

COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

Regional Recreation Strategic Plan Summary

April 2019

Ways to Provide Your Feedback



Leave a comment on the display panels found at various facilities and events throughout the CVRD.



Participate in the discussion on PlaceSpeak. Access the “Regional Recreation Strategy” topic through the project web page.

CVRD Website (Project Web Page)

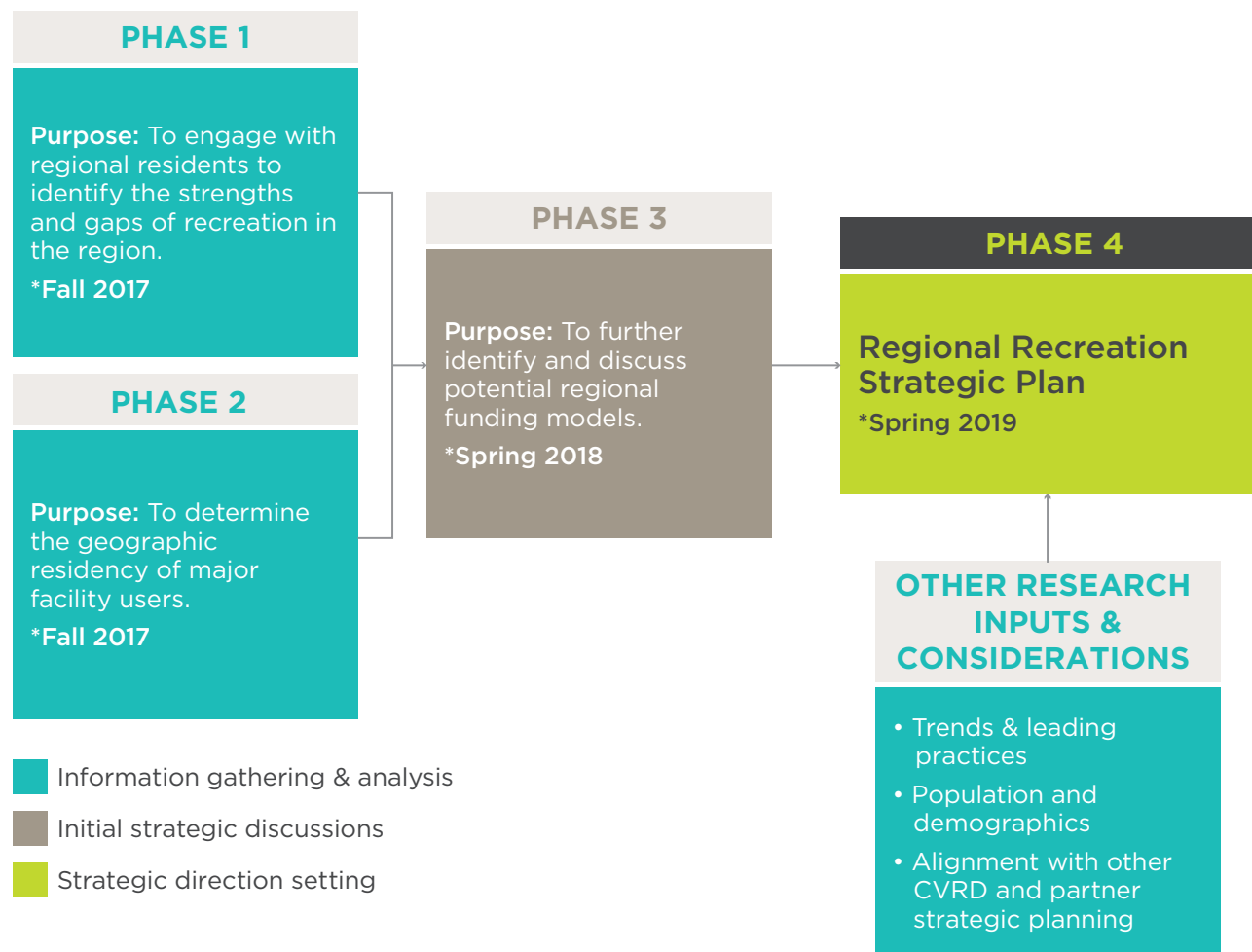
www.cvrld.bc.ca/rec-plan



About the Project



The Cowichan Valley Regional District and its member municipalities (Municipality of North Cowichan, Town of Ladysmith, Town of Lake Cowichan, and the City of Duncan) recognize the importance of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities to residents. Over the past year the partners have undertaken a regional recreation planning initiative to assess the current state of recreation in the region and strategically plan for the future. The final phase of this planning initiative was to develop a Regional Recreation Strategic Plan that will guide future service delivery and collaborations.



Current Status: A Final Draft of the Regional Recreation Strategic Plan has been developed and is now being shared with the public. The feedback gathered through this review process will be used to finalize the Plan.

Research and Engagement Overview



Engagement with residents and stakeholders was a key aspect of developing the Regional Recreation Strategic Plan. To ensure that a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints were heard, the project team utilized a number of engagement methods to gather feedback throughout Phase 1 of the project.

Overview of Engagement Activities



Resident Survey

1,410 responses



Focus Group Sessions

4 sessions
(~90 participants)



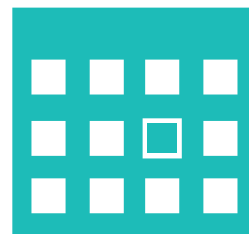
Online Engagement through PlaceSpeak

128 connected
residents



Facility Displays

Residents provided comments on facility displays that were set-up at 10 regional facilities



Pop-Up Events

Members of the consulting team visited various locations in communities throughout the Cowichan Region (e.g. community facilities, retail locations, community markets).

The engagement findings were also supplemented by other forms of research that included a review of trends, leading practices, and regional population and demographics indicators. Summarized on the following pages are key findings from the research and engagement.

Key Findings Summary



Recreation Activities Preferences

- **Spontaneous / unstructured recreation is important for regional residents.** The majority of activity preferences identified by Resident Survey respondents reflect those that can be done without the need to join a league/team/program.
 - » Favourite Indoor Recreational Activities (Top 5 identified by Resident Survey respondents): walking, theatre performances, arts and crafts, swimming, fitness classes
 - » Favourite Outdoor Activities (Top 5 identified by Resident Survey respondents): hiking/walking, gardening, BBQ/picnic/social gathering, community events, activities at the beach



Barriers to Participation

- **A number of factors prevent some residents from participating in recreation.**
 - » The top five barriers to participation in recreation pursuits identified by Resident Survey respondents were: age/health issues, cost of programs, inconvenient times, location of facilities, and lack of time.
- **Affordable access to recreation is important to regional residents.** The importance of ensuring affordable access to recreation was commonly mentioned during the Focus Group sessions and on the facility display panels set-up in community facilities. Many residents believe that future facility development needs to keep affordability top of mind.
- **Residents believe opportunities exist to improve the promotions and marketing of recreation.** Resident Survey respondents identified “improvements to the marketing and promotions of existing recreational opportunities” as the top way that the CVRD and its member municipalities can improve recreation participation in the region.



The Current State of Recreation Services in the Region

- **Resident satisfaction with recreation opportunities is relatively strong.** 80% of Resident Survey respondents indicated satisfaction with the overall availability of recreation opportunities in the region (37% were “very satisfied” and 43% were “somewhat satisfied”).
- **Residents are using facilities across the region.** Utilization data collected through Phases 1 and 2 indicate that many residents use facilities across the region. The data also suggests that in some instances there is not alignment between funding contributions and facility user’s location of residency.

Key Findings Summary (Continued)



Future Needs, Demands and Opportunities for Recreation

- **Mixed viewpoints exist on the need for new and/or enhanced facilities.** 35% of Resident Survey respondents believe new and/or enhanced facilities are needed in the region while 40% of respondents do not believe new and/or enhanced facilities are needed (20% were unsure).
- **Residents would like to see expanded programming made available.** Findings from the Resident Survey and Focus Group sessions indicated that there is likely a demand for more outdoor education and skill development programming, arts and cultural programming and fitness/wellness opportunities.
- **Support exists for increased levels of regional collaboration.** 66% of Resident Survey respondents indicated support for some level of increased regional collaboration, while 34% do not favour increased collaboration. When asked about specific types of collaboration, the following responses were provided:
 - » 49% of Resident Survey respondents would like to see increased cost sharing to enhance the operations or capacity of existing facilities.
 - » 40% of Resident Survey respondents would like to see increased cost sharing to undertake major capital facility projects.



Recreation Infrastructure Trends and Leading Practices (Provincial and National)

- Shift from stand-alone/single purpose facilities to multi-purpose facilities.
- Increasing user demands for comfort and convenience amenities (e.g. public Wi-Fi, social areas, variety of food options, child care services).
- Integration of indoor and outdoor facilities on the same site to capitalize on operational economies, make optimal use of available land, and share support amenities.
- Importance of physical accessibility and spaces that support inclusion.



Recreation Participation and Activity Trends (Provincial and National)

- Concerning physical activity levels, especially among children and youth cohorts (Only 9% of Canadian kids aged 5 to 17 get the 60 minutes of suggested physical activity they need each day).¹
- Increasing demand for spontaneous / unstructured recreational opportunities while participation in many organized sports has stagnated or declined.
- Shift in older adult recreation preferences from passive to more active and multi-generational pursuits (fitness classes, pickleball, hiking).
- Quality and timing of programming continues to be an important factor in participation.

¹ ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

Key Findings Summary (Continued)



Service Delivery Trends (Provincial and National)

- Evolving nature of volunteerism (including: preference for defined roles, personal and professional development as a key motivator).
- Increasing importance of partnerships. This trend is largely driven by increasing capital costs and funding requirements mandated by senior levels of government (examples of common partnerships include those struck between multiple local governments, school boards, community organizations, and the private sector).
- Importance of transparency and engagement in decision making and project planning processes.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration between the recreation, health care and social services sectors.



Population and Demographics (2016 Statistics Canada Census of the Population)

- Population of 83,739.
- Growth of 4.2% from 2011 to 2016 (Provincial average – 5.6%)
- Median age of 49.9 years (Provincial average – 42.3%)
- Age distribution:
 - » 14.7% of residents are ages 0 to 14 (Provincial average – 14.9%)
 - » 61.3% of residents are ages 15 to 64 (Provincial average – 66.9%)
 - » 24.0% of residents are ages 65 years and older (Provincial average – 18.3%)
- Median household income (gross) of \$80,328 (Provincial average – \$88,451).
 - » Disparities between different areas of the Cowichan Region with regards to overall income levels and the proportion of residents that classify as low income.



Vision and Service Delivery Goals



The Regional Recreation Strategic Plan identifies a **Vision** and five **Service Delivery Goals** that will guide future recreation services and investment.

A Vision for Recreation Services in the Cowichan Region:

Through access to diverse, high quality parks, recreation and cultural opportunities, residents of the Cowichan Region live active healthy lives and are part of strong vibrant communities.



Service Delivery Goals for Recreation Services in the Cowichan Region:



SUSTAINABILITY

What does this mean?

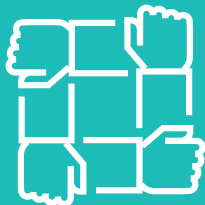
The CVRD and its member municipalities will ensure that parks, recreation and cultural facilities and spaces are planned and managed in such a way that emphasizes long term operational viability and environmental stewardship.



QUALITY

What does this mean?

Parks, recreation and cultural opportunities that are offered or supported by the CVRD and its member municipalities will be delivered in a quality manner that aligns with industry standards and leading practices (including Sport for Life, provincial and national guiding strategies and policies, and local initiatives).



INCLUSIVITY

What does this mean?

The CVRD and its member municipalities will seek to ensure that all residents can enjoy the numerous benefits of participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities and pursuits. The CVRD and its member municipalities will also continue to undertake initiatives aimed at mitigating potential barriers to participation such as age, financial capacity, ethnicity, physical accessibility and social factors.



DIVERSITY

What does this mean?

Opportunities provided by the CVRD and its member municipalities will focus on ensuring a diversity of offerings for a cross-section of age groups, ability levels and interests.



COLLABORATION

What does this mean?

The provision of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors to the Cowichan region will occur in a collaborative manner that leverages the resources and knowledge of the CVRD, member municipalities, and community organizations. Doing so will help achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery (including the health and education sectors).

Service Delivery Strategies



The following Service Delivery Strategies are identified in the Regional Recreation Strategic Plan and are aimed at optimizing the overall delivery system.

**Provided in the Regional Recreation Strategic Plan document are specific tactics (actions) and success indicators for each Strategy.*

- **Service Delivery Strategy #1:** Ensure that governance structures and guiding documents are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #2:** Expand efforts to address financial barriers to participation in recreation.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #3:** Develop an engagement protocol specific to recreation service delivery.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #4:** Increase investment in the marketing and promotions of recreation opportunities with a focus on getting more residents, more active.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #5:** Increase regional collaboration and synergies across all aspects of community services delivery and planning.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #6:** As a region, continue to explore potential solutions to address funding model inequalities and misalignment.
- **Service Delivery Strategy #7:** Over the next five years, further explore specific needs related to arts and culture in the region.



Infrastructure Strategies



Strategic Infrastructure Principles

Regional Recreation Strategic Plan identifies three overarching Strategic Infrastructure Principles that are intended to guide overall capital and operational planning for recreation infrastructure in the region.

Strategic Infrastructure Principle #1: Ensure that existing key recreational facilities and spaces are sustained before contemplating new capital development.

Strategic Infrastructure Principle #2: Major infrastructure projects being contemplated in the region will be explored collaboratively by all regional partners.

Strategic Infrastructure Principle #3: Preference will be given to future facility projects that provide multi-purpose and inclusive spaces that serve a cross-section of residents rather than single use or single interest types of facilities.

Facility and Amenity Strategies

The Regional Recreation Strategic Plan additionally provides Facility and Amenity Strategies specific to a number of key recreation facility and space types. Notable strategies include:

- If major capital investment into indoor aquatics is considered in the Cowichan Region, it is suggested that a new mid-sized aquatics facility to serve the southern part of the region be prioritized over expansion of the Cowichan Aquatics Centre.
- Prioritize quality over quantity in the provision of outdoor sport fields and indoor fitness spaces.
- Increase the provision of natural surface trails in the region.
- Continue to monitor trends for new and emerging activities (e.g. pickleball) and analyze infrastructure needs on a regional basis to determine potential options and approaches.

The Regional Recreation Strategic Plan additionally provides a number of **Planning Tools** to assist with the future analysis and ranking / prioritization of potential projects. These tools should be used on an ongoing basis and as warranted by specific situations and opportunities.





