

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

June 28, 2004

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

Subject: Toronto Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan – Our Common Grounds
All Wards

Purpose:

To obtain approval of the Toronto Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan - Our Common Grounds and confirmation of next steps for the organizational review, ReActivate TO!

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The Parks and Recreation Strategy sets objectives for increased investment in Parks and Recreation on the part of the City and suggest a variety of ways in which this investment can be funded. The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan is meant to provide direction for the City leading to 2020 in three major areas: Environmental Stewardship, Child and Youth Development, Lifelong Active Living – sport and recreation. This plan also positively impacts the progress of other corporate objectives: Clean and Beautiful City, The Mayor’s Community Safety Plan, Environmental Plan, The Social Development Strategy, Call to Action on Physical Inactivity, Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force and further complements the City’s Official Plan.

The Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism will report back within six months with a strategy that outlines the first phase of implementation of recommendations and associated budget impacts for the 2005 budget process.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) *Our Common Grounds; Toronto Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan* be approved (Attachment No. 1);
- (2) City Council direct the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism to present an implementation plan for the 52 recommendations, with financial

implications, to Economic Development Parks Committee, prior to consideration of the 2005 Budget;

- (3) City Council recognize the valuable contribution by residents and staff to ReActivate TO! The Parks and Recreation Organizational Review, and direct staff to proceed with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan that outlines how Parks and Recreation will integrate staff, community and stakeholder involvement on an ongoing basis, including CUPE Locals 79 and 416 and COTAPSAI;
- (4) strategic directions and consultation input be considered in the implementation of the next steps of the organizational review- service plans, organizational design, stakeholder engagement plan, training and skills plan, and three year business plan, to be completed by year end;
- (5) input from the public as a result of the consultation process be forwarded to the Listening to Toronto process for consideration in the 2005 budget process; and
- (6) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The strategic planning process began in 2001 and has most recently become an integral part of the Parks and Recreation Organizational Review with the initiation of ReActivate TO! At its meeting May 30, 31 and June 1, 2001, City Council adopted Clause 11, Report No. 5 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee, a Terms of Reference for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Subsequently, City Council, at its March 2, 3 and 4, 2004 meeting, adopted the staff report "Framework for Aligning Strategic Goals and Service Levels with Organizational Review in the Parks and Recreation Division". This subsequent report outlined an approach that included the strategic planning process as the starting point for service plans, service priorities and organizational design. Phase three of the framework outlined a report back to the July 5, 2004 meeting of Economic Development and Parks Committee on the summary of key findings from staff, stakeholder and public consultations and on the strategy.

Council approved the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Council Steering Committee comprised of Councillors Ashton, Lindsay Luby, Rae, Augimeri, and Hall. A Stakeholder Reference Group comprised of representative members from organizations associated with parks, forestry, recreation, sport, business, and community was also established.

Comments:

Consultation Process:

Toronto Parks and Recreation undertook considerable consultation with staff, stakeholders and members of the public in the development of its Strategic Plan. Two series of consultations were held: the first in 2002/03 and a more comprehensive process in spring 2004.

In March 2004, Toronto Parks and Recreation initiated ReActivate TO! an extensive consultation process to engage staff, stakeholders and public to contribute to an organizational review. In addition to the Council Steering Committee and the Stakeholders Reference Group, an internal project co-ordination staff team was established with representation from all levels of Parks and Recreation staff – frontline to General Manager, Directors of the two EDCT support divisions – Policy and Development and Administration and Support, CAO’s Office, and representatives of CUPE Local 79 and 416, and COTAPSAI. (Attachment No. 2)

The consultation process focused on outlining service priorities, service expectations and opportunities for service improvements. The process also provided input to the development of the final strategic plan *Our Common Grounds – Toronto Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan*.

Staff Consultation

Twenty seven staff consultation sessions were held for Parks and Recreation Division part-time and full time staff from all units and functions of the Division. Three consultation sessions were held for EDCT staff and staff from other City Departments/Divisions. Parks and Recreation Staff were also sent surveys attached to their pay stubs. Many staff also submitted general comments, suggestions and ideas through e-mail and inter-office mail.

Public Consultation

Eight public consultation sessions were in May and early June. Youth and Children made significant contributions at all of the sessions. Four additional sessions were also included for four important stakeholders - sport organizations, environmental groups and community centre advisory councils. Surveys were also distributed to the public via mail and also accessed and submitted online. Additional comments, suggestions and ideas were mailed in and e-mailed.

Consultation Method	Consultation Summary	Participants
Public Sessions 12 sessions City-wide facilitated small group discussions	8 public sessions – 2 per district 1 sporting organizations 1 advisory councils – community centres 1 youth only session 1 environmental organizations	632 <i>(168 youth and 81 children)</i>
Staff Sessions 30 sessions frontline staff facilitated small groups discussions	27 Parks & Recreation staff 1 EDCT divisions 1 CNS department 1 all City Departments and Divisions	689
Enviro-nics Poll	randomly selected persons (see Consultation Report)	500
Re-Activate TO website	e-mails and comment sheet submissions	94
Surveys pay stub, on-line and publicly distributed surveys	Staff Surveys Submitted Public Surveys Submitted	436 625

Summary of Feedback from Public and Staff

Public input directly shaped the strategic plan and will also be applied to the development of service plans. A sense of urgency was prevalent during the discussions with the public especially around the condition parks and the need to invest in our youth. The following reflects the most common comments and ideas from the Public Sessions:

- i) *Citizens view Parks and Recreation as a key contributor to the quality of life of Toronto's communities and neighbourhoods*
- ii) Need to focus on parks and parks maintenance with priority to bring them into better shape – parks highly valued and want them treated like our 'front lawn'
- iii) *Increased use of City parks and diversity of users – creating need for better park designs and user strategies – i.e. – dogs, trails, roller sports, etc*
- iv) Youth programming and employment opportunities for young people
- v) Need for increased community responsiveness by programs, services and staff
- vi) Unmet demand for sport fields, community centres, and arenas
- vii) Quality of facilities and general state of good repair – impact on community enjoyment and utility
- viii) Need to increase marketing, promotion and general awareness of services, locations and programs – need comprehensive outreach strategy
- ix) Seniors programs and increase in population that will be retired in the next 10 years present opportunities for volunteerism and mentorship with youth

Staff comments and concerns were similar to the Public and also included:

- i) Need to increase training, and skills investment
- ii) Lack of identity – uniforms and signage
- iii) Desire for better consistency in practice and service levels across city,
- iv) Concerns with perceptions of inequalities by geography,
- v) Need to improve communications with frontline staff
- vi) Morale - need to feel valued.

Attachment No. 3 contains a summary of both staff and public consultation sessions.

Service Review

In conjunction with the public and staff consultation process, a Service Review process was started. This process included four service teams in Parks, Urban Forestry, Recreation, and Facilities and Technical Services. An interim report outlining the current service levels and issues impacting service is attached. (Attachment No. 4)

This interim report provides essential background on service delivery issues facing the Division. There are no recommendations associated with the attached report. Recommendations will be developed later in 2004 once more detailed analysis of the input is completed.

Our Common Grounds

Toronto Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan *Our Common Grounds*, recognizes the importance of quality of life as an indicator of a great city. The urban forest that surrounds us, the parks and public spaces that please and comfort us, the activities and skills that give participants a sense of competency and joy of physicality - all contribute to building communities in Toronto and make it the best it can be. As the City has grown and evolved, the services and programs of Toronto Parks and Recreation must respond. We must adapt our capacity, our facilities, our programs, and our responsiveness to the changing dynamics of Toronto.

Over the three years of the strategic planning process and the organizational review process, a great many Toronto residents from all parts of the city took the time to contribute their thoughts and ideas about the services, programs and facilities provided by Parks and Recreation.

The extensive consultation process confirmed a number of key points:

- 1) that residents regard Toronto Parks and Recreation as critical to the quality of life in the City of Toronto
- 2) that the 3 streams of the strategic plan 1 - environmental stewardship, 2 - children and youth development and 3 - lifelong active living among all Toronto residents, are appropriate
- 3) that there is a sense of urgency and priority from the public with respect to Parks and Recreation service priorities around parks maintenance and youth engagement.

Three Streams – Strategic Directions

The three main goals that will form the basis of the priorities and service plans from now to 2020 are Environmental Stewardship, Child and Youth Development and Lifelong Active Living.

Environmental stewardship is a priority for Parks and Recreation because with responsibility for 7,400 hectares of land, it is the single-largest manager of green space in Toronto; the Division is also custodian of most of the city's natural areas and many of its trees. Toronto Parks and Recreation will protect, preserve, and enhance the health of Toronto's environment through diligent care and maintenance of the City's green spaces, forests and built Parks and Recreation environments.

Child and Youth Development is a priority for Toronto Parks and Recreation since close to 70% of our registered participants are children and youth – (61% 0 to 12 years old and 9% youth). More importantly, our children and especially youth are physically inactive, face increased levels poverty and need a focus during the critical after-school period. Parks and Recreation will demonstrate leadership in providing opportunities that support healthy child and youth development through recreational programs and employment opportunities.

Lifelong Active Living is a priority for Parks and Recreation because the City has a complex and challenging demographic profile to address if social development is to be achieved: a high proportion of socially vulnerable groups, growing diversity, high mobility, an ageing population, income polarization and concentrations of risk and social vulnerability. Further Parks and Recreation will provide leadership in getting Torontonians regularly active. Nearly 60% of

Torontonians aged 12 and older are physically inactive – we are the most out of shape city in Ontario. Parks and Recreation has the facilities, programs, parks, trails and confidence to engage Torontonians to become physically active. The longer-term payoff will significantly reduce health care costs.

Setting Targets – Toward 2020

The following key targets are being recommended to guide the achievement of the three goals and can be achieved following implementation of many of the recommendations:

Environmental Stewardship Extend our tree canopy from its current 17% to 30 - 40% of the city. Ensure more than 80% of our park visitors are very satisfied. Engage in active stewardship of 100% of naturalized areas
Child and Youth Development Achieve a 20% increase in the number of children participating in registered programs Achieve a 40% increase in the numbers of youth participating in programs
Lifelong Active Living Achieve a 20% increase in physical activity by the city's population -- by 2020 Achieve a 40% increase in seniors participating in programs by 2010 Achieve a 1000% increase in persons with a disability enrolled in programs over five years

Our Common Grounds addresses the comments from the public and staff and incorporates the achievement of the three strategic goals through its 52 recommendations. The strategy sets the direction for subsequent activity on organizational design and the analysis of the information gathered through the Services Review process and also sets the stage for healthy collaboration with our unions, stakeholders, other City departments, senior levels of government and the citizens of Toronto.

Bold Moves on Our Common Grounds

Our Common Grounds shows how we can make some bold moves and meet the public's expectations for a safe, clean and beautiful city:

- **Implement a Parks Renaissance Program** – Five-year Plan for revitalizing the maintenance, safety, and beauty of the City's front lawns – the greenest part of our city.
- **Create a Park Ranger Program** - rangers in every ward who will promote and protect Toronto's green assets - a defining aspect of the city for tourists and residents.
- **Create a ParksArt Program with Toronto Culture Division**
- **Implement the Facility Renewal Program** - increase the capital maintenance budget by at least \$40 million a year
- **Prepare a Sport Strategy Framework in partnership for spring 2005** - identifies the critical role that sport can play in city building.

- **Implement the Youth Recreation Strategy - Investing In Our Youth** - following the philosophy of youth-for-youth.
- **Parks and Recreation should lower its hiring age from 16 to 14 where possible** – allow younger youth to develop leadership skills.
- **Options for free programs** - Council should direct Parks and Recreation to investigate and report by spring 2005.

The recommendations found in Attachment 1 build on the other key City policy documents including the Council Strategic Plan, Official Plan, the Clean and Beautiful City, Mayor's Panel on Community Safety, the Environmental Plan, the Culture Plan, the Social Development Strategy and the Call to Action on Physical Inactivity.

Conclusions

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan *Our Common Grounds* will lead to a revitalization of the City's parks, urban forestry and recreation programs and services. This revitalization will contribute greatly to Toronto's quality of life for everyone who lives here, works here and visits here.

Enhancing the beauty of our common grounds requires more than just resources but also an increased focus on partnerships and community engagement. The financial squeeze brought on by the downloading of responsibilities from the Provincial government, together with the City's dependence on the property tax has resulted in long term impacts. There has been a negative impact to our quality of place due to the cost cutting decisions of the past 10 years and on our capacity to maintain the quality of life Torontonians desire. Much like the Culture Plan the costs to finance and invest in the City's quality of life will require support from senior levels of government, new financial tools, innovative partnerships and new ways of doing business.

Our Common Grounds sets the direction for the City's Parks and Recreation priorities from now to 2020. The Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism will report back to Council in the fall 2004 with an implementation plan that outlines priorities for the next three to five years and the related costs.

The draft strategic plan has been presented to the EDCT Senior Management Team, the Executive Management Team of the City of Toronto as well as the Interdepartmental Policy Co-ordinating Team.

To reach its goals, the City of Toronto needs to ensure that Parks and Recreation is a strong front-line function that delivers high quality services that enhance the life of Toronto residents. This Strategic Plan sets out what we need to do to create a city-wide urban forest, envelop our neighbourhoods in a connected greenscape, renew our parks and encourage all Torontonians to live actively from childhood to their sunset years.

Parks and Recreation will initiate, welcome, coach and cheer for the Toronto of the future.

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Joe Halstead
Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

List of Attachments:

- Attachment No. 1: Our Common Grounds: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, 2004 including Executive Summary
- Attachment No. 2: Membership List of the Council Steering Committee, Stakeholder Reference Group and the Parks and Recreation Project Coordinating Team
- Attachment No. 3: “What we heard: Comments from Staff and Toronto residents ” – Consultation Report
- Attachment No. 4: The Service Review Interim Report, June 2004

PARKS AND RECREATION A STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Common Grounds

Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

WITH AMALGAMATION IN 1998, Toronto became the fifth largest city in North America. Toronto City Council created the Strategic Plan and The Official Plan to shape the next 30 years of growth. Both envision Toronto as one of a few great world cities, battling for a leading place in the new globalized economy. Toronto will be positioned as a Creative City whose future wealth will come from our citizens' skills, talents and ideas. Creative people choose to live and work in places which celebrate human diversity and where the quality of life is best. With 100 languages spoken here, more parkland per citizen than our US competitors, vibrant arts communities, strong architecture and fine schools, cultural diversity and quality of life are Toronto's best features. Toronto Parks and Recreation will be a front line department in the development of Toronto's quality of life and the integration of newcomers into the community.

Parks and Recreation's Strategic Plan sets out how, in our community centres, parks and natural places, we can make Toronto its best self.

For 150 years, Toronto has used parks and recreation to soothe frazzled spirits and help newcomers join in. But with amalgamation, we experienced a major integration problem in the context of two crises. Even as Toronto Parks and Recreation's responsibilities grew dramatically to include \$6 billion in hard assets, three million trees, thousands more hectares of natural area, and programs and services for millions, our operational budgets shrank. As a result, our capacity to care for our parks and natural areas suffered, even as it was recognized that trees mitigate air and water pollution, and a healthy natural environment is of vital importance to human health. Our hard assets deteriorated. We did not build the new sports facilities and playing fields needed to provide Torontonians with playground-to-podium athletic opportunities. And Torontonians faced new barriers to participation in healthy physical activity with fees charged for programs which had previously been free.

Senior citizens and youth are scarce in our community centres and playing fields. Newcomers, unfamiliar with what is available to them, participate at lower rates than the rest of the community. Levels of obesity in our children and youth have grown, even though inactivity in early years translates into social ills and chronic diseases in later life. Compared to other Ontarians and Canadians, Toronto's rates of participation in physical activities are significantly below the provincial and national averages. In 2003, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health declared our levels of inactivity dangerous to public health. These twin crises—low rates of physical activity and straitened financial circumstance— have shaped our strategic plan.

The Strategy

To enhance quality of life in the city, Parks and Recreation must:

€Steward the environment around us.

€Promote and enhance the social and physical development of our children and particularly our youth.

€Lead the way to lifelong physical activity among all Toronto residents.

Parks and Recreation's vision is that Toronto will become known as the City within a Park. We will extend our urban forest until a continuous green scape envelopes communities across the lakefront, and north to the Oak Ridges Moraine. Toronto's children and youth will be engaged in vigorous physical activity every day, as will our seniors and people with a disability. In sum, Parks and Recreation will bring all of Toronto's diverse communities together on our common grounds.

Parks and Recreation values: inclusion; respect; diversity; health; innovation; openness; excellence.

Parks and Recreation staff will be the welcoming face of the City. We will be mentors, helpers, enablers, coaches, partners, entrepreneurs, stewards, trailblazers.

To measure our progress we have set targets we believe are realistic.

Targets

Environmental Stewardship:

€Extension of our tree canopy from its current 17 per cent to 30 to 40 per cent of the city.

€More than 80 per cent of our park visitors very satisfied.

€Extension of natural area stewardship from five per cent currently to 100 per cent protected and restored.

Child and Youth Development:

€A 20 per cent increase in the number of children participating in registered programs.

€A 40 per cent increase in the number of youth participating in programs.

Lifelong Active Living:

€A 20 per cent increase in the city's population enrolled in programs—190,000 more by 2020.

€A 1,000 per cent increase of people with a disability enrolled in programs over

five years.

€A 40 per cent increase in seniors participating in programs by 2010.

€A 20 per cent increase in the number of Torontonians who are physically active by 2020.

The Action Plan

1. Implement an Urban Forestry Management Plan over the next 10 years to create the framework to increase Toronto's current tree canopy coverage of 17 per cent to 30 to 40 per cent.
2. Increase our annual tree planting by 16,000 trees per year.
3. Increase the average lifespan of our sidewalk trees from five to 20 years by improving tree planting conditions. We need to coordinate with other municipal departments to ensure soil and water conditions are adequate and secured.
4. Establish a permanent interdepartmental Tree Committee to coordinate the extension of our greenscape and management of the urban forest. It should include representatives from Urban Development Services, Parks and Recreation and Works and Emergency Services.
5. Implement an ecological restoration and preservation program for our natural and environmentally sensitive lands that supports the Natural Heritage Strategy and the Parkland Naturalization Program. This program should include: erosion protection through the planting of native trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses; elimination of unsafe pathways by converting them to sustainable natural trails for hiking and mountain biking; control of destructive invasive species.
6. Establish an Eco-Fan Club to engage and educate the public. This should include: interpretive signs; tours; outreach to schools and community groups; promotion of volunteerism in the protection of natural areas; support for special events like clean-up days and Trees Across Toronto; partnership with Toronto's natural environment groups; and be related to the protection of unique aspects of Toronto's ecosystem.
7. Improve nature with technology through the roll-out of mobile computers so staff can keep track of the urban forest.
8. Reduce the forestry service order backlog to three to six months to properly sustain the existing trees in streets and parks.
9. Promote the protection of public parks as everyone's front yard.
10. Implement a Parks Renaissance Program to be phased in over five years. Components should include:

€Turf Improvement: cutting grass eight more times per year; seeding, top dressing and fertilization; aeration; irrigation system installation; integrated pest management in every park.

€Our Uncommon Gardens: renovating existing garden beds; enhancing City Hall's and other significant municipal buildings' displays; reinventing our feature gardens; adding new beds over five years.

€Heal the Eyesores: clean up graffiti; fix the broken windows, benches, field houses, picnic tables, benches, playgrounds and pathways.

€Pick It Up: continue installation of new environmentally friendly garbage cans for waste collection and recycling, with resources to empty them, and educate the community about their proper use.

€Keep It Running: replace worn forestry vehicles, grass cutting and other equipment as required to maintain service, and worn park furnishings and amenities.

11. Lead green action through organizing the work of parks volunteers to ensure community engagement.

12. Develop a new Dog-and-People In Parks strategy.

13. Develop a World Parks Program to celebrate Toronto's cultural diversity through the redesign of our parks—plan to remake eight parks per year with multicultural themes, phased in over five years.

14. Prepare a Parks Master Plan for spring 2005 to guide the renaissance of our parks and trails across the city. We have great landscape designers: we should let them shine.

15. Institute a Trailblazers Program, involving improvement and expansion of our trail system, and the provision of interpretive and directional signage, guidance for users with a disability, and appropriate lighting, for the pleasure and safety of trail and park users.

16. Create a Park Ranger Program with rangers in every ward who will promote and protect Toronto's green assets—a defining aspect of the city for tourists and residents.

17. Start a Life Gardens Program to promote gardening as a healthy activity which brings forth bounty and beautifies the city. Components should include: year round children's gardens, and support for community gardens and related programming in our parks and conservatories across Toronto.

18. Create a ParksArt Program with Toronto Culture involving artful horticulture in parks as part of the Public Art Program.

19. Initiate a professional gardener certificate program through our community gardens and greenhouses, aimed at disadvantaged youth.

20. Pioneer a Natural Areas, Forestry and Parks Apprenticeship Program and a Youth Interpretive Program. Hire 60 students per year to educate youth on careers in these areas and to raise awareness of the vital importance of nature.

21. Implement the Facility Renewal Program (a component of the Facilities Master Plan and Pool Provision Strategy) which should increase the capital maintenance budget by at least \$40 million a year, or one per cent of insured value, for 10 years. This will address the maintenance backlog.

22. Implement preventative maintenance to ensure our centres are clean, welcoming and comfortable again. Lack of preventative maintenance is increasing our capital cost. Our buildings are showing their age.

23. Advance the goals of the Environmental Plan by implementing conservation and waste diversion in our buildings.

24. Prepare a Sport Strategy Framework in partnership with the Toronto Sport Council for spring 2005 which identifies the critical role that sport can play in city building. The plan will:

€Identify regional facilities and field requirement priorities to increase sport opportunities for all participants from grass roots to elite athletes.

€Set a foundation for working with other sport and recreation agencies to ensure that participants have maximum opportunities to learn, participate, train, compete, at all stages of the playground-to-podium continuum.

€Identify means to increase leadership capacity in sport by providing youth with opportunities to learn sports event management and coaching.

€Establish levels of achievement for sports instruction programs offered by Parks and Recreation.

25. Set city standards for sport delivery, permits, and recreational facilities' equipment and supplies offered by Parks and Recreation.

26. Place priority on sports field development. Increase the number of sports fields by 10 per cent, including artificial turf surfaces.

27. Work with Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation and Parc Downsview Park to ensure that active recreation opportunities are included in their development plans.

28. Implement the Youth Recreation Strategy—Investing In Our Youth, following the philosophy of by youth-for-youth. Components should include:

€Increased sport opportunities across the city to increase physical activity, teamwork, and skill building.

€Enhanced urban programming for youth.

€More female programming, to level the gender playing field in sport and recreation, including dance, female-only sports and workshops.

€Youth empowerment and mentorship opportunities, encouraging youth to assume leadership roles in community centres and community volunteer projects.

29. Parks and Recreation should lower its hiring age from 16 to 14 for some positions, provided youth have completed the Leadership Training program.

30. Expand the Youth Outreach Program to reach out to new immigrants. Youth should be hired to explain our programs to newcomers and invite them to use them.

31. Ensure adequate facilities are available in communities with large populations but few recreational opportunities, by renting extra space specifically for youth programs.

32. Provide day-time drop-in and recreation opportunities for homeless and out-of-school youth to build their self-esteem and connection with the community.

33. Ensure each centre has a least one unstructured but supervised after-school drop-in program for youth.

34. Provide physical activity opportunities and leader-in-training programs in each district, in partnership with other agencies, for youth with a disability or special needs.

35. Establish youth councils for all community centres so that youth have their say.

36. Finalize and seek support for the Seniors Recreation Strategy with the Seniors' Round Table.

37. Increase the number of physically active Torontonians —10 per cent by 2010 and 20 per cent by 2020.

38. Implement the Children's Recreation Strategy fully.

39. Increase the number of children registered in programs by 20 per cent by 2020.

40. Provide new Canadians, especially those from warm climates, opportunities to learn and play Canadian winter sports.

41. Ensure all children in Toronto have the opportunity to learn to swim.

42. Ask Council to direct Parks and Recreation to report by spring 2005 on options for free programs for children and youth.

43. Develop a capital plan by spring 2005 to retrofit facilities for use by people with disabilities that is based on the requirements of the Ontarians With Disabilities Act.
44. Ensure staff at all levels reflects the diversity of all the communities we serve, and invest in staff training to achieve a welcoming environment for all.
45. Increase capacity to improve community recreational development and citizen engagement.
46. Promote the programs, services and benefits of recreation across the city. Building public awareness requires a broad effort.
47. Be the coach for the whole city. We need to demonstrate the value of lifelong activity through the use of our parks, trails, and community centres.
48. Create a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to guide, recognize and celebrate volunteers, advisory councils, partners and advocates.
49. Support the Mayor's Community Safety Neighbourhood Plan through the increased use of multi-service-multi-agency program delivery methods in high risk neighbourhoods.
50. Parks and Recreation budgets should be calculated with due regard to costs avoided, both now and in the future, in other departments and by other levels of government.
51. Parks and Recreation's annual budget should relate directly to the size of the assets maintained, and the numbers of Torontonians served. A measure of our success should be that both numbers grow in lockstep with the city's population growth.
52. The City of Toronto should encourage other levels of government to invest in activities related to parks and recreation.

**Toronto Parks and Recreation
Organizational Review**

Council Steering Committee

Members:

Members of Council:

Councillor Brian Ashton, Chair EDPC

Councillor Gloria Lindsay Luby

Councillor Maria Augimeri

Councillor Suzan Hall

Councillor Kyle Rae

Staff:

Joe Halstead, Commissioner, EDCT

Brenda Librecz, Acting GM, Parks & Recreation

Kathy Wiele, Project Director

**Toronto Parks and Recreation
Organizational Review**

Project Coordinating Team

Members:

Linda Taschereau

Greg MacDonald

David Kidd Local 79

Ainsworth Hamilton

Bruno Sette

Bill Guthrie Local 416

Richard Majkot, COTAPSAI

Jim Bradley

Sharon Waddingham

Barb Shulman

Winnie Li

Ken Jeffers

Frank Kershaw

Brenda Librecz, Acting GM, Parks & Recreation

Kathy Wiele, Project Director

Devin Fan

Sandra McCallum

**Toronto Parks and Recreation
Organizational Review**

Stakeholder Reference Group

Members:

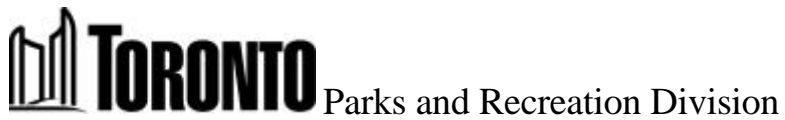
Bill Alexander	Disabilities Issues Committee
Lea Ambros	CELOS
Laura Berman	Foodshare Toronto
LeaBredschneider	Swim Ontario
Steve Boone	Greater Toronto YMCA
John Caliendo	ABC Residents Association
Catherine Charlton	ProAction Cops & Kids
George Dark	Toronto Parks & Trees Foundation
Peter D’Cruz	Toronto Field Hockey Club
Brian Denney	Toronto Region Conservation Authority
Tony DiGiovanni	Landscape Ontario
Andy Doudoumis	North York Soccer
Geoffrey Dyer	Toronto Botanical Garden
Bonnie Easterbrook	John Innes Advisory Council
Tanya Fleet	Rainbow Hoops Basketball
Greg Flynn	Native Child and Family Centre
Sandy Foster	Centennial College Recreation Leadership Program
Nathan Gilbert	Laidlaw Foundation
Patrick Glasgow	Youth – John Innes CC
Joanna Kidd	Toronto Bay Initiative
Jameela Krishnan	St. Jamestown Youth/Regent Park Youth Worker
Katrina Miller	Toronto Environmental Alliance
Roslyn Moore	Friends of Glendon Forest
Carole Murphy	Thistletown Community Advisory Board
Scott Oakman	Greater Toronto Hockey League
Greg Piasetzki	Leaside Girls Hockey League
Karen Pitre	Sport
Lewis Rhona	FHO and Field Hockey Canada
Ron Rock	East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club
Janet Rosenberg	
Boris Rosolak	Seaton House, Community & Neighbourhood Services Dept.
Veta Saunders (Pastor)	Church of God of Prophecy Outreach Program
Krishanthu Shu	Rose Avenue CRC
Steven Smith	Urban Forestry Associates
Robin Sorys	High Park Community Advisory Council
George Whyte	Toronto Cricket Association
Sau Lin Wong	Milliken Advisory Board
Sue Vail (Dr.)	York University – Sport Management Program
Lewis Yeager	Rouge Park Alliance

“What we heard: comments from
City of Toronto staff and residents”

Consultation Report

ReActivate TO!

June 28, 2004



Consultation Report

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- 1. Outreach to Public and Flyers**
- 2. Participant Guide**
- 3. Outreach to Staff**
- 4. “Focus Ontario” Questions**

1. Background

As a part of the Parks and Recreation Division's reorganization process coined, ReActivate TO!, an extensive consultation and survey process was developed to engage staff, users, non-users and stakeholders detailing what they think and feel about our programs and services. Over the months of May and June 2004, 30 consultation sessions were held with over 600 Parks and Recreation staff and staff from other Divisions and Departments and 12 consultation sessions were held with over 600 members of the public, including youth and children (see chart below for details). Surveys were available online and in hard copy and to date we have had input via surveys from over 400 staff and over 600 members of the public. Other mechanisms of input included commentary to the ReActivate TO! email address, comments sent directly to the office of the Acting General Manager and comment cards accepted at the consultation sessions.

This summary report will provide a general overview of what we heard through the consultation and survey process. More detailed summaries and expanded notes of each consultation session held are available through the Parks and Recreation intranet site at www.toronto.ca/parks. These notes will be made available to all staff and members of the public who participated in the sessions.

2. Types and Number of Consultations

Consultation Method	Consultation Summary	Participants
1. Public Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 sessions City-wide • facilitated small group discussions 	8 public sessions – 2 per district 1 sporting organizations 1 advisory councils – community centres 1 youth only session 1 environmental organizations	632 <i>(168 youth and over 81 children)</i>
2. Staff Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 sessions frontline staff • facilitated small groups discussions 	27 Parks & Recreation staff 1 EDCT divisions 1 CNS department 1 all City Departments and Divisions	689
3. Environics Poll	Randomly selected persons (survey attached)	500
4. Re-Activate TO website	e-mails and comment sheet submissions	94
5. <i>Surveys</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay stub, on-line and publicly distributed surveys 	Staff Surveys Submitted Public Surveys Submitted	436 625

3. Highlights of Feedback from Public and Staff

These inputs from the public directly shaped the strategic plan and will also be applied to the development of service plans and organization design models. A sense of urgency was prevalent during the discussions with the public especially around the condition of parks and the need to invest in our youth. The following reflects the most common comments and ideas from the all of the sessions:

- Citizens view Parks and Recreation as a key contributor to the quality of life of Toronto's communities and neighbourhoods
- Need to focus on parks and parks maintenance with priority to bring them into better shape – parks highly valued and want them treated like our 'front lawn'
- Increased use of City parks and diversity of users – creating need for better park designs and user strategies – i.e. – dogs, trails, roller sports, etc
- Youth programming and employment opportunities for young people
- Need for increased community responsiveness by programs, services and staff
- Unmet demand for sport fields, community centres, and arenas
- Quality of facilities and general state of good repair – impact on community enjoyment and utility
- Need to increase marketing, promotion and general awareness of services, locations and programs – need comprehensive outreach strategy
- Seniors programs and increase in population that will be retired in the next 10 years present opportunities for volunteerism and mentoring with youth

Staff comments and concerns were similar to the Public and also included:

- Need to increase training, and skills investment
- Lack of identity – uniforms and signage
- Desire for better consistency in practice and service levels across city
- Concerns with perceptions of inequalities by geography
- Need to improve communications with frontline staff
- Morale – staff need to feel valued

4. Public Consultations

Introduction to the Public Consultation Process

A total of 632 users, non-users, residents and stakeholders of Parks and Recreation services from across the City participated in 12 public consultation sessions. Participants included adults (48% of all participants), seniors (12% of all participants), youth (27% of all participants) and children (13% of all participants). Public interest and demand for these sessions has increased beyond the 8 prescheduled sessions. Various groups and stakeholders have contacted Parks and Recreation and indicated their interest in co-hosting similar sessions in their neighbourhoods, an additional 4 sessions have already occurred.

The Communications strategy for the public sessions included various mechanisms including the internet, flyers, media outlets, mailings, business cards and personal contact efforts. Please refer

to Appendix 1 for details on the outreach efforts to the public and to view copies of the flyers used.

A separate ReActivate TO! Participant Guide for the public sessions was developed and distributed to participants prior to the consultation sessions and also made available at the sessions and on the internet. A total of 5,000 copies of the Public Participant Guide were distributed. Coupled with a presentation by senior staff to open the session, the guide provided context and background information of the Parks and Recreation Division. Please refer to Appendix 2 for the Participant Guide.

Findings from the Public Consultation Process

Although the questions that were asked vary slightly from the questions posed to staff, the objective to gauge a sense of what services the public feels should be the priority of Parks and Recreation and to identify the areas of service that require improvement, remained the same. The following is a general overview of what we heard during these public sessions. The following theme areas presented are based on the most frequent responses made by participants. The expanded notes from all of the sessions will be mailed to participants and posted on the website.

Questions 1 and 3 – What are your expectations of Parks and Recreation? Given the financial pressures and the need to serve the diverse communities in Toronto, what are the programs and services Parks and Recreation should focus on?

Although questions 1 and 3 were designed to extract different types of information, responses were virtually identical to both questions, hence, they have been combined in the analysis to provide an overview of what the public expects the program and service priorities Parks and Recreation should focus on.

Park Maintenance is a Priority

- Need to focus on parks and parks maintenance with priority to bring them into better shape – parks highly valued and want them treated like our ‘front lawn’.
- Increased use of City parks and diversity of users – creating need for better park designs and user strategies – i.e. – dogs, trails, roller sports.
- By-law enforcement regarding litter, dogs off leashes and poop and scoop infractions were common concerns.
- Safety concerns were also a priority for the public, particularly inadequate lighting in parks, ravines and trails. Youth also commented about the safety of parks, feeling afraid to enter these areas after dark, noting that some areas are territorial and not properly lit.
- The majority of participants indicated that there is a need to add more and replace or fix the eyesores and broken park furnishings such as benches, fountains and washrooms, particularly in large parks. For those amenities that do exist, the public wanted a quicker turn around on broken fixtures and maintenance problems.

- Environmental awareness and the need to keep our natural areas and ravines at an appropriate standard are prevalent themes.

Youth Programming at 'Top of Mind' with Public

- All ages strongly communicated that we need to focus on youth – programs, employment, and/or creating a 'safe place to be'.
- After school timeframe noted as the priority time for youth and pre-teens – junior high students.
- Public want access to schools back and want Parks & Recreation to work with the schools on 'after school programs' at school locations – sense of urgency communicated.
- Type of programs for youth was discussed with a need to create a hybrid of drop-in and registered program – they want someone to look out for them & check attendance.
- Youth participants wanted a place to belong - youth lounges and a place to work out -weight rooms and membership cards.
- Female youth were very vocal about programs that are for "girls only", where they could participate freely with other females.
- There were also many comments on the need for non-physical education type programs such as access to the internet, homework clubs, English as a second language classes, services geared toward new immigrants and workshops that discuss life skills, peer pressures and other such issues.

Fees are a Barrier to Participation

- Youth and seniors indicated that fees are a barrier to participation.
- Many groups indicated that areas 'in need' or 'communities at risk' should receive free programs and quality programs as a priority. Concerns expressed that at Priority Centres where all programs are free that choices and new programs are limited due to no budget availability to pay for the programs.
- Discussion also took place around the Welcome Policy and the merits of expanding it or replacing it solely with more Priority Centres.
- Applying to the Welcome Policy also seen as a barrier – concerns expressed about its administration.
- Fees were mentioned at all sessions, and discrepancy exists in that many stated programs should be free especially for children and youth while others felt there should be a nominal charge if the city has a financial problem (the notion of free programming was greater).
- Revenues discussed as driving the program agenda and mode of operation – focus on revenue generation instead of community development or community building.

Recreation Programming - Swimming, Skating and Camps are a Priority

- A Park, a Pool and a Place to meet were three essentials for every community.
- The public expressed a strong opinion in stating that recreational programming should be general in nature and not specialized – teach everyone to swim and skate – life skills in Canada – long winters.
- Teaching new Canadians winter sports were noted and addressing access to winter sport equipment was discussed as something the City should seek corporate sponsors.
- Regarding recreational programming, swimming, camps for children, skating and early childhood programs were noted as being of the utmost importance.
- Need for more sports fields – all sports groups indicated need for more fields – cricket, soccer, rugby, lacrosse, baseball – the sports fields need to be better maintained as well.
- Competitive facilities in non-existence in Toronto – our youth are leaving the City to train for national competitions - i.e. women's hockey.

Seniors Programs are a Priority

- Seniors expressed that they too need to design their own programs and lead them.
- Seniors wanted to also share their experience and have the opportunity to volunteer to help with after school programs, mentoring youth and be able to work part-time beyond the age of 65 years.
- Swimming and skating during the daytime hours while kids in school. Seniors are more physically active today.

Community Responsiveness is a Priority

- Need for increased community responsiveness of programs, services and staff
- The types of programs offered needs to be more flexible and reflective of community needs and input
- Above all, the public asked for more community driven programming and service delivery. For example, in some areas baseball diamonds are not well used by the community, but cricket pitches would be more appropriately used but difficult to change.
- Advisory Councils for Community Centres would like to have clarity on roles and expectations and would like to see increased input on program and service decisions. Advisory Councils also would like to have clarity on City priorities as it relates to the revenue driven model versus the community development model.

Family Programming - more choices for both parents and kids at same time

- The time when programs are offered was discussed – there was interest in having programs for families or offering something for mom or dad while the kids are in a program.
- Special events that bring the entire family together was also a popular suggestion.
- Moving programs into parks, and focusing on environmental projects such as tree planting.

Safe, Clean, Accessible and Welcoming Facilities are a Priority

- The public is unhappy with the condition of our buildings, community centres, washrooms, lack of waste bins, recycling containers, broken fixtures unkept common areas.
- The temperature at facilities (east and south districts) was also a common complaint, as it was for staff.
- How the public is greeted or rather – lack of reception staff was considered a concern – especially for newcomers who need assistance

Access to Schools

- The public is finding it difficult to access space and suggested that better partnerships with school boards could remedy the lack of space.
- Schools are seen as community spaces and should be utilized outside of school hours by the public.
- The recent permit rate increases by the TDSB has increased the demand for space at community centres and community groups are finding it difficult to continue their programs.
- Lack of available storage space is also a key issue for these community groups.

Equipment at Facilities is an Expectation

- Equipment is old, inadequate for a program. Full-time and part-time recreation staff concur with this issue and find it difficult to operate programs with little or no equipment.
- Fitness centre equipment was also cited as old or more often broken than operational and does not allow the fitness program to compare with other providers.

Community Involvement – Volunteers

- The public expects volunteerism through a variety of groups including Advisory Councils.
- Volunteerism for the youth population in particular was put forward as a mechanism to engage youth in their community. It was also suggested numerous times that students compulsory volunteer hours by the school board be achieved via Parks and Recreation. Cleaning litter in parks and volunteering in recreation programs were common suggestions.
- The Mayor's Clean-Up Day was heralded as a great initiative and it was suggested that this become a more frequent volunteer event.

Question 2 – What should be done to improve Parks and Recreation programs and services?

Quality of Service Needs Improvement

- The public feels strongly that community centre staff should be reflective of the diverse community it serves, and therefore, staff should be from the community and be multi-lingual.
- Youth also agreed that customer service needs improvement, particularly the way they are treated by staff. Youth feel alienated, disengaged and often unwelcome.
- The public want to enter a facility and “be greeted in a friendly manner” and expect a level of professionalism from staff that doesn’t always exist.
- They expect standards in terms of dress code, a live person to answer the telephone and supervisors visible in the buildings.
- There is an expectation that staff should be trained and qualified in what they do.
- Parks staff need to have an uniform and be visible in the community.
- Participants voiced that they did not want to be referred to as “customers”.
- Registration process, permitting process and user information systems should be more user friendly.

Increase Resources for Parks & Recreation

- All sessions indicated that Parks & Recreation services are not frill but are important quality of life components of living in Toronto. Therefore need to prioritize and increase resources especially for parks. Level of service in parks not adequate to meet expectations.

Increased Community Awareness and Marketing of Parks and Recreation Services

- Both the general public, youth and as mentioned above, staff, feel strongly that improved promotion is essential.
- The public is not aware of the programs and services that Parks and Recreation delivers, nor are they aware of the spectacular benefits one can receive from participating.
- There were many creative suggestions for promotional vehicles for youth programs such as “funky club like flyers”, going into schools and providing information to students, sending pamphlets home with students, website, email newsletter, TTC advertising, using Heritage programs to advertise and radio spots.
- There was a lot of discussion on the ‘Fun Guide’ and the merits of a review to determine its cost effectiveness and value. Suggestions for improvement include providing program descriptions, translating into different languages and supplementing it with a smaller community brochure for a neighbourhood specific area.
- An overall marketing plan for the Division is required.

Growing Partnership and Sponsorship Opportunities

- It was suggested that sponsorship is a way to increase resources for Parks and Recreation.
- Many participants supported the notion of corporate sponsorship.

- Greater promotion of memorial bench and memorial tree programs.
- Partnering with other agencies and organizations to deliver service was seen as a positive solution.
- Focus on improving relationships with school boards and gaining access to schools for Parks & Recreation programs
- Need to raise the profile of the Parks & Trees Foundation in order to enhance corporate and individual contributions to Toronto's green agenda.
- Need to develop in partnership with sporting organizations a sport strategy that will guide long term priorities for field, aquatics, arena and training centres both local and regional scale of facilities.
- Improve relationships with Unions.

Communication Needs Improvement

- There were many accolades for this consultation process and calls for these types of sessions more often.
- The public want to have a regular bulletin or newsletter – would like electronic format and use of the web as well as print
- Language was identified many times as a barrier for many new immigrants and one way to ensure inclusiveness is to be able to communicate in using materials translated into a variety of languages.
- As mentioned above, multi-lingual staff, communication pieces in different languages and diverse programs is a way to break this barrier.

Employment Age is a Barrier to Youth Engagement

- The public also cited the employment age as requiring a change in that it should be lowered to 14 years of age for some positions and 12 years of age for leadership opportunities. It is interesting that this was a common comment from adults and youth.
- The participants feel that Parks and Recreation plays an important societal role in its employing of youth – it is a strategy that works well in that it keeps our youth engaged in productive activities that have lifelong positive impacts.
- If youth between the ages of 11 to 16 are not engaged in Parks and Recreation programs, then change the age of hiring and leadership training in order to attract youth in this important age group.

Question 4 – What other advice do you have for City Council regarding Parks and Recreation?

Participants took this opportunity to express that they feel Parks and Recreation services are extremely important and are an integral part of ones quality of life. Common comments were:

- “an essential service”
- “should be a priority”
- “everyone should be entitled to a healthy lifestyle”

The public requested more funding for Parks and Recreation services and asked for expanded service beyond the current levels. Of all the responses made, none were stronger than the feeling that Parks and Recreation is valued and is a positive contribution to the lives of residents.

5. Staff Consultation Process

Introduction to the Staff Consultation Process

A total of 689 Parks and Recreation staff from various functions participated in the 30 staff consultation sessions including part-time, full-time, temporary, management and unionized staff. This includes key staff from other Divisions and Departments who work closely with Parks and Recreation including Community and Neighbourhood Services, Public Health, Works and Emergency Services, Corporate Services and the other Divisions of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism. Within the Division, sessions were held on a functional and cross-functional basis covering the service functions of Technical Services, Forestry, Recreation, Parks and Administration.

Staff were informed of these sessions through a variety of communication mechanisms including the intranet, registration flyer, an attachment to payslips, a memo, bulletin boards and personal contact efforts. Please refer to Appendix 3 for details on the outreach efforts to staff. Staff who were not able to attend a session were given the option to schedule a personal interview, where a recorder met with the staff person at their work location and recorded their input on the consultation questions.

A ReActivate TO! Participant Guide was developed and distributed to staff during the consultation sessions and also made available at the sessions and on the intranet. A total of 800 copies of the Staff Participant Guide were distributed. Coupled with a presentation by senior staff to open the session, the guide provided context and background information of the Parks and Recreation Division.

Findings from the Staff Consultation Process

The questions that were asked were chosen in order to determine what services staff feel should be the priority of Parks and Recreation, and to identify the areas of service that require improvement. The following is a general overview of what we heard during these staff sessions on each question asked. The following theme areas presented are based on the most frequent responses made by staff. Although there were many important comments put forward, only the most prevalent messages are noted here.

Question 1 - Given the financial pressures and the need to serve the diverse communities of Toronto, what are the programs and services Parks and Recreation should focus on?

Clean Parks and Green Spaces Need our Attention

- All staff groups felt that there should be increased upkeep and maintenance of our deteriorating parks.
- Staff identified the need for by-law enforcement for illegal dumping, dogs off leashes and poop and scoop infractions. Increased household waste an impediment to park maintenance.
- Public education of parks and environmental issues was also seen as an important step to combating by-law infraction issues.
- Increased use of parks and competing users are pressures impacting on quality of the parks.
- Lack of resources for parks- staffing resources have been depleted since the early 90's by close to 50%.
- New park designs should have input from frontline operations staff – some new parks are difficult to maintain due to poor design that impedes easy maintenance and creates safety issues.
- Return the flowerbeds – flowers make a city beautiful – let's return to planting them like we did in the early 90's.
- The pesticide ban has had a negative impact on how our parks look – we need to have alternatives to ensure parks look better especially in the spring.
- Equipment needs to be replaced and upgraded – productivity would increase if newer equipment and technology was utilized.

Youth Programming a Priority

- Youth, child, early child, senior and adult programs, in that order, were identified as priorities.
- Youth Outreach Workers program seen as successful way to engage youth. Program needs to be revised to have the staff position converted to permanent employees instead of part-time and/or temporary.
- After-school hours must be priority for increased programming.

Swimming and Skating are Popular Programs

- Waiting lists for swimming, skating and camps should be addressed.
- Swimming is a life skill and should be one of our areas of excellence.
- As we have long winters, we need to keep people physically active by broadening access to our skating and hockey arenas, providing skate rentals and hockey in the neighbourhood programs and opening trails.

Revenue Targets are a Challenge

- Differing views were expressed on whether programs should be free, charged or subsidized, however revenue targets do determine the program mix versus community development objectives.
- Staff have expressed concerns about ability to meet revenue budget due to changing societal circumstances, the high target and limited resources to make programs more appealing to the public.
- Revenues should be more strategic and not negatively impact community objectives.

Community Responsiveness is Important

- Programs should be reflective of community needs and drop-in skate and swim programs were noted as the most important programs to be available to all residents.
- In order to continue delivering and addressing waiting lists for program access to space was also noted as a priority and the need to strengthen partnerships with third parties such as school boards in order to attain space.
- The Welcome Policy and Priority Centres should be reviewed in order to increase access to our programs and services.

Facility Maintenance is a Priority

- Existing facilities are seen as being adequate, but the Division should focus on utilizing them better, maintaining them better and repairing them before building new ones.
- The term “band-aid” solutions was used often to describe the current maintenance service. Need a preventative maintenance program – it will take money in the short term but it will save money in the long run.
- Staff opposed contracting out repairs, as contract work was identified as being done poorly.
- Control over the maintenance of our own facilities should be a priority – when it isn’t it suffers and the public cannot understand why we cannot get the building heat turned on or the leak in the roof fixed when it happens instead of weeks later.
- Building maintenance is inadequate in that repairs are not completed for months and building temperatures are not in keeping with program requirements and standards.
- A work order system is needed for facility maintenance and operations.

Trees Need Resources Too

- Planting and maintaining new and current trees is important.
- Planting trees in our parks should be given a higher priority.
- The tree maintenance backlog is excessive and the Division should strive toward a city-wide services standard that minimizes waiting times across the City.
- The harmonization of policies specifically related to trees was also seen as a priority. Forestry staff would like to hold an annual tree symposium for front-line staff to share best practices and discuss challenges and opportunities.
- Public awareness of tree planting and benefits of planting and caring for trees needs to occur to address negative public reaction to planting of trees along streetscapes.

Safety Concerns

- Increased security and monitoring at our community centres, parks and public spaces is warranted
- Increased lighting and other security features

A Focus on Promotion and Public Education is a Priority

- Our programs and services must be promoted better and a review of our current primary marketing tool, “the Fun Guide” is needed.
- Staff had many suggestions to increase the promotion and marketing of Parks & Recreation program and benefits of our programs.
- Along with promotion, education to the public on key issues – litter in our parks, need to increase physical activity for lifelong healthy living, and other public service related issues.

Encouraging Volunteers – the opportunities are endless

- Staff said that volunteers are important and should be used in more instances to improve our effectiveness but not to replace city workers.
- Volunteers can aid in bringing awareness of issues and concerns to the public’s attention – such as clean city initiatives-- advocating public’s help in keeping our parks clean and safe.
- In order to do so they identified volunteer recruitment and training as a priority.

Question 2 – What is going well in the programs and services you are involved with?

The majority of responses to this question were that the quality of staff is extremely high, in that staff are knowledgeable, resourceful, dedicated, go beyond what is expected and deliver quality work with limited resources. A sense of pride of ones work and a strong dedication was evident from these comments.

Other comments were about specific initiatives that staff felt were going well such as:

- the handling of the Asian Long Horned Beetle
- Youth Outreach Workers
- standardization of the sign shop
- Parks and Trees Foundation
- Youth Games

For more detailed comments on this section, refer to the expanded notes for each session.

Question 3 – What needs improvement in your work area for you to do your job better and how would you make improvements?

Consistency, Equity and Clarity in Service Delivery City-wide

- Both Parks and Recreation staff and staff from other Divisions and Departments agree that the Division must undertake to establish city-wide standards and practices for specific services and tasks based on usage and circumstances and be consistent in their approach.
- Other departments remarked on how decentralized Parks & Recreation was and how it would take 4 calls to get four different answers to a service level question.

- Although amalgamation occurred, in many service areas districts are still operating under legacy systems of their former municipalities or utilizing four different approaches across the city for a similar task.
- The need to equalize pay, job descriptions, expectations and staffing models was a first and foremost concern for Parks and Recreation staff across all disciplines.

Administrative Processes and Tools not meeting Operational Requirements

- Staff feel they spend more time doing administrative work rather than front-line work.
- Administrative processes and supports are not adequate.
- Staff identified the need to improve office equipment such as telephones, computers, supplies and the equitable access to this equipment by all staff (staff at satellite locations often do not have access to the basic administrative equipment required to perform ones job). Access to email for part-time raised as impediment to communications.
- Staff strongly feel that there is a severe shortage of staff to perform clerical, processing and other administrative tasks. This diminishes the capacity for staff to carry out the critical functions of the job because so much time is focused on administrative and compliance issues.
- Other barriers to improved service delivery are the payroll, finance and purchasing processes which staff identify as a hindrance rather than an aid. Increased red tape and no training or resources added to implement the new lengthy processes. High level of frustration over lack of administrative resources to address the high expectations of the administrative policies.

Staff Resources Stretched from 10 years of Cutbacks

- Staffing levels are negatively impacting on service and ability to respond to changing community needs and public expectations due to downsizing, gapping targets, hiring freezes and non-replacement of vacancies and retirees.
- Staff said they do not have adequate resources and identified this as the main contributing factor to low morale.
- Morale is also low because of the lack of staff reward or recognition such as staff special events, barbecues, availability of staff discounts and other such incentives.
- Lack of identity for Parks & Recreation – two areas noted:
 - Uniforms are not harmonized, some staff do not have an uniform and some do, inadequacy of current uniform design – a new uniform is needed to generate pride and create an identity.
 - Name of Department: Parks and Recreation, the largest Division in the EDCT is not included in the name ‘Department of Economic Development , Culture and Tourism’.
- Staff identified a myriad of tools that are lacking such as work order systems, proper equipment (for example forestry staff do not have the correct truck size required), technological systems and preventative maintenance systems (a common response by technical services staff who we should be proactive rather than reactive to maintenance issues).

- Staff also requested that they be a part of the ordering process because they could identify the type of equipment required.
- The lack of financial resources was identified as a requirement by all functional areas. The shortage of funds is so great for recreation staff, that they stated they often have to purchase supplies and equipment on their own in order to have the resources to run a program.

Up, Down, and Across – Communication Needed!

- Internally and with other Divisions and Departments, communication must be improved. The nature of Parks & Recreation business places staff in remote and different locations often – therefore communications are imperative.
- Parks and Recreation staff feel there is little communication between functional areas, which makes it difficult to work together when required.
- Within the Department the major areas of concern relate to the lack of communication and joint planning by the two support divisions that provide vital services for Parks and Recreation: Policy and Development Division and Administration and Support. Policy and Development is responsible for the planning and implementation of the capital budget for Parks and Recreation facilities and parks. Staff would like to have greater input to the planning and implementation of capital facilities that they will be operating in the future. Further staff also expressed need for improved and more timely research from this group. The Administrative and Support Division has challenges in that it doesn't have enough resources to meet our expectations.
- Many staff are not connected to the email system therefore communication is more difficult and requires resources and thoughtful consideration.

Skills & Training Investment Needed

- Staff training and need for specialized skills to undertake almost every job in Parks & Recreation was expressed.
- Health & Safety Legislation has increased the demand and type of training required.
- There is a perception that there is not enough budget allocation for staff training.
- Staff would like to also interact with each other at annual forums such as expanding the recreation conference, to add two other daylong events – one for Forestry and one for Parks that promote staff sharing expertise and best practices.
- The public also indicated that we need to upgrade the skills of our staff in the areas of diversity training, customer service and community development.

Competing Priorities

- Frontline staff indicated that they feel confused when priorities and tasks are changed by internal and external staff, when they have little resources to undertake the basic job requirements.

- Sometimes competing requests for priorities are made – setting up for special events when grass needs to be cut in another area without any more resources to cover the cutting.
- Requests for waiving fees is increasing, but revenue targets are not going down.

Question 4 – Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

When asked for any other comments, staff reiterated many of the points mentioned above and cited some very specific comments about their specific work locations. The most common comment was that the consultation session was meaningful and that more such sessions should occur on a regular basis. Staff wanted to ensure that a result occurs from this process and that this is not just a futile effort.

The next most common comment, which was put forward by parks, forestry and technical services staff was the preference of a four-day workweek. These staff feel that a four day work week would be more efficient in that a longer work day would equate to jobs being completed quicker because staff would not have to stop work prematurely and travel between locations.

For more detailed responses please refer to the expanded notes at www.toronto.ca/parks.

6. Evaluation of Consultation Sessions

The consultation sessions were extremely well received by staff, stakeholders and the public. An evaluation of the sessions was conducted and on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating very satisfied with the session:

- 80% of staff and 75% of the public rated the session between a 4 and a 5.
- The bulk of the rest of the ratings were between a 3 and a 4 indicating they were satisfied with the session.

7. Other Input

Other input was received via 38 comment cards that were filled out by staff, 76 by the public consultation participants and 21 comments were sent to the ReActivate TO! website. The comments were received from individuals, as well as groups that have a vested interest in Parks and Recreation such as the High Park Advisory Council and the Canadian Cancer Society. The input from these mechanisms was either very specific to local issues or provided general responses geared toward the questions asked at the consultation sessions. Much of the same commentary that was received during the consultation sessions is reflected through these inputs as well. The roll-up of information from these mechanisms is also available on www.toronto.ca/parks.

8. Staff Survey Administered by Parks & Recreation

Introduction to Staff Survey Process

A survey was administered by Parks & Recreation to City staff in Spring 2004 using a non-random methodology. Instead of developing a random sample of staff, copies of the survey were distributed widely and respondents returned their completed surveys on a voluntary basis. This method produces a large amount of useful data but does not produce statistically valid results.

The staff survey probed service levels and generally followed the questions in the Spring 2004 Environics survey (see Section 10). The survey was distributed in May to all full- and part-time Parks & Recreation staff as a pay stub attachment. Staff from EDCT's two support divisions, Administration & Support Services and Policy & Development, were also reached in this manner. The survey was also available on-line at the Parks & Recreation intranet site.

436 staff surveys were returned by June 17, 2004.

Findings from the Staff Survey

- 1) A large majority (88%) of staff want Parks & Recreation service levels maintained or increased. This is nearly identical to the opinion expressed by the general population (87%).
- 2) Support is especially solid for maintaining service levels (54%), but more than one-third of staff want service levels increased (34%). This latter finding is higher than for the general population (27%).
- 3) Staff's top 10 priorities for increasing service levels are:
 - 1) number of recreation programs for youth aged 13-24 (68% of respondents)
 - 2) picking up litter in parks (67%)
 - 3) number of recreation programs with a physical activity component (54%)
 - 4) maintenance of community recreation centres (48%)
 - 5) number of recreation programs for children aged 0-12 (46%)
 - 6) quality of recreation programs (42%)
 - 7) amount of parkland (38%)
 - 8) number of community recreation centres (37%)
 - 9) number of registered recreation programs where participants learn basic or introductory skills (37%)
 - 10) number of recreation programs for seniors aged 60 and older (36%)
- 4) Generally, staff and the general population share similar priorities:
In terms of recreation programming:
 - emphasize youth, followed by children and seniors
 - emphasize basic or introductory skills over advanced skills or highly specialized activities
 - place much greater emphasis on programs with a physical activity component
 - place much greater emphasis on the quality of programs

- in terms of park operations, emphasize picking up of litter, followed by maintenance of sports fields, grass cutting, and maintenance of recreational trails
 - in terms of community centre operations, emphasize basic maintenance, followed by maintenance of swimming pools
 - in terms of provision levels, emphasize the amount of parkland, followed by the number of City trees, community recreation centres, indoor swimming pools and recreational trails.
- 5) As with the general population, staff have little appetite for reducing service levels (6%) or eliminating services altogether (1%).

9. *Public Survey Administered by Parks & Recreation*

Introduction to Public Survey Process

A survey was administered by Parks & Recreation to the general public using a non-random methodology similar to that used for the staff survey. Again, this method produces a large amount of useful data but does not produce statistically valid results

The public survey probed service expectations and service priorities. The survey was distributed in May and June at ReActivate TO! consultation sessions, at City Hall and the civic centres, and at all community recreation centres. It was also available on-line at the Parks & Recreation internet site.

625 public surveys were returned by June 17, 2004.

Findings from the Public Survey

Urban Forestry:

- 1) Providing urban forestry staff who are helpful and courteous and providing urban forestry services in a timely manner are the most important aspects of service for Torontonians.**
- 2) Parks & Recreation is strongest at providing staff who are helpful and courteous.**
- 3) Parks & Recreation is weakest at providing information that is readily available and easily understood.**
- 4) Providing urban forestry services in a timely manner shows the largest gap in performance – the difference between the level of importance expressed by the public for a given service and the public’s level of satisfaction with that same service. This is the highest priority for taking action to improve service to the public. (A large performance gap also exists for providing information that is readily available and easily understood, but this aspect of service is relatively less important to Torontonians.)

Recreation Facilities and Parks:

- 5) Providing recreation facilities and parks that are safe, clean and well-maintained are the most important aspects of service for Torontonians.**
- 6) Parks & Recreation is strongest at providing recreation facilities and parks that are conveniently located, physically accessible and have helpful and courteous staff.**
- 7) Parks & Recreation is weakest at providing facilities and parks that are clean and well-maintained.**
- 8) The largest performance gaps lie in providing recreation facilities and parks that are clean, that are well-maintained, and which are safe. These are the highest priorities for taking action to improve service to the public.

Recreation Programs:

9) Providing recreation programs that offer good instruction/supervision by staff, have helpful and courteous staff, and which are fun and enjoyable are the most important aspects of service for Torontonians. Programs that are offered at convenient times, are reasonably priced and have a registration process that is easy to access and use are nearly as important.

10) Parks & Recreation is strongest at providing recreation programs that are fun and enjoyable, have helpful and courteous staff, and give participants new skills.

11) Parks & Recreation is weakest at providing programs that meet participant needs, offer what people want, take place at convenient times and use a registration process that is easy to access and use.

12) The largest performance gaps lie in providing recreation programs that offer good instruction/supervision by staff, are offered at convenient times and are what people want. These are the highest priorities for taking action to improve service to the public.

10. Public Surveys Administered by Environics Research Group

Introduction to Service Levels Survey (2004)

As part of its omnibus “Focus Ontario” telephone survey, Environics Research Group asked questions on behalf of Parks & Recreation between April 7 and 26, 2004 (see Appendix 4). The results are based on a probability sample of 500 adults aged 18 and older living in Toronto, including both users and non-users of City parks and recreation services. A sample of this size has a sampling error of plus or minus 4.4% in 95 out of 100 samples.

Findings of Service Levels Survey (2004)

- A large majority (87%) of Torontonians want Parks & Recreation service levels maintained or increased. In no case does combined support fall below half – it ranges from 53% (keeping or increasing the current number of municipal golf courses) to 95% (maintaining or increasing the picking up of litter in parks).
- Support is especially solid for maintaining service levels (60%), but more than one-quarter of Torontonians want service levels increased (27%).
- The top 10 priorities for increasing service levels are:
 - 1) number of recreation programs for youth aged 13-24 (54% of respondents)
 - 2) number of recreation programs for children aged 0-12 (51%)
 - 3) picking up litter in parks (49%)
 - 4) number of City-maintained trees (39%)
 - 5) number of recreation programs for seniors aged 60 and older (38%)
 - 6) quality of recreation programs (36%)
 - 7) number of recreation programs with a physical activity component (35%)
 - 8) amount of parkland (34%)
 - 9) maintenance of swimming pools (34%)
 - 10) number of registered programs where participants learn basic or introductory skills (31%).
- There is little public appetite for reducing service levels (6%) or eliminating services altogether (2%).
- The top 10 priorities for reducing service levels are:
 - 1) number of municipal golf courses (27%)
 - 2) number of registered recreation programs where participants learn advanced skills or that involve highly specialized activities, equipment and/or facilities (15%)
 - 3) number of recreation programs for adults aged 25-59 (15%)
 - 4) number of ski and snowboard centres (12%)
 - 5) number of City-maintained flower beds (11%)
 - 6) number of non-registered drop-in recreation programs (11%)
 - 7) number of outdoor rinks (7%)
 - 8) number of outdoor swimming pools (7%)
 - 9) tree pruning, removal and planting services (9%)
 - 10) grass cutting in parks (6%).
- In relative and absolute terms, support is weak for two services: municipal golf courses and ski/snowboard centres. Increasing the number of golf and ski facilities maintained is the lowest priority for Torontonians (5% and 10%, respectively), while reducing the number of the each is the highest priority (27% and 12%). Golf and ski were also the top priorities for service elimination: 11% of Torontonians do not see the need for having any municipal golf courses, and 6% do not want any ski and snowboard centres.

Introduction to Customer Satisfaction/Service Improvement Surveys (2001 & 2003)

As part of its omnibus “Focus Ontario” telephone survey, Environics asked questions on behalf of Parks & Recreation between April 10 and 25, 2003. The results are based on a probability sample of 495 adults aged 18 and older living in Toronto, including both users and non-users of City parks and recreation services. A sample of this size has a sampling error of plus or minus 4.4% in 95 out of 100 samples.

Findings of Customer Satisfaction/Service Improvement Surveys (2001 and 2003)

Comparisons are made below with the results of a similar Environics survey conducted in October 2001.

- most respondents or members of their household (95%) use City parks, and the percentage of once or more weekly users has risen since 2001 (to 55%)
- while less than two-thirds of respondents (63%) use City recreation centres, the number of non-users has dropped since 2001 and the frequency of use has climbed slightly (to 18% on a once or more weekly basis)
- as in 2001, parks are used most frequently to enjoy nature or the park atmosphere, and to engage in unstructured, drop-in activities
- users visit community centres equally to participate in registered programs, to use services on a drop-in basis, and to get information
- overall satisfaction with parks and community centres remains high (91%), but has fallen slightly since 2001 (down 1% for parks, 2% for centres)
- relative to 2001, Torontonians are now much more opinionated about what the City should do to improve their visits and to attract non-visitors to parks and community centres
- as in 2001, improved satisfaction for current park users will come primarily through improved park maintenance
- other key ways to improve park visits are: cut out use of pesticides; control off-leash dogs better; promote where the parks are and what people can do there better; and improve park safety
- as in 2001, improved park safety is the most important way to attract non-visitors to parks
- other key ways to attract non-visitors to parks are: control off-leash dogs and promote where the parks are and what people can do there
- two measures are key to improving visits and attracting more people to community centres: increase program variety/offer what people want, and promote where the centres are and what people can do there
- improved satisfaction for current centre users will also come through improved hours of operation, improved maintenance, and reduced/eliminated fees
- non-users may be attracted to centres if there were reduced/eliminated fees, improved physical accessibility, and improved hours of operation
- support for providing fee subsidies is high and has increased slightly (to 76%), though there is almost no support for not charging fees for programs and services

- in terms of who should receive subsidies, support has increased for low-income families (to 57%) and decreased for those who cannot afford fees (to 56%) and seniors (to 1%)
- awareness of the Welcome Policy has increased slightly but remains low (10%)
- a very large and increasing number of respondents (96%) view parks and recreation services as a key contributor to Toronto's quality of life
- the perceived benefits of parks and recreation are:
 - healthy development in children aged 12 and younger (very strong, >90%)
 - healthy development in teenagers and youth (strong, >80%)
 - personal health and wellness for adults and seniors (very strong, >90%)
 - lower costs to the health care system (moderate, >60%)
 - protecting and enhancing the environment (strong, >80%)

11. “Listening to Toronto” Input on Parks and Recreation

Introduction to the “Listening to Toronto” Project

In January 2004, the City of Toronto embarked on its most intensive round of public consultations since amalgamation. Seven “Listening to Toronto” sessions were held across Toronto, hosted by the Mayor and the Budget Advisory Committee Chair. The sessions gave over 1,100 participants an opportunity to consider budget challenges and priorities in facilitated small-group discussions.

What did the “Listening to Toronto” participants generally think of Toronto Parks & Recreation and the programs, services and assets managed by the Division?

- Torontonians place a very high value on the city’s natural setting – its parks, ravines, trees, waterfront and other green spaces.
- Community centres are seen as a social cornerstone of the city’s neighbourhoods. Recreation is mentioned frequently as a City service that benefits people who live, work and play in Toronto.
- Among the challenges facing Toronto and the Division are issues relating to the environment, crime and safety, City services, income disparity, and urban design and planning.
- The top concerns bearing on the Division are park and facility maintenance, recreation user fees, youth programs and facilities, the supply of indoor space and the state of the urban forest.
- For the 2004 budget, Council was urged to maintain or enhance current service levels in Parks and Recreation, while continuing to seek ways of saving money and raising revenues.
- Providing more opportunities for youth and encouraging volunteerism were seen as high priorities.
- Many opinions were tendered on the issue of recreation user fees.

For the two reports summarizing all participant input, visit www.toronto.ca/listeningtotoronto/.

Findings of “Listening to Toronto” Consultation Session for Parks and Recreation

Question 1 - What things make Toronto great, and why is it important that we not lose them?

(2,491 response sheets processed, containing 439 Parks & Recreation-related items)

Input touched on nine broad themes: diversity; our natural environment; neighbourhoods; transit; cultural life; safety; a civil society; economic diversity; and City services.

Parks & Recreation figured prominently in several themes:

- *our natural environment:* people love Toronto’s distinctive parks, ravines, trees, waterfront and other green spaces; cycling and walking trails knit our city together and give people the chance to experience nature; our natural environment attracts visitors to Toronto, and there are lots of opportunities to remain active and healthy

- *neighbourhoods*: recreation centres and local parks are a key part of the social infrastructure which fosters a sense of community belonging and identity; centres bring people – including newcomers – together, providing a focal point for social interaction
- *City services*: municipal services provide a major benefit to the people who live, work and play in Toronto; parks, recreation facilities and programs were among the most commonly cited services that help make Toronto a great city for families.

Question 2 - What challenges do we face as a city, and why is it urgent that we address them?
(3,243 response sheets processed, containing 148 Parks & Recreation-related items)

Input touched on 10 broad themes: homelessness and housing; transportation and transit; crime, policing and safety; the environment; accountable City government; City's financial health; City services; income disparity; access to employment; and urban design and planning.

Parks & Recreation figured prominently in half of these themes:

- ***crime, policing and safety***: Torontonians feel that there is not enough focus on crime prevention; calls for more youth recreation programs far outstripped concerns about safety in parks and recreation facilities
- ***the environment***: concerns were raised that too many trees are being removed for development, and that Toronto's watercourses and lakefront are polluted
- ***City services***: dealing with litter, decaying infrastructure, and insufficient access to school and community spaces were cited as ways to improve services or close service gaps
- ***income disparity***: people thought the City should do more to combat poverty, given a growing gap between rich and poor in Toronto, neighbourhood polarization and the large number of children living in poverty; the impact of user recreation fees is a key issue
- ***urban design and planning***: people want the City to do a better job at planning and managing growth, including providing appropriate infrastructure to support population growth; provision levels for parks and recreation facilities were questioned.

Question 3 - What advice would you offer City Council as it discusses the City's 2004 budget? What values and principles should guide Council in making difficult decisions?
(3,966 response sheets processed, containing 103 Parks & Recreation-related items)

Input touched on 14 broad themes: provincial and federal partners; the role of City government; public participation; accountability; prevention; equity; wise use of resources; and efficiency; City services; policing; the environment; user fees; property taxes; and new sources of revenue.

Parks & Recreation figured prominently in over half of the themes:

- ***public participation***: people value opportunities to participate in government and in their communities and neighbourhoods – there is an expectation that the voice of the community will be heard on important civic issues, such as making policy, planning services and setting priorities; calls were made to strengthen community partnerships and encourage volunteerism to support City programs and initiatives

- ***accountability:*** people expect the City to operate in an open and responsive manner; this includes informing and educating the public about service and budget issues, monitoring City performance, and consulting communities that will be affected by decisions
- ***prevention:*** people recognize the benefits of addressing underlying causes instead of paying for programs and services after problems develop; this includes investing in the future through programs for children and youth, and providing opportunities for working families to improve their well-being
- ***equity:*** people value a caring and compassionate city – they support efforts to address inequities; this includes protecting the most vulnerable, focusing on high needs in our communities and neighbourhoods, promoting and investing in diversity, ensuring services are accessible by people with special needs, and ensuring equitable access to services
- ***user fees:*** people recognize that Toronto increasingly depends on user fee revenue, but there is concern about the effects of fees on service access (especially the negative impact on low income families); increasing user fees is a controversial issue, though people support fees to change negative behaviour; opinion is divided on whether user fees should be based on services consumed or on ability to pay; recreation user fees were again a key point of debate
- ***the environment:*** people value a clean and healthy environment – they are concerned about pollution and environmental degradation, and support efforts to improve the quality of our environment and the City’s liveability; calls were made to make green decisions – expand the park and open space system, make the waterfront great, accelerate waste diversion, promote energy conservation and reduce the City government’s impact on the environment
- ***City services:*** people want the City to explore better ways to deliver services, and consider eliminating low-priority or non-essential activities; privatization remains a controversial issue; calls were made to protect essential services like programs for children and youth
- ***efficiency and wise use of resources:*** people recognize that City revenues are limited, and expect program and service objectives to be achieved in an efficient and economic manner; people are also interested in exploring creative and innovative ways of using resources; this includes conducting program reviews, making better use of existing community facilities and public spaces, and improving and maintaining what we already have.

12. Next Steps

In order to continue being inclusive in our process, consultation sessions are still being hosted on requests from neighbourhood stakeholder, access and equity and special interest groups. Surveys are also still being submitted and will be inputted as received. The information that will be derived from these ongoing efforts will be rolled into the findings to date and will be made available for review in the Fall of 2004.

All of the information and key messages will be forwarded to teams that have been established to synthesize the findings and develop them into recommendations. Recommendations will be made on service priorities, organizational structure, people plan, stakeholder plan, business plan and transition plan. These recommendations will be brought forward in the Fall of 2004.

13. Special Thanks

Special thanks to the Consultation Team, who planned, organized and delivered the public and staff sessions. The team was lead by Co-Chairs Costanza Allevato and Glen Sharp and Championed by Director Paul Ronan. A core group of staff members was supported by approximately 110 trained facilitators and recorders and 8 Information Technology staff. The core group is as follows:

Esther Afriat	Janet Hilts
Lorene Bodiam	Warren Hoselton
Gord Bacon	Sandy DiMatteo
Dave Barrett	David Kidd
Johnny Bergeron	Mark Lawson
Karen Boulton	Gary Mercer
Wynna Brown	Georgia Nastamagou
Daniel Caravaggio	Mark Paar
Linda Christensen	Christine Rogers
Terrance Duffy	Zoran Matorcevic
Gloria Good Draper	Tony Rea
Ruthanne Henry	Ray Stukas
Mark Hilbig	Brian Waterman

Parks & Recreation Service Review – Interim Report

Reactivate TO!

Setting the Scene – Current Service Levels

June 2004

Phase One: Service Review – Parks & Recreation

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INTRODUCTION: A SERVICE REVIEW FOR PARKS & RECREATION

In March 2004, Toronto City Council directed the Parks & Recreation Division to undertake an organizational review, beginning with public consultation and input on strategic directions, service priorities and service levels, and principles for organizational design.

This interim report provides the essential background on service delivery issues facing the Division. It does not offer recommendations. These will be developed later in 2004 once a more detailed analysis of the input received has been undertaken.

The report has two objectives:

- To document the current state of Parks & Recreation's programs and services, and the context in which the Division operates
- To begin identifying opportunities for improving the Division's programs and services.

Underlying both objectives is a need to set priorities – to focus on what's most important as the Division allocates scarce resources to respond to diverse community needs.

The Division's four functional areas – parks, urban forestry, recreation and facilities and technical services – are referred to frequently in the report. The intent, however, is not to privilege one area over another in a priority-setting exercise. This stems from a need to align operations with the directions laid out in the draft Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan. We must address all functions simultaneously if we truly intend to strengthen environmental stewardship, lifelong active living, and child and youth development as the three foundations of the Plan.

Getting Input on Service Levels, Expectations and Opportunities for Improvement

In March 2004, the Acting General Manager of Parks & Recreation established a Service Priorities Team as a core element of the organizational review. The Team was given the task of describing the current state of Parks & Recreation programs and services and developing mechanisms to allow staff and the public to provide input on service priorities, expectations and opportunities for improvement.

The Team was comprised of 13 staff including: a Director Champion; a Team Lead; four Functional Leads, guiding sub-teams totalling 61 staff from across the Division; a Program Standards & Development Officer from Central Services; and representatives from the Administration & Support Services and Policy & Development divisions of Economic Development, Culture & Tourism (EDCT).

The Service Priorities Team participated actively in the staff engagement and public input phases of the organizational review. The feedback gained from these phases (Appendix 4), coupled with other research and analysis conducted by the functional sub-teams, is the basis for this interim report.

SETTING THE SCENE: SERVICE PROFILES, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

1,470 parks, 7,365 hectares of green space and 3 million public trees to manage...
Responsibility for \$6 billion worth of recreation facilities, including 839 sport fields and 670 other facilities like playgrounds, pools, ski centres, animal displays, golf courses and ferries...
2.1 million drop-in visits to 141 community centres... More than 430,000 participants in registered recreation programs... 3,671 approved staff positions linked to a gross operating budget of \$240 million...

Few administrative units of the City of Toronto government can compare with the Parks & Recreation Division's business scope, portfolio size, or level of interaction with the people of Toronto. The aim of this section is to provide greater detail on this complexity, both in terms of developing a profile of programs and services currently offered, and by outlining the larger context in which the Division operates.

Issues, Trends and Forces Affecting Service Delivery

Social, Environmental and Financial Challenges

Parks & Recreation operates within an annual budget that is approved by City Council. The following chart outlines the key challenges that impact on the Division's ability to meet public expectations. More detail on these issues and current leisure trends is provided in an environmental scan (Annex 1).

<i>Social</i>		<i>Environmental</i>		<i>Financial</i>	
CHALLENGE	IMPACT	CHALLENGE	IMPACT	CHALLENGE	IMPACT
Growing population and increasingly varied leisure interests.	Unable to increase programs and infrastructure in step with demands. Conflict created among individuals and groups competing for space in community centres and parks and on trails. Better design, maintenance, education needed.	Increased litter in parks and no corresponding increase in resources to keep parks clean. 40% of park litter is household waste.	Undermines the condition and image of our parks and the larger city. Takes staff away from their parks maintenance role.	Limited financial resources and rising costs (wages, utilities, inflation). No access to funding sources beyond property tax and user fees.	Annual funding does not cover pressures of maintaining current services, let alone new or enhanced services. Limits our ability to address new challenges and respond to population growth, high-need areas, and changing demographics.
Changing demographics include growing ethno-racial diversity and an expanding seniors' population.	Increased need for culturally appropriate and age-responsive programming.	City's waste diversion strategy calls for significant reduction in amount of waste going to landfills.	Large amount of waste generated in parks and facilities. Need to introduce recycling and educate the public on keeping our parks clean.	Demand for new facilities and programs to address needs of under-served communities.	Must divert funding from one area to another, potentially impacting stable areas. Unmet demands and community expectations continue to exist.
Child poverty remains high. 30% of Toronto's children live in poverty, and higher-poverty neighbourhoods have increased from 66 to 120 (1991-2001).	User fees are a barrier to full participation. Increased use of subsidy programs (e.g. Welcome Policy) and reliance on community partners.	Pesticide by-law: natural alternatives mean increased turf management costs. Sport fields and parks have been pesticide-free since 1999, but some public concern exists over appearance.	Increased funding needed to provide natural alternatives to pesticides and meet community expectations.	Aging facilities and park infrastructure : 83% of major assets are over 20 years old; 27% are older than 40 years, requiring extensive renovation and repair.	Only most critical repairs are done. Enhanced state of good repair and preventative maintenance programs are needed to sustain current infrastructure.
Physical inactivity and obesity has risen dramatically among both children and adults.	With growing health problems, need to increase awareness of the issue and promote Parks & Recreation services as a solution.	Asian longhorned beetle , an alien pest, can destroy large portions of the urban forest.	Over 15,000 trees removed in 2003-04. Requires infestation monitoring and collaboration with all government levels on containment strategies.	Differing service levels across Toronto: current service delivery model is based on former municipal practices.	Lack of city-wide service consistency is a public issue. Service expectations need to be addressed and prioritized.
Youth engagement: increased demand to provide positive choices and opportunities across the city and in high-need areas.	Requires consideration of need for youth outreach programs to develop leadership skills and job opportunities, with an emphasis on community	West Nile Virus: a disease new to Toronto, spread by mosquitoes that breed in watercourses and standing water.	Require watercourse monitoring to detect larvae, and measures to prevent possible spread of virus. Impact on clothing required by staff who maintain parks and	Sideloading of costs by other public agencies: educational funding formula resulted in fee increases for use of school space.	Besides reducing affordable community access to

	partnerships.		ravines.		space, limits Parks & Recreation's ability Recreation to expand programs and meet after- school needs. \$11 million spent annually on fees could be better used providing service.
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Corporate Commitments

Since amalgamation, City Council has adopted a number sectoral plans and set policy directions on various fronts which affect Parks & Recreation. These plans, strategies, policies, initiatives and by-laws include:

- Corporate Smog Alert Response Plan (1998)
- Council's Strategic Plan (three stages, 1999-2001)
- Pesticide Reduction Policy (1999) and By-law (2003)
- Community Safety Strategy (1999)
- Final Report of the Seniors' Task Force (1999)
- Children's Action Plan (annually since 2000)
- Reports of the Food and Hunger Action Committee (2000-03)
- Final Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity (2000, and subsequent reports)
- Environmental Plan (2000)
- Economic Development Strategy (2000)
- Parkland Acquisition Strategic Directions Report (2001)
- Bike Plan (2001)
- Social Development Strategy (2001)
- Report of the Waste Diversion Task Force 2010 (2001)
- Mayor's Strategy to Promote Safety for Toronto Youth (2002)
- Corporate Framework for Alternative Service Delivery (2002)
- Official Plan (2002)
- Waterfront Development Plan and Business Strategy (2002)
- Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan (2002)
- Ravine Protection By-law (2002)

- Culture Plan (2003)
- Water Efficiency Plan (2003)
- Call to Action on Physical Inactivity (2003)
- Clean and Beautiful City Initiative (2004)
- Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force (2004).

All of these policy directions have large implications – and high community expectations – for Parks & Recreation. The challenge is to respond effectively while balancing the many competing demands placed on the Division – a challenge rooted in our highly diverse array of programs and services. Council, however, has not always been in a position to provide adequate resources for implementation.

Other forthcoming by-laws and sectoral strategies which will impact the Division include:

- City-wide Private Tree By-law
- Recreation Facilities Directions Report
- eCity Information and Technology Vision
- Corporate Framework for Establishing User Fees.

Alignment with the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan

Environmental stewardship, lifelong active living and child and youth development are the foundations of the draft Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan.

For all three foundations, the Parks and Recreation Division will initiate, educate and advocate. We will do our part to make Toronto a city that is caring and friendly, clean and green, a safe place with a high quality of life.

The draft Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan recommends a number of actions by which Division can deliver on environmental stewardship, lifelong active living, and child and youth development. Service planning, annual budget submissions and multi-year business planning must be mindful of these proposals.

The relationship between the three foundations and the Division's programs and services is illustrated below.

Parks & Recreation Programs and Services and the Three Foundations

(all figures are 2003 annual)

<i>Environmental Stewardship</i>	<i>Lifelong Active Living</i>	<i>Child and Youth Development</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Parks Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,470 named parks • 7,365 hectares of parkland • 340,000 users daily • 19% residents use parks 5 days/week • grounds & buildings inspections and maintenance, e.g. washrooms, field houses • equipment inspection and maintenance, e.g. tennis courts, wading pools, benches, fountains, playgrounds, picnic tables, park signs, gazebos, patios, park roads & paths • snow removal • 64 outdoor artificial ice pads maintained • Toronto Islands and beaches maintenance <p>Forestry Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tree canopy covers 18% of City • 500,000 street trees • 2.5 million trees in ravines, parks, forests • 7,500 street trees planted • 30,000 trees planted through Tree Advocacy Program • 50,000 trees pruned • 30,000 waterings • tree preservation through by-law enforcement • forest health care & ravine management • educational materials <p>Leisure, Sports & Play Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 141 community centres maintained • 839 sports fields, e.g. ball diamonds, soccer fields, cricket pitches • 203 tennis sites, over 750 courts • 833 playgrounds <p>Gardens, Greenhouses & Conservatories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 conservatories, 8 greenhouses 	<p style="text-align: center;">Fitness & Wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35,600 registrants • 3,200 fitness classes • fitness support & instruction • health clubs, passports and memberships <p>Seniors' Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18,472 registrants • 1,135 older-adult programs • drop-in convenience <p>Golf Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 full-service courses • accessible, urban • 215,000 rounds • instruction & clinics • pro shops • advance tee times • equipment rental <p>Marine Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 ferry boats to Toronto Island Park and Island residents • 1.1 million passengers • provincially mandated service <p>Special Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 events • delivery through corporate and private partners • event development assistance to community <p>Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.2 million in recreation grants awarded to 151 community organizations <p>Note: <i>The programs and services outlined in this chart are not exclusive to the foundation under which they are listed. Most can be attributed to two</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Camps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75,000 campers • 240 programs • March break • Summer • sports, arts • environment • leadership skills <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52,300 participants • 3,350 programs • 4 stadiums • 1 track & field centre <p>Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31,000 participants • 70% child and youth registrants • visual and performing arts, e.g. drawing, painting, dance <p>Aquatics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 129,300 registrants • 131 indoor & outdoor pools • 29,100 courses • learn-to-swim • leisure swim • specialized courses, e.g. syncro, diving, competitive <p>Skating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21,000 registrants • 60 ice surfaces • learn-to-skate • leisure skate <p>Skiing & Snowboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ski & snowboard centres • instruction • leisure skiing & snowboarding <p>General Interest & Clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drop-in / social • after-school / homework <p>Youth Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thousands of youth get their first

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.2 million plants for parks, boulevards, facilities• displays, educational programs• community and allotment gardens maintenance	<p><i>or three categories.</i></p>	<p>job with Parks & Recreation, as one of 10,000 annual employment opportunities</p>
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Overview of Parks & Recreation's Programs and Services

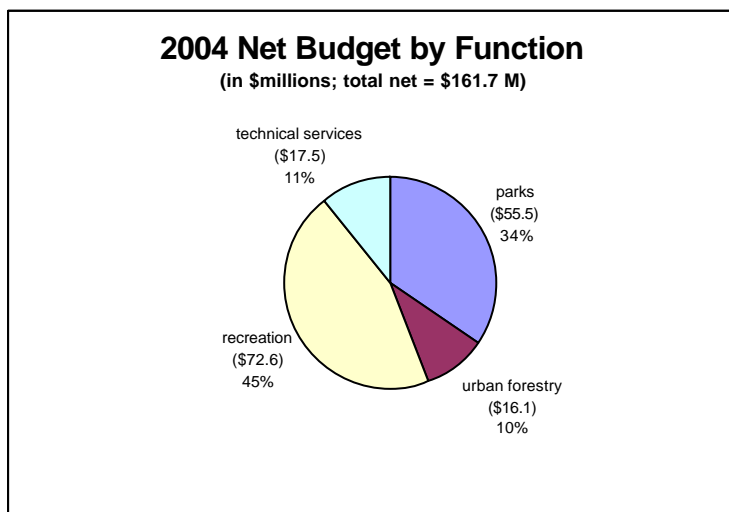
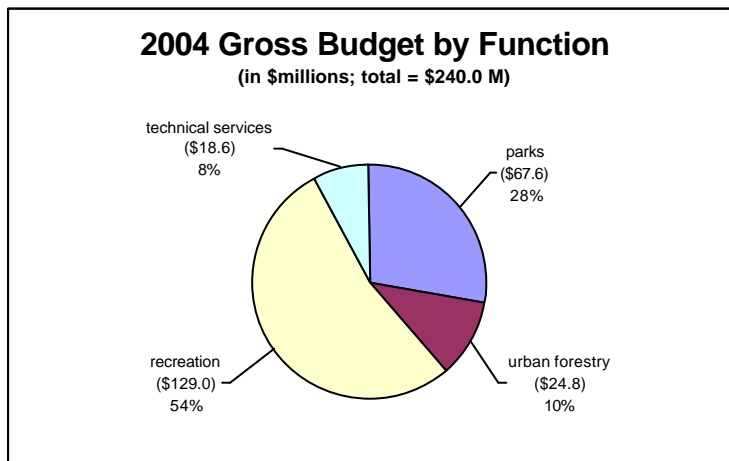
Budget and Staffing

The 2004 approved operating budget (in millions) for Parks & Recreation includes:

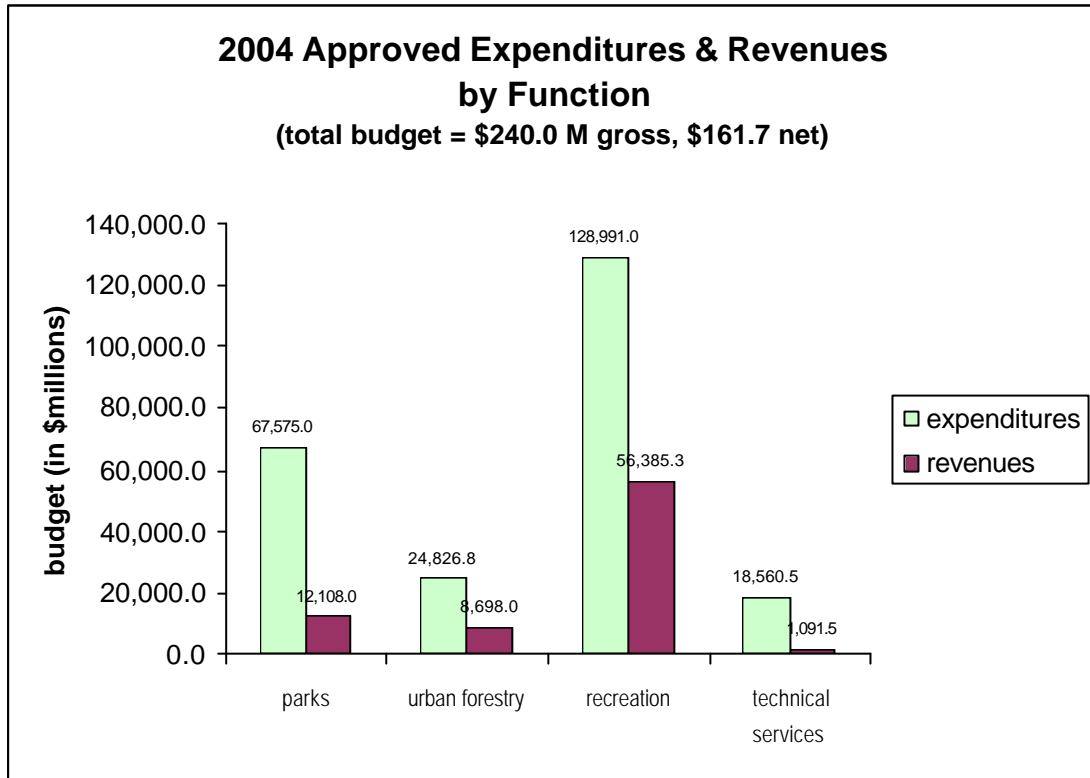
Gross expenditures	\$240.0
Revenue	<u>\$78.3</u>
Net budget	\$161.7 M

The gross cost per capita for all Parks & Recreation services in 2004 is \$95.98. The net cost per capita is \$64.67.

The Division's gross and net budgets broken down by function reveal an emphasis on recreation. Both expenditures and revenues are higher for this function than for parks, urban forestry and facilities and technical services. Relative to the other functions, a greater proportion of recreation's expenditures are offset by revenues.

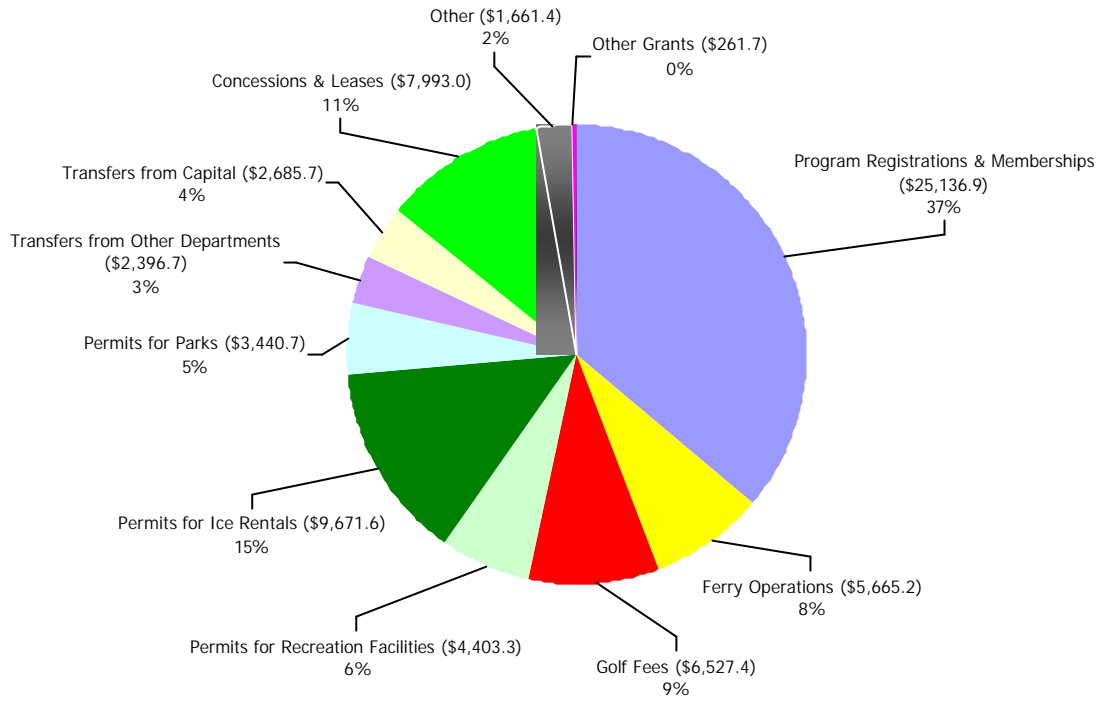


The approved budget does not tell the whole story. In 2003, the Division experienced a budget shortfall of \$7.2 million. 19% of this amount resulted from over-expenditure, while 81% stemmed from unachieved revenue – a consequence of external events like SARS and the electricity blackout. This illustrates the impact of economic forces over which Parks & Recreation has no control.



The revenue breakdown for 2003 underscores the Division's reliance on user fees. 80% of revenues come from four major sources: recreation program registrations and facility memberships (37%); permits for parks, recreation facilities and ice surfaces (26%); and ferry ridership and golf rounds (17% in total).

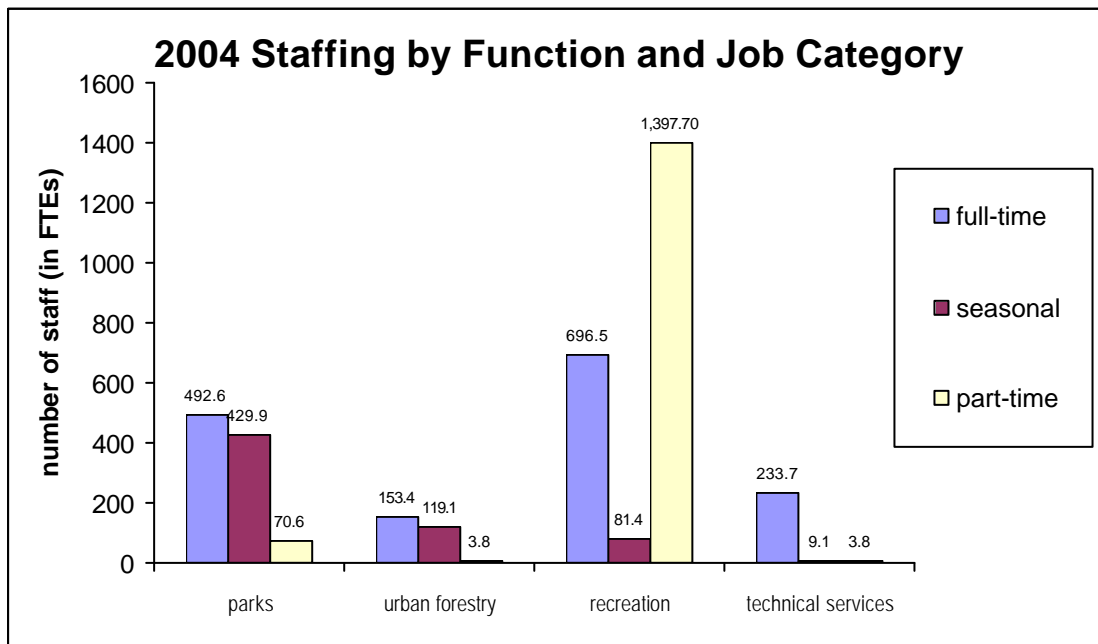
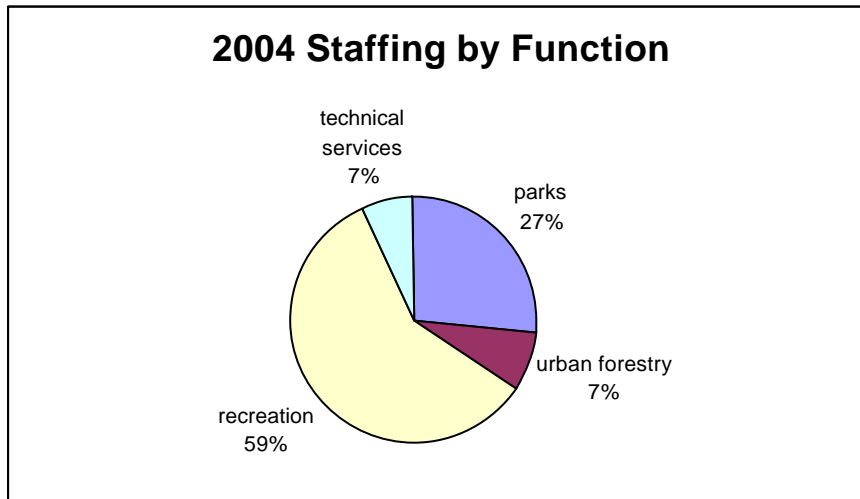
2003 Revenue Breakdown (in \$millions; total = \$69,160.1)



Staffing Levels

In terms of staffing, the 2004 total approved complement for Parks & Recreation is 3,671 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs). This complement consists of 1,576 permanent full-time employees (43% of the workforce) and 2,115 part-time FTEs (57% of the workforce). Approximately 6,500 staff work for Parks & Recreation on any given day; on an annual basis, the Division offers about 10,000 job opportunities.

The total staff complement can be analyzed by function and job category. Nearly two-thirds of the complement is assigned to the recreation function; in turn, part-time staff make up two-thirds of the recreation workforce. Slightly more than a quarter of the total workforce works in parks, divided equally between full-time and part-time workers. Urban forestry and technical services staff each make up less than 10% of the total workforce.



Service Delivery Approaches

Parks & Recreation services are delivered to Toronto residents in many different ways. Programs and services are provided directly by the City and by a network of service providers and community and sport organizations who respond to the full range of leisure preferences and interests.

The City provides direct service through:

- registered programs – including camps and swimming and skating lessons
- drop-in experiences – including open-skate, open-swim and drop-in programs
- unstructured “at your leisure” opportunities – including park visits and trail use
- customer response – answering calls for assistance from the public for services like the inspection and pruning of street trees.

The City facilitates the provision of services by the community through access to public space, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships.

Access to Public Space

More than 3,000 volunteer community and sport organizations across Toronto deliver a large number of recreation and sport opportunities. These organizations are, in turn, supported by more than 200,000 volunteers. The groups typically permit Parks & Recreation facilities, parks and sport fields in order to offer their programs to their constituents. More than 2.5 million people participate each year in the activities provided by these organizations.

Volunteering

Residents and corporations assist in the provision of Parks & Recreation services through their volunteer contributions. Volunteers assist each year in reforestation and naturalization activities, by adopting gardens and organizing community special events, and by working with children and youth.

Partnerships

The Association of Community Centres and Arena Boards of Management operate City-owned community centres and arenas through agreements with the City of Toronto. The City provides operating and/or capital funding to assist these boards. In some cases, direct operational support is provided by the City through the Facilities & Real Estate Division of Corporate Services.

The City also provides an annual grant program to assist volunteer groups to offer recreation, sport, and park activities. In 2003, Council awarded \$1.2 million worth of recreation grants to 151 community organizations.

Functional Review

The Service Priorities Team undertook the first phase of a functional review, organized around the Division's four core functions (parks, urban forestry, recreation, and facilities and technical services). For each function, the Team identified major activities, service objectives, key resources (e.g., physical assets, performance outputs and other measures, and service delivery approaches), the status of existing service standards, and major trends and challenges that impact on service delivery.

The key findings are summarized in the following charts.

Further analysis of the issues and the development of recommendations will occur in the next phase of the organizational review.

PARKS

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Park Operations	Ensure the City's parkland is clean, safe, attractive and well-maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,365 hectares of parkland • 1,470 parks • 839 sport fields • 756 tennis courts • 833 playgrounds • 200 km of trails (90 km paved) • 35 splash pads • 170 wading pools • 1 campground • 7 skateboard parks • 35 lawn bowling greens • 10 feature gardens • 11 allotment gardens • 28 community gardens • 963 floral beds in 375 parks • 74 hectares of beaches <p><u>Work Crews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 turf crews • 52 horticulture crews • 30.5 garbage removal crews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass is to be cut every 7-10 working days for general parkland. • Grass cutting standards are not being met during fast growing periods due to limited staff and fleet resources. Grass is being cut every 10-14 working days. • Grass is to be cut once every 5 working days for Premiere and Class A sports fields. Difficult to achieve during spring. • Litter pick up every 10 working days for general parkland. • Litter pick up and removal in parks is not meeting the standards especially with the 40% increase of household garbage dumping since 2002. • Insufficient technology to measure service standards and levels of service. • "General maintenance of parkland" standards have been developed, but adequate repair and maintenance of amenities is not being achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks are highly valued and used; 340,000 visits every day. • Increasing litter, illegal dumping and the need to divert more waste from landfills. • Pesticide free by-law requires additional labour to implement Integrated Plant Health Care. Staff resources have not increased to meet new demands. • Deteriorating infrastructure and lack of preventative maintenance due to reduced resources for repairs and maintenance. • Since 1990, parks staff has been reduced by 50% ; crew sizes have been reduced from 5 to 3. • Increasing attention to dogs in parks, specifically by-law enforcement (dogs off leash and poop and scoop). • All levels of staff handle public complaints. During the peak season, supervisors spend 30% of their time addressing public inquiries.

Parks cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1998, 212 hectares has been acquired for park purposes, including 52 hectares for 75 new parks. Additional resources have not been provided to reflect this increase. • Smog alert days (12 in 2003, 18 in 2002 and 20 in 2001) impact our ability to cut grass and perform park maintenance.
Natural Environment	Protect, preserve and restore the natural environment through stewardship activities in partnership with stakeholder and community volunteer groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,565 hectares of natural areas (42% of total parkland area) • 772 hectares of meadows • work with 60 natural environmental groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkland Encroachment Policy is in place, but difficult to enforce with only one full time employee to deal with 2,500 known encroachments. • In 2003, 45 encroachments were resolved; currently have 110 active cases. • Various plans exist outlining maintenance and restoration methods for specific sites (e.g., High Park and Don Valley Brick Works). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past concept that the natural environment looks after itself has resulted in deterioration of plant ecosystems. Proactive protection and stewardship is required to preserve, protect and restore. • 5% of natural areas are under active stewardship. This is accomplished by city staff in partnership with other agencies, stakeholder groups and community volunteer groups. The ultimate goal is to achieve 100%. • The community is very active with over 5,000 volunteers planting 40,000 native trees and plants over the last 5 years. • Environmental groups want to work in partnership with the city, but limited resources are available.

Parks cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
<p>Horticulture & Greenhouses</p>	<p>Provide conservatory displays consisting of permanent plant collections and seasonal floral displays.</p> <p>Produce ornamental and native plants for use in city parks across the city.</p> <p>Work in partnership with community groups and organizations towards the goal of civic beautification through horticulture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2 million plants are produced at 2 production greenhouses • 3 conservatories with 5 seasonal displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse production quantity standards have been established and are consistently met. Quality standards consistently meet and exceed industry standards. • Currently at capacity for plant production in terms of greenhouse space and staff resources. • Horticulture standards are being developed. Currently, the work performed is the same with differences in frequency due to available resources. • Display quality meets international standards as evidenced by participation in and awards achieved at 1999 Nations in Bloom (winner of best city with a population over 1 million people) and Mosaiculture International Montreal (Silver Medal, 2003). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend is for municipalities to improve civic beautification through horticulture displays to make cities more liveable and to attract tourism. • Number of flowers planted each year is down 50% from the early 1990's.

Parks cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Marine Services	Provide ferry service transportation of passengers and vehicles to Toronto Islands 365 days a year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 passenger vessels • 1 work boat • 1.2 million passengers/year • 16,950 return ferry trips are made yearly • 4,300 vehicles are transported • 4,550 trips are made and 130,000 passengers are transported from October to April • 12,400 trips are made and 1.07 million passengers are transported from May to September 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-round service mandated by provincial law. • Regulated by Transport Canada. • Vessels are certified annually by Transport Canada. • Vessels are in full compliance with all Federal legislation. • Customer satisfaction survey conducted in 2002 indicates a 94% satisfaction level for services provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1998 there has been a 250% increase in fuel costs without additional funding to compensate. • Specialized service demands for vehicular traffic have increased, straining current resources with a 10% decrease of staff since amalgamation. • Rapid deterioration of vessels has been occurring. Reduced maintenance to docks and ferry vessels is the result of reduced funding. Over the next 5 years, \$300,000 will be required annually to maintain safety levels required by Transport Canada.

URBAN FORESTRY

Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
<p>Develop programs and initiatives to achieve an increased, sustainable tree canopy cover of 30-40%.</p> <p>Provide high quality, efficient and readily accessible tree service to residents, property owners and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Develop improved planting conditions for sidewalk trees and use trees to maintain and improve City streetscapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 million City trees; 500,000 on streets, 2.5 million in parks, ravines, natural areas <p>Annual Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70-80,000 calls for service • 7,800 new & replacement trees planted • 19,000 trees inspected • 24,000 trees trimmed • 5,300 trees removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the City-wide Street By-law and Ravine Protection By-law, Private Tree By-laws in former Toronto and Scarborough, and Council-approved “Standardized Forestry Policies,” consistent direction exists for planting, pruning, tree removal, tree inspection, tree protection, maintenance of boundary line trees, and removal of crab apple trees on City road allowances. • All are appropriate except for the inspection of potentially hazardous trees on private property. Municipal Licensing & Standards currently has the authority to deal with these situations under the Toronto Municipal Code, but Urban Forestry Services (UFS) expertise is relied upon in practice. • New standards to be developed: effective tree replacement timelines following stumping, to ensure re-planting opportunities are protected; regular systematic tree inspection cycles, to address liability and risk management concerns; regular systematic tree maintenance cycles, to provide for efficient service delivery; adherence to circulation timeframes for technical reports circulated by other City departments; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in tree canopy resulting from aging tree population, loss of quality and volume of soil, reduced management resources. • Declining staff levels and budget: compared to pre-amalgamation, UFS staff are responsible for more than 4 times the area of urban forest with less than half the budget (up from 0.8 km² to 3.5 km² per staff, down from \$12.71 to \$6.20 per capita). • On any given day, UFS may have up to 10,000 outstanding requests for service, which has created an often-frustrating delay in service delivery. Maintenance service delays vary substantially by District, creating a sense of neglect in some areas. • Protection of trees and their growing environment during construction activity and urban intensification more generally. • High failure rate of recently planted trees is wasteful and obvious to the public. • Public awareness and expectations increasing as UFS’s ability to fulfil them decreases. Implementation of proposed City-wide Private Tree By-law will require \$500,000 (gross) annually. • Impact of Asian longhorned beetle on Toronto’s urban forest and on regular UFS operations. • Too much reactive work increases travel time and the percentage of unattended higher priority work. • Customer service related to telephone call intake and data entry is decentralized (five separate units) and inefficient.

		frequency of on-site safety audits; standard for growing conditions for sidewalk tree planting to improve soil volume and watering.	
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RECREATION

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Golf	To provide a wide range of affordable golfing experiences on courses with varying degrees of difficulty and with instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 full service golf courses • 196,700 rounds of golf annually • equipment rentals • lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting industry standards. • Youth development approaches need expansion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental issues with respect to water conservation and pesticide use continue to be addressed. • Club houses and concessions need to be upgraded at the golf courses to keep pace with public expectations.
Aquatics	<p>To prevent drowning through the provision of swimming lessons.</p> <p>To provide leisure experiences through the provision of public/lane swims.</p> <p>To promote physical health and fitness.</p> <p>To train future leadership staff.</p> <p>To provide the highest level of safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-7 series of 8 lessons/ series /indoor pool • 29,100 courses offered annually • 56% of all recreation programming offered • 139,300 registrants • 23,200 on wait list • 1,721,391 drop-ins • 71 indoor pools • 60 outdoor pools • Standard staff to participant ratios for lessons • Lifeguard to bather ratios for public swimming according to legislation • Content, safety & curriculum developed by staff committees • Staff training delivered before each series of lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The waiting list of 23,200 is a concern in terms of meeting the needs of Torontonians. Further analysis is required to determine how many unique individuals were not accommodated. • City aquatic standards exceed provincially legislated standards. • There is a question as to how many pools are needed to serve a city the size of Toronto. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a pool provision strategy is underway to address the ageing infrastructure and determine the number of pools required now and in the future. It is anticipated that the issue of the waiting lists will be addressed as well through the study .

Recreation cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Camps	To provide children and youth day/week long experiences in arts, sports, nature and other leisure experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp sessions in summer, March and Christmas breaks • 3357 camps sessions offered • 240 programs • 6% of courses offered • 75,000 registrants • 11,100 on wait list annually • 85,354 drop-ins • Training content is consistent • High 5 quality assurance model is utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current service levels cannot accommodate all who wish to participate. • The use of the Welcome Policy is increasing to accommodate children who cannot afford the camp fees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to respond effectively to unmet needs.
Sport	To provide skill development, team experiences and social inclusion through sporting experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-7 series at 8 lessons per series • 3350 programs • 52,300 registrants • 7,800 on wait list on an annual basis • 132,430 drop-ins • 839 sport fields • 756 tennis courts • 4 stadiums • 1 track and field centre • High % quality assurance program to address healthy child development through recreation tool is utilized in all recreation programs • Allocation policies address equitable distribution of facilities and sport fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a question as to how many sport fields are needed to serve Toronto and as to which sports are increasing in popularity so that a meaningful capital plan can be established. • There is a significant concern that young girls and women are not involved in sport at the same rate as males. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City and the sport community need to come together to discuss role clarity and working collectively on sport development in the city. • There is a strong indication that the city is unable to meet the demands of the gaining popularity of soccer and cricket. A needs assessment must be completed to determine present and future demands. • Public tennis courts are not being used to their fullest potential. Alternate uses should be determined on a community basis to gain the fullest use of the asset.

Recreation cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Fitness & Wellness	To provide Torontonians with active opportunities and encouragement in order to increase physical and mental health levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-7 series of 8 classes/ series • 3200 classes • 6% of programs offered • 35,600 registrants • 3,900 on wait list annually • 224,622 drop-ins • 21 fitness centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current service levels cannot accommodate all who wish to participate. • The fitness field is competitive and many private clubs provide high end equipment and amenities. Toronto's fitness centres need to be positioned as being local, with safe equipment and highly trained staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The critical issue of the inactivity and obesity levels of Torontonians is being addressed in a holistic way with all city partners involved in the "Call to Action" initiative. • Our fitness and wellness staff and partners need added resources to help address this critical health issue.
Arts	To enable Torontonians to gain appreciation for artistic expression through the provision of visual and performing lessons, clubs and exposure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 , 8 week sessions through out the year • 4638 courses offered • 8% of recreation programming offered • 31,000 registrants • 5,700 on wait list annually • 5,121 drop-ins • Provision of space for arts groups • Partnerships with groups to provide performances and exhibitions in parks & facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current service levels cannot accommodate all participants. • Formalized communications with the Culture Division will bring forward a strengthened program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Culture Plan calls for us to work more closely with the Culture Division to broaden artistic expression and experiences in parks and facilities. • An analysis of the wait list is needed to determine unique clients, age groups and further ways of meeting demand.
Skating & Skiing	To provide skill development and mastery of skating, skiing and snowboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ski & Snowboarding lessons at 2 centres • Skating lessons offered at 51 arenas • 3,300 courses offered • 6% of total courses offered • 27,700 registrants • 7,100 on wait list for skating • 1,900 on a wait list for skiing & snowboarding • 224,963 skating drop-ins • 42,668 skiing drop-ins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing increased uptake of the Welcome Policy by families who cannot afford skiing and skating lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge of aging infrastructure at the ski centres is one that needs to be addressed. Expensive equipment is antiquated and needs replacement.

Recreation cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Special Events	To facilitate and assist with special events that provide opportunities to gather, celebrate and build a stronger sense of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 special events annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards under development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to budget pressures staff charges community and non profit groups for the use of staging, chairs, picnic tables etc. Groups are concerned about the affordability of this service and feel that fees should be waived as a public service.
General Interest & Clubs	To provide a range of general interest and introductory experiences to strengthen experiential learning and social networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-7 series of 8+ lessons / series are offered in 140 community centres throughout the city • After school programs are a critical offering to provide safe and enjoyable after school experiences • 766 courses offered • 1% of total programming offered • 2,826 registrants • 900 on wait list on an annual basis • 175,879 drop-ins • Space is also permitted to special interest clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong indication of pent-up demand for permit space for clubs and special interest groups. • Current service levels cannot accommodate all who wish to participate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a 40% migration out of TDSB facilities since the Toronto School Board started charging non profit/ volunteer associations unaffordable rates for space. City facilities cannot absorb all of these groups. • City staff and Council need to continue to work with TDSB to advocate on behalf of these groups as they add to the leisure experiences offered to Torontonians.

FACILITIES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
<p>Facility Maintenance & Construction</p>	<p>Maintain and enhance the facility infrastructure and hard assets of the Parks & Recreation Division.</p> <p>Preservation of the Division's capital assets is the primary goal.</p>	<p>Maintain and repair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000 lights at sports fields, walkways and parking lots • 180 HVAC and mechanical systems • 690 drinking fountains • 75 score clocks • process 16,000 work orders annually • In-house trades staff, such as; Electricians, Plumbers, Welders, Locksmith, etc • Contracted services, and Trade Union workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current level of resources only allows for critical repairs related to audits, HVAC, mechanical and electrical systems, structural repairs and upgrades. • A large backlog of maintenance and repair work exists. • Legislative requirements are being met including various codes for plumbing, electrical and buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of the buildings are over 35 years old and entering a life cycle when the need for capital investment is required to keep them safe and usable. • Resources are inadequate to maintain this aging infrastructure. • Inadequate systems to co-ordinate and track the large volume of work requests for all areas of Facilities and Technical Services. • Lack of an adequately resourced preventative maintenance program to properly maintain the infrastructure.
<p>Facility Operations Services</p>	<p>Operate and clean the arenas, pools, community centres, and other recreation facilities.</p> <p>Provide well maintained, clean, safe, functioning facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate, clean and maintain 5.5 million square feet of space in 141 community centres • 60 ice surfaces • 128 swimming pools • 141 community centres • 11 indoor bocce courts • In-house and contracted staff: Arena Pool Operators, Custodians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to maintain a satisfactory standard in many facilities relative to facility operations and keeping the buildings clean. • Cost to deliver the services vary across the Division due to different methods of service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are insufficient to adequately clean and maintain all facilities at a satisfactory level.

Facilities and Technical Services cont'd

Activity	Service Objectives	Key Resources	Status of Service Standards	Major Trends and Challenges
Parks Maintenance & Construction	<p>Maintain, repair, and enhance park assets and amenities.</p> <p>Develop, preserve and enhance the capital assets.</p>	<p>Maintain and repair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 833 playground structures • 241 bridges • 47 ornamental fountains • 128 automatic irrigation systems • Specialized shops include: locksmith, public address systems, carpentry, signs and welding • In-house staff: General Handyworkers, Welders, Heavy Equipment Operators & Handyworkers • Contracted Services are utilized for some of the tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park amenities are not being adequately repaired or replaced due to insufficient resources. • Meet or exceed C.S.A. standards for playground design and inspection. • Able to meet requests for personalized commemorative program services. • In compliance with all legislative requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging parks infrastructure requires greater financial funding to properly repair and maintain resources.
Fleet Equipment & Stores	<p>Provide equipment maintenance repairs to support Parks, Forestry, and Facility operations.</p> <p>Provide services to support the operations and services of the Parks & Recreation Division including courier, radio communications, purchasing, and tendering.</p> <p>Ensure that the materials and supplies are available to carryout the services of Technical Services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,619 pieces of fleet equipment • 684 pieces of small equipment • 3,500 work orders annually • 900 welding work orders annually • \$2 million worth of revolving inventory and stock • In-house staff: Material Management Clerks, General Handyworkers, Couriers, Custodians, Small Engine Mechanics, Welders • Parks & Rec. stores, operating yards and fuelling sites • Equipment repair and welding shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized fabricating requirements are established and being met for unique site specific needs. • Ensuring a minimal down time for Parks and Forestry equipment is challenging with current resources. • Currently meeting yard and store service requirements. • A timely courier delivery system is provided. • An effective mobile communication system is provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of fleet and equipment is being left in service well past normal life expectancy, creating a higher maintenance demand that can't be met with existing resources. • Annual contributions to fleet reserve fund are inadequate. • Difficult to manage a \$2 million inventory of materials and supplies without a suitable inventory management system.

Opportunities for Consistent, High Quality Work Practices

The Service Priorities Team has identified a number of opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of internal work practices. These opportunities – which have “downstream” positive impacts on service delivery to the public – affect all functions and are city-wide in scope:

- review, revise, adopt and implement service standards for all functional areas and activities
- review service delivery approaches in all functional areas and activities to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- complete harmonization of Locals 416 and 79 job descriptions and wages
- complete a “Job Demand Analysis” for all management positions
- ensure consistent use of job profiles and rates of pay
- complete policy harmonization
- implement a tracking system for all legislative requirements
- develop an employee training/succession planning/reward program that focuses on excellence in customer service, project management, financial management, purchasing and teambuilding, and align this program with training plans, performance planners, the Toronto Public Service Initiative and other Corporate approaches
- develop an internal communication plan and protocol for staff
- disentangle the Division’s maintenance budget from Corporate Services
- benchmark against other municipalities, focusing on standards, costs and service levels.

The merits of these opportunities – along with other ideas recently proposed by staff – will be assessed during the next phase of the Parks & Recreation organizational review.

NEXT STEPS

This interim report provides the necessary context for taking action to improve Parks & Recreation's programs and services.

Once Council has approved the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan, the Division will proceed with the next stages of the organizational review. Considerable emphasis will be placed on service planning to reflect Council's strategic directions for Parks & Recreation. By the end of 2004, Parks & Recreation will:

- complete a service priorities assessment and service plans with recommendations
- define the resources required to take action through a multi-year business plan
- develop options for organizational design
- prepare a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to improve the working relationship between Parks & Recreation and our users, participants, partners and other agencies and individuals with an interest in our work
- develop a People Plan to guide investments in staff training and development
- review the Division's financial and operational systems to ensure that the necessary service delivery supports are in place and the planning and operational frameworks are aligned
- set up a monitoring and measurement system to track implementation and evaluate progress
- ensure that future operating and capital budgets incorporate the approved priorities, directions and opportunities to meet community and staff expectations.

Once all elements of the organizational review are in place, Parks & Recreation will be even better positioned to meet the needs of our citizens and contribute to the high quality of life in Toronto's communities and neighbourhoods.

Annex 1 – Parks & Recreation Environmental Scan

An evidence-based approach was used to support why environmental stewardship, lifelong active living, and child and youth development were chosen as the foundations of the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan. Additional information on recreation and leisure trends is provided at the end of this environmental scan.

The Importance of Environmental Stewardship

With responsibility for nearly 7,400 hectares of green space, Parks & Recreation is the single largest custodian of green space in the City of Toronto. Parks & Recreation also has stewardship over 3 million trees, 839 sports fields, 141 community recreation centres, and about 670 other recreational facilities, including pools, golf courses, ski centres, greenhouses and ferries.

The size and scope of this portfolio means that the Division can have a substantial impact on the health of Toronto's environment. This impact can be either positive or negative – by either relieving or contributing to the stresses that affect the City's vegetation, air, land, water and associated resources.

Stewardship is not just about achieving ecological health – it also means pursuing sustainability in our built environments through good property management. This includes maintaining and extending the life and usefulness of existing recreation facilities and parks, and in the process meeting community needs while minimizing operating costs.

Some facts and figures bearing on Toronto:

Vegetation:

- There are about 8,595 hectares of natural habitat in the City of Toronto, covering some 13.5 percent of the total city area. Toronto maintains a good coverage of terrestrial natural habitat for an urban area, primarily as a result of the extensive valley land network. Maintaining and improving these conditions will require continued protection and restoration efforts.¹
- Our parks and natural areas are now home to many exotic species (40%) which alter the balance within terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.² Approximately 240 vegetation communities have been identified within Toronto, many of which are threatened by invasive exotic plants and an overall decline in ecosystem health.³
- More than 8 in 10 Ontario urban residents think the presence of trees in their local community is very important. Almost 6 in 10 say that the presence of healthy trees in their city or town has a major impact on their personal health. Almost 9 in 10 think trees are very

1 City of Toronto and Toronto & Region Conservation Authority, *City of Toronto Natural Heritage Study: Final Report, December 2001* (Toronto, 2002).

2 City of Toronto Environmental Task Force, *Clean, Green and Healthy: A Plan for an Environmentally Sustainable Toronto [Environmental Plan]* (Toronto, 2000).

3 *City of Toronto Natural Heritage Study*.

important in helping improve air quality. About 6 in 10 think trees are very important in helping water quality, reducing the effects of climate change and helping with energy conservation by moderating building temperatures.⁴

- Toronto's urban forest includes about 7 million trees, but it is threatened by a decline in the number of species and the fact that many of the trees are the same age.⁵
- Toronto's urban forest stored an estimated 900,555 Mg of carbon, sequestered 36,601 Mg/yr of carbon, caused 13,921 Mg of carbon to be avoided, and resulted in energy reductions of 53,838 GJ in 1998. Trees also removed a total of 997 Mg of pollution from the atmosphere for a total associated value of \$8,565,000.⁶

Land:

- in its "Healthy Cities Project," the *National Post* viewed green space as a salient measure of community health. At 3.19 hectares per 1,000 people, Toronto has one of the lowest rates of park space among Canadian cities, ranking 10th on the *Post*'s survey of 13 municipalities.⁷
- Council has approved full cost recovery for the waste that is collected and/or transferred and disposed from the City's Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions and Departments, which create a major financial incentive for waste diversion.⁸
- public health concerns about the links between cancer and pesticides prompted Council to adopt a Pesticide Reduction Policy for City parks and green space in 1998 and a Pesticide By-law for all property in Toronto in 2003.
- in the past, climate change occurred so slowly that wild plants and animals had time to adjust. Today, shifts in temperature, seasons, and weather are happening so fast that wildlife has little chance to adapt. Instincts developed over thousands of years are becoming useless. Key habitat elements are declining or disappearing, causing major stresses on wildlife.⁹
- other factors contributing to species declines are habitat degradation through climatic changes, increasing levels of toxic chemicals and pollutants as well as introductions of non-native plants and animals.¹⁰
- citizens across Canada are undertaking wildlife habitat projects to provide food, water, shelter, and space for species threatened by climate change. They are choosing projects that enhance the natural ability of forests and wetlands to absorb greenhouse gases and maintain a

4 Environics Research Group, *Attitudes of Urban Residents toward Urban Forests and Woodland Issues* (Toronto, 2001).

5 "Urban Forest's Ancient Trees Under Threat, Academic Says," *The Globe and Mail* (October 15, 2002).

6 W.A. Kenney and Associates, *The Role of Urban Forests in Greenhouse Gas Reduction* (N.p., 2001).

7 "The Intangibles that Define a Community," *National Post* (October 17, 2002).

8 Toronto Solid Waste Management Services, *The ABCs (and Ds) of Recycling* (Toronto, 2002).

9 Canadian Wildlife Federation, available at <http://www.cwf-fcf.org/pages/wildprograms/wildprogramsweb_e.asp?section=6&language=e#2>.

10 Canadian Wildlife Federation.

healthy climate; that help isolated species meet their needs by improving connectivity between fragmented habitats; and that buffer the impacts of climate change on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.¹¹

¹¹ Canadian Wildlife Federation.

Built Environment:

- Toronto's recreation infrastructure is aging, requiring either improved upkeep or replacement: 83% of the major facilities are over 20 years old, and 27% are more than 50 years old.¹²
- the asset/insured value of all Parks & Recreation facilities is about \$6 billion. Using industry standards, the City should be spending about \$120.3 million annually (about 2% of asset/insured value) on state of good repair in its capital budget. The 2002 request for new state of good repairs was \$17.6 million, leaving an annual maintenance deficit of \$103 million.

Air:

- air quality issues are seen as the greatest environmental concern faced by Toronto residents.¹³
- 2002 was the hottest year on record in Toronto with temperatures over 30° C for 40 days. The average is 15 days.¹⁴
- Toronto experienced a record 28 smog alert days in 2002, eight more than were recorded in 2001. The number of smog alert days has been rising since 1979.¹⁵
- health experts estimate that air pollution causes 1,000 premature deaths in Toronto each year and hospitalizes another 5,500.¹⁶
- Toronto hospitals spend over \$150 million per year to treat the victims of air pollution and air pollution costs the Toronto economy at least \$128 million in lost productivity.¹⁷
- the Ontario Medical Association calculates that the direct health and economic costs from pollution-related illness is about \$1 billion per year in Ontario.¹⁸
- Toronto's Corporate Smog Alert Response Plan, adopted by Council in 1998, has resulted in the short-term reduction or suspension of Parks & Recreation activities that contribute to poor air quality on smog alert days.

Water:

- Impaired water quality and contaminated sediments have reduced the availability and quality of aquatic habitat. Even where natural areas are protected, degradation can take place from

12 Data in this section is from the Policy & Development Division of the City of Toronto's Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Department.

13 Environics Research Group, *Public Opinion and the Environment: A Summary of Major Trends in the Toronto Region* (Toronto, 1998).

14 "Life in the City Hot and Steamy," *Toronto Star* (September 21, 2002).

15 Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA), *Toronto Smog Report Card 2002* (Toronto, 2002).

16 Toronto Public Health, *Toronto's Air: Let's Make It Healthy* (Toronto, 2000).

17 TEA, *Toronto Smog Report Card 2002*.

18 Ontario Medical Association, *The Illness Cost of Air Pollution*, Toronto, 2000.

surrounding land uses and inappropriate human use.¹⁹ The aquatic habitats and fish communities within the City of Toronto are highly impacted and are considered to be in poor to fair condition.²⁰

- Data collected in Toronto since the mid 1980s has shown that waterfront areas close to uncontrolled discharges of stormwater and combined sewer overflows have consistently degraded water quality. This results in beach postings and the loss of recreational opportunities at the City's 14 beaches. In 2001, Toronto's beaches were posted as unsafe for 46% of the summer season.²¹

The Benefits of Taking Action on Environmental Stewardship

- A healthy natural environment is a public good. The benefits that flow from protecting the environment cannot be appropriated by any person or persons for their own private benefit.
- The aesthetic value of the natural environment contributes to a sense of well-being, particularly among highly urbanized populations.
- Forests play a vital role in maintaining natural environmental systems, thus contributing to environmental sustainability. By collecting carbon and other pollutants, forests help to maintain climatic conditions and reduce greenhouse gases.
- Forests have a significant role in maintaining watershed systems and retaining water within forest soils to protect the forest and remain active during drought.
- A survey of "personal responses to nature contacts" indicated very positive feelings about being in nearby-nature areas; 85% found this relaxing (restful, soothing), 76% found it enjoyable; 40% found it a chance to "escape worries"; 32% indicated it gave them time to think and let thoughts wander.
- A healthy natural environment contributes strongly to neighbourhood satisfaction levels.
- Through outdoor education and recreation programs, the public has a greater appreciation and understanding of the value of the natural environment.
- Green space is highly valued in communities and hence, draws in investment and promotes prosperity.
- People can walk, jog, relax, play, do nature appreciation, picnic, socialize and exercise in healthy and inspirational settings.
- Outdoor education/recreation programming is the best available method for fostering environmental sensitivity.
- Outdoor education teaches people to enjoy nature and enlarge their lives, both cognitively and affectively. Environmental education programs show an increase in knowledge of the environment, an increase in levels of social interaction, a decrease in socially inappropriate behaviours and an increase in learning life-long outdoor leisure skills.
- Outdoor programs provide a range of benefits, feelings of accomplishment, developing a connection to nature, making friends, improving skills, overcoming natural obstacles and testing limits, and becoming aware of, and appreciating the natural and cultural resources of the outdoors.

¹⁹ Toronto Environmental Task Force, *Environmental Plan*.

²⁰ *City of Toronto Natural Heritage Study*.

²¹ Data from Toronto Public Health.

- Students who are bored in the classroom can be stimulated to learn through outdoor experiences. By observing wildlife (for example), they can be motivated to learn more about biology and ecology.
- Through outdoor education, we can increase the public knowledge of making wiser choices in the use of our natural resources. Through increasing public awareness and appreciation, we can save our natural environment for the future, so that everyone benefits.
- Use of geologically or environmentally sensitive areas for open space or recreation purposes can reduce potential property damage costs and loss of life.
- Riverside parks, streams, wetlands and natural areas can replace a good deal of expensive infrastructure to handle drainage, water supply and water quality.

Lifelong Active Living: The Importance of Physical Activity

Toronto Parks & Recreation has extensive infrastructure and program resources to promote physical activity. The Division also has a century-long legacy of involvement in this field. But *emphasizing* physical activity requires consideration of various challenges facing Toronto as well as the benefits to be gained through this emphasis.

Personal Health:

Physical inactivity is a major contributor to increased adult morbidity and mortality from chronic disease. Current levels of inactivity are now a major concern for North American health practitioners. The previous section documented the issue in regards to children and youth – the essential “front end” of a lifelong approach to health and wellness. Some additional facts and figures bearing on Toronto:

- physical inactivity contributes to up to 23% of all deaths from major chronic diseases.
- 57% of Canadian adults aged 18 and older are considered insufficiently active for optimal health benefits.²²
- more women (67%) than men (54%) are physically inactive.
- physical inactivity levels increase with age. Activity levels begin declining from childhood.
- sedentary children are likely to become sedentary adults.
- only 33% of Torontonians aged 12 and older are moderately active; 56% are physically inactive.²³
- 30% of families with children in Toronto are living below the low-income cut off. Lower-income Canadians tend to be less active than higher-income Canadians.²⁴

According to the 1996 Ontario Health Survey:²⁵

22 CFLRI, *2001 Physical Activity Monitor*.

23 Statistics Canada, “Canadian Community Health Survey, 2000/01.” Available at <www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/020508/d020508a.htm>.

24 Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Improving the Health of Canadians* (Ottawa, 2004).

- 18% of Torontonians aged 12 and older are active, 20% are moderately active, and 58% are inactive.
- 19% of Torontonians aged 12-19 are moderately active, and 45% are inactive.
- relative to Ontario, Toronto has a slightly higher rate of inactive people.
- males and females rated roughly the same.

According to a 2000-01 Statistics Canada survey, only 33% of Torontonians aged 12 and older were at least moderately active (well under the national average of 42.6%), while 56% were physically inactive.²⁶

According to a 2002 Environics Research Group survey of Toronto residents:²⁷

- a large number of Torontonians (82% of respondents) report that they are participating in activities involving moderate effort.
- of those participating in moderate activities, well over half participate 4 or more days per week (56%) and for at least 30 minutes per day (57%); this means that 46-47% of Torontonians aged 18 and older are achieving the minimum standard defined in “Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living.”
- males and females participate in moderate activities at the same high level (81 and 82% of respondents).
- activity declines with age, though many older adults (79% of those aged 55 and older) remain moderately active.
- activity increases with household income, education level, and employment status.
- Torontonians with children under age 18 are more likely to participate in moderate activities than those without children (85 vs. 80%), but those with children spend less time per day being physically active.
- fewer Torontonians (45%) participate in activities involving vigorous effort.
- more males participate than females in vigorous activities (50 vs. 40%).
- the key factors preventing Torontonians from being more active are: lack of time (51%); lack of motivation (12%); and old age (9%).
- minor factors preventing activity include: lack of accessible, convenient facilities and programs; cost; and lack of safe environments in which to be active (all 1-3%).
- the most important ways of encouraging Torontonians to become more active are: more leisure time (28%); more accessible, convenient facilities (12%); and being in better health (10%). However, 11% of respondents feel it is not possible to do more, as they are already as active as they can be.
- weak means of encouraging activity include: improved health education and promotion; more self-motivation; counselling by health care and other professionals; and peer and family pressure (all 1-2%).

25 Quoted in Nancy Day et al., *Toronto’s Health Status: A Profile of Public Health in 2001* (Toronto: Toronto Public Health, 2001), 9.

26 “Canadian Community Health Survey, 2000/01: A first look,” Statistics Canada, *The Daily* (May 8, 2002).

27 Environics Research Group, *Torontonians’ Exercise Habits and Motivations, and Attitudes toward Use of Pesticides on Public Lands* (Toronto, 2002).

- the most important ways Toronto's parks could help or encourage Torontonians to become more active are: expand or improve programs and services (13%); improve park design (11%); improve park maintenance (8%); improve park safety (7%); and provide more sports facilities (7%). However, 34% of respondents feel that parks can do nothing to encourage them to be more active.
- weak means of encouraging activity through parks include: better control of dogs who are off-leash (2%), and better control of wild animals (1%).
- the most important ways Toronto's community and recreation centres could help or encourage Torontonians to become more active include: increase program variety, offer what users want (18%); promote where the centres are and what can be done there (12%); improve the hours of operation (8%); reduce or eliminate fees (8%). However, 34% of respondents feel that centres can do nothing to encourage them to be more active.
- weak means of encouraging activity through community and recreation centres include: improve centre maintenance; improve centre design; improve staff attitude/make users feel more welcome; improve centre safety; and reduce class sizes (all 1-2%).

According to two 2001 *Globe & Mail* reports, Toronto ranked 16th among Canada's "25 fattest cities" (with 45.6% of the population overweight), but ranked only 19th among Canada's "fittest cities" (with 17.8% of the population active).²⁸

Social Development:

Securing an improved quality of life in Toronto – achieved by strengthening social cohesion, ensuring access to services and opportunities, and shaping a healthy and safe urban environment through investment in social infrastructure – is a complex task. Fundamental shifts in public policy, such as funding realignment and downloading by Ottawa and Queen's Park, have frayed the city's social infrastructure. Toronto's demographic make-up compounds these challenges:

- *fifth largest city in North America:* Toronto is home to 2.481 million people (2001). ²⁹
- *small but steady population growth:* about a 4% growth rate (1996-2001), low relative to the GTA Regions.
- *more growth ahead:* Toronto is projected to grow by 537,000 (or 21.8%) between 1996 and 2031; by 2011, there will be about 2.76 million people in the city. ³¹

²⁸ "Fattest & fittest: St. Catharines leads the fat parade," *The Globe & Mail* (July 21, 2001); "Fattest & fittest: Fit with vitality in Victoria," *The Globe & Mail* (July 23, 2001).

²⁹ Unless otherwise credited, the findings in this section are drawn from Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2001 Censuses; City of Toronto, *Community Consultation on Social Development, Background Paper 3: Demographic Trends* (Toronto, 2000).

³⁰ Toronto Urban Development Services, *Flashforward: Projecting Population and Employment to 2031 in a Mature Urban Area* (Toronto, 2002), 4. This projection, based on the 1996 Census of Population, is cited in the City of Toronto's new Official Plan (2002).

³¹ Data in this and the following bullet points is from Urban Development Services (November 2002), and is based on the 2001 Census of Population.

City of Toronto Population Change by Age Categories 1991 - 2011

Age Category	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
0 - 5	162,665	185,410	174,315	177,675	184,960
6 - 12	167,545	187,940	204,715	215,455	214,410
13 - 24	365,940	348,735	363,180	416,245	441,450
25 - 59	1,175,800	1,236,325	1,298,445	1,370,160	1,429,760
60 +	403,820	427,060	441,075	458,970	494,100
Total #	2,275,770	2,385,470	2,481,730	2,638,505	2,764,680

Source 1: 1991, 1996, 2001 Population Data
Census Tracts, Statistics Canada
Source 2: 2006, 2011 Population Data
Scenario 4: GTAC Exact, without undercoverage, June 11, 2000
Prepared by: Urban Development Services, Research and Information
Compiled by: EDCT, Policy & Development - Research & Grants, November 2002

Age Category	1991 - 2001	1996 - 2001	2001 - 2006	2001 - 2011
0 - 5	7.2	-6.0	1.9	6.1
6 - 12	22.2	8.9	5.2	4.7
13 - 24	-0.8	4.1	14.6	21.6
25 - 59	10.4	5.0	5.5	10.1
60 +	9.2	3.3	4.1	12.0
Total % Change	9.1	4.0	6.3	11.4

Source 1: Population Percentage Change Calculations based on Table 1 Data

- *significantly higher proportion of vulnerable groups:* Toronto has 80% of GTA recent immigrants; 78% of GTA youth living on their own; 75% of GTA households receiving social assistance; 66% of GTA poor children; 69% of GTA seniors living alone; and 62% of GTA lone-parent families.
- *growing diversity:* as one of the world's most ethnoculturally diverse cities, Toronto receives almost 25% of all immigrants to Canada. In 2001, 49% of the City's population was foreign-born and nearly 43% were members of a visible minority. Since 1980, Asia has replaced Europe as the top source of new arrivals.
- *high mobility:* a steady arrival of migrants (60,000-80,000 immigrant landings per year), and a steady flow out of the City to the GTA Regions, resulting in a nearly 6% turnover in population each year.
- *an aging population:* over the last three decades, growth in the seniors' population (65 years+) has far outstripped growth in the total Toronto population (98% vs. 19% change, 1971-2001). Though the total number of seniors is smaller than the child, youth and adult age groups, adults aged 60 and older are expected to increase by 12% by 2011, when this group will constitute 17.8% of the total population.³²
- *changing households and families:* two-parent families are 81% of all Toronto families, but 1991-96 saw large increases in lone parent families (23%) and separated (21%) and divorced (20%) individuals; average household size has declined since the 1960s.
- *concentrations of risk/social vulnerability:* based on social indicators analysis, the City Planning Division has identified priority areas across Toronto for children, youth, seniors, and immigrants; the central corridor and southwest sections of the City show far less indication of social vulnerability. The number of higher poverty neighbourhoods has risen from 66 in 1991 to 120 in 2001, and has been especially pronounced in the former Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, York and East York.³³

³²City of Toronto, *Rebuilding Respect: A Progress Report for Seniors* (Toronto, 2002); projections from Urban Development Services (November 2002), based on the 2001 Census.
³³ Toronto Urban Planning & Development Services, *Social Indicators and Priority Areas* (Toronto, 1999); United Way of Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty, 1981-2001* (Toronto, 2004).

- *income polarisation*: the GTA's poorest and wealthiest people live in Toronto; the City had 69% of the GTA's lower income households in 1996.
- *increasing poverty*: the rate of poverty among Toronto's families has risen substantially over the last two decades, with almost one in every five families in 2001 living in poverty.³⁴ The incidence of poverty is rising in families headed by persons aged 25-34, seniors, women and single-parent families in particular, and renters.
- *rising homelessness*: most are still single men over 30, but youth and families with children are now the fastest-growing groups in the homeless and at-risk populations.

The Benefits of Taking Action on Lifelong Active Living

Personal Health:

One of the major benefits of physical activity is that it helps people improve their physical fitness. Fitness is a state of well-being that allows people to carry out everyday functions with ease and reduces their risks for health problems.

Virtually all individuals can benefit from regular physical activity, whether they participate in vigorous exercise or some type of moderate health-enhancing activity. But capturing the full benefits of physical activity requires a lifelong commitment to active living. Even among frail and very old adults, mobility and functioning can be improved through physical activity.³⁵

It is clear that the health benefits of physical activity are not limited to adults. Because behaviours that increase the risk of cardiovascular disease begin early in life, it is essential that prevention begins in early childhood.³⁶ According to the U.S. Surgeon General, ³⁷ regular participation in physical activity during childhood and adolescence:

- helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat.
- prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure and helps reduce blood pressure in some adolescents with hypertension.
- reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.

Through its effects on mental health, physical activity may also help increase students' capacity for learning.

34 United Way of Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Poverty by Postal Code*.

35 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Physical Activity Fundamental to Preventing Disease* (Washington, 2002).

36 Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, *The Changing Face of Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada* (Ottawa, 1999).

37 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (Atlanta, 1996).

These benefits are echoed and augmented in *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*: 38

- better health.
- improved fitness.
- better posture and balance.
- better self-esteem.
- weight control.
- stronger muscles and bones.
- feeling more energetic.
- relaxation and reduced stress.
- continued independent living in later life.

Social Development:

The Division has responded to demographic challenges and trends in many ways. Recent examples include providing recreation programs for at-risk children and youth, accommodating disabled participants, addressing homelessness in parks, and tackling gender inequities in physical activity and sport. These initiatives are heir to the Division's recreational mission established in the early 1900s, which emphasized social welfare objectives over physical activity. 39

Pursuing a renewed social development agenda within the Division should generate a number of benefits: 40

- contribute to balanced human development, helping Torontonians reach for their potential, including developing various skills in children and youth; providing an opportunity for adults to develop their full and holistic potential; and providing opportunities for life-long learning.
- contribute to quality of life, by building self-esteem and positive self-image; enhancing life satisfaction levels; enhancing perceived quality of life for individuals, families and communities; and nurturing growth, acquisition of life skills, and independent living for those with a disability.
- reduce self-destructive and anti-social behaviour, including reduced crime, racism, isolation, loneliness and alienation.
- build strong families and healthy communities, by maintaining family connections through shared leisure interests; providing safe, developmental opportunities for the latch-key child; building social skills and stimulating participation in community life; producing leaders who serve their communities in many ways; providing the catalysts that build strong, self-sufficient communities; and building pride in a community.

38 Health Canada, *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* (Ottawa, 1998).

39 Wayne Reeves, *Playing by the Rules: Organized Children's Leisure in Toronto, 1897-1934* (Toronto: Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives, 1998).

40 Adapted from Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, *The Benefits Catalogue* (Ottawa, 1997).

The Importance of Child and Youth Development

The Division's recent work have been influenced by the Children and Youth Action Committee (CYAC) and the Children and Youth Advocate, appointed by Council in 1998 to serve as the focal point of the City's efforts to improve the health and well-being of its children and youth.

CYAC and the Advocate encouraged Council to adopt the Toronto Children's Charter in 1999. The Charter sets out fundamental values that Parks & Recreation is expected to embody in its programs and services, including:

- all Toronto children shall be entitled to a standard of living adequate to ensure healthy physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development, well-being, and a good quality of life.
- all Toronto children shall be entitled to participate in recreational and leisure activities, in the form of play, creative expression, and skill development opportunities.
- all Toronto children have the right to be served by governments which acknowledge their responsibility to improve the health and well-being of children and work co-operatively to ensure adequate and equitable funding for children's programs.
- the foregoing rights shall apply to all Toronto children without discrimination according to race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, ability/disability, ethnic origin, language, region, property or class, religion, or any other distinction. This may entail the use of affirmative action or equity programs in order to redress situations of special individual, community or regional disadvantage.

The work of CYAC, the Advocate, and the Division is also set against a wider backdrop of issues facing children and youth. Some Canadian facts and figures bearing on Toronto:

- three out of five children and youth aged 5-17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development. Activity levels decline from childhood to the teen years. For children aged 5-12, 44% of girls and 53% of boys are considered active enough while 30% of adolescent boys are considered sufficiently active enough for optimal health benefits.⁴¹
- between 1981 and 1996, prevalence of overweight increased from 15% to 29% for boys and 15% to 24% for girls.⁴²
- between 1981 and 1996, prevalence of obesity increased from 5% to 13.5% for boys and 5% to 12% for girls. Obese children are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension and other diseases and disorders.
- girls are less active than boys. Adolescents aged 13-17 spend an average of almost 14 hours per week on physical activity. While teenage boys devote about 17 hours a week to physical activities, teenage girls devote less than 12 hours.⁴³

41 Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI), *2000 Physical Activity Monitor* (Ottawa, 2001).

42 This and the following finding are from Mark S. Tremblay and J. Douglas Willms, "Secular trends in the body mass index of Canadian children," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 163 (2000): 1429-33.

43 CFLRI, *2000 Physical Activity Monitor*.

- after declining in the 1970s and '80s, cigarette smoking rates among youth aged 15-19 increased to 27% in 1994.
- teenage sexual activity has remained almost the same as it was in the 1980s. About 6 in 10 males and 5 in 10 females acknowledge that they have had sex. Sexually transmitted diseases among teens have decreased since 1990, but pregnancy rates have increased.⁴⁴
- in 1997, suicide was the second leading cause of death among males aged 10-14 (15.9%) and males and females aged 15-19 years (25.1% and 16.3%). The leading cause for children and youth was unintentional injuries. For the entire population, the three top causes of death were diseases of the circulatory system, cancer, and respiratory diseases.⁴⁵
- in 1996-97, some adolescents reported low levels of self-esteem, sense of mastery, and sense of coherence when compared to other age groups. Depression was most common among youth aged 18-19, with young women aged 15-19 the most likely of any sex-age group to exhibit signs of depression (9%).⁴⁶
- most teens have a positive self-image, self-confidence and a generally healthy personal mental outlook, though still many are unhappy (10-30%). Not enough time, boredom, meaning/purpose of life, loneliness, weight and inferiority are among the concerns of youth.⁴⁷
- volunteering declined from 33% to 29% among youth aged 15-24 during 1997-2000, though those who volunteered gave more hours. Youth are more likely to volunteer to improve their job opportunities, to explore their own strengths, and because their friends volunteered. More youth volunteer with education and research (23% of events and 19% of hours) and social services organizations (20 and 22%) than arts/culture and recreation (20 and 18%).⁴⁸
- certain groups of children – especially those who are economically disadvantaged – have reduced rates of participation in sports and the arts.⁴⁹
- while the poverty rate for children declined from 37% to 30% between 1996-2001, this rate is still more than two times as high as the rest of the GTA and there are still 128,755 children aged 0-14 years living below the low-income cutoff.⁵⁰
- although overall youth crime in Toronto has decreased considerably from levels in the early 1990s, the youth charge rate for violent crime remains 40% higher than in 1991 and youth

44 Reginald W. Bibby, *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2001); Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children* (Ottawa, 1998).

45 Health Canada data, available at <www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/publicat/pcd97/mrt_f_e.html>.

46 Health Canada, *Toward a Healthy Future: Second Report on the Health of Canadians* (Ottawa, 1999).

47 Bibby, *Canada's Teens*.

48 Statistics Canada, *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (Ottawa, 2001).

49 David R. Offord, Ellen Lipman and Eric K. Duku, "Which Children Don't Participate in Sports, the Arts, and Community Programs?" Paper presented at *Investing in Children: A National Research Conference* (Ottawa: Human Resources and Development Canada, 1998).

50 City of Toronto, *Toronto Report Card on Children, Vol. 5, Update 2003* (Toronto, 2003).

gang activity is on the rise. Safety remains a significant concern for the majority of youth. Youth crime primarily affects other youth.⁵¹

- rising levels of childhood obesity have been linked to a nationwide failure to adopt mandatory physical education in Canada's schools, despite widespread support for such action.⁵²
- changes to the education funding formula in Ontario and permit policies in Toronto have undermined affordable community access space in schools. The potential closure of school pools, or their transfer to the City of Toronto, remains on the horizon.⁵³

The Benefits of Taking Action on Child and Youth Development

A number of positive outcomes can result from using recreation programs to promote child and youth development.

Impacts on physical health are the best documented of all recreational benefits. Regular participation in physical activity during childhood and adolescence: ⁵⁴

- helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat.
- prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure and helps reduce blood pressure in some adolescents with hypertension.
- reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.

There is also growing evidence of psychosocial benefits, including:

- better time management, increased self-esteem and self-worth, and the opportunity to identify with respected coaches and supervisors. ⁵⁵
- competence in sports helping protect children against the occurrence of emotional and behavioural problems where children are at risk for these conditions.
- a strong correlation between youth staying in school and their participation in extracurricular activities.
- a strong relationship between participation in organized recreational activities and propensity to participate in unpaid school activities, fund raising, and community work.⁵⁶

⁵¹ City of Toronto, *Toronto Youth Profile 2003* (Toronto, 2003); City of Toronto, *Speak Up: Toronto Youth Talk About Safety in Their Community* (Toronto, 2002).

⁵² Coalition for Active Living, *Six-Point Plan for Action* (Ottawa, 2001).

⁵³ Toronto Children and Youth Advocate, *Annual Report 2002* (Toronto, 2002); Toronto Community & Neighbourhood Services, *Cracks in the Foundation, Community Agency Survey 2003: A Study of Toronto's Community-based Human Service Sector* (Toronto, 2004).

⁵⁴ The findings in this section are from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (Atlanta, 1996).

⁵⁵ This and next two findings are from Offord et al., "Which Children Don't Participate in Sports, the Arts, and Community Programs?"

- more positive relationships with one's peers and friends, a greater likelihood of performing better in school, increased future educational expectations, decreased participation in negative behaviours such as drinking and smoking, and lower levels of television watching.
- development of life and leadership skills by participating in team and sport activities.
- fosters awareness of the larger community and cross cultural understanding.
- enables children and youth with psychological disorders to achieve the same level of social, physical and academic competencies as their non-disordered peers.⁵⁷
- play experiences influence neurological development and help determine whether the child grows up to be intelligent, articulate and confident, or not.⁵⁸
- develops positive attitudes towards the importance of recreation and leisure in contributing to healthy, active lifestyles.

Economic benefits have also been demonstrated. By providing recreation services to children of sole-support mothers receiving social assistance, recreation pays for itself through reduced use of social and health services (such as probation, child psychiatry and other physician specialties, child psychology and social work). The provision of recreational services also resulted in a 10% greater exit from social assistance compared to parents of children who did not receive this service, and produced other good outcomes for the mother.⁵⁹

Given such important beneficial effects, it is vital that children and youth have access to quality recreation. Through its programs, services and facilities, Parks & Recreation can play a leading role in removing barriers to equal participation that are based on income, gender and other factors.

Recreation and Leisure Trends

Leisure Forecast – Toronto in 2021

In a 2000 *Toronto Life* article, demographer David Foot made this prediction about leisure in Toronto 20 years from now:⁶⁰

⁵⁶ This and the next finding are from Canadian Policy Research Networks and Canadian Council on Social Development, *Four Hypotheses about the Public Policy Significance of Youth Recreation: Lessons from a Literature Review and a Data Analysis on "Learning through Recreation"* (Ottawa, 2001).

⁵⁷ Gina Browne et al., *When the Bough Breaks: Provider-Initiated Comprehensive Care is More Effective and Less Expensive for Sole-Support Parents on Social Assistance* (Hamilton: McMaster University, 2000).

⁵⁸ S. Begley, "Your Child's Brain," *Newsweek* (February 19, 1996).

⁵⁹ Browne et al., *When the Bough Breaks*.

⁶⁰ David Foot, "The Toronto that will be," *Toronto Life* (January 2000): 84-90.

“Gardening, one of the favourite activities of middle-aged and older folks, will continue to grow in popularity, so much so that many empty-nesters who might otherwise have been lured into condos will stay where they are because they don’t want to give up their gardens. Another leisure pastime popular among older folks is bingo. With a million seniors in the Greater Toronto Area in 2021, bingo will be booming. Expect bingo operators to take their cue from the movie exhibitors and install luxury seating, good food, and classy cocktail lounges where musicians will perform ‘Bridge Over Troubled Water’ and other golden oldies.”

Physical Activity / Health and Recreation Trends for Children and Youth – Ontario

According to the Canadian Fitness and Leisure Research Institute’s (CFLRI) 1995 Physical Activity Monitor, 65% of Ontario children aged 5-12 and 60% of boys and 79% of girls aged 13-17 were not active enough to lay a solid foundation for future health and well-being.

According to CFLRI’s 2000 Physical Activity Monitor,⁶¹ the most popular physical recreation activities reported for Ontario children and youth aged 5-17 who participated at least once in the previous 12 months were:

Swimming	89%
Walking	89%
Bicycling	88%
Swings, slides, teeter-totters	86% (includes only children aged 5-12)
Tobogganing, other winter activities	73%
Skating	62%
In-line/roller skating	62%
Running, jogging	53%
Soccer	53%
Basketball	50%

Leisure Trends – Canada

According to a 1998-99 Statistics Canada survey, the most popular activities reported by adults aged 20 and older in the previous three months were:

Walking for exercise	69%
Gardening, yard work	48%
Home exercise	29%
Swimming	24%
Social dancing	22%
Golf	13%
Jogging, running	12%
Weight training	11%
Fishing	11%
Bowling	8%

61 C.L. Cragg et al., *Increasing Physical Activity: Supporting Children’s Participation* (Ottawa: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2001).

Exercise classes, aerobics	7%
Baseball, softball	7%
In-line skating	6%
Skating	5%
Basketball	4%
Hockey	4%
Tennis	4%
Volleyball	3%
Alpine skiing	3%

- Women are more likely than men to report walking, participating in exercise classes, and social dancing. Men are more likely than women to report participating in tennis, bowling, swimming, fishing, golfing, skating and hockey.

According to a 1998 Statistics Canada survey, sports involvement among Canadians aged 15 and older varies greatly by sex:

- 43.1% of men and 25.7% of women participate regularly in sport.
- 17.4% of men and 7.4% of women participate through competition and/or tournament; participation through a club or organization is roughly equally.⁶²

According to a 1998-99 Statistics Canada survey, the most popular activities reported by youth aged 12-19 in the previous three months were:

Walking	60%
Bicycling	48%
Swimming	46%
Jogging, running	37%
Social dancing	37%
Home exercise	36%
Gardening, yard work	28%
In-line skating	28%
Volleyball	26%
Weight training	25%
Bowling	20%
Baseball, softball	17%
Skating	14%
Exercise classes, aerobics	14%
Fishing	13%
Golf	13%
Ice hockey	13%
Tennis	11%
Alpine skiing	7%

The CFLRI's 2000 Physical Activity Monitor identified popular physical activities for children aged 5-12 and youth aged 13-17:

- Boys aged 5-12 are more likely than girls of the same age to play golf, snowboard, skateboard, and participate in team sports such as soccer, football, baseball or softball,

⁶² Sport Canada, *Sport Participation in Canada: 1998 Report* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 2000); Lucie Ogrodnik, "Sport participation in Canada, 1998." Statistics Canada, *Focus on Culture* 12, 2 (2000): 3-6.

basketball, and hockey. More girls than boys participate in ballet or other dance classes, social dancing, gymnastics, skating, and playing on swings, slides and teeter-totters.

- Teenage girls are more likely than teenage boys to participate in social dancing, exercise classes or aerobics, cross-country skiing, and ballet or other dance classes. Teenage boys are more likely than teenage girls to engage in bicycling, skateboarding, snowboarding, golf, weight training, and many team sports.⁶³

According to a 1998-99 Statistics Canada survey, participation in organized activities (sports, music, the arts or clubs) among children aged 4-15 tended to peak by early teens, with almost 92% of children aged 10-13 participating in some type of activity. This proportion dropped to 83% among youth aged 14-15:

- Among younger children, participation rates showed little difference between boys and girls. Boys were somewhat less likely to participate at 4-5 years of age, while girls were slightly less likely to participate between the ages of 6-11.
- Differences between the sexes were more evident among teenagers. By the age of 14 or 15, about 1 in 5 girls indicated they were not participating in any activity, compared to about 1 in 10 boys. At all ages, boys were more likely than girls to be participating in organized and unorganized sports. Girls were found to be participating more in arts or music, and clubs or groups.

According to a 1998 Statistics Canada survey, Canadians aged 15 and older have 5.8 hours of free time per day, averaged over a 7-day week:

- 2.7 hours are spent on television, reading and other passive leisure.
- 1.9 hours are spent on socializing.
- 1.0 hours are spent on active sports and other active leisure.
- 0.2 hours are spent on sports, movies and other entertainment events.
- Men have more free time than women (6.0 vs. 5.6 hours), and spend more time on active leisure (1.1 vs. 0.8 hours).⁶⁴

According to a 1998 Statistics Canada survey, sport and recreation took a smaller share of Canadian consumer spending between 1986 and 1996, declining 8.7% over that period. "Sport and recreation" includes sporting and athletic equipment, recreational vehicles, and recreational services (live sport spectacles and use of recreational facilities).⁶⁵

According to a 2002 Statistics Canada report, more Canadian households are spending more on relatively sedentary recreation and leisure activities at home – more of our recreational dollar is spent on purchases of electronic entertainment goods than more traditional active pursuits, such as sports. Between 1982 and 1999, spending rose 253% on cablevision and 515% on computers. Spending on recreational fees and athletic equipment rose minimally (8%), with fewer

⁶³ C.L. Cragg et al., *Increasing Physical Activity: Supporting Children's Participation* (Ottawa: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2001).

⁶⁴ Statistics Canada. *Overview of the Time Use of Canadians in 1998* (Ottawa, 1999).

⁶⁵ Lucie Ogrodnik, "Sport and recreation taking a smaller share of consumer spending: 1986 to 1996." Statistics Canada, *Focus on Culture* 10, 3 (Autumn 1998): 5-6; Louise Earl, "Spending on selected recreation items in Canada." Statistics Canada, *Focus on Culture* 10, 2 (Summer 1998): 1-4.

households buying fees and goods, but those fewer households spending more on their purchases.⁶⁶

According to a 2000 Ipsos-Reid/Council for Business and the Arts in Canada survey, soccer is by far the most popular organized leisure activity that Canadian parents want their children to participate in first – regardless of whether that child is a boy or a girl.

⁶⁶ Frances Kremerik, “The changing recreational spending patterns of Canadian families.” *Canadian Social Trends*, 64 (Spring 2002): 13-18

Physical Activity Trends – Canada

According to the CFLRI's 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, the most popular physical activities for adults are:⁶⁷

Walking	82%
Gardening, yard work	72%
Home exercise	57%
Swimming	55%

According to the CFLRI's 2001 Physical Activity Monitor, 57% of adults aged 18 and older are considered insufficiently active for optimal health benefits.⁶⁸

Trend Interpretations for Sport, Parks and Recreation – Canada (1998 and 2001)

The following interpretation was developed by the Canadian/Parks Recreation Association at a 1998 think-tank in response to changes in demographics/psychographics, leisure behaviour, the role of government, the economy, and technology:⁶⁹

⁶⁷ C.L. Cragg et al., *Increasing Physical Activity: Supporting Children's Participation* (Ottawa: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2001).

⁶⁸ C. Cameron et al., *Increasing Physical Activity: Supporting an Active Workforce* (Ottawa: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2002).

⁶⁹ Canadian Parks / Recreation Association, *Illuminating Our Future: Parks and Recreation in Canada* (Ottawa, 1999).

<i>trends</i>	<i>implications</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population is aging • Households are getting smaller • Greater divide between "haves" and "have nots" leading to a leisure gerontocracy • More people with special needs • Continued urbanization • Longer period for retirement • Free time available in smaller segments • Bombardment of information with less time to review and digest it • Increasing ethnic diversity • Citizens have less affinity to their geographic community • Greater segmentation of population in terms of values and predisposition • Experiential hedonism (search for happiness through experience) • Spiritual quest • Greater flexibility of gender, roles and equity of sexes • Increased interest in environmental stewardship • People feel stressed / rushed • Increased substance abuse (drugs) for diversion or to reduce stress • Youth un/underemployment resulting in youth poverty • Sedentary youth lifestyles • Intrinsic need to be involved in communities of interest • Need to be involved in decision-making • Less trust in government and large institutions • More localized involvement • Volunteer profiles changing (more seniors with more time and a need for meaning in their lives) • More flexible work time and place • Weakening concept of the stand alone "professional" • Jobs are not a fixed bunch of tasks but instead a list of targeted outcomes • Pressure to seek alternative work models • Influence of technology allow staff to interact more with people • Public focus on achieving results vs delivery of services • Devolution of services to lower levels of government • Amalgamation of local governments and institutions • Reduction in public sector spending on parks and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility design for multi-use and accessibility • Increased need for staff training and developing awareness of differences • Time will be more valuable than money for those with money • Need for more sophisticated data collection systems • Need to understand customers (who they are, their needs and expectations) • Need for more interactive processes with customers • Pressure for higher quality services • More individualized services • More stimulating services • Adjust amount of services available for each gender • More small indulgences • More "eco" type experiences • More interpretive services • Expanded facility hours • Redefine prime / non-prime • Simplify process for accessing services • Recognition of current youth culture and various niches • More sophisticated youth consumer • Renewed multi-faceted focus on youth • Increased investment in early childhood years • Many sectors involved in youth intervention and issues • Need to adapt process to foster youth participation • P&R seen as a viable vehicle to achieve social, economic and environmental goals • Volunteer burnout • Need for new structures / methods for community involvement • Wider range of volunteer skills available • Volunteers looking for work experience and training • Redefined management - labour relationship • Higher proportion of part-time staff / volunteers • People work in teams, therefore, need teamwork, technical and project skills • Hiring generalist and contract out specialist • Focus on measuring outcomes • Land claim settlements • Potential for contracting out • Can't get help from senior gov't • Partnership opportunities • Re-evaluate who subsidizes who • Serving the "customer of one" • Decision-making process much more difficult and stressful • There will be little freedom from communication - people will always be reachable • Easy access to information will be a great "leveler" with maximum equity of access to services

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diminished influence of senior governments• Increasing bandwidths supports transfer of more information faster• Wireless communication technology will allow people to communicate from anywhere• Processing speeds and power will continue to increase dramatically so that multi-media interfaces and large scale modeling will become easier• Voice activated computers will make keyboards obsolete	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing customer expectations for access to service• Reduced physical activity with virtual realities• Exciting marketing opportunities• Changing staff tasks from mundane to customer focused• Increase entrepreneurial opportunities• Vehicle for community input• Expectation for immediate responses to communications
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The following interpretation was developed by Brian Johnston of Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd. (PERC), in a 2001 address to Parks and Recreation Ontario.⁷⁰ His key message: “Look for major shifts, which include significant changes in behavioural patterns, societal attitudes and values, and how things get done. These trends will most likely affect your facility planning processes, how you organize services and, perhaps most importantly, how you finance them.”

Johnston’s Trends:

- 10 key national trends, organized by demographics, psychographics (social values/mind set), leisure behaviour, and facilities.

Demographics

1. *Ageing population.* “Old boomers” want to continue in mainstream facilities, rather than be isolated in seniors’ centres.
2. *Widening gap between haves and have-nots.* Income polarization means more disposable income for some, marginalization due to inability to pay for others. Growing numbers of affluent seniors requires both a re-evaluation of “deep discount” subsidies and ways to deal with the entitlement-to-cheap-services mindset. Strategies that generally increase access by have-nots and which don’t focus on age may be the answer (e.g., econoswim vs. seniors’ swim).
3. *Increasing diversity.* Beyond addressing ethno-cultural issues, need to focus on physical abilities, as there are now more special needs than ever before (e.g., allergies, asthma).

Psychographics

4. *Experiential hedonism.* The pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. Linked to rising interest in one-off experiences rather than long-term commitment to programs, teams, etc.

⁷⁰ “The Future of Parks and Recreation,” Parks and Recreation Ontario, *PROFile* (Winter 2002): 1-3.

5. *Spiritual quest.* Beyond organized religion to the pursuit of the meaning of life. Linked to rising interest in connecting with nature.
6. *Declining trust in institutions.* Includes both the public sector and private enterprises. With high levels of education and a lack of social consensus or shared values, the public is demanding a greater role in decision-making. Protesting change and being part of the “public process” has become a new leisure activity.

Leisure Behaviour

7. *Structured to informal activity.* Programmed activities and organized team sports are in decline (raw numbers may still be high where a growing population exists, but proportions are dropping quickly). Soccer is an exception, probably due to low threshold costs.
8. *Declining volunteerism.* Statscan’s analysis for 1997-2000 revealed a loss of 1 million volunteers (down 13%), with Ontario being the biggest loser. Declines are especially significant among older volunteers. Survivors are volunteering more, but expect burn-out in the near future.
9. *Decreasing physical activity in children.* Heart and Stroke Society’s analysis found that 33% of children in 1998 and 66% in 2001 had insufficient levels of activity to support basic health.

Facilities

10. *Changing investment risk.* Risky ventures: arenas, curling, seniors’ centres, sports fields. Safer investments: trails, leisure pools, theatres, natural areas, gardens. Trails are the cheapest to build and operate on a per-unit basis, and attract the widest range and largest number of users (e.g., now twice as many in-line skaters in Canada as ice skaters).

Winning and Losing Themes:

- winning themes:
 - health and wellness.
 - family.
 - culture.
 - community.
 - multi-purpose complexes.
 - nature.
- losing themes:
 - fun.
 - teams.
 - team sports.
 - clubs.

- single-purpose facilities.

Johnston's Challenges:

1. *Redefine and recommit to the business we're in, and understand that business more clearly.* Our business should be citizen-building, family-building, community-building and city-building through public service, not "fun and games." Unlike the private sector, we don't measure all costs and benefits in dollars. However, the social and environment goods produced by the public sector aren't entirely subjective in value.
2. *Restructure and refinance to deliver on our businesses.* This includes setting appropriate subsidy levels and determining who should do what (e.g., alternative service delivery).
3. *Measure the right things.* We focus too much on quantitative outputs, rather than figuring out how to measure outcomes and benefits.
4. *Communicate better.* Focus on communicating objectives and outcomes. The latter include individual and community pride, individual and community health, and a general sense of well-being. Push the collective good of what we do more than the individual benefit.