

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

British Columbia has entered an era of unprecedented change – demographically, socio-economically and even environmentally. These changes affect every aspect of life and every sector – including parks, recreation and culture. In the midst of these changes is a heightened awareness of health and wellbeing.

Recently, the provincial focus on healthy lifestyle behaviours and healthy environments has accelerated exponentially. Whether it's through media stories, via parks, recreation and culture initiatives or through the influence of one's social circle, the message of overall health and wellbeing is beginning to impact individuals, families and communities across the province. As members of the parks, recreation and culture sector in British Columbia, we celebrate this progress. For decades, we have been working diligently with individuals, organizations, governments and other stakeholders to enhance the wellbeing of residents and communities through parks, recreation and culture programs and services.

Until recently we have concentrated on providing recreational activities, cultural programs and access to parks, facilities and other services. Gradually, however, our sector has evolved into much more than a service provider. Today, we play an increasingly significant role as a province-wide leader and strategic partner in enhancing individuals' quality of life, in building healthy communities, in protecting our environment and in supporting the economy.

Healthy individuals create healthy communities. Healthy communities strive to protect and sustain a healthy environment and they contribute to a healthy, sustainable economy. Today, the parks, recreation and culture sector plays a vital role in each of these four elements, thereby contributing to and enhancing the quality of life in British Columbia. Because its reach is broad, the sector has many stakeholders including local governments, senior governments, non-profit and community organizations, industry associations, the private sector, volunteers and academia.

In 2006, the B.C. Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) commissioned a strategic planning process to assist us – the parks, recreation and culture sector – in understanding and clarifying our expanding role.

This ten-year strategic plan is a pioneering document. As the first comprehensive plan for the parks, recreation and culture sector in British Columbia, it represents a momentous step in coordinating the stakeholders, assets, programs and initiatives that comprise the sector. It represents a desire to develop an integrated approach as we move forward with a shared quality of life perspective. And it proposes a definitive action plan to guide us through the next decade toward our goals.

Developing a strategic plan for the parks, recreation and culture sector in B.C. is an effective way to position and organize the stakeholders so we can work as a collective body toward a shared vision and common goals.

The strategic planning process was intended to:

- Provide clarity to the scope and role of the parks, recreation and culture sector in supporting a sustainable quality of life for B.C. residents;
- Create a shared vision for the sector's role and a strategic path to meeting its objectives;
- Invite stakeholders to collaborate, coordinating their unique assets and expertise to achieve maximum benefits across the province;
- Outline a ten-year plan of action so the sector can fulfill its vision and achieve its goals;
- Provide a framework and key information to the Province on how best to work with the parks, recreation and culture sector for the benefit of all of B.C.

The strategic planning process involved consultation, envisioning and research. Led by the BCRPA, the process involved participants from all stakeholder groups in the parks, recreation and culture sector and allied sectors. The BCRPA coordinated the discussions and has overseen the development, drafting and review of the strategic plan. Consultants conducted research, interviewed stakeholders, led visioning workshops and documented the results. Their work has been reviewed, refined and merged into this strategic plan. It incorporates involvement and input from stakeholder groups, ensuring sector-wide representation which is essential for a sector-wide vision and action plan. For an overview on the strategic planning process, refer to Appendix F.

THE OPPORTUNITY

By acknowledging our role as a major contributor to the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities, the environment and our economy, this strategic plan is intended to stimulate cooperation, galvanize new energy and inspire a deeper commitment to fulfilling our vision for the future of the parks, recreation and culture sector and the future of British Columbia. As we adopt and work toward a common vision, the strategic plan provides a common language, common framework and joint action items.

This strategic plan represents an unprecedented opportunity for every aspect of the parks, recreation and culture sector – be it people, facilities, programs or policies – to contribute toward the vision of a quality of life for all.

THE WAY FORWARD STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Vision

A high quality of life for all British Columbians – healthy individuals and communities and sustainable environments and economies.



Our Mission

The mission of the parks, recreation and culture sector in British Columbia is to promote a high quality of life for all through: advocacy and partnerships; programs and services; parks and facilities.



Our Framework

Healthy Individuals; Healthy Communities; Sustainable; Environments; Sustainable Economies



Guiding Principles

A Sustainable Quality of Life; Beyond Leisure; Sustainable Communities; Multiple Goals; Collaboration; Accessibility and Inclusion; Whole Person Benefits; Citizen Participation and Involvement; Strategic Volunteerism; Economic Prosperity; Social Sustainability.



12 Strategic Results Areas

Vision Building and Inspiration; Leadership Renewal; Accessibility and Inclusion; Infrastructure Renewal; Advocacy and Communication; Community Development; Environmental Sustainability; Individual Wellbeing; Partnership Development and Collaboration; Economic Sustainability; Research and Performance Measures; Policy and Governance.



38 Action Items

Immediate: Within two years
Short Term: Within two to five years
Long Term: Within five to ten years



Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing the Action Items

Local government
 Senior government
 Non-profit and community organizations
 Industry associations
 Private sector
 Volunteers
 Academia
 Others