

British Columbia Recreation & Parks Association

A Time for Renewal:

Assessing the State of Recreation
Facilities in British Columbia

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THE VANCOUVER SUN

B.C.'s aging recreation facilities put healthy communities at risk

BY SUZANNE ALLARD STRUTT. SPECIAL TO THE SUN APRIL 16, 2009



The province's community centres are getting old and in need of renovation.

Photograph by: Ian Lindsay, Vancouver Sun files, Special to the Sun

Studies and surveys by the B.C. Recreation and Parks Association indicate that 70 per cent of British Columbia's recreation, parks and sports facilities are at least 25 years old, and many of them more than 35 years old.

In this provincial election there is going to be a lot of debate and discussion about important community issues and priorities. What better time for citizens to talk about the fact that many of the recreation and parks facilities in their communities are desperately in need of renovation



What is the State of Recreation Infrastructure in BC?

Indoor Facilities:

- Ice Arenas
- Indoor Pools
- Outdoor Pools
- Curling Facilities
- Community Centres
- Youth Centres,
- Senior Centres
- Community Halls

Outdoor Facilities:

- Parks
- Natural Areas
- Trails
- Playing Fields

The Facilities Assessment Study

Purpose: Develop a clear picture of the state of our recreation infrastructure and what is needed to keep it vital.

First study of its kind in BC

It Studied: 8 types of indoor & 4 types of outdoor publicly-owned and/or operated recreation facilities.

The Facilities Assessment Study



Three Key Components to the Study:

Inventory Phases: 3 inventories to compile database of existing recreation facilities.

Analysis Phase: Examination of inventory data and development of theoretical infrastructure replacement and rehabilitation costs.

Validation Audit: 34 existing buildings selected for detailed evaluation to validate the theoretical analysis and establish empirical data about facility rehabilitation costs.

The Facilities Assessment Study: Key Findings

68% of BC's indoor recreation facilities are 25 years or older.

42% of BC's indoor recreation facilities are 35 years or older



1. Our recreation buildings are rapidly aging.

Current Life Cycle Stages of BC's Indoor Recreation Facilities*

Life Cycle Stage	Number of Facilities	Percentage of Facilities in Life Cycle Stage
Stage 1: Planned (not built)	8	1%
Stage 2: 1 to 14 years old	149	19%
Stage 3: 15 to 24 years old	97	12%
Stage 4: 25 to 34 years old	207	26%
Stage 5: 35 + years old	335	42%
Total	796	100%

Typically, as a facility's life-cycle stage increases, operational costs and the need for capital upgrades escalate dramatically, while energy efficiency and functionality decline.



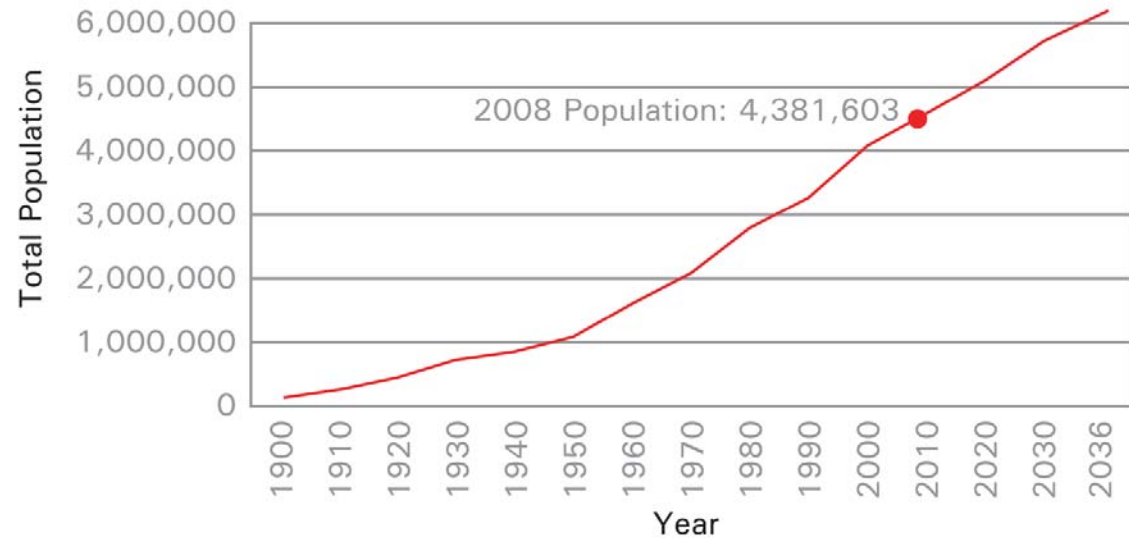
The Facilities Assessment Study: Key Findings

BC's projected population growth over the next 10 years is **575,900**

By 2035 our population could be over **6,000,000**

2. Our population continues to grow.

Past & Forecasted Population Growth in BC



Population Graph based on population data from BC Stats, 2009

Urban Sprawl compounds growth by increasing demand for new facilities that serve fewer people.



The Facilities Assessment Study: Key Findings

3. Our older buildings don't match our new lifestyles.

Functional Obsolescence: A loss of facility utility due to changing demand from its users.

Caused by:

- Changes to recreation programming
- Changes in sports regulations and technical standards
- New standards for health, safety and the environment
- Changes in demographics
- Changing trends in recreation

The Facilities Assessment Study: Key Findings



4. Our investments have been inconsistent.

1960s & 1970s: Large investments in recreation infrastructure made. Established our existing base of facilities.

1980s & 1900s: Decline in spending due to recession and cutbacks.

Present: A deficit scenario in which many of our buildings are nearing the end of their useful life.

Impact: Aging infrastructure is more expensive to maintain and manage, compounding the deficit further and requiring extensive renovation or replacement.

The Facilities Assessment Study: Key Findings

Our per person investment in recreation infrastructure was almost three times more in the 1970s than in the 1990s.



5. Our recent investment hasn't kept up.

Investment in Recreation Infrastructure by Decade

Year	Investment	Population	\$/Person
Pre 1960	\$1.05 billion	1,602,000	\$655
1960s	\$1.18 billion	2,128,000	\$552
1970s	\$3.61 billion	2,745,861	\$1,313
1980s	\$1.22 billion	3,292,111	\$369
1990s	\$1.96 billion	4,039,230	\$484
2000s	\$0.82 billion	4,381,603	\$186

It is time for long-term renewal that ensures a sustainable, ongoing future for our recreation facilities.



What Trends Affect Recreation?

Why is this a Trend?

- Our schedules and routines are more varied
- Our interests are more diverse
- We want to fit recreation into our regular routines

1. Our Activity Choices

Trend: We are choosing less structured activities

Impacts:

- People want more recreation options
- Outdoor facilities are becoming more popular
- Size, layout and use of facilities must be flexible

What Trends Affect Recreation?



Why is this a Trend?

- Natural changes, migration, economics and personal preference all change over time

2. Our Shifting Demographics & Diversity

Trend: Our population is aging

Impacts: Older participants will shift from strenuous activity to lower impact activity

Trend: We are becoming more culturally diverse

Impacts: We must listen to all voices of our community when planning for future recreation

Trend: Our geographic patterns are shifting

Impacts: By anticipating population shifts we can invest where our dollars will have greatest benefit

What Trends Affect Recreation?

Why is this a Trend?

- Combines building costs
- Increases utility, accessibility and operational benefits
- Reduces overall carbon footprint



3. Our Approach to Recreation

Trend: We are beginning to integrate multiple recreation levels and services in one facility

Impacts:

- Design should appeal to a variety of ages and abilities
- Extensive planning and capital costs
- Could require partnerships across geographical and service boundaries

What Trends Affect Recreation?

Why is this a Trend?

- Recreation is a right for everyone living within the province
- It is essential to health and well-being



4. Our Desire to be Inclusive

Trend: To provide access to all British Columbians, our facilities are becoming more physically and economically accessible

Impacts:

- New design and retrofitting should provide barrier-free access
- Facilities should be accessible and affordable regardless of economic status
- Ensure all citizens in the province have access to relevant recreation experiences

What Trends Affect Recreation?



Why is this a Trend?

- Public stewardship is gaining momentum
- Sustainability is becoming an expectation
- Climate change is at the forefront of our awareness

5. Our Environmental Awareness

Trend: Awareness of the contribution and responsibility parks and recreation have to the environment is growing

Impacts:

- Natural outdoor spaces are an important component of our parks system
- New environmental standards are being set for new construction
- Opportunities to retrofit existing infrastructure can greatly reduce its carbon footprint
- People are looking for opportunities to participate in protecting their environment



What is Needed for Facilities Renewal?

Facilities Assessment Study Findings

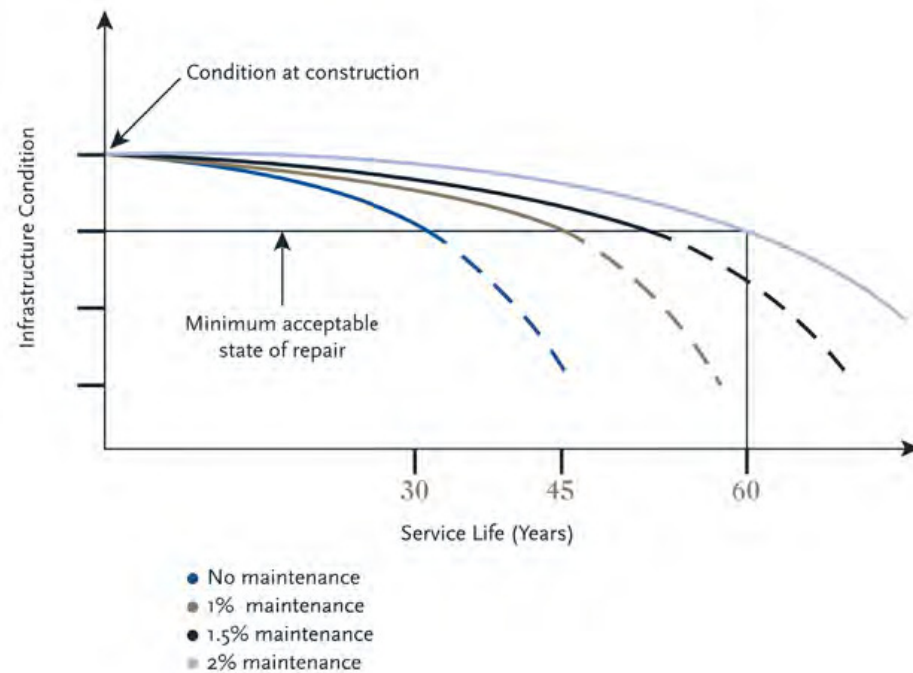
Analysis Phase: Assigned theoretical infrastructure costs based on facility life-cycle stage to 796 indoor facilities inventoried province-wide

Validation Audit: Undertook empirical research of 34 indoor recreation buildings to develop cost estimates based on observation

What is Needed for Facilities Renewal?



Infrastructure Condition as Determined by Maintenance



Source: Danger Ahead: The Coming Collapse of Canada's Municipal Infrastructure, 2007

What is Needed for Facilities Renewal?



This number does not include the costs of our parks, trails and playing field assets.

The Analysis Phase

Based on cost factors related to life-cycle:

\$4.0 Billion

is needed for the rehabilitation of existing indoor facilities based on life-cycle stage assumptions.

+ \$1.2 Billion

is needed to build new indoor facilities to proportionately accommodate BC's ten-year population growth predictions.

= \$5.2 Billion

is the total investment needed over the next ten years to adequately address the indoor recreation facility infrastructure deficit and population growth.

What is Needed for Facilities Renewal?



The Validation Audit

- Most buildings studied in the Validation Audit exhibited physical conditions consistent with age
- Exceptions:
 - Older facilities that retained physical vitality through upgrades and maintenance
 - Younger facilities with premature failure of physical systems
- Overall, the findings supported the life-cycle assumptions used in the Analysis Phase

What is Needed for Facilities Renewal?

Where do we see our outdoor recreation deficit?

- Degraded playing fields
- Unused playgrounds
- Deteriorating trails



What about our Outdoor Spaces?

- Studies to date have focused on indoor recreation deficit
- Trends suggest outdoor facilities are playing an increasingly larger role in provision of recreation
- Land development pressure and growing population reduces green space
- The Facility Assessment Study found that many municipalities feel they are unable to allocate sufficient funds to outdoor recreation
- While budget numbers are typically smaller for outdoor recreation, benefits of investment are proportionately large

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Investing for Today & Tomorrow

Today:

More than **68%** of our recreation infrastructure is 25 years or older

We have an over **\$4 billion** deficit that is growing

Immediate action is **Critical**



“The planning, building, developing and operating of public recreation facilities are now the concern of all levels of government: municipal, regional, provincial and federal. This subject must become the concern of every citizen and is particularly urgent because of increased demand and costs for these facilities, especially at the operation level” (Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Sports and Fitness Division, Province of Ontario).

Investing for Today & Tomorrow

Participation

Local Governments:

- Traditionally greatest role for planning & funding
- Competing capital priorities
- Responsible for operations, maintenance and upgrades

Provincial & Federal Governments:

- Existing grant programs to supplement local governments

Sponsors, Private and Public Institutions, NGOs:

- Playing increasingly supportive roles in recreation infrastructure development

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



A New Approach to Recreation Infrastructure:

One that supports cooperative life-cycle management and on-going investment

Three Program Components:

- Recreation Renewal Program
- Recreation Partnership Program
- Recreation Life-Cycle Program

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



Recreation Renewal Program

Primary Purpose: To develop a sustainable funding process that will fund the renewal and expansion of our recreation infrastructure.

- Similar to current arrangements that share federal, provincial and local funding, but on a continual basis.
- Sustained at an adequate level to erase the deficit and require new capacity over a 20-year period and then steady-state to facilitate renewal and increased capacity.
- Require project planning that sets out detailed life-cycle maintenance and operations plans

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



Recreation Partnership Planning Program

Primary Purpose: To ensure funding opportunities are explored and effective partnerships are formed.

- Promote co-operative facility planning among adjacent communities
- Seek good opportunities for private/NGO partnerships
- Fund studies to analyze demand for both high-performance sport and recreation facilities
- Support production of preliminary design and accurate cost and life-cycle planning
- Support partnership organization and fundraising

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



Recreation Life-Cycle Program

Primary Purpose: To assist communities with achieving appropriate on-going maintenance and capital for renewal of facilities.

- Support development of a database on life-cycle best management practices and budgets.
- Complete and maintain a database on existing recreation facilities in BC.
- Provide on-going training to maintenance and operations personnel.
- Public print and web-based materials to support maintenance and renewal practices.
- Develop challenge grants for life-cycle maintenance and greening initiatives

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



Defining Funding Priorities

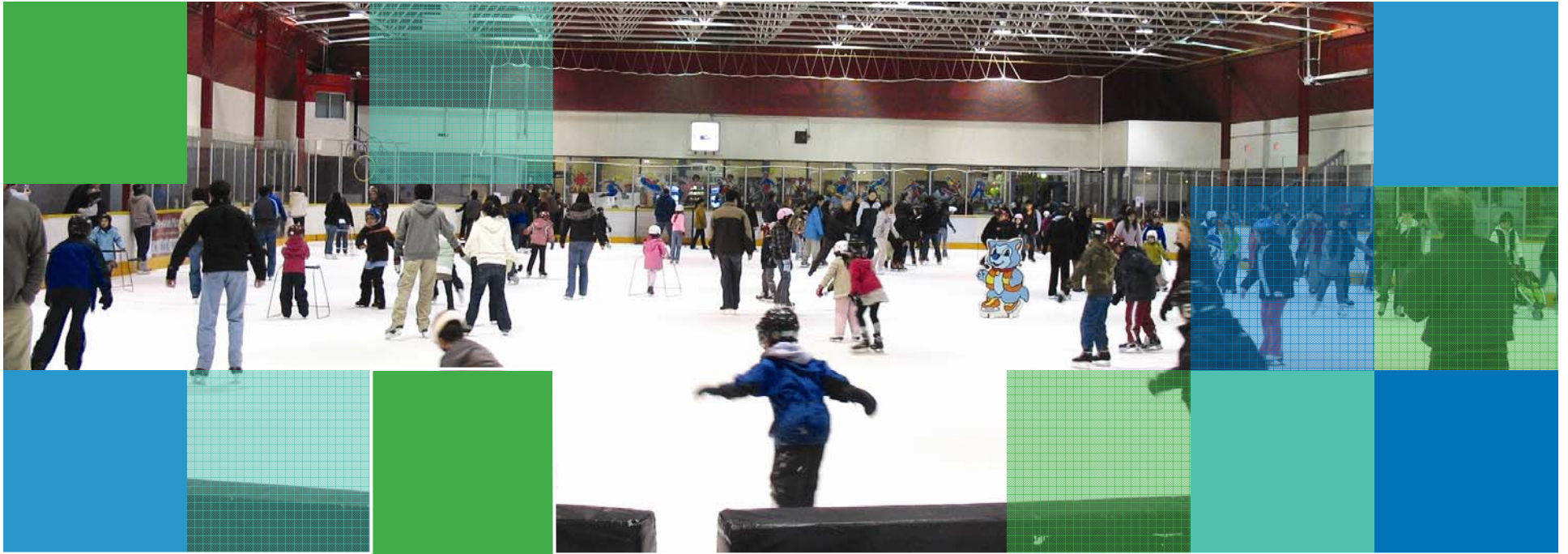
1. Distribute projects equitably.
2. Encourage partnerships.
3. Anticipate and respond to needs and trends.
4. Target strategic outcomes.
5. Balance indoor and outdoor facilities.
6. Create facilities that are multi-purpose and flexible.
7. Develop effective life-cycle maintenance programs.
8. Encourage multi-year initiatives.
9. Set high environmental standards.
10. Engage stakeholders.
11. Assess the capacity of municipalities to take on maintenance, operations and rehabilitation.
12. Choose inclusive projects.
13. Seek opportunities that address economic, health and social outcomes.
14. Contribute to community renewal.
15. Support creative design and up-to-date construction.
16. Complement existing federal, provincial and local initiatives.

Investing for Today & Tomorrow



Defining Funding Priorities

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A Time for Renewal

Just as healthy living and environmental consideration require a new focus and on-going commitment, recreation infrastructure urgently needs on-going investment. With sustainable maintenance and funding for renewal, recreation facilities are one of the most cost-effective prescriptions for good health and engaged citizens.



Want to know more?

Access the full summary report and background studies at:
www.bcrpa.bc.ca