

2016

Sedgewick Recreation and Leisure
Where People Come First



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“Recreation, is really a very beautiful word. It is defined in the dictionary as “the process of giving a new life to something, of refreshing something, of restoring something.” This something of course, is the whole person.”

- Bruno Hans Geba

UNDERSTANDING RECREATION/GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Recreational experiences include participation in physical activity and sport, and in artistic, cultural, social and intellectual activities. Recreation and leisure activities can be structured and unstructured. Many are done with other people while others are done alone.

People participate in recreational activities for fun, enjoyment, fitness and health, social interaction, creative expression, a desire to connect with nature, relaxation and to enhance their quality of life. People also understand the support and beneficial role that recreation plays in community development. Local government is the primary supplier of direct recreation services. The private sector employs recreation specialists and provides opportunities for recreation and physical activity. Innovative public-private partnerships in recreation have been shown to support park renewal efforts, sponsorship, product and service innovation, cooperative access to facilities and the delivery of tourism products and services.

BENEFITS OF RECREATION

Participation in recreation reports improvements in mental well-being, including increased self-esteem and life satisfaction. Recreation provides opportunities for personal growth and development for people of all abilities and can be especially helpful to people living with disabilities. Among all ages, recreational experiences involving physical activity facilitate the maintenance of healthy weight, and this in turn a reduction of health care costs.

For both children and adults, recreation can facilitate and support social relationships through clubs, social organizations, participating on a team. Among youth, recreation can help decrease anti-social behaviors.

Recreation can be important in promoting “family”. Community events keep neighbors in touch with each other and reinforces relationships that make neighbourhoods strong. Participation in cultural and artistic programs have been shown to promote social mutual caring and volunteerism. Recreational activities can help build welcoming communities for people.

From lowering blood pressure to reducing stress levels to supporting children’s cognitive development, nature has a profound ability to support both physical and mental health. Nature based recreation fosters a better understanding and appreciation for all aspects of nature.

Spending on recreation creates jobs, fosters tourism and makes communities more attractive places to live, learn, work, play and visit. Investments in recreation can lead to improvements in individual and community wellbeing which helps to reduce costs in health care.

Recreation is a key delivery agent for sport and provides a variety of supports to local organizations. These include access to facilities, early skill development and exposes programs, ongoing sport play, co-ordination and communication, enhanced coaching capacity, sport hosting and sport tourism.

Promotion of physical activity is a key priority for recreation. Many communities have worked with public health, physical activity, sport and education to develop community plans for active living. These plans include awareness campaigns, program events, and the development of supportive environments.

Provide leadership, support, encouragement, information, policies and programs that facilitate full participation in recreation by people of all abilities across all settings.

Access:

- Leisure Information Network and Northern Links.
- WHO Healthy Settings.
- WHO Glossary Health Promotion.

COMMUNITY RECREATION GOALS

The recreation and leisure plan is to guide in both the short and long term. The goal of this project is to develop an innovative and fiscally responsible plan that will guide future direction of recreation facilities, programs and services, recommending actions to address the current and future needs of those who live, work and play in Sedgewick.

Short-term programs may centre around culture and heritage by having creative birthday parties, adult and family planning, education programs, and theatre. Exhibits, concerts, comedy and local entertainment all together help you get your “fix”.

An up-to-the-minute schedule for all drop-in activities at the recreation centre is short-term programming.

Examples:

- Fitness classes.
- Indoor walking.
- Strollersize.
- Kinder-core (babysitting service).

A “Living Well” program for everyone looking for an active program:

- Needs a gentle class.
- Has a condition or inquiry.

These programs are supervised exercise programs completed in a welcoming group environment. Primary goal is the promotion of self-management as it applies to a chronic condition, as well as the maintenance of a personal exercise program.

Sedgewick should strive to implement short-term recommendations over the next three years. It will take three years to gradually ramp up tasks to the level of service now desired by the community. In short, implementation is based on following phasing strategy with each year adding new elements to enhance programming options:

Year 1:

Begin initial coordination, policy development and information and recreation guide development, increase grants and initiate scholarship awards.

Year 2:

Provide pilot programs and outdoor events. Increase grants, establish pilot programs for indoor events.

Year 3:

Initiate facility reservations and pilot programs for drop-in activities, increase in the indoor events, increase drop-in activities.

Sedgewick may also at this time continue to test community support for implementing longer-term goals. If support for the programming increases, Sedgewick may then investigate partner-supports to develop longer term goals. Efforts to pursue longer-term goals should not preclude the advances in implementing short-term accommodations.

Long- Term Goal:

1. Supporting a comprehensive public recreation program with a hub of activity.

The desire expressed by the Town of Sedgewick Council is to improve recreation services for Sedgewick residents. Generally the residents with the means to do so have found recreation services they need in the private sector or with public agencies outside Sedgewick. However, many residents are unable or unwilling to spend limited resources to travel or meet their recreation needs. The creation of a truly public system of recreation opportunities would benefit all residents by supporting a more cohesive community, improved health and enhanced livability.

A comprehensive program would include a wide variety of program areas, expanding from the community provided sports team and private fitness classes to a broader mix of classes, outdoor recreation and community events. The program would also include all the necessary supporting services such as marketing, volunteerism, co-ordination, and facility management.

To provide these programs and services, recreation facilities will need bookings in classrooms, meeting places and outdoor facilities. Providing both a hub and services of distributed recreation opportunities (at local parks, school grounds etc.) reduces barriers to accessing these activities, particularly get the youth and elderly in the community.

This two-part recommendation to the council can reflect the tensions throughout this process around “how far should we go” with programming options. While there may be some discussion to determine “how much should we do?” There is a sense we should proceed now with preliminary steps to initiate recreation services.

MISSION STATEMENT

To facilitate active lifestyles for all people.

We believe that participation in recreation and leisure are essential aspects of human life that improve one's quality of life.

We strive to ensure equality, participation in our community, parks and recreation facilities programs, services and special events for all people.

This access provides positive experiences, choice, challenges and empowerment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Principle 1:

Quality of life is a fundamental right.

- Active living is an important and essential component in the quality of life for all people, and quality of life is among the fundamental right of Canadians.

Principle 2:

Empowerment is the key.

- The empowered individual is the core of any successful program or service.
- The realization of the importance of self-determination and more opportunities for one to "take charge of one's life" is important.
- People have the right to be involved in planning programs, choosing activities of interest and initiating change when required.
- We live in a society that aims to promote interdependence, where people collaborate with others and receive support for acts of self-determination.

Principle 3:

Every community should be involved. Programs and services are best delivered at the community level.

Since individuals are the core of any successful program or service, it follows that these programs and services should be implemented at the local level.

This principle implies that these community programs and services should be fully accessible to allow for maximum participation.

Principle 4:

Equal access must be guaranteed.

- All individuals should have an equal opportunity to participate in physical activities regardless of age, gender, language, ethnic background, economics or ability.
- This principle stresses the opportunities to participate in active living should focus on inclusion rather than exclusion; the individual rather than the statistical norm; and current needs and interests rather than historical precedence.
- There is a need to enhance recreational planning and policy development to be inclusive, and to continue to eliminate discrimination within a system.

Principle 5:

Respect and dignity are the foundations.

Preserving the respect and dignity of all individuals is fundamental to the success of all recreational programs.

The principles of dignity and risk, age, opportunities, personal satisfaction and freedom of choice are fundamental to providing programs and services to the people.

Participation options should be challenging and demanding, geared to specific age groups, and varied enough that individuals can choose from a wide variety of activities.

GOALS:

1. To act as recreation advisors, consultants and liaison between people, community recreation professionals and all levels of government.
2. To promote awareness of the benefits of active living, recreation and leisure, as well as benefits of inclusion.
3. To facilitate recreation, inclusion through leisure planning, referrals, information implementation processes, and assistance in overcoming barriers to participation.

How to build a culture of innovation?

- New and better ways of doing programming; better product, better success.
- Convert knowledge into better recreation.

Step 1:

Get endorsement from management.

- New ideas
- New resources

Step 2:

Get a custom definition.

- Provide a written guide and vision.

Step 3:

Put process and tools in place – facilitate ideas and follow through.

- Create tools to help people think through ideas.
- Ideas must be managed and prioritized.

Step 4:

Involve everyone – great ideas come from unexpected areas – tap creativity – all sources.

Step 5:

Measure progress and success.

- You can't manage what you don't measure, track and show results.

Step 6:

Celebrate and reward success and even a failure or two.

- Recognize and reward what works.
- Look at what didn't work and recognize lessons learned.

PLANNING

Planning is not achievable without a dedicated budget to support it. It is necessary to assist support staff, materials, and training to plan effectively.

Professional development opportunities to improve planning skills are required. The more knowledgeable people are about planning, the more efficient they will be in developing a plan that is cost effective and ensures quality and safety.

Funding may also be used to gain community involvement in the planning process making it interesting, enjoyable and rewarding.

Time is the main barrier to planning. Day to day operations get in the way of the planning process by prolonging it or preventing it from starting. Time is needed to research a plan. Recreation needs to be given adequate time, knowledge, skill sets and funding to ensure effective quality plans and avoid disjointed and reactive planning.

Once a plan is compiled it needs to be put into action and then evaluated. Evaluation ensure that the goals of the plan are being reached.

Sedgewick's recreation needs a planning system – an interactive process that is able to adopt and change as time progresses. Evaluation helps to prepare for recommended changes for the next planning. Developing a process for planning, implementing and evaluating, will help the program move from one stage to another and keep a continuing cycle.

Professional Development:

Professional development is to improve skills and stay on top of trends and resources is important. Sedgewick's recreation can invest in their staff and volunteers to improve morale and make staff feel valued, resulting in higher productivity and more of a professional work environment.

Professional development for staff and volunteers should be considered in the budgeting process. Grant supplies should allow some funding to go toward personal development; having well trained staff/volunteers who are knowledgeable can help benefit the community's future.

Benefits such as:

- Better resources.
- Quality programming to educate.
- Easy day-to-day operations.
- Save money as staff are more knowledgeable.

Participating in training courses and workshops are also “networking and sharing opportunities” where people learn from discussions with one another.

Good Practice Examples:

- Better and more access to professional development funding.
- More opportunities, locally to reduce travel expenses and time.
- Increase awareness to the importance and value of professional development from funding sources.

Inclusion:

Offering inclusive recreation means having the ability to accommodate the needs of each individual, whether it be assisting with finances, providing facilities, or other personal needs.

Each situation should be assessed. Accessibility is important to consider when offering recreation programs. Accessibility relates not only to physical structure of the building but access to and from the location and user fees.

Communities are always changing and for this reason it is important to conduct a needs assessment on a regular basis and be prepared to assess.

Inclusive recreation may mean providing requirements for each individual depending on the program. There is need for more education on the provision of inclusive recreation, not only for staff but for parents, and extended family and friends.

Again, budget is a major factor within this issue as education, transportation, and facility/equipment upgrading and modification can be very costly.

Good Practice Examples:

- Grant monies need to be aware of the challenges of ensuring inclusion for all.
- Educational training need to be created to help educate funding providers.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Recreation, leisure activities and parks play an important role in knitting communities together and enhancing quality of life. A strong understanding of recreation and leisure are integral to social change and town development is important.

There is no doubt about the value and importance of services and programs for Sedgewick's residents, visitors and businesses of all ages. Active healthy people means active healthy communities. It is important for Sedgewick to continue to offer opportunities through programming that enhance quality of life.

These programs play different roles to different people. For some it is sport for others it is lifestyle, but the key is a balance of opportunity.

Working together and saving money, with shared agreements and services, makes for an effective positive result. Sedgewick's residents will have access to more opportunities because of shared use agreements. Sharing is the new way of doing business.

The household members receive benefits from recreation/leisure services. The wide array of benefits that community support can deliver is unparalleled. Sport can make us healthier, help put our children on a positive life course and equip them to meet future challenges, strengthen our community by drawing people together and building trust and inclusion. Sport can make Sedgewick more attractive to workers and companies.

With an enhanced emphases on recreation and leisure services we will attract people, growth and new developmental opportunities.

Good Practice Examples:

- Shift management practices to a public body of "trained volunteers" inviting it to be run as a public club.
- Prepare students for entry. Get students involved in organizing and participating in events – let students have a voice in helping to address local community issues. Be known as a "youth friendly community".
- Recreation departments allocated resources to a newly formed group in order to ensure its success. Resources include operational support and human resources. This avoids duplication of services.
- Community beautification projects and graffiti eradication projects involving professional community mentors – turn it to art walks, etc.
- Promote the development of new partnerships.
- Identify who is working with who and assist.
- Create and promote resource material – distribute to planners, professionals etc.

- Be a strong voice in sharing and influencing public policy – stand as a strong united front to support change.
- Improve public awareness of the importance of recreation, leisure and call Sedgewick's people to action.

SEDGEWICK'S RECREATION FACILITIES

Thanks to the strong tradition of investments, Sedgewick is served by a broad range of public recreation, leisure and cultural facilities.

Hockey rinks, golf course, heritage spots, recreation centres and other facilities give us places to gather, relax, build healthy bodies and enjoy leisure pursuits.

These facilities help attract events, boosting Sedgewick's reputation. A master plan lays out an ensuring future for people to enjoy these same benefits.

A recreation facility can range from an arena, to a swimming pool, to a bowling alley, to a gymnasium, or a multi-purpose room.

Generally citizens want recreation facilities that promote these values:

- A sense of community – places where new friends are made and old friendships nurtured.
- Health and Wellness – facilities that contribute to better health.
- Inclusion – places where their needs are met with interest and openness.
- Safety – facilities that enhance physical and mental wellness.
- Partnership – facilities developed through partnerships to reduce reliance on tax dollars and to share the contributions to community needs.
- Civic engagement – facilities that stand out as a good example of what Sedgewick has to offer.
- Integrated services – places that offer a range of opportunities that fit well into today's lifestyle and bring people together to enhance a sense of community.

Recreation facilities offer safe, inviting, equipped places for fitness, play, art, culture and other activities that challenge and improve our bodies. Here, people of all ages and abilities can develop skills and interests that help them improve health and wellness. Here, communities build neighbourly connections that enhance safety, capacity and quality of life.

Recreation benefits all ages and stages. Children learn valuable skills through sport and out-of-school programs. Teens in positive recreation and social activities are less likely to find themselves in troubling situations. Adults and seniors who take time for recreation are fitter, healthier, more engaged in the community and less reliant on the health care system.

Sedgewick's facilities are:

- Sedgewick Golf Club House.
- Sedgewick Recreation Centre.

- Sedgewick Lake Park cook house.
- Sedgewick Community Hall.

The most common recreation facilities are outdoor sport fields and playgrounds. The purpose of recreation facilities be it indoor or outdoor is to help meet the needs of the community by providing a place for recreation to be.

Sedgewick's recreational facilities are well located and accessible to everyone in the community. During peak season, and peak times, facility access may be limited. For example, the arena may be booked from after school to late in the evening, therefore limiting access for unorganized recreation. However, the overall predominant factor is the maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities. Budgeting is key, to ensure general maintenance and capital upgrades are planned. Staff must also be in place to ensure maintenance is carried out, contributing to facility longevity. With no major funding grants for new infrastructure or for support for facilities it is important to program, promote and plan for sustainability. Without this planning, general maintenance drains basic facility funds.

Good Practice Examples:

- Multi Year Capital Planning.
- Staff training.
- Volunteer training sessions.

Trends impact future needs. As Sedgewick evolves, our recreation patterns change as well. Trends shaping our facility needs include:

- Population growth – Sedgewick is expected to grow adding to recreation demand as planned by the new vision, Grow With Us.
- Aging infrastructure – recreation facilities are more than 20 years old, need regular maintenance or significant renovations and are not as energy efficient or flexible as the new designs. Older facilities deserve to be redeveloped to meet current needs.
- Changing demographics – gradual aging of the population, coupled with an expanding array of cultures expands our range of recreation needs. Future facilities in Sedgewick must be planned, designed and located for access.
- Loose community ties – a sense of community is critical to families and the community at large. Any new facility should help join us together.

Good Practice Examples:

- Multi-purpose facilities with a shift from single purpose buildings to versatile spaces with flexible programming.
- Locate health and recreation services together.
- Users are choosing facilities with style over utilitarian designs.
- Equip facilities with revenue – generating space for service such as ATM's, licensed food services, and equipment shops.
- Multi-use arenas without summer ice are installing temporary multi-purpose floor boards for inline hockey and lacrosse.

Future planning of facilities will rely on seeking partnerships with health care, education, and social service agencies to provide integrated service. Sedgewick would ultimately envision facilities where all the citizens would have access to welcoming, conveniently located facilities that, enhance our sense of community by offering a wide variety of interests and skills.

This strategic approach takes into account today's realities while providing the flexibility to adopt as population grows and recreation trends shift.

Access: Sport and Recreation Website

Meant to be by no means a "full out" strategic plan. It is written for future thoughts only.

RISK MANAGEMENT

If you serve on a board, risk management is one of your key responsibilities. Awareness of your groups legal obligations and commitment to quality and safety are critical. Risk management is the cause of action you take to reduce potential legal liability. It attempts to address potential problems before they occur. Creating a safer environment and legally safer operational procedure is the aim. Risk management is an ongoing progress that should be applied to all programming and procedures.

Benefits of Risk Management:

1. Better sporting and recreational outcomes.
2. Improved safety for participants, officials, spectators and volunteers.
3. Lower costs and increased budgetary certainty.
4. More effective management of assets, events and programs.

Risks facing sport and recreation organizations:

The risk areas are broad. There are some general risks such as:

1. Not being incorporated.
2. Not complying with Child Protection Legislation.
3. Not having a member protection policy.
4. Not requiring participants to sign a waiver or release form prior to participating.
5. Providing equipment and facilities that are not safe for the intended use.

How to Manage Risk:

All key players, including board members, management and volunteers should be involved in every step of the risk management process. To make this process easier, break the risk management process into achievable steps by following a checklist.

For example:

- Appoint a risk manager – responsible for process.
- Identify “key” people who will be involved.
- Identify risks.
- Analyse risks.
- Evaluate risks.
- Design a risk elimination and reduction plan.
- Implement the plan.
- Develop a clear communication strategy on risk management.
- Monitor and review strategies and report them to the board regularly.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive risk management plan. It simply outlines some of the areas Sedgewick needs to address when developing a future risk management plan regarding sport and recreation.

RECREATION/LEISURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The challenge today is to build the well-being in the midst of change and emerging issues and to turn challenges into opportunities.

Challenges may include:

- The aging population means that many communities have a declining proportion of children and increasing population of older adults. This is evident in the area as our young people move to large urban centres to pursue education and work, and the desires of older people is to “age in place” if possible.
- At this time, rural town areas face challenges in recreation due to decreasing population levels, a lack of funds and infrastructure, traditional ways of life increasing pressure on small numbers of volunteers to lead in many needed areas.
- Challenges also related to transportation and distances exist.
- Challenges to health exist. These include:
 - Risk behaviors such as a sedentary living and risk factors for disease such as obesity.
 - Chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.
 - Mental health concerns such as depression and youth suicide.
- Challenges exist in economic inequities.
 - Individuals and families with lower income typically have fewer opportunities for recreational experiences due to cost.
- Challenges exist in social activities.
 - Changes in increasing inequities, unemployment, rapid development, the use of social media instead of face-to-face interaction. The loss of traditional supports has compounded feelings of isolation for many people.
- Challenges exist in new and emerging technologies.
 - Parents and leaders in recreation are concerned about the increasing amount of time children and youth spend in sedentary digital pursuits.

- New technologies have encouraged a reduction in time available to pursue recreational experiences.
- Challenges and threats around the natural environment.
 - Growing threats to the natural environment have made the environmental issues important to the field of recreation.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

There are numerous benefits to individuals engaging in positive recreation; social, physical, mental and emotional. Recreation is not confined solely to sports and physical activity; it includes artistic, cultural, social and intellectual activities. It is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered social services. Community recreation does not just assist individual development and quality of life but community development and social functioning as well.

Recreation practitioners face many issues and challenges in their day-to-day jobs.

Budget:

Public recreation users expect quality programming, services and facilities; this is challenging for recreation professionals to maintain with budget constraints. Financial hardships affect recreation agencies at one time or another whether it is due to funding cut backs or increased costs.

Some have privatized services or created revenue producing activities such as seeking donations or hosting fundraising events. Increasing user fees, reducing operating costs and seeking alternative funding have been considered.

When budgeting for recreation programs and services there are many factors to take into consideration:

- Quality and safety of the program.
- Possible funding grants.
- Awareness of risks when programs are not priced appropriately and operating costs are reduced too low.

Recognizing the financial limitations in a community is very important to providing opportunities that are inclusive to all people. Managing a cost effective facility can be difficult. Keeping prices low isn't always achievable.

Development of large plans can take time, skills, community co-operation, a budget and evaluation process. The other issue that is linked strongly to budget is understanding and support. Many of the decision makers do not understand the role or the long-term goals of recreation in their community, therefore making it difficult to assist with effective budget allocations.

There is a need to increase funding for recreation at all levels, especially provincial and municipal governments.

Create awareness and educational sessions are needed to help funders get a better understanding of the cost of recreation.

Create/offer grant seeking and writing training sessions, that provide skills to make looking and filling out grant applications easier and less time consuming.

HUMAN RESOURCES

How human resources build economies.

Community leadership and effective development go together. Recreation providers are needed to work together to avoid duplication of services and ensure the best opportunities.

Decision makers need to understand the benefits of ensuring facilitation and co-ordination of recreation services and foster a high quality of enjoyment for Sedgewick's citizens.

There is a demand for all types of recreation and leisure services in Sedgewick. All types of recreation require short and long term investment through creative enhanced community involvement.

The economic benefits of having these services cannot be argued. They are required to keep Sedgewick thriving.

To increase the ability of leaders to better understand local needs, set priorities, and develop strategies that will provide future progress. Strong partnerships and enhanced communication will provide resources for Sedgewick to generate cost savings.

Enhance emphasis on recreation and leisure services will continue to attract people, growth and economic development for Sedgewick.

Good Practice Examples:

- Communicate
- Support professional training
- Facilitate development of new partnerships
- Create and promote resources
- Be a strong voice in shaping and influencing public policy
- Improve public awareness of the importance of benefits in recreation and leisure

Community leadership and economic development go together. Unless you have good leadership in a community – leaders with foresight to make the right decisions – having successful economic development will be vague. Working overtime to cultivate leaders makes communities successful.

Special events and tournaments are an effective way towards economic benefits. It shows the local businesses that the town council is invested in seeing our local economy grow, but they also help to create return business as events such as these show off the community, and people will visit Sedgewick again.

FITNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION

A fitness and health promotion program for citizens will help improve performances in careers and personal lives. By designing and delivering meaningful, age-relevant physical activities programmers will contribute to the health of the “well” population and help people improve.

Experimental learning through field placement is the core of this program. This program takes a holistic approach to intervention of each targeted group addressing such issues as client context and family support. This program will reliably demonstrate the ability to:

- Conduct assessments of fitness, well-being and lifestyle and provide feedback to both the people and the programmer.
- Prescribe appropriate physical activity, fitness, lifestyle and active living programs to enhance, health, fitness and well-being across the various age range.
- Revitalize appropriate interviewing and counselling skills to promote or enhance health, active living and well-being of adults their children and parents or caregivers.
- Collaborate with individuals across various age ranges in the selection and adaption of strategies that will enable them to take control of and improve their health fitness and well-being.
- Develop, implement and evaluate programs and events appropriate for all ages and stages of development which respond to identified needs and interests of users and maximize the benefits of health.
- Apply principles of physical conditioning to train individuals and instruct groups of all ages in physical activities, including sport participation.
- Contribute to community health promotion strategies through consultation and participation with municipal recreation departments, private health and fitness facilities, schools and sport clubs and organizations.
- Assist and implement development of strategies for ongoing personal and professional growth.
- Provide effective implementation techniques for fitness programs, facilities and families.

Participate according to the Canadian Sport for Life concept.

WELLNESS STRATEGY

A wellness strategy addresses the physical, social, and psychological needs of employees and maintains a commitment to employee health, safety and wellness.

The wellness strategy will:

- Assist the Town of Sedgewick's board to deliver on its commitment of wellness for our people.
- Provide employees with opportunities associated with value of wellness.
- Contribute to, implement, and build upon the efforts to:
 1. Improve employee morale and productivity.
 2. Enhance organizational culture.
 3. Health benefit costs containment.
 4. Reduce absenteeism and turnover.

Programs, activities, and services will be delivered by joint health and safety, and wellness professionals.

These professionals are to address each of these behaviors.

Good Practice Examples:

Recognize each other's contribution:

- Say "Thanks" program.
- Employee appreciation activities.
- Retirement gifts.

Encourage development:

- Career development.
- Tuition assistance.
- Performance development plans.
- Departmental training.

Seek life balance (health and well-being):

- Physical health programming (ie. skating, walking, yoga etc.).
- Social/emotional/health programming (ie. life issues seminars, hobby workshops, clubs).
- Healthy lifestyle education support programs (ie. healthy eating, grief counselling).

A community "Wellbeing Strategy" has anticipated outcomes such as:

1. Unites and engages a community around a shared vision of wellbeing.
2. A stronger relationship between town council and community through civic engagement.
3. A platform for pro-active programming.

A "Wellness Strategy" can have a positive contribution to quality of life in Sedgewick. It catalyzes development of other activities throughout the town. It makes noticeable differences in innovation and measurement in social standards.

This program can have many challenges. A complex, long-term project but with attention paid to communication, shared active programs, and an agreement on shared action, - great success can be found.

INSPIRING RURAL LEADERSHIP

At some point in everyone's life whether it's in the workplace, the community or a family setting, we're called upon to be a leader. Leaders see challenges, opportunities or things that need to be done. Leaders reach out towards them and enlist others to reach, too.

Vision:

Increased leadership capacity with individuals and boards effectively advance the mandates of organizations.

Values Based Leadership:

Objectives:

- Raise awareness and understanding of values.
- Provide participants an opportunity to reflect on core value.
- Consider how values grow leadership.

Leadership Styles:

Objectives:

- Describe and appreciate a diversity of leadership styles.
- Personally define and understand dominant leadership styles and how it affects others.
- Adopt leadership styles to group situations.

Leadership Practice Examples:

- To build skills for effective leadership, build powerful relationships and support individuals.
- Model the way.
- Inspire a shared vision.
- Challenge the process.
- Enable others to act.
- Encourage others.

Team work and communication skills are important in leisure and recreation programs. Consider how to lead, then support and communicate with groups of people working towards a common effort. In programming leaders must learn and understand how preconceptions and limited perceptions interfere with communications. Programmers must develop a plan for communicating more effectively.

In leading change and engaging communities you must create awareness of different projects and support this work so people will be curious to research more and involve themselves more. Time needs to be taken to build skills for leaders of change to deal with the different reactions to change that are bound to occur within individuals and between and among groups when change is

occurring. Take time to consider how you might use skills to lead change for their community. Also how to act to show enhancement of their knowledge and skills is effective change leadership.

We need to change the focus of thinking from “always about now” to focus on a target of where you want to be. We need to breakdown the broad concept into manageable behaviours that support leaders to develop the capacity and habit of “forward thinking”.

Equipping the leaders with good information enables them to consider the deep complexities of the issues facing communities. Having them explore desires for the future and taking action that aligns the efforts of the people in effective ways is forward leadership. Leadership that will take action and align the people in effective ways and is mindful of consequences in the short and long term will serve a community such as Sedgewick well.

Access: Growing Forward 2

YOUTH PROGRAMMING THROUGH OPERATIVE OUTREACH

The roots of bullying, taunting, teasing and other uncaring behaviors are complex. It seems many children simply are reflecting a society where these behaviors have been encouraged – on T.V. by their peers, and family members. Children are passing on the hurt they have experienced – bottled up into unresolved feelings of grieving, fear, anger, or sadness. Children need help releasing these feelings in a caring setting. All children, as well as their targets, can get stuck in patterns of passing on their own hurt to others. They need caring adults to help them break out of these roles.

Access: Laura Parker Roerdan, Author of “Don’t Laugh at Me”, guide and curricular materials.

Workshops, speeches, and youth oriented performance programs in conjunction with other service organizations would help to provide Sedgewick’s youth with empowerment feeling not so vulnerable. Helping our youth to put words and power behind their own ideas, experiences and emotions is needed. With innovative programming and development of concerts, events, speakers, and collaboration of resources Sedgewick has the resources to implement short-term developing leadership programs for youth.

Programs and speakers could focus on:

- Character development.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Social learning.
- Emotional learning.

Good Practice Examples:

- Research on social learning.
- Research on emotional learning.
- Offer support.
- Offer material.
- Offer training.



Building a caring community takes time, effort and support. Our goal is to equip youth with the necessary skills and confidence through curriculum, music, inspiration and research to be bully-free and feel safer.

In order to experience a community as caring, all people need:

- To experience a sense of belonging.
- To feel emotionally safe.
- To feel physically safe.
- To feel valued and respected.

Don't Laugh At Me are lessons on:

- Resolving conflict.
- Building community.
- Celebrating diversity.
- Expressing and managing feelings.

Together these lessons build essential skills for reducing bullying and conflict, supportive learning environments and engaging young people in active participation in our town. In order to experience a community as caring, all people within it need to:

- Experience a sense of belonging.
- Have a sense of shared purpose and ideals.
- Have feelings of accomplishment.

These values stand as a guide for future programming in this area.

BENEFITS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Mentoring is often a part of recreation and leisure programming. Supportive, healthy relationships formed between mentor and mentees are both immediate and long-term.

Benefits for youth:

1. Increased high school graduations.
2. Lower high school drop-out rates.
3. Better attitudes.
4. Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence.
5. Improved interpersonal skills.

Benefits for mentors:

1. Increased self-esteem.
2. A sense of accomplishment.
3. Creates a network of volunteers.
4. Increases patience and supervisory skills.

Positive youth benefit from close, caring relationships. Mentoring has been growing in popularity as both a prevention and intervention strategy in programming. Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal with variation, but the essential components include caring, empathetic, consistent and long lasting, often with a combination of role-modeling, teaching and advising. Programs like this are integral to successful leisure programs. Developing a mentoring program is a great way to make valuable contributions in your community.

Good Practice Examples:

- Assess the needs and resources in the community and existing programs.
- Design the parameters of the program; age, gender, etc.
- Determine the focus of mentoring relationship; academic, career or positive youth development.
- Determine if the program will collaborate with other recreation and leisure programs.
- Plan how it will be managed.

One way to get additional assistance in both the planning and implementation stages is to reach out to a provincial mentoring organization or collaborate with other community liaisons, contact schools, businesses, and existing programs in order to access resources and learn from the experiences of others. These are key attributors associated with successful mentoring and leisure programs. A program such as this enhances the transition of youth to healthy adult roles.

PROGRAMS TO ACCESS

- The Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines and Youth: An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Steps (for youth 5-17 years).
- New research supports the ParticipACTION 2016.
- New Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth. Encourage children and you to “SWEAT, STEP, SLEEP and SIT”.
- SMART RISK – No Regrets Live Youth Program (for youth 13-25 years). A peer leadership programs promoting smart risk decisions. A program that teaches a smart and stupid risk.
- Collaborating for Success – Implementing the Active Alberta Policy, Alberta Government

The Forever... in Motion grant is to support communities in implementing Forever... in Motion program. This helps older adults become physically active through volunteers, peers, or staff led physical activity groups.

- Active Alberta is a government wide policy designated to contribute to a quality of life for Albertans. Approved by eleven ministries, the policy identifies the importance of a co-ordinated approach when working towards increasing physical activity in diverse communities and environments across Alberta. The implementation in practices is a critical piece in determining its success.

SPORT FOR LIFE COMMUNITY

Sport for life community is community which has adapted the “Sport for Life” framework by bringing health, education, recreation, sport and other stakeholders to develop and implement a plan for an active, healthy community.

The purpose is set in the stages:

First Step: We’re examining what we might want to do, but haven’t settled on a course of action.

Exploring: We know changes have to be made but we don’t have a resourced plan at this time.

Mobilizing: We have a sourced plan and have begun advancing it, but have a ways to go.

Transforming: We have strong resourced, cross-sectional initiative which has begun to make changes.

Championing: Our community has made strong progress!!! We can continue to re-evaluate and strategize how we can improve.

Benefits of Aligning Recreation and Sport

1. Recreation Services Benefits

- Broader reach of programming.
- Expanded facility use.
- Lifelong participation in active living.

2. Sport Organizations Benefits

- Higher participation levels and longer retention of athletes.
- Stronger volunteer base.
- Enhanced performance of athletes.

3. School Benefits

- Higher individual self-esteem.
- Improve health and motivation.
- Improve cognitive functioning.

By aligning programming, schools, recreation and sport groups we can address important areas:

1. Multisport programs for physical literacy.
2. Programming for lifelong activity and excellence.
3. Building capacity.

Sedgewick needs to provide more networking programs such as the one above. More effort needs to be directed at harmonizing, training, and ultimately leaning toward more of a practice approach. "Sport for Life" promotes development through sport, so people can enjoy physical activity and be active for life. A physically active lifestyle leads to healthier communities through both injury prevention and general health and wellness.

CULTURAL TOURISM AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE SITES

Cultural tourism is an area of economic benefit to museums and heritage sites. Challenging economic times require recreation programming in above sites to explore ways and means of increasing attendance and self-generates revenues and to control operating expenses. To do this Sedgewick needs to practice and focus on customer service, partnerships, and packaging opportunities.

Programming needs to show they are more receptive to new ideas and approaches. Taking notice of existing cultural attractions and events and partner resources, finding scheduling etc.to have successful end results. Recreation needs to communicate with heritage organizations to support existing roles and help meet future ones.

Examples:

- Wider community education
- Downtown revitalization

It becomes a continuum of culture, tourism and business.

Good Practice Examples:

- Increase awareness (ie. unique advertisements).
- Extend the product to be unique or special.
- Community support and involvement.

The cultural, recreation strategy is to move activities forward so as they involve people who are “greatly motivated by heritage and culture”. Successful programming brings cultural “people” and heritage “people” together. This becomes the first step in communication.

An understanding of what “culture” and “heritage” need from each other for successful partnership is the role of recreation programming. Centering on sponsorships, memberships, and donations as well as developing programs in commitment practice, special exhibitions, special events and festivals. Quality programming also provides for positive visitor experience in Sedgewick. This raises the profile of the community.

TODDLERS AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Young children learn to do by doing. This includes structured and unstructured activities. Unstructured play is making a snowman, rolling down hills etc. Structured play is when an adult creates a stimulating environment and children are encouraged to explore. A stimulating indoor space provides different types of balls, cones, skipping ropes, hoops, low balance beams, soft and hard surfaces, and small climbing structures.

Adults support the children exploration by being active role models:

- Playing themselves to demonstrate ways to play.
- Teaching proper throwing techniques.
- Rolling “short” and “long” distances.

Playground equipment for preschoolers including swings, climbers, ropes and so on is a stimulating outdoor space. A natural environment is hills to climb up and roll down, small ditches to jump over, low walls to walk along, steps to jump from and piles of leaves to jump in.

Both indoor and out, a stimulating environment encourages children to be active and explore abilities. It supports their motivation to move and helps to develop both confidence and competence. They start to think about managing risk for themselves.

It is fundamental movement skills in the early years that encourages children to compete in sport activities throughout their lives.

There is a lot that can be done to ensure that children’s environments foster free play. Physical space should offer a variety of activities that support children choices. A social environment that accompanies the physical space encourages creativity and exploratory skills.

Alberta has recognized the importance of encouraging free play and has developed “LOVE TO PLAY” programming and spaces.

Good Practice Examples:

- Parents and instructors believe children have the ability to make choices about how, what, whom and when to engage play.
- Shared opinion that free play offers health and development benefits for pre-schoolers.

Preschools help meet the needs of play in children so they are in safe, supervised environments that provide group interaction. Preschools are a prime target of “accessory recreation programming”. This meaning Sedgewick’s recreation department may offer supplementary programming.

Examples:

- Equipment.
- Paper supplies.
- Additional supervision.
- Room rentals, etc.

Community – preschool programs are genuine and positively impact all stages of development of our children. Our community partnership will continue to collaborate with programs and give Sedgewick a meaningful relevance.

Access: Preventable Research Evaluation “Love to Play” project.

PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

People with disabilities are valued and respected members of our communities. They are welcomed for their strength and potential.

Recreation and leisure opportunities in Sedgewick needs to include an emphasis on reducing barriers for adaptive persons and programs. There are groups and individuals who face barriers, age, health etc. that may limit them to recreation opportunities. Community-based organizations can collaborate with regional health groups, school divisions and community partner groups to provide an array of supports and services in leisure programming for special needs people. All efforts can be made so that persons with disabilities are accommodated throughout local programming.

Some of the barriers to access are removed by:

- Providing funding for equipment.
- Providing programs with qualified/trained instructors.
- To avoid social isolation for the person, provide a Handy Bus service.

We need to strive and engage and assist through leisure programming to provide individuals with disabilities and their families a support action. Providing opportunities are choices to lead full inclusive lives.

One of the goal initiatives is to provide support so as individuals are not socially and culturally isolated. Community programs should focus on individual goals to develop supports in helping people with needs to participate in activities in an effort to develop, maintain and enhance the involvement of family and friends. Individual plans are developed based on a person's interest and the activities in their community.

Activities could include:

- Outings with family and friends.
- Volunteer activities.
- Church activities.
- Movies and education programs.

A vision for recreation and leisure programming here is developed and refined over time as Sedgewick gains knowledge and an understanding of the assessment needs process. Understanding goals and direction we may want to take, takes time and commitment.

Good Practice Examples:

- Information and referral support are available to families.
- Information about federal and provincial government programs and services, community support and our own local resources.
- Assisting in obtaining and co-ordinating supports and services.
- Refer back to our own community support and advocacy resources, such as parent groups, disability associations and advocacy organizations.
- Information and support to empower individual persons to participate.

Programming moves forward with our purpose being, an achievement for special needs, to have full participation in our society. This is why future programming should partner with organizations and government agencies.

Contributions from local business, community organizations, and volunteers is vital to ongoing programming and success.

Access: Voice of Albertans with Disabilities.

SENIORS PROGRAMS

The Government of Alberta developed the Aging Population Policy framework, encouraging and supporting the creation of age friendly communities.

Depending on the nature of senior programming the specifics will be unique however; there are some elements of age friendliness that is common:

- Comfort – reduce long periods of standing time etc.
- Visibility – using signage with good contrast etc.
- Safety – sturdy floor surfaces, wider aisles etc.
- Respect – patience and understanding sensitivity.

Sedgewick needs to be creating an environment that is accessible and friendly to older adults to ensure the populations can lead healthier active lives.

Parks are often underutilized by older adults. It is important that we make parks accessible, safe, functional and more importantly develop programs to encourage older adults to visit parks regularly.

The usage of parks for leisure is vital to the physical and mental wellness of seniors. Outreach is necessary to get people out of their homes. Programming is essential to turn parks into public health resources. Effective physical activity programs for older adults must:

1. Set specific goals
2. Promote everyday tasks and opportunities for physical activity.
3. Offer a variety of group based physical activity programs.
4. Programs must be tailored to meet the needs of individuals.
5. Offer instruction in proper techniques – provide supervision.
6. Offer intergenerational programs.

Example Programs:

- Chair yoga.
- Walking programs – “walk with ease” training.
- Aqua aerobics.
- Socializations programs or social fitness.
- Games or pairing activities
 - Softball throw
 - Football throw
 - Frisbee throw
 - Soccer shoot
 - Bean bag toss

Sedgewick needs to develop a sense of community and help generations develop respect for each other while simultaneously promoting health living, exercise and leisure fun.

OUTDOOR ADULT FITNESS PARKS

With the constant increase in adult obesity encouraging regular physical activity is an important consideration for the health of the Sedgewick community.

It is time to think about new ways to make physical activity and exercise more accessibly, more available, more affordable, more pleasurable, and ultimately more useful to society.

Outdoor fitness equipment found in Fitness Parks for adults is providing a variety of meaningful outcomes. Remove the barriers to a life of fitness.



TRAILS

The social, health, and economics of pedestrian trails.

Social Benefits:

Trails foster community involvement and corresponding pride, in addition to providing an opportunity to interact with people, of varying backgrounds and experiences. Trails foster community involvement. The location of trails close to homes can be used easily as a route to a store, commute to school or work becoming very rapidly a part of Sedgewick's community life.

Trails help to build community pride by ensuring that their neighbourhoods are good places to live.

Trails help make communities more attractive and friendly places to live. Good trails can serve as a focal point for community events and gatherings. The activities can lead to greater interaction between residents.

Health Benefits:

Trails are healthy ways to stay fit and live well.

1. Walking relieves stress and tension.
2. Reduce elevated blood fats or blood pressure.
3. Improve digestion.
4. Refreshes the mind, reduces fatigue.
5. Trails support a range of recreational outdoor activities; walking, running, snow-shoeing and newer pursuits like geo-caching.
6. Trails instill a commitment to responsible recreation.
7. Create walk-able neighbourhoods.

Economics Benefits:

Property values increase in proximity to trails and communities recognize them as safe places to be active.

Generally pedestrian trails are an affordable form of recreation. Trails also instill a commitment to responsible recreation that promotes a respect for nature.

Good Practice Examples:

- Advancing trail ways by incorporating pathway systems and map them into a brochure.
- Offering off leash park initiatives and trail and pathway added maintenance activities.

HERITAGE AND CULTURE

By knowing what was we can see who we are as well as what we can become. Sedgewick's past is for all of us to experience and share. We preserve, to help us appreciate where we come from. We learn for the future, arrive at today and understand our history by the records of today.

Project Opportunity and Community Building:

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is committed to honouring those who served Canada in times of war, military conflict and peace, and to keeping the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

Building relationships is the central part of this cultural work. Everyone has a different approach. However we must recognize that all participants find comfort in having programs that provide stability and structure.

VAC accepts applications on a quarterly basis. Up to 50% of eligible expenditures, not exceeding a maximum of \$50,000 may be reimbursed. A minimum of 25% of the applicant's portion of the overall project cost must be cash, while up to 25% can be contributions in kind.

Future Project Opportunity:

- Revitalization of the cenotaph and memorial grounds at the end of Main Street.

What is a cenotaph?

- *"...a monument erected in honour of a person or group of people whose remains are elsewhere."*
- *"...a fitting monument of silence is a cenotaph, the empty tomb."*

Visual Aids:

Sedgewick's past...



Versus the future...



Sample writings to commemorate our veterans:

- *They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them nor the years condemn at the going down of the sun in the morning. "We will remember them."*

(North side is dedicated to the Glory of Those Who Served their Country)

- *In memory of men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of our country at the going down of the sun and in the morning. "We will remember them."*

(North side dedication, to the Glory of Those Who Served their Country)

Heritage and Culture Advantages of Reconstruction:

- Development of heritage awareness.
- Education and interpretation programs.
- Promote tourism.
- Promote heritage resources.

Enhancements:

- Plaques.
- Flags and poles.
- Handrails.
- Landscape and fencing.
- Benches.
- Lighting.

RECREATION, HERITAGE AND CULTURE

By knowing what was we can see who we are as well as what we could become. Sedgewick's past is for all of us to experience and to share. We preserve, to help us, appreciate where we come from. We learn for the future, arrive at today and understand our history by the records of today.

Our public library reaches out enhancing our lives and connecting people. They are meeting places and gateways to information. The Sedgewick library provides leadership in life-long education and centralizes services. It ensures everyone has access to the benefits of services. Our library contributes to our culture and heritage and then to our quality of life.

A variety of funding programs, grants, and awards are available for individuals and organizations. Libraries are a part in sustaining and growing our culture and heritage sectors. By investing in innovation, creativity and arts these programs help businesses succeed, create jobs, support artists, and overall enhances Sedgewick.

Art and culture activities for the youth may include, clubs, groups or programs with leadership, arts and crafts, dance, and music. Events/facilities centre around art galleries and museums, historic park concerts or plays.

Top five benefits of participating in cultural activities:

1. Socializing
2. Exercise
3. Being healthy
4. Self-confidence
5. Sportsmanship

Art and culture activities are more than just entertainment. They teach us about who we are, they contribute to the well-being of Sedgewick and they enrich the experiences for visitors to our town.

The involvement in cultural activities contributes to social, economic, educational, and spiritual life of a community.

Good Practice Examples:

- Performing art festivals/competitions.
- Community Culture Events – events which have a strong arts focus bring people together around planning issues.
- Cultural workshops – hands on learning and skill development in arts and crafts.
- Community culture projects – activities that promote and display cultural expression and explore or celebrate Sedgewick's identity.

Throughout these good practice examples we are looking to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Increase skills and knowledge of people active in cultural events.
2. Increase quality of, artistically or socially of, an activity.
3. Increase number and quality of partnerships within Sedgewick and communities.
4. Increase access to cultural resources and participation in cultural activities.

Building relationships is the central part of this cultural work. Everyone has a different approach. However we must recognize that all participants find comfort in having programs that provide stability and structure.

The changes are slow and incremental, but revolve in all ways around what's best for children and families. Heritage appreciation is built through community organizing.

CEMETERY REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Have you ever considered a prayer garden? Sedgewick has... a prayer garden is a visual reminder of your faith. Design a beautiful healing, spiritual garden with your natural environment. Prayer has always been central to unity.

Project Opportunity and Community Building:

Flagstaff County offers a Cemeteries Assistance Grant to rural community groups who are operating a cemetery in the county. The purpose of the grant is to assist local groups to complete improvement and maintenance to their cemetery.

Community groups are eligible to apply for the Cemeteries Assistance Grant from Flagstaff County every two years to a maximum of \$2,500.

Creation that takes on relationships, together is always more powerful than alone.

Future Project Opportunity:

- Revitalization of the prayer garden located at the Sedgewick Cemetery.

What is a prayer garden?

- *"...it's build to inspire and enrich lives of prayer together in a beautiful atmosphere in conversations."*
- *"...time, energy and gifts cultivating something beautiful out of the land. A place to gather as a community to break ground for a prayer garden for something that may seem like work into a celebration."*

Visual Aids:

Sedgewick's past...



Versus our future...Sedgewick's prayer garden can be enhanced so that it offers visitors a special measure of peace and solitude. It is to inspire and enrich lives.



Cemetery Revitalization Advantages:

- Discover more about the natural world.
- A new place to encounter celebration.
- Involve everyone at the community level by participating in active living and inclusion.

Funding Resources:

1. Flagstaff County Cemeteries Assistance Grant (\$2,500 every two years).
2. Battle River Community Foundations Grant



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Economic benefits of rural recreation and leisure services.

Sedgewick Recreation Services work to facilitate planning, professional development, communication, and sharing of resources between individuals and organizations involved in physical activity and leisure recreation within the town limits of Sedgewick.

Sedgewick's local governments face growing pressure with respect to encouraging or maintaining quality of life, and addressing social issues, ensuring recreation and leisure services and support remains a fundamental service for all residents, businesses, and visitors.

1. Leisure programs, services and parks contribute to economic development by attracting business to Sedgewick.
2. Leisure programs, services and parks draw tourism and contribute to Sedgewick's economics. An example; art, culture and sport.
3. Recreation, fitness, sport, arts, culture, parks etc. are significant employment generators for Sedgewick.
4. Small investments in recreation, sport, arts, culture, and parks yield larger economic returns from events, capital investments and ongoing services.
5. Recreation and leisure together are one of few "businesses" in a rural community likely to bring in "new money". Leisure planning plays an important role in knitting communities together and enhancing quality of life. Recreation and Parks are integral to social change and community development.

Building successful strategies for economic and recreational development in Sedgewick means realigning the numerous ways in which different parts of the economy interact to generate opportunities.

For example, infrastructure is more than bricks, it is about...

- Protecting the environment.
- Building strong, interactive and creative communities.
- Strengthening our community.
- Increase tourism.
- Increase job creation.
- Builds healthy minds and bodies.

No recreation/leisure means no lots sell in town and no facilities means no families. There has to be a balance between infrastructure and programming for economic success in Sedgewick.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public feedback is critical to the Recreation and Leisure Study. The planning process includes residents, interest groups, etc. in identifying community recreation needs and interests. Evaluating feedback goals and cross-checking the desired levels of services with residents is an important aspect.

Good Practice Examples:

- Resident interviews; interviews ranging from 10-20 minutes in length by phone and in person to address a short list of questions related to recreation programs.
- Recreation Questionnaires; an on-line questionnaire made available for 8 weeks to collect feedback on recreation participation, satisfaction, and desired programming. A questionnaire link on the website, and in an email distribution allowing people to respond.
- Focus Groups; a meeting of focus groups is to discuss recreation options for the future. One large focus group to discuss community recreation priorities and a smaller group to discuss problems, opportunities and funding options among other topics.

The goal with community support is to summarize recommendation and implementation strategies to enhance recreation programs and services.

MARKETING

Effective marketing takes skills. Recreation programs need support and training on how to market effectively. They need to know how to develop marketing resources that will attract the best market. This requires funding within every program. A portion of the budget needs to be dedicated to marketing as resources can be costly to establish and develop. Marketing is dependent on budgeting, staffing and professional development.

Access to grants, partnerships with community organizations and support from council are needed to address marketing challenges.

Good Practice Examples:

- Professional development opportunities for marketing are needed to learn the new technologies and how to market the new technologically savvy generation.
- Grants need to be aware of the increased costs (more money, more staff, etc.) on marketing and provide more support.

Marketing is essential to promote the recreation opportunities being offered to the intended group.

There are many different means of communication to the public. The challenge is knowing which is the best for the market being targeted.

“People need to be informed, educated, inspired, motivated, sometimes persuaded and often reminded to come to programs.”

Marketing needs to be built into the plan process and requires written policies and procedures to be effective.

Access: Marketing & Business Directory

EVALUATION AND VALIDITY

Vital to effective recreation and leisure programs evaluations are an appropriate method of monitoring, staffing, funding and integrity.

Without a systematic plan for evaluation you will be left with only the best of intentions. The elements of evaluation are:

- Staffing.
- Funding.
- Timing.
- Integrity and ethics.

These are managed through a set of guidelines for establishing an evaluation system.

- Link evaluations projects – efforts to evaluate specific programs should be connected in an interwoven system that focuses on joint co-ordinated projects.

This requires open communications among programmers and a common goal. An example of this would be questionnaires prepared for one program's evaluation might be used for another program.

- Gain administrative support – supervisors should be involved in planning specific evaluation projects as well as the entire evaluation system. An advisory committee is helpful in helping with individual evaluation projects and overseeing the entire evaluation system. Good communication with administration gains commitment towards the entire project.
- Involve program participants – There are many reasons to involve program participants in evaluation. Involving them early and often can help them gain an understanding of what an evaluation is all about, ultimately increasing their support for the program. Being involved makes them feel less threatened.
- Define roles and clarify – involved people need to be clear of what is expected from them. A clear way to do this is to write it down. This helps to ensure completeness and solve disagreements.
- Provide adequate funding – costs of evaluation should be included in operations budgets. Personnel costs, supply costs all need to be considered. Grants can be a source of evaluating funding. A list of expenses included in the budget or grant proposals include:
 - Travel expenses.
 - Material costs.
 - Outside consultant.
 - Staff training costs.

- Labour and material cost for data entry.
 - Analyst costs for preparing tabulations and special data.
 - Telephone charges, postage, reproduction and printing costs.
-
- Provide useful feedback – measuring overall satisfaction is important but even more useful is information made possible by measuring specific satisfaction with details. These more targeted results increase the evaluations value.
 - Prepare an evaluation proposal – a formal proposal – a written description of the intentions of the evaluation is useful for communicating your plan to others. In addition the process of writing a proposal helps you think through the steps, helping you to be more efficient.

Successful evaluation projects start out well organized and stay on track through to the finish. Integrity and ethics are essential for conducting a valid evaluation. Integrity refers to the validity of the information that is collected to determine the value of a program. Ethics is concerned with the treatment of the participants in the evaluation process.

An example:

When children are involved in an evaluation, parents or guardians should sign an informed consent.

The objective is for evaluations to produce timely, relevant, credible, and objective findings and consultation on program performance. This is a fundamental step in having programming move forward in Sedgewick.

Engage, Collaborate, Participate Conclusion

There are linkages between recreation opportunities and healthy communities. Recreation facilities help build a community's social-economic placement by bringing people together and encouraging safer, cleaner neighbourhoods. Understanding the links between recreation and strong communities, helps the council to effectively program, evaluate budgets, formulate and analyze policies and make investment decisions that support recreation areas, facilities, and programs.

Health care providers can benefit by actively promoting recreation programs that serve the health needs of people that in turn, benefits the entire community. This can easily be completed through partnerships with recreation programmers.

Law enforcement and educators supporting recreation resources can reduce crime and juvenile delinquency while enhancing learning. By incorporating recreation into their community programs they can expand existing resources for supporting individuals and their communities.

Educators, law enforcement and health care personnel will hopefully see recreation service providers as active partners toward similar goals.

Studies document how physical activity helps to control obesity, boost immune systems, diminish the risk of disease and increases life expectancy. Participation in recreation activities is an important contribution to improve mental health and quality of life. Recreation can aid in reducing depression, relieving stress, improving self-esteem and personal growth.

In this increasingly fast-paced world, facilities and programs provide the opportunities for something we want the most – a chance to take a breath and to relax – to refresh our minds.

Beyond the benefits that relate to individuals, recreation is an important asset to our communities. Recreation programs offer cost-effective means for addressing some troubling problems, particularly with regard to youth. Recreation programs can do much for juvenile and crime, combat the rise of alcohol, reduce school drop-outs, and promote learning.

By providing opportunities to strengthen family, promote cultural events, and create community awareness, recreation opportunities can build better and more livable communities.

What is most important is that these benefits can act in tandem. For example; a recreation program directed at youth obesity can increase self-esteem, reduce alcohol usage, build family bonds, and promote volunteerism, all at the same time. These combined benefits are endless.

Clearly this can have a positive economic impact and benefit to the community. This makes recreation one of the most cost-effective services available to us, here in Sedgewick.

Access: The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation

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