911,355)	(279,060)	(10,190,126)
Expenditures Excluding Transfers, Surplus and Deficit								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	177,882	1,686,803	1,662,225	1,648,486	1,553,363	1,680,659	236,111	10,285,529
616 Gibsons Aquatic	662,446	569,184	534,609	552,192	635,474	371,432	-	3,325,337
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	72,816	1,646,987	1,662,225	1,152,341	91,552	78,309	40,239	6,261,640
620 Sechelt Arena	615,566	565,005	482,818	589,597	649,187	193,560	-	3,095,727
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	1,910,920	1,901,825	1,832,565	1,734,702	495,117	58,706	5,228	7,939,063
625 Pender Harbour Pool	503,181	440,667	312,274	351,944	363,611	370,637	336,883	2,679,197
670 Regional Recreation Programs	13,411	84,889	292,509	517,466	577,237	581,060	526,657	2,692,158
	7,152,146	6,894,460	6,673,292	6,512,731	4,565,641	3,335,263	1,145,118	36,278,651
Operating taxation subsidy	5,229,561	5,080,512	4,923,299	4,543,795	3,021,392	2,423,908	866,058	26,088,525

Capital Results	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total 2005 - 2011
Capital Revenues								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	(75,645)	(14,479,333)	(4,868,122)	(17,381,014)	(36,804,114)
616 Gibsons Aquatic	(178,981)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(178,981)
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	(12,662)	(24,288)	(52,619)	(3,569,101)	(170,470)	(110,169)	-	(3,939,309)
620 Sechelt Arena	(64,160)	-	-	(2,131)	(42,170)	-	-	(108,461)
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	(361,720)	(76,342)	(351,834)	(344,927)	(40,556)	(140,034)	-	(1,315,413)
625 Pender Harbour Pool	(7,224)	(604,181)	(1,265,056)	-	(5,267)	(3,209)	(5,000)	(1,889,937)
	(624,747)	(704,813)	(1,669,507)	(3,991,804)	(14,737,796)	(5,121,534)	(17,386,014)	(44,236,215)
Capital Expenditures								
615 Community Recreation Facilities	-	-	-	75,645	-	35,616	17,253,389	17,364,650
616 Gibsons Aquatic	178,981	-	-	-	-	-	-	178,981
617 Gibsons & Area Community Centre	12,662	24,288	52,619	3,569,101	7,414,908	2,443,039	70,250	13,586,867
620 Sechelt Arena	64,160	-	-	2,131	42,170	-	-	108,461
621 Sechelt Aquatic Centre	361,720	76,340	351,834	344,926	7,275,451	2,639,670	57,375	11,107,316
625 Pender Harbour Pool	7,224	604,181	1,265,056	-	5,267	3,209	5,000	1,889,937
	624,747	704,809	1,669,509	3,991,803	14,737,796	5,121,534	17,386,014	44,236,212
Net Capital	-	(4)	2	(1)	-	-	-	(3)

NOTE: Figures from Internal GL accounts

The Gibsons Aquatic Centre and the Sechelt Arena were operated by the respective municipalities prior to 2007

The first full year of operation by the SCR D was 2007

The Sechelt Aquatic Centre and the Gibsons & Area Community Centre were new facilities

The Sechelt Aquatic Centre opened in November 2007

The Gibsons & Area Community Centre opened in March 2008 ie first full year 2009



Parks operating revenues and expenditures

Exhibit 9-2									
SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT									
Summary of Parks, Bicycle & Walking Paths and Joint Use Revenue and Expenditures by Function									
For the Years 2005 to 2011									
Operating		2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Total 2005 - 2011
Revenues Excluding Taxation and Surplus									
650	Community Parks	(168,843)	(88,095)	(84,069)	(59,253)	(112,605)	(70,637)	(77,332)	(660,834)
665	Bicycle & Walking Paths	(1,421)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,421)
		(170,264)	(88,095)	(84,069)	(59,253)	(112,605)	(70,637)	(77,332)	(662,255)
630	Joint Use	-	-	-	-	-	-	(510)	(510)
		(170,264)	(88,095)	(84,069)	(59,253)	(112,605)	(70,637)	(77,842)	(662,765)
Expenditures Excluding Transfers, Surplus and Deficit									
650	Community Parks	1,449,425	1,329,942	1,288,621	1,287,457	1,196,034	1,120,431	999,104	8,670,714
665	Bicycle & Walking Paths	105,807	101,750	86,935	70,688	66,962	135,235	86,208	653,585
		1,555,232	1,431,692	1,375,556	1,357,845	1,262,996	1,255,666	1,085,312	9,324,299
630	Joint Use	11,207	20,520	16,499	15,724	14,359	22,042	45,044	145,395
		1,566,439	1,452,212	1,392,055	1,373,569	1,277,355	1,277,708	1,130,356	9,469,694
	Operating taxation subsidy	1,396,175	1,364,117	1,307,986	1,314,316	1,164,750	1,207,071	1,052,514	8,806,929
Capital Results									
Capital Revenues									
650	Community Parks	(40,238)	(182,501)	(542,660)	(966,320)	(1,345,741)	(69,905)	(71,121)	(4,858,486)
665	Bicycle & Walking Paths	(625,302)	(47,238)	(357,659)	(313,953)	(66,794)	(7,255)	0	(1,418,201)
		(665,540)	(1,869,739)	(900,319)	(1,280,273)	(1,412,535)	(77,160)	(71,121)	(6,276,687)
Capital Expenditures									
650	Community Parks	39,163	1,822,502	542,660	966,322	1,345,743	69,905	71,122	4,857,417
665	Bicycle & Walking Paths	625,302	47,238	357,659	313,953	66,794	7,255	0	1,418,201
		664,465	1,869,740	900,319	1,280,275	1,412,537	77,160	71,122	6,275,618
	Net Capital	(1,075)	1	0	2	2	0	1	(1,069)
NOTES:		Figures from Internal GL accounts							
		Increased revenue for 650 Community Parks for 2011 is due to an operating grant for fire mitigation							
		(Function 630 Joint Use had no capital transactions)							

Recreation and parks revenues-and-expenses summary

To further inform this chapter, the SCRD staff provided figures to compare Recreation and Parks Operating Expenditures to Total SCRD Operating Expenses for the years 2008 to 2011. In January 2009 the SCRD adopted revised Public Sector Accounting Standards. The 2008 figures were restated and previous years' total Operating Revenue and Expenses are not fully comparable. The Recreation and Parks Operating Expenditures excluding Transfers, Surplus and Deficit have averaged 28.7% of Total SCRD Operating Expenses for the period 2008 to 2011.

Exhibit 9-3, below, reflects revenue and expenditure factors give the significant investment in the four recreation facilities. The percentage to total operating expenditures for Parks and Recreation is relatively stable 2008 to 2011.



Exhibit 9-3					
SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT					
Summary of Recreation and Parks Revenue and Expenditures					
Comparison to Total Operating Expenses					
For the Years 2008 to 2011					Total 2008 -
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2011
Internal GL Accounts					
Recreation & Parks Operating Revenue	(2,092,849)	(1,902,043)	(1,834,062)	(2,028,189)	(7,857,143)
Excluding Taxation, Parcel Tax and Surplus					
Recreation & Parks Operating Expenditures	8,718,585	8,346,672	8,065,347	7,886,300	33,016,904
Excluding Transfers, Surplus & Deficit					
Recovery rate % of Operating Expenditures					
recovered by Operating Revenue	24.0%	22.8%	22.7%	25.7%	23.8%
Statement of Operations					
Recreation & Parks Operating Expenditures	8,718,585	8,346,672	8,065,347	7,886,300	33,016,904
Excluding Transfers, Surplus & Deficit					
Total SCRD Operating Expenses	29,225,752	28,581,254	30,028,421	27,343,150	115,178,577
Recreation & Parks % of Total SCRD Operating Expenses	29.8%	29.2%	26.9%	28.8%	28.7%
NOTES:					
Recreation & Parks figures from Internal GL accounts					
Total Operational Expenses for 2008 to 2011 from Audited Financial Statements; 2012 from Internal GL					
Sechelt Aquatic Centre opened November 2007					
Gibsons and Area Community Centre opened April 2008					

2 Financial Implications of the Master Plan

This Master Plan was prepared in keeping with the Financial Sustainability Plan of the SCRD. The recommendations are primarily informed by public feedback obtained through the 2011 Master Plan survey and further developed based on subsequent consultations, input from SCRD staff, and the expertise of the consultant team. The figures provided below are estimates only, are provided only to give an order of magnitude to the SCRD and will be phased in response to operational needs, resource-sharing, partnership or grant opportunities, and financial realities. The SCRD, in addition to outlining expenditures, would address revenues in its five-year financial plan.



Operating and capital

Descriptions	SCRD Investment
Human Resources	
Additional 2.5 full-time equivalent programming staff (shared between recreation functions) to help implement additional Gibsons and Sechelt programs and to re-establish community-hall local programs.	\$162,500 per year
Additional part-time equivalent position to help build and maintain new SCR D trails and walkways. Volunteers from off-road cycling groups and the Sunshine Coast Trails Society most likely will build and maintain new trails on Crown land. The SCR D can help by coordinating an overall trail and bike/walkway strategy.	\$50,000 per year
Additional park maintenance was noted as a need in the community study. The team did not examine the current staffing levels. The recommendations should come from the Parks Division.	
New Trails, and Bicycle and Walking Paths	
It is anticipated most of these new projects may be financed by—	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special grant infrastructure programs available from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Forestry and applications to special grants that come available from time to time. • allocation from the federal government's UBCM/Community Works Funds (Gas Tax.) The current funding commitment is in place to 2015. • working with community groups such as Sunshine Coast Tourism and the Sunshine Coast Trails Society. Sunshine Coast Tourism has indicated that if their application for a 2% Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) is successful, they may allocate 20% of their new revenues to local projects that enhance visitor experience. 	
Given the strong community feedback, the Parks Division should build up a reserve to fund trail planning and construction on an ongoing basis to an extent greater than the three above sources. A meaningful annual budget would be \$250,000 per year.	\$250,000 per year
Shoreline Access	
There is a strong desire on the part of the community to gain better access to the beautiful coast and associated water. It is recommended that \$50,000 per year be allocated to this purpose	\$50,000 per year
Park Improvements	
An ongoing park improvement program is required as documented in the Master Plan. We recommend that \$50,000 be allocated on an annual basis to this purpose.	\$50,000 per year
Sport Field Restoration	
As noted, playing fields require rebuilds to maintain a safe and functional playing surface. It is recommended that a playing field rebuild program be planned for one field every five years. These rebuilds typically cost \$25,000 to \$150,000; hence \$25,000 should be set aside annually.	\$25,000 per year



Park-Management Plans	
There are a number of parks that require new or revised management plans. These plans could include such functions as “dogs in parks,” children’s play etc. It is recommended that \$10,000 be set aside annually and that park management plans be completed as demand and funds are available.	\$10,000 per year
Community Halls and Campgrounds	
The existing SCRD community halls and campgrounds need significant refurbishing. Preliminary rough estimates suggest between \$120,000 to \$340,000 may be required for the Parks Function.	\$120,000–340,000
Parkland Acquisition	
As the population grows additional parkland will need to be acquired. This program should be funded through DCCs, donations, etc.	
Grant in Aid	
The grant-in-aid and leisure assistance program recommendations are seen as modifications to the delivery system that, depending on the approach taken, do not require significant additional financial resources.	
Joint-Use Agreement	
A recommendation to review the joint-use agreement with the school board could explore how the SCRD and school board can better utilize their facilities. It is recognized, however, that the school board fiscal constraints may suggest that the SCRD could face more costs if the joint-use program is expanded. The plan notes that working in partnership with the school board may provide the most cost effective solution to providing services to the community.	
Communication Program	
The Master Plan noted the need for improved communications and signage. It is believed that most of this program could be found in house supported by external expertise. The resulting program could include sign sponsorship from tourism, commercial operators etc. It is recommended that \$30,000 be set aside for consulting services.	\$30,000

Ongoing maintenance and capital replacement: indoor facilities

These expenditures total \$7,000,000 and should be part of the annual capital plan. At this time the Parks Division does not have a detailed multi-year maintenance schedule.

Descriptions	2012–2022	Total
Sechelt Aquatic Centre		
Energy Project (2012)	\$675,000	
Ongoing equipment maintenance	1,244,000	
Total		\$1,919,000
Sechelt Arena		
Lighting improvements (2012)	\$65,000	
Slab repairs (2013)	103,000	
Building upgrades	1,911,600	
Total		\$2,079,600



Descriptions	2012–2022	Total
Gibsons Pool (See note below) ³⁴		
Boiler/hot tub/mechanical (2012)	\$675,000	
Ongoing maintenance	512,800	
Total		\$1,187,800
Gibsons and Area Community Centre		
Sound attenuation (2012)		
Ongoing capital maintenance	\$ 135,000	
Total	1,307,000	
		\$1,442,000
Pender Harbour Pool		
Fitness, UV, and other	\$325,000	
		\$325,000
TOTAL		\$6,953,400

Reserves

Planned maintenance and capital replacement is generally funded through contributions to the annual capital plan. The SCRDP also has a “Sustainability policy” in place that states:

- The Regional District will strive to develop appropriate reserves for its capital assets and other significant financial obligations.
- Policy: Operating surpluses and one-time revenues will not be used to fund ongoing expenditures. Major one-time revenues will be applied to—
 - reserves and/or rate stabilization in keeping with levels set by the board,
 - one-time expenditures, or
 - repayment of outstanding debt.

At this time the Recreation Division has a minimal reserve set up for ongoing maintenance and capital replacement. Parks Division has started funding a maintenance and capital replacement reserve and an operating reserve for emergencies. Discussions with Finance staff and other Municipal representatives suggest these reserves should be increased and a plan adopted to ensure annual contributions. Implementation of this recommendation may require incremental financing of \$125,000 on an ongoing basis. In addition, staff believes an additional \$300,000 may be required to bring Reserves up to an appropriate level.



Descriptions	SCRD Investment
Recreation Reserves	
Annual contributions	\$125,000 per year
Top up reserves to establish an appropriate baseline	\$300,000

Sources of funding

The majority of the Master Plan recommendations is directed at expansion of services and does not entail new facilities or large financing commitments. Many of the new initiatives may also generate incremental revenues.

A number of serious repair problems have come to light that will probably require additional debt or tax financing. These emergency or unexpected repairs reinforce the need for the SCR D to regularly fund reserves.

Sources of further revenue:

- Marketing efforts to increase the utilization of the Recreation and Park facilities and programs. Initiatives may include the hosting of special events and user fees for sports fields.
- There may be room to raise rental rates for facilities during peak periods for non-priority groups who may be able to utilize the facilities during less-crowded periods.
- Staff resources for the Leisure Assistance Program could be reduced if other social services agencies are used to screen the assistance eligibility. In addition, there are other models for funding leisure access that minimize the financial investment.
- Utilize special grant programs for special projects wherever possible to leverage cost-sharing opportunities and to create ownership outside SCR D staff.
- Work with tourism and other community groups for funding assistance and volunteers for trail expansions in the region.



3 Recommendations

Financial Investment

76. Secure adequate funding to support the Master Plan recommendations.



The SCRD Board asked staff to prepare the following summary of the magnitude of cost as of April 2013:

“Capital Projects Major Recreation Facilities—Order of Magnitude Costs Some Details Older Facilities” (Prepared by SCRD Staff)

Beyond works already approved for these facilities, more works could be undertaken either to maintain or enhance them over time. The Financial chapter in other sections notes that indoor facilities have ongoing maintenance and capital replacement costs. For example, some key components like de-humidification in arenas are subject to relatively large life cycle costs.

Another factor is potential enhancements to the two older facilities. A study by Shape Architecture for Gibsons Pool shows that a major renovation including additional space would cost \$3.4 million or more depending on if a fitness room is included and does not include all health, electrical and seismic aspects that may add to the costs. The pool is aging and has been well maintained e.g. new roof. Nonetheless it will need ongoing mechanical items and the community would appreciate a UV sanitation system to improve the ambience based on pool user comments. Some open ended comments in the Master Plan survey also reflected wishes to see an upgrade to the pool.

Alternatively to a major renovation of this pool, anywhere from \$1 to \$1.5 million could be spent over the life of this Master Plan for some mechanical and decorating/cosmetic improvements inside and outside. Already for 2013, an accessibility project will occur in the pool using SCRD and grant funds. This will benefit individuals with physical constraints like previously done in the Sechelt pool.

Another option to a major renovation for this pool would one day to construct a new pool at a location like adjacent to GACC that would cost in the order of magnitude of \$7 to \$10 million (current dollars) depending on the scope of the project and site conditions. Shape indicated a new pool smaller than Sechelt would cost \$6.9 million. This option allows for less duplication of aspects like reception and fitness rooms.

The Master Plan has observations and ideas for both Gibsons pool and Sechelt arena that give a priority to programming them and seeking to increase use by the public. This relates to the financial recovery rates that are important to the sustainability of recreation services.

Sechelt arena like the Gibsons Pool is receiving some short term improvements. Future needs for a new roof, mechanical replacements/upgrades and equipment like a new Zamboni will be unavoidable and will cost between \$1 and \$1.2 million. These are needed to maintain the facility.

On the other hand, like for Gibsons pool, enhancements to this arena are not mandatory. Examples of potential enhancements are improvements to the second floor, better bleachers and bleacher heaters that would be an extra cost to the mandatory repairs. Beyond those examples of enhancements, any addition to the Sechelt Arena floor area for ice or dry floor use would be a significant additional cost and depending on the scope would have an order of magnitude cost of between \$2 (no ice) and \$6 million or more (current dollars and depending on what the addition actually entails). The order of magnitude cost at the higher end would be to add an extra ice sheet with significant spectator seating. There does not appear to be a business case for a third ice



sheet on the Sunshine Coast at this time. If there was a business case it does make sense to twin an ice complex.

This master plan in other sections has not recommended immediate major enhancements to the existing recreation facilities. It does acknowledge that ongoing maintenance and capital replacements are factors to be aware of.

As noted this Master Plan does include some comments on programming and options particularly for the older facilities as both of them are currently used to a lesser degree than the newer ones and efforts are needed to attract more users as a priority. The Master Plan suggests that more staff programming resources would complement this objective.

Moreover, it should also be noted that as the newer facilities become older, their capital needs for equipment repair and replacement and building maintenance will grow hence the recommendation in the Master Plan financial chapter to establish greater capital reserve funds.

The above information is included in this Master Plan at the request of the SCRD Board to inform the public at the draft Master Plan stage, and more consultation and assessment would be needed before major expenditures, particularly for enhancements to the old facilities, could be approved or presented to the public for their support or potential voter assent.



Appendix I: Details on Outdoor Recreation and the Environment Recommendations

Recommendation 6

Criteria for trail and bike path development:

- Route provides or improves connectivity at the regional level.
- Route provides or improves connectivity with other parks and trails.
- Route improves the safety of existing undesignated walking or biking routes.
- Route provides access to the waterfront (ocean or lakes).
- Route has high aesthetic values and/or recreation opportunities.
- Route is important as a means for alternative transportation.
- Route appeals to the community and helps to meet the needs of the community.
- Route is in a location that is currently underserved and/or where population is increasing.
- Partnerships with interest groups who are willing to assist in trail development and stewardship are possible.
- Trail can be built to be safe.
- Cost for trail corridor is reasonable, or an opportunity arises to obtain land that may be suitable as parkland at a cost below market.
- Cost and efforts needed to develop and maintain the route are manageable.
- There is alignment with other SCR D initiatives, e.g., OCP.

Recommendation 7

Details for the Trail Strategy:

- Include goals and objectives, trail classifications with design standards, a trail-rating system (e.g., green, blue, black), designation of trail uses, identification of staging areas, recommendations, partnership opportunities, and an implementation plan.
- Involve volunteer trail and tourism groups in the development and potential implementation of the Trail Strategy.
- Update the mapping of existing trails, potentially with the assistance of hiking and mountain-biking groups from the community.
- Revise design standards to improve the safety of trails and bike paths adjacent to roads.
- Plan for equestrian uses on some trails.
- Address conflicts between non-motorized and motorized uses of trails, focusing on non-motorized uses on SCR D's trails.
- Support the development of a Trails Code of Conduct.



Recommendation 8**Criteria for parkland acquisition:**

- Land provides or improves connectivity with other parks and trails.
- Property provides access to waterfront (ocean or lakes).
- Land contributes to the parks system in terms of aesthetic values and/or recreation opportunities.
- Land has environmental value, natural resources at risk, or high potential for environmental enhancement.
- Land has cultural/historic value.
- Land is adjacent to and improves the quality of an existing park.
- Land appeals to the community and helps to meet the needs of the community.
- Land is in a location that is currently underserved and/or where population is increasing.
- Site will support accessibility, i.e., the potential number of people able to access the park.
- Cost is reasonable, or an opportunity arises to obtain land that may be suitable as parkland.
- Cost and efforts needed to maintain park are manageable.
- There is alignment with other SCRCD initiatives, e.g., OCP.

Additional details on parkland acquisition:

- When acquiring 5% parkland from subdivision, this parkland should be suitable for active recreation and not normally include environmentally sensitive or hazard lands, which should be separate. Cash-in-lieu obtained through development should be used for acquisition of appropriate parkland.
- Partner with others to establish parks where there is environmental value and/or recreation value on Crown lands, especially at the urban interface and if lands are threatened, e.g., UREP acquisition.
- Establish a program for acquiring future parkland through trust agreements and bequests.
- Maintain a list of potential parkland acquisitions from the previous Parks Master Plan, SCRCD lists, and OCPs. Monitor potential opportunities to acquire these parcels.

Recommendation 9**Criteria for upgrading shoreline accesses:**

- Whether they can be identified on site, and if not, why
- The condition of the trail if one exists, or the potential to support a trail
- Their potential recreation opportunities
- The potential for parking nearby



- Whether they occur where there are gaps in the supply of shoreline-access opportunities
- Whether there is an opportunity to work with MOTI on the upgrading

Additional details on shoreline accesses:

- Develop plans for the shoreline-access parks and road rights-of-way that end along the shoreline in collaboration with MOTI. The plans should identify which of these parks/rights-of-way should be upgraded, the work needed for them to become accessible and safe, and the order of priority for the upgrading, based on costs and benefits.
- Prepare an action plan for the opening and upgrading of shoreline accesses.
- Develop some shoreline-access parks to be universally accessible.
- Develop good signage to identify beach access trails from the land side and from the waterfront end of the trails.
- At the more popular shoreline-access points, provide some parking where possible.

Additional details on sports fields:

- Conduct a coast wide review of sports participation, trends, schedules, and patterns of use to identify needs and opportunities, e.g., consider the opportunity of soccer play in spring and summer.
- Compare the community's needs with the availability of sports fields, in all SCRD jurisdictions.
- Prepare a schedule of fields that need upgrading to meet these needs.
- Refresh the Joint-Use Agreement with the school district to collaboratively upgrade sports fields.
- Work with other governments and School District #46 to centralize the management of sports fields throughout the Sunshine Coast into one field-allocation and booking system and one set of fees and charges. When determining fees and charges, consider the quality of fields and the age of users (typically, adult groups are charged higher fees). Determine if booking software is adequate.
- Explore opportunities to increase efficiencies related to the maintenance of sports fields across the jurisdictions, e.g., more sharing of equipment, fewer maintenance crews.
- Explore opportunities to increase use of the Pender sports field, potentially in partnership with the Lions Club for use of the building, e.g., for summer festivals and events.



Recommendation 11**Additional details on other park amenities:**

- With community consultation, prepare individual park-management plans for parks that experience significant use and/or have a high potential in relation to their current condition or have environmental or other factors justifying an individual management plan.
- Consider environmental implications as a primary consideration in all park planning, design and development and prepare environmental-impact assessments prior to development in parks.
- Provide some universal accessibility within parks whenever they are upgraded, including at least one universally accessible trail (preferably a loop) in all destination and community parks.
- Consider safety as a primary consideration in all park planning, design, and development.
- Upgrade infrastructure in parks for asset preservation and to avoid costly repairs in the future.
- Consider and develop a process to support opportunities for public art within parks, recognizing the wealth of artistic talent in the community.
- Increase opportunities for launching non-motorized boats in waterfront and beach-access parks, considering shoreline conditions, sea conditions, environmental due diligence, the distance between boat launches, and the available space for vehicular access and parking.
- Explore opportunities for a boat launch to accommodate motorboats on the south portion of the coast.
- Explore opportunities to charge a fee for launching motorized boats during peak periods.
- Based on initiatives from communities and park-planning processes, consider opportunities for the following amenities in parks: multi-use courts, water parks (potentially in the north), community gardens, dog off-leash areas, exercise facilities, youth facilities.
- Encourage opportunities for the appropriate organizations to provide upgraded amenities in parks.

Recommendation 12**Additional details on environmental management:**

- Prepare Environmental Management Strategies for parks with important resources and/or management challenges (e.g., invasive species, trampling of vegetation). Identify environmental protection versus activity zones within parks as appropriate.



- Continue environmental-protection work within parks using best management practices and Green Shores guidelines, e.g., shoreline-protection works.
- Work on an Invasive-Plant Management Strategy in cooperation with the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee, which includes other governments and stakeholders in the SCRCD.
- Work on biodiversity planning in partnership with other groups such as the Lagoon Society and the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association.

Recommendation 13

Additional details on managing recreation uses:

- Work with other jurisdictions to integrate public information related to dog management.
- Prepare a coast wide dog-management brochure, either integrated within the SCRCD parks-and-trails map or as a separate brochure. Identify the dog off-leash areas, parks/areas where dogs are not permitted, and consistent regulations related to dog management (e.g., on-leash (under control) provisions and contact information for each jurisdiction).
- Prepare coast wide signs and dog-waste-bag dispensers related to dog management using consistent language.
- Work with other jurisdictions and tourism interests on how best to maintain road access for typical vehicles to key destination parks (e.g., to Dakota Ridge, Tetrahedron, and Mount Richardson). These roads may or may not be managed by the SCRCD.
- Update the Parks Bylaw 356 to reflect existing uses.

Recommendation 14

Additional details on public information:

- Develop sign standards for parks and trails (including shoreline accesses) with directional (way-finding), regulatory, and interpretive signs, and work with other jurisdictions, particularly the First Nations, to install these throughout the SCRCD.
- Work with Sechelt, Gibsons and Sunshine Coast Tourism (and possibly the Province) to prepare an attractive coast wide map of parks and trails, including shoreline accesses, with information on the facilities and activities within the parks, information on park/trail code of conduct and safety (e.g., Bear Aware), and nearby attractions. Explore the potential for some advertising to help support the map production.
- Increase opportunities for nature interpretation, including interpretive brochures, signs, and programs.
- Work with island residents regarding the management of island parks.



Recommendation 15**Additional details on maintenance:**

- Explore options for operational sustainability that are consistent with the Corporate Strategic Plan, e.g., water conservation, low-fuel (or non-fossil-fuel) vehicles, active and passive solar lighting, composting.
- Prepare park-maintenance standards that reflect the parks classification system, e.g., destination parks receive the highest level of maintenance and green space receives the least.
- Adopt and implement maintenance standards for trails.
- Maintain trails, e.g., clear brush, repair steps.
- Encourage MOTI to repair potholes and remove debris on a regular basis along bike paths.
- Explore opportunities to find maintenance efficiencies, in collaboration with other jurisdictions.

Recommendation 53**Additional details on parameters for an RPSAC governance review:**

- Consider representatives of organized community groups be added to RPSAC, e.g., indoor-sports groups, outdoor-sports groups, outdoor-recreation groups.
- Establish a Parks Sub-Committee composed of the SCR, Sechelt, Gibsons, SIGD, and the Province to so it can integrate high-level planning, programming, and stewardship of parks and trails.
- Establish a Recreation Sub-Committee, composed of neighbourhood- and community-based groups and individuals, to support community development and program initiatives.



Appendix II: 2011 Master Plan Survey Report



Appendix III: Background Document



Appendix IV: Focus Group Notes Broken Down by Community



Appendix V: Focus Group Notes Broken Down by Service Delivery Theme



Appendix VI: Youth Survey



Appendix VII: Community Feedback

