



**PARKS AND RECREATION / LEISURE SERVICES  
MASTER PLAN FACILITATION  
*NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT***



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents a Needs Assessment for parks and recreation planning in the City of Dawson Creek. The Needs Assessment is an evaluation of the values, demands, aspirations and priorities for investment in future parks and recreation facilities. A facilitation approach was taken to complete the assessment. While this report's authors led the research and discussion, the results of this facilitation come from community members — through surveys, interviews or workshops. In total, this Needs Assessment is intended to serve as a background document to the preparation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan and future capital investments.

The context section of this report begins with a survey of existing parks and recreation facilities. Residents in Dawson Creek enjoy a wide range of recreation facilities, although the quality and level of maintenance of some of these facilities is poor. In an overview of societal trends, those that are relevant to Dawson Creek include greater participation in organized activities, more people playing sports throughout their lives and increased emphasis on quality of life.

Demographic analysis shows that Dawson Creek is growing older, but not to the same extent as other communities in British Columbia. Nevertheless, the population of people under 14 is expected to decline by 2011 and the population of people over 45 and over 65 is expected to increase dramatically. Activities where there may be more participation in the future include walking, gardening, nature observation and cultural activities (e.g. performing arts, art galleries). Providing a testament to this trend is a suggestion from several sources that an indoor walking circuit be accommodated in future facilities.

Throughout the responses from the surveys, interviews and workshop, there was clear support for fostering healthy lifestyles and improving quality of life. In the survey, community groups thought the quality of existing facilities was worse than community leaders. Beautification was also more important to community groups. The age cohort that may require more attention from parks and recreation programming is the adolescent/late teen group.

One of the central themes to arise from the Needs Assessment is that quality of life is paramount. Participants said, in different words, that the improvement in the quality of life should be the main criterion for evaluating priorities for parks and recreation expenditures. Another theme to arise involved communications. People would like to see an improved and co-ordinated approach to communicating all of the parks and recreation activities that occur in the community, including those from other agencies such as the School District and Northern Lights College.

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In terms of providing direction for future investments, there was a clear indication that existing facilities should be upgraded and improved before considering new investment expenditures. The chief priorities for future investment include an indoor multi purpose recreation facility (including an aquatic centre, agriplex and events centre), walking trails, sports fields and outdoor ice rinks that could be converted to summer use (e.g. basketball, skateboard or tennis). Other recommendations include forming a Sports Council and preparing a City-wide Trails Master Plan, complete with a long term vision and short term improvements. Finally, there appears to be support for continuing with the planning process and preparing a complete Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Participants view a Master Plan as a way of fulfilling the City's aspirations and assisting local organizations plan for the future.

The implementation and development of a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is a direct reflection of Dawson Creek being a progressive community that recognizes the high level of expertise within its ranks and works with this for the benefit of all. Notwithstanding this, the mandate and purpose of the committee could be expanded to greater reflect the responsibility entrusted to them in order to sustain the superior level of commitment currently demonstrated.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, the facilitation aspect and interpretation can only be achieved after a large amount of groundwork has been previously undertaken. Urban Systems wishes to fully acknowledge the level of pre-planning that was undertaken by the City of Dawson Creek Leisure Services department.

Leisure Services undertook the lion's share of information gathering through the survey, setting up of workshop sessions, facility inventory and ongoing compilation of a user data base. Leisure Services too, managed to coordinate the bringing together of so many interested parties over a two day interview period in order for them to have input into the process. The authors wish to also recognize the many participants that came out representing the youth, Service Clubs, Speciality Groups, Major Sports Groups and Senior Citizens.

The workshop session with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee was extremely constructive and this is a direct reflection of the dedication and commitment by its members for working together as a committee for the benefit of all the community rather than representing their own or clubs interests.

Lastly, the evident level of volunteering shown by a great number of members of the community to establish Dawson Creek and the South Peace as a cultural and sporting capital directly reflects a caring society.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Parks and Recreation Master Planning

Parks and recreation master planning is all about developing a course of action for future investment in parks and recreation that meets the aspirations of its residents. The City of Dawson Creek is fortunate in that it has such a good base to begin such an exercise. The City has many positive attributes including good recreation facilities, an active arts and cultural community and heritage destinations. At the same time, the City is facing a number of key questions. These include responding to the competing needs of users, the level of investment in improving existing facilities versus adding new facilities, and how parks and recreation can best enhance the quality of life.

In addressing these questions, City Council has taken some positive, proactive steps toward the improved delivery of parks, recreation and leisure services. For instance, Council established the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The role of this committee is to provide guidance to Council and Staff in providing parks and recreation services, including capital investments, operations, maintenance and programming. There has also been a heightened awareness in the City about community health as a priority goal for future planning. The beginning of this Needs Assessment and Facilitation is further evidence of the positive attention the City is devoting to parks and recreation.

Discussion about completing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan arose from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The Committee approached Council about developing an overall gameplan rather than responding to requests from user groups and other community members on a year-to-year or ad hoc basis. Council was supportive of the initiative, and work towards long term parks and recreation planning began. Parks and Recreation Master Planning provide a framework for making future investments in parks and recreation. This framework takes into account considerations such as supply and demand, public aspirations, fiscal prudence, community health and City competitiveness. The benefits of such an approach are:

- greater responsiveness to community needs, both now and in the future;
- cost savings gained through improved co-ordination and long-term planning
- improved programming and delivery of parks and recreation services

Finally, Parks and Recreation Planning is a program, not a one time exercise. Circumstances change, opportunities arise, growth occurs. The needs of youth and seniors today may not be the needs of youth and seniors tomorrow. A Parks and Recreation Master Plan, while outlining priorities and investments, ought also to be adaptable as conditions change.

## 1.2 This Needs Assessment

This report represents the first step toward developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan—the Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is not a Parks and Recreation Master Plan but rather an evaluation of values, aspirations and priorities for future investment. This Needs Assessment considers societal trends, demographic trends and community input as background information toward the preparation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

This Needs Assessment has taken a facilitation approach. Facilitation is all about helping other people make sense of complex problems and work toward finding solutions. The facilitators, while leading the discussion and analysis, allow the participants to come to conclusions themselves. In the case of this Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment, Parks and Recreation Staff first completed an inventory of parks and recreation facilities and services. This was followed by a survey of community leaders and user groups, and then by face to face interviews with representatives from several organizations. Finally, a workshop was hosted with the Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Staff to discuss needs and aspirations. The results presented in this report, are a product of this information.

This Needs Assessment has also taken into consideration other planning efforts undertaken by the City. The Dawson Creek Community Visioning Process, for example, was completed in 2003. One of the six main components of the Vision is that Dawson Creek be “An Active Sports and Cultural Community.” Other planning documents that were reviewed as part of this assessment include the Official Community Plan and Comprehensive Environmental Development Plan, both of which have land use policies respecting parks, recreation and environmentally sensitive areas.

## 1.3 Methodology

The following methodology was used in the preparation of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan Facilitation:

- initial discussions with City Parks and Recreation Staff about the issues confronting the community and their goals and expectations;

- assembly and evaluation of existing parks and recreation facilities;
- background research on societal and demographic trends impacting parks and recreation in British Columbia and Dawson Creek in particular;
- completion, distribution and analysis of a survey distributed to community leaders and parks and recreation users;
- interviews with sports groups, service clubs, community groups, youth, and seniors;
- facilitation of a workshop with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee;
- preparation of a first draft of the needs assessment;
- review of the first draft of the needs assessment with the Advisory Committee, and
- preparation of a final draft of the needs assessment and submission to City Staff for final review and submission to City Council.

#### 1.4 Organization of This Report

This Needs Assessment report is organized into the following sections:

1. Introduction—explains how this work came about, the benefits of Parks and Recreation Master Planning and the distinction between a Needs Assessment and a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
2. Background Information—presents an inventory of existing facilities as well as a discussion of societal and demographic trends to assist in identifying and evaluating needs.
3. Community Input—interprets community input received from survey results, interviews and a workshop with the Advisory Committee.
4. Themes—presents the overarching themes to arise from the assessment of background information and community input; these themes could act as the guiding principles and backbone of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
5. Investments—outlines the direction for future improvements in parks and recreation in Dawson Creek and the initial prioritization of investments.
6. Conclusion—summarizes the major findings of the needs assessment and how this report can be utilized.

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## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1 Inventory

An inventory of parks and recreation facilities was compiled by City Parks and Recreation staff. The full inventory can be found in Appendix A. It provides an overview and starting point for future discussion and analysis. The inventory outlines parks and recreation facilities in the following categories:

- Childcare
- indoor recreation facilities
  - ice arenas
  - curling
  - gymnasias
  - equestrian facilities
- parks, playgrounds and open space
  - parks and playgrounds
  - cemeteries
  - walking trails
  - nature parks
  - picnic sites
  - community gardens
- sports fields
  - ball diamonds (minor and adult)
  - soccer pitches (full, mid and mini size)
- arts, heritage and cultural facilities
- summer outdoor activities
- winter outdoor activities

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## 2.2 Societal Trends

There are several societal trends in parks and recreation that are affecting many communities in British Columbia. The only difference between communities is the degree to which they are affected. By considering societal trends, parks and recreation planners can develop a better understanding of the needs of residents and anticipate what these needs will be in the future. The following are 6 societal trends that appear to be particularly relevant to Dawson Creek.

### 2.2.1 *More People Play Sports Throughout Their Lives*

One of the interesting trends facing communities throughout North America is the preponderance of people who play organized sports throughout their lives. Why, for example, is Prince George facing increasing demand for sports fields when its youth population has been declining? Much of the answer rests with the number of adults playing soccer. Another example is the many over-45 adult hockey tournaments in the province with three different tiers based on skill. All of this places an increasing demand on sport facilities that parks and recreation departments should recognize.

Why is this happening? It is probably due to a combination of factors. The baby boomers (those born between 1945 and 1965), our largest age cohort, value youth more than their predecessors. Sports has traditionally been associated with youth, and sports has become an increasingly prominent part of our culture. There is also an increased awareness of health and wellbeing, and people understand that organized physical activity is one way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A related factor may be how much our lives have become automated. Motor vehicle use is widespread, our workplaces have become increasingly automated and fewer people are employed in physically demanding occupations. Organized sports are a good way to keep physically active.

### 2.2.2 *More Participation in Organized Activities*

As more adults are playing sports throughout their lives so is there more participation in organized activities at all levels, but particularly for children and youth. Where, in a former era, sports and play took place informally, there has been a societal trend toward more structured, organized activities. Parents are quick to register their children for all kinds of organized activities: swimming, dance, piano, volleyball and so on. Children, who once created their own play (in the playground, in friend's homes and elsewhere) are now increasingly shuttled from one activity to another by their parents.

Why has it become so? Some theorize that our world has become increasingly competitive, and parents have sought to give their children the best possible head start by scheduling activities for their children. Others have suggested that the increase in organized activities is due to a concern about safety, as organized activities bring with it supervision. For adults, greater participation in organized activities is linked to many of the factors discussed above but also is part of a quest to have more human, face-to-face interaction with people than our society ordinarily offers.

### **2.2.3 Heightened Awareness about Quality of Life**

The term “quality of life” has become common place in our lexicon. It is used to describe a host of factors that make our lives more enjoyable and meaningful. Quality of life is more than having a good job and a roof over our head. It is about the environment in which we live from infancy until death. Parks and recreation is an important part of the quality of life in the community. Many activities in one’s life take place in the context of parks and recreation... a child’s first soccer game, holding hands with a loved one on a walking trail, playing in an indoor floor curling bonspiel in the Senior’s Centre. All of these are nourishing activities that parks and recreation provide.

Northern communities in British Columbia were once places to work. People could find well paying jobs that could support families. As generations of people have lived in northern communities, however, they are more often seen now as places to live. Increasingly, people desire good parks, good sports facilities, cultural venues and a connection to the past. Local governments have listened and there is now a higher level of investment in such facilities. Indeed, many local governments and economic development organizations see “quality of life” as a key part of an overall business strategy to enhance a city’s competitiveness.

### **2.2.4 Visual Quality & Beautification**

Related to the heightened awareness about quality of life is the increased emphasis placed on visual quality and beautification. People recognize that if downtowns, neighbourhoods, parks and streets look good, then this reflects well on the entire community. If one of these elements appears unfriendly, untidy or poorly maintained, then this reflects poorly on the entire community. This recognition of the importance of visual quality often becomes the domain of parks and recreation. Involvement in the national Communities in Bloom Program, for instance, is often co-ordinated by the parks and recreation department in co-operation with local volunteer groups. Dawson Creek is a community that has taken beautification seriously and completed a Community Enhancement Plan in 2000. Several of the projects within the plan have been completed (e.g. gateway to the walking trails on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, lighting of the grain elevator and art

gallery.) Outcomes to be achieved through beautification include renewed community pride, greater tourism and economic activity, better physical appearance and improved quality of life.

### ***2.2.5 Community Schools and Community-Based Recreation***

Another societal trend is the advent of community schools. This comes alongside a community-based approach to providing recreation services. Community schools are schools that serve more than just the elementary or secondary students who attend classes and school activities during the day. They become local centres that are at the heart of the neighbourhood. Activity rooms, gymnasias, playing fields, dance studios, offices, and child care centres are some of the facilities that may be shared between a school and the community. Community-based recreation planning often coincides with community schools with joint planning taking place between the school district and the municipal parks and recreation department.

There are two principal benefits to this arrangement. The first is the efficiencies and economies of scale that result from this arrangement. School districts and municipalities can pool resources to invest in capital improvements and share operational costs such as maintenance and overhead. The second benefit is that there is, for many people, it creates greater connectedness. For example, a mother could drop off a child at school and there could be after school programming or day care facilities in place. Similarly, a grandfather could walk with his grandson to the community school while he meets his friends in an activity room for a game of bridge. Community schools bring people of varying ages and interests together in one place where the school becomes much more than a place of learning for the children who attend it.

### ***2.2.6 Proliferation of New Activities***

Finally, there has been a proliferation of new recreation activities that has been difficult to foresee. Who would have predicted, for example, that two activities using a frisbee have grown exponentially in North America? The two games are disc golf and ultimate. New parks and retrofits of existing parks are being designed with disc golf courses. Ultimate (a game like soccer or football), is competing with soccer and other field sports for time slots. Similarly, a sport such as mountain biking was little heard of twenty years ago, but now enjoys Olympic status and widespread use. Even for winter sports, cross country ski clubs who have bought equipment for track setting, now have to deal with two kinds of skiing: classic and skate skiing. Parks and recreation planning must be adaptable to considering new activities that may not have the same organizational presence or history in the community. Some interest in sports and activities may challenge the conventions of time allocation and programming. In Dawson Creek, for example, it

was surprising to learn about the high participation in indoor archery and the difficulty the archery club had in securing space.

## 2.3 Demographic Trends

An important aspect in any long range planning exercise is demography. Demography is the study of statistics and projections of people. Demographic indicators help us assess demands on facilities and services whether it is for planning for development, infrastructure, schools or, in the case of this exercise, parks and recreation.

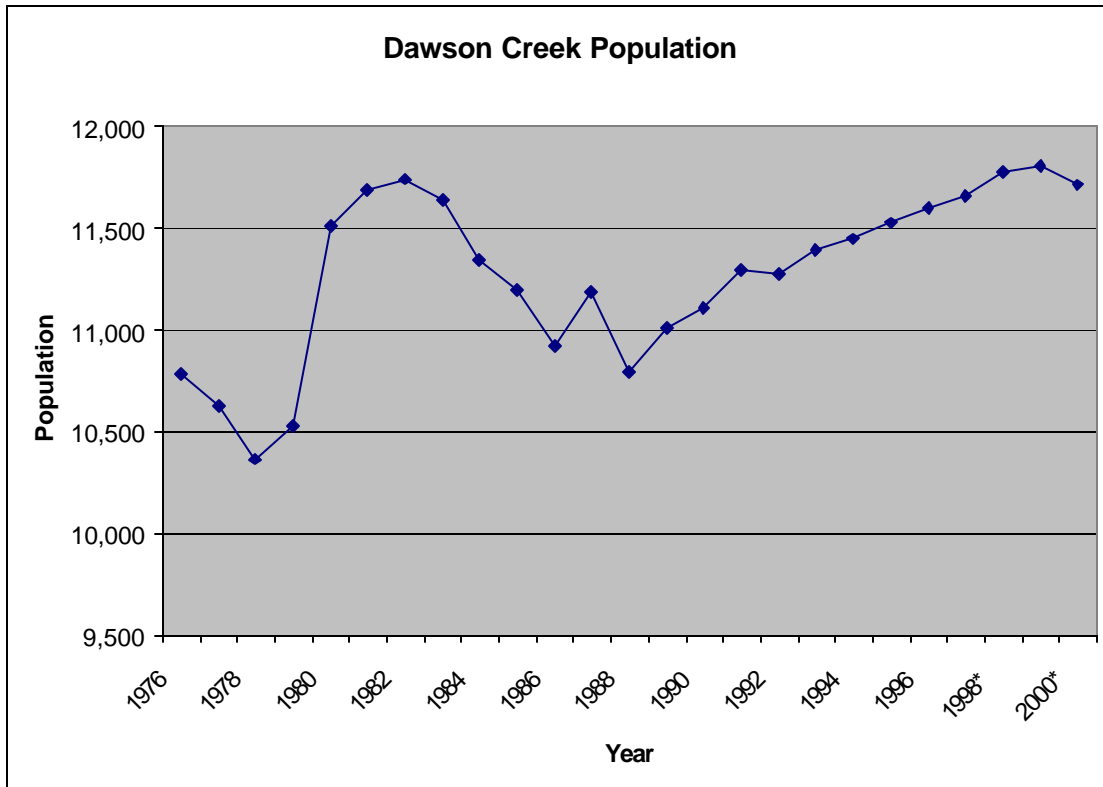
In 2002, Part 1 of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan, the *Supply and Demand Report*, was completed. The Plan supported Council's decision to set aside what is now known as Chamberlain Heritage Park for park purposes even though the Official Community Plan designated it for future residential development. By considering population projections and the corresponding demand for housing, the Plan concluded that even under the most optimistic growth scenario, the City had more than enough land designated for future housing.

### 2.3.1 Historical Population

For 2001, the last census year, Census Canada estimated the population of Dawson Creek to be 10,754. In contrast, BC Stats estimated Dawson Creek's population to be 11,305 in 2001 and 11,409 in 2002. The difference in the two estimates stems from what BC Stats considers to be an "undercount" in the methodology of the Census Canada method.

*Figure 2.1* illustrates the changes in population within the City since 1976. As indicated, the City's population increased rapidly in 1980, and peaked at 11,739 in 1982. This was followed by a decline shortly thereafter. Since the late 1980's, however, the City's population has increased modestly, coming close population levels experienced in the early 1980's. The City experienced a negligible decline in population from 1996 to 2000, before recovering in 2001 and 2002.

**Figure 2.1**  
**City of Dawson Creek Population 1976-2001 (BC Stats)**



### 2.3.2 Population Projections

Population growth rates have been, on average, 0.4% per year within Dawson Creek since 1976. This growth is an average of growth over two business cycles. By contrast, the average annual growth rate for same period in Fort St. John was 1.5%. What growth rates are anticipated for Dawson Creek in the future? If the population expands at the historical rate of growth, this would be 0.4% per year. If the population were to experience significant growth, albeit less than what the North Peace has experienced, the growth rate could be 1%. If there is substantial growth, even exceeding the growth of the North Peace, the growth rate could be 2%. Taken together, the three scenarios of 0.4, 1 and 2 % annual growth could be considered 'probable', 'possible' and 'unlikely' scenarios. *Table 2.1* illustrates population projections using these three scenarios.

**Table 2.1  
 Dawson Creek Population Projections (2003-2021)**

Year	.4 % per year (Probable)	1% per year (Possible)	2% per year (Unlikely)
2003	11,455	11,523	11,637
2004	11,500	11,638	11,870
2005	11,546	11,755	12,107
2006	11,593	11,872	12,349
2007	11,639	11,991	12,596
2008	11,686	12,111	12,848
2009	11,732	12,232	13,105
2010	11,779	12,354	13,367
2011	11,826	12,478	13,635
2012	11,874	12,603	13,908
2013	11,921	12,729	14,186
2014	11,969	12,856	14,469
2015	12,017	12,985	14,759
2016	12,065	13,114	15,054
2017	12,113	13,245	15,355
2018	12,161	13,378	15,662
2019	12,210	13,512	15,975
2020	12,259	13,647	16,295
2021	12,308	13,783	16,621

In the probable 0.4% annual growth scenario, the City of Dawson Creek's population will grow by 280 people by 2008 and by 900 people by 2021. In the possible 1.0% scenario, the City's population will grow by 700 people by 2008 and by 2,400 people by 2021. In the unlikely 2.0% scenario, the City's population will grow by 1,400 people by 2008 and by 5,200 by 2021. These population projections can help in considering the demand for parks and recreation facilities and services.

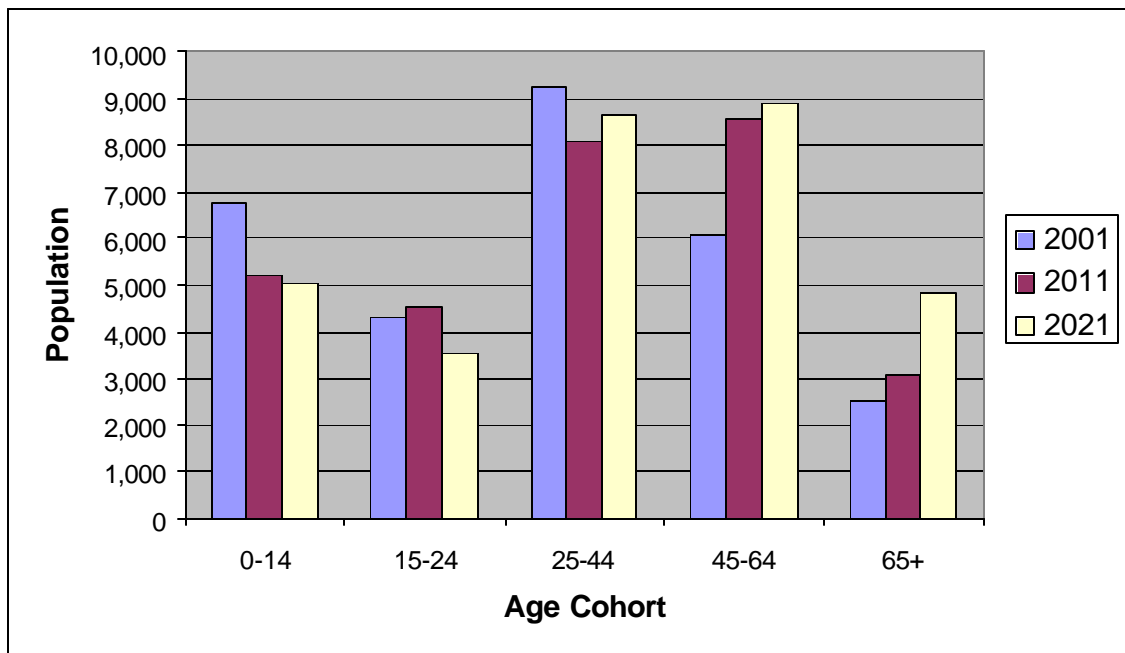
### **2.3.3 Age Projections**

In considering what demands an increased population will bring, one should also consider what ages this population will be. There are variations in activities among different age groups. For example, we know there is more youth participation in gymnastics than genealogy, and we know there is more adult participation in genealogy than in gymnastics. Parks and recreation planning can anticipate the age range of future populations. It can also anticipate the magnitude of

potential increase or decrease in participation and the demand for future parks and recreation facilities.

In assessing the age of future populations in Dawson Creek, some forecasting has been completed by BC Stats for the South Peace Local Health Area using their 'People' model. The model takes into account birth, death and fertility rates, in-migration and economic factors. While the South Peace Local Health Area includes smaller communities such as Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge, it provides a reasonably good indication of future age cohorts in Dawson Creek. *Figure 2.2* presents the projected population in different age cohorts for the years 2011 and 2021.

**Figure 2.2**  
**Age Projections for South Peace Local Health Area (BC Stats)**



Several observations can be made from these projections. First, the population of youth and young adults (to 24 years) is not expected to change much by 2011 and but could be substantially lower. For the 25-44 age cohort, a modest decline in population is expected by 2011 with some recovery expected by 2021. The greatest population increase for 2011 is expected in the 45-64 age cohort while the greatest population increase for 2021 is expected in

the 65+ age cohort. The greatest single factor influencing these projections is the baby boom: those people who were born between 1945 and 1965. Many of these people will be between 45 and 64 in 2011 and many of these people will be over 65 in 2021.

Although Dawson Creek appears poised for an upswing in economic activity, one cannot escape the fact that the City will increasingly become an 'older' community. In what leisure pursuits will aging baby-boomers participate? A review of associated literature suggests the following:

- walking
- passive outdoor recreation (e.g. nature observation, birdwatching)
- gardening
- culture (theatre, museums, galleries)
- golf
- curling
- swimming

Walking is consistently referenced as the most popular activity. Indeed, Dawson Creek is fortunate to have such a good system of walking paths already. This may be one priority area for additional investment

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### 3.0 COMMUNITY INPUT

#### 3.1 Survey

The first and perhaps the most comprehensive means of receiving community input was the distribution of a survey. There were 40 surveys distributed to community leaders (e.g. City Council, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, Senior Staff) and 163 surveys sent to community organizations (e.g. user groups, service clubs, sports organizations). There were 15 surveys returned by community leaders and 33 returned by community organizations, bringing the return rate to 38 and 20 percent respectively. While these responses may not be a representative voice for the entire population, they do provide a good starting point for further discussion and analysis.

The principal questions covered by the survey included:

- Current levels of service, in terms of quantity and quality for parks and recreation facilities
- How well served are particular demographic groups
- What aspects of the parks and recreation system should require more, or less, emphasis
- Whose roles and responsibilities should be increased/decreased
- What financial alternatives should be investigated to pay for additional services.

A summary of the results of the survey follows. For a more detailed breakdown of survey results, please consult Appendix B.

##### ***3.1.1 Quantity and Quality of Existing Facilities***

The first set of questions dealt with the quantity and quality of existing facilities.

For parks and outdoor activities, respondents said that the community was well served by golf, horseshoe pitches, ball diamonds and skiing. Poorly served activities were beach volleyball, tennis and soccer. There was some divergence in the responses between community groups and community leaders. Community groups believe that the quality of athletic parks is worse than community leaders. Community groups also believe that beautification is more important than their community leader counterparts.

For recreation facilities, respondents replied that the community was well served by ice arenas (including hockey, figure skating and curling), bowling and art galleries. Poorly served activities include outdoor skating, weight rooms/fitness centres, indoor racquet courts, theatre, indoor pool and childrens' play areas, whether they be indoor or outdoor. There was general agreement between the two groups as to the quality and quantity of specific recreation facilities. There was, however, some disagreement in the emphasis between quality and quantity. Leaders thought that quantity was better than quality and community groups thought that quality was better than quantity. For a more detailed breakdown of the results of these questions, please consult Appendix B.

### **3.1.2 Serving People**

The second set of questions in the survey involved how well different segments of the community are served by the parks and recreation system. *Figure 3.1* below shows what community leaders and community groups thought about how different segments of the population were being served.

As the results show, well served segments of the population include adults, seniors and young children under 12. On a four point scale, adults were rated the highest at 3.1. Persons that respondents said were relatively poorly served include teens, persons with low income and persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities scored low at 1.3 and 1.7 from the community leaders and recreation groups respectively. There was little variation in the responses between the two groups of respondents.

Figure 3.1

How well served are the following groups served by the current parks and recreation system?

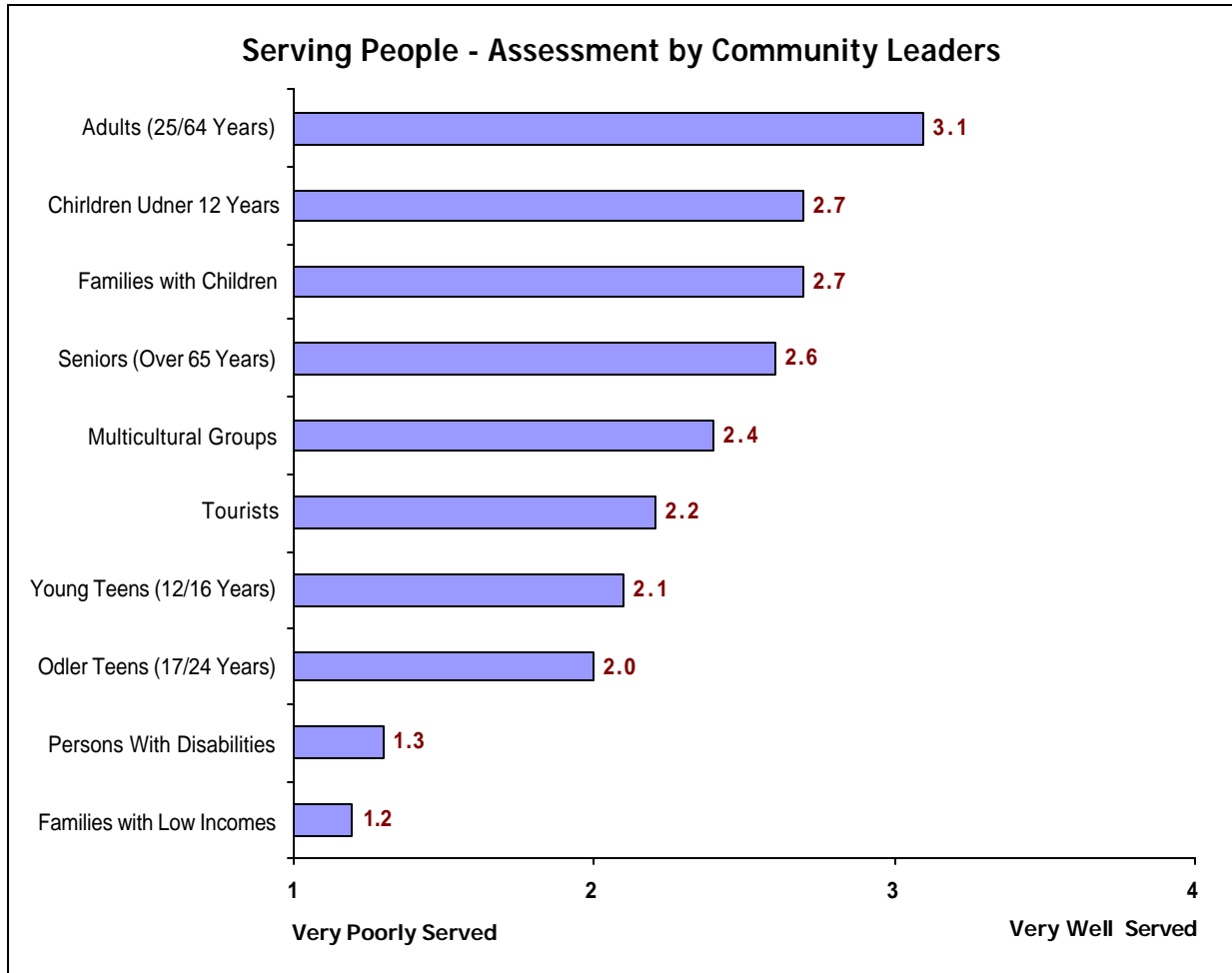
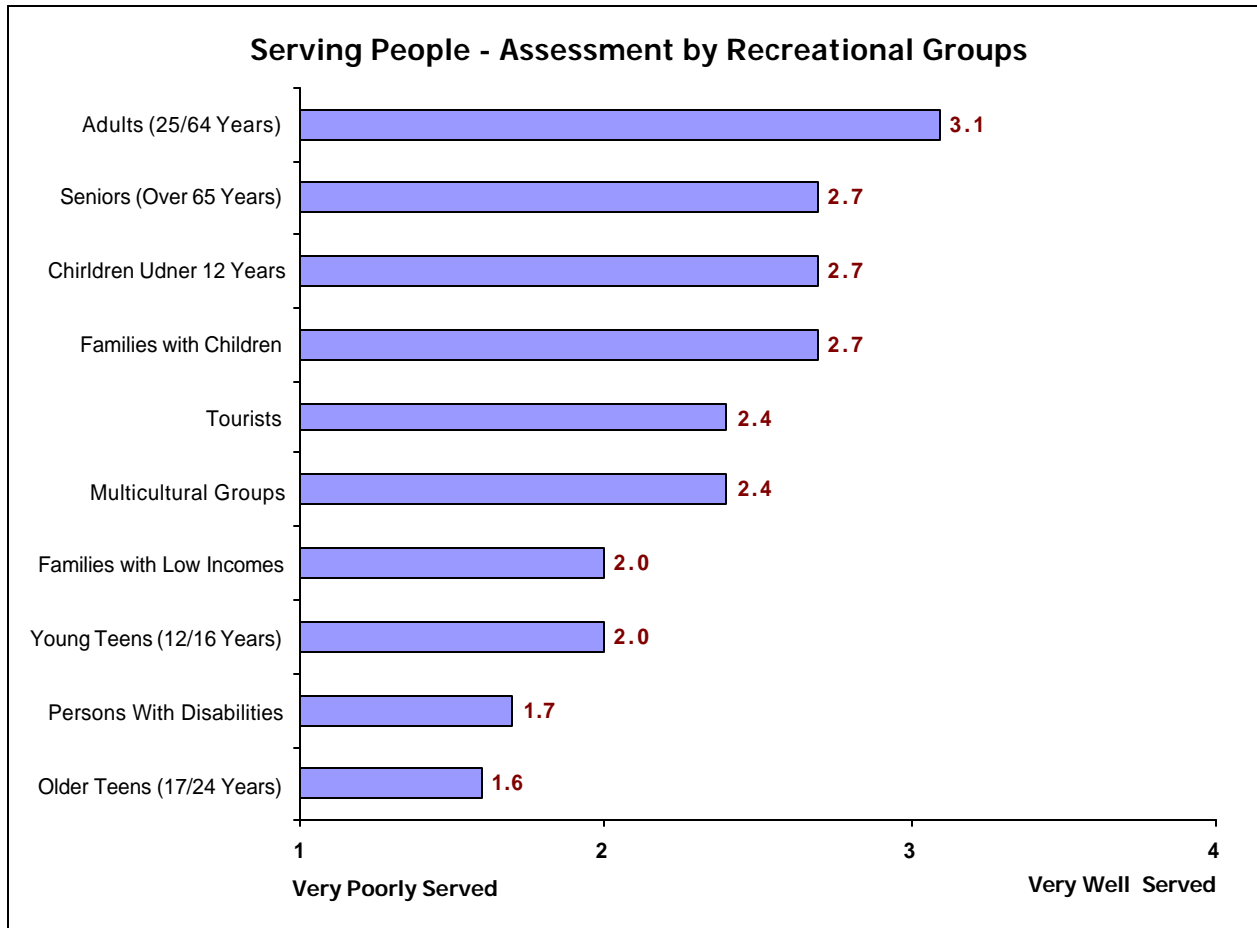


Figure 3.1 (continued . . .)

How well served are the following groups served by the current parks and recreation system?

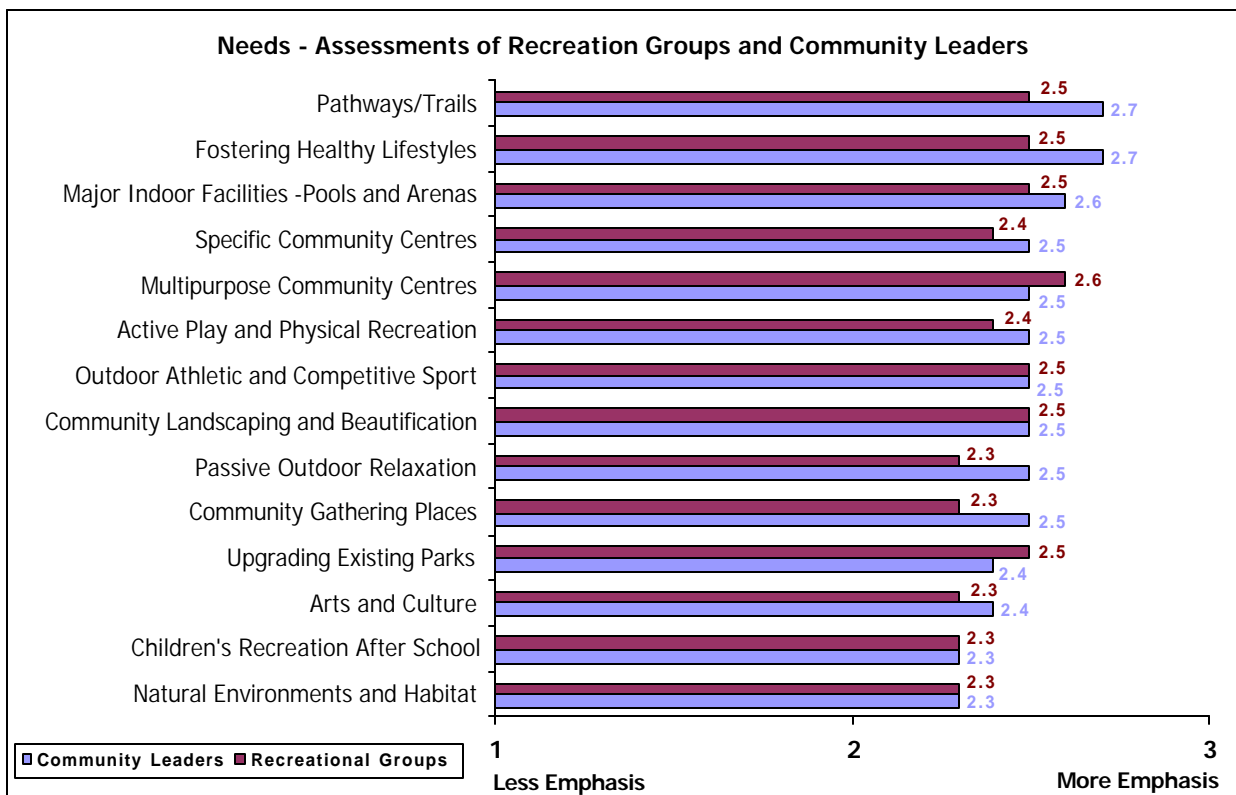


### 3.1.3 Needs

The third part of the survey asked about community needs. Respondents were asked whether the City's Parks and Recreation Department should put more, the same or less emphasis on different needs. *Figure 3.2* below provides a tabulation of the responses.

**Figure 3.2**

**To what extent do you think that the Parks and Recreation Department should place more, the same, or less emphasis on the following needs?**



There was clear support in the survey for fostering healthy lifestyles, with the strongest support from community leaders. On a three point scale, the score of 'fostering healthy lifestyles' was 2.7 out of a possible 3 for recreation groups. There is also strong support for more emphasis on:

- trails and pathways (this category and 'healthy lifestyles' were rated the highest)
- a major indoor facility, including a pool and/or an arena or a multipurpose community centre (at 2.6, this was the highest priority for community groups)
- outdoor parks for sports—or upgrading of what currently exists

Surprisingly, there was relatively less support for arts and culture and natural environments and habitat. These results are quite contrary to results from other communities that place more emphasis on these needs. Perhaps respondents believe that the community is already well served in these areas and more emphasis is not needed. For example, Dawson Creek has a strong arts and cultural community and maybe respondents believe that this is well in hand.

#### **3.1.4 Roles and Responsibilities**

Leisure opportunities, whether active or passive, whether facility or park-based, are provided by a variety of agencies. Not only is the City's Parks and Recreation Department involved but so is the School District, the Regional District, non-profit groups (like service clubs and the Horticultural Society), major industrial employers and commercial businesses. As we consider the future of the parks and recreation system, respondents were asked how the groups thought how the role of these groups should change, if at all.

The results of these questions were clear and simple—all groups should do more! There was a strong belief that there was room for even more involvement and effort from every sector of the community. These sectors included local government, the business sector, non-profit groups and the development industry. While all sectors could be more involved than they are presently, there some believed that volunteer and non-profit groups were involved as much as they could. The business sector was considered by the majority of respondents as having the 'most room' to do more.

### **3.1.5 Financing**

The final part of the survey dealt with the question of financing. Local governments are faced with increasing demands from users. At the same time, local governments are asked to keep taxation levels and user fees affordable. Confronted with these competing interests, some local government are considering alternative financing arrangements to develop and maintain the services that it provides. Respondents were asked about their level of support for various funding approaches. *Figure 3.3* below provides a summary of the results.

Themes to be taken from the responses include a preference that there be increased collaboration between all participants. This was the highest scored response (3.5, on a 4 point scale) for both community leaders and recreation groups. Respondents were open toward corporate sponsorships. Yet recreation groups were less supportive about advertising or the pursuit of public-private partnerships. Respondents were clear about service levels not being reduced. At 1.1, this option was scored the lowest by each of the two groups.

Respondents from community groups noted that the parks and recreation system comes from consistent maintenance and upkeep. This is difficult to achieve with volunteers, and the community groups are aware of this. Interestingly, community groups were more accepting of user fees than the community leaders (Council members, Committee members and Staff), who have the responsibility to set user fees. The community groups recognize that this be a necessary step toward having quality facilities.

### **3.2 Community Input – Interviews**

The need to achieve a more open line of communication, as an information gathering, was undertaken through User Groups Interviews. Free from the directed confines of a survey questionnaire that is necessary for a large audience, the interview seminars can be steered towards a more in depth level of information gathering. The other advantage to the face to face interviews is that it can give opportunity for the bonus of added information being presented that may not be forthcoming as a result of a set questionnaire.

**Figure 3.3**

**Looking ahead over the next five to ten years, please identify the extent to which you would support each of the following strategies.**

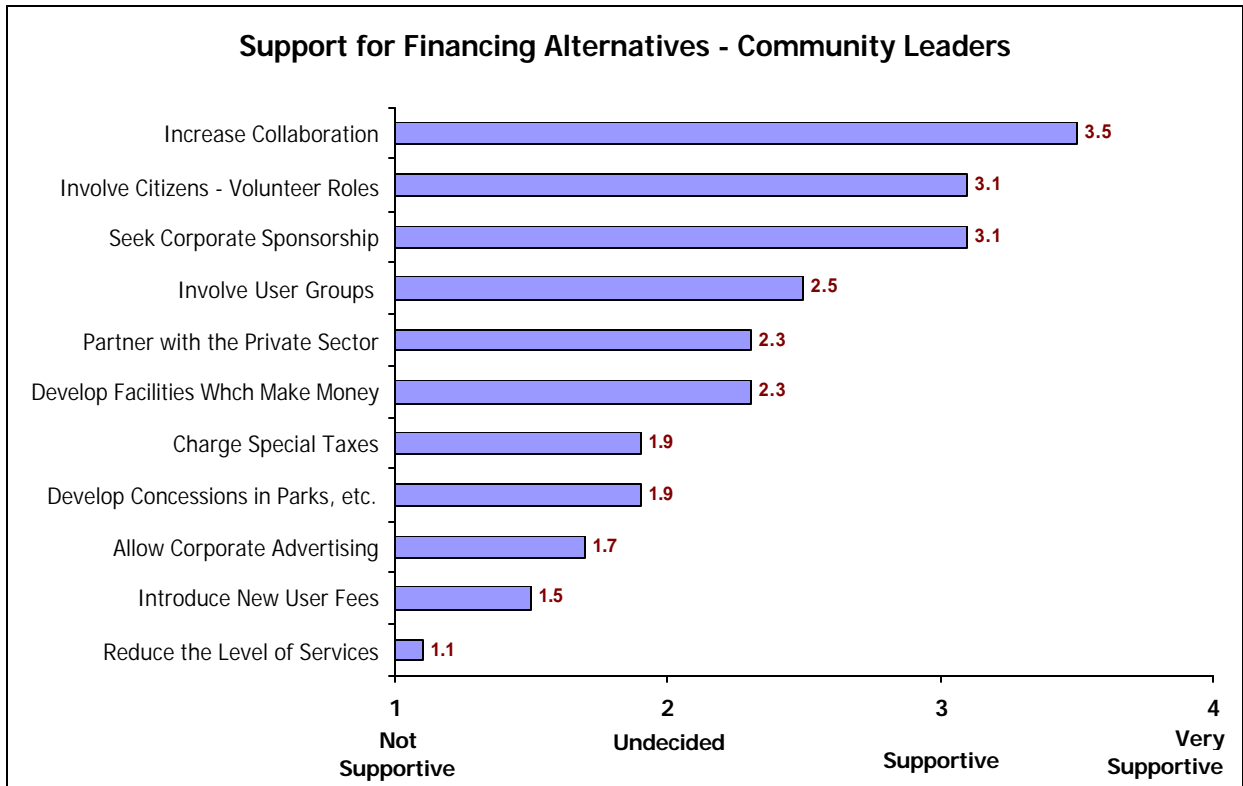
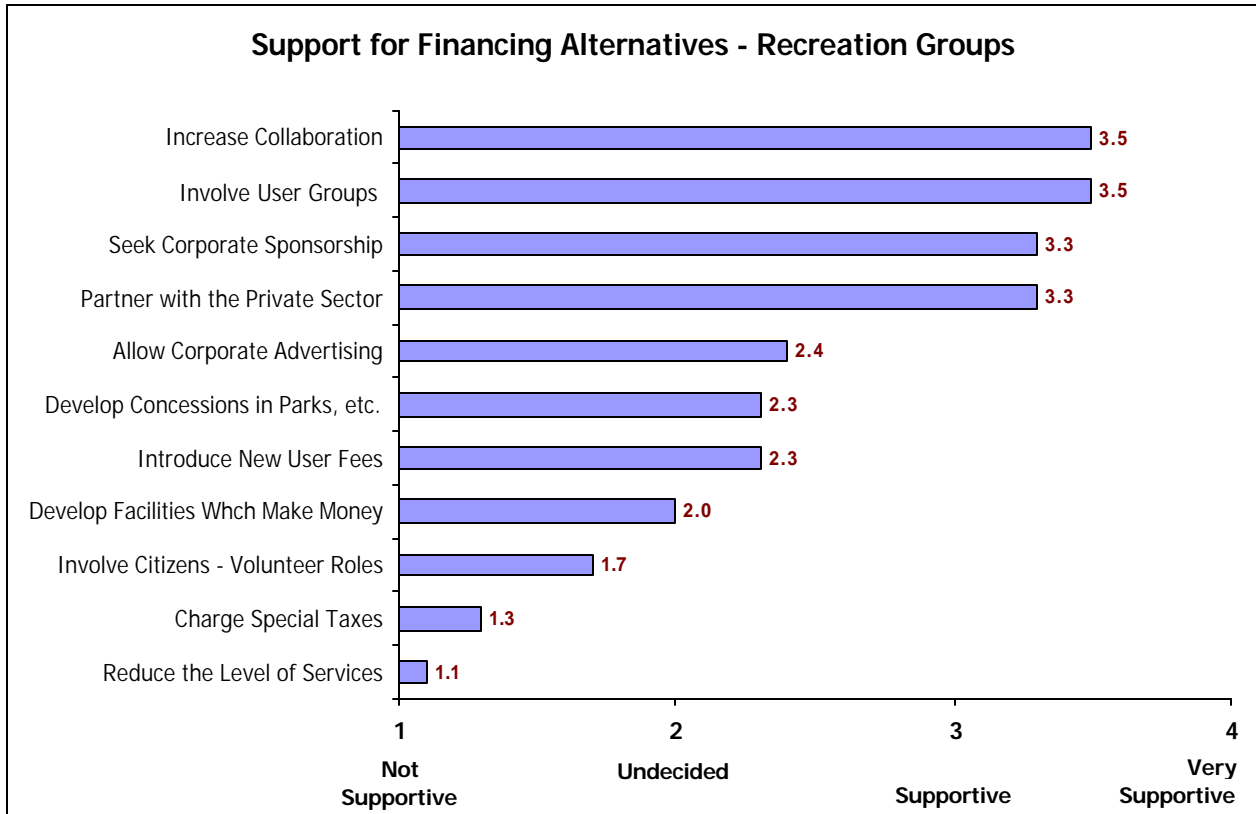


Figure 3.3 (continued . . .)

Looking ahead over the next five to ten years, please identify the extent to which you would support each of the following strategies.



A diversity of interview groups were identified and invited by the City of Dawson Creek Leisure Services Department to achieve a balanced cross section of representative areas;

- Youth
- Service Clubs
- Major Sporting Groups
- Seniors
- Speciality Groups

### **3.3 Youth Group Interview**

As part of the facilitation process the need to interview the youth of Dawson Creek was imperative in order to achieve a balanced perspective of the opinions of the next generation as a whole. This information gathering was disassociated with any one particular sport or leisure service type, as well as, away from the distraction of direction by parents or guardians.

A group of 31 youth (14 male, 17 female) were assembled as a representative cross section. Central School provided the venue and representatives from a number of public and private schools attended.

After an introduction as to the nature and process of the facilitation towards achieving a Parks and Recreation Master Plan was presented, two questions were posed. The first question: *“What are the activities that you are participating in now?”* was directed at individual youth responses in order to gain a picture of what was happening today in the community.

The section question: *“What have you seen or experienced in other communities that you wish Dawson Creek could have?”* This was a hope and aspirations question, set to determine what activities are not being covered off or alternately where possibly a neighbouring community is satisfying or attracting away residents of Dawson Creek.

**Table 3.1**  
**The Top Five (5) Activities Dawson Creek Youth**  
**(Sample Survey) Are Participating in Now**  
**Question #1 - *What are the activities that you are participating in now?***

Ranking	Activity	Total Responses
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Volleyball	10
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Basketball	10
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Skateboarding	10
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Snowboarding	10
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hockey	8
Tied for 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Singing	6
Tied for 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dance	6
Tied for 4 <sup>th</sup>	Musical / Band	5
Tied for 4 <sup>th</sup>	Quadding	5
Tied for 4 <sup>th</sup>	Dirt Biking	5
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Mountain Biking	4
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Riding	4
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming	3
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Skiing	3
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	BMX	3
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Cycling	3
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Hunting	3
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Art	3
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Soccer	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Tennis	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Sports	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Snowmobiling	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Motor Cross	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Waterskiing	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Hiking	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Walking Trails	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Camping	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Theatre / Drama	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Guitar	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	K-Pac	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Photography	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Swings	2
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Team Sports	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Floor Hockey	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Indoor Sports	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Dodgeball during break	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Basketball during break	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Hockey at the Ark	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Youth Group	1

**Table 3.1 (continued...)**

**The Top Five (5) Activities Dawson Creek Youth  
 (Sample Survey) Are Participating in Now  
 Question #1 - *What are the activities that you are participating in now?***

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Archery	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Gymnastics	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Karate	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Paintball	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Rollerblading	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Boating	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Jogging	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Fishing	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Concerts	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Music Lessons	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Piano	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Going to Art Festivals	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Poetry	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Writing	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Drawing	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Baby Sitting	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	4/H	1
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Computer (MSN Messenger)	1

**Table 3.1.1**

**Response ranking referencing question #1, showing the top 3 activity totals by Like-Activities-Grouping.**

Top 3 Ranking	Like-Activity-Grouping	Total Responses
1 <sup>st</sup>	Skateboarding Snowboarding Skiing Rollerblading Mountain Biking	31
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Floor Hockey Volleyball Basketball Indoor Sports	22
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Musical / Band Concerts Music Lessons Piano Guitar Singing	16
4 <sup>th</sup>	Dirt Biking Motor Cross Quadding Snowmobiling	14
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Hockey Soccer Team Sports	11
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Archery Gymnastics Tennis Swimming Karate Paintball	11
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Theatre / Drama Dance K-Pac Going to Arts Festivals	11
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Hiking Jogging Cycling Walking Trials	8

**Table 3.1.1 (continued...)**

**Response ranking referencing question #1, showing the top 3 activity totals by Like-Activities-Grouping.**

<b>Top 3 Ranking</b>	<b>Like-Activity-Grouping</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Poetry Writing Photography Art Drawing	8
7 <sup>th</sup>	Babysitting 4/H Swings Computers (MSN Messenger)	5
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Dodgeball during break Basketball during break Hockey at the Ark Youth Group	4
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Fishing Hunting	4
9 <sup>th</sup>	Boating Waterskiing	3
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Camping	2
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Horse Riding	2

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### 3.3.1 Conclusion to Current Youth Activities

The results developed from Questions 1 (*What are the activities that you are participating in now?*) regarding the listing of the top five activities that they are participating in at present are not surprising and concur directly with North American Leisure Services analysis. This list outlines directly the balance of activities expected of a progressive community that recognizes Leisure Services in its widest context.

The relatively low figures recorded for participation in team sports (ice hockey, soccer, basketball and volleyball) may be a surprise to municipal administration and facilities management that are repeatedly approached for increased venues. The normalcy of the return answers sets out that the vast majority of youth participate in strictly unstructured activities as individuals or in small groups.

An encouraging result of the question was the responses referencing the arts (music, theatre, dance, etc.) and this can be directly reflected in the cities efforts at being an arts center for the South Peace.

There was no record of youth participating in minor ball, while hockey, soccer and swimming scored low scores, which could be taken as an investment consideration by administration for future.

The youth group were asked to rank their wish list compiled based on question #2 (*What have you seen or experienced in other communities that you wish Dawson Creek could have?*). The top three (3) of each youth's list are set out in *Table 3.2*. The remainder of the wish list (number ranking four (4) plus) are set out in *Table 3.3*. This third table should not be taken as representative of the whole group as not all youth presented an even number of replies. The information is presented in order to gain a perspective as to the diversity of topics covered off, by the youth.

#### Like-Activity-Group

For each table in Section 3 there is a column headed "Like-Activity-Group". This grouping was undertaken by the authors to combine similar recreation activities under an umbrella group to be further representative as a theme than the individual activity. As example, by grouping; swimming pool, water park, water slide and wave pool all together as a Like-Activity-Group this is

more representative than presenting the individual items. The responses given to the question were undirected and therefore a diversity of answers was received. To further the example, 'swimming pool' was cited as taking only one vote in the Top Three Wish List for the community, and this could be misinterpreted in the context of a total of 18 responses directed at water type play activities.

**Table 3.2**

**Response ranking referencing Question #2 – *What have you seen or experienced in other Communities that you wish Dawson Creek could have?***  
**A total of 30 activities were identified with a total of 84 ranked votes cast.**  
 ~Youth Group~

Ranking	Activity	Total Responses
1st	Theatre	12
2nd	Skateboard Park	8
3rd	Climbing Wall	7
4th	Water park	6
5th	Basketball	5
Tied for 6th	Hang Out Place	4
Tied for 6th	Snowboard Terrain Park	4
Tied for 7th	Movie Theatre / Cineplex	3
Tied for 7th	Mountain Bike Trail	3
Tied for 7th	Swimming Pool / Aquatic Center	3
Tied for 7th	Beach Volleyball	3
Tied for 7th	Riding Arena	3
Tied for 8th	Arts Centre	2
Tied for 8th	BMX Track	2
Tied for 8th	Internet Café	2
Tied for 8th	Youth Centre	2
Tied for 8th	Indoor Paintball	2
Tied for 9th	Music Performance	1
Tied for 9th	Drama Workshop	1
Tied for 9th	Walking Trail	1
Tied for 9th	Wendy's Restaurant	1
Tied for 9th	Mall	1
Tied for 9th	Arcade	1
Tied for 9th	More Ski Lifts	1
Tied for 9th	Go Cart Tack	1
Tied for 9th	Quad Trails	1
Tied for 9th	Roller Hockey	1
Tied for 9th	Indoor Tennis	1
Tied for 9th	Boxing	1
Tied for 9th	Weight room	1

**Table 3.2.1**

**Response ranking referencing question #2, showing the top 3 activities totals by like-activity-groups.**

Top 3 Ranking	Like-Activity-Grouping	Total Responses
1 <sup>st</sup>	Theatre Music Performance Arts Centre Drama Workshops	25
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Climbing Wall Internet Café Youth Centre Hang Out Place	15
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Beach Volleyball Basketball Roller Hockey Indoor Tennis Boxing Weight room Indoor Paintball	14
4 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming Pool / Aquatic Centre Water Park	9
5 <sup>th</sup>	Skateboard Park	8
6 <sup>th</sup>	Mountain Bike Trail Walking Trail BMX Track	6
7 <sup>th</sup>	Snowboard Terrain Park More Ski Lifts	5
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Wendy's Restaurant Mall Arcade	3
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Riding Arena	3
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Movie Theatre / Cineplex	3
9 <sup>th</sup>	Go Cart Track Quad Trails	2

**Table 3.3**

Remainder of wish list representing wishes four plus. This table should not be taken as representative of the whole group as not all youth presented an even number of replies (i.e. 3 wishes instead of 5).

Ranking	Activity	Total Responses
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Arcade	10
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Hang Out Place	10
Tied for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Outdoor Volleyball	10
Tied for 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Water Park	9
Tied for 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Outdoor Basketball	9
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mountain Bike Trails	8
4 <sup>th</sup>	Bigger Mall	7
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Theatre	5
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Arts Centre	5
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Stadium	5
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Quad Trail	5
Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup>	Outdoor Skating Rink	5
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Water Slide	4
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Wave Pool	4
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Youth Centre	4
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Climbing Wall	4
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Theme Park	3
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Riding Arena	3
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Recreation Centre	2
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Go Cart Track	2
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Gymnastics Studio	2
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	BMX Track	2
Tied for 8 <sup>th</sup>	Pool Hall	2
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Amusement Park	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Movie Theatre	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Video Games	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Internet Café	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Concert Hall	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	More Hotels	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Electronics Store (Future Shop)	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Restaurants	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parks	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Drag Racing Strip	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Safer Motor Cross Track	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Water Skiing	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Floor Hockey	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Boxing	1

**Table 3.3 (continued...)**

**Remainder of wish list representing wishes four plus. This table should not be taken as representative of the whole group as not all youth presented an even number of replies (i.e. 3 wishes instead of 5)**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Indoor Hockey	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Gym-Power Tumbling	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Shooting Range	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	NHL Team	1
Tied for 9 <sup>th</sup>	Free Firewood for Campers	1

**Table 3.3.1**

**Response ranking referencing the remainder of wish list representing wishes four plus, showing the top 3 activities totals by Like-Activity-Groups**

Top 3 Ranking	Like-Activity-Grouping	Total Responses
1 <sup>st</sup>	Outdoor Skating Rink Outdoor Basketball Outdoor Volleyball	24
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hang Out Place Youth Centre Internet Café Recreation Centre Climbing Wall	21
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Pool Hall Arcade Amusement Park Movie Theatre Theme Park Video Games Swimming Pool Water Park Water Slide Wave Pool	19
4 <sup>th</sup>	Arts Center Concert Hall Stadium	18
5 <sup>th</sup>	Bigger Mall More Hotels Electronics Store (Future Shop) Restaurant	11
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Go Cart Track Drag Racing Strip Race Track Safer Motor Cross Track Quad Trails	10
Tied for 6 <sup>th</sup>	Mountain Bike Trails BMX Trail	10
7 <sup>th</sup>	Gymnastics Studio Floor Hockey Boxing Indoor Soccer Gym-Power Tumbling	6
8 <sup>th</sup>	Theatre	5
9 <sup>th</sup>	Riding Arena	3
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Parks	1

**Table 3.3.1 (continued...)**

**Response ranking referencing the remainder of wish list representing wishes four plus, showing the top 3 activities totals by Like-Activity -Groups**

Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Water Skiing	1
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Shooting Range	1
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	NHL Team	1
Tied for 10 <sup>th</sup>	Free Firewood for Campers	1

**3.3.2 Conclusion to Youth Wish List**

The recorded desire for a superior venue as theatre / concert place produced the highest results of the Top Three (3) Wish List as set out by the youth of Dawson Creek. Much of the discussion subsequent to the question session was directed around the appreciation for the level of programming presented at the Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre (K-PAC) and the youth saw further opportunities for this type of facility.

An interesting result was a complete lack of reference to the need for team sports venues (ball diamonds, ice arenas, soccer fields). This could be taken as a general satisfaction with the current supply or as a disinterest in the wish to peruse such activities.

The overall results generally reflect the aspirations of North American Youth. The overriding desire expressed during discussion was for a “hang out place”. When pushed to describe the anticipated or preferred programming of a “hang out place”, then predictably hang out was the least of the anticipated uses. Appeals for Climbing Walls, drop-in basketball or concert venue were the preferred as options.

Following on from the types of desired activities needed in Dawson Creek, the subsequent discussion period focused on the need for venues and programming where participants could get together in small groups and especially as a family unit with parents, siblings or guardians.

### 3.4 Service Clubs Interview

Below were the representatives from the Service Clubs:

- Dawson Creek Horse Club & Stable & Arena
- Rotary Noon Club
- Kin Club
- Kiwanis

These are the issues brought forward by the Service Clubs:

- Building for an indoor riding arena;
- Horse trails to and from arena area;
- Horse trails around Bear Mountain;
- Skateboard Park;
- Inside walking trails;
- Mountain bike trails at Bear Mountain;
- Hospice House;
- Riding for the disabled;
- Indoor / outdoor venue for 3D archery;
- Dog-agility / lessons venue;
- Arts centre (like False Creek Roundhouse);
- Gymnasium;
- Dance studio;
- Drop in basketball;
- Better partnering between City, School District 59, Northern Lights College;
- Aquatic Centre NOT a swimming pool;
- Daycare / babysitting service at arts and sport venues for dropping off young children; while parents participate;

- Get Dawson Creek on the major horse event circuit;
- Have a city clean up campaign several times a year;
- Communication – the City needs to produce a better program guide of events that are happening or services available;
- Opportunity for more relationship with rural neighbours (outside of city limits) by providing events to include them;
- Service clubs could be more involved with city parks/facilities, and
- K-PAC is providing the majority of arts and culture in the city.

### 3.5 Major Sports Group Interview

Below were the representatives from the Major Sports Groups:

- Skateboarding;
- Junior Soccer;
- Archery;
- Athletics;
- Minor Hockey;
- Speed Skating, and
- Minor Ball.

These are the issues brought forward by Major Sports Groups:

- Speed skating oval requires extensive groundwork;
- Speed skating “shack” needs an upgrade;
- Need a local group to help city sports groups host meets / events / tournaments. Assistance in promotion / hospitality / advertising / fundraising /coaching;
- Need outdoor ice arenas in each neighbourhood. A whole generation of kids are growing up on our city that do not relate skating / hockey with the outdoors!;

- Need an outdoor arena near the speed skating oval to keep hockey players off the racing surface and subsequent conflicts;
- Improve profile of clubs in the City in association with the cities own promotional material;
- City requires a new soccer venue;
- Maintenance of existing soccer / ball fields is poor;
- Standard of existing soccer / ball fields is poor;
- Should be better cooperation with School District for sharing facilities;
- Need a coordinated facilitation of sponsorship for sports groups;
- Should be greater transparency and genuine participation by City administration with regards to recreation facility planning and more public consultations;
- Need to develop a trails / greenways system city wide;
- Security concerns inside and outside arena;
- Concern for high cost of ice time rental;
- Need to review of the length of time the ice is in – why not keep it open 11 months of the year?;
- Current city facilities (soccer, ball diamonds, speedskating track, pool, outdoor rinks) are all in poor condition and need upgrading;
- Location of new pool is important for pedestrian access;
- Need more outdoor facilities that are free for non programmed activities, i.e.: outdoor rinks, basketball, volleyball for drop in / family / neighbourhood use;
- Outdoor facilities are great for those on low income to give them a venue to participate in a sport;
- Need a coordinated certification program for coaches;
- Archery needs a large indoor venue;
- Dawson Creek could host a Western Canada 3D Archery competition twice a year if it had a venue;
- Need a third ice facility (why not in association with the proposed pool?);

- Need ice time in the summer months. Attract families / training camps from other communities to come to Dawson Creek in the summer. Have large parking lot with RV sites associated with the new arena;
- Arena dressing rooms are getting better but still a long way to go;
- How about get heating in Memorial arena;
- Have a trail system that is city wide joining all areas;
- New outdoor neighbourhood rinks could be used for ball hockey in the spring;
- The new pool should have an indoor walking track, daycare, water park, gym, archery centre, batting cages;
- Existing track and field facilities are adequate though concern for the future if they become neglected to poor standard of others.
- Need an indoor skateboard facility;
- City should host more sports events – pay for professional skateboarders to come and demonstrate;
- Need a safer toboggan hill;
- Have a few walking trails designed for the disabled;
- X-Country running should be better promoted and supported by the City – it is low impact and brings lots of families from neighbouring communities for events;
- City should do more to help the ski hill society – maintenance equipment, promotion, transportation;
- Too much spitting and urinating in the arena change rooms, more should be done to deter this – coaches responsibility, and
- Too many families are driving up to Taylor to use the ice arena up there.

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### **3.5.1 General Overview of the Interview with Major Sporting Groups**

As part of the facilitation an interview session with members of the Major Sporting Groups was arranged with the meeting held at the Arena meeting room.

The meeting was extremely constructive and positive with the individual representatives moving well beyond taking this opportunity to promote their own activity to work together at developing a general consensus for their city.

A great number of topics were covered, and they are expressed above. An underlying theme did develop over the course of the workshop session, and this was directed at current facilities. The general consensus was that the city was pretty well supplied with facilities, but these were in very poor condition and of inadequate design standards to properly host any form of competitive event.

### 3.6 Specialist Groups Interview

Below are the representatives from the Specialist Groups:

- The Ark;
- Dawson Creek Archives
- Dawson Creek Horticultural Society
- Historical Society
- Youth Church Group
- Child Development Centre

These are the issues brought forward by the Specialist Groups:

- Transportation for youth between home and recreation facilities;
- Wish to see mountain bike trails on Bear Mountain;
- Need some official recognition for museum, library and archive;
- Need greater advocacy for children and adults with disabilities;
- Need greater access opportunities for those with disabilities;
- Any new pool / aquatic centre must be for universal design;
- Horticultural Society wishes to have better cooperation from the City with regards to watering flowerbeds;
- Horticultural Society needs help with weeding flower beds;
- Beautification of the city should be a priority;
- Need for washrooms in city parks;
- Need an indoor soccer venue;
- Needs to be a system of subsidy to ensure access to those families on low incomes;
- City should take a greater role in promoting healthy communities;
- Heritage needs greater recognition by the city, i.e.: have a Heritage Planning Committee;

- There needs to be better recognition of those businesses that regularly donate time / money / product to sports events;
- Needs to be better recognition of parent volunteers / coaches, and
- City should provide more pool hospitality passes to visiting team families.

### ***3.6.1 General Overview of the Interview with the Specialist Groups***

As part of the facilitation an interview session with members of specialist groups (a general heading given to include other groups not directly addressed) was arranged. The meeting was held at the City Hall meeting room and generated a reasonably constructive input to the Needs Assessment process.

Much of the discussion heard was focussed wholly on the individual groups own needs and function and where the city could direct more funding and support.

Where consensus towards Parks and Recreation did come together, was through general discussion about issues such as; accommodating the public and visitors with disabilities, more should be done to help families on low incomes so that their children are not excluded from parks and recreation opportunities, also that safe, convenient and affordable transportation between residential neighbourhoods and recreation venues be available.

Recognition of the role that the Ark is performing at present was expressed. Although the Ark is situated outside of the City limits but predominantly attracts City children, there did not seem to be a potential conflict if the City were to develop a Youth Centre of its own. It was felt that the level of programming currently being offered at the Ark was superior and diverse enough not to potentially be affected by an alternative venue.

An offer was made by the representative for the Youth Church Group to have its members be more involved with City parks and recreation activities. An example was presented as the youth group becoming actively involved in the construction of mountain bike and walking trails in the Bear Mountain area. This opens up opportunities within the City not currently being exploited whereby clubs and societies are actively involved with an aspect of parks and recreation well beyond donation of monies by service clubs. Active participation through physical construction and preferably including maintenance, also by organisations could realize new recreation programming for the City.

### 3.7 Seniors Group Interview

Issues brought forward by the Seniors Group:

- Need an indoor walking track for use in the winter;
- Would like to have organized regular group walking events – destinations;
- Concerned about vandalism of city property seen along the walking trails;
- Is there an opportunity for more seating areas along the walking trails;
- We see an opportunity for signage along the trails (heritage, flora, fauna);
- Some areas along the trails are not as well lit as others, and
- Communications – many senior citizens in the city are unaware of existing opportunities if they are not members of a club. City could do more at making all seniors aware of upcoming events / courses / activities.

#### 3.7.1 General Overview of the Interview with the Seniors Group

As part of the facilitation an interview session with members of the Senior Citizens Hall was arranged. The meeting was well attended and developed a lengthy and constructive level of discussion.

The issues list set out above in Section 3.7 is the smallest list of concerns or recommendations from all the groups invited to participate. A general feeling of overall satisfaction with the existing situation was expressed by the group. This can only be attributed to the hard work being undertaken by the members of the Seniors Citizens Hall directed at developing an exciting agenda for its members. This air of general satisfaction referenced through discussion covered off the cost of accessing facilities, transportation opportunities, and special events. It was quite evident that a core number of seniors volunteer in the community regularly, particularly for the arts and culture events. The seniors are very proud of the cities cultural venues, many of which they were instrumental in forming.

Members of the Senior Citizens Hall are extremely active and supportive of each other, while developing a very busy schedule of events. With 300 members and a strong sense of autonomy, the seniors group interviewed embodies a sense of independence and self reliance. The general attitude was that they greatly valued their arms length relationship from the city administration.

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A predominance of points above in 3.7 relate to walking and the city walking trails. The majority of seniors expressed that they use the trails daily and sometimes twice a day. Winters are the hardest time for outdoor exercise and the ritual of using the walking trails with associated social interaction and camaraderie are lost.

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#### 4.0 PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

In April 2002 Council appointed established a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and appointed twelve positions to this committee. The mandate and purpose was established as “an advisory committee to Mayor and Council to provide input and recommendations on recreational facilities, active parkland and greenspace”.

Subsequent to the community input as survey mail out to Community Leaders (40) and Community Groups (163), as well as, interview with targeted groups, a workshop session was held with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

The workshop session was divided up into three (3) sections in order to build up a comprehensive picture of input that will ultimately direct much of the recommendations of a Master Plan. The facilitation of the Needs Assessment is an evaluation of values, aspirations and priorities for future investment.

From this basis, a clear understanding of the existing needs to be established, followed by a needs and aspirations, and finally putting some kind of hierarchy for future consideration.

Three (3) questions were set for the workshop:

1. *Tone Setter – What do you like about Parks and Recreation in Dawson Creek?*
2. *What are your aspirations? -- Wouldn't be great if .....*
3. *Setting Priorities – What are your priorities for investment?*

##### 4.1 ***What Do You Like About Parks and Recreation in Dawson Creek?***

The answers are set out in descending order of response, with number one achieving the most votes. (see *Table 4.1*) Figure in the second column indicates the total number of votes.

The answers are grouped by the facilitators into like categories giving a second total (third column).

**Table 4.1**

***What do you like about Parks and Recreation in Dawson Creek?***

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Trails	8
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Greenspace	7
<b>Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Central location of facilities	4
<b>Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Diversity of leisure activities available	4
<b>Tied for 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Balance of sports and culture	3
<b>Tied for 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Art Gallery	3
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Parks	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Number of facilities NOT quality of facilities	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Number of Diamonds	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Number of Outdoor Rinks	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Curling Rink	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Library	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Neighbourhood Parks	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Play Grounds	2
<b>Tied for 5<sup>th</sup></b>	Attempt at community based planning	2
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Non Organized Space	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Achievements of local teams despite poor facilities	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Number of Soccer Fields	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Number of Facilities	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Great Arenas	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Proximity of Golf Course	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Pioneer Village	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Museum	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Accessibility	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Staff	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Tennis	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Dawson Creek AA	1
<b>Tied for 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Ark	1

**Table 4.1.1**

**Response by Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, ranking referencing the question *What do you like about Parks & Recreation in Dawson Creek*, showing the top 3 activities totals by Like-Activity-Groups.**

<b>Top 3 Ranking</b>	<b>Like-Activity-Grouping</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Greenspace Non Organized Space Parks	10
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Number of facilities NOT quality of facilities Achievements of local teams despite poor facilities Number of Soccer Fields Number of Facilities Number of Diamonds Number of Outdoor Rinks	9
<b>Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Diversity of leisure activities available Balance of sports and culture	8
<b>Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Trials	8
Tied for 4 <sup>th</sup>	Diversity of leisure activities available Balance of sports and culture	7
Tied for 4 <sup>th</sup>	Pioneer Village Museum Art Gallery Library	7
5 <sup>th</sup>	Neighbourhood Parks Play Grounds	4
6 <sup>th</sup>	Attempt at Community Based Planning	2
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Accessibility	1
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Staff	1
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Tennis	1
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Dawson Creek AA	1
Tied for 7 <sup>th</sup>	Ark	1

## 4.2 *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

### Trails

#### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... to have a trail system that linked all parks and recreation areas, neighbourhoods and businesses.
- ..... Dawson Creek was known as the City of Walking Trails.
- ..... extend walking trails to link all neighbourhoods.
- ..... sidewalk on 17<sup>th</sup> from Alaska Avenue to 102<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.
- ..... sidewalk on 15<sup>th</sup> from Alaska Avenue to 102<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.
- ..... enhance the streets to the walking trail system.
- ..... connect residential areas, downtown, sports facilities by trail.
- ..... allow opportunities for passive use of trails.
- ..... new trails designed with aesthetics in mind.
- ..... expansion of trails.
- ..... have an area greenway trail system.
- ..... extend looped walking path.
- ..... what about having a trails committee.
- ..... need a system of trails.
- ..... extension of walking trail with specific connections.

### Planning

#### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... cooperation and partnering of the major planning players:
  - City;
  - School District #59;
  - Northern Lights College;

- Peace River Regional District, and
  - Service Clubs.
- ..... have a more progressive parks and recreation department.
- ..... if the parks and recreation department was supported by the City Administration.
- ..... planning could be more your person focussed.
- ..... well planned facilities in the future.
- ..... we had a parks and recreation master plan that gives direction to city planning and includes community involvement.
- ..... if there was equitable funding by all levels of government.
- ..... if the city had a master plan and that there was adherence to the plan.
- ..... need a progressive plan that can be updated and revised.
- ..... master plan that looked to the future.
- ..... if there was a planning process that was open to public consultation.
- ..... expansion of city limits and land rezoning.
- ..... had a more active recreation department.

#### Multi-Centre

##### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... a central place to host multiple events like – soccer tournaments, ball tournaments, hockey school, swim meets, entertainment events, rodeos, monster truck shows.
- ..... outdoor arena to host an event.
- ..... central multi events centre.
- ..... an outdoor and indoor soccer facility linked.
- ..... multi-use centre, centrally located, designed for low maintenance costs over long term.
- ..... multi-use facility that was inclusive.
- ..... recreation centre – aquatic, indoor track, community gym, weight room, daycare.
- ..... agriplex.

- ..... multi function facility.
- ..... range of activities in on location.
- ..... need an indoor / outdoor exhibition centre.

#### Greenspace

##### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... expansion of greenspaces with accompanying beautification.
- ..... more greenspace.
- ..... more free space – greenspace.
- ..... more tot parks.
- ..... more dog trails.

#### Soccer / Ball

##### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... build new soccer pitches.
- ..... refurbish existing local soccer fields.
- ..... rebuild the ball diamonds to proper standards.
- ..... need new baseball, adult / minor fields.
- ..... major facility upgrading program.
- ..... had at least one professional ball diamond and soccer pitch.

#### Sports Council

##### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... a sports council to coordinate, one stop registration, coaching clinics, financial resource.
- ..... central resource sports committee to provide funding information, program information.
- ..... strong resource coordination body.

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### Aquatic

#### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... we had an appropriate aquatic facility in an appropriate location.
- ..... new pool with low chlorine.
- ..... new pool.

### Outdoor Rinks

#### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... outdoor rinks.
- ..... neighbourhood rinks that were lit and maintained.
- ..... have a system of neighbourhood outdoor rinks.

### Other

#### *Wouldn't It Be Great If .....*

- ..... new skateboard park.
- ..... downtown cultural centre.
- ..... if Dawson Creek could be a centre of excellence (i.e.: speedskating).
- ..... had a snowboarding terrain park.
- ..... a skateboarding / BMX facility.
- ..... a track and field facility.
- ..... all new facilities were accessible to all users despite ability to pay.
- ..... the Leisure Services department received proper funding in its budget.
- ..... if Dawson Creek could host a Canadian event.
- ..... indoor walking trail.
- ..... bike trail to Pouce Coupe.
- ..... access to all facilities was available to all groups.

### 4.3 What Are The Priorities For Future Investments?

Below are the different categories and how they scored.

If chosen as their #1 pick = 3 points

If chosen as their #2 pick = 2 points

If chosen as their #3 pick = 1 point

#### 1. Multiplex

- with new pool; agriplex; recreation centre; multipurpose; multifunction; arts; family; must be compatible with agricultural based community; year round capacity; multi use; meet our needs; affect the most users; multi event centre; large spectator area; aquatics; arena; track; rodeo; motor-cross; walking track; events centre; indoor soccer; lacrosse; entertainment facility; equestrian centre; performing arts, riding arena.

Multiplex was given a total of **18 points:**

3 x #1 picks
3 x #2 picks
3 x #3 picks

#### 2. Master Plan

- development and commitment to long term community planning; need a vision of where we would like to be; master plan; effective outcome based planning to enhance quality of life of all citizens; planning for land relocation; budget for development of new facilities where 25% goes to facilities based upon public use and 25% goes to facilities based on commercial returns; look 20 years ahead.

Master Plan was given to total of **16 points:**

3 x #1 picks
2 x #2 picks
0 x #3 picks

#### 3. Upgrade Existing Facilities

- upgrade existing parks, rinks; soccer; minor ball; senior ball; track and field; football; bring existing facilities up to standard; improve maintenance; 50% of annual budget to go to maintaining and upgrading existing facilities where 25% goes to those facilities based upon public use and 25% based upon commercial returns.

Upgrade Existing Facilities was given a total of **13 points:**

3 x #1 picks
2 x #2 picks
0 x #3 picks

#### 4. City Trails

- improve trails; link facilities; connection; link to transit; maintenance; make Dawson Creek walking trails a central focus of our community; aesthetics; passive use; increase total number of trails.

City Trails was given a total of **9 points**:  
1 x #1 picks  
1 x #2 picks  
4 x #3 picks

#### 5. Open Process

- council to execute planning according to a public agreed long range plan; fair and open process to develop the vision / master plan; bring marginalized individuals "into the fold".

Open Process was given a total of **4 points**:  
0 x #1 picks  
1 x #2 Picks  
2 x #3 picks

#### 6. Youth Recreation Centre

- youth activity centre; similar to Ark but downtown; central location.

Youth Recreation Centre was given a total of **4 points**:  
1 x #1 picks  
0 x #2 picks  
1 x #3 picks

#### 7. Skate Park

- skateboard / BMX park.

Skate Park was give a total of **4 points**:  
0 x #1 picks  
2 x #2 picks  
0 x #3 picks

#### 8. Replace Pool

- new pool on same site; replace pool in same area.

Replace Pool was given a total of **3 points**:  
0 x #1 picks  
1 x #2 picks  
1 x #3 picks

9. Greenspace

- preserve and expand greenspace.

Greenspace was given a total of **3 points**:  
 1 x #1 picks  
 0 x #2 picks  
 0 x #3 picks

10. Non Sports Facilities

- have regular upgrades to Dawson Creek non sports facilities like arts, museum, tourist destinations.

Non Sports Facilities was given a total of **2 points**:  
 0 x #1 picks  
 1 x #2 picks  
 0 x #3 picks

11. All Users

- take into account all users.

All Users was given a total of **1 point**:  
 0 x #1 picks  
 0 x #2 picks  
 1 x #3 picks

12. Communications Tool

- link sports groups; service clubs; city; School District #59; Northern Lights College; Peace River Regional District.

Communication Tools was given a total of **1 point**:  
 0 x #1 picks  
 0 x #2 picks  
 1 x #3 picks

Based on the above information the following is a summary of investment priorities identified by work shop participants.

**Table 4.2**  
**Priorities for Future Investments by Parks and Recreation**  
**Advisory Committee**

Ranking	Category	Total Points
1	Multiplex	18
2	Master Plan	16
3	Upgrade Existing Facilities	13
4	City Trails	9
5	Open Process Youth Recreation Centre Skate Park	4
6	Replace Pool Greenspace	3
7	Non Sports Facilities	2
8	All Users Communications Tool	1

## 5.0 THEMES

As a brief synopsis of the Needs Assessment this can be broken down into areas that will need further investigation as part of a city wide Leisure Services Master Plan. Throughout all the information gathering sessions certain recurring topics were brought forward.

- Multiplex – much of the planning for such a complex has already been undertaken by the City of Dawson Creek in partnership with the Peace River Regional District and the Village of Pouce Coupe to combine an aquatic centre with Agriplex. The predominant theme heard on the topic was that while the facility is still at the design stage, that the full potential for its programming be realised. Multi purpose in every sense, open year round with multiple concurrent events, walking track, rodeo ground, water park, riding arena, archery range, concert venue, etc.
- Sports Council – the city to work with the DCAA (Dawson Creek Athletic Associations) in developing a sports council dedicated to the promotion of sports in the city. The central resource that provides an information centre of coaching, fund raising, promotion expertise, accommodation lists, one step sign up, etc.
- Master Plan – the city has already realised the importance of planning through the initiative of this Needs Assessment. This is only the first step in setting a direction for the city over the next 10-15 years. Utilizing the Parks and Recreation Committee with their collective expertise in directing an open forum for establishing a plan for the future.
- Communications – the city at present does a great deal at promoting the community for its business resource and tourism potential, and more could be undertaken in association to include parks and recreation. The need for a communication conduit whether in electronic, print, radio format, an information gathering and dispersal needs to be undertaken to maximise the usage of existing services.
- Outdoor Rinks – these used to be such a powerful aspect to defining a neighbourhood as the congregation point, common ground, and village square. In recent years the outdoor rinks have fallen into disrepair. The need to re-establish the outdoor rinks prominence in the neighbourhood by building multi purpose facilities. Ice in the winter over an asphalt pad that converts to basketball and skateboarding in the summer.
- Trails – Dawson Creek to become a City of Trails. Linking neighbourhood, commercial areas, arts and sports centres. Interpretive trails spelling out the regions heritage, environment, people, gateways and seating areas. Promoting a health community.

- 
- Bear Mountain – although outside of the city limits, the city could take a greater interest in this area. Further development and support of the ski facility, design of a snowboard terrain park, or cross country skiing from the city limits. Expansion of the walking trails to include mountain biking and horse back riding trails.
  - Performance Arts Centre – appeals for a venue to host plays, concerts, shows in an auditorium setting or theatre. A cultural hub next could include pottery studios, dance floors, recording sound stages and gallery space.
  - Existing Outdoor Facilities – a much repeated theme throughout the process – we have enough facilities, but they are poorly maintained and to no particular professional standard. A need for a complete review of all existing outdoor facilities and a plan developed with budgets for improving the non conforming aspects.



## APPENDIX A

### *Dawson Creek Parks and Recreation Facility Inventory*

## **APPENDIX B**

### ***Survey Results***