

**DATE:** October 3, 2019

**FILE:** 7900-01

**TO:** Chair and Members  
Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission

Supported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer

***R. Dyson***

**RE:** Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission – Recreation Services Update

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### **Purpose**

To provide the Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission (CVSCC) with further information on services, initiatives and the recreation review provided by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) recreation services.

### **Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

This report is for information only.

### **Executive Summary**

This report is to provide further information on services, initiatives and the recreation review provided by the CVRD recreation services.

Highlights include:

- Accessibility to Recreation Services Implementation – Low Income All access Recreation Pass is in development. (Strategic Goal 2 and 4)
- Active Comox Valley (Strategic Goal 4 and 5)
  - Outline of process for optimal delivery of service.
  - Supports and promotes local recreational activities that are affordable and accessible, including community runs/walks and family-oriented events.
- Recreation Review Implementation
  - Management team roles and responsibilities refocused within the CVRD recreation facilities to ensure recreation can provide a culture of collaboration, innovation and problem solving.
  - Direction, alignment and commitment opportunity for improved internal and external customer service.
- Outdoor court study (Strategic Goal 2 and 3)
  - Consultant selected and community outreach to begin in fall, 2019.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

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Services

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Doug DeMarzo  
General Manager of  
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## **Background/Current Situation**

### **Accessibility to recreation services:**

The VISION for the future of indoor recreation facilities in the Comox Valley Regional District is: To provide lively, accessible and inclusive indoor recreation facilities that, in combination with the local municipal facilities, support the pursuit of healthy active lifestyles for Comox Valley residents of all abilities, ages, and pursuits.

At the March 5<sup>th</sup> planning session the CVSCC identified Accessibility – focusing on income, as one of five strategic priorities for the CVRD recreation department. Ensure access to recreation services for all citizens regardless of income level. This priority has been selected as deemed to have the significant impact on achieving the vision. To advance this initiative the letter attached as appendix A was sent to the local municipalities on August 30, 2019.

Staff are planning to meet with partnering municipalities in November 2019 to discuss next steps to determine the best way to pilot the low income access pass. Some of the challenges include different registration systems and privacy issues.

### **Active Comox Valley:**

Active Comox Valley (ACV) is one of over 100 Active Communities in British Columbia. This initiative began in September 2005 and is aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and invigorating community spirit through physical activity.

ACV is funded by the CVRD. The initiative is supported with resources from local municipalities, recreation departments, interested citizens and major community contributors who work collaboratively to promote healthy lifestyles and community spirit through physical activity. The program was delivered by a contractor up until 2016. It has supported events such as Terry Fox run, playboxes and move for health day. Over the past couple of years programming staff have been responsible for promoting ACV.

ACV recognizes that there are real barriers to people getting more active, such as cost, accessibility and transportation issues. The program support and promote activities which are affordable and accessible, like community runs/walks and family-oriented events. Together as a community, we can forge a healthier and more sustainable way of life in the Comox Valley.

While ACV is a CVRD initiative reflecting on Goal 4 and 5 from the strategic plan we are reviewing the process with our partnering municipalities to best deliver this service and will report back in early 2020 with recommendations.

### **Recreation Review Implementation:**

A facilitator was retained to review existing operational processes to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of recreation services.

The work also focused on ensuring staff have the capacity to anticipate and plan for changing conditions and expectations. It is important that staff are able to meet the challenge of operating within the service's budget capacity and to be able to present viable strategic business plans if there is a need to pursue a change in the tax requisition or service levels.

It was also viewed that this was an opportunity to involve all of the staff in the CVRD recreation facilities to ensure a culture of collaboration, innovation and problem solving. When all of the staff take responsibility for ‘owning’ the operational issues and concerns it is much easier to develop approaches that are supported.

Highlights from the review have been implemented from this plan include:

- Management structure changes to provide better customer service, facility operations and to ensure clearer accountability. This restructure in job descriptions includes a formal education training plan.
- In July 2019 was the first five day training week where all staff attendance was required. Successful outcomes of this closure were:
  - Emergency procedure training and practice.
  - Customer service standards.
  - Respect in the workplace and handling difficult situations.
  - Understanding the recreation and CVRD strategic goals and direction setting.

Challenges associated with the five day pool facility closure as expressed by patrons were:

- Insufficient communication with pass holders about closure dates.
- Unclear messaging on voicemail regarding programming and how to purchase or confirm program registration and operating hours.
- Unable to connect with a live customer service representative.

As a result future closures will be shorter and information will be well advertised and communicated. In response to some of the challenges from this year patrons were given the opportunity for a five day extension of their pass.

- Review of IT needs for the upcoming five years.
  - On-line registration system that started this August.
  - Improving wifi and internet services to the facilities to improve our safety alarm systems to meet regulatory requirements.
  - Improve patron and user group experience such as Comox Valley Minor Hockey’s need for online/live game results.

### **Outdoor Court Study**

The regional outdoor court study will be a document that looks at the long term future of the region in context of its changing environment, demography, emerging priorities and needs for outdoor courts.

A consultant has been hired and public engagement will be underway this fall. The consultant will present a draft to the CVSCC at a later date.

Attachment: Appendix A – “Letter dated August 30, 2019”

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File: 8020-01

August 30, 2019

Sent via email only: russwurm@comox.ca

Mayor and Council  
Town of Comox  
1809 Beaufort Avenue  
Comox, BC V9M 1R9

Dear Mayor and Council:

**Re: Low Income Regional Recreation All Access Pass Program**

Recreation is very important to the residents of the Comox Valley. In the same way that we benefit from amazing natural recreation, we are also served by exemplary local government recreation services.

In response to the recently adopted Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission Strategic Plan - Goal 4 - Accessibility to Recreational Services, we are currently focussed on ensuring lower income families have affordable and convenient access to the wide variety of recreation programs and activities that we collectively offer. Achieving this requires cooperation between all our respective organizations to develop an all access pass program that reduces the administrative barriers for our residents.

In this regard, at the July 16, 2019 meeting, the Sports Commission passed the following resolution:

*“THAT staff be directed to work with the Comox Valley Regional District’s member municipalities to develop options for a low income regional recreation all access pass in the Comox Valley.”*

To advance this initiative, I am respectfully requesting that your Council support this work by directing your staff to collaborate with the Comox Valley Regional District and other local municipalities to develop a Low Income Regional Recreation All Access Pass Program.

Respectfully,

***J. Ketler***

Jesse Ketler  
Chair  
Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission

cc: Richard Kanigan, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Comox  
Chair Bob Wells, Comox Valley Regional District