



GREATER VERNON SERVICES



GREATER VERNON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broadest range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources. (National Policy Statement on Recreation, 1987)

Parks and recreation services are vital components of healthy communities. Years of experience throughout North America have demonstrated the need for local government to be involved in this service. Local government can provide contributions to community and citizen wellness that enhance and complement the types of services typically provided by the private sector and non-profit groups.

Municipal jurisdictions in the Greater Vernon area have consolidated the provision of parks and recreation services through the Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation District (GVPRD). The GVPRD includes the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream, and Electoral Areas B and C of the North Okanagan Regional District. The parks and recreation services in the GVPRD are managed by the Greater Vernon Services Commission (GVSC). The GVSC is responsible for building and maintaining parks and recreation facilities, and for running recreation programs. The GVSC conducts some aspects of its work with its own staff; other functions are contracted to others.



In 1991, the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the GVPRD was adopted. It contained goals, objectives and dozens of recommendations regarding new facilities, parks and services. Many of these recommendations have been acted upon during the past 12 years, supported in part by a 1992 referendum that enabled upgrading and expansion of the swimming pool, and land acquisition for an arena, performing arts centre, and parks, trails and beaches. Since that time, various other related studies have been completed, including: Ribbons of Green (1993), Natural Area/Features Inventory (1993), playground study (1995), beach user survey (1999), and extensive public opinion and user group surveys (2000 and 2001).



This is the first major updating of the entire Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify a vision, goals and objectives for parks and recreation, and to provide recommendations for park acquisition, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, trails, beaches, culture, recreation programs, human resources, and financing related to delivery of parks and recreation services within the next ten years. Although the plan focuses primarily on the 10 year horizon, population growth over the next 20 year period is considered in order to guide decision-making.



Consultation with the Greater Vernon community played a major role in the planning process and included the following tasks:

- meetings with a project Steering Committee,
- meetings and visioning session with Greater Vernon Services Commission and elected officials,
- focus group meetings with interest groups on key topics,
- key informant interviews, and
- two public open houses early in the process, and one at the end.

Vision

The following is the vision for parks and recreation within the community:

Recreation and parks are essential to QUALITY OF LIFE.

Greater Vernon is a vibrant community where health and well-being are valued. Some of the essential elements of quality of life in the Vernon area are healthy lifestyles, a wide range of opportunities for recreation and culture, and respect for the unique environment. The parks and recreation system plays a vital role in achieving those values.

Large parks and major recreation facilities form the core of the parks and recreation system. Connecting these are pedestrian and cycle corridors; the Ribbons of Green that tie the community together. Parks and recreation facilities are accessible to a full range of the population. Partnerships with the private sector and community groups support the delivery of sport, fitness, recreation, cultural and parks services.

The parks and open spaces in Greater Vernon encompass and protect many of the natural and environmental features that make the area unique. Key environmental habitats and features are protected, as is the visually stunning scenery.

The parks and recreation system is operated in an economically responsible manner. Goals include affordability for users and taxpayers, and support from user groups.



Recommendations

The Master Plan provides a summary of existing conditions, an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for all components of the parks and recreation system. The following is a summary of the plan's recommendations for the 10 year time frame. More detail on the recommendations and their proposed phasing and costs are included within the plan document.

Parks and Open Space Supply

The following are the parks and open space types, along with proposed standards (where applicable) to guide land acquisition:

Park or Open Space Type	Proposed Standard/Purpose	Typical Size
City-Wide Parks – includes Major Destination Parks, Athletic Parks, Urban Parks, Beach Parks	2 ha (5 acres) per 1,000 population	12 – 20 ha (Major Dest. & Athletic)
Community Parks	1 ha (2.5 acres) per 1,000 population	4 – 8 ha
Neighbourhood Parks	1 ha (2.5 acres) per 1,000 population	2 – 4 ha
Tot Lots	Retain existing ones, no new ones	n/a
Natural Areas	To protect environmentally significant areas/features and provide outdoor recreation opportunities	As required to protect features
Trails	To connect key natural features and use areas	n/a
Waterfront Access	Small properties that provide public access to the water	n/a

Parks and open space bring beauty to an area while GIVING PEOPLE SATISFACTION AND IMPROVING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

Through the provision of parks, open spaces and protected natural environments, recreation can contribute to the ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH of our communities – an essential, life-sustaining role.

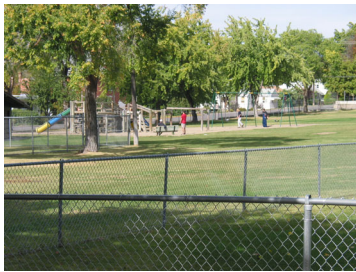


City-wide Parks

- Acquire 40 ha for a **new major destination park** in the north Vernon area to meet the current deficiency and future needs.
- Develop park facilities at Swan Lake.
- Upgrade Polson Park.
- Secure the DND land, and continue to develop it as an **athletic park** softball tournament facility with appropriate support facilities.
- Develop Kin Park as a tournament-level field sports facility.
- Develop outdoor gathering spaces along with any new central recreation facilities.
- Renovate the City Hall/Museum/Library complex plaza.



These parks are beneficial for everyday quality of life. All age groups benefit from increased socialization.



In most recreation needs surveys conducted within the last ten years, TRAILS are listed as the most needed or desired recreation facility.



- Renovate other **urban parks**.
- Encourage developers in the urban area to provide plazas.
- Develop facilities on land north of Kin **Beach Park**.
- Acquire additional properties around Paddlewheel Park.
- Develop new facilities on the expanded Paddlewheel Park.
- Upgrade and add new facilities to Kal Beach Park.

Community and Neighbourhood Parks

- Acquire 19 ha for new community and neighbourhood parks to meet current deficiency, and another 16 ha (10 year) to 34 ha (20 year) for new community and neighbourhood parks to meet future needs.
- Develop new community parks as development proceeds (assume 1 every 5 years).
- Develop new neighbourhood parks as development proceeds (assume 1 every 3 years).
- Upgrade existing parks.

Natural Areas

- Adopt a regional approach to natural area acquisition.
- Acquire or otherwise protect large interconnected natural areas (target 40 ha per year).
- Protect Swan Lake.
- Designate motorized use areas.
- Support environmental groups.
- Enhance communication with brochure, Web site, interpretive signs.
- Encourage environmental protection in planning.
- Naturalize and restore existing parks.

Trails

- Develop a trail implementation plan.
- Acquire trail corridors (target 3 km per year).
- Develop trails along acquired corridors.
- Negotiate for trails through development parcels.
- Develop park and trail signage system and implement over time.
- Work with property owners on trail acquisition.



The benefits of accommodating ball diamond growth are more active healthy adults and tourism development.



Recreation is essential to the development of our children and youth – we learn motor skills, social skills, creativity and other life skills through play.

Waterfront Access

- Adopt a waterfront acquisition policy and implement it consistently with the interests of the entire GVPRD in mind.
- Ensure waterfront parks and trails are provided in new waterfront developments.
- Acquire waterfront land on the north shore of Okanagan Lake to serve population growth in this area.
- Acquire or otherwise protect the cattail beds in the Okanagan Landing area.
- Evaluate all waterfront road rights-of-way and sell where appropriate.
- Continue acquiring Lakeshore Drive lots.
- Acquire a new boat launch site if possible between Paddlewheel Park and Kin Beach.
- Discuss with B.C. Parks their plans and opportunities for enabling appropriate public access to Kal Lake Provincial Park beaches.

Ball Diamonds

- Work on partnership agreements with the School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard and to enable access to washrooms.
- Focus on minor fastball at Grahame Park.

Sports Fields

- Work on partnership agreements with the School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard.
- Upgrade or develop 2 to 6 additional fields in parks or at schools the next 10 years (depending on artificial turf at city-wide park or not).
- Support the development of an indoor soccer facility.
- Develop a new fieldhouse with washroom, concession and storage at any proposed major new field complex.
- Develop a package and staff support to encourage tournaments in the community.

Other Park Facilities

- Support the user group in covering or at least adding lights to 4 tennis courts, preferably at Marshall Park.
- Add 4 new tennis courts to one new park within the next 10 years, at Marshall Park if possible.



- Add play areas to all new city-wide, community and neighbourhood parks.
- Upgrade play areas at a rate of 1 to 2 per year to maintain safety.
- Add hard courts to parks if desired by the community.
- Add one more youth park.
- Work with the community to determine locations and policies for dog management.
- Provide picnic facilities in 2 of the new parks.
- Provide 1 to 2 new spray parks, geographically distributed.



Aquatics

- Introduce play toys and large inflatables.
- Allocate an equipment replacement fund.
- Add a climbing wall at the aquatic centre.
- Provide “play leader” training for staff.
- Add retail services to the lobby.
- Add health, wellness, rehab services.
- Upgrade Lakeview outdoor pool.
- Consider alternative management for delivery of aquatic services (private operator or community society).



Arenas

- Develop an Ice Allocation Policy.
- Review the management contract for arenas.
- Develop a leisure ice surface.

Strength and cardio training has a profound effect on the longevity and health of individuals. Fitness increases life expectancy, prolongs independent living, reduces the risk of many diseases, and improves performance and productivity.

Fitness / Wellness Facilities

- Provide space for fitness, wellness and rehabilitation services by renovating the Auditorium.
- Provide accessible weight room equipment for seniors and people with disabilities in new facility.
- Consider partnerships with developers to include fitness, weight room and community spaces.

Indoor Sports Facilities

- Develop a clear policy on community use of school gyms.
- Provide capital funds to the School District to enlarge the size of elementary school gymnasiums.
- Provide capital funds to the School District to twin secondary school gyms.
- Develop a new multi-purpose community recreation facility.
- Partner with sport organizations to build permanent indoor facilities (groups to fund building construction costs).
- Renovate the auditorium to a fitness, health and wellness centre.
- Develop a partnership to build a gymnastics facility.

Cultural Facilities

- Coordinate an Arts and Cultural Network.
- Develop a policy on art in public places.
- Develop a sponsorship package for sculptured art in key public locations.
- Consider supporting the relocation of the Vernon Public Art Gallery to the existing Vernon Public Library building, pending the library location decision.
- Develop a new policy and criteria for funding to community groups.
- Develop a Cultural Plan with arts, cultural and heritage organizations.



Community recreation reduces alienation, loneliness and anti-social behaviours.

Recreation, parks, fitness, sports, art and culture reduce costs of social service intervention and foster care, and reduce crime and social dysfunction.

Recreation Programs

- Adopt a “community development” approach to recreation programming.
- Form an “Association of Community Planners” representing all community groups providing recreational programs.
- Provide satellite recreation programming in public schools.
- Develop a Community Diversity Action Plan which addresses diversity issues.
- Coordinate a workshop on cultural diversity for community groups.

Seniors: Regular physical activity is one of the very best methods of health insurance for individuals

- Maximize usage of Halina Senior's Centre by offering intergenerational programs.
- Liaise with youth organizations and support the Teen Junction with their plans to build a new teen centre.
- Encourage social services agencies to provide recreation programs for people with disabilities.
- Investigate and consider a financial assistance program.

Future Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided for consideration beyond the 10-year time frame of the plan:

- Acquire land for a third major destination park.
- Acquire large properties to replace athletic facilities at DND and Marshall Park in the future if necessary.
- If the Civic Arena site is sold, require an urban park component as part of the site's redevelopment.
- Consider road relocation around Kal Beach Park.
- Upgrade the aquatic centre.
- Provide a new community centre including an aquatic and fitness/wellness facility.
- Provide additional ice surfaces to replace the Civic arena in 20 years.
- Plan to provide additional programs for seniors in the next ten to twenty years.

Recreation and parks are the attractions that draw tourism – the third largest and one of the fastest growing industries in the world today.



Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy focuses on the primary elements required to successfully implement the Plan, including:

- The role of partnerships, including a proposed community development approach to provision of parks and recreation services, the importance of marketing, and coordination among agencies,
- Needs for human resources as part of the new delivery model,
- Needs for new policies to support the Plan's recommendations,
- Tools and recommendations for financial planning, and
- A phasing and capital plan for proposed parks and recreation facilities and services.

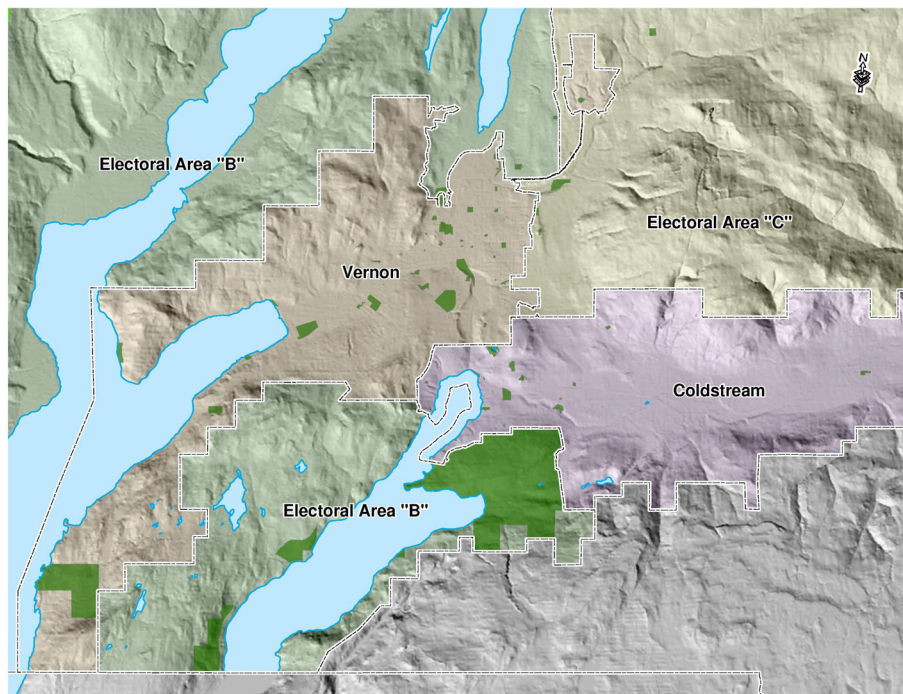
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Purpose of Project

Parks and recreation services are vital components of healthy communities. Years of experience throughout North America have demonstrated the need for local government to be involved in this service. Local government can provide contributions to community and citizen wellness that enhance and complement the types of services typically provided by the private sector and non-profit groups.

Quality of life is the key factor in determining where residents choose to live. Individuals and families rank lifestyle as one of the highest priorities other than employment in determining where to reside. With many retirees moving from cities such as Vancouver and Calgary to the Greater Vernon area, there is increased demand to provide a full range of parks and recreation opportunities. The public's expectations for quality experiences and recreational lifestyle have increased. Major amenities such as beaches, parks and community recreation facilities create necessary community gathering places. Parks and recreation departments have recognized the health and social benefits gained from recreation and are ensuring adequate financial and staffing resources are allocated to these community priorities.

Municipal jurisdictions in the Greater Vernon area have consolidated the provision of parks and recreation services through the Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation District (GVPRD). The GVPRD includes the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream, and Electoral Areas B and C of the North Okanagan Regional District.



The parks and recreation services in the GVPRD are managed by the Greater Vernon Services Commission (GVSC). The GVSC is responsible for building and maintaining parks and recreation facilities, and for running recreation programs. The GVSC conducts some aspects of its work with its own staff; other functions are contracted to others.

In 1991, the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Greater Vernon area was adopted. It contained a set of goals and objectives, as well as a park classification system and dozens of recommendations regarding new facilities, parks and services. Many of these recommendations have been acted upon during the past 12 years.

The 1991 Master Plan was based partly on the results of a major public survey which provided information regarding the parks and recreation needs and interests of the general public. Since that time, several public opinion surveys have been held, dealing with specific matters (e.g., pool, arenas, referenda). In 1992 a referendum was passed which provided authority for the borrowing of funds for the upgrading and expansion of the swimming pool, and land acquisition for an arena, performing arts centre, and parks, trails and beaches. The availability of the referendum funds and capital budgets in the early 1990s allowed for significant implementation of the 1991 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

In 1993, a trail system plan for the Greater Vernon area was developed (Ribbons of Green), as well as an inventory of natural areas and features (Natural Area/Features Inventory). A playground study was conducted in 1995 and a beach user survey was done in 1999. Also in 1999, two referenda passed that allowed local government to develop a multi purpose complex and a community theatre. In 2000 and 2001, another extensive public opinion survey was carried out by Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC). Surveys of user groups were also conducted by the GVPRD in 2001. The results of those surveys have been used in the preparation of this new Master Plan.

The purpose of this plan is to identify a vision, goals and objectives for parks and recreation, and to provide recommendations for park acquisition, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, trails, beaches, culture, recreation programs, human resources, and fees and charges related to delivery of parks and recreation services within the next ten years. Although the plan focuses primarily on the 10 year horizon, population growth over the next 20 year period is considered in order to guide decision-making.

1.2 Planning Process and Consultation Methods

Consultation with the community played a major role in the planning process. The following were the key components of the consultation process:

- four meetings with a project Steering Committee of key staff,
- four meetings with Greater Vernon Services Commission and elected officials, one of which was a visioning session,

- seven focus group meetings with interest groups on the following topics: arenas, aquatics and fitness, recreation complex, youth, seniors, sports fields and ball diamonds, natural areas and trails,
- twenty-one interviews with representatives of key groups, and
- two public open houses early in the process, and one at the end.

In addition to the consultation, the work involved extensive data collection and analysis, including: demographic projections, review of past and recent surveys, review of trends, analysis of comparables, spatial analysis of park distribution and extent, and synthesizing of consultation results.

2.0 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Through a visioning workshop with the Greater Vernon Services Commission and elected officials, and extensive discussions with focus groups, the following vision, goals and objectives for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan were developed.

2.1 Vision

Greater Vernon is a vibrant community where health and well-being are valued. Some of the essential elements of quality of life in the Vernon area are healthy lifestyles, a wide range of opportunities for recreation and culture, and respect for the unique environment. The parks and recreation system plays a vital role in achieving those values.

Large parks and major recreation facilities form the core of the parks and recreation system. Connecting these are pedestrian and cycle corridors; the Ribbons of Green that tie the community together. Parks and recreation facilities are accessible to a full range of the population. Partnerships with the private sector and community groups support the delivery of sport, fitness, recreation, cultural and parks services.

The parks and open spaces in Greater Vernon encompass and protect many of the natural and environmental features that make the area unique. Key environmental habitats and features are protected, as is the visually stunning scenery.

The parks and recreation system is operated in an economically responsible manner. Goals include affordability for users and taxpayers, and support from user groups.

2.2 Goals and Objectives

Develop a system of **parks** that provide a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities to the community.

- Provide large multi-purpose parks that draw residents from throughout the region and contribute to the character and identity of Greater Vernon.
- Expand and enhance major beach parks in recognition of their importance to residents.
- Provide athletic parks that support the development of sports skills and major tournaments in the community.
- Develop and enhance urban parks that add to the quality of the downtown areas of Vernon and Coldstream and support gatherings for special events as well as lunch-time and resting spots for shoppers and workers.
- Provide community and neighbourhood parks that meet the everyday needs of residents for convenient recreation and socializing.

- Work to establish security of tenure for all park land.

Provide a system of **natural areas and trails** that protect resources and provide key linkages throughout the community.

- Protect key natural features and areas within public natural areas.
- Provide a network of routes including multi-use pathways and trails, coordinated with on-road bicycle lanes, linking key parks, facilities, schools and business areas.
- Consider environmental resources and values in all park acquisition, planning and design.

Develop new and improved **recreation and cultural facilities** to support everyday community leisure needs related to recreation, sports and culture, as well as tournaments and special events that also involve visitors and tourists.

- Upgrade and relocate facilities to maximize efficiency and potential levels of use.
- Encourage and support recreation and cultural user groups consistently and equitably.
- Ensure that all age groups are provided with appropriate opportunities.

Provide **recreation programming** in areas such as sports, arts and culture, health and fitness, and outdoor activities, offering people opportunities to participate, socialize, develop skills, and build a better sense of community.

- Involve potential users in developing programming.
- Provide appropriate programs for all age groups, including those with specific or special needs.

Cultivate **partnerships** with community organizations, the private sector, other levels of government, and the public.

- Determine the appropriate role for each type of partnership, e.g., development, operation, programming, maintenance, and develop policies and partnership agreements to support this.
- Consider a broad range of partners, from large corporations to individual volunteers.
- Ensure that information about parks and recreation is reaching residents, and that their needs are being communicated and addressed.
- Encourage community development through the parks and recreation system.
- Involve the community in planning and upgrading parks and recreation facilities.
- Increase collaboration with the school district with respect to sharing of facilities and recreation programs.
- Minimize duplication and maximize efficiency in the provision of facilities and services.
- Encourage the development of sport and cultural tourism by providing linkages and support.

Ensure that the parks and recreation system is **cost effective** and **affordable**.

- Pursue a variety of options for funding the parks and recreation system, including: ongoing review and update of DCCs, user fees, bequests, and sponsorships.
- Ensure that appropriate land use planning tools are utilized to secure parkland and amenities.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In the early 1990s, the Greater Vernon area experienced very high population growth, approximately 3% per year. In the latest census from 1996 to 2001, however, growth had decreased significantly, to about 0.5% annually. The purpose of including a demographic analysis in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to project the future population to ensure that an adequate supply of parks and recreation facilities are planned to serve the anticipated population.

The Official Community Plans (OCPs) within the Greater Vernon area (City of Vernon, Rural Vernon, and District of Coldstream) estimate population growth rates between 1.2% and 4.5%. Given the very low growth rates between 1996 and 2001, data that was not likely available when the OCPs were prepared, this Plan is based on growth rate estimates of 1.5% per annum.

The following table shows the estimated existing and projected population for the target dates rounded to nearest 100.

Date	Estimated Population
2003	50,800
2013	58,900
2023	68,400

Since population growth has a significant influence on the parks and recreation facilities required, it will be essential to monitor growth and to adjust the plan's recommendations if necessary. It is also important that the Plan address the characteristics of the population. The following are some key facts:

- In the 1996 census, the average income in the Greater Vernon area was around \$3,000 lower than the provincial average. This is likely due to the lower cost of living in the Okanagan than the Lower Mainland where the bulk of B.C.'s population resides.
- The age profile in the Greater Vernon area has a higher percentage of seniors than average in B.C., and correspondingly lower numbers of all other age groups. The Plan will therefore need clear opportunities for seniors along with a strong family orientation for the other age groups. Opportunities for seniors typically include: seniors' centres within recreation complexes, outdoor facilities such as lawn bowling and shuffleboard close to seniors' centres and/or seniors' housing, and programs for senior.
- The area has an average of 2.3 people per dwelling unit compared with the provincial and Canadian averages of 2.4.
- Single family housing makes up 62% of the residential stock. This is predicted to decrease with rising land costs, a higher empty nester population and changing lifestyles leading to more multi-family homes.
- The rate of home ownership in the Greater Vernon area was 64% in 1996.

4.0 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

4.1 Parks and Open Space Types and Supply

Trends

There have been significant changes evident in park and open space planning over the last decade as communities strive to recognize and protect environmental resources and to meet the social needs of their citizens. The following are some of the primary trends:

- Communities are identifying and protecting natural areas within the parks and open space system. This is occurring because people are recognizing the importance of protecting environmentally sensitive areas and the needs that humans have to experience nature within the urban environment. Typical land development patterns are not protecting sufficient natural areas and the park system offers an appropriate mechanism to achieve a high level of protection. Many communities have conducted environmentally sensitive area studies that assist in identifying natural areas requiring protection.
- Greenways of open space networks are being developed to provide linear open space corridors that meet environmental and recreational objectives. These are often interconnected corridors of natural areas, some of which include trails.
- Trail systems are being provided throughout communities to provide transportation options, recreation opportunities, and to reduce the use of vehicles. Hiking, walking, dog walking and cycling are among the most popular activities in every community.
- Youth parks with a variety of facilities are being provided in highly visible areas, preferable close to community centres, to provide opportunities for youth.
- The needs of seniors are being recognized in the park system with specific facilities for their use in appropriate locations, and by providing seating and horticultural areas in urban parks.

Overall Park Supply

In order to evaluate the existing supply, the GVPRD parks and open space system has been divided into categories based on the various functions of each type of park and open space. This section lists and defines the parks and open space categories, along with proposed standards of supply (see Map 1). For the purposes of this plan, parks are defined as sites meeting active recreational needs and they include: city-wide, community and neighbourhood parks, and tot lots. Open space is defined as other sites that serve visual, environmental and more passive recreational opportunities; open space includes natural areas, trails, and waterfront access points.

The standards have been changed slightly from the previous standards to exclude tot lots and shift that parkland to neighbourhood and community parks. It should be noted that the standards are a guide rather than a definitive requirement. The standards can be applied in a flexible manner to ensure that community needs for a full range of park types and easily accessible parks and open space are available to all area residents.

The overall supply of parks in Greater Vernon by category in relation to population is illustrated on Figure 1. The current supply in relation to future population growth and the shortfall are also indicated. The existing standard of 4 ha (10 acres) of parks per 1,000 population is a common standard in B.C., and there is no apparent reason to change the standard. It is therefore recommended as an ongoing standard with the distribution as indicated in this section.

	City-Wide Parks (inc. Urban)	Community Parks	Neighbourhood Parks (incl. Tot lots)	Total
2003				
Number of Sites	15	8	31	54
Total Area (ha)	84	36	32	152
Proposed Standard / 1000 Population	2.0	1.0	1.0	4.0
Current Supply / 1000 Population	1.6	0.7	0.6	3.0
Current Deficiency (ha)	17.6	14.8	18.8	51.2
Number of New Sites Needed	1	2	5	8
2013				
Current Supply / 1000 Population	1.4	0.6	0.5	2.6
2013 Additional Deficiency (ha)	16.2	8.1	8.1	32.4
Number of Additional Sites Needed	0	2	2	4
2023				
Current Supply / 1000 Population	1.2	0.5	0.5	2.2
2023 Additional Deficiency (ha)	19.0	9.5	9.5	38.0
Number of Additional Sites Needed	1	2	3	6

Figure 1: Analysis of Current Park Supply by Population
(Park lands include DND lands and Marshall Park.)

The table illustrates that the park supply does not meet any of the proposed (or current) standards. The shortfall will be even more significant with respect to the future population. It should be noted that the DND lands and Marshall Park are included in the supply of City-wide parks, even though these properties are not owned by the GVSC. If the park function was removed from either property, the GVPRD would need to replace the site with land that could serve as an athletic park. ALR land would likely be required to meet that need.

The following sections provide specific recommendations related to the provision of new parks and open space in areas that are deficient and where parks will be required to accommodate future population growth.

City-Wide Parks¹

Standard: 2 ha (5 acres) per 1,000 population

City-wide parks regularly draw visitors from the entire Greater Vernon area. People may visit these parks due to the natural features or the facilities and programs offered. The following are four different types of city-wide parks:

- **Major Destination Parks** are centred around features which are unique, and offer a range of facilities and activities. Major destination parks draw the general public who specifically travel to spend time “in the park”. Park features can be natural, such as lakes or ridgelines. They can also be built features, such as the variety of facilities in Polson Park. A typical minimum size is 12 ha. Polson Park is the only existing major destination park in the Greater Vernon area.
- **Athletic Parks** have major athletic facilities that draw participants from the entire Greater Vernon area. These parks are also regularly used for tournaments and other sports-related events. DND, Marshall Park, and Kin Race Track fall within this category. A minimum size is 15 ha, but 20 ha is preferred, depending on the facilities included.
- **Urban Parks** are located in the central business district. They provide seating and gathering spaces and features such as ornamental plantings and art that establish a landscape character for the core area. They are distinct from neighbourhood and community parks in that play equipment is not typically included. There eight small urban parks within the Greater Vernon area, including the cenotaph parks, city hall/library/museum, and several boulevard areas that add character to the urban area.
- **Beach Parks** are major beaches that attract a regional population to the waterfront setting. Activity opportunities are varied and include swimming and boating. Existing beach parks are Kal Beach, Kin Beach, and Paddlewheel Park.

Community Parks

Standard: 1 ha (2.5 acres) per 1,000 population

Community Parks (optimal size 4 to 8 ha) generally serve the catchment area of a secondary school, or about three to five neighbourhoods. They typically include sports fields, parking areas, washrooms and trails. They are meant to form the visual, physical and social focus of the community. Some examples of existing community parks are MacDonald Park, Creekside Park, and Grahame Park.

¹ The term “City-wide” is used in this context with reference to parks that serve the entire GVPRD even though the entire area is not strictly within a city.

Neighbourhood Parks

Standard: 1 ha (2.5 acres) per 1,000 population

Neighbourhood Parks (optimal size 2 to 4 ha) generally serve the catchment area of an elementary school, or 2,000 to 4,000 population. They are meant to form the visual, physical and social focus of the neighbourhood. In many cases, portions of elementary school sites serve as neighbourhood parks. Some examples of existing neighbourhood parks are Alexis Park, Armory Park, Sawicki Park, and N'Kwala Park.

Tot Lots

Tot lots are small properties (approximately one city lot) containing play equipment and other facilities for children. They service a smaller area than a neighbourhood park and are often located in areas with young families. Existing tot lots will be retained and documented within the supply of neighbourhood parks, however no new tot lots will be obtained due to their relatively low use and high maintenance costs. Private developers are encouraged to provide common areas with play facilities within their developments. Some examples of the nine existing tot lots are Heron Glen, Hudac, and Lochaven tot lots.

Natural Areas

Natural areas have been acquired by the GVSC participants to protect environmentally significant areas and features and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. The natural areas include ponds, wetlands, riparian and forested areas, prominent slopes, and other natural features. There is no standard for acquisition of these areas. There are 11 parcels of land that are classified as natural areas, and these are generally small for this type of land. Some examples are Becker Park, Black Rock, CEC Young, Cools Pond, McKergow Meadows, and Webster Park.

Trails

Trails within the context of this Master Plan include off-road trails that connect key natural features and use areas throughout the Greater Vernon area. Trails are often located within natural areas. There is no standard for trail acquisition. Some examples of existing trails are the Gray Canal and BX Creek trails.

Waterfront Access

Waterfront access points are small properties whose primary function is to provide public access to the water. Some of these serve local areas only and have steps or a path to a pocket beach. Others are boat launches that are used by residents throughout the area. There are a number of existing waterfront access points along the east shoreline of Kalamalka Lake.

4.2 City-wide Parks

The standard for City-wide Parks (unchanged from the current standard) is 2.0 ha per 1,000 people, and the current supply is 1.6 ha per 1,000 people. The shortfall in relation to the standard is significant: currently 22 ha; 16 additional ha in 2013, and another 20 ha in 2023.

Major Destination Parks

The primary Major Destination Park is Polson Park. The importance of Polson Park in the community is reflected in the results of the 2001 public survey. However Polson Park requires upgrading.

At least one other major destination park is needed in the next 10 years, and a third would be desirable within 20 years. The new parks could be different types of parks to provide diversity within the community. For example, one might be a lakefront park with forest and wetland settings, such as at the south end of Swan Lake. Another might be a location higher up in the hills with good views and a grassland or rangeland type of ecosystem.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polson Park is in a central location and has many interesting qualities and features. • Swan Lake area has very high potential as a second major destination park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polson Park is dated, underutilized, and there are safety and security issues. • Polson Park grandstand and field are not highly functional and have an adverse influence on the park. The grandstand has a City heritage designation, though this can be removed. • Polson Park is not well connected with trails to other high use areas. • One major destination park is not enough. • South end of Swan Lake is private land and in agricultural land reserve (ALR). • It will be difficult to obtain large new parcels of land for park space because much of the land is already subdivided, in the ALR, or difficult to develop.

Athletic Parks

There are currently 3 athletic parks that serve primarily a city-wide population. The most developed park is the Department of National Defence lands (DND). It has excellent ball diamonds and sports fields, however no permanent support facilities have been developed there since the land is leased, and the future is therefore uncertain.

The Kin Race Track is a city-wide park mainly because of the thoroughbred horse racing that occurs there. Over the years, the park has ranged from being a busy and active horse track to being almost unused for a period of time. Horse racing has been experiencing a general decline as other forms of gambling, particularly slot machines, have overtaken that market, and the race tracks with slot machines can offer higher purses and therefore attract more horses. Originally owned by the

Kinsmen and run by the Jockey Club, the race track and related facilities are currently operated by the Vernon and District Agricultural Society. The Agriculture Society is trying to broaden the use of the park to include a variety of horse and agriculture-related events. However, the most economically viable future for the park, if it were to remain a horse track, would be inclusion of an indoor facility with the horse racing simulcast (per Agriculture Society).

In order to increase the use of the site, the GVSC installed 4 softball diamonds in the centre of the race track. This has been problematic for both softball and horse groups. There are conflicts between field use and horses, the fields are in poor condition, and the site doesn't function well for either group, e.g. can't get an ambulance to the fields, minimal and poorly organized parking.

Marshall Park has some excellent new facilities, including 4 sports fields, 2 baseball diamonds, 4 tennis courts, and a fieldhouse. There had been tentative plans to increase the recreational facilities on the site, however the property is leased from the City of Vernon so its tenure is uncertain and a Tourist Commercial Waterfront Neighbourhood Plan (Ekistics, 2003) has been prepared for the area. That plan limits the number of athletic facilities to those that already exist.

The Greater Vernon area needs one or two secure city-wide athletic parks that can accommodate major events for ball, soccer, and other sports. The ball diamond and sports field parks could be located in separate parks or together.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DND has excellent fields. • Kin Race Track has excellent opportunity as a city-wide athletic park, if the race track was removed or relocated. • Marshall Park has some excellent athletic facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DND does not have a permanent fieldhouse or stands and the lease makes the future uncertain. • Kin Park does not function well in its current arrangement, and it is highly underutilized. The potential need to retain the race track at Kin is unclear. A year-round gambling facility at the site is not expected to be politically acceptable. • Marshall Park may not have the opportunity to expand its facilities.

Urban Parks

There are two urban areas within Greater Vernon; downtown Vernon and Coldstream. The primary existing urban park in Vernon is the plaza space around the City Hall, Museum, and Library. The plaza space is in separate sections, providing an attractive character for the approaches to the buildings and occasional use on benches. However, the park space is not designed for nor conducive to large gatherings or special events. Other urban park sites are either historic sites, e.g., centotaph parks, old cemeteries, or boulevard space. Coldstream has developed a Town Centre Plan that provides direction for its urban parks.

There are typically two ways of acquiring urban parks; through provision of public space associated with major public facilities, e.g., city hall, performing arts centre, recreation centre, or by requiring developers of downtown space to provide plazas in prominent locations, e.g., street corners, along shopping streets.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be opportunities to build new urban parks in association with new or upgraded public recreation and culture facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban parks are small and have a low profile in the community.

Beach Parks

The Greater Vernon area has three primary beach parks that serve the regional population². Beach resources and available space are limited so there are not likely opportunities to develop new beach parks. The primary potential lies in expanding and improving existing parks.

Kal Beach is a small area, it has no grass, and the road is very close to beach, passing between the beach and parking lot. The park has sand volleyball, and is a popular youth gathering area.

Kin Beach is an attractive beach with diverse activities. The fact that it is too shallow for a boat launch makes this a popular swimming beach, though the water quality can be a problem. A new property acquired to the north is available for park expansion. There is some confusion with the beach to the south of Kin Beach; it is located on Indian Reserve (IR) property.

Paddlewheel Park is an attractive park with diverse water-related uses, including a boat launch, sailing club, play area, washrooms, basketball, tennis and volleyball. The primary issues are not enough space for boat trailer parking and conflicts between the boat launch and swimming.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three beach parks are well distributed and provide a variety of lakefront recreation opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the beach parks are small in relation to their ideal size to serve the growing population. • Kal Beach would benefit from expansion and greening. • Kin Beach would benefit from a new plan encompassing the property to the north, and the IR if possible. • Paddlewheel Park needs expansion to resolve use conflicts.

² This section refers to parks where beach use is the primary activity. Other parks that have less prominent beaches are included in other categories.

Recommendations

Major Destination Parks

- Acquire land for and develop a new major destination park in the north Vernon area - recommend park acquisition minimum 40 ha, some of which is to meet current needs and the remainder to meet future needs (i.e. funding through DCCs).
- Develop the new major destination park through a Master Planning process involving community consultation, with consideration for picnic, hiking, play and interpretive facilities.
- Upgrade Polson Park through a Master Planning process involving community consultation, addressing potential removal of the grandstand and football field, upgrading of facilities as required, removal of vehicular traffic through the park, and development of new facilities for the general public, e.g., picnicking and gathering areas, special types of plantings.
- Explore opportunities for acquiring land for a third major destination park that will be required in 10 to 20 years. Potential locations include upper elevation lands in the Commonage or Bella Vista Range.

Athletic Parks

- Acquire the DND land (through acquisition if possible, but if not with a long-term lease), and continue to develop it as a softball tournament facility with appropriate support facilities, and with possible expansion to the south.
- Remove the existing facilities from Kin Park and develop it as a tournament-level field sports facility, with potential expansion to the north, and with facilities including indoor and outdoor sports fields, some with lights, potentially artificial turf (if desired and supported by user group contributions), fieldhouse and grandstand.
- Acquire large properties to replace DND and Marshall Park in the future, if their tenure for park use is not secured.

Urban Parks

- Develop outdoor gathering spaces along with any new central recreation facilities.
- If the Civic Arena site is sold, require an urban park component as part of the site's redevelopment.
- Renovate the City Hall/Museum/Library complex to consolidate the outdoor space and make it more suitable for events.
- Renovate other urban parks, e.g. Cenotaph Parks, to make them more attractive, safe and useable for the general public.
- Encourage developers in the urban area to provide street level plaza space as part of their projects. Ensure that these are designed to provide an attractive and safe experience for the general public.

Beach Parks

- Develop land north of Kin Beach with picnic facilities and grass, retaining trees along edge. Work with the community to identify the facilities to be included, e.g., sand volleyball courts, picnic shelters, spray park.
- Acquire additional properties around Paddlewheel Park to accommodate boat launch, parking and swimming with less congestion and conflicts.
- Develop new facilities at the expanded Paddlewheel Park, potentially including: a new boat launch, defined swimming area, new picnic facilities, new parking lot.
- Upgrade and add new facilities to Kal Beach in consultation with the community, e.g., basketball, play area. Investigate a long-term option of rerouting the road behind the parking lot to consolidate and increase the useable size of the park.

4.3 Community and Neighbourhood Parks

Community and neighbourhood parks are analyzed together, since they serve similar needs, but at different levels. There are currently 8 community parks and 31 neighbourhood parks, of which 9 are tot lots, in the Vernon area. There are also 15 public schools that function to varying degrees as neighbourhood and community parks. These are not included in calculations of park supply.

The proposed standard for community parks is 1 ha/1000 population, and the current supply is 0.7 ha per 1,000 people. The shortfall in relation to the standard is significant: currently 15 ha. To meet population growth, an additional 8 ha will be needed in 2013, and another 9 ha in 2023. Community park development typically includes sports fields and/or ball diamonds, fieldhouse/washroom building, playgrounds, trails and parking lots.

The proposed standard for neighbourhood parks is 1 ha/1000 population, and the current supply is 0.6 ha per 1,000 people. The shortfall in relation to the standard is significant: currently 19 ha. To meet population growth, an additional 8 ha will be needed in 2013, and another 9 ha in 2023. Neighbourhood park development will typically include play equipment, hard court or basketball court, pathways, open grass, and seating.

A proposed guideline is that community parks should be located within 1 km (a slow 20 minute walk) of every resident in urban areas, with closer spacing in higher density areas. The standard for neighbourhood parks is that they should be within 0.5 km (a slow 10 minute walk) of urban residents, with closer spacing in higher density areas. A spatial analysis of the neighbourhood and community parks illustrates that there are areas within the study area that do not meet these guidelines (see Map 2). For this analysis, Major Destination and Beach City-wide Parks were grouped with community parks, since they perform many of the same functions.

Community and neighbourhood parks are important in providing ball diamonds and sports fields to their respective communities. Those facilities are discussed in section 5.0.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community and neighbourhood parks are generally well distributed throughout the developed areas. • Many of the parks are well used and appreciated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the existing parks are very small and have low levels of use. • Some of the newer parks are in the ALR and cannot be developed. • A significant amount of new parkland is required to meet standards and the growing population. • Some of the parks require upgrading.

Recommendations

- Acquire new community parks in new development areas and where special opportunities exist, generally as shown on the plan (see Map 3). Distribute community parks as required based on future population and available properties.
- Develop new community parks as development proceeds.
 - Develop the following properties with community park facilities: BX Ranch, Sovereign property – both to have special focus based on natural and cultural features.
- Acquire neighbourhood parks in new development areas, generally as shown on Map 3 (slightly revised from OCP).
 - Explore the option of acquiring West Vernon Elementary School as a park site if the School District closes this school. If acquired, review the existing facilities to determine any potential for adaptive uses, with particular consideration for the recreation needs of seniors.
 - Purchase N’Kwala Park if the School District is interested in selling it.
- Upgrade existing community and neighbourhood parks as required. The following are potential upgrading needs:
 - Develop a trail around Cool’s Pond to provide more opportunity for recreation.
 - Upgrade the lacrosse facility at Creekside Park.
 - Improve the access and parking at Coldstream Park.

The following are principles that should be used to guide acquisition and development of community and neighbourhood parks:

- Locate community parks adjacent to secondary schools where possible.
- Locate community recreation facilities in or adjacent to community parks where possible.
- Locate community parks near natural areas or trails where possible.
- Locate neighbourhood parks adjacent to elementary schools where possible.
- Locate neighbourhood parks central to neighbourhoods with street frontage and access from all four sides if possible.
- Dispose of underutilized park properties smaller than 0.2 ha that have financial value in locations already well served by neighbourhood parks, where the surrounding community will support this.
- Increase the size of neighbourhood parks smaller than 0.2 ha in locations that are not well served by neighbourhood parks.
- Encourage the School District and college to recognize school grounds and campuses as park areas and to develop or improve them accordingly.

- Park services that are required to support population growth should be paid for by growth.
- Explore the potential for the old Pottery Road landfill to serve as a community or neighbourhood park, subject to successful remediation and the approval of relevant government agencies. Landfills are capped and adapted for that use in many municipalities, e.g., McArthur Island in Kamloops, Port Mann landfill in Surrey, Burnaby, Coquitlam, many parks in the U.S. In the future, the existing landfill, which has 15 more years until closing, may also have park potential.

4.4 Natural Areas

There are currently about 47 ha of land owned by the GVPRD that is considered natural areas (see Figure 2). Some of these areas include trails and others do not. At less than 0.2% of the entire land base, this is extremely low compared to other municipalities and regional districts. For example, some municipalities have guidelines stating that 12% of their land base should be protected area, in keeping with the equivalent provincial standard, e.g., Surrey.³ Other municipalities state that 6% of the urban area should be parks and natural areas, e.g., Abbotsford.

The Greater Vernon area includes several large provincial parks and extensive Crown Land, however many other communities have equivalent resources as well. The provincial parks bring the overall supply of natural areas to 5.6%, but these parks do not replace the need to protect natural resources within the urban area. As illustrated on Figure 2, the distribution of natural areas is very inconsistent. Whereas there is a large amount protected south of the City in Area B, and this benefits Coldstream which is adjacent, there is a minimal amount of protected natural area within Vernon or Area C.

One of the reasons likely contributing to the relatively small amount of protected natural areas in the Greater Vernon area is the lack of regional parks. Most of the more populated regional districts in British Columbia have regional parks that provide an intermediate level of protected area, between provincial and municipal parks, e.g., Greater Vancouver Regional District, Capital Regional District, Fraser Valley Regional District, Sunshine Coast Regional District.

Natural areas are important in the community for a number of reasons. This type of open space visually provides relief from the hard surfaces and formal patterns of development, particularly in the urban area. It protects features in the landscape that give form and identity to the Greater Vernon area, e.g. creeks, ravines, rock outcrops, hillsides. It can protect environmentally sensitive areas, providing important habitat and corridors that support fish and wildlife. It also provides opportunities for stormwater management, enabling modification of the water quality and rate of runoff from developed sites. Natural areas can often provide corridors that are suitable for trails, provided that the trails can be incorporated without causing undue harm to environmental resources.

³ In these cases, provincial and national protected areas are sometimes included in the calculation, but only where they fall within the municipality.

	GVRD Natural Areas	Provincial Parks	Total	Jurisdiction Area (excluding lakes)	% of Area
Area B					
Number of Sites	1	4	5		
Area (ha)	2.2	1147.6	1149.8	7283.8	15.8
Area C					
Number of Sites	3	0	3		
Area (ha)	9.9	0.0	9.9	3629.2	0.3
Coldstream					
Number of Sites	8	0	8		
Area (ha)	11.3	0.0	11.3	6653.3	0.2
Vernon					
Number of Sites	7	2	9		
Area (ha)	23.6	226.1	249.7	7822.9	3.2
Total GVRD					
Total Sites	19	6	25		
Total (ha)	46.9	1373.7	1420.6	25389.1	5.6

Figure 2: Analysis of Current Supply of Natural Areas

Vernon has an active contingent of open space/naturalist groups who work on conservation and education projects. These groups have helped to identify key natural areas requiring protection, including: Bella Vista-Goose Lake Range, Commonage, Middleton Mountain, Silver Star Foothills, Coldstream South Slopes, Swan Lake. Since the Natural Areas/Features Inventory was completed in 1993, some sites have been developed. There is strong interest in protecting additional open space to protect resource values and to connect the various parcels into corridors that provide links for recreation purposes as well as for fish and wildlife.

North Okanagan Parks and Natural Areas Trust (NOPNAT) was established to assist in the acquisition of land as natural areas through donations, bequests, etc. NOPNAT does not have a high profile and lacks resources for expenses such as promotion and legal fees.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant provincial parks, Crown Land, and Silver Star. • Some neighbourhood plans (NPs) are protecting open space and providing trails. • Quality natural resources (world class) with high potential for natural parks, linear parks and paths. • Have detailed ecological information for Bella Vista/Goose Lake Range – sensitive ecosystem inventory (SEI). • High level of local knowledge and nature-oriented groups. • Coldstream is taking ownership of steep slopes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No regional parks function or proactive planning for natural parks – GVSC addresses municipal types of parks, nothing between this and provincial parks – e.g. other regions GVRD, FVRD, CRD. • Not clear who is addressing ecosystem protection – needs to be regional; jurisdictional uncertainty regarding responsibilities for planning and management of natural areas. • Huge pressure for development, especially in undeveloped areas. • Lack of recognition that land in its natural stage has high value. • Perceived priority for organized sports over passive outdoor recreation. • Natural areas in NPs are often on the land over 30% slope and narrow buffers around wetlands – won't address ecosystem protection. • Not clear on the intent of Open Space in neighbourhood plans - what is the level of protection? Are NP commitments being enforced and monitored? Vernon is not taking ownership of steep slopes. • Don't have detailed ecological information elsewhere (other than Bella Vista/Goose Lake Range). • Creeks have been channelized, destroying natural values. • Uncontrolled use of natural areas by motorbikes, e.g., Middleton Mountain values have been diminished by motorbikes. • Garbage disposal in natural areas. • Poor protection of natural areas outside parks – some are DP areas, some are not mapped, boundaries have not been determined. • Noxious Weeds Act not being enforced – causing damage to natural areas, e.g. areas were mowed too late in fall after seeds had dispersed.

Recommendations

- Consider the regional district as a whole in the context of the Okanagan Valley as a whole, and develop regional level parks that protect key natural areas and resources.
- Support biological inventories to identify the highest value ecosystems and habitats.
- Acquire or establish covenants on large natural areas in each of the key areas within the natural features inventory. Work with NOPNAT, the Land Conservancy and the Nature Trust to promote acquisition of interconnected natural areas through donations, bequests or other mechanisms, and to establish protection for natural areas, e.g., through City or Trust ownership or covenants with these groups.
 - Acquire natural areas around Swan Lake to connect with the proposed park in the north Vernon area and to complement the Nature Trust land on the east shore.
- Work with the province to establish protection for Swan Lake itself. Explore potential to remove float plane use from Swan Lake due to the impacts on birds.
- Work with the motorized recreation groups and the Ministry of Forests to identify and establish a regional use area and corridors for motorized use. Disallow motorized use in other natural areas.
- Support environmental education and stewardship by volunteer groups. Provide funding, especially to NOPNAT, to enable groups to protect and restore natural areas, provide interpretive signs, and organize stewardship activities.
- Enhance communication regarding natural areas, e.g. brochure, Web site, interpretive signs.
- Encourage the municipalities and the regional district to develop consistent guidelines and policies for environmental protection within development sites, such as the following:
 - Increased use of Development Permits for natural areas, if appropriate,
 - Keep as much as possible of shorelines natural,
 - Protect important habitat, including wetlands, creeks,
 - Acquisition of steep slopes everywhere,
 - Acquisition of or covenants on natural areas through the development process,
 - Monitoring and enforcement of the approved plans over time,
 - Enforcement of Noxious Weeds Act.
- Explore opportunities to naturalize portions of existing parks and to restore damaged areas, e.g. Middleton Mountain. This would involve exclusion of use in some areas, placement of growing medium, and planting with native plants.

4.5 Trails

The Ribbons of Green plan set the context for on-road and off-road trails in the region. This Parks and Recreation Master Plan addresses only off-road trails, since on-road paths fall within the jurisdiction of the respective municipal governments. (Proposed on-road trails are illustrated on the map for context).

There are currently around 16 km of off-road trails in the Vernon area. Many of the trails are located in natural areas. Although the trails that do exist are very popular, this is a very small amount of trail development for such a large geographic area.⁴ Given the public's strong interest in having more cycling and hiking trails in the community, they have high hopes and expectations. Implementation of the Ribbons of Green plan is perceived as slow by the interest groups.

Many communities have been involved in developing "greenway" trails in the past ten years. Most of these communities have been very active in trail construction. Vernon residents compare their few trails with more extensive networks available in other communities.

There are needs for at least two types of off-road trails; paved or gravel wide multi-use trails, and narrow unpaved hiking trails. Rough standards for the various types of trails have been developed, but not in great detail and the application of the standards may not have been consistent in the past.

Utility and railway corridors provide unique opportunities for trails. There may be opportunities to make use of these through partnerships with the respective companies. In Vernon, the railway corridor from Swan Lake through downtown to Kalamalka Lake has particular appeal due to its location. Although the railway is still active, it may be possible to acquire a portion of the right-of-way width, provided that appropriate fencing is installed to protect the security of the railway. The Terasen pipeline on the west side of Vernon is another corridor worth exploring. On the east side of Greater Vernon, there is a network of power lines that may also have trail development opportunities.

Crown Land also offers potential for trail use. This is most appropriately developed by the managing provincial agency, e.g., Ministry of Forests.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New sense of priority and awareness regarding trails - Highest public priority per 2001 survey was paths and trails. • Gray Canal and BX Creek are excellent trails. • GVSC is negotiating for the railroad right-of-way that goes north-south from Swan Lake to downtown. • Path to Paddlewheel Park is being developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived slow implementation of Ribbons of Green. • Few developed trails. • Divided jurisdictions, especially regarding Ribbons of Green – City and Regional District, on-road and off-road different. • Deficiencies in bylaws, e.g., different standards or lack of standards with respect to trails, trails have been built 3 different ways, trail standards are needed.

⁴ For comparison, Abbotsford which is about 30% larger in area, has 83 km of trail and is actively working on establishing more, with a target of around 200 km.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-road pathways are included in the OCP to Kal Lake and Swan Lake in future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a staff person addressing trails issues.

Recommendations

- Refine the Ribbons of Green concept to match existing conditions and develop a detailed trail implementation plan including:
 - priorities for implementation of trails, with the highest priorities including key connecting routes and rights-of-way that can be acquired,
 - uses to occur on each trail, e.g. hiking, cycling, horses,
 - detailed standards to be consistently applied for 2 or 3 levels of trail,
 - implementation plan with phasing and budgets,
 - consistent application of the standards with clarification of the purpose of each trail.
- Continue to acquire and develop off-road trails. As part of this process, explore opportunities to use utility and railway corridors for this purpose.
- Negotiate with developers of large parcels to provide trail corridors and if possible to develop major trails through their sites, in both directions if appropriate, e.g. north-south and east-west.
- Develop a consistent signage system for parks and trails, including directional, instructional and interpretive information.
- Respect the rights of private property owners and work with them on mutually acceptable design solutions, e.g. fences where required.

4.6 Waterfront Access

There are currently 11 water access parcels with an average size of 0.15 ha. Those with pedestrian access only can be low profile sites used mostly by local residents. The properties with boat launches are in demand and have high levels of use. Parking is often a problem at the boat launch sites.

Because of the attraction of waterfront land, there has always been interest in acquiring additional waterfront sites. Lakes are extremely important to the Greater Vernon community for their visual attractiveness, natural values, and the multitude of recreational opportunities supported. Because of the uniqueness of having so many major lake resources in one community, they are very important to the identity and lifestyles in the Greater Vernon area. Because of this, it is critical that GVSC take a leadership role in this area, recognizing in addition the contribution of the lakes to tourism and economic development. No clear guidelines or criteria for waterfront land acquisition have been developed in the past.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat launch facilities exist on Okanagan and Kalamalka Lakes through GVSC sites. • Waterfront properties have been acquired over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future of the Lakeshore Drive properties on Okanagan Lake is unclear. • Some of the small waterfront access properties on Kalamalka Lake have low use and low potential for more public use. • Kalamalka Lake has 3 boat launch sites at the north end, which is a drinking water supply.

Recommendations

- Adopt a waterfront acquisition policy to include objectives such as those listed below:

Objectives for Large Lakes

The following are the objectives for waterfront property acquisition on Kalamalka and Okanagan Lakes:

- Place a high priority on acquisition and protection of waterfront property and access to waterfront property.
- Ensure that this priority is reflected in all planning documents within the Greater Vernon area (e.g., OCPs, Neighbourhood Plans, Parks Master Plan, Master Transportation Plan, etc.)
- Ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to waterfront acquisition and access.
- Acquire property that can easily accommodate public access to the waterfront; pedestrian access at a minimum, vehicles as a secondary objective.
- Acquire property with attractive qualities, including gentle slopes, compatible vegetation, good views, compatible uses adjacent.
- Acquire property with good road access to the property.
- Acquire larger parcels where possible.
- Acquire property that can provide benefits to the community at large.
- Acquire property where public waterfront access is currently lacking.
- Consider potential uses and acquire land that can accommodate uses such as: swimming, boat launch, walkway/picnic, beach volleyball, play areas, and other related uses (could include commercial uses).
- Consider the sale of inferior parcels to support acquisition elsewhere.
- Discourage more motor boats on Kal Lake near the drinking water supply at the north end.

Objectives for Swan Lake

The following are the objectives for waterfront property acquisition on Swan Lake:

- Acquire property that will protect environmentally sensitive habitat.
- Acquire parcels that will support trail access to and along the south and east shorelines.
- Acquire property for pedestrian and related types of access only (not boat launches).

Acquisition Strategy

The following strategies are proposed for waterfront property acquisition:

- Establish priorities for acquisition based on the degree to which a property meets the objectives.
 - Keep track of the ownership of desired properties, get rights of first refusal where possible, and acquire properties whenever they are available.
 - Target key areas and assemble properties over time.
-
- Implement the waterfront acquisition policy consistently with the GVSC acting as a unified body with the interests of the entire Greater Vernon area in mind.
 - Ensure that any new waterfront development includes a waterfront trail and park, e.g., in the proposed Brooks Lane commercial area.
 - Acquire waterfront land on the north shore of Okanagan Lake between Kin Beach and the Tavistock Property to serve population growth in this area. Explore the possibility of accomplishing this by acquiring property adjacent to an existing right-of-way.
 - Confirm the location and extent of cattail beds in the Okanagan Landing area (south of beaches near the corner of Okanagan Lake), and acquire or otherwise protect these for environmental and water quality reasons.
 - Evaluate all road rights-of-way that provide waterfront access in relation to their compliance with the objectives and their value for other purposes. Consult with neighbours to determine the levels of use and interest in each property. Retain the good ones, and sell the inferior ones with the revenue going to waterfront acquisition.
 - Continue acquiring Lakeshore Drive lots.
 - Acquire a new boat launch site if possible between Paddlewheel Park and Kin Beach - location is ideal for boat launching – head of lake too shallow, farther south gets steep, properties are small and too far to drive, would take pressure and congestion off Paddlewheel Park
 - Discuss with B.C. Parks their plans and opportunities for enabling appropriate public access to Kal Lake Provincial Park beaches.

5.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

Whereas the previous section reviewed parkland primarily in relation to the supply of the land itself, this section addresses specific facilities within parks. Ball diamonds and sports fields are discussed separately because of the specialized uses associated with these facilities. Information in this section is supplementary to the review of city-wide athletic parks. Other park facilities are discussed at the end of this section.

5.1 Ball Diamonds

Vernon has a total of 34 ball diamonds, of which 24 are for softball (slo-pitch or fastball), and 10 are baseball (9 minor and 1 adult). The following is a summary of ball diamond supply:

Game	Total # of Fields	# of Fields in Parks	# of Fields in Schools	# of Fields w/ Lights
Softball – Adult	20	18	2	4
Softball – Youth	3	0	3	0
Fastball	1	1	0	0
Baseball – Youth	9	5	4	0
Baseball – Adult	1	1	0	0
Total	34	25	9	4

The following is a typical range in supply of these facilities based on other communities in B.C.:

Facility	Low Range	High Range
Softball	1 / 7,429 population	1 / 3,000 population
Baseball	1 / 10,000 population	1 / 7,429 population

Vernon has a softball diamond supply of 1/2,116 population, a very high supply. The baseball diamond supply is 1/5,080 population. This is also a large number of fields for the size of the community. An analysis was conducted of field use in relation to capacity. Using a conservative estimate of capacity (Monday to Saturday week, Saturday based on 9 to 3 pm only, 2 hour blocks for ball games, one block per weekday evening for fields without lights, 2 blocks for fields with lights), the field use in relation to capacity is 55% for school fields, and 75% for fields in parks.

The largest group of ball diamond users in the community is the various adult slo-pitch leagues who together have over 1,000 members. The minor fastball (also called fastpitch) league serves around 180 girls; fastball can use the same diamonds as slo-pitch. There is only one adult baseball league, and a minor baseball league that had 450 members in 2000. Slo-pitch participation is steady, minor fastball is stable, and minor baseball participation is decreasing.

In addition to the above league play that includes practices, games and tournaments, a Funtastic tournament is held in Vernon every summer on the July 1 long weekend. In 2003, 320 teams participated, making this the largest amateur event in Western Canada. Mixed slo-pitch is the central event, with most of the activity occurring on the DND site. The group hopes to build Funtastic Place in Vernon, a major slopitch tournament facility.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ball diamonds at DND are excellent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although Vernon has a high number of ball diamonds, some are poor quality, e.g., Kin Race Track, school fields, and the use of these fields is low. Grahame Park fields have become too small for adult play.

Recommendations

(Note that recommendations for ball diamonds in City-wide Athletic Parks are provided in section 4.2).

- Work on partnership agreements with School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard and to enable access to washrooms.
- Focus on minor fastball at Grahame by moving adults elsewhere, e.g. new field at DND or Funtastic Place, especially since two of the fields at Grahame are too small for adult use.

5.2 Sports Fields

Vernon has a total of 51 sports fields. These are used primarily for soccer, but other uses include football, rugby, field lacrosse, track and field, fly fishing practice, grass volleyball, Special Olympics, and ultimate (frisbee). The following is a summary of the supply of sports fields:

	Total # of Fields	# of Fields in Parks	# of Fields in Schools	# of Fields w/ Lights
Soccer -Youth	35	4	31	0
Soccer -Adult	15	12	3	0
Football	1	1	0	0
Total	51	17	34	0

The following is a typical range in supply of these facilities based on other communities in B.C.:

Facility	Low Range	High Range
Sports Fields	1 / 6,000 population	1 / 2,811 population

Vernon has a sports field supply of 1/996 population. This is a very high standard of supply. An analysis was conducted of field use in relation to capacity. Using a conservative estimate of capacity (Monday to Saturday week, Saturday based on 9 to 3 pm only, 1½ hr blocks for soccer, one block per weekday evening), the field use in relation to capacity is 43% for school fields, and 73% for fields in parks.

The North Okanagan Youth Soccer Association (NOYSA) is the primary user of sports fields. With about 2000 members in the 2003 season, membership is stable and their season of use is April to November. The NOYSA uses all park and school fields except ones that are in poor condition. They host 3 tournaments per year. There are also men’s and women’s soccer leagues in the community.

There are several important trends occurring in soccer. One is a move towards artificial turf, which can sustain much higher levels of play year-round, and many B.C. communities now have or are developing such fields. Another is indoor artificial turf practice facilities, e.g., Western Indoor Soccer, Burnaby. These are very popular for training. The third factor is the hiring of full time soccer development coordinators to improve the sport. These factors are leading to a more active soccer community and worn, over-utilized fields.

The other groups that use sports fields include: senior mens’ rugby, minor football, high school football, field lacrosse, track and field, fly fishing practice, grass volleyball, Special Olympics, and ultimate (frisbee). Ultimate is a relatively new activity. With just over 50 regular members in the Greater Vernon area, the league hosted a major weekend tournament in recent years, and also hosts several smaller tournaments annually.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sports fields in parks are generally very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the school fields are in poor condition, and this is significant since 2/3 of the sports fields are at schools.* Competition among user groups for field use, e.g. frisbee and football using fields typically used by soccer. Confusion between GVSC and NOYSA among the general public, e.g. competing summer camp programs. School gymnasiums may no longer be available for winter soccer practice. Lack of a good quality grandstand (or even bleachers), need for a tournament facility. Marshall is the best so far and may be threatened. Too much focus on user pay – even from groups who contributed and for tournaments. No lights on sports fields.

Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of washrooms and water taps at fields (e.g., schools, DND washrooms not always open).

* E.g., The following fields could not be used in 2003: Grahame #1, VSS #1, Silver Star Elementary, Hillview #1.

Recommendations

(Note that recommendations for sports fields in City-wide Athletic Parks are provided in section 4.2).

- Work on partnership agreements with School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard.
- Support the development of an indoor soccer facility. Potential locations in order of priority: Kin Park, OUC site or area. If possible, locate the indoor soccer fields at the same site as the new premium soccer fields.
- If an artificial turf field is developed, upgrade or develop 2 additional fields in the next 10 years.
 - Options: renovate fields at Kal Secondary, Vernon Secondary, or BX Elementary.
 - Develop 2 new fields in proposed parks.
- If an artificial turf field is not developed, upgrade or develop 6 additional fields in the next 10 years.
 - Options: renovate fields at Kal Secondary, Vernon Secondary, BX Elementary, Kidston, Hillview #1
 - Develop 6 new fields in proposed parks.
- Develop a new fieldhouse with washroom, concession and storage at any proposed major new field complex.
- Develop a package and staff support to encourage tournaments in the community in collaboration with Sport North Okanagan, GVSC Economic Development and Community Futures.

5.3 Other Park Facilities

Tennis

Vernon has 20 public tennis courts in parks and school grounds, and 3 private courts at the Kalamalka Country Club. None of the public courts have lights, but the private courts do. Most of the tennis courts are in good condition. The courts are mostly doubles, with only Marshall Park having 4 courts in one location. There have been two attempts in the past to cover courts, but these attempts were unsuccessful.

The typical standard for tennis courts is one court per 2,500 population. Vernon has 1 court per 2,540 population which is consistent with the standards. The community will need 4 courts in the next 10 years to keep up with population growth. An active tennis group using Marshall Park has interests in covering the four existing courts and adding four more in that location. This would be consistent with trends in tennis, which indicate that larger clusters of courts are much better at supporting a viable

tennis community, providing opportunities for lessons, tournaments and a significant level of participation.

Some of the existing tennis courts may not support much tennis use. Many communities have been converting underutilized tennis courts to hard courts (see below).

Play Areas and Hard Courts

Many of the neighbourhood and community parks in Vernon have some level of play area. There are 28 play areas in city parks, and additional ones at school grounds. There may be some deficiencies here because there are 39 community and neighbourhood parks. Play areas perform an important function in terms of providing opportunities for children to engage in outdoor recreation on an unscheduled basis, and in providing young families with opportunities to gather and socialize.

The play areas range from very basic facilities with a swing set and teeter totter to a variety of climbing structures, bouncy toys, and other more modern play equipment. Some of the facilities are ageing and do not meet current safety standards and others are quite new. Two of the facilities enable use by people with disabilities. There is one spray park completed enclosed by a fence that previously surrounded an outdoor pool in Polson Park. This facility requires retrofitting to be a more inviting facility.

Hard surface multi-purpose courts are a type of facility that has become popular in public parks recently. These are paved courts, usually surrounded by fences, with space for hockey nets, and basketball hoops. These are useful facilities because of the range of activities that can be accommodated, e.g., roller hockey, ball hockey, skateboarding for beginners, general cycling, hopscotch and ball play for small children. Vernon has only one hard court to date; the lacrosse box at Creekside Park. There are several half and full basketball courts.

Picnic Facilities

Vernon currently has 9 parks with picnic facilities, of which 2 have shelters and 3 have BBQ pits. These appear to be meeting demand for picnicking. More will be required to accommodate population growth.

Youth Parks

There are two existing skateboard parks, one located at Polson Park and the other at Creekside Park. As the population grows, more youth parks will be required within the urban area to accommodate skateboarding, cycling, and other activities that may be of interest to local youth.

Dog Off-leash Parks

The GVPRD currently has 5 dog off-leash parks. Dog ownership is extremely popular and dogs require exercise to be healthy. As urban areas have become more dense, there is less opportunity for letting dogs off a leash, except in designated areas. In addition to more dog off-leash parks, an interest was expressed in having dog off-leash trails.

Other Park Facilities

There are many other facilities that can be located in parks. These are best determined in consultation with the surrounding community. The following are some potential park facilities, especially as the population grows: community gardens in the urban area to serve those living in apartments or condominiums, more sand volleyball courts, more spray parks. Adequate facilities such as washrooms, change rooms and food services need to be located where they are required. Vernon is also in need of an integrated signage system for parks and trails.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of tennis courts is consistent with typical standards. • The quality of most courts is good. • Most neighbourhoods have access to a play area. • Some good picnic facilities exist. • Two skateboard parks exist. • Dog off-leash parks exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some courts may not support much tennis. • There is a lack of a large tennis court complex. • There are no covered tennis courts. • There are no public tennis courts with lights. • Some play equipment is old and not meeting current safety standards (it is gradually being upgraded). • There are none of the new type of hard court. • Picnic facilities and spray parks will be required to keep up with growth. • More youth parks with a broader range of options will be required. • More dog off-leash parks and some trails may be required.

Recommendations

- Support the user group in covering or at least adding lights to 4 tennis courts, preferably at Marshall Park.
- Add 4 new tennis courts to one new park within the next 10 years, Marshall if possible.
- Add play areas to all new city-wide, community and neighbourhood parks.
- Upgrade play areas at a rate of 1 to 2 per year to maintain safety.
- Add hard courts to parks if desired by the community.

- Add one more youth park, either in the north end of the community or in the Okanagan Landing area so that these are well distributed.
- Work with the community to determine locations and policies for dog management, considering the geographic distribution of dog off-leash parks and trails.
- Provide picnic facilities in 2 of the new parks.
- Provide 1 to 2 new spray parks, geographically distributed.

6.0 INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The provision of indoor recreational facilities is significant to the quality of life for individuals and families living in Greater Vernon. Indoor recreation facilities provide residents with opportunities to recreate and to be actively, socially and culturally involved in their community. Various sport organizations, cultural groups, not-for-profit societies, private operators and service clubs work closely with the GVSC to offer a variety of leisure opportunities at community indoor recreation facilities.

The importance of indoor recreation facilities in Greater Vernon is reflected in the results of the 2001 parks and recreation survey, with seventy-five (75%) of the respondents indicating that someone in their household had used one or more of the facilities at the Recreation Complex in the past year.

As our recreation facilities age and community planners look to the future, we must be more cost effective and community driven in the provision of indoor recreation facilities. The time of building stand alone, single purpose facilities such as an arena or swimming pool has changed to planning multi-purpose and multi-generational community buildings. Rather than creating stand alone youth and seniors centres, we integrate youth and seniors spaces in multi-purpose community recreation centres. Rather than spreading individual recreation facilities throughout the community, we amalgamate or centralize our recreation facilities in clusters for one-stop shopping experiences.

Other trends related to recreation facilities include planning with partners who share in the capital funding and provide direct programming in the community. Partnerships with health agencies, libraries, social services, sports medicine providers, commercial retailers and not-for-profit groups have been successful across Canada.

For the purposes of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan indoor recreation facilities are grouped into the following categories: aquatics, arenas, fitness/wellness facilities, indoor sports facilities, and cultural facilities. Each subsection below briefly describes the existing facilities and provides a summary of strengths and weaknesses from the user's perspective (based on information from focus groups and interviews).

6.1 Aquatics

The Greater Vernon District has one public indoor pool which has a 25 metre lap pool and a leisure pool with sauna, steam room, and whirlpool. The indoor pool is combined with community recreation facilities that include an indoor arena, outdoor arena, curling rink, gymnasiums, auditorium, weight room, meeting rooms, and the Halina Senior's Centre.

Greater Vernon has the Lakeview and Lavington outdoor pools, which are open from the beginning of July until the beginning of September. The life-guarding at Lakeview outdoor pool is contracted to the Kokanee Swim Club. This free form play pool is over fifty years old and is in need of capital upgrades and maintenance. The Lavington outdoor pool is contracted to a private operator, Recreation Excellence, Inc. The Polson Spray Park is also available during the summer months for families to enjoy the water park spray features.

Many community residents enjoy swimming in local and nearby lakes. The Greater Vernon area is fortunate to have numerous lakes and beaches available for public use during the summer months,

which is unique in the province. There is a significant drop in attendance at the indoor aquatic facility when the public has the option to visit one of the outdoor lakes for their swimming activities.

The general recreation standard accepted for swimming pools throughout British Columbia is 1 per 40,000 residents. Currently the population of Greater Vernon is sufficiently provided with one indoor and two outdoor aquatic facilities. However, as the population increases over the next twenty years, additional aquatic facilities will be required. Newly designed aquatic facilities not only provide a lap pool and leisure pool; they also include other customer service-oriented amenities such as weight rooms, retail space, food services and sports rehabilitation services.

Strengths*	Weaknesses*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Complex pool is accessible and has good parking • Management is available and open to suggestions • Very reasonable fees and charges • Affordable public swim session “Loonie Swim” • Layout of aquatic facility is user friendly • Meets the basic needs of the swim club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to add more features to the pool • Scheduling of swim club vs public swimming • Aquatic equipment requires replacement • Sound system is insufficient – underwater speakers are very poor • Inside ceiling requires maintenance/cleaning • More people and more programs will require more pool space in ten to twenty years • Design flaw of insufficient viewing area for spectators

* From a user group perspective

Recommendations

- Increase participation and utilization of the indoor pool by introducing play toys, water apparatus and large inflatables.
- Allocate an appropriate equipment replacement fund for purchasing needed aquatic equipment for aquafit, swim lessons and public swimming.
- Add a climbing wall at the aquatic centre.
- Provide customer service training for lifeguard/instructors to become “play leaders” and become more interactive with participants. Include the BCRPA recognized “High Five” training program for staff.
- Redevelop the lobby area to be more customer-friendly, adding a small retail shop, food services/coffee shop, which could be leased to a private operator.
- Add health and wellness, massage and rehabilitation services, which could be developed in partnership with a private business.
- Plan for a major capital upgrading at Lakeview Outdoor Pool in approximately 5 years, adding spray features and play apparatus.
- Spray parks (refer to section 5).

- Investigate the possibility of alternative management of the delivery of aquatic services, e.g., to a private operator or a not-for-profit community association.
- Allocate the required capital funds for upgrading the Aquatic Centre in approximately ten years to include a minor retrofit and replacement of water features.
- Investigate options for purchasing property and initiate a partnership in order to plan and develop a new aquatic and wellness/fitness facility. A new 25 metre programming pool with adjustable floor is recommended, with gymnasiums, weight room, and a sports rehabilitation facility. In twenty years, the population is estimated to be approaching 70,000 residents and this will justify the development of a second indoor aquatic facility to be part of a community recreation facility located in an area of increased population density, e.g., Okanagan University College site or area, or Okanagan Landing.

6.2 Arenas

Greater Vernon is fortunate to have five ice surfaces available to organized ice user groups and local residents. These include: the Civic arena, Priest Valley (PV) arena, Multiplex, Centennial outdoor rink, and the privately-owned Okanagan Training Rink. Additional single ice surfaces are provided within a thirty to forty minute drive in Lumby, Enderby and Armstrong.

The Civic arena accommodates minor hockey and one adult hockey league. Priest Valley arena accommodates figure skating, speed skating, ringette, adult hockey and public skating on Saturdays for one hour. The Multiplex is the home of the Vipers Junior A hockey team, and ice time is allocated to ringette, minor hockey, adult hockey and public skating. The Centennial Outdoor Arena operates when weather permits and provides free public skating, parent and tot, shinny, ringette, girl's hockey, and School District #22 usage.

Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation has contracted a private operator, Recreation Excellence, to manage all public ice surfaces in the Greater Vernon area.

In addition to ice-related activities and programs, the Multiplex is designed to accommodate a variety of dry floor uses including large-scale community special events, concerts, car shows, exhibitions and trade shows.

The general standard accepted for arenas is 1 for 40,000 residents. With a total of four indoor ice sheets and one outdoor seasonal rink available in the Greater Vernon area, the community is currently well-served for the population. However, some communities require more ice than this standard because they have higher than typical participation in ice-related activities, e.g. City of Calgary uses a standard of 1 ice sheet for 20,000 residents. Vernon does have a high level of interest and participation in ice-related uses. This demand could decline in relation to population within 20 years as baby boomers age.

Although there is pressure from arena user groups to secure convenient times for their use, the GVSC does not wish to over-build the capacity of arenas and become less cost effective in their operation. The approach to providing additional arena surfaces will be dependent upon the increasing population versus the anticipated declining proportion of the population who will use arenas in the next twenty years.

Other considerations are the quality and aging of facilities. For example, the trend in public skating is towards leisure ice facilities with free-form configurations and features that make skating more interesting. A structural review of the Civic Arena and Priest Valley Arena identified that both buildings are structurally sound and are expected to last more than 20 years.

Strengths*	Weaknesses*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient supply of arenas • Easy to book ice and secure time slots • Multiplex is a good facility to host the figure skating Ice Show • Youth groups are subsidized 50% by GVSC • Free skating at Centennial arena • Multiplex has a positive effect, hosting regional sporting events, concerts, curling, and the Vancouver Canucks • Economic advantages to hosting large events at the Multiplex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Learn to Skate” is competing with Figure Skating “Can Skate” • There is no Ice Allocation Policy • Multiplex special events interrupt regular ice user groups • Pressure for the Multiplex to be multi use, providing other than ice-related activities • Multiplex ice rental rates are more expensive than Civic arena ice rental rates

* From a user group perspective

Recommendations

- Develop an Ice Allocation Policy with input from regular ice user groups.
- Review management of all arena facilities.
 - Options: Continue contract with private operators.
 - Form a not-for-profit society “Greater Vernon Arena Association”.
- Develop a leisure ice surface.
 - Options: Replace the concrete floor at Centennial outdoor rink and renovate this site into a free form ice surface with fire pit and outdoor theming.
 - Develop a larger leisure ice surface at a new location in conjunction with a community centre.
- Provide additional ice surfaces to replace the Civic arena in approximately twenty years
 - Options: Plan to build two utility ice sheets at a new location in conjunction with a new community recreation facility.
 - Twin the Multiplex, adding a standard sized ice sheet.

6.3 Fitness / Wellness Facilities

Fitness facilities within Greater Vernon include numerous private fitness centres in addition to the Recreation Complex which provides weight room and land fitness facilities.

The baby boom generation is having a large impact on the design and use of fitness, health and wellness facilities, and this is expected to continue during the next ten to twenty years. The retirement of this generally well-educated and healthy group will not only change the workforce, but will also create a new large group of active retirees who will expect to take up new challenges in their spare time. Research has indicated that the majority of recreation departments are providing not only fitness programs and weight room facilities, but are also including rehabilitation, health and wellness programs.

Research and comparisons indicate that to operate a profit-generating weight room facility, the weight room space must be at least 465 square m (5,000 sq. ft). Although there is some risk of competing with the private sector, a segment of the population enjoys participating in fitness activities at their local recreation centre rather than becoming a member of a privately operated fitness facility. Fitness, health and wellness activities are considered to be a basic recreation service.

Strengths*	Weaknesses*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of private fitness centres in Greater Vernon area • Fitness instructors are BCRPA certified and registered • Recreation Complex facilities include gymnasiums, pools, weight room, auditorium and programming spaces • Centralized facilities at the Recreation Complex • Helpful staff and good customer service • Land and aquatic fitness facilities are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Complex weight room is too small for classes or drop-in use • Weight room requires expansion, and updated and well maintained equipment • Weight room equipment should be specialized for target markets including women, seniors and people with disabilities • No option for fitness membership and limited drop-in available • The majority of public fitness opportunities are registered programs running 10 to 20 classes

* From a user group perspective

Recommendations

- Provide space for fitness, wellness and rehabilitation services by renovating the auditorium into a profit-centred operation. Develop a partnership with the private sector to accommodate fitness, health and wellness programs (weight room, rehabilitation services, massage therapy, sports medicine).
- Provide accessible weight room equipment for seniors and people with disabilities in new facility.
- Consider partnerships with developers to include fitness, weight room and community space in future large condominium complexes and provide “outreach” programs at these locations.

- Consider a partnership with the private sector to develop a new community recreation centre in a residential growth area which would include gymnasiums, fitness and weight room facilities. (refer to Aquatics section for locations).

6.4 Indoor Sports Facilities

The major indoor sports facilities provided by Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation are located at the Recreation Complex. In addition, facilities in the community are located in public schools, private schools, churches and private clubs.

The 2001 public survey asked respondents to indicate what new indoor facilities were required in the Greater Vernon area. Thirty one (31%) percent of the respondents suggested the need for additional gymnasium space while thirty (30%) percent indicated a large activity centre / hall. Clearly a multi-purpose indoor facility ranks at the top of community priorities for new recreation facilities. The new type of multi-purpose community centre provides a central “gathering place” for residents of all ages and accommodates recreation, sport, fitness, cultural and social activities.

The recommended standard for multi-purpose community centres is one per 60,000 residents. The Greater Vernon Recreation Complex with the two gymnasiums is sufficient for the current time. Future long-range plans should include developing partnerships with sport organizations to build indoor recreation facilities on land provided by Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation.

Strengths*	Weaknesses*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single use indoor facilities for boxing club, curling, and seniors at the Recreation Complex • Variety of indoor facilities: Dogwood and PV gymnasiums and the auditorium • Reasonable rental rates for indoor facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of community access to school facilities - access limited to elementary school gyms, less access to larger secondary school gyms • Lack of land to expand Recreation Complex by adding new indoor facilities

* From a user group perspective

Recommendations

- Work with School District No. 22 Board and staff to develop a clear policy on community use that increases community access and recreation programming in school gymnasiums.
- Continue to provide capital funds to School District #22 to enlarge the size of elementary school gymnasiums to secondary school size gymnasiums.
- Consider providing capital funds to School District #22 to twin secondary school gymnasiums in order to provide indoor sport tournament facilities. Potential sites may include Fulton Secondary School and VSS.

- Explore options for a new multi-purpose community recreation complex designed to accommodate recreational, social and cultural activities, including gymnasiums, fitness facilities pool, arena, and general community use spaces. The location should be separate from the existing Recreation Complex and central to a concentration of population, e.g., Okanagan University College, Okanagan Landing, or Coldstream.
- Provide land and partner with community sport organizations which will provide funding for capital costs of building permanent indoor facilities, e.g., indoor soccer, indoor tennis, gymnastics.
- Maximize the use of the Recreation Complex Auditorium by renovating it to accommodate fitness, health and wellness programs, e.g., weight room, rehabilitation services, massage therapy, sports medicine (see previous section).
- Explore the development of a partnership to build a full-time gymnastics facility.

6.5 Cultural Facilities

The word “culture” can have different meanings depending on the use and the context. Consistent with trends in municipal recreation, culture in this report refers to arts, heritage, and ethnic diversity.

The provision of cultural opportunities such as visual and performing arts in a community is essential to the development of artistic expression, creativity, and imagination. The current supply of large cultural facilities available for community use includes: the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre, Vernon Community Arts Centre, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon Museum and Archives, and Powerhouse Theatre.

Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation does not directly provide art and cultural services. Not-for-profit groups are the primary services providers for arts, cultural and heritage programs.

The relationship between the arts and cultural not-for-profit societies and Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation has been traditionally that of tenant / landlord. Each organization occupies a facility and Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation provides an operating grant to cover building expenses including maintenance, utilities, and janitorial costs. Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation does not wish to be involved with cultural community groups other than through the fair and equitable distribution of funds.

Other than the provision of operating funds, no formal relationship or communication system exists among the various cultural service providers and Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation. A network of cultural service organizations could enable seasonal programming discussions in order to eliminate duplication in services and to ensure a coordinated community approach to providing arts and cultural facilities and services.

Recommendations

- Coordinate an Arts and Cultural Network to ensure regular communication among various not-for-profit arts organizations and to assist in developing a coordinated approach for the delivery of arts and cultural services in the community.

- Develop a policy on art in public places to increase the liveability and attractiveness of the community by making art an integral part of the environment.
- Develop a sponsorship package to encourage financial contributions towards locating sculptured art in key public locations throughout the community (e.g. Civic Plaza, Swan Creek pathway).
- Consider supporting the relocation of the Vernon Public Art Gallery to the existing Vernon Public Library building, pending the final decision on the new library location.
- Develop a new policy and criteria for funding to community groups. Review the level of funding provided to arts and cultural organizations based on the new criteria.
- Develop a Cultural Plan involving all community arts, cultural and heritage organizations.

7.0 RECREATION PROGRAMS

The delivery of recreation programs in the Greater Vernon area provides opportunities for personal growth and development in addition to providing many positive benefits to the community at large. In addition to programs being provided by the GVSC, recreational services has primarily been the responsibility of volunteer community groups and clubs. The extensive participation of volunteers has been very successful, with approximately thirty community groups and clubs providing recreation programs for people of all ages and interests.

The delivery of recreation programs throughout most communities in British Columbia is the responsibility of municipal recreation departments. In other communities such as Ridge Meadows and Chilliwack, a “community development” approach to providing leisure services has been adopted. Various sport organizations, cultural groups, community associations, businesses, not-for-profit societies and service clubs work closely with the Parks and Recreation Department to offer residents a variety and balance of recreational opportunities. The responsibilities of local government include facilitating community groups to directly provide recreation services and filling the gaps in the provision of recreation programs.

In the provision of recreation programs, the GVSC should use the following principles:

- Partner with community groups to provide recreation programs.
- Assist with coordinating a centralized approach for the delivery of arts and cultural programs.
- Partner with School District #22 to develop “neighbourhood-based” public recreation programs in public schools.
- Develop or sponsor programs where community groups cannot fill the need.
- Encourage all residents to participate in recreational activities in order to address the particular needs of disenfranchised groups and individuals.
- Coordinate a centralized approach to marketing community recreation programs involving all community recreation service providers.

Strengths*	Weaknesses*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large number of volunteer groups provide community recreation programs • Some programs are provided at existing community facilities • Opportunity exists to develop partnerships with community groups to provide programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of duplication in services provided by community groups, no coordinated approach and delivery system • Lack of public programs results in few opportunities for those unaffiliated with a private group or club • Lack of recreation management position to coordinate community development • Lack of recreation programs and services for teens

* From a user group perspective

Recommendations

- Adopt a “community development” approach to providing recreation programs to ensure greater utilization of existing recreation facilities. Staff to act in a facilitative role with community groups to ensure less duplication in programs and a coordinated approach to service delivery.
- Form an “Association of Community Recreation Planners” which will be representative of all community groups providing recreational programs. This association will ensure less duplication in program services and outline program delineation responsibilities.
- Expand the delivery of recreational program services from current recreation facilities to include satellite programming in public schools. Adopt a “neighbourhood development” program delivery in school catchment areas in partnership with local parent advisory groups.
- Develop a Community Diversity Action Plan which addresses diversity issues and opportunities. Establish an advisory group who can provide guidance and determine initiatives as required.
- Coordinate a workshop on cultural diversity for community groups that provide recreation programs.
- Assist with maximizing usage of Halina Senior’s Centre by offering intergenerational programs, gradually increasing facility usage by programming for all age groups.
- Plan to provide additional programs for seniors in the next ten to twenty years as the more active baby boomers retire and have available leisure time. Continue to encourage the Schubert Centre to expand recreational activities for senior citizens.
- Liaise with youth organizations and support the Teen Junction with their plans to build a new teen centre. Complete a program review and identify the impact on the Boys and Girls Club.
- Encourage social services agencies to provide recreation programs for people with disabilities.
- Investigate and consider development of a financial assistance program to allow people who normally would not participate to experience the benefit of having an active lifestyle.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be implemented in many ways by government and their various partners. The implementation strategy provided here highlights some key aspects required for successful implementation of the Plan.

8.1 Partnerships

In these fiscally constraining times, many Parks and Recreation Departments are looking to partnerships as an integral component of community development and as a way to make limited municipal funds go farther in the development and operation of facilities and services. One of the challenges is that the public's willingness to pay for parks and recreation services is not always consistent with their demand for these services. Working with partners to deliver parks and recreation services enhances and supports community spirit and vitality, and the "investment" of all of those involved in helping to provide appropriate recreation experiences.

There are many opportunities for partnerships, some of which are already occurring. Volunteerism is one of the primary ones. Opportunities for volunteers include: coaching activities, instructing programs, managing organizations and projects, planning for new services, and advising on committees. They can also be involved in support activities such as providing transportation, fund-raising, and problem-solving.

Volunteers are a huge asset to the community and it is important to recognize them as such. As the community expands its volunteer network, it will be most successful if sufficient resources are provided for volunteers, e.g. provision of materials, covering expenses, appropriate volunteer recognition.

Associations and organizations of different types also provide partnership opportunities. Partnership with the tourism sector can assist in the development and promotion of facilities and events. Partnership with the health industry can help to encourage an active lifestyle, e.g. Heart and Stroke Foundation's "walk for health". Organizations such as the Rotary Club have interest in building facilities within parks. Schools and colleges can supply students who can learn and provide community services through special projects.

A major partnership opportunity can be achieved through partnership with the private sector. This can range from simple concessions to complex facilities. The most common model is that the developer builds a facility or provides a service on park property and pays rent and/or a percentage of sales to the City. Public-private partnerships can be complex, and they should be entered with clear agreements on the roles of the partners, communication procedures, and operational guidelines, policies and procedures for the development and operation phases.

The GVSC is currently involved in partnerships with other government agencies such as the School District and many not-for-profit societies, community organizations and sports groups who are providing community recreation services.

Parks and recreation departments across Canada have developed extremely successful partnerships with organizations such as health agencies, community associations, volunteers in parks programs, private sector business, and festival societies.

Community Development

Community development is a process of meaningful citizen participation in decision-making, in actively helping to carry out those decisions, and in the evolution of the community (Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture, Directional Document for Community Development, 2001). “Community” means a shared sense of connection among people. “Development” means bringing out the possibilities of the community. It is well proven that community development and community engagement processes are successful in contributing to a strong sense of community pride and community cohesiveness.

Community development is also a complex process, often involving more resources than are typically anticipated or available. The Greater Vernon area has an active network of volunteers working in many capacities, and some of the special events in particular are testament to their efforts.

There are different types of communities. Some are based on “place”, such as neighbourhoods. Other communities are based on interests, such as a specific activity or event. Traditionally, parks and recreation staff have assumed responsibility for determining the needs for services and facilities. In recent years, the public is interested in being actively involved in decisions that affect their lives and lifestyles, and parks and recreation departments have shifted to being community facilitators.

As the Greater Vernon area becomes more involved in community development, it will be important to have policies and procedures that allow for timely public involvement. There will need to be a system that enables discussion, the identification of problems, and the cooperative development of solutions. Some potential techniques include local advisory groups, local meetings, interest group meetings, public meetings, workshops, mail-outs and surveys. Whatever the method, there should be some consistency in the approaches used, and the information obtained should be carefully interpreted and conveyed back to the public.

In some communities, citizens are unaware of the benefits of community development, and can perceive some activities as “downloading”. To prevent this, it is important to have a communication strategy that articulates why community development is being implemented, including the concepts behind the philosophy and past success stories.

As mentioned above, community development requires resources. If the GVSC is to be successful in promoting and expanding community development, available staff with the appropriate skills will be required.

Marketing

Marketing and communication is an important tool for maximizing awareness and use of the community’s services and facilities. Done well, it enhances relationships with citizens and conveys the image and the benefits of the parks and recreation system. There are a number of components to marketing, including: printed materials, signage, and pricing.

Vernon's marketing information is distributed primarily through Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter Leisure Guides. These materials have been useful, however as the community and services expand, there will be a need to expand marketing efforts. For example, more types of distribution of information may be needed; and better information on parks and trails may be desired.

Signage says a lot about the provider of the service, and establishes a ready means of identification. As discussed elsewhere in this plan, parks and trails in the GVPRD are in need of a new, integrated signage system. In addition, there is a need for increasing the image and profile of GVSC by developing a consistent application of the logo to indoor and outdoor facility signage, marketing products, media releases, publications and all other communications material.

Through the municipal tax structure, publicly accessible facilities, programs and services are a key determinant of residents' "quality of life". Although residents may feel a sense of entitlement to tax-subsidized services, the trend in recent years has been for increased cost recovery of the overhead cost of facilities operation and programming. The mission of most recreation departments has been to provide programs and services based on the needs expressed by community residents. This often results in a mix of programs including those that can command: a full recovery of their costs, a partial recovery of cost and those that are philosophically important but not able to be revenue positive.

The marketing approach and provision of services in general needs to ensure that all members of the community feel welcome to participate. This includes people with disabilities, people of all cultures, all genders, and those who are economically disadvantaged.

Contract Management

In 2006, the existing contract expires and there will be an opportunity to consider alternative options for the management and delivery of recreation services. Options to consider include: renewing the existing contract, contracting a private operator, developing a not-for-profit society, or any combination of these. For example, it could be possible to contract out the operation of the aquatic centre while the community facilities and programs would be administered by a not-for-profit society.

Many communities throughout Canada have formed Community Associations which are responsible for the management and operation of recreation facilities and program services. Recreation staff are responsible to the Community Association and work closely with a Board of Directors to provide a variety of recreation services. This approach has been very successful in empowering community volunteers to become more involved in the delivery of recreation services.

Centralized Community Booking Function

Community groups and /or individuals book parks, playing fields, gymnasiums, meeting rooms and the auditorium by contacting staff at the Recreation Complex. Exempt from the centralized booking system is the booking and scheduling of arenas, which is handled by the private operator, Recreation Excellence. The second phase of a centralized booking system is to include the booking of all arenas, which will need to be discussed during contract negotiations. The third phase of the centralized booking system is to include the booking of all School District #22 gymnasiums.

Recommendations

- Adopt a community development approach to the provision of parks and recreation services, including development of a definition of community development and a common understanding of its implications.
- Develop guidelines and policies to assist in the development of partnership agreements with the private and non-profit sectors.
- Develop a policy for funding to all community groups that is fair, equitable and based upon outlined criteria.
- Communicate the partnership vision consistently and frequently to staff, community groups, businesses and citizens.
- Develop procedures to ensure that residents have consistent and appropriate opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Hire staff and allocate resources to promote and support volunteerism and community development.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan, including information on partnership and community development opportunities and benefits.
- Develop policies and guidelines related to private or corporate sponsorships and advertising.
- Develop adopt-a-park and adopt-a-trail programs to support stewardship. This is especially appropriate for small parks that can be taken care of by volunteer groups much more efficiently than by the GVSC.
- Consider and evaluate a range of options for the management and delivery of recreation services before the contract with the City of Vernon expires. Consider the potential role of Community Associations as part of this analysis.
- Continue to implement the plan for a centralized booking function for all Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Develop a consistent set of standards for signage and application of the GVSC logo for all indoor and outdoor facilities, publications, and communications material.

8.2 Human Resources

The current level of staffing for GVSC includes a Parks and Recreation Director and three full-time office support staff which are shared among Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Water Utility and the General Manager for GVSC.

The provision of parks services is provided by the City of Vernon, Public Works Department. The delivery of community recreation facilities and programs is provided by a variety of service delivery models. The City of Vernon provides a Manager of Programs and Facilities who works half time (50%) for GVSC in addition to aquatics, recreation programming, maintenance and reception staff. The management of the recreation complex and aquatic facilities are contracted to the City of Vernon. The management of arena facilities is contracted to the private operator, Recreation Excellence Inc. The Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre, Vernon Community Arts Centre, Vernon Public Art

Gallery and Vernon Museum and Archives are managed by not-for-profit societies. Various sport organizations, other not-for-profit societies, service clubs and private contractors also contribute to the delivery of parks and recreation services in the Greater Vernon area.

Staff are serving a wide variety of Greater Vernon users in a complex service delivery model. This includes managing, overseeing and protecting tens of millions of dollars of parks and recreation assets as well as an annual operating budget in excess of \$9 million. It is therefore necessary to ensure that appropriate management staff are overseeing the distribution of community funds and allocation of resources.

Recommendations

- Strengthen staff skills in facilitation, negotiation, business case development, strategic planning and working with community partners to support the community development approach.
- Adopt the following management staff structure for the delivery of community parks and recreation services in the GVSC.

Parks and Recreation Director

Liaison with GVSC and elected officials
Communication and consultation with the Regional District
Assist with developing consensus amongst all jurisdictions
Policy development and strategic planning
Identification of partnership opportunities
Management of future parks and recreation facility developments
Responsible for operating and capital budgets and maintaining the budgeting system
Maintain current inventories of parks and facilities and ensure they are updated on a regular basis

Parks Planner

Current and long range planning for parks and open spaces, ball diamonds, sports fields and other outdoor recreation facilities
Technical skills - landscape planning and design
Protected area and interpretive planning
Capital development and maintenance plan
Capital requirements and outdoor facility developments
Coordination and liaison with parks maintenance staff
Oversee capital budget for parks
(Parks technician required during a later phase of the human resources plan)

Facilities Manager

Building maintenance for all indoor recreation facilities
Facility audits and maintain current inventory of facilities
Capital maintenance and development plan
Capital requirements and indoor facility developments
Oversee capital budget for indoor facilities
Identification of partnership opportunities

**Community Development
Coordinator**

Liaison with School District, community groups, not-for-profit societies and other community service providers
Oversee the centralized booking of community facilities
Marketing and communications plan
Sponsorship development
Partnership development and ensuring ongoing relationships
Facilitate cultural agencies network
Strategic planning

Should funding not be available to employ all recommended staff positions immediately, the parks planner has been identified as the most critical. A timeline for proposed new GVSC staff is as follows:

Immediate	Parks Planner
1 – 3 years	Community Development Coordinator and Facilities Manager

8.3 Policy Development

GVSC assumes responsibility for planning and providing parks and recreation services for all municipal jurisdictions in the GVPRD. It is therefore important that GVSC develop policies to ensure collaboration, consensus and equitable delivery of parks and recreation services to the community.

The importance of developing policies is to ensure the consistent and coordinated delivery of parks and recreation services and to maximize resources. Clear policies provide guidance and direction to all civic servants, private contractors and community groups. Policies also encourage recreation service delivery organizations to commit to a cooperative approach.

Recommendations

- Develop a policy for inclusion of low-income families in recreation programs, and inform the public about the policy.
- Develop a policy on the inclusion of people with disabilities indicating that the Parks and Recreation Department will promote and provide access for persons with disabilities throughout the continuum from participatory to high performance activities.
- Develop a policy on gender equity to ensure that girls and women have opportunities and equity as participants, competitors and leaders.
- Refine Official Community Plans within the Greater Vernon area as required to incorporate the provisions of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

8.4 Financial Planning

User Fees and Charges

Overall the user fees within the GVPRD are comparable to those in neighbouring jurisdictions. The setting of user fees is very much dictated by the political and professional judgements, views and philosophies within the jurisdiction. GVSC will need to determine what its objectives are with respect to user fees and recovery of costs. A user fee pricing policy should be established and should consider the following:

- The overall value and benefit of parks and recreation services to the community,
- Consultation with user groups and the taxpayer at large,
- The taxpayers' responsibility vs. the users' responsibility towards the cost of parks and recreation services,
- The percentage of the cost of services to be funded by the taxpayer,
- What is included in the cost of a service (direct vs. indirect costs),
- The taxpayers' willingness to subsidize parks and recreation services,
- The fundamental criteria to be utilized in setting user fees, e.g., fairness, equity and consistency, historical rates, or market-based comparisons,
- The impact of increases in fees on the demand for services and the overall revenues received, and
- Exclusive use vs. general access use of a facility or service.

Since 1997, the user fee increases have not kept pace with inflation. This means that a greater percentage of the responsibility for parks and recreation services has been transferred from the user to the taxpayer.

The Greater Vernon Services Fees and Charges Manual states that "recoveries from services and facilities should be self-supporting for adults, and no more than 50% subsidization for children and 'disabled' persons". A very significant challenge in this area is determining what is included in cost and how to measure the costs of services. A detailed rationalization is required for each service area to determine the costs for the service and what the recovery rate is for that service. It appears that, with the exception of arena rental rates, adult rates are not recovering the cost of the service and youth rates are not recovering 50% of the cost of the service. The following are a few examples of the cost vs. recovery of services. It should be recognized that these are preliminary indications only and a more detailed analysis will be required for all service areas.

Arenas

The average operating costs per hour for the Civic arena and the PV arena are approximately \$131 and \$114 respectively. The admission fees are \$3.75 for adults and \$2.75 for youth. For public skating events, approximately 80 participants are required for the facility to break even based on a two hour session. For arena rentals, the adult rate is \$150.00 per hour and the minor hockey rate is

\$62.25. Therefore, the adult rate is above 100% of the cost of the services and the minor hockey rate is approximately 50% of the cost of the service.

Indoor Pool

The average operating cost per hour for the indoor pool is approximately \$165. Admission fees are \$4.10 for adults and \$3.00 for youth. For a public swim, approximately 100 participants are required to break even based on a two hour session. For pool rentals, the Swim Club pays \$34.00 to \$65.35 per hour but does not utilize the entire facility. For community use the rate is \$138.00 per hour and the commercial/private rate is \$153.75 per hour. Therefore, in no case is the facility recovering 100% of the operating costs.

Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds

The average operating cost per hour for sports fields and ball diamonds ranges from \$14 to \$65. The rates for sports fields/diamonds are \$10.80 per hour for adults and \$4.35 per hour for youth. These recoveries are significantly below the operating costs for sports fields/diamonds.

Summary

There are some dramatic differences in recovery rates as a percentage of operating costs, resulting in significant differences in the impact to the user and subsequently to the taxpayer burden.

Recommendations

- Develop a Pricing Policy for User Fees with clear criteria and guidelines for setting user fees.
- Rationalize the cost of each service area and measure this against the recoveries within each service area.
- Develop a transition plan to address user fee discrepancies to ensure that dramatic changes are phased in over a period of years.
- Establish a target of user fees as a percentage of the total budget and ensure that this target is addressed as part of the annual user fee review.
- Ensure that the subsidy rates for each service area are communicated to users and taxpayers.

Funding Growth Related Facilities and Services

Development Cost Charges – Parkland Acquisition

The Local Government Act allows jurisdictions to charge a Development Cost Charge (DCC) for new development to cover capital costs associated with growth. The GVSC currently has a DCC for parkland acquisition of \$2,000 per lot. This rate was set in 1995 and has not been increased since.

Based on the growth projections, the average new household will have 2.3 residents. Utilizing a land acquisition cost of \$125,000 per acre and an assist factor of 1%, the DCC rate for parkland acquisition would be set at \$2,844.

The current DCC bylaw does not address differences in housing type, and this can have significant implications in relation to needs for parks and recreation. For example, assuming 3.0 residents per household for single family and 2.0 residents per household for multi family, the DCC rates would be \$3,716 and \$2,475 respectively. If separate DCC categories and rates are not established and the housing type mix is different than projected, a shortfall in DCCs could occur, resulting in a shortfall in parkland.

A full review of DCCs is required, utilizing the Province's Best Practices Guide as the framework. As part of this review, GVSC needs to determine its philosophy and policy relative to growth. If growth is to pay for itself, then an increase in DCCs is certainly required. If a high DCC rate is seen to discourage desired growth, a policy could include increasing the assist factor during less buoyant economic times. During strong economic times, the DCC rate is unlikely to negatively affect new development.

Development Cost Charges – Parkland Development

In addition to parkland acquisition, the Local Government Act now permits DCCs for parkland development. The Act allows the use of DCCs for “providing fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, rest rooms, changing rooms and playground and playing field equipment on parkland”. Due to the constraints on taxation and the difficulty in providing capital funding for new projects, the DCC review should include the implications of establishing a DCC for parkland development.

Land Use Planning Tools and 5% Land Dedication

As outlined in the Parks and Open Space section of this report, there are some unique geographic and environmental features in the Greater Vernon area that need to be protected and secured. The Local Government Act has a number of provisions to allow for this protection through the development process. These include the use of Development Permit Areas, 5% land dedication, as well as other development requirements. The staffs of the Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments of the jurisdictions within Greater Vernon Services need to work closely together to ensure that the OCPs and Neighbourhood Plans are consistent with one another and to provide for the securing of open space in non-traditional ways. It is necessary for successful short-term and long-range planning to ensure all municipal jurisdictions work as one consolidated unit.

Recommendations

- Develop a policy on growth based on a clear statement regarding whether growth should pay for itself or not. Ensure that this policy is reflected in all planning documents.
- Review and increase parkland DCCs to reflect current market conditions.
- Include parkland development in the DCC review and establish a parkland development DCC.
- Utilize the Province's Best Practices Guide as the framework for the DCC review.

- Consider different DCC rates for different housing types (i.e., single family vs. multi family)
- Review population growth after the 2006 census becomes available, and revise this plan's recommendations and financial estimates if growth is significantly different from the projection of 1/5% per annum.
- Establish a staff committee of the Planning and Parks and Recreation departments within the GVSC to examine and document a consistent approach to securing open space through the development process.
- Use land use planning tools where possible to secure parkland, particularly for natural areas, trails, beach access, and neighbourhood parks. Examples include: development permit areas, environmentally sensitive areas and use of bonus densities.

Funding for Shortfall in Existing Parkland Inventory

There is currently a deficiency of 51.2 hectares of parks and open space relative to the current standard of 4 hectares per thousand persons. This represents an outstanding obligation of \$10 to \$15 million and is not within the current funding framework of the GVSC budget. This amount could be significantly reduced if ALR land could be utilized to meet part of this shortfall. Current Land Commission requirements seem to allow the use of ALR land for park purposes if the need for the land can be demonstrated in a Master Plan. Discussions and negotiations with the Land Commission should take place to determine the extent to which ALR land may be utilized to address this shortfall.

Consideration should be given to a new and separate levy for parkland acquisition. This levy could be applied against all land and improvements within the GVPRD as the provision of parkland is a long term investment in the community. Based on a \$10 million program over a ten year period this would cost the typical household approximately \$ 33 per year. In addition to addressing the current shortfall, this would create the opportunity to identify and acquire strategic sites in a timely and proactive manner.

Recommendations

- Develop a land acquisition strategy for parkland that targets specific properties that could meet the recommendations of the Master Plan, including a strategy for tracking the ownership and potential for purchase of these properties.
- Enter into discussions with the Land Commission to determine what portion of the current parkland shortfall could be addressed by ALR acquisitions. Submit the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to the Agricultural Land Commission along with a request for permission to develop new parkland that is currently within the ALR.
- Establish a parkland levy on all land and improvement assessments within the GVPRD to create a funding mechanism for the current shortfall.

8.5 Parks and Recreation Phasing and Capital Plan

This section provides tables that summarize all of the recommendations put forward in this plan. Each recommendation is placed within a time frame within which it is proposed. An estimated ballpark cost, primary funding source(s), and potential partnership(s), if applicable, are also provided for each recommendation. Priorities (as 1, 2 or 3) are also indicated in the event that there isn't sufficient budget available to implement all of the recommendations within a given time frame.

Estimated costs were identified with the assistance of financial consultants, architects, and park and recreation planners, with information on property acquisition costs from GVSC staff. (Costs for options are noted in red type.) The cost levels indicated are order-of-magnitude estimates only and will need to be refined as more detailed capital programs and budgets are developed in consultation with the community. Costs for items beyond the 10-year time frame are not necessarily provided at this time. Items marked "na" often require staff involvement, but no capital costs.

Major Destination Parks

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Acquire 18 ha for a new major destination park in the north Vernon area to meet current deficiency	1	✓				\$1,800	Capital	Env Trusts
Acquire additional 22 ha for a new major destination park in the north Vernon area to meet future needs	1		✓			\$2,200	DCC	Env Trusts
Develop park facilities at Swan Lake	3			✓		\$2,000		
Explore opportunities for acquiring land for a third major destination park	2				✓		DCC	Env Trusts
Upgrade Polson Park	2	✓				\$2,000	Capital, DCC	
Secure the DND land, and develop it as a softball tournament facility	1		✓			\$1,000	Capital	User Groups
Develop Kin Park as a tournament-level field sports facility	1			✓		\$4,000	Capital	User Groups
Acquire large properties to replace DND and Marshall Park in the future, if necessary (42 ha)	3				✓	\$4,200	Capital	User Groups
Replace athletic facilities from DND and Marshall Park if necessary	3				✓	\$5,000		
Develop outdoor gathering spaces along with any new central recreation facilities	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$600	Capital	
If the Civic Arena site is sold, require an urban park component during redevelopment (staff requirement)	1				✓	na		
Renovate the City	2			✓		\$300	Capital	

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Hall/Museum/Library complex plaza								
Renovate other urban parks	3		✓		✓	\$200	Capital	
Encourage developers in the urban area to provide plazas	1	✓				na	Capital	
Develop facilities on land north of Kin Beach	2		✓			\$200	DCC	
Acquire additional properties around Paddlewheel Park	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$1,800	DCC	
Develop new facilities on the expanded Paddlewheel Park	2		✓	✓	✓	\$1,500	DCC	
Upgrade and add new facilities to Kal Beach Park	2		✓		✓	\$200	Capital	
Consider road relocation around Kal Beach Park	3				✓		DCC	

Community and Neighbourhood Parks

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Acquire 34 ha for new community and neighbourhood parks to meet current deficiency	1	✓	✓			\$8,600	Capital	
Acquire 16 ha (10 year) to 34 ha (20 year) for new community and neighbourhood parks to meet future needs	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$9,600 (20 yr)	DCC	
Develop new community parks as development proceeds (assume 1 every 5 years)	1		✓	✓		\$4,000 (for 2)	DCC	
Develop new neighbourhood parks as development proceeds (assume 1 every 3 years)	1	✓	✓	✓		\$1,500 (for 3)	DCC	
Upgrade existing parks (assume \$20,000 per year)	1	✓	✓	✓		\$200	Capital	

Natural Areas

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Adopt a regional approach to natural area acquisition (staff requirement)	1	✓				na		
Acquire or otherwise protect large interconnected natural areas (target 40 ha per year) - \$1.5 mil / year	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$15,000 (10 yrs)	DCC	Developers Trusts

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Protect Swan Lake (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓		na		Province Trusts
Designate motorized use areas (staff requirement)	2	✓	✓			na		MOF Users
Support environmental groups (\$20,000 per year)	1	✓	✓	✓		\$200 (10 yrs)	Capital	
Enhance communication with brochure, Web site, interpretive signs (\$50,000 per year)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$500 (10 yrs)	Capital	Env Groups
Encourage environmental protection in planning (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na		
Naturalize and restore existing parks (assume \$20,000 per year)	2	✓	✓	✓		\$200 (10 yrs)	Capital	

Trails

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Develop trail implementation plan	1	✓				\$50	Capital	User Groups
Acquire trail corridors (target 3 km per year – assume 20 m wide)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$6,200 (10 yrs)	Capital, DCC	Utilities
Develop trails along acquired corridors (assume 2 m wide gravel - \$75,000 per year)	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$750 (10 yrs)	Capital, DCC	
Negotiate for trails through development parcels (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓		na	na	Developers
Develop park and trail signage system and implement over time	1	✓	✓			\$300	na	MOF Users
Work with property owners (mostly a staff requirement – some fencing)	1	✓	✓	✓		\$100	Capital	

Waterfront Access

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Adopt a waterfront acquisition policy and implement it consistently (staff requirement)	1	✓				na	na	
Ensure parks and trails in new waterfront development (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	na	

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Acquire waterfront land on the north shore of Okanagan Lake	3	✓	✓			\$4,000	Capital, DCC	
Acquire or otherwise protect the cattail beds in the Okanagan Landing area	1	✓	✓	✓		na	Capital, DCC	Developers Trust
Evaluate all waterfront road rights-of-way and sell where appropriate	1	✓	✓			Pot. Revenue	na	
Continue acquiring Lakeshore Drive lots	3	✓	✓			\$3,500		
Acquire a new boat launch site if possible between Paddlewheel Park and Kin Beach	2		✓			\$1,200	Capital, DCC	
Discuss with B.C. Parks plans for enabling public access to Kal Lake Provincial Park beaches. (staff requirement)	1	✓				na	na	

Ball Diamonds

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Work on partnership agreements with School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard and to enable access to washrooms	1	✓	✓			na	Capital	User Groups
Focus on minor fastball at Grahame	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	na	

Sports Fields

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Work on partnership agreements with School District to enable GVSC to renovate and maintain school fields to a higher standard	1	✓	✓	✓		\$300	Capital	User Groups
Develop 2 to 6 new fields in parks or at schools	1					\$200 to \$600	Capital	User Groups
Support the development of an indoor soccer facility	1	✓				na	User Groups	
Develop a new fieldhouse with washroom, concession and storage at any proposed major new field complex	1					In Parks		

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Develop a package and staff support to encourage tournaments in the community (staff requirement).	1	✓				na		SNOO Econ Dev/CF

Other Park Facilities

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Support the user group in covering or lighting 4 tennis courts.	2	✓				\$50 - \$500	Capital	User Groups
Add 4 new tennis courts with lights to one new park	2			✓		\$200	Capital	User Groups
Add play areas to all new city-wide, community and neighbourhood parks	1	✓				In Comm/Nhood	Capital	
Upgrade play areas at a rate of 1 to 2 per year to maintain safety	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$500	Capital	
Add hard courts to parks if desired by the community	1					In Comm/Nhood		
Add one more youth park	2			✓		\$300	DCC	
Work with the community to determine locations and policies for dog management (staff requirement)	1	✓				Na		
Provide picnic facilities in 2 of the new parks	2		✓	✓		In Comm/Nhood		
Provide 1 to 2 new spray parks, geographically distributed	2		✓	✓		\$150 to \$300	Capital, DCC	

Aquatics

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Introduce play toys & large inflatables	1	✓				\$20	capital	
Allocate equipment replacement fund	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$10	capital	
Add a climbing wall at the aquatic centre	2	✓				\$20	capital	
Provide "play leader" training for staff	1	✓				\$4		
Add retail services to lobby	2	✓				\$150		private
Add health, wellness, rehab services	1	✓				\$300		private

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Upgrade Lakeview outdoor pool	2			✓		\$100	capital	
Alternative management for aquatics (private operator or community society)	2		✓			na	contract	private or society
Capital upgrade to aquatic centre	2				✓	\$500	capital	
Aquatic & fitness/wellness facility with new community centre	3				✓	\$11,000	contract	private

Arenas

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Develop an Ice Allocation Policy (staff requirement)	1	✓				na		
Review management contract	2		✓			na		
Develop a leisure ice surface Options: Renovate Centennial Arena Develop a leisure ice surface as part of a new community centre	3		✓			\$1,500 \$3,000	capital	
Provide additional ice surfaces to replace the Civic Arena in 20 years Options: Two new utility ice sheets Twin the Multiplex	3				✓	\$7,000 \$3,500	capital	

Fitness / Wellness Facilities

Recommendation	Priority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Provide space for fitness, wellness and rehabilitation services by renovating the Auditorium	2		✓			\$400	capital	private
Provide accessible weight room equipment for seniors and people with disabilities in new facility	2		✓			\$80		
Consider partnerships with developers to include fitness, weight room and community spaces	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	lease or private purchase	private

Indoor Sports Facilities

Recommendation	Pri- ority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Develop a clear policy on community use of school gyms (staff requirement)	1	✓				na	na	School District
Provide capital funds to the School District to enlarge the size of elementary school gymnasiums	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$800	capital	School District
Provide capital funds to the School District to twin secondary school gyms	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	\$1,200 0	capital	School District
Develop a new multi-purpose community recreation facility (land costs not included)	2				✓	\$9,000	referend um	private partner
Partner with sport organizations to build permanent indoor facilities (land costs not included / group to fund building construction costs)	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	group funding	sports group
Renovate the auditorium to a fitness, health and wellness centre	2	✓				na		sports group
Develop a partnership to build a gymnastics facility	1	✓				land cost	capital	Gym clubs

Cultural Facilities

Recommendation	Pri- ority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Coordinate an Arts and Cultural Network (staff requirement)	2	✓				na		Arts groups
Develop a policy on art in public places (staff requirement)	2	✓				na		Arts groups
Develop a sponsorship package for sculptured art in key public locations	3		✓			\$10	grant	
Consider the relocation of the Vernon Public Art Gallery to the existing Vernon Public Library building, pending location decision	1	✓						Art Gallery
Develop a new policy and criteria for funding to community groups (staff requirement)	1	✓				na		
Develop a Cultural Plan with arts, cultural and heritage organizations	1	✓				\$30	budget	Arts group

Recreation Programs

Recommendation	Pri- ority	In 2 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years	> 10 years	Cost (1000s)	Primary Funding Source	Pot. Part.
Adopt a “community development” approach to recreation programming (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na		Com groups
Form an “Association of Community Planners” which will be representative of all community groups providing recreational programs (staff requirement)	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na		Com groups
Provide satellite recreation programming in public schools (staff requirement)	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	fee for service	School District
Develop a Community Diversity Action Plan which addresses diversity issues (staff requirement)	2	✓				\$5	grant	Com groups
Coordinate a workshop on cultural diversity for community groups	2	✓				\$2	grant	Com groups
Maximize usage of Halina Senior’s Centre by offering intergenerational programs (staff requirement)	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	fee for service	Seniors group
Plan to provide additional programs for seniors in the next ten to twenty years (staff requirement)	2				✓	na	fee for service	Seniors groups
Liaise with youth organizations and support the Teen Junction with their plans to build a new teen centre.	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	private	Youth groups
Encourage social services agencies to provide recreation programs for people with disabilities (staff requirement)	2	✓				na		Com groups
Investigate a financial assistance program (staff requirement)	2	✓				na		Com groups

Next Steps

The tables above and the other recommendations in this Plan provide a strategic direction for the future of parks and recreation in the Greater Vernon area. The ability to fund the Plan will be dependent upon a number of financial decisions by the GVSC. The current financial plan for the Parks and Recreation Department does not provide a significant contribution from annual revenues to support the proposed capital programs. Additional funding will be required from a combination of the following potential sources if this Plan is to be achieved:

- Increase in parkland acquisition Development Cost Charges,
- Establishment of a Development Cost Charge for parkland development,
- Increases in user fees,
- A land acquisition levy,
- Allocation of annual tax levies to a Capital Works Reserve,
- Capital program referendum.

The next step towards implementation will involve selection of options, where these still exist in the Plan, and preparation of a detailed spreadsheet based on the tables in this section. The spreadsheet should include:

- Anticipated costs within each year of the 10 year Plan for land acquisition, capital development, and operations (with each noted separately), and
- The funding source for each cost.

Once this has been developed, a detailed plan for acquiring the funding will be the next step. An iterative process will be required to plan the specific annual projects in relation to the funding that can be acquired. Ensuring that operating funds are available to maintain new facilities and services will be an important component of this process.