

# Community of communities



## Flagstaff Regional Recreation Plan

Prepared for Flagstaff County



by Beacon for Change Inc.



The preparation of this plan was funded through a Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) Grant.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Vision Statement</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Mission statement</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Values and Guiding Principles</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Strategic Objectives</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>A. Collaborative Leadership</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Enabling Objectives:	
1. Collaborate on Regional Services and Decision Making .....	2
2. Employ a Regional Recreation Coordinator.....	2
3. Address Changing Recreation Patterns .....	2
4. Enhance Regional Capacity for Values-based Development of Community Volunteers .....	3
<b>B. Advance our Collective Quality of Life in the Community of communities</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Enabling Objectives:	
1. Become an Ace Community of communities.....	4
2. Implement new programs targeted for each age group that meets a wide range of abilities and interests .....	6
3. Rebuild and unite the region’s community sport system.....	7
<b>C. Community Building</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Enabling Objectives:	
1. Implement a Service Delivery Model (Appendix A) .....	8
2. Adopt an Excellence in Recreation and Parks Philosophy .....	8
3. Complete an Infrastructure Renewal and Development Plan .....	9
4. Revise the Regional Recreation Grant Program.....	9
5. Coordinate the submissions for Provincial grants on a required basis .....	9
<b>Our Region</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Our Collaborative Initiative</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Our Understanding of Recreation</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Our Foundations for Action – A Paradigm Shift</b> .....	<b>12</b>

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Appendix A** - Regional Recreation Service Delivery Model

**Appendix B** - Regional Recreation Program and Facility Grant Program

**Appendix C** - Combined Summary of the Flagstaff Community of communities Recreation Programs and Facilities Review and the Public Consultation Report

**Appendix D** - Implementation Schedule

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

**Flagstaff Community of communities Recreation Programs and Facilities Review**

**Public Input on the RRMP**

**Comments from the Public Consultation**

**Urban-Rural Interdependencies: Flagstaff Pilot Project**

These documents can be found on our website at [www.flagstaff.ab.ca](http://www.flagstaff.ab.ca).



## OUR RECREATION VISION

Our Vision for recreation in the Flagstaff Community of communities is:

To embrace and proactively use recreation and parks as an essential means for enhancing individual well-being, community vitality and economic sustainability.

## OUR RECREATION MISSION

Our recreation Mission is:

To build healthy citizens and communities.

Specifically, to develop a region where recreation and parks are widely accessible to all and which will:

- focus on meeting citizen and community needs;
- increase the numbers of citizens valuing and participating in recreation and parks activities; and
- make a positive contribution to addressing emergent public health, social and economic conditions in the Flagstaff region.

## OUR RECREATION VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe:

- that recreation and parks provide benefits that are essential to quality of life and the health and well-being of individuals, communities and the economy in the region;
- that “recreation” is inclusive of play, physical activity, sport, arts and culture and outdoor pursuits;
- that “parks” include designated community parks, public open spaces, sports fields, natural areas and environmental reserves;
- that using a “community development” approach yields benefits both through the process and the programs and services that are delivered;
- that working in partnership with others who contribute to wellness and quality of life in the region is essential; and
- that volunteerism is fundamental to the delivery of recreation and parks programs.

## OUR RECREATION STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Flagstaff Community of communities Strategic Objectives for recreation and parks are:

### A. Collaborative Leadership

### B. Advance our Collective Quality of Life in the Community of communities

### C. Community Building

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE A: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP



### ENABLING OBJECTIVE 1: COLLABORATE ON REGIONAL SERVICES AND DECISION-MAKING

Recreation and parks as a function, must capitalize more fully on the potential of collaboration if it is to reach its potential and our citizens are to be served effectively, efficiently and economically.

The challenge of sustaining vibrant communities, particularly in rural Alberta, suggests a need for a collaborative regional model of service delivery. Such a model will embrace economic, social, cultural and environmental responsibility; recognize the value of natural and human capital; reach out to disciplines such as health and education; and focus on enabling our communities as a region. This model would optimize the use of scarce resources, including trained professionals, who are in short supply in rural and small urban communities. It is outlined in Appendix A.

Enhancing regional and community recreation and parks services also supports the Provincial Government's rural development strategy.

### ENABLING OBJECTIVE 2: EMPLOY A REGIONAL RECREATION COORDINATOR

Among other tasks, the Coordinator will:

- Promote, coordinate and communicate the Regional Recreation Plan and its Service Delivery Model;
- Forge municipal partnerships in the development of regional recreation programs and facilities that address service delivery innovation;
- Develop, negotiate and coordinate agreements and services to guide delivery of Recreation and Parks programs, facilities and services; and
- Coordinate and routinely produce a Regional Recreation Program and Services Guide.

### ENABLING OBJECTIVE 3: ADDRESS CHANGING RECREATION PATTERNS

Research clearly shows that participation patterns for recreation continue to shift. The popularity of activities that consume large amounts of fixed time or require large numbers of support people is declining. To predict the future of recreation amid accelerating lifestyles it would be wise to consider both trends (predictors of change) and demographics. Organizations offering recreation and parks opportunities cannot assume that they have a captive market. Commitment of interests, time and money are earned by fulfilling needs. Participants expect a high level of service, even from volunteers. Meeting such standards requires a sharpened mind and skill set.

Alberta municipalities are developing 'integrated community sustainability plans' and 'environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure'. All Alberta communities should be encouraged to 'take the natural step' by engaging in sustainable development.

Recreation and parks can contribute to integrated community sustainability (ICS) plans by integrating recreation and parks master planning as part of the local dimension of ICS planning.

A provincial gap analysis clearly identified quality assurance in children's sport and recreation programs as an area requiring strategic attention. *HIGH FIVE@*, a quality assurance program based on extensive research, trains recreation leaders to ensure that recreation opportunities for children are of high standard and contribute to child development and emotional literacy. This program has gained national recognition and use. It should be applied as appropriate to program delivery in the Flagstaff region.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE A:  
COLLABORATIVE  
LEADERSHIP**



**ENABLING OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE REGIONAL CAPACITY FOR VALUES-BASED DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS.**

Volunteers are recognized and respected in the region. They are typically the same small group of people due to the difficulty of recruiting new volunteers and exceptional difficulty of recruiting volunteers who are knowledgeable.

Transition approaches must be developed over time to build renewed capacity within the voluntary sector. Partnering with adjacent municipalities, provincial recreation and sport organizations and associations like *TRUE SPORT* will assist in the creation of innovative mechanisms to enhance local capacity.

The leadership of a full-time Regional Recreation Coordinator is crucial to the success of this objective. The Regional Recreation Coordinator would assist with professional support to the community volunteers and volunteer 'groups' through actions such as:

- advice regarding management issues;
- information;
- leadership development;
- support in liaising with other government recreation and cultural services such as provincial Agriculture Societies programs among others;
- support in developing community involvement;
- publicity advice;
- assistance in obtaining qualified leaders; and
- assistance in the development of program evaluation procedures.

A volunteer development program would consist of:

- recruitment strategies;
- placement of volunteers;
- orientation for volunteers;
- methods to encourage volunteer initiative;
- recognition of volunteers; and
- the personal development of volunteers.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE B:  
ADVANCE OUR COLLECTIVE  
QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES**



Our pursuit of advancing and enhancing our collective quality of life must be supported by a new recreation program and service delivery approach.

Two things require change. First, not-for-profit clubs and organizations can no longer work in silos but rather must collaborate to meet the needs of our citizens and secondly, hierarchies amongst volunteer organizations are becoming increasingly irrelevant and must be focused on new ways to achieve our recreation vision and not let tradition narrow our focus.

The following 'guiding principles' serve as the cornerstone for the assessment of quality of life goals:

- Individual responsibility and empowerment – each citizen is responsible for actively participating in personal health and wellness;
- Citizens first – residents are citizens first and consumers second;
- Holistic health – because much of life's meaning lies in interconnectedness, contribution to one's community can be an antidote to stress, particularly when combined with fitness, good nutrition and relaxation;
- Quality, choice and accessibility in public goods – including recreation and cultural assets – must be of high quality and accessible to all regardless of social economic status, age or any disadvantage. No child, for example, should be denied the opportunity to participate;
- Protecting and nurturing quality of place – the design of our communities and the respect paid to natural capital must set the foundation for active lifestyles and enhanced quality of life;
- Long-term perspective – quality of life enhancements need to occur continuously;
- Children and youth are our highest priority – while it is important to foster health and wellness for all, investments in our children and youth promise the greatest long-term dividends; and
- Active living and daily living – is essential, a cornerstone of health and quality of life.

**ENABLING OBJECTIVE 1: BECOME AN ACE (ACTIVE, CREATIVE, ENGAGED) COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES.**



The use of our leisure and public spaces defines quality of life for the residents of a community.

Recreation, sports, fitness, arts, culture, heritage and parks opportunities are the heart of our communities; pumping vitality, creativity, and positive energy into our lives.

What we do with our discretionary time helps us enjoy, make sense of and shape our lifestyles, our families, our communities and the world around us. This quality of life is also the magnet that attracts and retains economic activity and a skilled workforce.

In recent years, the field of recreation and parks has focused much of its effort in three main areas – facilities, programs and parks to contribute to this quality of life. While these remain important, the ACE Communities initiative has been focused on a fourth area – community building - where recreation and parks are used as a catalyst to strengthen community leadership, innovation and capacity.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE B:  
ADVANCE OUR COLLECTIVE  
QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES**



While recreation and parks brings richness and value to our lives and our communities, there is even greater potential when we capitalize on our unique understanding of communities and how they work.

The ACE Communities initiative has been able to explore and better articulate the growing importance of community building, the critical need for applying system- thinking to our communities and strong, collaborative leadership all through a recreation, parks and culture lens. ACE Communities describes a process as well as provides specific tools and resources to help a community strengthen its local leadership, identify its assets, apply a community development approach, involve a variety of sectors and citizens and ultimately become a more active, creative and engaged community.

Emphasizing the community leadership that will ensure impact and a longer term legacy, ACE Communities use a holistic approach that includes activities to:

- build community leadership through education and training;
- engage youth in leadership opportunities;
- conduct research related to quality of life; and
- apply marketing and communications approaches that promote the relationship of quality of life to community leadership, recreation, parks and culture.

There are three paths that must be implemented to become an “ACE Community”. These include strengthened local leadership, initiation of a short term project that encourages the community to work together and the development of a community-driven long term plan related to quality of life.

The Flagstaff region is well on its way to fulfilling the requirements to be an ACE Community.

We:

- are strengthening local leadership by hiring a Regional Recreation Coordinator;
- need to initiate a short term project requiring the community to work together; and
- have developed a community driven long term plan with the approach we’ve used to prepare our Regional Recreation Plan that has been developed by undertaking a review of all facilities, open spaces and programs and engaging communities, organizations and citizens in public consultation.

The benefits of being an ACE Community are:

- access to community building workshops;
- sharing, collaborating, meeting and learning online using state-of-the-art integrated processes;
- access to new resources and regular webcasts and webinars related to community leadership competencies and the use of ACE tools and resources;
- community leaders toolkit;
- use of the Service Excellence Framework for community recreation and parks practitioners;
- ongoing involvement with other provincial organizations involved in community capacity building; and
- use of the Facility Inventory Tracking System.

It is worth noting that Killam became an ACE Community in 2009-10.



**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE B:  
ADVANCE OUR COLLECTIVE  
QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES**



*Everybody gets to play™*  
Recreation without barriers



The best way to play™



**ENABLING OBJECTIVE 2: IMPLEMENT NEW PROGRAMS TARGETED FOR EACH AGE GROUP THAT MEETS A WIDE RANGE OF ABILITIES AND INTERESTS.**

For children, implement the following:

Use *HIGH FIVE®*, Canada's only quality assurance standard for recreation and sports programs for children aged 6 - 12. *HIGH FIVE®* provides a range of training opportunities, assessment tools and resources to ensure that communities and organizations can deliver the highest quality programs possible. *HIGH FIVE®* is also aligned with the Canadian Sport for Life model which provides excellent information as to what children should be doing at specific stages of their life. In addition, *HIGH FIVE®* empowers leaders in creating a quality environment where children's mental and emotional needs can be met simultaneously.

Embrace *Everybody Gets to Play™* which enhances the quality of life of children and youth in low-income families through increased access to, and participation in, recreation opportunities. Using a Community Mobilization Tool Kit, *Everybody Gets to Play™* orientations and one-day workshops enable communities from across the province to identify, reduce and ultimately eliminate barriers to recreation for children living in low-income families.

Implement the *Sogo Active* initiative created for one reason, to help youth challenge themselves and their friends to get moving. In this program, youth are asked to take the lead in solving the inactivity crisis by designing challenges to get themselves and their friends more active. Presented in collaboration with *ParticipACTION*, *Sogo Active* is a national initiative developed by *ParticipACTION* to create a youth-focused physical actively movement targeting Canadians aged 13 – 19.

Embed the *Kids at Hope* belief system. *Kids at Hope* is an innovative concept which states that all children are capable of success, NO EXCEPTIONS! *Kids at Hope* is first and foremost a belief system, supported by a cultural strategy and then enhanced by programs. *Kids at Hope* inspires, empowers and transforms families, youth-serving organizations and entire communities to create an environment where all children experience success.

For seniors and young adults:

Seek out those new initiatives that will inspire a renewed willingness to become active socially and physically through recreational activities.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE B:  
ADVANCE OUR COLLECTIVE  
QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF  
COMMUNITIES**

Teams should be organized around the theme of maximizing participation in the region rather than being organized around a facility or municipality.

**TRUE  
SPORT  
LIVES HERE**



**ENABLING OBJECTIVE 3: REBUILD AND UNITE THE REGION'S COMMUNITY SPORT SYSTEM.**

Sports delivery in Canada relies on a diverse array of organizations, in both the public and not-for-profit sectors. The complexity of the sport delivery and support system in itself make effective collaboration difficult.

The roles of both the Federal and Provincial Governments will remain diminished. The onus for developing grassroots programs lies at the local level, requiring cooperation between the local sports organizations, community schools and municipal governments.

Most Canadians believe community sport can help young people develop positive values and positively affect communities.

The 2002 national public opinion survey on youth and sport discovered that few Canadians believe sport is fully realizing its powerful potential.

That sense of unrealized potential has spurred a new Canadian movement, *True Sport*. Driven by four core values: fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun, *True Sport* aims to create safe and welcoming environments where participants develop skills and abilities, test their limits and strive to achieve.

Under the guidance of the Regional Recreation Coordinator, a forum of all organizations delivering sport-oriented programs needs to be held to discuss and formulate a cohesive plan to inspire interest in sports and deliver sport programs efficiently so indoor and outdoor facilities are used effectively.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE C: COMMUNITY BUILDING



### ENABLING OBJECTIVE 1: IMPLEMENT A SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL (APPENDIX A)

#### The model:

- clarifies program and/or facility provision alternatives;
- allows for the measuring of input, outputs and outcomes;
- evaluates recreation facility and program proposals;
- enables self assessment and continuous improvement; and
- provides a vehicle or framework through which priorities can be achieved.

### ENABLING OBJECTIVE 2: ADOPT AN EXCELLENCE IN RECREATION AND PARKS PHILOSOPHY

This approach for open space and recreation facilities is achievable in our region and will revolve around three key concepts, six guiding principles and a series of actions.

#### Key Concepts:

- **An investment in people.** The creation of a system of indoor and outdoor community gathering places provide residents of all ages with a high quality of life and the opportunity for improved health and wellness now and in the future.
- **A carefully planned infrastructure investment strategy.** Invest to revitalize our existing infrastructure before we build new facilities. Work with a variety of partners to develop assets in a more timely fashion building community stewardship.
- **An investment in a healthier environment.** Conserving and maintaining natural heritage and ensuring that man-made redevelopment and development has a reduced ecological footprint to show commitment to a more sustainable community.

#### Guiding Principles:

- Invest in our community's health and wellness;
- Reduce the ecological footprint of development;
- Grow in place through reinvestment and revitalization;
- Engage the public and strengthen our community;
- Plan for the needs of the future; and
- Create funding strategies to provide ongoing support.

#### Actions:

- Strategically plan in advance to include emerging needs and capacities;
- Undertake collaborative decision-making with and through community partners;
- Look to regional centres of play and opportunities to meet similar community needs across boundaries;
- Work systematically to the largest cross-sectional community benefit;
- Maximize the opportunities for residents to enjoy indoor and outdoor services as a critical quality of life necessity; and
- Explore opportunities to develop and enhance partnerships with the school systems to promote schools as community hubs for the delivery of community recreation programs.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE C: COMMUNITY BUILDING



### **ENABLING OBJECTIVE 3: COMPLETE AN INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

Some of the region's community recreation infrastructure has or is approaching the end of its useful life expectancy. Some of it has already been replaced. The answer is not simply to replace what we have. The answer is to assess whether the future needs are the same as those of the past and only build the infrastructure that meets future needs. Tomorrow's infrastructure must facilitate wellness and holistic services in collaboration with others in the region.

The Infrastructure Renewal and Development Plan will:

- Inventory all existing indoor and outdoor facilities;
- Assess their physical condition using the Alberta Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA) assessment tool;
- Determine upgrading required for existing facilities;
- Determine what, if any, new facilities may be required; and
- Implement an integrated facility management system and a Facility Lifecycle Maintenance Program.

### **ENABLING OBJECTIVE 4: REVISE THE REGIONAL RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM.**

Incorporate all of the elements of each of the Community Building Enabling Objectives as criteria for grant funding. The new grant program will establish the parameters for wise, consistent, transparent, creative and difficult choices that will have to be made to respond to our region's emerging needs.

**Appendix B** outlines the new Grant Program.

### **ENABLING OBJECTIVE 5: COORDINATE THE SUBMISSIONS FOR PROVINCIAL GRANTS ON A REQUIRED BASIS.**

This approach builds on all three of this Regional Recreation Plan's Strategic Objectives: Collaborative Leadership, Collective Quality of Life and Community Building in the Flagstaff Community of communities.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE C:  
COMMUNITY BUILDING**



There is a general feeling of dissatisfaction in the region about the competing advocacy of individual clubs, organizations, sports and municipalities grounded in engrained attitudes and behaviours.

Understanding our past and the eras of evolution for recreation and parks combined with an understanding of the paradigm shift that is necessary to move forward will be helpful.

The following two charts provide the necessary insight:

OUTPUTS ERA Approach		OUTCOMES ERA Approach
Focus on what we do	→	Focus on why we do it
Focus on resource inputs and outputs of activity	→	Focus on tying activity to the goals set out for it
Focus on direct benefits to users	→	Focus on indirect benefit to all (i.e. public goods)
Measures of efficiency	→	Measures of effectiveness
We can do this ourselves	→	We can do it better if we collaborate with others who share the same goals

ERA	TIMEFRAME	CHARACTERISTICS
Inputs Era	1960s and 1970s	New infrastructure and programs
Outputs Era	1980s to mid 1990s	Users, efficiencies, management
Benefits Era	Mid 1990s to present	Benefits messages, broadened role. Partners
Outcomes Era	2005 – 2015 and beyond	Benefit-based outcomes, public goods, integrated approaches

We need to ensure sound performance measurement systems are in place – systems that balance both outputs and outcomes. The greatest need is for us to get better at measuring outcomes.





## OUR REGION

Inter-municipal interdependence is a fact of life in Alberta and will continue to be well into the future.

At the same time, today's needs are not the same as those of our parents or grandparents; and those of the future will be different yet again. Wise, creative and challenging choices have to be made to respond to our collective community's emerging needs. We cannot overlook the realities of the present while dwelling in the experience of our past.

The Flagstaff Regional Recreation Plan (RRP), its vision, mission and strategies outlines how value for the resources allocated to recreation across the Flagstaff region can be achieved as well as a balanced approach to service delivery. That balance must consider active and passive recreational pursuits; spontaneous use and organized activities (e.g. minor sports), children, adult and seniors needs, urban and rural lifestyles and the condition of existing assets versus evolving needs. The Plan also provides evaluative and decision-making tools that if used, will provide a consistent, well-informed, transparent and accountable way to ensure that the resources expended upon recreation in the region achieve the goals set out for them.

## OUR COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

The achievement of our Regional Recreation Plan depends upon our collective will to embrace the key elements of our future success as a Community of communities.

### KEY ELEMENTS FOR OUR FUTURE SUCCESS:

In their report on our region, "Urban-Rural Interdependencies: Flagstaff Pilot Project", the University of Alberta's City-Regions Study Center identified the following as the key elements for our future success:

- **See diversity and difference as a strength.** The communities of Flagstaff come together around shared values and goals. But they are also brought together by their differences. The communities acknowledge that diversity among them creates opportunities for partnership. Diversity gives both the reasons and the tools to collaborate with and complement one another. Partnerships enable community members to pool resources, reduce duplication and share knowledge.
- **Recognize the mutual benefits of partnering.** What conditions favour partnerships? In Flagstaff, there are many. Urban-rural alliances and agreements are most beneficial when the participating parties share common goals, resources, timelines and when they pursue their shared objectives through open communication. In these successful partnerships, the involved parties share knowledge, resources and best practices and include a balance between outside expertise and local know-how.
- **Acknowledge conflict and differences.** While people in rural and urban areas enjoy and acknowledge the benefits of partnering, there are also, of course, conflicts. There are contrary yet respectful views about who benefits most from rural-urban interdependency.
- **Turn challenges into opportunities.**
  - The challenges:
    - The Past – Current practice is influenced by past experiences.
    - Resources – Partnering is hindered by a lack of resources or by a lack of local knowledge, guidance and structure about how to partner.
    - Personalities – Unresolved interpersonal conflicts or protectionism limit dispute resolution mechanisms.
    - Inequalities – inequalities in population base can lead to complications in cost-sharing and funding.
  - The opportunities:
    - The people of Flagstaff recognize opportunities in the diversity in opinions, resources, knowledge and ways of doing things within the region. They look forward to the development of more social infrastructure and recreational facilities and to engaging with other partners through regional organizations.
- **Facilitating urban-rural partnerships.** In seeking to create productive relationships, the communities of Flagstaff emphasize the need to actively guide and structure partnerships. A spirit of cooperation and community should be fostered; and communities that invest in partnerships should be rewarded.

## OUR UNDERSTANDING OF RECREATION

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was strong belief in the potential of leisure and recreation to enrich individual and community quality of life. Since the early 1980's, however, fiscal conservatism, commercialization and privatization have prompted leisure and recreation to adopt a more reactive approach.

Yet leisure is not a commercial activity, nor a commodity to be consumed. Instead it is an agent of public good. What is needed is a community based approach that identifies the fundamental importance of that common good.

In partnership with others from the Quality of Life Sector, our region needs to create and grow the "people climate". Such a climate offers quality of life and authenticity of "place" – diverse, active lifestyle options and amenities that people in unique communities really want.



## OUR FOUNDATIONS FOR ACTION – A PARADIGM SHIFT

The Alberta Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA) recently published a report entitled "Enhancing the Quality of Life in Alberta". It outlines various strategies that municipalities can use to enhance the quality of life for their citizens. The report recognizes that most municipalities are struggling due to a lack of own-source revenue, diminishing fiscal transfers and seemingly uncoordinated policies and plans for the delivery of programs and services.

What is needed, the report emphasized, are collaborative, strategic, sustainable investments that enhance the social recreational health and well being of communities.

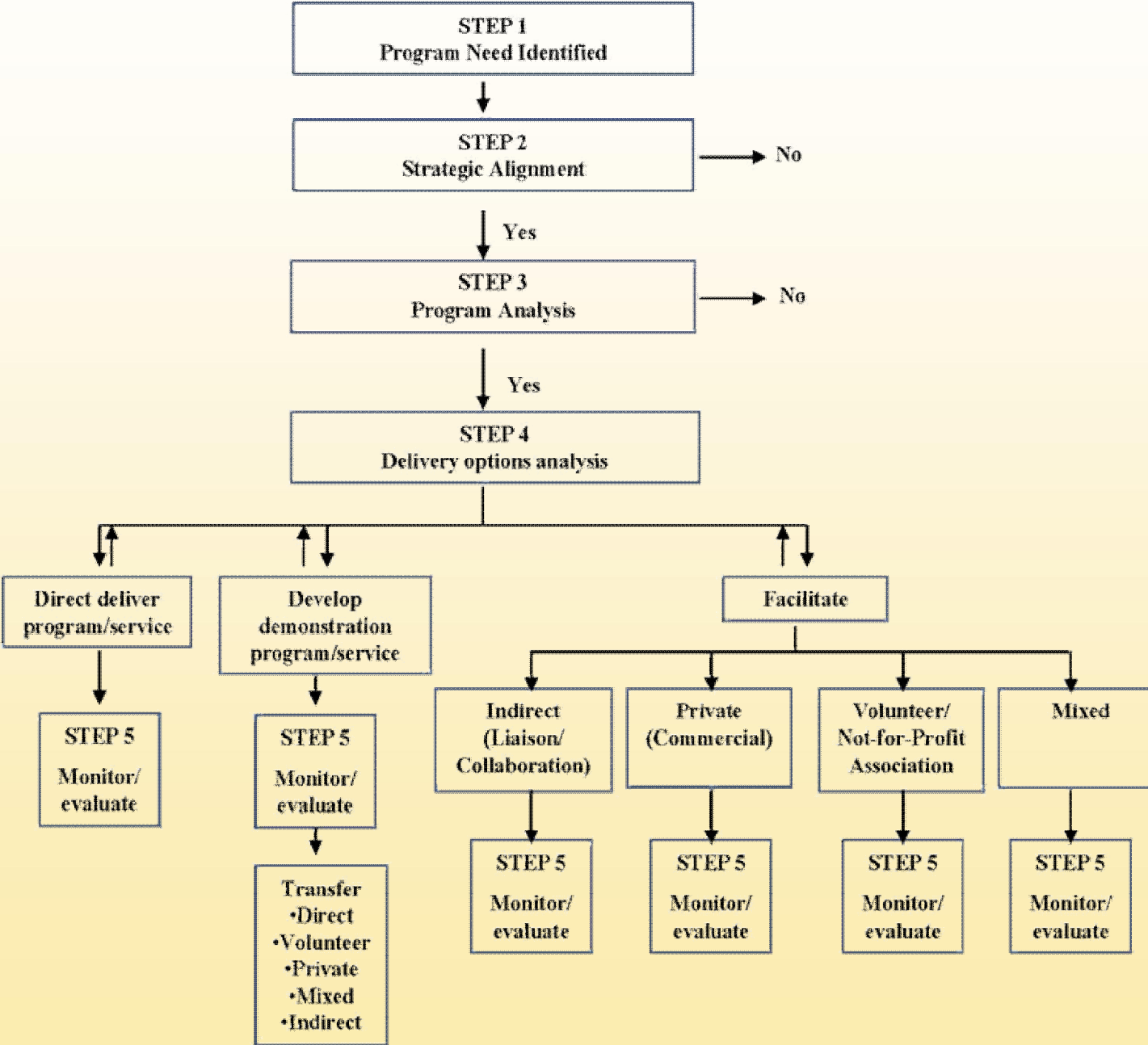
The change necessary to achieve enhanced quality of life sees a shift:

FROM		TO
A homogenous society	→	Diversity in communities
Communities of place	→	Communities of interest
Shared location	→	Shared interests
Recreation as leisure	→	Recreation as wellness
Recreation as discretionary	→	Recreation as being necessary
Governing	→	Governance
Government is accountable	→	Accountability is shared
Quality service	→	Quality of life
People are customers	→	People are citizens
Individualism	→	Communitarianism
Exclusive	→	Community and social engagement



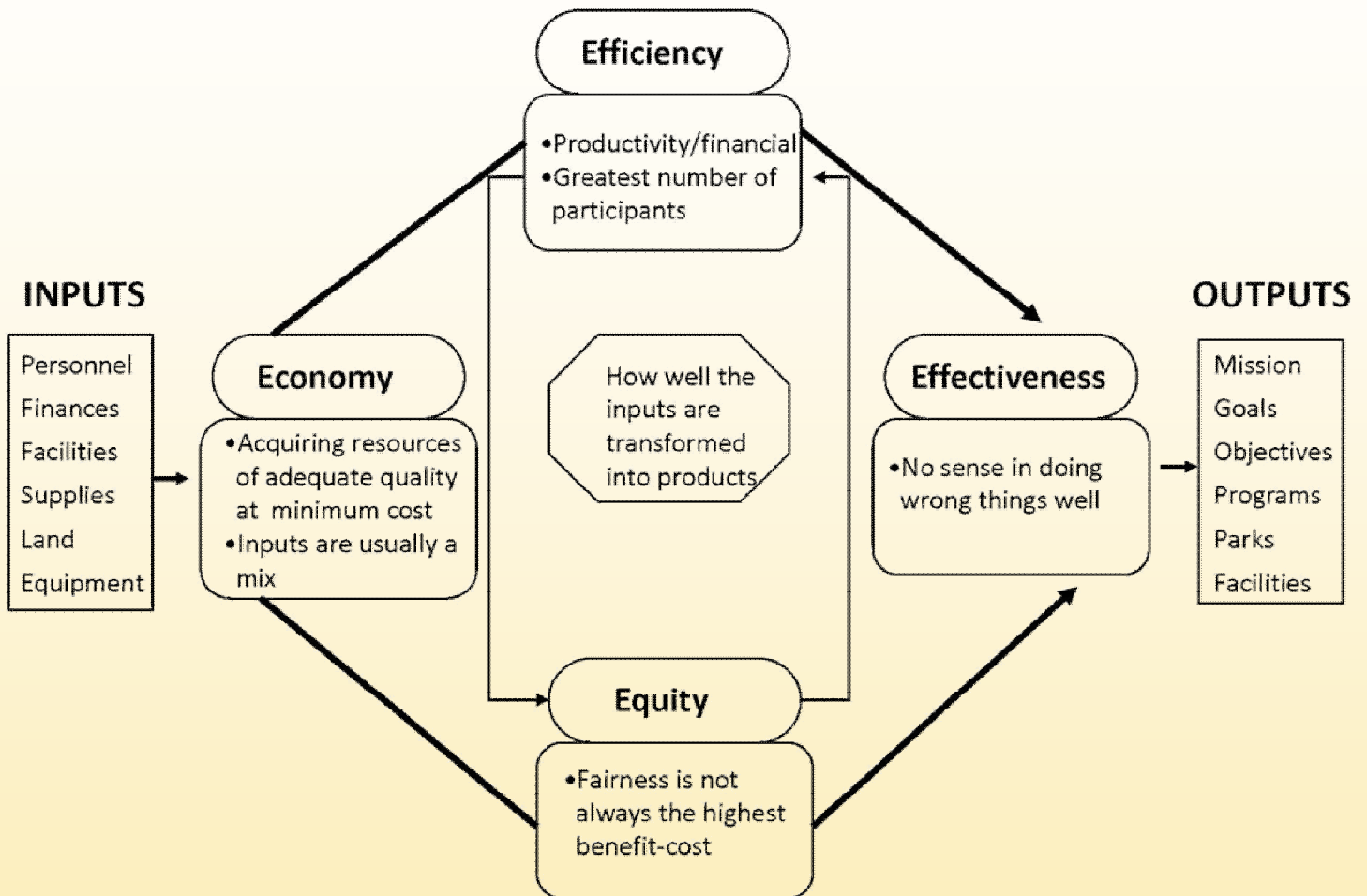
# APPENDIX A – Regional Recreation Service Delivery Model

## RECREATION AND PARKS SERVICE DELIVERY PROVISION PROCESS





## THE MEASURE OF INPUTS AND OUTPUTS



# Definition of the Four “E”s

## **ECONOMY**

In deciding on the most appropriate method of delivering a facility, service or program you must determine the most economical way of identifying, organizing and allocating the necessary resources.

## **EFFICIENCY**

The second criteria - efficiency, is used in deciding how a facility, program or service is to be delivered. In this regard, the analysis should focus on identifying the direct and indirect costs and benefits of the various delivery methods and for each level of effectiveness (i.e. goals, achievement) determine the most efficient delivery process (i.e. which has the highest benefit to cost ratio).

## **EQUITY**

Equity is a concept of what is fair. Therefore, equity calls for equal treatment of equals and conversely, unequal treatment of unequals. An example of this is:

If there were a 100 males aged 6 to 12 representing 5% of the males aged 6 to 12 in a Town; and in a smaller Village or Town there were 50 males aged 6 to 12 representing 20% of the males in that Town, equity would be achieved not by comparing the absolute numbers but by comparing the percentages. The two municipalities are not equal in population of males aged 6 to 12 therefore they are un-equals and should be treated unequally, that is equitably.

Equity requires that specific questions be answered.

- What is fair?
- What claims should be recognized?
- How are the areas in the Community of communities to be conceived of as being equal?
- How are the areas' status (i.e. financial, volunteerism) to be measured?
- How is equality of treatment to be measured?

Equity is critical to dealing with the differences in the Flagstaff region. Application of this will provide the basis to decide if there is any case to be made for treating different areas in the Community of communities differently, how this difference can be measured and how differential initiatives might be pursued.

There are two criteria recommended for use in deciding whether or not different areas or different resident groups should be treated differently. These are:

- Need: location; average family income; population age composition; population growth or lack of growth; special disadvantaged groups; sense of community identity
- Demand and Preferences: use/participation; preference; barriers to participation; requests/complaints

Although equity is a principle to be achieved, due to the extra costs incurred in achieving it, it is usually never fully realized.

## **EFFECTIVENESS**

When deciding the best method of delivering a facility, service or program, you must ask the question 'to what degree will the various methods available to us yield the product we want in terms of our vision, mission and strategies'. When answering this question it is essential that you be objective.

# APPENDIX B – Regional Recreation and Facility Grant Program

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Council:

- Review program recommendations and make final decision on all programs.

### Council Committee:

- Review and evaluate the merits of all proposals.
- Determine if additional information is required to make a recommendation.
- Determine which programs and/or facilities should be supported by Council.
- Submit recommendations to Council.
- Annually review programs and facilities.

### Administration:

- Act as a liaison between the Council Committee and the program/facility advocate.
- Coordinate submissions, ensuring all required information is included in the submission.
- Present submissions to the Council Committee, when required.
- Facilitate annual review of program by the Council Committee.
- Maintain records on all submissions and approved programs.

### Program Advocate:

- Prepare submission to required standard.
- Provide additional information to Administration, if required.
- Meet with the Council Committee and present proposal, if requested.
- If successful, work with the Administration on the implementation of the program.
- Provide information for the Council Committee's review, when requested.

## REGIONAL RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM EVALUATION GUIDELINES

### Step 1: Program and/or Facility Identification

The program and/or facility advocate should prepare an Executive Summary for initial consideration by the County. This one page general overview of the program should include:

- Description of the program and/or facility;
- Program and/or facility goals;
- Scope of the program/facility (magnitude and timeframe);
- Program and/or facility benefits and identification of those who will benefit; and
- Program and/or facility finances (macro business case/budget).

### Step 2: Strategic Alignment

The Administration should review the program and/or facility proposal to determine if it aligns with the Regional Recreation Plan.

Does the program or facility:

- Meet the needs of the citizens;
- Build a connection amongst the “Community of communities”; and
- Increase the profile of recreation in regional social development?

If yes, which and to what extent of the strategies does the program and/or facility support?

#### Collaborative Leadership:

- Diversified volunteer opportunities;
- Positive volunteer involvement;
- Increased citizen participation;
- Effective communication;
- Increased community pride;
- Improved quality of life for citizens;
- Expands connections amongst the “Community of communities”;
- Operational effectiveness amongst the “Community of communities”; and
- Strengthened relationship amongst recreation and parks program and facility providers.

#### Advance our Collective Quality of Life:

- Increased community pride;
- Improved quality of life for citizens;
- Increased community pride; and
- New integrated programs.

#### Community Building:

- Pursuit of excellence;
- Coordinated grant applications;
- Value-added services, programs and benefits; and
- Continuing recreation and parks opportunities.

To advance to Step #3 – Program Analysis, a proposed program must, as a minimum, align with the Regional Recreation Plan Vision and Mission as well as at least one of its Strategic Objectives.

It is possible that several proposed programs and/or facilities would be assessed at the same time. The programs that are most aligned with the Vision/Mission statements and multiple strategies should be considered as preferred candidates for a Step #3 review.

### **Step 3: Program Analysis**

The program and/or facility advocate needs to prepare a concise business case that accurately reflects the financial realities of undertaking the program or funding the facility.

**The business case should contain the following information:**

- Executive Summary;
- Information on the proposed program and/or facility;
- Market analysis relative to the proposed program and/or facility;
- Financial data relative to the program and/or facility;
- An organization profile (if applicable);
- Organizational information;
- Organization finances;
- Other programs and services currently provided; and
- Marketing and promotion plans.

The business case should be reviewed by the staff to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the information; then a Council Committee should discuss the program benefits and weigh the costs against the benefit; and finally, it and any recommendations from the Administration or the Council Committee should be presented to Council for a decision.

At this point in the process, the Committee will need to rank the proposed programs and/or facilities to ensure that those with the highest priority are allocated appropriate funding. Proposed programs and/or facilities that do not advance past the Step #3 review should be rejected or referred to another service provider.

### **Step 4: Service Delivery**

Where there is an option, the County will need to identify the optimum service provider. Administration will need to be a partner in this process, as all options will require direct or indirect supervision by the staff to ensure follow through accountability.

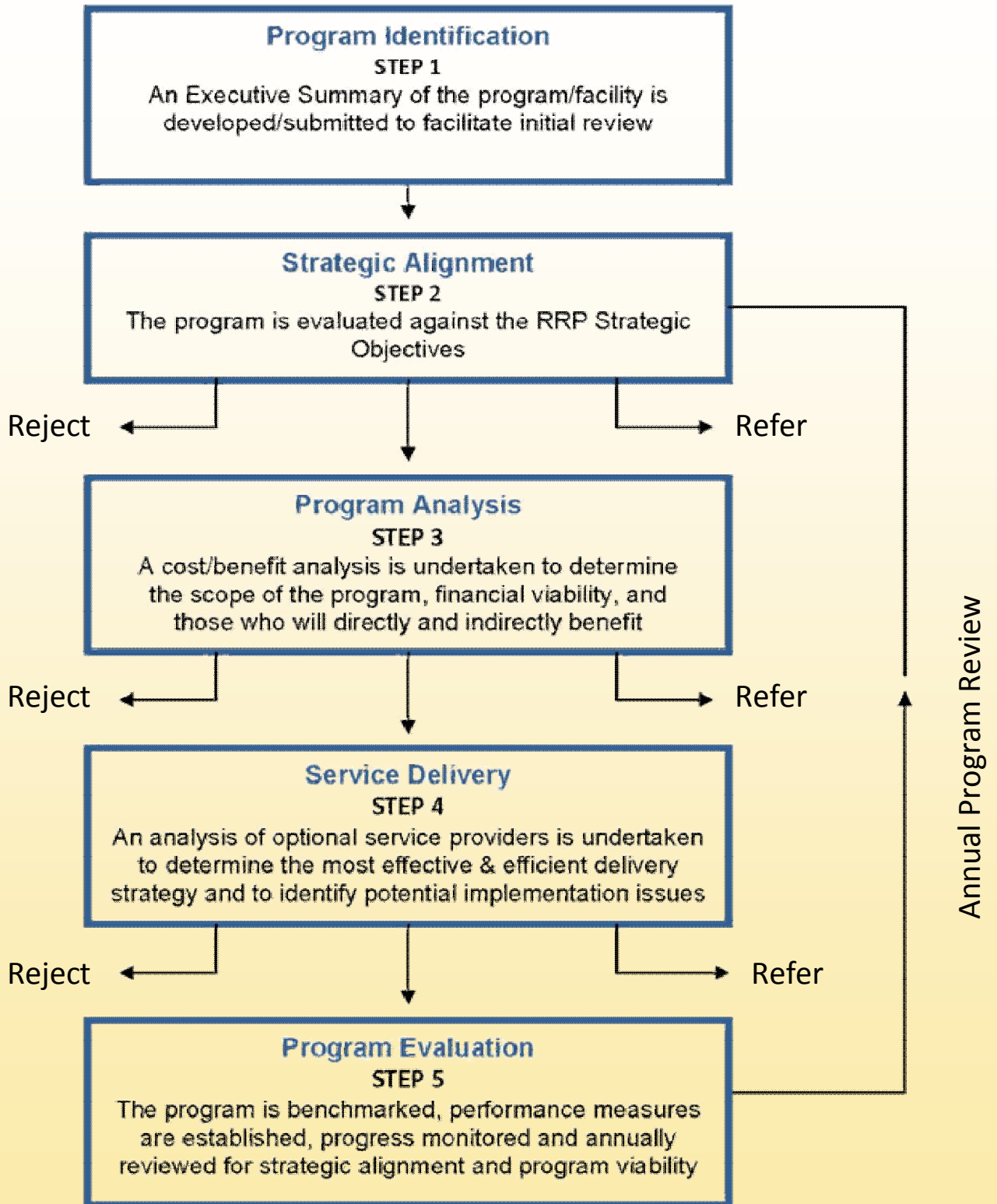
Delivery options include:

- County staff;
- Not-for-profit, volunteer organization(s);
- Partnership with other service provider(s); and
- Private sector contract.

### **Step 5: Program Evaluation**

Prior to implementation the County and service provider(s) need to establish performance measures and benchmarks against which to measure progress. The measures may be both qualitative (outcomes) and quantitative (outputs), but need to include starting positions prior to implementation and target positions at specific dates after implementation.

## REGIONAL RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM EVALUATION GUIDELINES



**Flagstaff County Community of communities  
Regional Recreation Grant Program  
Evaluation Form  
STEP 2 – Strategic Alignment**

Proposed Program and/or Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Applicable YES/NO	Meets Criteria (√)					Comments
		Low		High			
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Strategic Alignment – Collaborative Leadership</b>							
1. Collaborative, region-wide and ranks high for economical, efficient and effective							
2. Is aligned with and contributes to the achievement of the RRP and the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan							
3. A High Five quality assurance program							
4. Builds renewed volunteer participation and capacity							
<b>Strategic Alignment – Advance our Collective Quality of Life</b>							
5. Provides opportunity to live a healthy life style							
6. Meets criteria for ACE communities							
7. New program or facility targeting wide range of activity, abilities and interests							
8. Geographic location served (score 1 point for each of County residents, Town or Village residents only, all residents, outside the County if all 4 score 5)							
9. Rebuilds and unites our community sport system							
<b>Strategic Alignment – Community Building</b>							
10. Facility is identified in our Renewal and/or Development Plan; or if a program, meets a 'new' program need							
11. Facility has a Facility Life-cycle Maintenance Program, or if a program age group served (score 1 point for each of under 20 years, 20-30, 30-45, 45-60, over 60)							

**Flagstaff County Community of communities**

**Regional Recreation Grant Program**

**Evaluation Form**

**STEP 3 – Program Analysis**

Criteria	Applicable YES/NO	Meets Criteria (√)					Comments
		Low		High			
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Facility/Program Analysis</b>							
12. Anticipated numbers served (score 1 for each of under 100 people, 100-500, 500-1000, 1000-5000, over 5000)							
13. 3-year profitability (score 3 – if subsidized, 4 – if breakeven, 5 – if profit)							
14. Essential service provided at better price							
15. More effective service offered at same price							
16. Useful service offered for free							
17. Experience of individual/organization advocating program							
18. Multi-municipal/provincial funded							
19. Revitalizes existing well used program or facility							
20. A new program or facility that meets a 'new' need							

**Total score out of 100 \_\_\_\_\_**

Additional Comments/Other Considerations:

---



---



---



---

Additional information required:

---



---



---



# APPENDIX C: Programs and Facilities Review and Public Consultation Report

## INTRODUCTION

In December of 2007 and extending into 2008, Flagstaff County undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process that led to the development of a long range Strategic Plan to position the County to both meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that the future will inevitably present. The Strategic Plan also served to focus the County's efforts and allocation of resources to achieve optimum value and contribute to the quality of life of the residents of the Flagstaff Community of communities.

In consulting with the Towns and Villages within the geographic area of the County as part of the strategic planning process, feedback was received that the issue of regional recreation was both important to them and in urgent need of review. In response to that input, Flagstaff County included the development of a plan for regional recreation in the Flagstaff Community of communities as a high priority project to be undertaken and funded by the County on behalf of all regional municipalities.

As a first step, during the fall of 2009 a review was undertaken of the recreation programs, open spaces and indoor facilities in the Towns, Villages and County of Flagstaff. This Review also looked at the financial sustainability of each municipality, recreation-oriented grant funding and regional collaboration approaches.

This was followed in late 2010 by a major public engagement and consultation process facilitated by an independent third party with assistance from the Provincial Government. The consultant met with each municipal council and each municipal CAO.

The public were provided three options for providing input on a Regional Recreation Plan (RRP).

1. Community Input Sessions for community groups, agencies and municipal staff were hosted in four Flagstaff municipalities during December 2010. A total of 97 individuals attended the four Community Input Sessions.
2. An on-line questionnaire, open to all residents of the 11 municipalities. A total of 177 individuals responded to the questionnaire.
3. Written submissions were accepted at the input sessions, through the town or village offices, by mail and e-mail. Fifteen submissions were received.

This report combines what was found during the onsite visits of open spaces and facilities, programming information, financial information and all elements of the input from the public engagement and consultation.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Flagstaff County has recognized both the value and need of taking a proactive approach to planning, social development and managing sustainable economic growth and environmental stewardship to foster a “Community of communities” through partnering with its urban and rural neighbors and other orders of government to achieve regional benefit for all residents.

Reaching such goals is achieved in large part by developing an ongoing strategic planning process to guide the economic, efficient, effective and equitable delivery of municipal services and infrastructure. To this end, the County identified five strategic goals:

1. “Building a sustainable region of “Community of communities” through strong political and administrative leadership and commitment to working with the Towns and Villages to enhance existing partnerships.
2. Demonstrating a commitment to environmental responsibility by working to minimize our adverse impact on the natural environment through the adoption of eco-friendly practices, progressive planning and the use of green technology.
3. Creating a strategic economic development plan.
4. Endeavoring to provide supportive services for seniors, youths and adults in the community, by first determining the need and then developing long term plans.
5. Establishing a responsible level of service by conducting a comprehensive service level review and realigning the organization to the strategic plan.”

## RECREATION PROGRAM AND FACILITY REVIEW OBJECTIVES

In response to input from the Towns and Villages in the Flagstaff region, the County included a project to develop a regional approach to recreation in its Strategic Plan. Recognizing that the first key step in undertaking such a project is to determine the reality of the current situation, a Recreation Programs and Facilities Review was completed in 2009 with a focus on strategic goals #4 and #5.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES REVIEW

- “To guide in the provision of recreation programs and facility opportunities for County residents and residents of the broader “Community of communities” in cooperation with Towns and Villages within the County’s municipal boundaries.
- To be part of a continuous recreation services planning process recognizing changing social and economic conditions.
- To identify alternative processes for meeting recreation and parks programming and facility needs rather than on prescribed service, facility and program solutions.
- To further the “Community of communities” Strategic Theme by focussing on the concept of ‘regional’ benefit and engaging the Towns and Villages with the County.
- To help address key financial, and in some cases, viability challenges for the municipalities.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES REVIEW CONTINUED...

- To develop a long-term collaborative approach that optimizes recreation and community wellness opportunities in partner communities that deliver economic, efficient and effective recreation facilities and programming while achieving regional benefit.
- To determine worth versus cost in answering the question, “What is it worth to have opportunities available versus the cost of those opportunities?”

## RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES REVIEW OUTCOMES

The Review identified a method that would help with resource allocation decisions for recreation programs and facilities at the service delivery level, and identified a needs assessment methodology to make resource allocation decisions that recognizes current realities and future forecasts. The Review built on the strength of the current Flagstaff County Strategic Plan, the University of Alberta Study Report on Urban-Rural Interdependencies and the 2005 Service Partnership Plan.

The recommendations were developed to support economical, efficient decisions and effective service delivery while also ensuring equity (fairness) issues are considered.

The challenge is in balancing socially sustainable community goals with fiscally sustainable community goals.

Socially sustainable communities foster a sense of community, opportunities for cultural, leisure, community and civic activities for all residents, an increased awareness of resources and services, networked communities, strong partnerships and community pride.

Fiscally sustainable communities maintain reasonable levels of taxation, fees, and charges that provide positive balance sheets. This requires that financial decisions are supported by the economical acquisition of labour, equipment, buildings and land and that those inputs are transformed efficiently into effective services that residents want and/or need.

The Review was future-focused and concentrated its recommendations on alternative processes for meeting recreation demands and needs rather than prescribed services, facility or program solutions.

The Review recognized that it is necessary to continually evaluate and assess needs and service levels in order that residents continue to enjoy optimum benefit from their tax dollar. Future success will be defined by the willingness and ability of all stakeholders in the Region to challenge the status quo by encouraging and enabling risk-taking, change and innovation.

The Review outlined a series of steps that would engage stakeholders, groups and citizens within the County, Towns and Villages to embark on an initiative that:

- challenges everyone to discover new ways to deliver recreation and parks services;
- looks ahead realistically, anticipating future needs based on trends;
- inspires everyone to advocate for change based on good quality information; and
- makes it safe for everyone to take calculated risks and experiment with new ideas.

The approach taken in the Review essentially used the data and information collected and reflected the notion that the residents of the “Community of communities” should decide what they want in terms of recreation and parks, and not what other people in other communities in Alberta have accepted.

## **PUBLIC INPUT INTO A REGIONAL RECREATION PLAN**

One of the Review's recommendations was to pursue Public Participation by:

“Engaging citizens, clubs, organizations and societies in meaningful  
recreation and parks policy development”

Only by engaging the citizens broadly and the societies, clubs and organizations more narrowly would we be able to build consensus amongst the “Community of communities” around recreation and parks program and facility priorities. Engaging citizens throughout the Region within the “Community of communities” would meet the County's stated strategic goals #1, #4 and #5 and most importantly, provide a shared understanding of what is important and valued.

To ensure the broadest opportunity for input, the public were provided three options for providing their thoughts on a Regional Recreation Plan (RRP).

1. Community Input Sessions for community groups, agencies and municipal staff were hosted in four Flagstaff municipalities during December 2010. A total of 97 individuals attended the four independently facilitated Community Input Sessions.
2. An on-line questionnaire, available to all residents of the 11 Flagstaff region municipalities. A total of 177 individuals responded to the questionnaire.
3. In addition, written submissions were accepted at the input sessions, through town or village offices, by mail and e-mail.

### **PURPOSE**

This document is a combined summary of both the Regional Recreation Facilities and Program Review and the Public Input Process. Its purpose is to check the recommendations that emerged from the Review against the input received from the groups, societies, agencies, municipalities, individuals and other stakeholders who contributed their views through the independently conducted Public Input Process. This will ensure that the approach and recommendations reflected in the Flagstaff Regional Recreation Plan have a basis in fact and accurately reflect the public interest. This in turn, will ensure that the Plan is logical, credible and relevant.

### **HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT**

To respect what was heard from the public, this combined summary is grouped by theme as the themes were identified through the public engagement process. For each, the relevant recommendation from the Review is identified and explained. The corresponding input from the public is then examined to provide a complete recounting of what emerged from both processes and to transparently demonstrate how the information obtained was translated into a recommended approach, series of actions and decision-making tools in the Regional Recreation Plan.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY VIABILITY**

### **REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Hire a Regional Recreation Liaison Coordinator**

#### **The Liaison Coordinator would:**

- Forge municipal partnerships in the development of regional recreation programs and facilities that both address and leverage service delivery innovation.
- Promote, coordinate and communicate the County and Regional Recreation and Parks Programs and the County's Facility Grant Program pursuant to the Service Delivery Model and Regional Plan.
- Coordinate and produce a Regional Recreation Program and Services Guide.
- Develop, negotiate, and coordinate agreements and services to guide delivery of Recreation and Parks programs, facilities and services.
- Facilitate and develop teams for service and staff development investigating and implementing best practices integration and consistency for indoor and outdoor services.
- Serve as a spokesperson to report County views through written and verbal presentations to partners and client groups on issues relating to the provision of Regional Recreation and Parks services.
- Undertake research in the areas of volunteer and staff development and training that bring to staff and volunteers the resources to carry out their work responsibilities to the best of their abilities and effectively enhance service capabilities.
- Maintain liaison with partners and delivery agents operating throughout the County.

#### **Rationale**

The absence of full-time recreation and parks leadership along with the absence of a regional plan are the two most significant reasons why there is unnecessary duplication in indoor and outdoor facilities and a lack of wide ranging recreation programs that support leisure needs and healthy lifestyles. There are recreation facility managers and facility operators but no overall leadership to coordinate and optimize the activities that are taking place.

It is unreasonable to expect the existing CAO's to individually or collectively provide the daily recreation leadership that would bring synergy to the current initiatives found in the Agriculture Societies, community associations, service, sports and cultural based clubs and senior's organizations.

Far too much time and energy is wasted by valuable volunteers "reinventing the wheel". A full-time Regional Recreation and Parks Liaison Coordinator would ensure that the existing effort is put towards doing the right thing – achievement of the Regional Plan and assist in the economical and efficient allocation of resources – doing things the right way.

## **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTIONS: In Support of Hiring a Regional Recreation Liaison Coordinator**

### Recreation and Community Viability

There was unanimous agreement that recreational opportunities make a significant contribution to the quality of life in all of the Flagstaff communities. Recreational activities add character to the community, can provide economic benefits and serve as incentives to people looking to move to the area. Participants expressed concern that the loss of accessible recreational opportunities would inhibit the ability of the towns and villages to attract and retain residents, possibly threatening the long-term viability of some.

### Facility Development

Indoor and outdoor facility design needs to be creative in examining development strategies such as multi-use parks and facilities, shared spaces (shared by time of day, day of week, season of year), innovative use of existing facilities, year-round programming opportunities, partnerships with other service providers and other non-traditional options.

### Facility Operations

The majority of facility operators indicated that the following issues were of the greatest concern to them.

- Recruiting and retaining employees is an ongoing problem for most facility operators in the region. This problem is exacerbated by a number of factors, such as many young people choosing to reside in larger urban centers.
- Volunteers are assuming a significant amount of the responsibility for the leadership, administration and operations of the facilities and open spaces. Because of the commitment required, it is difficult to recruit new volunteers and many of the current ones are suffering burn-out.
- Changes in equipment, technology and operating practices require employees to learn new skills. Finding people with the skills and/or finding the necessary time to train staff and volunteers is proving to be a challenge.

### Programming of Recreational Activities

There is a need to ensure that programming reflects demand. The participants at the Community Input Sessions were unsure how effective the Flagstaff region's recreation organizations are at marketing their programs and getting their message out to the greater community. Better communication between the groups and in running programs could improve efficiencies by allowing for the sharing of ideas, skills, expenses and resources.

### Volunteers

The same small group of volunteers was doing most of the work and assuming most of the responsibility. This over-reliance on the same individuals is leading to burn-out. At the same time it is difficult to recruit new volunteers.

Only a few of the representatives indicated that their organization had a formal recruitment strategy for attracting and retaining new volunteers.

Participants also indicated that it was difficult to recruit volunteers with specific skills.

## Funding

Non-profit groups need assistance in identifying funding sources, developing funding strategies and preparing proposals and grant applications. The groups often lack the time, knowledge and skills necessary to put together competitive sponsorship packages and to effectively complete detailed grant submissions.

## Opportunities for Collaboration

Enhanced communication between the providers of recreation facilities, programs and services will create opportunities for the sharing of information, ideas and expertise.

This enhanced dialogue between the service providers could aid long-term planning, support complementary programming of events, explore possible joint ventures and help avoid scheduling conflicts.

Program participation and recruitment of volunteers may be aided by a County-wide marketing and awareness campaign that highlights the recreational opportunities available to residents within all 11 of the Flagstaff region's municipalities.

Sharing the cost of hiring knowledgeable and experienced staff who could provide leadership and help guide and train local staff and volunteers would seem to make sense. Expertise was also required in the areas of ice maintenance, financial and grant management, and marketing.

### **General feedback regarding the need for a Regional Recreation Coordinator:**

- ... need better coordination;
- ... a menu showing recreation opportunities;
- ... help us to be more efficient;
- ... a grants writer;
- ... assistance with grant applications;
- ... a regional recreation director;
- ... a volunteer coordinator;
- ... team up to hire a regional recreation director;
- ... need to share and pass on knowledge and experience; and
- ... need to coordinate communication amongst groups.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY VIABILITY

### REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Develop a Regional Recreation Plan

Flagstaff County Council approved the November 2009 report, *Flagstaff Community of communities Recreation Programs and Facilities Review* and the key recommendation in it:

“To develop a Regional Recreation Plan (RRP)”

The review stated that a RRP is “an essential next step to addressing the recreational needs of the citizens of the communities within the geographic boundaries of Flagstaff County and in so doing, enhancing their quality of life while making better use of the resources available to provide recreational programs, facilities and services.”

A Regional Recreation Plan would:

- outline a transparent and consistent process for determining what indoor and outdoor facilities and programs are required to meet regional recreation and parks needs for the “Community of communities”;
- assist in identifying what facilities and programs meet local neighborhood needs;
- outline the steps to be taken to better use existing human, physical and financial resources; and
- lay out how to enhance the quantity and quality of service delivery.

A RRP will be a valuable tool in helping decision-makers and operators to:

- develop a shared understanding of what recreation and parks program needs are to be met, when financial resources will be required and how much;
- create a long-term capital and operating budget;
- foster a shared understanding of why and how funding decisions are made;
- achieve consensus around the greatest needs; and
- make wise use of land, people and dollars.

### PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTION: In Support of Developing a Regional Recreation Plan

#### Facility Development

The over-riding message arising from the input on facility development was to use caution and plan carefully when considering the development of new facilities. According to many participants at the input sessions, as well as those providing comments as part of the on-line questionnaire, facilities in the Flagstaff area are “over-built and under-used”.

There was extensive discussion and input on how to address facility development and the following represent the comments that were raised most frequently and garnered the greatest support.

- The Flagstaff area has some excellent buildings that are currently serving residents well. There are also some existing buildings that, with some extra work, can provide the community with many more years of service. Given the cost of constructing and operating facilities, there should be an emphasis on maintaining, re-vitalizing and/or renovating what currently exists before time and money is expended on new buildings.



- Need discussion on when to choose between the options of maintain, renovate or re-build. Participants' advice was to look at recreational facilities from a "big picture" perspective. By looking at the County as a whole, municipalities and groups would gain an understanding of similar services offered in other facilities, current usage numbers in the area, facility needs that are not being met by others, opportunities to share operational costs and other valuable information.
- The participants made it clear that, due to the size of the County, a single massive building for each activity would not work.
- A comprehensive and sustainable strategy for addressing short and long-term capital and operational expenses/revenues should be required before making significant investment in existing or future facilities.
- Indoor and outdoor facility design needs to be creative in examining development strategies.

### Facility Operations

The growing costs of facility operations were of concern, particularly for the volunteer group executives who attended the Community Input Sessions. While funding for capital costs can be difficult to raise, those costs represent a one-time investment. On the other hand, operating costs are annual, ever-increasing costs that are impacted by many variables, including inflation, ageing infrastructure, fluctuations in utility rates, the climate, increases or decreases in user generated revenues, availability of affordable labor and the willingness and/or ability of volunteers to assume operational responsibilities.

### Programming of Recreational Activities

There is a need to ensure that programming reflects demand. Program organizers need to find creative approaches to attract participants or consider discontinuing the program.

### Volunteers

For organizations to effectively offer programs and services in the future, they need "new blood" with new energy and new ideas.

### Funding

There needs to be an appropriate balance between the contributions to capital and operational expenses made by the five major funding sources:

1. Province;
2. Flagstaff County;
3. Towns and Villages;
4. Recreation program users; and
5. Community groups.

Opinions on what was an appropriate financial contribution from each source varied greatly.

### Opportunities for Collaboration

Enhance communication between the providers of recreation facilities, programs and services. This enhanced dialogue between the service providers could aid long-term planning,

Working collectively, the groups may be able to take on fundraising initiatives that might be unmanageable by a single group.

### Coordination of the Regional Recreation Plan

The RRP needs to consider recreation in the broadest sense.

The Regional Recreation Plan should guide and support those who deliver recreation services.

Local autonomy needs to be respected.

Elected politicians need to be well-informed and consulted as part of any regional planning.

The plan will need to examine options for ensuring appropriate regional input now and in the future.

### **General Feedback on the need for a Regional Recreation Plan (RRP)**

... explore viability and sustainability;

... need a plan for organization and communication;

... regional coordination; and

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY VIABILITY**

### **REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Coordinate Recreation Programming**

Coordinate the delivery of recreation programs for all the citizens within the “Community of communities”, and market and promote the programs with program guides delivered to all residences for the fall, winter, spring/summer seasons. This will be a primary function for the Recreation Liaison Coordinator.

The development of a detailed Recreation Program Plan is the process by which programming emphasis can be determined. Recreation programming is most significantly affected and driven by the age groupings within a region.

### **Rationale**

The coordination of the marketing of all programs will provide ‘structure’ for exposing duplication and gaps in programming and will provide citizens a one stop shopping catalogue for finding their programs of interest.

All delivery agents whether municipal, club, organization, volunteer or private should be included in the program guide.

The demographic mix within the County, Towns and Villages presents unique recreation program challenges.

The following summary assumes no one moves away – the reality is many do. Young adults leave for higher education and jobs; seniors for different life styles. The University of Alberta report reviews this extensively.

- In 2006 there were 640 children nine years of age and under in the Towns and Villages and 710 between the ages of 10 - 19. Seventy fewer children are following the teenage group preceding them.
- In the County there were 440 children nine years of age and under in 2006 and 625 between the ages of 10 - 19. There are 185 fewer children coming into their teen years. In total there are 255 fewer children, nearly 20% fewer children entering the 10 - 19 year old group than there was over the past decade. This reality is having a profound effect on the ability to form children and teens sports teams; and as a result reduced use of arenas, ball diamonds, bowling alleys and playgrounds.
- The other significant demographic reality is the emerging boom in those 60 years of age and older. Currently there are 1465 people between the age of 40 – 59 in the Towns and Villages compared to 1375 over the age of 60.
- In the County there are 1205 people between the ages of 40 to 59 compared to 590 over the age of 60.
- In total there are 2670 people transitioning into the over 60 age group – compared to the 1965 people over 60 now. There will be 705 more people in the over 60 group; a 36% increase over the period 2006 – 2016.
- The increase in age group will occur in the 20 – 39 age group.
- In the Towns and Villages there are currently 1135 people aged 20 – 39 and 1350 following them in the 0 – 19 age group, an increase of 215 people.
- In the County there are 635 people aged 20 – 39 followed by 1065 aged 0 – 19, an increase of 430 people.
- In total there will be 645 more people aged 20 – 39 over the next twenty years, a 36% increase in the number of people than there are now aged 20 – 39.

These demographic realities have the potential to significantly impact the use of facilities and open space for middle-aged adult programs, such as, ball, men’s hockey, mixed curling and hall rentals for social events.

There is also a significant link to the creation of economic development and social infrastructure if the County, Towns and Villages want to sustain recreation and parks programs and facilities.

### **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTION: In Support of Coordinating Recreation and Programming**

#### Recreation and Community Viability

Access to recreation opportunities, either in the form of facilities and/or programs, applies to both the towns and the villages.

#### Facility Development

Year-round programming opportunities, partnerships with other service providers and other non-traditional options should be considered.

### Programming of Recreational Activities

There is a need to ensure that programming reflects demand. Sometimes historical programs are maintained even though the numbers of registrants do not warrant the time, effort and cost of operating the program. When participation numbers are too low, program organizers need to find creative approaches to attract participants or consider discontinuing the program.

Most programs are open to, and sometimes dependent on, registration by residents living in other areas of the County. The participants at the Community Input Sessions were unsure how effective the Flagstaff region's recreation organizations are at marketing their programs and getting their message out to the greater community. There was a feeling that better exposure of the recreational opportunities would lead to greater numbers of people getting involved.

Many clubs and organizations are running programs, and may be struggling in some areas of operations while achieving high levels of success in others. Better communication between the groups could improve efficiencies by allowing for the sharing of ideas, skills, expenses and resources.

### Opportunities for Collaboration

There was agreement by the participants that some aspects of recreation are best provided at the local level, while other aspects may benefit from the municipalities and volunteer groups working together, on a regional basis. The following key ideas for potential regional collaboration emerged.

- Enhanced communication between the providers of programs.
- Program participation may be aided by a County-wide marketing and awareness campaign that highlights the recreational opportunities available to residents within all 11 municipalities.
- Joint programming by similar organizations may create sufficient participation to warrant the delivery of programs that might otherwise be too costly to run.
- Share recreation program staff on a regional or sub-regional level.

### **General Feedback on Coordinating Recreation Programs:**

...with declining population we need to combine participants from the whole region to field teams;

...need better coordination of programs and events;

...need to recognize we are competing with recreation programs offered in Camrose and Wainwright;

...agree on uniform fees in the region; and

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: VOLUNTEERISM AND RECREATION NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

**REVIEW RECOMMENDATION:** Prepare a policy statement regarding volunteers and not-for-profit associations that includes:

- recognition of the importance of volunteers, the role they play in recreation and parks, and the benefits that result from volunteers; and
- professional support to the community volunteer 'groups' through actions such as:
  - advice regarding management issues;
  - information;
  - leadership development;
  - support in liaison with other government recreation and cultural services (provincial Agriculture Societies programs);
  - support in developing community involvement;
  - publicity advice;
  - assistance in obtaining qualified leaders;
  - assistance in developing program evaluation procedures;
  - a volunteer development program consisting of:
    - Recruitment;
    - Placement of volunteers;
    - Orientation for volunteers;
    - Methods to encourage volunteer initiative;
    - Recognition of volunteers; and
    - Personal development of volunteers;
  - the establishment of administrative understanding and procedures that are tailored to the level of development/cost of the initiative being undertaken by the volunteer; and
  - collaboration with other departments and agencies that utilize volunteers.

### **Risk**

In these situations the municipalities encounter risk in terms of allocating substantial amounts of public funds for local association purposes. The risk is the security of the expenditure in terms of benefits to the residents and long-term impact on the municipality's tax base.

### **Special Notes**

This recommendation should be read in light of the amount of volunteerism and not-for-profit involvement now occurring in the region. It should also be read in conjunction with the section on 'Delivery System' as the volunteer sector is one agent of service delivery.

There is an extensive body of active, committed and informed volunteers who provide much of the life-blood of community recreation throughout the region.

This recommendation is seen by the consultants as one means of diversifying the financial resources of the local governments.

It is based on the professional experience of the consultants and the current literature and activities regarding volunteers and not-for-profits.

Volunteers and not-for-profit associations are one of the prime agents for the delivery of recreation services throughout Alberta.

### **Rationale**

The strength of the existing facility and recreation program delivery system is volunteers.

Weaknesses are often strengths overdone. The over dependency on volunteers, the varied recognition they receive, the age of the majority of volunteers, the lack of volunteer development and training and the nature of employment for working adults all negatively impact the sustainability of volunteerism going forward.

The condition of many of the open spaces and indoor facilities pose a risk to the safety of users. In the absence of any knowledge or experience to the contrary, volunteers are limited in the wisdom they can bring to these issues.

The Regional Recreation Plan should use the “Service Delivery Model” as the foundation for balancing the role of government (federal, provincial, municipal), volunteers and not-for-profit agencies and the private sector in the development, delivery and operation of recreation and parks, facilities, programs and services.

### **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTION: In Support of Defining the Role and Support for Volunteers and Not-for-Profit Organizations**

It is evident from the discussions at the Community Input Sessions that there is a deep respect for the personal commitment made by volunteers in all organizations and at all levels of an organization. Individual community champions, working with groups of dedicated volunteers, were often portrayed as the single biggest reason for the development of the facilities and the existence of the programs.

Residents recognized and valued the contribution of the volunteers, and most organizations and municipalities have programs in place to publicly acknowledge their work.

Several specific concerns were consistently raised at the Community Input Sessions.

- The same small group of volunteers was doing most of the work and assuming most of the responsibility. This applied both to the amount of work by an individual volunteer for a single organization and the number of organizations that he or she volunteered for. This over-reliance on the same individuals is leading to burn-out.
- Participants also indicated that it was difficult to recruit volunteers with some specific skills.
- The changes in equipment and technology were making it hard to find volunteers who were knowledgeable about the operating requirements of arenas. Training was an option but required an even greater commitment by volunteers.

## General Feedback on Volunteers and Not-for-profit Organizations:

### Dependence on Volunteers

- Right now there is too much reliance on volunteers - our local skating club closed because none of the involved parents wished to run it. It would help to have more involvement from a recreation director and fewer hours required of volunteers.
- Many organizations are largely dependent on the work of volunteers to survive which makes them very vulnerable. Give more thought to the demographic of the residents and support recreation with that in mind.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: DELIVERY APPROACH**

### **REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Implement a service Delivery Approach**

There are certain issues in the recreation and parks field that seem to emerge in a cyclical pattern. Selection of one or several of the various methods of meeting recreation and parks requirements is one such issue. The issue is complex and very much intertwined with the values and the economic conditions of the day. Personal and community priorities of the residents of the Flagstaff region are influenced by historical, social and economic conditions, and more particularly, the amount of disposable income and security they have. Therefore, as income and security are threatened, they tend to reassess their priorities and trade-offs. It is from these vantage points that the method of delivering recreation and parks services should be viewed.

Of importance in this context is the role of municipal governments in the provision of recreation and parks opportunities. The basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of a range of recreation opportunities for individuals and groups consistent with available community resources.

As we all know, volunteers, not-for-profit agencies and the private sector have been involved in the provision of recreation and parks services at the local level for a long time. Examples include Agriculture Societies, community-based leagues, sports organizations, fitness centres, golf courses, and horse riding centres.

To be able to determine a municipality's role in the delivery of recreation and parks services demands an approach that objectively considers a wide range of variables in a structured, consistent, transparent and well-understood manner is required. At the outset the need for a simple model (or process) and associated evaluative criteria is called for. The model and criteria should allow for the variability across the County with the Towns and Villages and among the various recreation and parks service deliverers.

Appendix A outlines the Service Delivery Methodology.

## **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTIONS: In Support of a Service Delivery Methodology**

### Facility Operations

The growing costs of facility operations were of concern, particularly for the volunteer group executives who attended the Community Input Sessions. While funding for capital costs can be difficult to obtain, those costs represent a one-time investment. On the other hand, operating costs are annual, ever-increasing costs that are impacted by many variables, including inflation, ageing infrastructure, fluctuations in utility rates, the climate, increases or decreases in user generated revenues, availability of affordable labour and the willingness and/or ability of volunteers to assume operational responsibilities.

There is a struggle between the desire to keep user fees lower (which helps make programs affordable for community members) and the need to charge high enough fees to help offset operational costs.

### Opportunities for Collaboration

There was agreement by the participants that some aspects of recreation are best provided at the local level, while other aspects may benefit from the municipalities and volunteer groups working together, on a regional basis.

### **General Feedback on a need for a Service Delivery Model:**

#### Regionalization, working together.

We need to work together to maximize the use of capital assets and increase the number of user groups to sustain operation of facilities. The old paradigm of one user group in one facility is no longer sustainable with all the regulations that have to be met.

- Communities need to share;
- Encourage centralization;
- Regionalize facilities;
- Team up to maximize services available;
- Reduce duplication of facilities;
- Pool our resources; and
- Combine facilities.

See the section on “Regionalization, working together” on pages 18 and 19 of the Comments from the Public Consultation for a detailed list of ideas that can be addressed with a Service Delivery Model approach.



## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: DELIVERY APPROACH**

**REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Revise the Flagstaff County Recreation & Parks Programs & Facility Grants Program and coordinate the submissions for provincial grants on a regional basis.**

The existing grant program is appreciated and understood by the Towns and Villages. The level of support for how fair the program is varies amongst the municipalities.

The current grant program criteria that must be met appear to be arbitrary. There is no benchmark to measure the 'degree' to which a project must meet the criteria. Other than follow up to verify the money granted was spent on the approved project, there is no review of the extent to which the 'benefits' were realized and/or whether there were improvements to operational viability.

Very few people are aware of the County's contribution to a park, program or facility due to the lack of promotion and marketing of the program and the apparent absence of any on-site recognition of the County.

The grant programs of Alberta Agriculture, Municipal Affairs, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and Alberta Culture & Community Spirit contribute significant dollars to recreation facilities and program delivery throughout the region.

### **Rationale**

There is little social or economic value in continuing to fund capital projects which have little value in terms of use and/or granting operating dollars for programs with low participation rates. Future funding should be tied to projects and programs that meet the recommendations in the "Community of communities" Regional Recreation Plan and the revised criteria in the Service Delivery Provision Process evaluation guidelines.

The sum of all the recommendations requires coordinated action to enhance the value for money spent on recreation, parks, programs and facilities.

The sum of provincial monies from the grant programs is significant for capital projects and annual programs. Some provincial grant programs can only be accessed by Agriculture Societies and registered Societies. Their continued existence, nurturing and support is critical to ensuring the flow of provincial dollars that would otherwise not be available. Leveraging these dollars should be part of a new County Grant Program.

All provincial grant programs have been reduced. The competition for funding is extreme. Those who can best demonstrate a well thought-out region-wide approach will be the most likely to receive grant dollars.

### **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTION: In Support of Revising County Grants and Coordinating Provincial Grants**

There was no shortage of comments on the topic of funding. This issue was raised by the participants at the Community Input Sessions, by the respondents to the on-line questionnaire and in the submissions. The executive members attending the Community Input Sessions made a point of indicating that effective long-term planning requires sustainable, long-term funding.

The following are the key comments related to funding:

- There needs to be an appropriate balance between the contributions to capital and operational expenses made by the five major funding sources:
  1. Province - through recreation, facility and community development grants;
  2. Flagstaff County - through regional grants and services;
  3. Towns and Villages - by local grants and assuming operational costs for some facilities, programs and services;
  4. Recreation program users - through fees and charges for facilities, programs and services; and
  5. Community groups – through fundraising and contributions of gifts-in-kind (volunteer labour, materials and services).

Opinions on what was an appropriate financial contribution from each source varied greatly.

There is a general awareness that Flagstaff County contributes funds to support regional recreation. What appears to be lacking, however, is an understanding of the funding formula, the total amount of financial support provided by the County, how that amount is determined and on what basis the money is allocated.

The participants at the Community Input Sessions would like the County to review (1) the current funding formula, (2) the formula used in the past, and (3) alternative funding formulas used by other municipalities, and discuss the options with the volunteer groups, towns and villages.

Non-profit groups need assistance in identifying funding sources, developing funding strategies and preparing proposals and grant applications. The groups often lack the time, knowledge and skills necessary to put together competitive sponsorship packages and to effectively complete detailed grant submissions.

Many community groups have come to rely on casino revenues as a source of income. There needs to be an examination of alternative funding sources.

**General Comments:**

- Come to a consensus on our recreation services;
- Develop business plans for each recreation facility;
- Tax residents equally;
- Clarify County's role;
- Provide a service to help stakeholders receive provincial funding and grants;
- Distribute funding fairly/regionally; and
- Help with operating costs.

See the section "Funding" on pages 21 and 22 and "Distribute funding fairly/regionally" on page 22 and 23 of the Comments from the Public Consultation Report for a list of ideas and concerns that can be addressed with revised County Recreation Grants Program.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION THEME: PARTNERSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION**

### **REVIEW RECOMMENDATION: Develop Partnerships**

The University of Alberta City-Region Study Centre Urban-Rural Interdependencies: Flagstaff Pilot Project Report, Chapter 5, page 20 – 34 and Appendix 4 is the most worthy reference to understanding the importance of partnerships, their history and their relevance in moving forward to a fiscally, socially and environmentally sustainable region.

Highlights of the University of Alberta report pertinent to recreation programs and facilities are:

#### **Willingness to Partner to Achieve Community Well-being**

The vast majority of those interviewed and surveyed agree that joining together with others is an excellent way to improve the well-being of their municipality, community, or business. Respondents see value in partnering on the local level to achieve long-term goals that would benefit them both locally and regionally. Partnering with other groups, for example, can eliminate overlapping projects and initiatives, and thus cut costs by sharing the financial burden with others who are offering the same level of service to their communities. However, identifying with the region instead of solely with the local community means adding to traditional allegiances. These allegiances have taken shape over generations among people who worked together on farms and in businesses, socialized at dances and over coffee, and rooted for teams in hockey arenas and on baseball diamonds.

But while modifying this culture of local loyalties to include regional ones can be challenging and time-consuming, this is generally seen by respondents as the way to go in order to improve the prosperity and stability of the Flagstaff Community of communities.

### **PUBLIC INPUT CONTRIBUTION: In Support of Partnerships**

#### Opportunities for Collaboration

There was agreement by the participants that some aspects of recreation are best provided at the local level, while other aspects may benefit from the municipalities and volunteer groups working together, on a regional basis. The following key ideas for potential regional collaboration emerged.

- Enhanced communication between the providers of recreation facilities, programs and services will create opportunities for the sharing of information, ideas and expertise. This would include municipalities meeting and talking with other municipalities, municipalities meeting and talking with volunteer groups, and volunteer groups meeting and talking with other volunteer groups. Among other things, this enhanced dialogue between the service providers could aid long-term planning, support complementary programming of events, explore possible joint ventures and help avoid scheduling conflicts.
- Program participation and recruitment of volunteers may be aided by a County-wide marketing and awareness campaign that highlights the recreational opportunities available to residents within all 11 municipalities.
- Joint programming by similar organizations may create sufficient participation to warrant the delivery of programs that might otherwise be too costly to run.

- Organizations or municipalities could share the cost of hiring knowledgeable and experienced staff who could provide leadership and help guide and train local staff and volunteers. Participants attending the Community Input Sessions suggested that expertise was required in the areas of ice maintenance, financial and grant management, and marketing. A few suggested sharing recreation staff on a regional or sub-regional level.
- Working collectively, the groups may be able to take on fundraising initiatives that might be unmanageable by a single group. One suggestion was to host a regional special event headlining a big name performer. Another suggestion was to purchase a portable food kiosk that could travel from event to event around the County and raise money to offset operational costs.

See the section on “Regionalization, working together” on pages 18 and 19 of the Comments from the Public Consultation for a list of ideas that can be addressed with a Service Delivery Model approach with a partnership approach to delivering recreation.

## APPENDIX D

### Flagstaff Community of communities Regional Recreation Plan

### Implementation Schedule

Recommendation	Action Priority Rating H-high M-medium L-low	Timeline	Lead Role	Supporting Role	Comments
<b>Strategic Objective – Collaborative Leadership</b>					
Collaborate on Regional Services and Decision-Making	M	Q3/2011 - Q4/2012	Recreation Coordinator	Towns/Villages CAO's Not-for-Profit	
Employ a Regional Recreation Coordinator	H	Q2/2011 - Q3/2011	Flagstaff CAO		
Address changing recreation patterns	M	Q1/2012 - Q4/2013	Recreation Coordinator	Town/Villages CAO's Recreation Staff	
Enhance regional capacity for values-based community volunteer development	M	Q2/2012 – Q4/2013	Recreation Coordinator		
<b>Strategic Objective – Advance our collective Quality of Life in the Community of communities</b>					
Become an ACE Community of communities	H	Q4/2011 – Q4/2012	Recreation Coordinator	Towns/Villages/ County CAO's Councils	
Implement new programs targeted for each age group that meets a wide range of abilities and interests	M	Q2/2011 – ongoing	Recreation Coordinator	All delivery organizations	
Rebuild and unite the region's community sport system	M	Q3/2012- Q2/2014	Recreation Coordinator	All sport organizations	
<b>Strategic Objective – Community Building</b>					
Implement a Service Delivery Model	H	Q4/2011	Recreation Coordinator		Effective January 1, 2012
Adopt an Excellence in Recreation and Parks philosophy	L	Q3/2012 – ongoing	Recreation Coordinator		
Complete an Infrastructure Renewal and Development Plan	H	Q4/2011 – Q4/2012	Recreation Coordinator	Towns/Villages	
Revise the Flagstaff County Recreation and Parks Grant Program	H	Q4/2011	Recreation Coordinator		Effective January 1, 2012
Coordinate the submissions for Provincial grants on a required basis	H	Ongoing	Recreation Coordinator	Towns/Villages	