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Executive Summary

The Comox Recreation Commission is a not-for-profit organization that strives to make a significant and lasting contribution to improve the lives of Comox residents. After conducting a province wide intercommunity survey Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants state that because of the efforts of the Comox Recreation Commission, “In terms of simple tax investment in Parks, Recreation and Culture Comox stands better than the average of comparable communities on all scales”.

In terms of business practice the Commission follows general accounting principals. (GAP) A professional Certified General Accountant (CGA) is contracted to oversee and record the daily operational business of the Commission. A professional accounting firm, Pietrzykowski Bay and Associates Inc., completes an annual financial review and monthly financial statements are reviewed by the Commission and then forwarded to the Town of Comox for their perusal. Over the past seven years the Comox Recreation Commission has met or exceeded all budget expectations.

This business case not only shows the overall recreation recovery rate of the recreation operation it also shows how individual recreation programs are assigned a recovery rate.

The strategic plan, operational plan, marketing plan and information management plan integrate with this business plan.

This business case shows how the Commission has been successful in securing grants that could not have otherwise been secured by the municipality. Bingo, Direct Access, After School Care, Community Futures and the recent \$330,000 OPLS expansion grant are examples.

Over the next few years the Commission will have the opportunity to work with SD71; the Commission may even find themselves in a position to operate a section of Village Park School. The Pearl Ellis Gallery would like to expand their operation and have stated they would very much like to work in partnership with the Comox Recreation Commission. The Commission needs to increase their readiness as a disaster centre and continue to provide as wide a variety of community programs as possible. The Commission must keep in mind Comox is aging as a population and as such must direct its efforts to provide both preventative and rehabilitative health programs to this sector.

The Comox Recreation Commission in conjunction with the Town of Comox will continue to repair and expand the Comox Community Centre.

This business case addresses marketing and branding opportunities.

The Commission will continue to undertake workload and operational effectiveness studies as well it will continue to work towards its goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, Vision Statement, Mission, Core Values and Beliefs.

Introduction

The Comox Recreation Commission Business Case has two basic goals: It describes the fundamentals of the Comox recreation business and provides financial data to show that the business will remain financially viable. The emphasis of the Comox Recreation Business Case is to maintain existing Comox recreation facilities and programs and seek new ways of generating revenue. The plan may change depending on yearly priorities.

Definitions

Plan – the Commission's statement of intent - the calculated intention to organize effort and resource to achieve an outcome - in this context the plan is in written form, comprising explanation, justification and relevant numerical and financial data. In this business context the plan's numerical data - costs and revenues - are scheduled between one to five years, broken down monthly, quarterly and cumulatively.

Business – relates to the activity of the Commission, irrespective of size and autonomy, this is normally for the provision of services, to produce public and commercial gain, extending to non-commercial organizations whose aim may or may not be profit (public service sector organizations such as recreational organizations, schools and hospitals are in this context referred to as 'businesses').

Business Case – for our purposes to be used as a very general and flexible term, applicable to the planned activities and aims of the Commission where effort is being converted into results.

Strategy - originally a military term, in a business planning context strategy / strategic means / pertains to why and how the plan will work, in relation to all factors of influence, particularly including competitors, customers and demographics, technology and communications.

Marketing - marketing means and covers everything from company culture and positioning, through market research, new business / product development, advertising and promotion, PR (public / press relations), and arguably all of the sales functions as well. Marketing is the process by which the Commission decides what it will offer, to whom, when and how, and then does it.

Geographical Area

The Comox Valley comprises the area and adjacent islands covering 1,725.6 square kilometers situated on the east coast of Vancouver Island bordered to the south by Mud Bay, north by the Oyster River and west by Strathcona Park.

Regional Population

The largest community in the Comox Valley is the City of Courtenay, followed by the Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland. Of note there is a large rural constituency surrounding these communities representing 40% of the regions population of approximately 60,000 thousand residents.

- Courtenay 21,068
- Comox 12,136 (Statistics Canada Profile Appendix A)
- Cumberland 2,760
- Region 23,826

Demography: Trends and Projections

The 20 and 40 year olds, those born from 1967 to 1979, are the baby bust generation. This large percentage of young adults and post secondary youth usually must leave the Comox Valley for education and employment opportunities. This group is significant because they are the potential new parents in the community. With relatively few of them here having children it is not surprising there is a decline in school age children. This trend will likely continue unless the next generation called the baby-boom echo generation, those born between 1980 and 1995, remain in the Comox Valley and begin having children of their own. The Comox Valley has a greater percentage of population over 40 than does the provincial average. The Comox Valley baby boom generation, those born between 1947 and 1966, is not as significant as the 60 to 90 year group. This group is higher than the BC average. Population over the last ten years has grown in excess of 14,700 new residents. The Comox Valley will continue to both increase in population and age. It is anticipated that the population will increase 23% or by approximately 12,700 persons over the next ten years.

Considerable growth has occurred in the community since 2001. There has been significant new development of retail enterprises such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot, London Drugs, Winners, Shoppers Drug Mart, Staples, Sport Mart, Future Shop, Sears and Quality Foods. Also, it is not hard to notice the major new residential developments springing up throughout the entire region. With those developments come the additional services necessary to support those new residents as they integrate into the community.

Density

With a density of 32.3 people per square km in 2001, the Valley has substantial space for the population to grow and enjoy the surrounding forested coastal, and mountain areas.

Population density in the Comox Valley is low compared to other Vancouver Island regions, for example:

Port Alberni (892.8 persons per sq. km.)

Duncan (2,290.9 persons per sq. km);

Campbell River (213.4 persons per sq. km);

Nanaimo (818.6 persons per sq. km)

Source: Stats Canada Community Profiles.

Comox Valley Population by Sex and Age

Population in the Comox Valley is well balanced, with those aged over 35 comprising the majority of the population. Some young adults leave the Valley for University after attending North Island College for two years, which contributes to a lower 19-24 age grouping.

Fast Facts on the Valley Population

Approximately 18.4% of the Population is in the 0-14 age category

Teens and young adults aged 15 to 24 makes up about 12%.

26% of the population is aged 25 to 44

16% of the population is aged 45 to 54

11.5 % of the population is aged 55 to 64

Over 16% of the population are over 65 years of age.

The gender breakdown in the valley is almost even with approximately 51% females and 49% males.

Education

Approximately 54% of the Comox Valley population over 15 years of age has some form of post secondary schooling. A high percentage of students are enrolled in the Valley High schools and many proceed to North Island College, University of British Columbia in Vancouver or the University of Victoria for post-secondary studies.

The Comox Valley education levels meet or exceed those for the Province and for Canada. Only a small % of the population has less than a grade nine education and almost 60% have a high school certificate or higher.

Family Structure and Characteristics

Statistics Canada estimates that there were almost 16,000 census families in the Comox Valley. The majority of these families consist of two people with no children at home. This indicates a slightly older population comprised of retirees or parents with children who have left the home for education or work purposes. About 13% are single parents, usually with one or two children at home. The total children in census families are estimated to be in excess of 16,000, with the average of 1 child at home per census family. About 70% of all families consist of two or three people.

Income

Household income in the Comox Valley is the highest in the Town of Comox at \$50,572 compared to the Valley average of \$43,862. Males consistently earn higher incomes than females in all areas of the Valley due in part to the concentration of males in both the forestry and construction industries. As well there is a high propensity for part time, military, female dependents. Over 26% of households in the Comox Valley have an income in excess of \$60,000. Estimates of average household expenditures provided by the Financial Post indicate that the Comox Valley has a low cost of living on Vancouver Island. Of the three main headings, Food, Shelter and Clothing, the cost is \$1,227.00 less than Victoria.

Competition

Competing for the recreational interests of Comox Valley citizens can at times be difficult to navigate. The main competition for the Comox Recreation Commission is the multitude of activity taking place at any one time in the Comox Valley. It is not uncommon for individuals to go skiing in the morning and then play a round of golf later in the day. There are many Comox Valley organizations, both private and public, that offer public recreation and cultural programs. The City of Courtenay recreation service, Cumberland recreation, 19 Wing recreation and the Regional District of Comox Strathcona recreation offer similar recreation programs as that of the Comox Recreation Commission. Of paramount importance is that all groups work together.

Comox Recreation Commission Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan has been developed by the board members and staff of the Comox Recreation Commission. It is intended to provide direction through the establishment of key goals and objectives that will guide the organization as it moves forward in providing quality recreational programming for the citizens of the Town of Comox.

Vision Statement

The Comox Recreation Commission envisions a community in which all people regularly participate in recreational activities. The Commission will accomplish this by taking a

proactive leadership role to ensure residents are provided with recreational programs and services that are relevant, inclusive, affordable and sustainable.

Mission Statement

The Comox Recreation Commission provides recreational programs and facilities to help improve the quality of life in Comox.

Core Values and Beliefs

The Commission is dedicated to providing sustainable recreational activities that draw people together, are available to all and will benefit the community as a whole.

We believe recreation includes physical, leisure, social and cultural activities that promote wellness, are life-long and enrich the quality of life.

We believe in being financially accountable to the community by operating in a prudent, transparent and ethical manner.

We value our members and provide a respectful and safe environment where individuals can achieve their goals.

We encourage local partnerships and will seek to purchase supplies and services from local companies whenever possible.

We endeavor to provide buildings and equipment that are well maintained and strive to ensure that patrons feel safe when using our indoor or outdoor facilities.

We believe in working co-operatively with the Town of Comox to ensure that the needs of the community we serve are being met.

We believe in providing a work environment that fosters growth, promotes teamwork and provides development opportunities for staff, instructors and volunteers.

We believe in recycling and utilizing materials and supplies that are in keeping with the protection of the environment.

Overall Strategic Direction

From 2008 to 2012 the focus of the Comox Recreation Commission is to offer a spectrum of inclusive recreational activities that draw people in our community together through responsive programming that is designed to meet people's needs in innovative ways and is supported by a comprehensive business plan and marketing strategy. We will move beyond the traditional methods of providing recreational programming by acting on our belief that recreation is multi-faceted and includes physical, social, leisure and cultural activities.

Goals and Objectives

1 - Objective:

To create an effective recreation commission board that is proactive and responsive to the needs of the community and staff

Strategies:

Examine the current governance model and update if necessary so that it meets the needs of the Comox Recreation Commission

Maintain and keep current a policy and procedures manual

Institute a board development, orientation and succession planning strategy

Develop and implement a communications plan to reach out to members and the community at large.

2 - Objective:

To provide recreational programming that meets the diverse needs of the community.

Strategies:

Use research and reliable data to consistently evaluate and develop programs that are affordable and accessible to all residents. Create a system to regularly collect input from the community about operations and programming.

To ensure that programs are being delivered effectively and efficiently, continuously monitor the service delivery model.

Continue to offer an array of innovative services that integrate physical, social, leisure and cultural activities accessible to all ages.

3 - Objective:

Develop a facility utilization plan that assures a safe, healthy environment and allows for expansion as the community's needs grow.

Strategies:

Develop a comprehensive building plan that addresses the current need to add on a gymnastics facility to free up needed space and to address the future needs of the community.

Develop and implement strategies to maximize the use of equipment, evaluate it for replacement, minimize downtime and look for opportunities to add new equipment. Develop a comprehensive plan for the use of recreational facilities other than the community centre. Develop a fitness studio upgrades plan. Maintain a safety and maintenance plan which includes a facility inspection and analysis

4 - Objective:

To be financially accountable to the community by operating in a prudent, transparent and ethical manner.

Strategies:

Develop a business plan that includes a comprehensive financial strategy.

Improve the self-sufficiency of the Recreation Commission by creating partnership opportunities which enhance recreational programming. Develop a plan to secure grant funding from outside sources.

5 - Objective:

To operate in a manner that promotes good employee relations and fosters opportunities for development and growth.

Strategies:

Establish regular staff meetings to keep the channels of communication open and to provide for evaluation and input on programming and services including safety, operations and administration. Maintain a program that recognizes staff achievements and milestones. Provide opportunities for continuous or advanced job specific training. Maintain strategies that provide for a positive, safe and flexible work environment.

6 - Objective:

To enhance the relationship with outside organizations including civic, business, media, members and the community at large.

Strategies:

Continue to ensure the Recreation Commission is working cooperatively with Town of Comox departments and representatives. Create a communications plan that regularly promotes the value and benefits of quality recreational programming. Provide opportunities for schools, businesses and community groups to participate in Recreation Commission activities and events. Develop in

cooperation with other stakeholders a recreation and cultural policy for the Town of Comox. Engage the School Board in discussions with regards to recreational opportunities.

7 - Objective:

Promote the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle through recreational programming and increased program usage.

Strategies:

Develop and implement a marketing program that reaches all levels of the community through the use of advertising and other promotional vehicles. Upgrade the commission's website.

8 – Objective:

Monitor operational effectiveness

Strategies

Develop an information technology plan. Establish a customer relations plan. Develop an operations manual. Staff and Board will meet bi-annually to review and update the strategic plan.

The Organization

The Comox Recreation Commission was established immediately following the Second World War. The Comox Recreation Commission was incorporated at the same time as the Courtenay Recreation Association, which was in 1947. Comox elders talk of a recreation board being in operation prior to this period. The hub of recreation and cultural activity prior to this period took place in Cumberland. The Comox Recreation Commission updated its Certificate of Incorporation and purposes with the Registrar of Companies, Province of British Columbia, on June 11, 1999.

As stated in the Certificate of Incorporation the legal name of the society is the Comox Recreation Commission whose purposes are to enrich the lives of Comox Valley residents by providing affordable leisure opportunities, to manage all aspects of the Comox Community Centre, Filberg Hands on Farm, Anderton Park tennis courts, Anderton Park club house, Anderton Park basketball court, Highland outdoor rink, Comox sailing school and Comox playing fields. The Comox Recreation Commission is to promote community health and well being by planning, developing, implementing, administering and evaluating recreation programs. The Commission is to encourage individuals to support recreation, health and leisure opportunities and to assist in capital projects to enhance recreation opportunities in the Comox Valley.

Directors serving on the Commission must not be remunerated for being or acting as a director but a director must be reimbursed for all expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred while engaged in the affairs of the society. No voting members of the executive or board of directors shall receive remuneration or other financial benefits for their services to the organization, regardless of the type of service performed. This is an unalterable provision. Upon winding up or dissolution of the Society, as stated in the Certificate of Incorporation, the assets which remain after payment of all costs, charges, and expenses which are properly incurred in the winding up shall be distributed to a charitable organization or organizations registered under the provision of the Income Tax Act (Canada) as may be determined by the members of the Society at the time of winding up or dissolution. Such charitable organization or organizations are to have a similar charitable purpose as that of the Comox Recreation Commission, as stated in the Certificate of Incorporation. The bylaws of the Society are set out in Commission Schedule B.

The Comox Recreation Commission has made a substantial cash contribution.

- \$207,000 cash contribution for the construction of the Comox Community Centre.
- \$48,000 contribution to construct the Anderton Park Club House.
- \$4,000 contribution for the construction of the Community Centre health office.
- \$30,000 to construct tennis courts five and six at Anderton Park.
- \$8,300 to repair the Robb Road tennis courts.
- \$4,400 to repair the Anderton Park basketball court.
- \$2,800 to construct the Hands on Farm duck pond.
- \$205,000 to purchase/replace fitness studio equipment and renovate fitness studio.
- \$28,000 in renovations to Sneakers Student Lounge.
- \$23,000 to purchase the Comox Community Centre playground structure.
- \$1,700 paid to the Town of Comox to install Community Centre playground structure.
- \$10,000 for the construction of the Hands on Farm barn.
- \$1,200 to renovate and equip the child playroom.
- \$5,000 for Community Activity Book.
- \$64,000 to purchase children's gymnastic equipment.

- \$7,200 to install display cabinets in the Comox Community Centre.
- \$3,300 to purchase two teen centre pool tables and one fooseball table.
- \$24,000 to construct the Grande Pavilion.
- \$7,000 to construct the Therapeutic Garden.
- \$2,500 to construct the Anderton Park tennis wall.
- \$3,900 to replace Town of Comox soccer goal posts.
- \$1,000 for bike racks.
- \$17,000 Class Software and Computers.
- \$2,500 to help establish a disc golf course.
- \$2,000 to move relocate CRC playground structure.
- \$15,000 to install infrared saunas.

The Comox Recreation Commission assists the municipality by applying for and securing grants that they may not otherwise be able to attain. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been secured for operational and capital purposes. One of the largest grants the Commission secured was from the Vancouver Foundation. The foundation grant, which was \$200,000, was matched with Commission funds of \$207,000. A provincial GO BC grant matched these combined funds. The Commission contributed \$814,000 towards the construction of the Comox Community Centre. In 2002 the Comox Recreation Commission secured the largest Direct Access grant for a recreation agency in British Columbia. The grant was in the amount of \$92,000. The Comox Recreation Commission participated in the waterfront walkway project by loaning the Town of Comox \$140,000.00 to fund the project. A grant in the amount of \$25,000 was secured from the province to help replace playground equipment. The Commission secured a \$12,250 grant to help build the Rotary Mariners Pavilion. Grants were secured to build the Hands on Farm barn, chicken coop, duck pond, and fencing. Grants have been secured to purchase athletic equipment and musical instruments for special needs clients. The art cases were constructed after securing a grant. Securing funds from Provincial and Federal sources has been of tremendous benefit. Many projects could not be completed otherwise. The practice of securing grants the municipality could not otherwise apply for has saved the Comox taxpayer hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Comox Recreation Commission ensures that any Comox resident adult or child, regardless of income, can participate in any Comox Recreation Commission program.

The Comox Recreation Commission “Access for All Program” operates through Social Services and St. Joseph’s General Hospital. The Comox Recreation Commission also awards an annual post secondary scholarship to a Highland graduate.

The Comox Recreation Commission has a proud history of program development. For example the Commission created, or assisted in the creation of, the Snow to Surf Race, Eastereggstravganza, Fat Chance Mountain Bike Race, Operation High Jump, Comox Dragon Boat Festival, Comox Cup Road Hockey Tournament, Legs for Learning Race, Valley Idol, the Comox Polar Bear Swim, and the Hands on Farm petting zoo. The Commission staged Comox Nautical Days throughout the 70’s and 80’s and has helped enable other programs such as the Mini-tri k triathlon, Originals Only Art Exhibitions, Soccertron, Active Comox Valley, Eli Pasquale Basketball Camp, the Terry Fox run and Yana Auction to name a few. The Comox Recreation Commission drafted the bids to host the 1981 BC Summer Games, the 1990 Seniors Games, the 1995 BC Winter Games and the 2005 BC Special Olympics. The Commission helped draft the bid to secure the 2010 BC Sr. Games mainly by allowing the use of its bid template.

As most grants have a matching component attached to them the Comox Recreation Commission has had to raise considerable additional matching funds to purchase equipment such as sail boats, safety boats, outboard engines, basketballs, bats and balls, hoops, shuttles, mats, computers, water fountains and play structures. Comox Valley residents make use of some of the best sport and recreational equipment made today. The equipment is maintained daily and replaced as required.

The Commission established the first R.C.M.P. sub office in Comox. The Commission has purchased benches, renovated the community centre kitchen, purchased and installed a heavy duty washer and dryer for the community centre, purchased back loading frames in order to establish a Comox Valley and International Youth Art Exhibition, which will come to fruition with the assistance of the Pearl Ellis Gallery in 2008. The Commission developed the valley’s first cultural plan. Following the cultural plan the Commission has purchased local works of art which are displayed throughout the community centre. The Commission has purchased stereo equipment, aerobic steps and installed a phone system for the deaf and hard of hearing. The Commission installed the community centre surveillance system and has pre-wired the entire centre with a meg-lock security system. The Comox Recreation Centre was the first recreation centre on Vancouver Island to install computers and create its own recreation software program. Class and RecWare, today’s leading recreation software experts, reviewed the Commission’s computer software program for their own purposes in the mid 1980’s. The Commission purchased the original computers and through a Vancouver radio competition won their fax machine which is still in use today.

Partnering with other community organizations is another activity of the Comox Recreation Commission benefiting the community. The Commission helped launch the Valley Bingo Palace. Many Comox Valley volunteer organizations jumped from generating funds through bake sales and car washes to generating the cash they needed to operate their organizations effectively. Today over 90 Comox Valley volunteer

organizations benefit from the Valley Palace operation. By partnering with other organizations the Commission can offer programs and services that it could not otherwise entertain. Partnering also enables other community organizations to meet their objectives. For example the Commission and SD71 each contributed \$25,000 and installed a premier playground structure located at Village Park. The Commission and Pacific Salmon foundation has raised tens of thousands of dollars all of which must be spent improving rivers and streams located within the Comox Valley. Such partnering ensures the sustainability and continuance of numerous Comox Valley cultural, physical and environmental and community based organizations and programs. The Commission has worked with Showcase Festival, CYMC, IHOS Celebration, Volunteer Comox Valley Originals Only, Valley Idol, SPCA, the Pearl Ellis Gallery, d'Esterre Seniors, Comox, Courtenay and 19 Wing Museums, Filberg and Nautical Days Festival Committees, Empire Days festival, Cumberland Lantern festival, Pacific Foundation, Beaufort Association for the intellectually challenged and most if not all service organizations in the Comox Valley. The list of organizations the Commission has worked with over the years is far more extensive than has been mentioned. Of late the Commission has been attempting to create a more disaster resilient Comox by working with such organizations as public health, the RCMP, Emergency Comox Valley, fire service, Red Cross, Emergency Social Services and School District 71. The Commission always favors working in partnership especially with organizations such as the Municipality of Comox, Courtenay, Cumberland and Regional District.

The Comox Recreation operation is today one of the most efficiently operated recreational services in all of British Columbia as stated by Professional Environmental Recreational Consultants in their report of February 9th, 2002. The report states that the Comox Recreation and Parks net cost to taxpayers compared to other BC municipalities of similar size is as follows. The Comox Recreation Commission full time staff per thousand residents is less than half the average of comparable communities. The Comox Recreation Commission recovery rate (operating revenues expressed as a percentage of operating costs) is about a third higher than the average of comparable communities. The CRC net operating subsidy per capita is about half that of comparable communities. The net capital cost per capita is less than two thirds the average of comparable communities and the total net tax investment per capita is about half that of comparable communities. As PERC states, "the data clearly shows that in terms of simple tax investment in parks, recreation and culture in Comox, our community stands better than the average of comparable communities on all scales. The recovery rate in 2008 far exceeds the 2002 rate.

Annually the Comox Recreation Commission completes a financial review engagement of its operations. The engagement reports clearly indicates that the Comox Recreation Commission is following general accounting practices and is in good operational shape.

As stated by Commission Accountants if they were to calculate all of the assets utilized by Comox and area residents, at today's prices, that figure would run into the millions.

The Business of the Comox Recreation Commission

The Comox Recreation Commission is in the business of marketing recreation, culture and a variety of other community services. The Commission is the direct delivery provider of such services and programs for the Municipality of Comox. The Comox Recreation Commission also maintains and rents certain recreational and cultural facilities located within the Town of Comox.

Individuals throughout the Comox Valley attend Comox Recreation Commission sponsored activities. The main activities provided by the Comox Recreation Commission are recreational programs for children, such as summer playground programs, after school programs, early morning child minding programs, gymnastic activities, teen programs, adult “how to” programs, lessons, tournaments, all ages squash, walleyball, handball and racquetball. The Commission supports major special events such as BC games. The Commission supports educational classes, lifelong learning, environmental initiatives, health prevention, rehabilitation, life centered living and lifelong fitness. The Commission manages one of the community’s premier fitness studios, hosts a number of annual special events and schedules all Town of Comox playing fields. Comox Community Centre staff serve as reception centre hosts in the event of a disaster and are all certified in first aid and CPR. Community Centre staff will begin training as reception centre hosts in 2008.

Comox Recreation Commission clients participate in Commission sponsored programs because the community centre is centrally located within the Town of Comox, the caliber of instruction, the well maintained equipment, a high instructor to student ratio, the cleanliness of the Comox Recreation Centre, and the professional and personal attention of all staff. Comox community centre identified pain points are long line-ups during registration, fitness equipment in need of replacement and the fitness studio operating beyond capacity during peak periods. The reason why Commission clients remain loyal has a great deal to do with the personal relationships between staff and clients over an extended period. The Commission is investigating online registration, a second POS system has been installed to expedite registrations and new fitness studio equipment is to be purchased in early 2008. More detail can be found at;
<http://www.comoxrecreation.com>

The Comox Recreation Commission Target Market

The Comox Recreation Commission target market is those individuals living in the Comox Valley. The Comox Valley includes many of the province’s fastest growing communities. The population is projected to increase over the next 10 years placing pressure on all public services such as recreation and parks. But growth is not occurring evenly. The Comox Valley has a population that is both older than the provincial average, and which is continuing to age, resulting in more adult and senior clients and fewer youngsters. The patterns of participation are also changing, which impacts the demand for different types of activities. The Comox Valley population is becoming more

active, as people link activity levels to health and quality of life. Much of the immigration to the Comox Valley has been by people in search of a healthier lifestyle.

Staffing

The Comox Recreation Commission employs 6 full time staff, 4 part time staff receiving benefits and 5 part time staff without benefits. There are 9 relief staff on call and 20 instructors. Instructor numbers increase / decrease depending on the time of the year. There is a total of 103 years of recreation experience between the Recreation Director, Program Supervisor, Recreation Programmer and Office Manager. The Comox recreation service is a seven day per week, 364 day per year operation, from early morning to late evening. The Commission operates with fewer staff today than they have in past years. The addition of half a time receptionist and janitor would enable the community centre to be open longer on weekends. The addition of one full time programmer is also required. The request for this additional staffing is scheduled for 2009. The demand for new programs is increasing; presently all program work is completed by the Recreation Director, a four day per week Program Supervisor and a half time Recreation Programmer. Without the support of volunteers many Comox recreation programs would be discontinued.

Quarterly Operational Duties per Policy (AP226)

January - March

- Review / submit summer student applications (AP227)
- Complete performance appraisals (AP228)
- Preparing the provisional budget (AP229)
- Review previous years operational expenses (AP229)
- Review existing office procedures; Systems Review (AP230)
- Quarterly budget review (AP231)
- Inspect all CRC facilities within the Town of Comox (FP0019)
- Update 5yr building/facility and equipment replacement plan (FP0019)
- Review Marketing Plan; community partnership opportunities (PP0018)
- Biannual review Information Management Plan (AP250)

April - June

- Ensure annual Financial Review is completed (AP232)
- Prepare for AGM (AP233)
- Update Grants Plan; grants identified / applications submitted (AP234)
- Start preparation on following years budget (AP223)
- Quarterly budget review (AP231)
- Update CRC Directors manuals (AP233)
- Complete inventory review (AP235)
- Complete program needs assessment (AP236)
- Commission / staff biannual review of Strategic Plan (AP237)
- Update Director/Accountant monthly financial review questionnaire (AP251)

July - September

- Review yearly staffing schedules (AP0016)
- Quarterly budget review (AP231)
- Complete yearly program review, including service delivery methodologies (PP0008)
- Review facility rental rates, including all CRC agreements (FP0020)
- Review all HR and accounting matters (AP238)
- Review the Business Plan and Financial Strategy (AP239)
- Review DEM and Safety Procedures Plan / Undertake annual facilities health audit (AP240)
- Host Town of Comox & Comox Recreation Commission staff golf tournament (PP0019)
- Update Customer Relations/Service Plan (AP241)
- Update Policy Manual (AP242)
- Biannual review Information Management Plan (AP250)

October - December

- Submit yearly budget to Town of Comox (AP243)
- Complete capital projects (AP244)
- Update reporting forms (AP245)
- Review yearly staff minutes (AP246)
- Quarterly budget review (AP231)
- Submit five year operational / capital budgets, with assumptions, for Commission approval (AP247)
- Review all playing field allocations/procedures (AP248)
- Host staff appreciation luncheon (AP249)
- Commission / staff biannual review of Strategic Plan (AP237)
- Review following year Special Event Schedule (PP0019)
- Review Quarterly Operational Plan (AP226)

Determining Program Fees

Program fees increase by percentage each year in order to offset operational expenses. Programs pay their direct costs and each generates a net profit. Determining a program fee is calculated by each client paying a small utility charge for the use of the program space, an administration fee, an advertising fee, materials and equipment replacement fee and a portion of the instructor fee. The costs are divided into a minimum number of participants and a percentage, approximately 20%, is added to each individual fee. If the Commission needs to generate additional funds the percentage is calculated at a higher rate for all programs. The Comox Recreation Commission rents space and provides an administrative service to specialized recreation contractors. In this instance the Commission charges a flat administrative fee of \$10.00 per individual and the contractor rents the desired space. Overall recreation program revenue is anticipated to increase by 2.5% in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Recreation Recovery Rate / Capital Construction Project Funding

The Comox Recreation Commission is in the business of providing affordable “public” not “private” recreation programs therefore keeping program registration fees in check is important. The Commission is keenly aware of the substantial yearly subsidy provided by Comox taxpayers to operate the Comox recreation service. Establishing a responsible recreation recovery rate ensures a balance between user fees and the subsidy provided through taxation. A minimum recovery rate of 50% will be provided from users to offset operations. The recovery rate is not to exceed 65%.

Historically capital construction projects have been funded through raising funds, securing grants, and contributions from the Town of Comox taxpayer. As the valley population continues to increase it is evident that many of the Comox Recreation Commission users reside outside Comox boundaries. Based on 2,300 clients research indicates the number of out of Comox users to be approximately 30%. This percentage is fairly consistent year after year. It is therefore reasonable to request a capital contribution from the Regional District for any major capital recreation project. It would be of benefit if the area recreation administrators prioritized one valley recreation capital list, akin to the playing field strategy, to be funded by all valley residents.

Inventory / Assets

As per the quarterly operational plan policy AP235 the Comox Recreation Commission updates its inventory and assets plan annually April through June. Recommendations as to the replacement of inventory, capital equipment and assets are forwarded to Town of Comox and Comox Recreation Commission in fourth quarter of each year as per policy AP247.

Grant Funding

Throughout the years the Comox Recreation Commission has been very successful in securing grants. Just recently the Comox Recreation Commission secured a \$330,000 grant to expand the Comox Community Centre. As per policy AP234 grants will be identified and applications submitted. Because submission deadlines vary, as is the case with summer student applications, some grant applications need to be submitted in the first quarter; in such instances the Director of Recreation is to follow policy AP227. Grants are to be applied for on an as needed basis; not simply because they’ve been made available. Establishing the Commission’s annual operational budget by relying on or anticipating grants, prior to approval, is unsound. The Commission should create a strategy to secure annual operating and when necessary capital funds from the Regional District Comox Strathcona. Civic, provincial and federal grants, Go BC, BC150, OPLS, Canada Summer Jobs, Community Futures, Direct Access, Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation and BC Council for Families have in the past been the usual providers of grants to the Comox Recreation Commission. The Municipality of Comox provides the largest annual grant to the Comox Recreation Commission, which is in excess of \$500,000 dollars.

Marketing

Because marketing includes identifying community need; as per policy PP0018 the Recreation Director will review ongoing community partnership opportunities. Following the guidelines of policy AP236 the Recreation Director will conduct a user/program needs assessment. The Comox Recreation Commission produces a monthly newsletter and a quarterly eight page program flyer. Commencing in 2008 the Commission will not only produce a monthly flyer they will produce a quarterly “square boy”. Editorial program coverage, display ads, posters, radio and television are all marketing tools utilized by the Comox Recreation Commission. Other innovative advertising vehicles will be used. The Recreation Director and Program Director determine which advertising tool best suits each program. Programs that historically are oversubscribed are not advertised. Over arching community needs assessments are completed every five years. The last community needs assessment was completed November 6th, 2003. The Comox Recreation Commission is noted for its quality programs, equipment and high level of individual service. Branding the Comox Recreation Commission in such a manner is of importance. Throughout the years Comox recreation has branded themselves “Comox Recreation, Your Children, our Privilege”. “Comox Recreation Rules”, and “Comox Recreation, for all Seasons”. In 1987 Comox Recreation came up with the branding for the entire Comox Valley which is, “Comox Valley, Recreation Capital of Canada”. Branding Comox Recreation needs to be rethought in 2008. Two new idea’s are; “Comox Recreation, Experience the Best the Valley has to offer”; the Directors recommendation, “Comox, The Heart of the Recreation Capital of Canada”. The word heart depicts health, heart health, heart and stroke foundation, even such events as Valentines Day. The colour scheme red, white and blue. The Comox Recreation Commission should design a new and contemporary logo. It is anticipated that by implementing the above marketing plan the Commission can expect to see an increase in overall recreation by 2.5%. The Comox Recreation Commission website has undergone major transformation in 2007 with continued improvements taking place in 2008. comoxrecreation.com

Implications for IT and IM

Information Technology - IT and Information Management - IM increasingly offers marketing, competitive advantage and streamlining operational efficiency to the Comox Recreation Commission. The Director of Recreation is to follow policy AP250 and undertake a biannual review of the Comox Recreation Commission IT and Information Management Plan.

2008 / 2009 IT- IM Initiatives

- Develop an electronic operations and procedure manual (Second quarter, 2009)
- Develop an electronic quarterly operational action plan (First quarter, 2009)
- Develop computer replacement plan (Fourth quarter, 2009)
- Review financial software and administrative databases (Fourth quarter, 2009)
- Upgrade website (Fourth quarter, 2008)

- Implement on-line registration program (Forth quarter 2009)
- Produce quarterly square boy (First quarter, 2008)
- Produce monthly community update (Third quarter, 2008)
- Purchase Class field scheduling software (First quarter, 2009)
- Host Class software clinic (Second quarter, 2009)
- Create a policy on sending batch transmissions (First quarter, 2009)
- Review purchase order / purchasing procedures (First quarter, 2009)
- Create a 24 hour information line (First quarter, 2009)
- Accept fax registrations (Third quarter, 2009)
- Produce a yearly calendar of events poster (Second quarter, 2009)
- Link BC community recreation agencies via web. (Third quarter, 2009)
- Create security system proposal / link to FD and Parks (Third quarter, 2009)
- Review data backup systems (First quarter, 2008)
- Post governance data (First quarter, 2008)
- Post CRC policies and procedures (First quarter, 2008)
- Create an on-line Youth Link to recreation (Second quarter, 2008)
- Post Cultural Policy (Second quarter, 2008)
- Post on-line survey (First quarter, 2009)
- Complete a software systems review (Third quarter, 2009)
- Host information technology fair (Fourth quarter, 2009)
- Post Business Plan (Third quarter, 2008)
- Post monthly financials, review engagement (First quarter, 2009)

Facilities Utilization

Because all facilities operated by the Comox Recreation Commission are owned and maintained by the Town of Comox developing clear guidelines as to the upkeep / maintenance of recreation facilities is of paramount importance. As per policy FP0019 all Town of Comox facilities operated by the Comox Recreation Commission will be inspected by the Recreation Director in the first quarter of each year. The Recreation Director then submits his / her recommendations to the Town of Comox Facility Maintenance Supervisor; including all capital equipment replacement items. The Comox Recreation Commission will strive to maintain all facilities above the normal standard for community and athletic centres. Facilities are scheduled on a first come first serve basis. The facility rate structure is reviewed in the third quarter of each year as per policy FP0020. Under no circumstance is “junk food” to be served from vending machines at any Comox Recreation Commission operated facility. Video games depicting different forms of violence are not permitted in any CRC operated facility. Comox Recreation Commission facilities are to remain multiuse in nature. The Hands on Farm will continue to serve as both a facility to shelter animals in the event of a disaster and as a summer petting zoo. The Community Centre will serve as the area reception centre in the event of a major disaster. Making use of school and other community facilities as opposed to new construction is in keeping with the goals of the Comox Recreation Commission, however a formal policy needs to be developed stating same. Facility rental rate increases are to remain at .5% above inflation. Contract instructor wages and all facility use agreements are to be reviewed as per policy PP0008 as these agreements and contracts directly impact on the Comox Recreation Commission facility usage and plans. As per policy AP212 regular meetings of the Comox Recreation Commission Safety

Committee are to be held the first Tuesday of each month with minutes being circulated to the Comox Recreation Commission, Town of Comox and Town of Comox Safety Committee. A year end safety report is to be filed with the Town of Comox.

Facility Maintenance / Development Plan

The Comox Community Centre has experienced water ingress problems. It's of utmost importance that repairs and renovations to the community centre take place when such matters present themselves as any type of water ingress can be extremely damaging if left unattended.

RDH completed a Condition Assessment and Renewal Report. The Condition Assessment Report documents the current condition of elements of the community centre building envelop, interior finishes and HVAC system. The Renewal Report prioritizes the tasks. The Commission endorses both reports and supports the recommendations contained within the report.

Expanding the Comox Community Centre to better meet the needs of Comox residents is a necessary process. In order to determine the recreational needs of Comox residents a public survey was undertaken, as well, recreation users and staff were surveyed. The following recommendations were identified and will meet the expressed recreational needs of Comox residents.

- Village Park and other Comox schools may close in June 2008; other schools may be renovated. The Commission should investigate the further use of schools and establish Joint Usage Agreements in conjunction with SD71.
- Replacing the 1967 Centennial building. By all accounts the Centennial building will cost more to renovate than replace, however before writing the building off a structural assessment should be completed by a professional engineering firm.
- It's of importance to the Comox Recreation Commission that they lead the way in terms of building "Green". This can be accomplished by following the LEED-certified standards. Renovation and new expansion should consider such things as geothermal heating and cooling which could be installed at the community centre when Village Park field is upgraded. It's estimated that Comox Community Centre energy consumption would decrease by approximately 40% using geothermal heating. (BC Hydro)
- The Comox Community Centre is the Comox Reception Centre for Comox residents in the event of an earthquake, wind storm, or any other natural or man made disaster. The community centre should install a back-up generator tied into the electrical system, and create storage space to house first aid supplies and items such as cots, dry goods and water.
- Create a new fitness studio of approximately 4,500 square feet. The existing studio is 3,054 square feet. Repairs and storage of equipment takes place in the upper kitchen and storage room. The new fitness studio should have a separate stretching area for women and a separate area for circuit training. A dedicated low impact activity room to advance such programs as yoga, dance and pilates.

- The new studio would house the latest fitness studio equipment with entertainment monitors, instructor office, proper flooring, therapy room, club style change room facility with single stall showers. (increased revenue \$35,000)
- Create a gymnastic centre based on the minimum dimensions presented by the gymnastic club, 60 X 120. (increased revenue \$15,000)
 - The existing steam rooms should be closed off to one another and converted to infrared saunas. (increased revenue \$2,500)
 - Divider curtains installed in shower areas; hot and cold water to replace mixed water. Investigate recirculation pump.
 - Currently equipment is stored in the coat room, under the front and back stairs, on stair landings, in the electrical rooms, in offices and in the elevator room. The staff needs to rid themselves of unnecessary files and equipment however creating additional storage space is required.
 - Expand the main lobby of the community centre. The expanded lobby will provide space for visitor seating, improve pedestrian flow and provide for the necessary privacy during registration.
 - Construct a lobby coffee and juice bar. (increase in rental revenue \$4,200)
 - Create a dedicated 20 people board room/meeting room to serve numerous Comox groups. (increase in rental revenue \$2,400)
 - Expand preschool activity room. (increase in revenue \$2,400)
 - Retain multipurpose room/teen centre for birthday parties, crafts, children's and youth activities.
 - Retain the first aid / nurse's room.
 - Reconfigure and upgrade the Community Centre playing field.
 - Create a spray pool with washrooms and change areas. (see Future Consideration)
 - Repairs to the Hands on Farm barn, out-buildings and fencing.
 - Repair and paint outdoor hockey shell.
 - Relocate outdoor volleyball courts on Highland fields.
 - Continue to work with the Regional District on a prioritized development strategy to improve all Comox Valley playing fields and tennis courts.
 - Completely rebuild Anderton Park tennis courts 1 – 4; build courts 7 and 8 in line with courts 5 and 6; rebuild Anderton Park tennis club house and park washrooms; construct four tennis courts in Highland area. (see Future Consideration)
 - Relocate Anderton Park basketball court.
 - Re-stain Commission/Rotary Mariners pavilion.
 - Replace security camera system.
 - Fill and level East Highland playing field to create third field; extend underground irrigation system to area.
 - Construct outdoor fit path at Aspen Park.

Future Consideration (Directors Recommendation)

Developing both an outdoor pool/spray pool as part of any Comox Community Centre expansion would be very popular. The request for this facility has been made countless times by Comox residents.

There are no covered tennis courts in the Comox Valley. The courts could be part of any Comox Community Centre expansion or completely rebuild Anderton Park tennis courts 1-4 and cover. Rebuild tennis club house and Anderton Park washrooms. This could be a joint project between the Comox Valley Tennis Club, the Town of Comox, Regional District and the City of Courtenay.

Consideration should be given to constructing an intimate 100 seat theatre as part of any Community Centre addition. The Sid Williams Theatre is oversubscribed and the need to offer cultural events in the Comox Valley is increasing. As the Comox demographic continues to age residents will seek out even more cultural activity. A 100 seat theatre located at the community centre diversifies community programming. The theater would net in excess of \$50,000 per year.

Space is an issue in and around the Comox Community Centre therefore any new design / plan should consider the possibility of extending upwards.

Town of Comox Partnership

The Comox Recreation Commission's most valued partner is the Town of Comox. Each year the Town of Comox provides a generous operating subsidy. In 2008 the Town of Comox operating subsidy is 42.35% of the Commission's operating budget. Because of the significant amount of the annual subsidy all capital projects exceeding \$15,000 must be approved by both the Commission and the Town of Comox.

Operational and Capital Budgets

For any organization to operate effectively establishing a minimum three to five year operational budget is necessary. The Comox Recreation Commission will develop both a five year operational and capital budget.