

Strathcona Regional District

Regional Recreation Services Feasibility Study

August 2024

Strathcona
REGIONAL DISTRICT





Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1. Study Purpose	2
1.2. Study Process (How was the feasibility study developed?)	3
2.0 Recreation in the SRD – Overview of Current Assets	4
3.0 Engagement Findings	9
3.1. Engagement Overview	10
3.2. Public Survey Findings	11
3.3. Stakeholder Discussion Session Themes	32
4.0 Trends in Recreation	35
4.1. Trends Context	36
4.2. Participation Trends and Preferences	37
4.3. Service Delivery Trends	38
4.4. Infrastructure Trends	39
5.0 Summary of Key Research and Engagement Findings	40
6.0 Potential Future Approaches & Considerations	42
6.1. The Benefits and Rationale for Increased Regional Collaboration	43
6.2. Potential Levels of Collaboration	48
6.3. Regional Recreation Funding Considerations & Options	52
6.3. Conclusions and Next Step Considerations	61
Appendices	63
Appendix A: Trends and Leading Practices References	64

1.0 Introduction

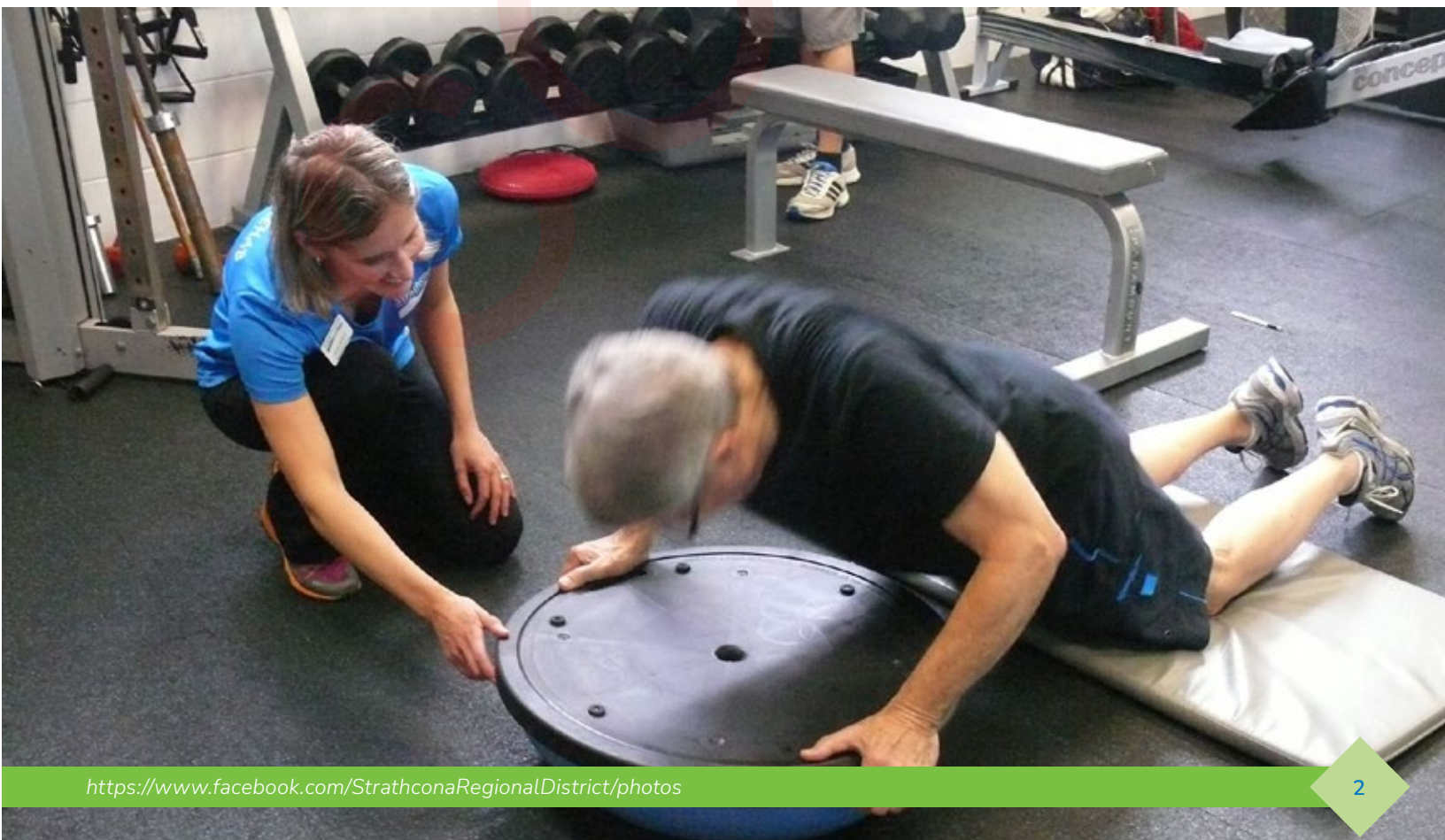


1.1. Study Purpose

The Strathcona Regional District (SRD) has a mission *“to provide the citizens with a healthy environment and social well being that leads to a vibrant quality of life through responsible economic development and effective delivery of service.”* Recreation contributes significantly to regional vibrancy, resident quality of life, wellness, and the economy - helping the SRD achieve its mission and support future growth and prosperity.

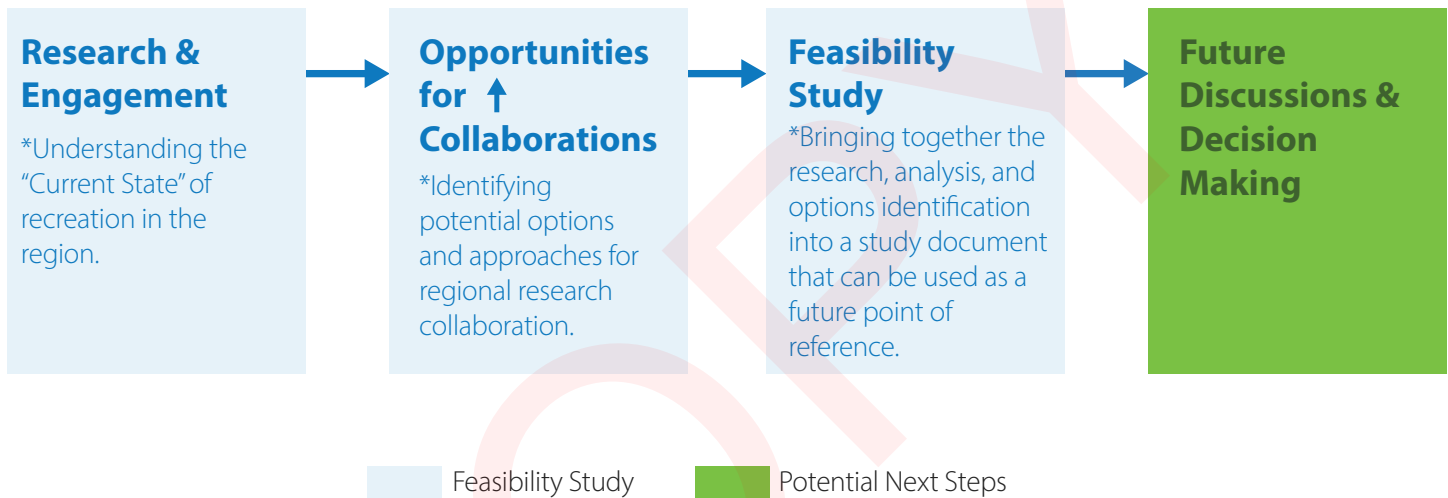
The SRD operates the major recreation complex in the area, the Strathcona Gardens, which consists of an aquatics facility, twin ice arena, fitness facilities, and other program spaces. The SRD also contributes some funding support for other recreation and community facilities located in communities throughout the SRD. As a relatively new Regional District (established in 2008) the SRD does not currently have a regional recreation service or established funding model.

The SRD undertook the development of this feasibility study to explore opportunities to increase regional collaborations in the delivery of recreation services (facilities and programming). **This study document will provide an important point of reference that helps inform future discussions and decision making on regional recreation.**



1.2. Study Process (How was the feasibility study developed?)

The following graphic illustrates the process used to develop the study.



As reflected by the graphic an important initial step for the study involved undertaking research and engagement to better understand the current state of recreation in the region, helping the project team identify a range of potential options and approaches for future regional collaboration. The key insights garnered through the research and engagement included:

- Resident activity preferences.
- Trends and changes.
- Perceived gaps and needs.
- Desired priorities for facilities and programming.
- Perspectives on the opportunities and limitations associated with regional recreation collaboration.

2.0 Recreation in the SRD – Overview of Current Assets



The provision of recreation services in the SRD relies on a multitude of local and regional government providers and not for profit organizations. The following tables provides an overview of current infrastructure assets located within the SRD.

Major Recreation Infrastructure Summary



Total Indoor Recreation Sites
 (Community Halls / Recreation Centres / Community Centres)
 *Not including schools



11 facilities



11 Locations

- 1 Anne Fiddick Aquatics Centre (Gold River)
- 2 Campbell River Sportsplex (Campbell River)
- 3 Campbell River Community Centre (Campbell River)
- 4 Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre
- 5 Kelsey Recreation Centre Pool (Sayward)
- 6 Sayward Community Hall
- 7 Strathcona Gardens (Campbell River)
- 8 Tahsis Recreation Centre (Tahsis)
- 9 Thunderbird Hall (Wei Wai Kum First Nation)
- 10 Quadra Island Community Centre (Quadra Island)
- 11 Zeballos Community Hall (Zeballos)



Recreation Infrastructure by Community

Geographic Area / Jurisdiction	Current Facilities	Summary of Use and Programming Insights
Campbell River	<p>Operated by the SRD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathcona Gardens (pool, arenas, fitness facilities, program rooms) <p>Operated by the City</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campbell River Sportsplex (weight room, racquetball and squash courts, gymnasium) • Community Centre (gymnasium, seniors centre, multi-purpose rooms and studios) • Centennial Outdoor Pool • Ball diamonds and sports fields (throughout the City) • School gymnasiums (throughout the City) <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campbell River Curling Club (4 sheets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 had varying levels of impacts on organized sport programs, with some groups seeing a decrease while others had minimal impacts. • Strong demand for aquatics programming, lessons, and leisure swimming. • City of Campbell River programming – key insights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 164,993 total recreation visits in 2019 » 32,450 child, youth and program visits in 2019 » 13,863 outdoor pool visits in 2019 » 65,091 fitness and weight room visits in 2019 • In general, program and facility visits in Campbell River were consistent on a year to year basis prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Village of Gold River	<p>Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre (arena, curling rink, community hall)</p> <p>Anne Fiddick Aquatics Centre</p> <p>Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming offered is dependent on ability to recruit programming staff. • Current minor hockey, figure skating, and men's hockey programs at the area.
Village of Tahsis	<p>Tahsis Recreation Centre (swimming pool, fitness room, bowling alley, gymnasium / community hall, meeting and program rooms)</p> <p>Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds</p> <p>School Gymnasium</p> <p>Community Parks and Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population decline in the Village has impacted facility and program use. • Availability of aquatics staff limit programming that can be provided. • Growing interest in outdoor recreation.
Village of Zeballos	<p>Zeballos Community Hall</p> <p>Zeballos Ball Park</p> <p>School Gymnasium</p> <p>Community Parks and Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School has provided space for some gymnasium programs (pickleball, volleyball, etc.).

Geographic Area / Jurisdiction	Current Facilities	Summary of Use and Programming Insights
Village of Sayward	Kelsey Recreation Centre (swimming pool, weight room, gymnasium, program rooms) Community Hall Ball Diamonds Soccer Field Tennis Courts Outdoor Fitness Park School gymnasium Community Parks and Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of programming offered at the Kelsey Recreation Centre. • Programming uptake is variable. • Tennis courts received minimal utilization. • Size of kindergarten class suggests that children and youth population needs will grow. • Try a variety of programming based on resources and ideas brought forward by residents.
Electoral Area A	Community Parks and Amenities	
Electoral Area B	Cortes Skate Park and Basketball Court Community Parks and Amenities	
Electoral Area C	Quadra Island Community Centre (and surrounding amenities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main hall / program space • Program and meeting rooms • Skate park • Tennis court • Outdoor court • Ball diamond • Playground • Riding ring Community Parks and Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quadra Recreation Society delivered over 182 activity opportunities in 2019/2020 (pre-pandemic) • Recreation programming at the Quadra Island Community Centre includes recreation, arts and culture, and skill development for children, youth, adults and older adults.
Electoral Area D	Community Parks and Amenities	
First Nations Communities	Thunderbird Hall (Wei Wai Kum First Nation) Gymnasium, outdoor fitness equipment, playground, basketball court and field Many band administration offices and school facilities are also used for recreation, culture, and leisure activities	

3.0 Engagement Findings



3.1. Engagement Overview

Engagement with residents and stakeholders was important to better understanding the current state of recreation in the region and identifying potential opportunities for future regional collaboration. The following graphic summarizes the project engagement.



Public Survey
1,033 responses



Stakeholder Discussion Sessions
23 participating organizations / interests

Findings from the engagement are provided as follows in this section.



<https://www.facebook.com/StrathconaRegionalDistrict/photos>

3.2. Public Survey Findings

Overview and Key Respondent Characteristics

The public survey was made available from early October to early November through the SRD's website. The survey was promoted through a variety of media platforms and a prize draw was included to encourage participation. In total, 1,033 responses were provided.

The following tables provide an overview of key survey respondent characteristics.

Household Composition	Survey Respondents	Statistics Canada Census Profile 2021
Age 0 – 4 Years	10%	4%
Age 5 – 9 Years	11%	5%
Age 10 – 19 Years	11%	10%
Age 20 – 29 Years	10%	9%
Age 30 – 39 Years	11%	11%
Age 40 – 49 Years	11%	12%
Age 50 – 59 Years	10%	14%
Age 60 – 69 Years	10%	18%
Age 70 – 79 Years	9%	13%
Age 80+ Years	7%	5%

Community / Jurisdiction	Survey Respondents	Statistics Canada Census Profile 2021 Percentage of SRD Population
Campbell River	47%	74%
Sayward	11%	1%
Electoral Area C (Discovery Islands-Mainland Inlets)	8%	9%
Electoral Area A (Kyuquot/Nootka-Sayward)	7%	9%
Electoral Area B (Cortes Island)	6%	6%
Electoral Area D (Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake)	6%	2%
Gold River	5%	3%
Tahsis	3%	2%
Kyuquot	3%	1%
Zeballos	3%	0.3%
Other	1%	N/A
First Nations Community	0%	11% ¹

¹ Figure from the SRD website.

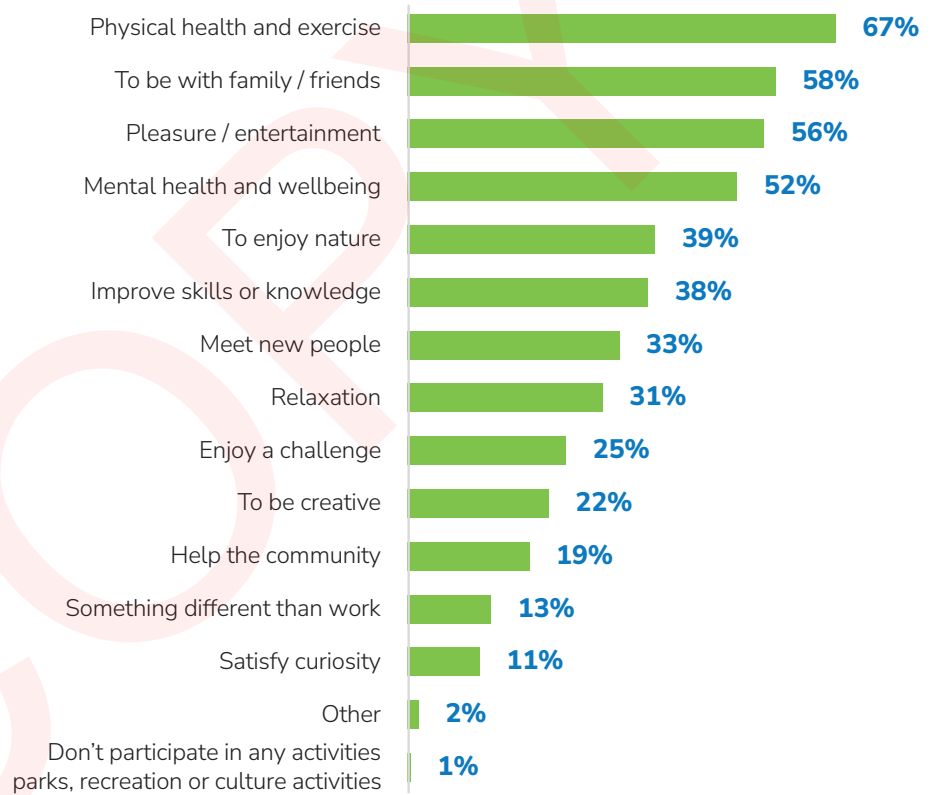
Household Activity Preferences

The survey began by asking respondents what motivates them to participate in recreation and related activities. The most popular motivators were physical health and exercise (67%), to be with family/friends (58%) and for pleasure and entertainment (56%). Notably, only 1% of respondents stated they do not participate in any recreation, arts, or cultural activities.

Sub-Segment Findings:

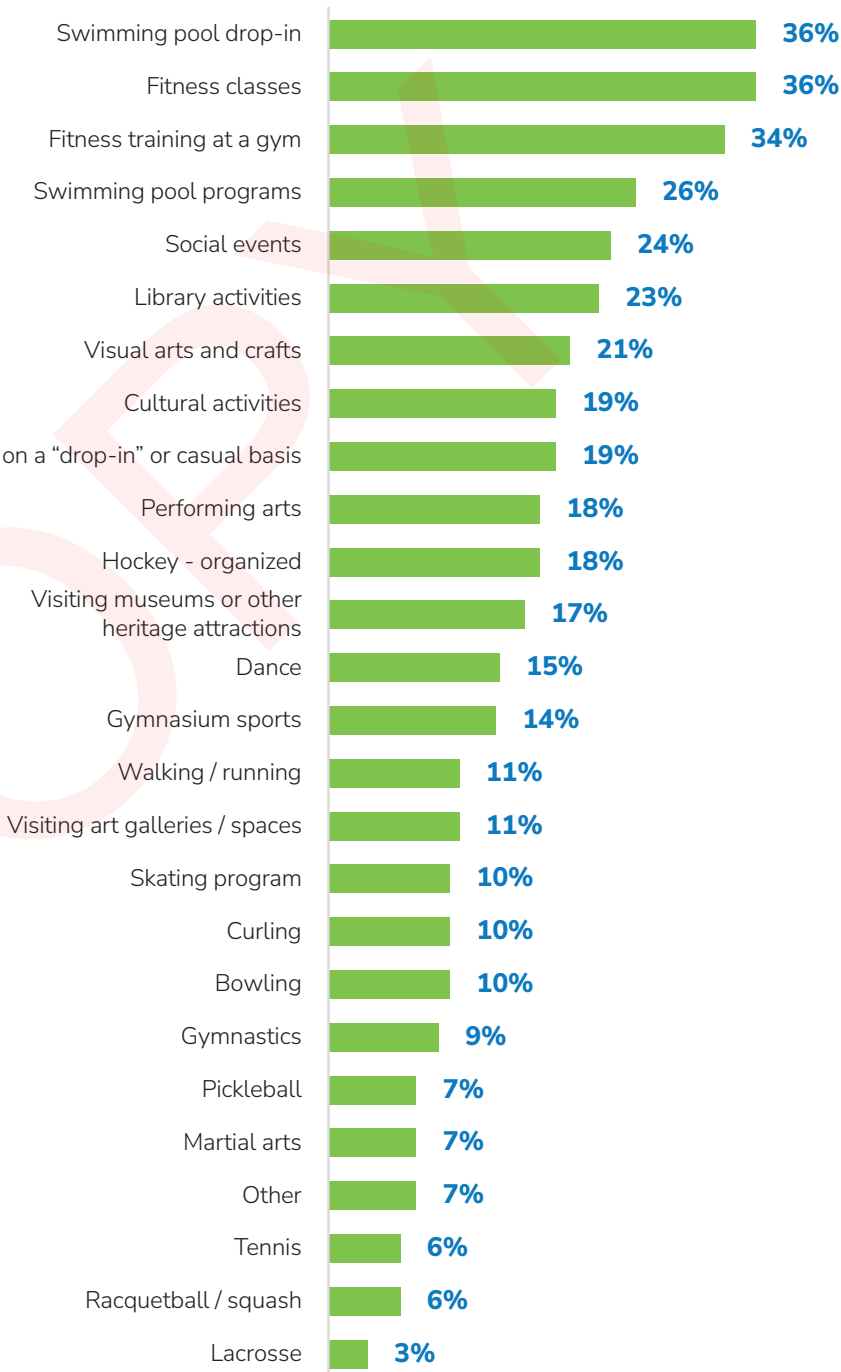
27% of residents who indicated that they live outside of Campbell River highlighted creativity and helping the community as motivators for recreation participation.

Household Motivation to Participate in Recreation Activities



Next, respondents were asked to indicate indoor activities that they or members of their household participate in on a regular basis (approximately 2 or more times per month) during the normal season of availability. The responses highlight the importance of both structured (program-based) and unstructured (spontaneous, casual, drop in) pursuits and preference. Fitness classes (36%), swimming pool drop-in (36%) and fitness training at a gym (34%) were the top responses. Respondents were given an opportunity to list any other activities that they participate in on a regular basis. The most popular written responses included soccer and indoor rock climbing.

Top Indoor Activities



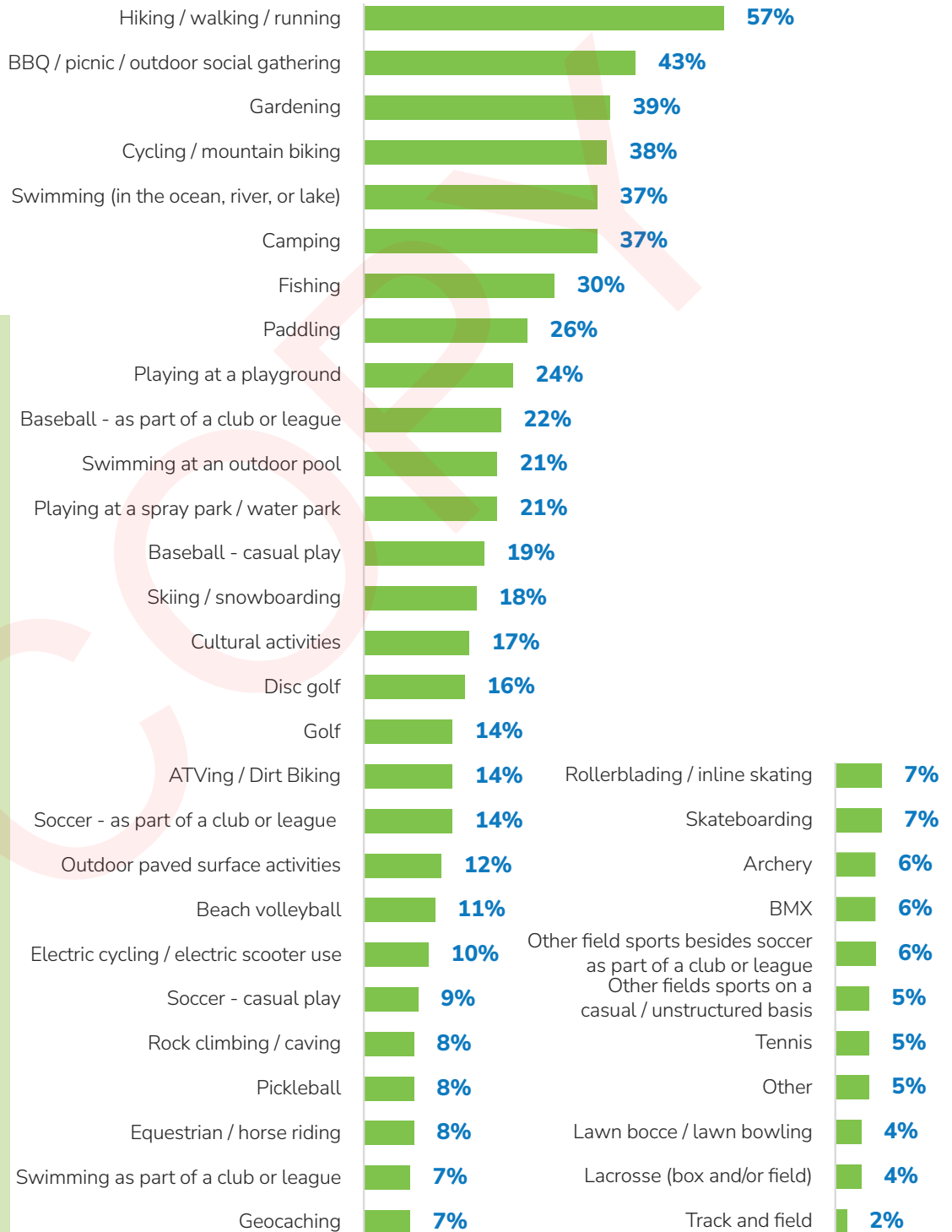
Regarding outdoor activity participation, over 50% of respondents stated they participate in walking / hiking / running at least 2 times per month. "Other" activities not identified in the list but highlighted through survey comments included hunting and dog walking.

Sub-Segment Findings:

When comparing sub-segment participation trends, only 14% of residents outside of Campbell River participate in swimming programs, compared to 38% of respondents from Campbell River.

Conversely, 4% of Campbell River respondents participate in beach volleyball, while the other communities see a 16% participation rate.

Top Outdoor Activities



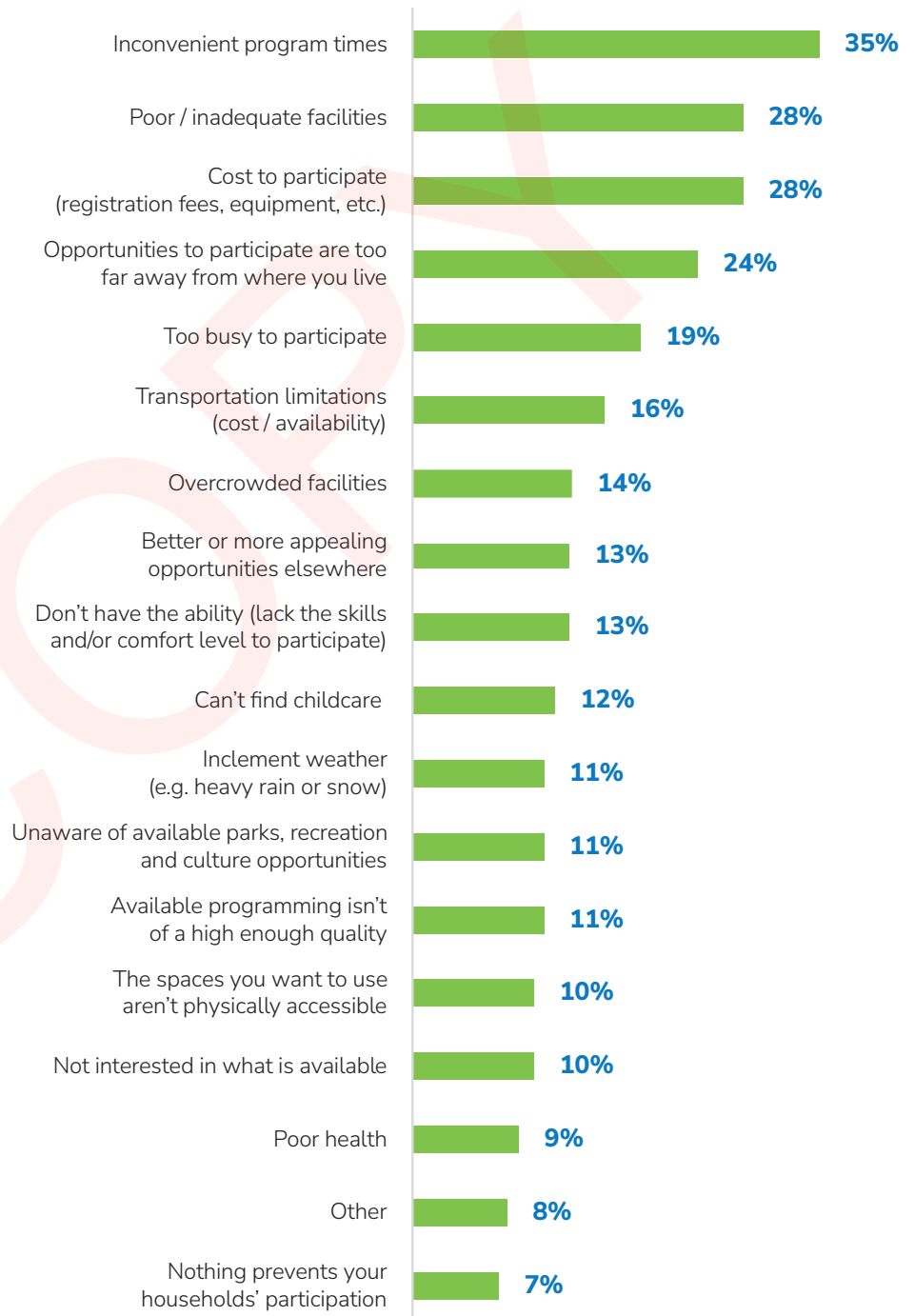
Barriers to Participation

Survey respondents were asked to identify any potential barriers that prevents them or members of their household in participating in recreation and related opportunities. The main barriers identified included inconvenient program times (35%), poor/ inadequate facilities (28%) and cost to participated (28%). Over 90% of respondents identified at least one barrier to participating in recreational or cultural activities. Common themes found within comments related to other barriers included lack of opportunities, programs, facilities, and staffing challenges. Many respondents also commented on programs filling up quickly with no additional opportunities for those on waitlists (e.g., swimming programs).

Sub-Segment Findings:

The largest barrier to participation for respondents living outside of Campbell River is the distance. 35% of those residents indicated that opportunities to participate are too far away from where they live.

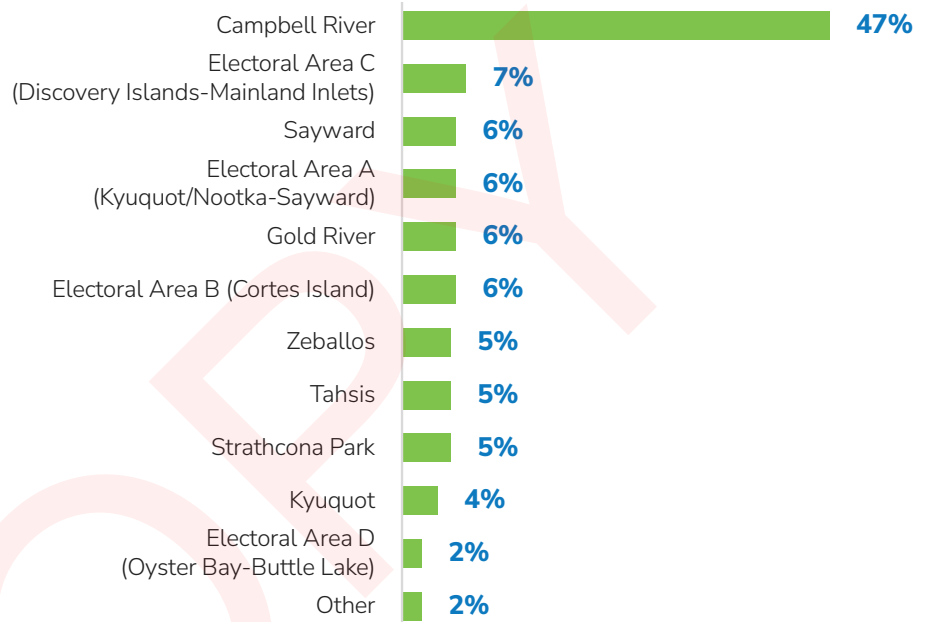
Barriers to Household Participation in Recreation and Related Opportunities



Facility Utilization

In exploring facility usage patterns, just under half of the respondents indicated that most of their recreation activities take place in Campbell River.

Where do most of your recreation and related activities take place?



Next, respondents were asked to indicate how far they would be willing to travel for different program offerings. As reflected in the table below, willingness to travel varies for different types of activities and tends to drop-off after approximately 30 minutes of travel time.

Willingness to travel for...	Less than 10 minutes	10 – 20 minutes	20 - 30 minutes	30 – 60 minutes	60+ minutes
Organized child/youth sport programming members of your household participate in	11%	40%	28%	14%	7%
Organized adult sport programming that yourself or others in your household participate in	9%	35%	35%	15%	7%
Fitness classes	18%	36%	26%	17%	3%
“Drop-in” facility time (e.g., open gym time)	19%	34%	27%	14%	5%
Aquatics programming (swim lessons, aqua-fit, etc.)	15%	38%	27%	16%	5%
Arts and cultural classes and activities	13%	39%	30%	13%	4%
Special events and festivals	6%	24%	35%	22%	13%

Sub-Segment Findings:

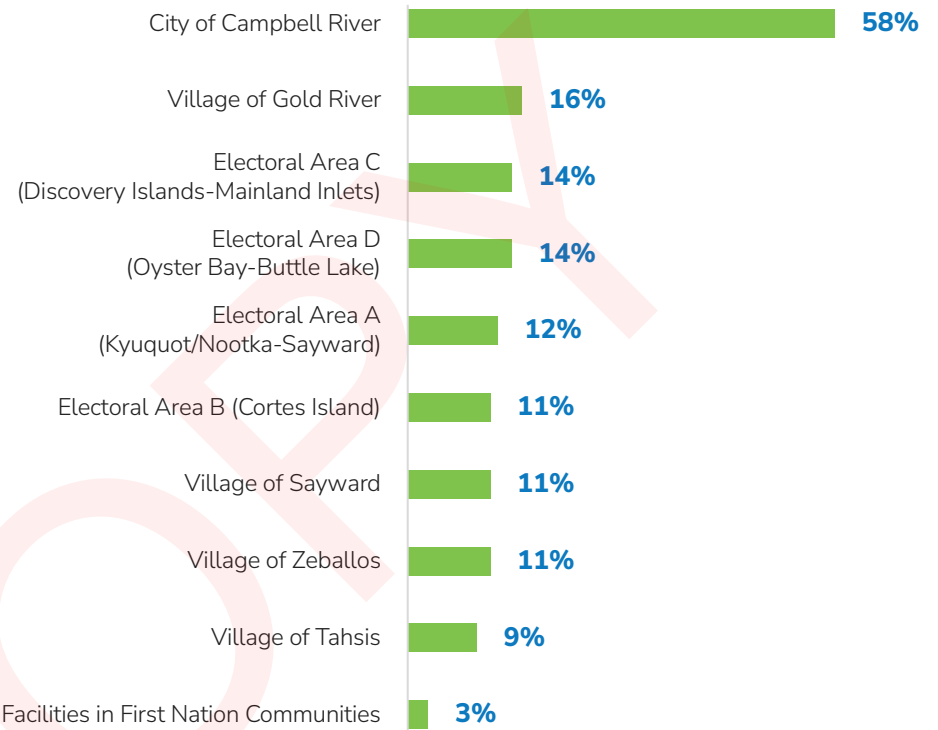
Campbell River respondents are less willing to travel more than 30 minutes for programs compared to respondents in the other communities.

Respondents were asked to indicate the communities that their household visits to utilize recreation facilities and spaces. Campbell River (58%) was the most popular location indicated, followed by the Village of Gold River (16%) and Electoral Areas C and D (14%).

Based on their response to the previous question, respondents were asked to indicate how frequently members of their household visit specific facilities and spaces within each community. If the respondent did not indicate visiting a community for recreation, they were not asked about the spaces within that community.

The tables below describe how often respondents visit recreation spaces in Campbell River, First Nation Communities, the Village of Gold River, the Village of Tahsis, the Village of Zeballos, the Village of Sayward, Electoral Area B (Cortes Island), Electoral Area A (Kyuquot/Nootka-Sayward), Electoral Area D (Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake), and Electoral Area C (Discovery Islands-Mainland Inlets).

Which communities does your household visit to use recreation facilities and spaces?



Campbell River Facility Utilization

A high proportion of respondents indicated that they visit trails (60%), outdoor parks and amenities (44%), and the Strathcona Garden Recreation Complex pool (40%) on a regular basis (daily or weekly). Visitation to community centres tends to be less frequent but still relatively high – suggesting that most of this visitation occurs for events or special functions.

Frequency of households visit to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Campbell River	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Campbell River	24%	38%	20%	15%	3%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Campbell River (e.g. playgrounds, picnic areas, skate and bike parks, splash park, etc.)	12%	32%	21%	24%	12%
Strathcona Garden Recreation Complex – Pool	9%	31%	18%	28%	14%
Strathcona Garden Recreation Complex – Arenas	12%	21%	10%	32%	25%
Centennial Outdoor Pool	4%	15%	13%	28%	41%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Campbell River	5%	22%	11%	20%	42%
Campbell River Sportsplex Gymnasium	2%	11%	11%	29%	47%
Community Centre – Gymnasium	1%	8%	8%	29%	54%
Community Centre – Other (e.g. multi-purpose program rooms, arts studios, etc.)	1%	5%	6%	33%	56%
Strathcona Garden Recreation Complex – Fitness and Wellness (e.g. weight room, program rooms, etc.)	4%	8%	4%	23%	62%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	2%	7%	7%	17%	67%
Campbell River Sportsplex – Weight Room	4%	9%	6%	14%	68%
Campbell River Sportsplex - Racquetball and Squash Courts	1%	4%	4%	14%	77%
Community Centre – Seniors Centre	1%	3%	3%	7%	87%
Community Centre – Temporary Weight Room	1%	3%	4%	3%	89%

Gold River Facility Utilization

The facility with the most visitation indicated in Gold River is the Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre Arena with 71% of respondents indicating that they visit the facilities at least monthly, with 16% indicating that they visit it daily or almost daily. The Anne Fiddick Aquatic Centre (68%) was the next most frequently visited facility on a monthly or weekly basis, followed by outdoor parks and amenities in Gold River (67%).

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Gold River	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Gold River	7%	24%	36%	24%	9%
Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre – Arena	16%	29%	26%	17%	13%
Anne Fiddick Aquatic Centre	7%	27%	35%	18%	14%
Trails in Gold River	9%	27%	27%	20%	18%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Gold River	9%	22%	27%	22%	19%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	12%	25%	22%	21%	21%
Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre – Curling Rink	11%	28%	23%	11%	27%



Tahsis Facility Utilization

Almost 60% of respondents indicated that they visit the Tahsis Recreation Centre Pool, 47% indicated that they use ball diamonds or sports fields and 40% indicated that they use outdoor parks and amenities at least weekly.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Tahsis	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Tahsis	19%	21%	37%	21%	1%
Tahsis Recreation Centre – Swimming Pool	11%	48%	35%	4%	3%
Trails in Tahsis	24%	14%	42%	14%	5%
Tahsis Recreation Centre – Bowling Alley	8%	27%	41%	14%	9%
Tahsis Recreation Centre – Meeting and Program Rooms	1%	32%	35%	19%	12%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Tahsis	11%	36%	23%	18%	12%
Tahsis Recreation Centre – Fitness Room	18%	32%	31%	5%	14%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	11%	21%	33%	21%	15%
Tahsis Recreation Centre – Gymnasium	8%	35%	14%	25%	18%



Zeballos Facility Utilization

The school gymnasium and outdoor parks are important facilities for recreation use in Zeballos for weekly and monthly participation. 48% of respondents use the school gymnasium, 47% use trails, and 39% use outdoor parks and amenities at least weekly.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Zeballos	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Zeballos	10%	15%	40%	34%	2%
Trails in Zeballos	6%	41%	20%	31%	2%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	6%	42%	40%	9%	3%
Zeballos Community Hall	1%	31%	47%	17%	4%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in the Zeballos (e.g. playgrounds, picnic areas, skate and bike parks, splash park, etc.)	2%	37%	35%	22%	5%



Sayward Facility Utilization

The Kelsey Recreation Centre Pool (48%) and gymnasium (46%) and weight room (41%) were the most visited indoor facilities on a weekly or daily basis. Outdoor activity spaces such as trails (46%), and outdoor parks and amenities (44%) were also popular spaces visited weekly or daily.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Sayward	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Sayward	15%	31%	28%	24%	2%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Sayward (e.g. playgrounds, picnic areas, skate and bike parks, splash park, etc.)	11%	33%	25%	27%	4%
Kelsey Recreation Centre - Swimming Pool	10%	38%	32%	8%	13%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Sayward	7%	31%	31%	18%	14%
Sayward Community Hall	4%	18%	49%	15%	14%
Kelsey Recreation Centre - Gymnasium	10%	36%	19%	20%	15%
Kelsey Recreation Centre - Multipurpose Room	15%	24%	24%	15%	21%
Kelsey Recreation Centre - Weight Room	17%	24%	21%	16%	22%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	2%	31%	31%	10%	27%



Electoral Area A Facility Utilization

Community Halls are the most visited indoor facility type in Area A (64% of respondents visit a Community Centre a minimum of once a month). Trails (73%) and ball diamonds and sports fields (71%) were indicated as having the most monthly use of facilities in the community.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Electoral Area A (Kyuquot/Nootka-Sayward)	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Area A	8%	21%	44%	15%	11%
Community Halls in Area A	6%	30%	28%	23%	13%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Area A	8%	21%	25%	27%	18%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	8%	25%	32%	16%	19%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Area A	7%	22%	42%	10%	19%

Electoral Area B Facility Utilization

Outdoor parks and amenities are the most visited recreation amenities in Area B with 71% of respondents indicating that they visit a minimum of once a month. School gymnasiums are visited by 67% of respondents at least once a month, making them the most frequently visited indoor space.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Electoral Area B (Cortes Island)	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Area B	16%	24%	26%	26%	8%
Community Halls in Area B	10%	18%	37%	26%	10%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Area B	14%	24%	34%	19%	10%
School Gymnasium (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	12%	26%	29%	14%	20%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Area B	11%	12%	28%	24%	25%

Electoral Area C Facility Utilization

Trails are the most frequently visited recreation amenity in Area C with 53% of respondents indicating that they visit them at least weekly.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Electoral Area C (Discovery Islands - Mainland Inlets)	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Area C	24%	29%	17%	24%	6%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Area C	13%	26%	24%	29%	7%
Community Halls in Area C	5%	29%	38%	13%	17%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Area C	2%	4%	27%	35%	32%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	4%	19%	20%	18%	40%

Electoral Area D Facility Utilization

Similar to the other electoral areas trails are an important part of the community with 35% of respondents indicating that they visit them at least weekly. School gymnasiums had the least amount of reported use with 67% of respondents indicating that they never visit them.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in Electoral Area D (Oyster Bay-Butte Lake)	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in Area D	12%	23%	30%	31%	5%
Outdoor Parks and Amenities in Area D (e.g. playgrounds, picnic areas, skate and bike parks, splash park, etc.)	4%	19%	35%	32%	11%
Ball Diamonds and Sports Fields in Area D	2%	3%	19%	27%	50%
School Gymnasiums (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	0%	6%	9%	19%	67%

First Nations Communities Facility Utilization

Respondents indicated high levels of use for most types of facilities. The community hall/centre/band office is the most frequently visited indoor space with 31% of respondents indicating that they visit this facility at least weekly.

Frequency of household visits to the following recreation and related fitness facilities in First Nations Communities	Daily or Almost Daily (5 or more visits per week)	Weekly (1 or 2 times per week)	Monthly (1 or 2 visits per month)	A few times per year	Never
Trails in or near First Nation's Communities	9%	17%	26%	37%	11%
Community Hall/Centre/Band Office	14%	17%	17%	33%	19%
Ball Diamond and Sports field	0%	27%	21%	27%	27%
School Gymnasium (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	0%	22%	14%	33%	31%

Importance of Recreation & Current Satisfaction Levels

Respondents were asked to indicate how important recreation and related opportunities are to their household and broader community. As reflected in the table, respondents place a high value on recreation both at a personal and community-wide level.

How important are recreation and related opportunities (parks, culture, the arts, etc.) to...	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Unsure / No Opinion
...you and your household's quality of life	57%	30%	11%	2%
...the quality of life for all individuals in your community	59%	23%	15%	3%
...the appeal and attractiveness of your community for current and prospective residents	53%	30%	11%	6%
School Gymnasium (after hours for non-school based programs and activities)	0%	22%	14%	33%

Satisfaction with Recreation Services

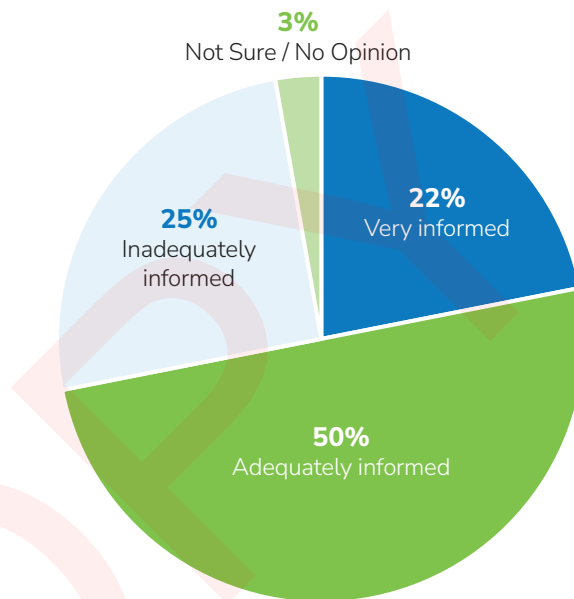
Respondents were asked to rank how satisfied they are with specific aspects of recreation services within their community. Respondents were most satisfied with their household's ability to access affordable recreation and active living opportunities (62%), followed by the quality of appealing recreation facilities within 60 minutes of travel time (61%), and within 30 minutes of travel time (60%). Respondents expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction with the availability of quality and appealing recreation facilities in their immediate community with 37% indicated that they are dissatisfied.

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of recreation services?	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Not Sure / No Opinion	Not Applicable to Your Community
The availability of quality and appealing recreation facilities that you can access in under a 60-minute travel time .	17%	44%	27%	9%	4%
Your household's overall ability to access affordable recreation and active living opportunities.	17%	45%	28%	7%	3%
The availability of quality and appealing recreation facilities that you can access in under a 30-minute travel time.	16%	44%	27%	9%	3%
The availability of quality and appealing recreation and related (e.g. arts and culture) programming within a 30 minute drive of where you live.	12%	47%	22%	15%	4%
The availability of quality and appealing recreation and related (e.g. arts and culture) programming in your immediate community.	11%	45%	29%	13%	2%
The availability of quality and appealing recreation facilities in your immediate community .	10%	44%	37%	6%	3%

Communication

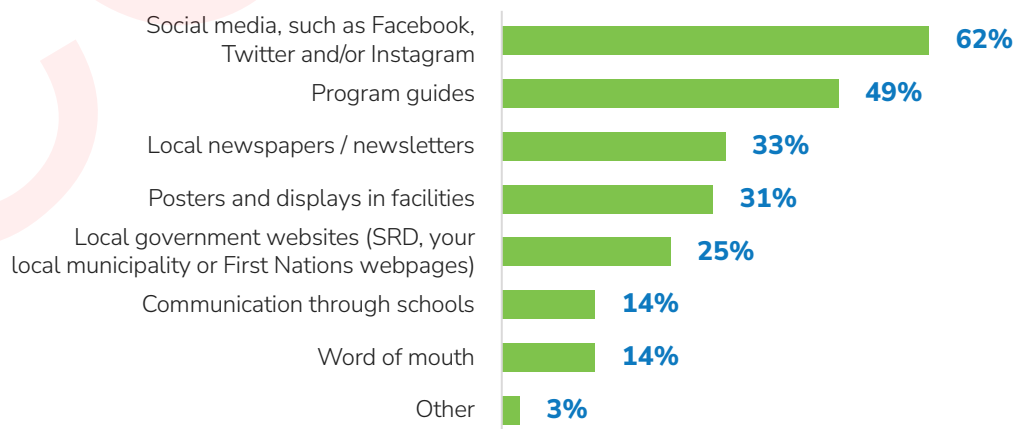
When asked about how informed respondents feel that they are about recreation and related opportunities, approximately 75% of respondents feel adequately or very informed about recreation opportunities. 25% of respondents feel that they are inadequately informed.

How Informed do you feel about recreation and related opportunities?



Next, respondents were asked about how they prefer to learn about recreation and related opportunities. The top three responses were social media (62%), program guides (49%), and local newspapers/newsletters (33%). When respondents took the opportunities to write in their preferences the Tidelines was mentioned as a good resource for information sharing and many residents also expressed support for newsletters.

How do you prefer to learn about recreation and related opportunities?



Future Priorities

Respondents were provided with a list of considerations for setting future priorities and allocating financial resources, they were asked to rank these considerations from very important to not important. At least 50% of respondents indicated that sustaining facilities, increasing supply of programming, and updating current facilities are very important considerations.

Considerations for Setting Future Priorities

Considerations for setting future priorities and allocating financial resources	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Unsure / No Opinion
Sustaining all or most existing recreation facilities.	57%	34%	9%	1%
Increasing the supply of available programming.	52%	31%	15%	3%
Updating current facilities to ensure they are safe, inclusive and accessible for all residents (including equity deserving individuals and those facing physical or social barriers).	50%	32%	14%	4%
Keeping user fees as low as possible.	47%	36%	15%	3%
Developing new types of facilities to meet emerging needs and trends (e.g. types of programs or activities that are growing in popularity).	43%	36%	16%	5%
Focusing resources towards developing larger “hub” facilities with multiple amenities that serve residents from a broader catchment area (e.g. like the Strathcona Garden Recreation Complex or the Sportsplex in Campbell River).	41%	34%	17%	8%
Renovating / retrofitting aging facilities to achieve higher levels of energy efficiency and reflect a commitment to sustainability and addressing climate change.	37%	34%	23%	6%
Developing “branch” facilities and outreach programming to service smaller and remote communities	33%	37%	22%	8%
Decommissioning facilities that are underutilized and re-allocating these resources to higher value uses.	27%	42%	19%	12%

Next, respondents were asked about program priorities. They were asked to indicate which programming from the list provided should be a priority for investment in their local community or surrounding area. Water education safety (42%) was indicated the most often as priority for children and youth programming, while unstructured recreation opportunities and outdoor recreation programming was indicated the most often for adults ages 18 – 59 (34%), and programs that encourage socialization was indicated the most often as a priority for older adults ages 60+ (33%).

Priority Programming for Investment

Priority Programming for Investment	Children and Youth (ages ~0 – 17)	Adults (ages ~18 – 59)	Older Adults (ages 60 and over)	I believe these opportunities are sufficiently provided
Nature based educational programming (e.g. trail / hiking safety and skills, camping skills, general outdoor knowledge courses, responsible OHV/ATV use courses, etc.)	36%	32%	23%	10%
Fitness and wellness programming	25%	32%	32%	12%
Unstructured recreation (e.g. the ability to play “drop-in” sports like basketball, badminton, etc.)	28%	34%	24%	13%
Organized sports	32%	32%	21%	14%
Visual arts and culture programming	26%	28%	30%	16%
Performing arts and culture programming	28%	28%	27%	18%
Programs for individuals facing social, physical, or cognitive barriers to participation	29%	32%	28%	11%
Programs that encourage socialization	29%	29%	33%	9%
Water education and safety	42%	26%	19%	13%
Aquatics fitness programming	22%	31%	31%	16%
Outdoor recreation programming (e.g. rock climbing, paddling programs, etc.)	32%	34%	22%	12%

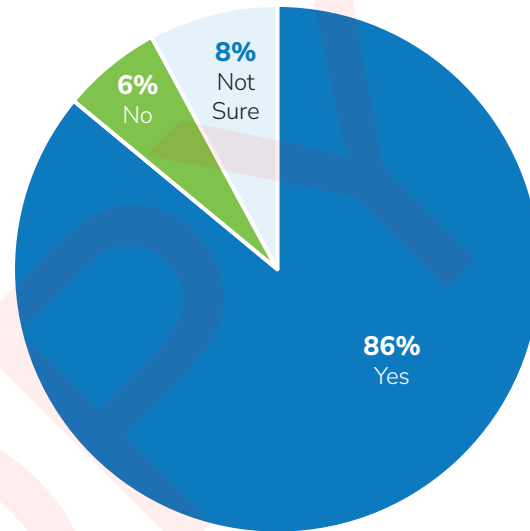
Sub-Segment Findings:

Respondents living outside of Campbell River identified adult and senior programming as a priority in all categories.

Regional Collaborations

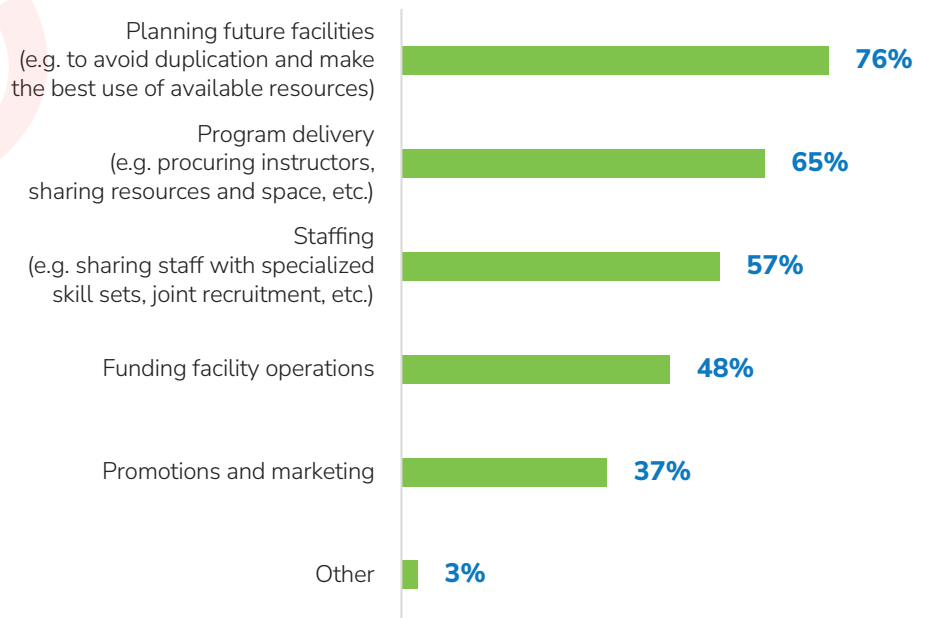
As illustrated by the adjacent graph, over three quarters (86%) of respondents expressed support for the idea of the SRD and local communities collaborating and partnering to provide recreation opportunities.

Do you support the idea of the SRD and local communities collaborating and partnering to provide recreation opportunities?



Those respondents in support of regional collaboration were next given a list of potential ways in which collaboration could occur. Facility planning (76%), program delivery (65%) and staff sharing (57%) were identified by over half of respondents.

Areas that the SRD, municipalities and First Nations should consider collaborating and partnering to provide recreation services



3.3. Stakeholder Discussion Session Themes

Overview

23 organizations / interests were engaged through a series of discussion sessions in the late summer and early fall of 2022. The intent of these discussions sessions were to explore a number of key topics pertaining to recreation in the region, including:

- Current state (strengths and gaps).
- Future opportunities to get more people, more active.
- Potential opportunities for, and limitations of, regional collaborations.
- The roles and ways in which programming and facilities are currently being delivered.

Some discussion sessions were held in-person while others were conducted virtually. Summarized in the following tables is a listing of the organizations / interests that participated in the discussions.

User Groups / Recreation Interest Groups

- Men's / Youth Soccer
- Women's Hockey League
- Hurricanes Girls Hockey
- Campbell River Skating Club
- Campbell River Minor Hockey
- Pickleball
- Campbell River Salmon Kings
- Campbell River Slo-Pitch
- Campbell River Disc Golf Club

Government (First Nations, Municipalities and Regional District Representatives)

- Gold River (CAO)
- Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation
- Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tleset'h First Nation
- Village of Zeballas (CAO)
- Village of Sayward (Recreation Manager & CAO)
- Nuchatlaht First Nation
- Village of Tahsis
- City of Campbell River (staff session)
- Strathcona Regional District (staff session)
- mentioned above Wei Wai Kum First Nation
- Quadra Island Recreation Society (staff and Board member)

Other Public Sector Agencies and Organizations

- School District 72
- Island Health

Key Themes

While the stakeholders held a wide array of viewpoints and perspectives a number of key themes emerged through the discussions. These themes and other notable points of interest are summarized as follows.

Current State of Recreation

- The pandemic has had significant impacts on recreation program delivery in terms of both the ability to provide services and participation levels.
- Smaller communities rely heavily on volunteers and part-time staff. While some communities noted that this is a strength, others identified recruiting and retaining these individuals as a significant challenge.
- Expectations for programs and activities vary based on the size of communities.

Trends and Changes

- Growth in outdoor based recreation, including hiking, mountain biking, and ocean based sports.
- Pickleball and disc golf are growing rapidly.
- Continued demand for aquatics programming (especially lessons and aqua-fitness). However, instructor and guarding limitations are a factor in meeting demand.
- Increasing recognition of the synergies between recreation and public health – but more work is needed to bring initiatives together.

Overall Perspectives on Collaboration

- In theory a “no brainer”, but implementation (the how?) and buy-in are always a challenge.
- The SRD needs to be the leader and bring forward options and ideas for consideration.
- General belief that regional collaboration needs to start with some “easy wins” and then move forward accordingly.
- Need to think more broadly about the benefits of recreation and less about boundaries.
- Some stakeholders were curious to learn more about the purpose of the study and why regional recreation was being explored at this time. While most agreed that increased collaboration is a good thing, many of these stakeholders were wary of a process that leads towards total integration or centralization of services.

Smaller, Remote Community Perspectives

- While supportive of more collaboration, communities have minimal financial or staff resources to contribute to broader initiatives.
- Like the notion of cost sharing on facility upkeep and operations, but keen to preserve local control over programming and space use.
- Would also benefit from sharing expertise (e.g. marketing, programming), staffing (e.g. lifeguards, summer programming staff to visit community periodically).
- Support Reconciliation and see recreation as a platform to advance it.
- Some particular interest in outdoor recreation opportunities (both for residents and to encourage visitation)

Community User Group / Recreation Interest Group Perspectives

- Would like one contact for bookings, fees and issues management.
- Identified the importance of being customer focused at facilities (working with groups to find solutions, not put up barriers).
- Generally satisfied with the supply of sports and recreation infrastructure, however the need for higher quality sports fields and diamonds was identified by a handful of stakeholders.

Other Themes and Points of Interest

- Schools are recognized as important sites of recreation and opportunities exist to better leverage this infrastructure for community benefit.
- Island Health has a number of preventative health initiatives and resources; opportunities exist to continue building relationships and cross-promoting health and recreation smaller communities.



4.0 Trends in Recreation



4.1. Trends Context

While providers of recreation opportunities need to be in-touch with the local dynamics and needs of their community, it is also important to remain up to date on emerging demands and trends being experienced regionally, provincially, nationally and beyond. Understanding broader trends can help anticipate future demands, opportunities, and align with best practice.

Summarized as follows are a number of important trends pertaining to activity participation, service delivery, and recreation (and related) infrastructure. These trends are supported by available research and data. A list of sources is provided in the appendices.



4.2. Participation Trends and Preferences

The following table identified key trends in recreation activity participation and preferences.

Trends	Description and Potential Impacts
Evolving nature of older adult activity preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older adults are seeking more moderately active and multi-generational pursuits. • Activities like pickleball and group fitness are likely to continue growing in popularity. • Younger older adult cohorts may be less inclined to visit “seniors centres” and prefer integration into community recreation facilities.
Demand for spontaneous / unstructured types of recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While structured and organized programming is important, there is an increasing desire for activities that are less organized and available on-demand. • Likely to result in continuing and growing demands for open gymnasium time, open pool time, shinny ice, and fitness centres.
Youth sport participation driven by a desire for skill development opportunities, cost, and flexibility for both participant and parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The professionalization of youth sports have increased cost. Many youth and parents also balk at the time commitment which can impact other recreational pursuits. • Growth in shorter duration programming (e.g. sessional instead of seasonal). • Growth of youth activities like mountain biking and skiing that have more flexibility and a multi-generational dynamic.
The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on programming, activity demands, and facility expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While still unknown, it is likely that the pandemic will have some lasting impacts. • Observed impacts to date include higher expectations of facility cleanliness, a desire for more space and less crowding, and a spike in demand for outdoor and nature based recreation (likely as a result of individuals having discovered these pursuits during pandemic facility disruptions).
Continuing demand for leisure based aquatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While aquatics opportunities in general remain popular, the most significant growth area is leisure based aquatics (includes family swimming, play based swimming, etc.). • Likely to continue resulting in demands for amenities like lazy rivers, splash features, slides, shallow water pools, etc.). • Perceived quality of leisure aquatics offerings will drive pool visitation.
Demand for indoor walking / running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While a longstanding offering in colder climates, there is increasing demand for indoor walking / running tracks to be included in south coast recreation facilities. Potential factors for this demand could include more variable weather (wetter winters, hotter summers) and age demographics.
Growth of ‘wheeled sports’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including trail-based activities (mountain biking, e-biking, etc.) and park amenity based activities (e.g. skateboarding, scootering, etc.). • E-scooters and e-bikes have become more prevalent as modes of day to day transportation.

4.3. Service Delivery Trends

The following table identified key trends and best practices in the delivery of public sector recreation and related services.

Trends	Description and Potential Impacts
Reconciliation and Decolonization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the need to decolonize sport and recreation and use these activities as a platform to achieve reconciliation. • Many communities have formally identified how their service provision can align with and help achieve relevant Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report. • Integrating Indigenous art and naming into facilities is an example of how recreation facility provision can advance decolonization.
Equity and inclusion as key drivers of service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While public sector providers of recreation and related services have usually had a strong inclusion and equity focus, an even greater level of attention has been placed on these key elements of service delivery in recent years across the sector. • In addition to subsidy programs, emerging best practices include staff training to better guide interactions with equity deserving and racialized individuals and increased offerings of low barrier programming.
Partnerships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growing cost to build and operate facilities has made partnerships even more important. • The regional district model in BC provides a structure from which service partnerships can be developed. • Partnerships with the school system, service agencies, public health, First Nations and the private sector continue to be explored by many regional districts and municipalities.
Evolving nature of volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrary to popular belief, volunteer rates are not declining but volunteer preferences are. • Individuals are more commonly seeking shorter duration volunteer roles with pre-set timeframes and levels of commitment. • Finding volunteers for board roles and coaching / program delivery is becoming significantly more challenging, especially in a post-pandemic context.

4.4. Infrastructure Trends

The following table identifies key trends and best practices in recreation and related infrastructure.

Trends	Description and Potential Impacts
Increasing user expectations for facility amenities and 'creature comforts'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for amenities such as wifi and food services. • Growing demand for social space before facility point of purchase.
Leisure aquatics focus for new pools and existing pool enhancements / expansions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most aquatics facility development and enhancement projects tend to be focused on adding leisure water space and amenities (e.g. lazy rivers, splash features, leisure pools, slides, wave riders, etc.).
Developing large span spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large span dry-floor recreation spaces (double gymnasiums, fieldhouses, flexi-halls, etc.) have the adaptability to evolve over time with trends. • Developing these spaces is becoming increasingly preferred / prioritized over purpose built spaces.
Changerooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolving societal demands and expectations for changerooms, especially pertaining to aquatics facilities (e.g. demand for more family changerooms and larger, more comfortable change areas and amenities). • Many public recreation and community centre facilities are struggling with providing washroom equity and access for vulnerable individuals with patron concerns over safety.
Integration between indoor and outdoor facilities and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarce land supply and operational efficiencies are continuing to drive this trend.

5.0 Summary of Key Research and Engagement Findings



The following table summarizes key findings from the research and engagement presented in Sections 2 – 4 of this study document. These key findings identify important considerations for future recreation service provision in the region and inform the future approaches and recommendations outlined in Section 6.

Key Finding	Potential Impacts on Regional Recreation
<p>Recreation activity preferences and demands are as diverse and unique as the communities within the SRD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation services in the SRD need to balance local community needs with avoiding duplication. • The built and natural environments of communities and areas across the SRD both influence recreation preferences. Service provision needs to leverage existing and available resources.
<p>Residents and stakeholders are generally supportive of increased levels of regional collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and partnerships may be necessary in some instances to sustain recreation service delivery, while in other cases it can help optimize what already works relatively well. • Members of the public and stakeholders generally recognize that sustaining existing facilities and / or building new ones will be challenging for a single jurisdiction to undertake on their own. • Creating “buy-in” is likely to be an ongoing process that needs to demonstrate benefits.
<p>Recreation infrastructure is aging and will require re-investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major facilities such as the Strathcona Garden and Sportsplex will continue to require significant levels of re-investment. • The existence of pools in smaller communities like Tahsis and Gold River is unique. While these facilities are highly valued, the cost of sustaining infrastructure, finding lifeguards, and overall operations will be challenging. • Communities across the region have varying levels of asset management practices and understanding of asset condition. Access to more comprehensive and complete data on asset condition and lifespan will be important to inform decision making and funding.
<p>Many residents access recreation facilities and programs across jurisdictional boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be important for service providers in the SRD to continue exploring innovative ways to create a more cohesive system, reduce barriers, and avoid duplication. • Residents have increasing expectations for programming and facility quality.
<p>Recreation can be a key community development mechanism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents and stakeholders believe that recreation can build community and help realize a host of social and economic benefits. • Increased cross-sectoral collaborations present an opportunity to further capitalize on natural synergies between recreation, public health and education (amongst other).
<p>There is not a single regional funding “best practice” approach in BC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining how to fund recreation as a service area challenges most regional districts in the province. In recent years many regional districts have re-visited their funding models and partnerships – often driven by the need to replace or undertake significant investment in aging infrastructure. • Regional funding discussions are best undertaken when all involved recognize that “benefit” extends beyond just simply who uses the facility and considers how recreation facilities can contribute to regional vibrancy and the ability to attract and retain residents.

6.0 Potential Future Approaches & Considerations



6.1. The Benefits and Rationale for Increased Regional Collaboration

The findings of this study support that increased levels of regional collaboration should be pursued. The notion of regional collaboration has high levels of public and stakeholder support as well as the opportunity to provide wide ranging benefits, including:

- The opportunity to create efficiencies and make the best use of available resources;
- The opportunity to share successes and expertise; and
- Maximizing overall recreation participation and the wide-ranging benefits accrued from getting more people, more active.

In addition to the benefits of collaborating, working together may be a necessity given the increasing costs and complexities of providing services. Recreation facilities are becoming more expensive to construct and operate, resulting in the need for multiple jurisdictions to leverage available funding to sustain service levels within a region.

Regional funding and service delivery partnership in B.C and across Canada are usually formed as a result of the following two common circumstances:

1. Residents in multiple jurisdictions generally agree that an amenity is too important and beneficial for their community to not have access to either locally or within a reasonable drive; and
2. A single jurisdiction is challenged or unable to sustainably fund the provision of the amenity on their own (operating and / or capital).

Pools and regional parks are two major amenity types that are commonly part of regional funding partnerships due to the above noted reasons.



Aquatics Provision on North-Central Vancouver Island

As alluded to on the previous page, indoor aquatics facilities are a common amenity type provided through a regional funding partnership. The table below provides an overview of aquatics facility funding models along the north-central areas of Vancouver Island. As reflected by the table, the majority of aquatics facilities receive funding support from multiple jurisdictions.

Facility	Regional Funding Partners
Ravensong Aquatics Centre (located in Qualicum Beach)	Operated by the Regional District of Nanaimo and funded by residents within the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, and RDN Electoral Areas E, F,G, and H.
City of Nanaimo Indoor Pools (Nanaimo Aquatics Centre and Beban Park)	Operated by the City of Nanaimo and funded by residents within the City, District of Lantzville, and RDN Electoral Areas A, B, and C.
Comox Valley Regional District Indoor Pools (Sports Centre and Aquatics Centre)	Operated by the CVRD through the Comox Valley Recreation Complexes Service that includes the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and CVRD Electoral Areas A, B, and C (not including Denman and Hornby Islands).
Echo Aquatic Centre (located in Port Alberni)	Operated by the City of Port Alberni and funded by residents within the City and ACRD Electoral Areas D, E and F.
Cowichan Aquatic Centre (Duncan)	Operated by the Municipality of North Cowichan and historically funded by residents within the City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, Town of Lake Cowichan, and CVRD Electoral Areas A, B, C, E, F, and I. *See note after table.
Frank Jameson Community Centre (Ladysmith)	Operated by the Town of Ladysmith and historically funded by residents within the Town and CVRD Electoral Area G and H. *See note after table.
<i>Strathcona Gardens (Campbell River)</i>	<i>Operated by the Strathcona Regional District and funded by residents within the City of Campbell River and SRD Electoral Area D.</i>
<i>Anne Fiddick Aquatics Centre (Gold River)</i>	<i>Operated and solely funded by the Village of Gold River.</i>
<i>Tahsis Recreation Centre (Tahsis)</i>	<i>Operated and solely funded by the Village of Tahsis.</i>
<i>Kelsey Recreation Centre (Sayward)</i>	<i>Operated and solely funded by the Village of Sayward</i>

*The Cowichan Valley Regional District has recently approved a new Bylaw 4438 that will shift funding completely towards a new usage-based model in which every jurisdiction within the CVRD will pay based on actual resident use. The new approach is being phased on over 3 years.

Key Finding:

Most aquatics facilities of a similar size to Strathcona Gardens along the north-central areas of Vancouver Island have a more comprehensive regional funding model than what is currently in place for Strathcona Gardens. This includes regional funding contributions to pools located in service centres with a population that is similar or larger to Campbell River (Courtenay / Comox, Nanaimo, Duncan / North Cowichan). There are very few communities with aquatics facilities as small in municipal population as Gold River and Tahsis from which to compare.



Identifying Regional Assets

Similar to the aquatics context, regional parks are often designated as such when deemed highly important to residents across multiple jurisdictions and the resources of a single jurisdiction cannot effectively manage and/or fund the park asset. The following table reflects an approach used by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen¹ to classify regional vs local parks. **While parks were out of scope and not a focus area of this study, many of these same characteristics could be applied when determining whether an amenity is regional / sub-regional in nature.**

Characteristics	Regional Park	Local Park
Visitor Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature-based outdoor recreation – mostly unstructured and spontaneous Connection to and appreciation of nature Interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spontaneous, structured & active outdoor recreation Structured sport Community gathering Water play Interpretation
Regional Uniqueness / Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regionally unique recreation opportunity and / or conservation value. Regionally unique / important area for Indigenous peoples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally important recreation opportunity.
Conservation Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protects regionally significant ecological, Indigenous and / or cultural areas and / or features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited regional conservation value. Local conservation value or education on wildlife, ecosystems, or ecosystem processes. May protect locally significant cultural area or feature.
Typical Visitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Area residents, regional residents, and visitors from abroad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Area residents. Limited or no visitation from beyond the Electoral Area
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the benefit of the region as-a-whole (residents of electoral areas and municipalities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the benefit of electoral area residents.
Typical Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variable, but typically much larger than local parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variable, but typically much smaller than regional parks.
Requisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through region-wide requisition (electoral area and municipal). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through Electoral Area requisition.

¹ Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen Parks, Trails, and Recreation 10-year Game Plan

Other Examples of Regional and Multi-Jurisdictional Funding

While pools and regional parks reflect the two most commonly funded regional amenities, there are numerous examples of other recreation and sport amenities on Vancouver Island for which inter-jurisdictional funding agreements have been developed. The following table identifies some selected examples.

Amenity Type	Examples of Regional Funding
Sports fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Comox Valley Regional District partner to fund sports fields projects and operations. • 21 sports fields in the designated Southern Recreation Area within the City and Regional District of Nanaimo are funded by residents from the City, District of Lantzville, and Electoral Areas A, B, and C. • Sports fields within the RDN's District 69 Recreation Services Area are funded by residents from the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, and Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H.
Arenas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Oceanside Place Arenas in Parksville (RDN operated) are funded by residents from the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, and Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H as part of the District 69 Recreation Services Area. • City of Nanaimo Arenas are funded by residents from the City, District of Lantzville, and Electoral Areas A, B, and C. • A number of arenas within the Cowichan Valley Regional District (Cowichan Lake Sports Arena, Fuller Lake Arena, and Kerry Park Recreation Centre) are regionally funded <i>*See note after table.</i>
Community centres and complexes (e.g. with fitness, dry-floor program space, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cowichan Valley Regional District has identified 9 "regionally significant facilities" that are funded regionally as per the new Bylaw 4438. Amenities within these facilities include aquatics, arenas, community centres, fitness rooms, arts and cultural amenities, and multi-purpose program spaces. <i>*See note after table.</i> • The Comox Valley Regional District has established the Comox Valley Recreation Complexes Service that oversees arena, swimming pools, and the curling centre (funded by residents from City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and CVRD Electoral Areas A, B, and C (not including Denman and Hornby Islands).

**The Cowichan Valley Regional District has recently approved a new Bylaw 4438 that will shift funding completely towards a new usage-based model in which every jurisdiction within the CVRD will pay based on actual resident use. Their approach is being phased on over 3 years.*

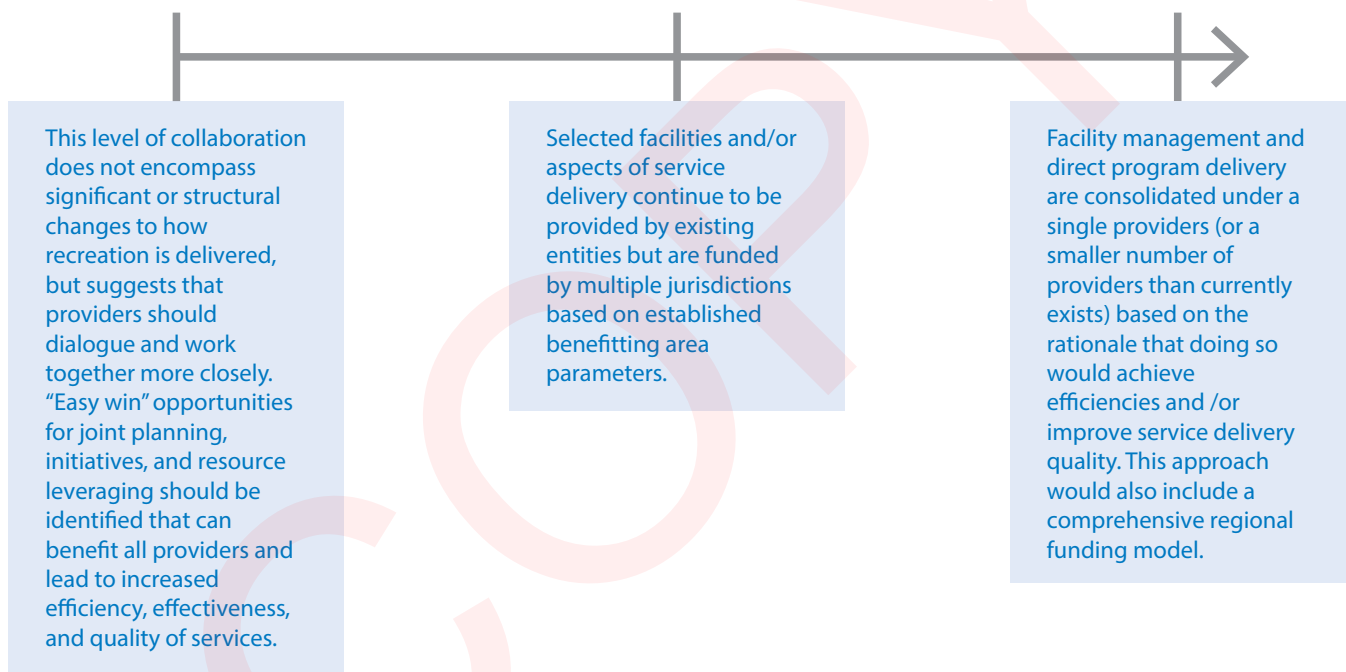
Key Finding:

In most situations, when amenities like arenas and community centres / complexes are regionally funded it is part of a comprehensive regional recreation service that is inclusive of multiple amenities and program delivery.

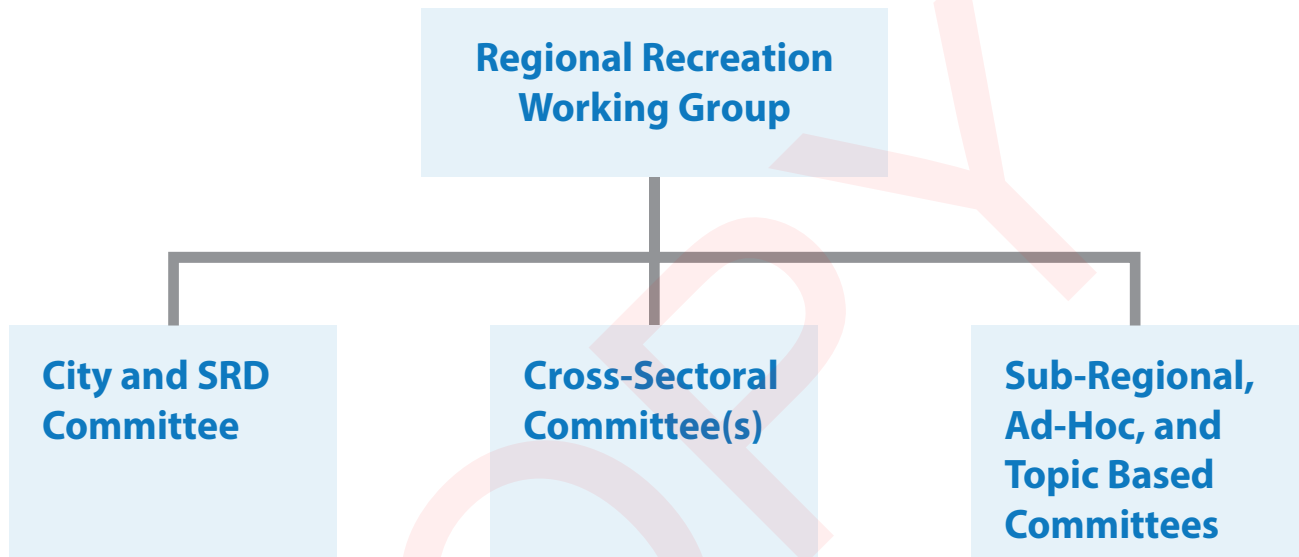
6.2. Potential Levels of Collaboration

When considering increased levels of regional collaboration to deliver recreation services, three overarching approaches exist as illustrated by the continuum graphic. The provision of regional recreation could advance along the continuum over time or stay fixed within one of these approaches.

Regional Recreation System Optimization Funding Services Regional or Sub-Regionally Amalgamated Service Delivery



It is strongly recommended that jurisdictions within the SRD work together to achieve **Regional Recreation System Optimization**. Outlined as follows is a recommended structure that can help create a more collaborative system of recreation service provision that benefits all providers and ultimately enhances the opportunities available for residents.



The **Regional Recreation Working Group** should consist of the SRD and all municipalities in the region. First Nations communities should additionally be invited to formally join the working group and all committees. The working group should be structured to provide a platform for ongoing dialogue on region-wide recreation topics, issues, opportunities. As importantly, the existence of this group will enable increased networking and lead to a better understanding of recreation across the region. Agendas for quarterly meetings can be fluid and evolve as needed, however committee reports should be embedded as regular agenda items to ensure all working group members are kept up to date on ongoing initiatives across the region. The working group should additionally be tasked with identifying potential sub-regional / ad-hoc / topic-based committees and cross-sectoral committees (as well as when committee can be retired or evolve to meet other needs).

The City and SRD committee will enable collaborative discussions around a number of key topics and opportunities specific to the Campbell River area. The following table identifies recommended initiatives that this committee should focus on over the next 1 – 5 years.

Recommended Initiatives	Potential Benefits	Key Implementation Steps and Actions
Making recreation programming more accessible and convenient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased convenience (reduced barriers) for residents in the Campbell River area can help increase participation levels and facility utilization. • Reflects a positive commitment to a more customer focused approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a “one pass” system that enables access to all facilities and drop-in programming in the Campbell River area. • Consider developing a single recreation opportunities website and/or mobile app.
Collaborative staff and volunteer training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages available resources. • Reduces redundancy (e.g. for specialized skill sets). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify functional areas where joint staff and volunteer training should occur.
Marketing and promotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates consistent messaging; reflecting the reality that some residents don’t know (and may not need to know) whether recreation services are SRD or City provided. • Leverages available resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure City and SRD marketing and communication staff collaborate. • Consider shifting towards a joint recreation brand and/or messaging. • Consider developing a single recreation opportunities website and/or mobile app (as previously identified under the first initiative).
Consistency in key aspects of operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning some procedures and policies can create increased convenience for users. • Opportunities for operational efficiencies. • Over time, will provide better and more consistent data that can inform programming and other capital decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the committee, identify opportunities for alignment (e.g. rates and fees, allocations, etc.). • Work towards aligning data collection and management systems.

Sub-regional, ad-hoc, and topic-based committees should be identified and formed as needed through the overall Regional Recreation Working Group to provide a mechanism for dialogue and collaboration on key issues and opportunities. Participation in these committees will be voluntary with the respective communities being able to determine if the committee is applicable to them or not. The following table identifies examples of potential committee that could be considered over the next five years.

Potential Committee	Role / Purpose
Specific facility / service area topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed to identify options and potential solutions for specifically identified situations that require input from multiple jurisdictions (e.g. an existing regional or sub-regional facility in need of significant capital reinvestment, funding discussions, etc.).
Opportunities exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committees formed around potential opportunities exploration (e.g. sport and recreation tourism, alignment with other regional initiatives, etc.). These committees can explore potential collaborations, share ideas, discuss experiences, etc.
Opportunities and best practices alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These committees can explore potential ways to align certain practices (e.g. facility assessments, program data and trends tracking, etc.). Committees could also be formed to look at best practices and potential approaches for emerging topics in recreation (e.g. growth of pickleball, best practices to ensure accessibility and inclusion across the region, etc.).

Cross-sectoral committees present a significant opportunity to create logical and mutually beneficial connections between recreation services and other sectors. These committees can help explore potential synergies, initiatives, and partnerships. Identified below are sectors that should be considered for cross-sectoral committees.

Potential Committee	Role / Purpose
Public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to explore initiatives and programs (and associated funding opportunities) that achieve both public health and recreation mandates. Creates a structure for ongoing dialogue and collaboration.
School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure to explore the most effective ways to optimize community use of school facilities and school use of community facilities (e.g. joint use agreements). Structure for regularly communication and collaborating on mutually beneficial initiatives (e.g. encouraging youth activity, facility projects, etc.).
Business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to use recreation, sports, and culture to attract non-local visitation and spending. Engage the business community in recreation and related topics, issues, and opportunities.
Social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities and mechanisms to increase recreation access, equity and inclusion. Identify potential initiatives and programs that can achieve both social service and recreation mandates. Provides a mechanism for increased insights into the needs of equity deserving and potentially underserved segments of the community or region.

As a next step, it is recommended that the Regional Recreation Working Group further explore potential committee opportunities with these identified sectors.

6.3. Regional Recreation Funding Considerations & Options

If more comprehensive regional funding is to be considered in the SRD, three critical elements need to be determined:

1. What constitutes a regional facility?
2. Who should fund it?
3. How should it be funded?

An ideal process would see these three questions being answered sequentially. This sub-section of the study outlines some parameters for consideration to help advance future discussions.

Identifying Sub-Regional Facilities

The adjacent provides a starting point, or classification hierarchy, for recreation facilities. Based on the geographically vast and unique context of the Strathcona Regional District, **it is reasonable to state that there are no fully regional facilities** that should be funded by all ratepayers within the SRD. **There are however a few facilities within the SRD that could qualify as a sub-regional facilities** and therefore potentially warrant consideration for ongoing regional funding.

Facility Classification	Description and Potential Funding Parameters
Regional	These facilities provide a benefit to all residents in the SRD and are therefore appropriate to receive funding from all jurisdictions.
Sub-Regional	These facilities provide a benefit to residents in two or more jurisdictions within the SRD and should therefore be funded by those specific jurisdictions within the region.
Local	These facilities benefit residents in a single jurisdiction and are not candidates for regional funding.

To provide an initial basis for further analysis, facilities with an indoor pool plus at least one other indoor programming space were identified as warranting consideration as a sub-regional facility. Four facilities within the SRD currently meet this initial screening criteria:

- Anne Fiddick Aquatics Centre (Gold River)
- Kelsey Recreation Centre (Sayward)
- Strathcona Gardens (Campbell River)
- Tahsis Recreation Centre (Tahsis)

Why were facilities with a pool plus at least one other indoor program space used as an initial basis for identifying potential sub-regional facilities?

Indoor pools represent an amenity with both a high resident value and significant cost structure to provide which is often beyond the means of a single jurisdiction. Other non-aquatics program spaces that are either directly attached or co-located on the same site as an aquatics facility furthermore help create a package or hub of recreation opportunity. While these non-aquatics program spaces may also exist at facilities deemed as being “local” and may not necessarily be regionally servicing amenities themselves, it is recommended that they remain included within the funding model for the identified sub-regional facility as it is impractical (and often inaccurate) to separate out costs solely for the pool and does not reflect the context of how users engage with the different spaces.

Important Considerations When Determining Funding (Benefitting) Areas

A key step to enacting a multi-jurisdictional funding model for recreation services requires partners for the potential service to establish funding area parameters (sometimes referred to as benefitting area parameters to reflect that there is a correlation between benefit and contributions).

There is no standardized or legislated approach to determining which areas should be included within a recreation service funding area. The determination of a regional funding area is highly contextual based on geography and a host of other dynamics. Electoral Areas within regional districts are diverse and often include those that are remote as well as those located adjacent to urban centres (effectively suburbs of a city). Commuting distance (e.g. 30 or 45 minute drive) is sometimes used as a proxy for attempting to determine whether residents are close enough to a potential regional or sub-regional facility to justify paying for those services. While this is a reasonable factor, access for direct usage should not be the only consideration applied. Funding areas should be evaluated as benefitting areas based on both the direct and indirect benefits of recreation.

- **Direct benefit:** accrued through direct use of the facility (e.g. me or my family are healthier and happy because we regularly use the facility or service).
- **Indirect benefit:** accrued to all regardless of use (e.g. lower rates of crime, higher property values, access to professionals like doctors, economic benefits, etc. all exist because of the facility or service).

It is recognized that determining a “benefitting area” using indirect benefit considerations is more challenging than solely using direct benefits (which can be measured and quantified through usage survey and/or admissions data) and requires a philosophical buy-in on behalf of elected officials and residents. This philosophical buy-in to the broad-based benefits of recreation and related services occurs at the local level in most community and rationalizes why most community’s subsidy amenities and programming. Regional funding partnerships simply extend this rationale across a wider geographic area.

Summary of Key Benefiting Area Considerations:

When determining a potential regional funding (benefitting) area, the following core concepts need to be understood and accepted by all jurisdictional representatives:

- Recreation facilities and services provide important indirect benefits that cannot be simply measured by usage. Metrics like resident use and drive time should be balanced by available data and engagement on resident's perceived value of a facility, available indicators on public health that may be attributed to the facility or programming, property value impact, and engagement with individuals that relocate to a region in order to better understand their key decision making factors (e.g. the extent to which major recreation facilities or services were a factor).
- Across any regional facility or service partnership, some jurisdictions will benefit more than others (e.g. have higher levels of resident use or service levels) and it is practically impossible to formulate a model which is completely equal.



Recreation Services on Smaller Island Communities

A unique characteristic of many jurisdictions along the south coast and, in particular, those on Vancouver Island are the handful of small island communities located in relatively close proximity to larger service centres with BC Ferries service. The table below provides an overview of recreation provision on several of the more populated islands along the east coast of Vancouver Island.

Island Community	Population (2021 Statistics Canada)	Recreation Service Delivery Situation
Salt Spring Island	11,635	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund their own service (Salt Spring Island Parks, Arts Recreation & Culture) that includes a community centre and pool. Operations of the service managed by the Capital Regional District through a services agreement. Do not fund recreation services in other jurisdictions but are part of a broader CRD regional parks system.
Pender Island	2,467	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund limited recreation services and grants through the Parks and Recreation Commission (overseen by the Capital Regional District). Do not fund any recreation services in other jurisdictions but are part of a broader CRD regional parks system.
Gabriola Island	4,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund recreation services provided by the Gabriola Recreation Society (funding administered by the Regional District of Nanaimo). Parks services encompass all of Electoral Area B (Gabriola, Mudge and DeCourcy Islands). Do not fund any recreation services in other jurisdictions (e.g. Nanaimo).
Denman Island	1,391	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund recreation grants through taxes collected and a grant program administered by the Comox Valley Regional District. Do not fund any recreation services in other jurisdictions (e.g. Courtenay or Comox).
Hornby Island	1,225	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund recreation grants through taxes collected and a grant program administered by the Comox Valley Regional District (e.g. Courtenay or Comox).
Quadra Island	2,472	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents fund recreation services provided by the Quadra Island Recreation Society. Do not fund any recreation services in other jurisdictions (e.g. Campbell River).

Identifying Potential Funding (Benefitting) Areas For Sub-Regional Facilities in the SRD

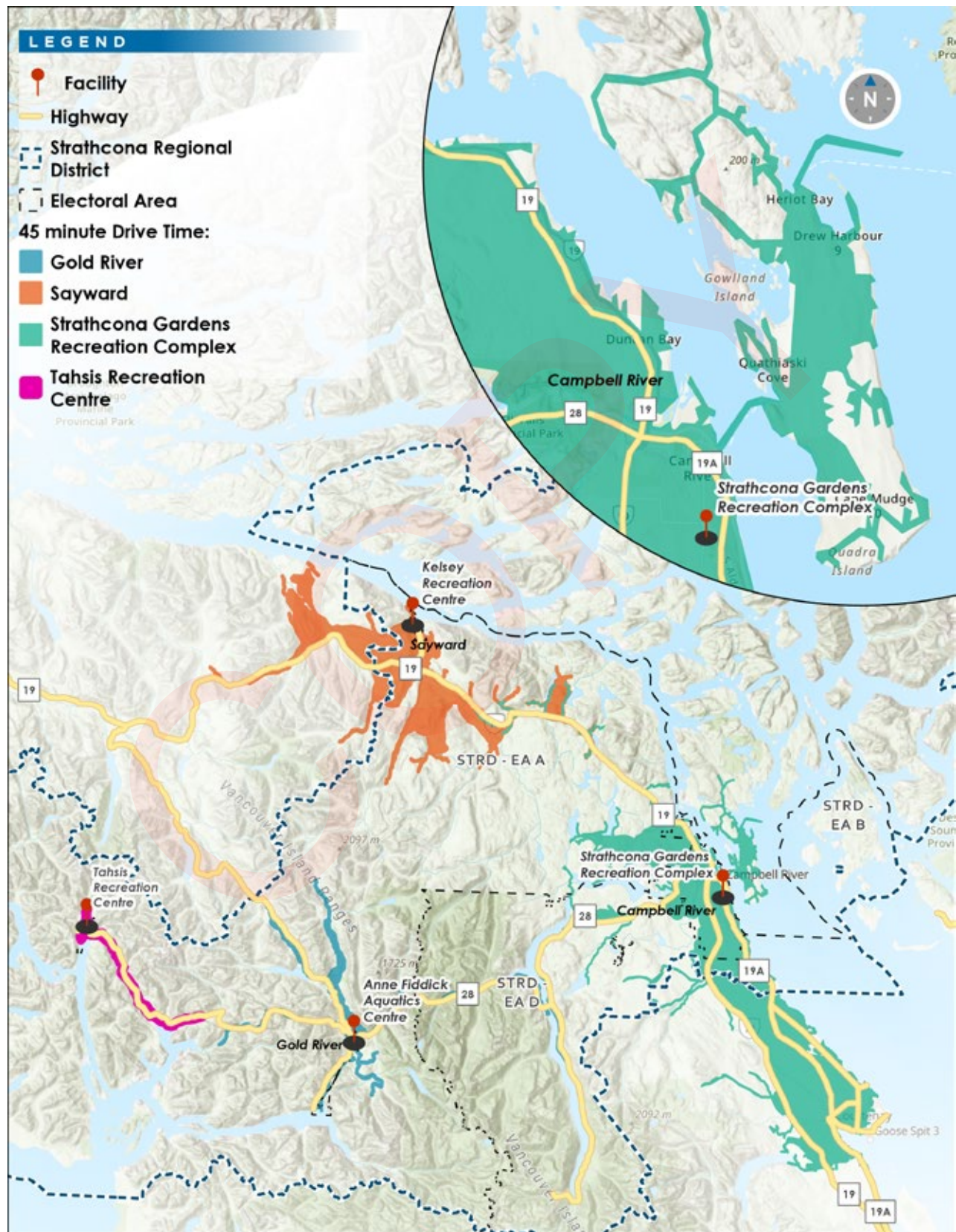
High level GIS based analysis² was conducted to identify jurisdictions with more than 50% of residents living within a 45-minute drive of the four sub-regional candidate facilities. It is important to reiterate that there is not a standard used across B.C. used to define reasonable drive time access nor sufficient level of benefit to a jurisdiction. This evaluation metric simply represents a logical, initial way of screening the potential sub-regional facilities. As reflected in the table, the Kelsey Recreation Centre (Sayward) and Strathcona Garden (Campbell River) are suggested as warranting further consideration for sub-regional funding.

Facility	Suggested for Further Sub-Regional Funding Consideration?	Rationale
Anne Fiddick Aquatics Centre (Gold River)	No	• Only 17% of EA A and 5% of EA D residents live within a 45-minute drive of the facility.
Kelsey Recreation Centre (Sayward)	Yes	• 56% of EA A residents live within a 45-minute drive of the facility.
Strathcona Gardens (Campbell River)	Yes	• 30% of EA A, 100% EA C*, and 100% of EA D residents live within a 45-minute drive of the facility.
Tahsis Recreation Centre (Tahsis)	No	• Only 3% of EA A residents live within a 45-minute drive of the facility.

**The analysis for Electoral Area C is not able to distinguish between residents living on Quadra Island and other islands and inlets within this vast and remote geographic jurisdiction. The total population of Electoral Area C was counted at 2,662 by the last Statistics Canada Census (2021) and various sources estimate the permanent resident population of Quadra Island at between 2,400 – 2,600 residents (reflecting that the vast majority of individuals included within the analysis are Quadra Island residents).*

2 Analysis conducted using Statistics Canada Census data available through Esri Business Analyst.

45-Minute Catchment Areas for Potential Sub-Regional Facilities



Funding Mechanisms

Three general methods exist for apportioning funding across jurisdictions that participate in a sub-regional recreation service or facility partnership. The following table provides an overview of these methods and examples of where they are applied. In several situations across B.C., a combination or hybrid of these approaches are used. **As previously noted, an ideal process would result in discussions on specific funding mechanisms occurring after clarity exists on facilities that are to be included within the funding model and the determination of funding (benefitting areas) based on accepted rationale around the direct and indirect benefits of recreation at a regional level.**

Methods	Description	Examples
Taxation	<p>Two sub-options exist within this approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property tax assessment Parcel tax (levying the same amount on each parcel or establishing thresholds based on a parcel value range). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Comox Valley Regional District and Regional District of Central Kootenay use property tax assessment as a basis for funding for facilities operated by the respective regional district. The North Peace Leisure Pool is funded by the City of Fort St. John and Electoral Areas B and C using property tax assessment. The Strathcona Gardens is funded by City and Electoral Area D residents based on assessment.
Population Distribution	<p>The proportion that the jurisdictions (municipalities and electoral areas) population accounts for as a total of the benefitting area population is used to determine funding responsibility (e.g. if Electoral Area 'X' has 25% of the benefitting areas population, 25% of the funding responsibility is apportioned to that electoral area).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No known examples exist of this approach being used solely to determine funding responsibility. The Peninsula Recreation Commission (Sidney, North Saanich and Central Saanich) use population distribution as part of their funding model. The Regional District of Nanaimo uses population distribution as part of the funding model for some facilities.
Resident Use	<p>Funding responsibility is determined based on determining actual resident use of the facility or services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cowichan Valley Regional District has used this approach with other funding methods for a number of years. In October 2022 the funding bylaw was amended and usage will be phased in as the sole method for apportioning funding responsibility across the various jurisdictions. The Regional District of Nanaimo uses utilization as part of the funding model for some facilities. The City and District of North Vancouver apportion funding responsibility for operating based on an annual accounting of utilization. <p><i>*In the CVRD and RDN usage is determined by conducting a statistically representative survey of facility users every ~5 years.</i></p>

The following table further expands on the potential advantages and disadvantages of the three potential funding approaches.

Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages
Taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In theory, assessment aligns ability to pay with contribution to the service (using assessment value as a proxy for ability to pay). The alternate taxation approach to assessment, parcel tax, more evenly distributes responsibility but still captures residents with multiple properties. Recognizes that recreation service levels have a positive impact on property values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contrasting the identified advantage, tax assessment places a higher level of funding responsibility on ratepayers with higher value properties which some may view as disproportionate relative to their use or benefit from the service.
Population Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to administer (Statistics Canada Census data provides a validated source that is updated every 5 years) Easy to communicate and explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not take into account factors like capacity to pay and assumes benefit is equitable across all jurisdictions within the funding area.
Resident Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating alignment between use and funding is seen as a logical approach by some. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging and costly to accurately measure, especially for facilities with dynamic types of both individual and organized group based activities (e.g. pools). Does not reflect that the benefit of an amenity or service to a jurisdiction can be indirect and accrued beyond simply direct resident use (e.g. ability to attract and retain needed skill sets, community vibrancy, increased property values, etc.).

6.3. Conclusions and Next Step Considerations

This section of the study provides a resource to help guide subsequent discussions and decision making on regional recreation funding in the SRD. As discussed throughout this section, there are no definitive guidelines for establishing sub-regional recreation funding areas and models. Establishing a successful and sustainable sub-regional recreation funding model requires conceptual buy-in to the direct and indirect benefits of recreation and an acknowledgement that a single jurisdiction is challenged with sustainably operating some amenity types that generate a significant benefit to a broader geographic area beyond their own boundaries.

Most regions and sub-regions along north-central Vancouver Island have established funding partnerships. **In fact, it can be accurately stated that the Strathcona Regional District is an outlier in terms of funding partnerships for recreation facilities** (5 of the 7 regional districts on Vancouver Island have regional funding partnerships that encompass 3 or more jurisdictions).

Two potential facilities have been identified as warranting potential sub-regional funding based on the criteria presented in this section.

- **Strathcona Gardens** with the City of Campbell River and Electoral Areas C and D considered as potential contributors.
- **Kelsey Recreation Centre** with the Village of Sayward and Electoral Area A considered as potential contributors.



As a next step, administration and elected officials will need to further evaluate whether regional funding is palatable to ratepayers and communicate the benefits of potential regional funding partnerships for recreation. Provided as follows are several additional considerations related to future discussions on sub-regional funding.

- **While there are no known precedents for smaller island communities funding recreation facilities in adjacent urban centres on Vancouver Island, there is reasonable rationale to support that Quadra Island residents benefit from and access an array of services and opportunities in the urban centres that they can access via public ferry services, including recreation.** Data from BC Ferries reflects that from 2018 to 2020 (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) Route 23 (Quadra Island to Campbell River) facilitated between 6,260 - 6,269 trips and 867,406 – 871,056 trips annually reflecting the high volume of commuting between Quadra Island and Campbell River for work and other services. While usage should not be the sole basis for assessing benefit (as discussed throughout this document), better understanding Quadra Island resident utilization of the Strathcona Gardens and the broader indirect benefits of the facility to EA C residents can help inform future decision making.
- **A reasonable counterargument to establishing a sub-regional funding model for recreation is that residents in adjacent jurisdictions were not originally involved in the decision to build major facilities and incur the long-term legacy impacts and responsibilities of the facility.** This argument is especially valid in smaller communities that offer an amenity type not typically found in similarly sized communities. Further exploration of sub-regional funding in the SRD needs to consider this perspective and potentially evaluate / define what a reasonable level of facility service is in a community.

- **Future discussions on regional recreation funding may be prudent to also consider establishing a regional parks service.** Similar rationale to funding partnerships for major indoor amenity types exists for parks that benefit residents in multiple jurisdictions. Additional exploration is needed to evaluate whether the parks and trails inventory context fits a change in current practice.

Regardless of whether the SRD and its partners move forward with a sub-regional funding approach for recreation, the Regional Recreation System Optimization recommendations contained in Section 6.2 should be advanced. Increasing dialogue, identifying “easy win” opportunities to share knowledge and resources, and collaborating on planning will benefit the provision of recreation at all levels and ultimately lead to more effective and efficient service delivery.

Appendices



Appendix A: Trends and Leading Practices References

British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)

Relevance: BCRPA offers a wealth of resources and supports to recreation providers within the province and fulfills an important advocacy role for the sector, ensuring that the broad based benefits of investment in recreation infrastructure is well understood by decision makers in all levels of government. Resources available through BCRPA helps identify trends and leading practices for the delivery of recreation services.

URL: www.bcrpa.bc.ca

A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

Relevance: The Framework is essentially a Master Plan for the recreation sector in Canada and includes a renewed definition for recreation, a Vision, Mission, Values, Principles of Operation and five Goal areas (Active Living, Inclusion and Access, Connecting People and Nature, Supportive Environment and Recreation Capacity). Aligning with the Framework at the local level reflects a commitment to best practice and the broader objectives of the recreation sector across Canada. Development of the Framework also included significant research and engagement, providing data points that gives key insights into how Canadians view and value recreation and related opportunities.

URL: www.crpra.ca

Sport for Life and Long-Term Development

Relevance: Sport for Life is a leader in advancing physical literacy and lifelong activity participation. The Long Term Development (LTD) framework consists of eight stages focused on ensuring basic skill development that can foster success (measured as lifelong physical activity for all and, for some individuals, success at advanced levels of sport). All National Sport Organizations in Canada are required to have an LTD plan.

URL: www.sportforlife.ca

The Bench – The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's Online Resource

Relevance: The Bench provides the recreation sector with an online platform to learn and grow. The platform includes a resource library and discussion groups and has quickly become a key place to obtain information and supports on various initiatives and emerging topics.

URL: www.thebenchcpra.ca

Provincial and National Sport Organization website

Relevance: Most Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO's) and their governing bodies, National Sport Organizations (NSO's), provide varying levels of annual reports and data on sport participation. In British Columbia, viaSport, oversee most PSO's.

Statistics Canada

Relevance: Statistics Canada captures participation data in sports, recreation and physical activity through its Census program. This data is available publicly and used by a myriad of academic and non-academic organizations to identify trends and changes in active living participation and other related data points (e.g. volunteerism).

URL: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019039-eng.htm>





CCOPY

r⁺cs

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