

MUNICIPAL LEISURE SERVICES: A SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS
in
LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

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ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY

June 2007

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at determining an effective service delivery model for community leisure services in the City of New Westminster. The City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department is looking at adopting new ways of doing business, improving corporate efficiency and effectiveness, and developing an updated service delivery approach that is sustainable and serves the needs of the community. To achieve this goal, the department needs to determine how best to provide services. The system surrounding the provision of leisure services is complex and intertwined with many municipal partners; all of which need to be considered and understood. In order to be effective in the future, it was found that leisure services will need to effectively work within partnerships, develop new skills within staff, incorporate flexibility into existing systems, and determine what role municipal leisure services will play in the spectrum of leisure service delivery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Reiki blessing was shared with me by my faculty supervisor, Marilyn Hamilton, upon the commencement of my major project. It read: “May the highest good in me release the highest good in you.” This blessing seemed to sum up how I felt everyone around me helped to see me through this research project.

I would like to acknowledge my friends and family for their patience, understanding, and unwavering support. At every turn, their best selves came to the table with love and unconditional offerings of anything they could do to help.

My project would not be what it is without the guidance of my academic team: my faculty supervisor, my project sponsor, my editor, and all of the research project participants who so openly shared their experiences with me.

My cohort of fellow students taught me the true value and meaning of community. As a group, they showed me what it meant to live into our collective vision of providing perfect moments, limitless generosity, and unstoppable magic. Every member of our community played a role in getting me to where I am today.

Lastly, to a very special individual who helped me to live and experience my learning through their love, friendship, support, and guidance throughout the MALT program and in particular through the completion of this project.

Thank you all for bringing out the highest good in me.

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CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS AND FRAMING

Municipal recreation services are on the threshold of exciting, yet daunting, times when it comes to the way services are delivered and business is conducted. We are living in a time when government resources are tight; we are expected to do more with less, yet communities want to maintain existing levels of service. Stepping back from our current direct service delivery model and examining a new model of doing business is essential. Supporting what the community wants, determining what fits the vision of the city and the department, and looking at what is manageable with existing resources and is sustainable in the long term are critical elements that need to be considered and examined. I am interested in determining how the vital service of community leisure services can be delivered to the City of New Westminster, British Columbia, in a way that allows for continued growth and prosperity, particularly during times of financial constraints.

I am interested in this area of study for personal and professional reasons. Personally, my career aspirations go far beyond the responsibilities I have as a middle manager in the organization. The process I went through to complete this project challenged and enhanced my leadership skills, which have helped prepare me for future positions within the organization. On a professional level, because of static financial resources, public demand for maintaining or increasing service levels, and a city-wide drive to ensure we are providing services efficiently and effectively, there is a need and a desire to explore ways of operating differently. We simply are unable to continue operating the way we currently do. The City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation Department prides itself on being one of the best leisure service providers in the industry. As a proud employee of this department for over fifteen years, I have a vested interest in ensuring that our cutting-edge reputation stays strongly intact. The outcomes of this action

research study will provide the department with the necessary information on how to best provide leisure services to the community of New Westminster.

For purposes of this study, the research question was: “What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department’s ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?”

Sub-questions that evolved included:

1. What is the role of municipal government in the provision of leisure services?
2. What service delivery models are currently being used to deliver leisure services?
3. What role could partnerships play in the delivery of recreation services?
4. As the demographics of the community change, how does this affect leisure service provision?

The Opportunity

In the City of New Westminster, the Parks and Recreation Department offers leisure services primarily through a direct service provision model. This model has been in place for over twenty-five years. Throughout this time, the model has sufficiently served the community of approximately 58,000 residents (City of New Westminster, 2004). According to the most recent *City of New Westminster Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 1998-2002* (Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants [PERC], 1997), 90% of residents are “active parks and recreation participants through the use of parks, facilities, and/or recreation programs” (p. 12). One might ask, why change the model if it is not broken?

The main document governing city-wide decisions is the corporate *Strategic Plan: 2006* (City of New Westminster, 2006), which has been developed by city council in conjunction with city staff. This document reflects “the values, policies, and plans of [the New Westminster]

municipal government (p. 2). Two main points in the city's strategic plan support a genuine interest from the city for a change in the way we do business. "Corporate effectiveness/efficiency" (p. 4) is one of the values presented as a strategic priority in the document. Secondly, part of the corporation's vision is to be "known and respected throughout BC as an innovative leader in the provision of progressive government services" (p. 3). To achieve these goals, the strategic plan further states that city staff and city council will be guided by certain values and operating philosophies, one of which is to be "constantly searching for and adopting new ways of doing business" (p. 3). These statements support the need for change in our business operation, particularly one that contributes to overall corporate efficiency.

Support for my research topic goes beyond the city administration level. The Parks and Recreation Department, my area of the organization, has a vested interest in looking at the way we deliver leisure services to the community. The *New Westminster Parks and Recreation Department Business Plan, 2006/2007* (Gibson, 2006) has been developed to guide decisions and set priorities for the department and states the department's commitment to an "updated approach to service delivery with a clearly defined balance between direct service provision and facilitation/enabling of community groups" (p. 13). The department has also embarked on an initiative called "New di-REC-tions" (p. 14), which engages all of the major players within the department in achieving departmental priorities. One of the priorities of this initiative is to determine a new structure for the department, in order to improve service delivery and department effectiveness. The Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan states a commitment to developing "a revised structure that supports priorities and optimizes investment in leadership" (p. 13). My research project will assist the department in achieving this goal.

I believe the department will be unable to determine an effective department structure without first determining what is the best way is to provide leisure services to the community. My research will provide the Parks and Recreation department with knowledge, points for consideration, and most importantly a jump start as they move through their very challenging New di-REC-tions initiative of re-structuring the department.

This project proved to be very challenging. Although I have worked closely with many of my colleagues for over ten years, I have not held an official leadership role of this magnitude with them. The research process I followed and the outcomes generated from my research were of significant importance to everyone in the department and will directly impact one of the critical departmental priorities. My co-workers challenged and stretched my leadership abilities in a supportive, encouraging environment throughout this research project.

Significance of the Opportunity

By determining an effective service delivery model for Parks and Recreation services, the department will be able to move towards achieving the goal of a new department structure. Through my research, I collected and presented information that will be necessary to have in order to determine a new way of operating our business.

We are at a time when change is necessary. Unfortunately, the City of New Westminster, inclusive of the Parks and Recreation Department, is not immune to the challenge, faced by many organizations, of finding the financial resources necessary to continue to provide the same levels of service the customer desires. We need to change the way we do business. Change is a process, a process that is best implemented in a strategic way. If the departmental goal of a new structure, a goal likely to induce stress and anxiety for staff, were to be initiated without solid foundational information, an environment of cynicism, scepticism, and avoidance could be

created. Through activities in this research project, the department was provided with a proactive, necessary first step to ensure the change process is implemented and received by staff in a positive way.

The Parks and Recreation Department will directly benefit from my research project in several ways:

1. The knowledge and recommendations presented to the department will have been generated in conjunction with staff creating ‘buy-in’ to the outcomes.
2. City wide and department goals, objectives, and priorities will be reflected in the final outcomes resulting in outcomes that will be useable and realistic.
3. Staff will have the opportunity to engage in a project that will in still the values and operating philosophies of the organization while initiating a significant change process.

This project engaged dedicated employees in an initiative that was progressive and innovative. The city and the department have been presented with ways to move leisure services in a direction that provides long-term prosperity and growth.

Systems Analysis of the Opportunity

In order to understand the complexity of an issue, the factors that affect, influence, and surround the issue need to be looked at as a whole. “A system is an entity that maintains its existence and functions as a whole through the interaction of its parts” (O’Connor & McDermott, 1997, p. 2). According to O’Connor and McDermott, “Systems thinking is seeing beyond what appear to be isolated and independent incidents to deeper patterns. So you can recognize connections between events and are therefore better able to understand and influence them” (p. xiiiv).

The system surrounding this research project is complex, intertwined, and involves many stakeholders. Using a boundary critique model, Figure 1 shows diagrammatically the system involved in this research project (Midgley, Munlo, & Brown, 1998). This model is useful as it “helps the researcher remain aware of the need to access a diverse variety of stakeholder views in defining problems, while still setting boundaries that facilitate practical action” (p. 477).

Primary Boundary (Parks & Recreation Department)

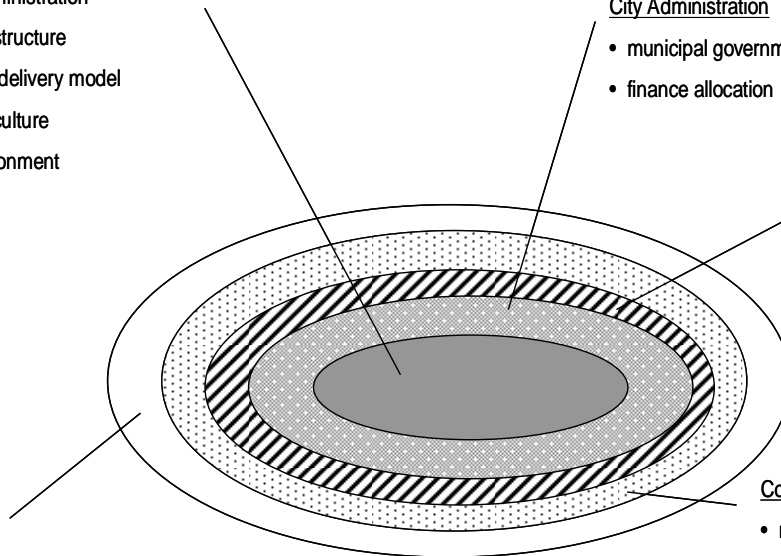
- department administration
- organizational structure
- current service delivery model
- organizational culture
- unionized environment
- tradition

City Administration

- municipal government
- finance allocation

City Council

- decision makers
- community representatives



Governing Bodies

- British Columbia Parks & Recreation Association (BCRPA)
- Canadian Parks & Recreation Association (CPRA)
- British Columbia Provincial Government

Community

- residents
- clients
- community service providers

Figure 1. A picture of the system surrounding and impacting this research project using a boundary critique model.

Primary Boundary

Elements of the system that fall into the primary boundary of this research project include: department administration, department organizational structure, current service delivery model, organizational culture, a unionized work environment, and tradition within the Parks and Recreation Department. These are the factors on which this research project will focus.

In creating a model for recreation service delivery for the City of New Westminster, internal politics also affect organizational operations. First, the majority of people employed in the Parks and Recreation Department are Canadian Union of Public Employees members who are governed by the rules and regulations for work that are outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Since the Collective Bargaining Agreement governs the wages paid to staff, depending on the total hours worked, time of day, and day of the week, which can directly impact how the programs and services are offered, it will be important for me keep these guidelines in mind within my research. Secondly, the core team of decision-making staff within the department have been employed by the city for an average of twelve years. The culture created by employees who have been working together for this duration will influence how the organization views and possibly accepts change. Thirdly, the current organizational structure supports a model of service delivery where the recreation professionals primarily provide services through a direct service provision model. Within some facilities, there are elements of other models in place that reflect a community-development style of delivery; however, there is no one, overall way of providing services that the whole department utilizes.

Other Boundaries

City Administration and City Council

The City of New Westminster operates under the policies, procedures, and guidelines of municipal government. Resource allocation is ultimately done through discussions and decision making with city council and senior city staff. City council will make the final decisions on how monies are spent and allocated within the city, based on the information provided by city staff and their perception of what the community wants and needs. Any changes to how services are

provided within the city will have to be approved by, and thus supported by, city administration and city council.

The Community

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PERC, 1997) indicated that citizens of New Westminster are active users and have a “high level of interest” (p. 15) in parks and recreation services. In this same document it was also noted that “with few exceptions, New Westminster residents are pleased with current service levels” (p. 18). Therefore, it can be expected that the community will want to be informed about any changes planned for dealing with service delivery. Changes to service provision that enhance existing service levels and do not adversely affect services valued by citizens are likely to be supported by the community (p. 18).

There are a large number of community-based organizations that provide various arts, culture, and sport opportunities in the city (i.e., Arts Council, minor hockey, rugby, and running clubs). These groups use city-operated facilities and parks to provide vital specialty services to the community that are not offered through parks and recreation. These organizations are part of the web of leisure services the community enjoys and will need consideration throughout the research process.

Governing Bodies

There are provincial and national governing bodies for parks and recreation services. On a provincial level, the British Columbia (BC) Recreation and Parks Association is a non-profit organization that is seen as an essential partner in building healthy individuals and communities. BC Recreation and Parks Association inspires and supports community leaders and provides professional development opportunities for people in the field of recreation (BC Recreation & Parks Association [BCRPA], 2005). Within BC Recreation and Parks Association, the recreation

and parks side of the organization primarily acts as a support network for municipal recreation services.

The National Recreation and Parks Association plays a slightly different role than BC Recreation and Parks Association. In 1956, this organization “prepared the first Recreation Plan and identified a structure for the delivery of service as well as a number of program and facility requirements” (PERC, 1997, p. 16). For many years it was “accepted practice within the Parks and Recreation profession to adopt uniform standards for the provision of service [which were] generally established by the NRPA [National Recreation and Parks Association]” (p. 17). Over the years, these standards became out of date and “reflected professional judgment versus an assessment of community needs” (p. 18). It is now recognized that “no two communities are alike nor will their parks and recreation systems be identical, due to differing geographical, cultural, economic and environmental characteristics” (p. 18). As a result, National Recreation and Parks Association has a new approach called “Level of Service ... [which is based on the] ... principle that service levels should be established by local residents rather than outside agencies” (p. 18). Therefore, the Parks and Recreation Department in New Westminster is free to establish any system of service delivery that meets the needs of the community and users of the services.

By looking at the system at play in this research project in this way, it becomes clear that in order to make changes in the way leisure services are provided, consideration needs to be given to all of the stakeholders involved. As O’Connor and McDermott (1997) stated, “Systems have emergent properties that are not found in their parts. You cannot predict the properties of a complete system by taking it to pieces and analysing its parts” (p. 7).

Organizational Context

Parks and Recreation in the City of New Westminster has enjoyed a very successful history. Major facility development was initiated in the late 1950s and through the 1960s and 1970s most of the major recreation facilities that the city enjoys today were developed (PERC, 1997). Presently, the Parks and Recreation Department operates on a facility-based model, where each facility specializes in a particular area of service delivery. For example, Century House is a recreation facility for seniors; Moody Park Arena focuses on skating lesson programs; and Queen's Park Arena focuses on ice rentals. In the most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it was noted that "this corporate direction is appreciated by City residents" (p. 8). However, there are societal forces affecting Parks and Recreation services, such as municipal budgets, demand, partnership development, and equity of services throughout the community (p. 3) that are challenging the department to look at new ways of providing services.

The New Westminster Parks and Recreation Department has a recent and well-defined mission statement and operating philosophy. According to the *Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan, 2006-2007* (Gibson, 2006), the mission is stated as "we create parks, recreation and culture opportunities that nurture healthy individuals and families, strong unique neighbourhoods, a vibrant city, and a vital environment" (p. 2). As stated in the same document, the following values pertaining to the department's operating philosophy met my research needs:

1. We will be ethical, trustworthy and fair.
2. We will be productive, innovative and progressive—constantly searching for and adopting better ways of doing business.
3. We are committed to community development approaches that mobilize resident capabilities and build a sense of ownership.
4. We value teamwork—within and across departments and with the community.
5. We will be inclusive in service delivery and decision making.
6. We will maintain quality in all aspects of service delivery.

7. We will listen and respond to the needs of our community using a holistic and benefits based approach to programs and services. (p. 2)

From this information, it is evident the Parks and Recreation Department has clear, guiding statements for how they will operate. These statements helped frame my research project in terms of values and direction that were continuously revisited and reflected upon.

New insights into Parks and Recreation service provision must be developed for two reasons. Providing leisure services to the community of New Westminster is a costly venture and “budget pressures on municipalities [has] resulted in reduced money available for programs, services, facilities and maintenance” (PERC, 1997, p. 3) resulting in a need for change. In the *2004 Annual Report* (City of New Westminster, 2004), it was noted that recreation was the third highest cost centre at \$13.5 million annually, following utilities and protective services costs (p. 12). Secondly, approximately two years ago, the city underwent a reorganization of city departments in an effort to improve customer service and streamline operations. Keeping in line with the city-wide effort to streamline operations, Parks and Recreation is also looking at restructuring the department which has been noted in the Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan (Gibson, 2006). Before a new department structure can be developed, I believe the department needs to have information on alternate ways to provide leisure services that are in line with department and city priorities.

Looking at new ways to provide leisure services to the city has been identified before. Throughout the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PERC, 1997), it was noted that the department should consider investigating new ways to partner with community organizations or groups to offer services. Similar statements also show up in the Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan, 2006/2007 (Gibson, 2006) and the Strategic Plan (City of New

Westminster, 2006), which indicated there is an appetite for looking at new ways of providing leisure services.

From my initial research I could find no recent formal studies or inquiries into changing how the department provides services to the community. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PERC, 1997) briefly mentioned a study that was conducted in 1979 called “Leisure for People,” which was a planning document “intended to review and evaluate parks and recreation services, and to produce recommendations related to improvements in parks, facilities and service delivery” (p. 16). This document has “provided the basis for parks and recreation development for more than a decade” (p. 16). It is unclear whether the findings from this study still guide the department’s service delivery model today. My major project will provide the department with updated research that can be used to help the department grow and meet the changing demands of today.

Summary

New Westminster Parks and Recreation has reached a time where organizational change is necessarily in order for leisure service provision to remain viable and successful in the future. Municipal leisure service delivery is a complex business that is intertwined with many other local leisure service providers. To be effective, it is imperative that the systems surrounding leisure service provision are identified, understood and respected for their role in the overall spectrum of leisure service delivery in the community. Although the primary boundary for this research project is that of the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department, it is important to note that other elements impact the way the department is able to provide leisure services to the community. New Westminster Parks and Recreation is committed to providing customer focused, quality leisure services to the community in the most cost effective way. This

commitment is noted in several guiding documents which help to set the department up for effective organizational change.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Road Map

In reviewing the literature related to leisure service provision, it was clear that there are many ways to look at what impacts how leisure services are provided for individuals and communities. Each perspective is critically important in its own way, needs to be respected and understood in its entirety, and is interrelated with all other perspectives meaning that no one perspective can be considered without considering all others.

With this understanding in mind, I decided it would be important to review the literature using an *integral* or *holistic* approach. An integral or holistic approach attempts to “include and integrate matter, body, mind, soul, and spirit—attempts, that is, to include the entire Great Nest of Being” (Wilber, 1998, p. 102). Wilber further stated that integral practice is the art of being able to “simultaneously exercise all of the major capacities and dimensions” (p. 105). Therefore, by using an integral approach, not only will it be clear that all perspectives or domains have been adequately considered, but it will also be clear how each of these perspectives are interwoven within each other. In order to look at the issue of leisure service delivery through an integral lens, I will be discussing three interrelated theories: integral theory, developmental levels, and Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996).

Integral Theory

Ken Wilber (1998), one of the world’s leading thinkers on integral theory, developed the “Four Quadrant Model of Reality ... [that gives us a way of] ... examining virtually any field of study” (Burroughs, as cited in Wilber, p. vii) from four key perspectives. A visual of this model is presented in Figure 2.

The four quadrants help us to understand the intentional, cultural, behavioural, and social forces that are at play when looking at any idea or issue. Wilber (2000) gave a brief overview of the four quadrants, as I present in Figure 2.

	Internal	External
Personal	<p>Upper-Left “I” Intentional (subjective)</p>	<p>Upper-Right “IT” Behavioural (objective)</p>
Group	<p>Lower-Left “WE” Cultural (intersubjective)</p>	<p>Lower-Right “ITS” Social (interobjective)</p>

Figure 2. The four quadrants of reality representing four distinct yet interrelated perspectives.

1. The Upper-Left quadrant represents the interior of the individual, the subjective aspect of consciousness or individual awareness. The language of this quadrant is I-language: first-person accounts of the inner stream of consciousness.
2. The Upper-Right quadrant represents the objective or exterior correlates of those interior states of consciousness. The language of this quadrant is it-language: third-person or objective accounts of the scientific facts about the individual organism.
3. The Lower-Left quadrant represents the inside of the collective, or the values, meanings, world views, and ethics that are shared by any group of individuals. The language of this quadrant is we-language: second-person or I-thou language, which involves mutual understanding, justness, and goodness—in short how you and I will arrange to get along together.
4. The Lower-Right quadrant represents the exterior-collective or social systems of the cultural components. The language of this quadrant, like that of the objective individual is it-language. (Wilber, 2000, pp. 62–64)

It is important to note that for a full understanding of any quadrant “it needs to be seen in the context of all others” (Wilber, 2000, p. 67). You cannot ignore the other quadrants and expect to see the full picture of an issue, event, or idea. All of the quadrants are interrelated. On this same note, the idea of an integral approach or practice is to “pick a practice from each category

[quadrant], or from as many categories [quadrants] as possible, and practice them concurrently” (Wilber, 1998, p. 107). Using an integral approach provides the freedom to “investigate the many levels and lines in all of the quadrants, without attempting unwarrantedly to reduce any of them to the others” (Wilber, 2000, p. 74).

Developmental Levels

It is possible to add another level of related complexity to Wilber’s (2000) integral model of reality with a discussion around values. Value systems shape how we, as individuals, view the world. Our value systems allow us to see the world through specific lenses that define our perspectives on how we see and understand the world around us. Developmental psychology has identified

at least three different subcultures within the general population.... that arise out of differing value systems or world views.... How people behave toward the environment and towards others ... will depend on which of these subcultures is dominant in their lives. (Brown, 2004b, pp. 11–12)

Brown has identified the common names for these three subcultures as “traditional, modern, and postmodern and they accordingly reflect traditional values, modern values, and postmodern values” (p. 12). Given time and the right conditions, people naturally progress from one subculture to the next as their value systems change, but only after the values of the previous subculture have been developed (p. 12). Each level brings with it increasing levels of complexity.

Brown (2004b) discussed the four value subcultures in detail. Hamilton (2006) took Brown’s information and altered it into a table and related it to a slightly different context. I have taken both pieces of work and used the information and format to create Tables 1 to 4. These tables show a summary of each of the developmental subcultures, their related characteristics, and expressions of these characteristics for comparison one to another.

Table 1. *The Traditional Subculture and its Characteristics*

Characteristics/Values	Expressions
1. Ordered existence under control of an ultimate truth.	Healthy
2. Life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes.	1. Hierarchical and protocol based thinking.
3. Conventional, fundamentalist, and obey the rule of order.	2. Push of clearly defined structure, follow rules and directives, bring stability.
4. Only one right way to think about everything.	3. Strive for perfection.
5. Laws, discipline, and regulations build character and moral fibre.	4. Give deeply of self for a cause.
6. Control impulsivity through guilt.	5. Responsible and organized.
	Unhealthy
	1. Rigidity, totalitarianism.
	2. "One right way" mentality.
	3. Paternalism, elitism, excessive control.

Table 2. *The Modern Subculture and its Characteristics*

Characteristics/Values	Expressions
1. Materialist, achievist, strategic.	Healthy
2. World is a marketplace full of possibilities and opportunities.	1. Proactive, experimental, rational, and achievement oriented.
3. World is a rational well oiled machine with natural laws that can be learned, mastered and manipulated for ones benefit.	2. Value the system in which they work.
4. Act in one's own self interest.	3. Open to change, look for ways to constantly improve and maximize productivity.
5. Highly achievement and improvement oriented toward materialist gains.	4. Take calculated risks.
6. Rely on technology to pragmatically solve problems.	Unhealthy
7. Laws of science guide politics, the economy, and human events.	1. Self serving politics, profiteering.
	2. Excessive self interest/ self preservation.
	3. Obsessive focus on efficiency, concern for public image.
	4. Status obsession, excessive materialism.
	5. Addiction to winning.

Table 3. *The Postmodern Subculture and its Characteristics*

Characteristics/Values	Expressions
1. Relativistic, communitarian, egalitarian.	Healthy
2. World is a human habitat where we share experiences.	1. Dedicate themselves to creating better lives for others.
3. Seek peace with inner self & explore with others.	2. Are empathetic, environmentally sensitive and tolerant.
4. Tend to be humanitarian and ecologically sensitive.	3. Inclusive and believe in team work.
5. Cherish the earth, Gaia, and life, and emphasize dialogue and relationships, and well-being of others.	4. Emphasize warm interpersonal relationships.
6. Want to know their own inner selves.	Unhealthy
7. Tend to emotional and spiritual issues.	1. Over reliance on consensus, denial of useful growth hierarchies.
	2. Overly subjective, unrealistic idealism, overly permissive.
	3. Unbalanced emphasis on affect/feelings.
	4. Ignorance of the need to produce tangible results.

Table 4. *The Integral Subculture and its Characteristics*

Characteristics/Values	Expressions
1. Aligned with the deep motivations of each stakeholder, can adapt as stakeholders and systems change.	Healthy
2. No one part is better than the other, all are part of the integral whole.	1. Balance awareness.
3. Leverages external and internal methodologies, using them appropriately.	2. Consult integral views.
4. One size does not fit all.	3. Recognize and integrate different approaches.
5. Integrate all approaches so sum is greater than the parts.	4. See the natural patterns in all living systems.
6. Recognize interconnectivity of the whole system.	Unhealthy
7. Consider all truths are partially right.	1. Global views need local understanding.
	2. It is a challenge to translate into and form all other world views.

By placing these three developmental subcultures over top of the four-quadrant model, it is possible to see that by integrating the two models you are able to get a deeper, richer perspective within each of the four quadrants. A full picture of how the theories come together to frame the literature review is presented after the next section.

Spiral Dynamics

There is one more level of complexity that I have chosen to work with in framing my literature review. On top of the four quadrant model and the developmental levels, I present the theory of Spiral Dynamics to give the concept of values another, deeper perspective.

Spiral Dynamics is “an incisive and far-reaching theory of human development.... [that] is based on the assumption that we have adaptive intelligences, complex, adaptive, contextual intelligences, which develop in response to our life circumstances and challenges....or life conditions” (Beck, as cited in Roemischer, n.d., ¶ 1). These collective intelligences are called “^vMEMEs” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 4).

A ^vMEME reflects a world view, a value system, a level of psychological existence, a belief structure, an organizing principle, a way of thinking or a mode of adjustment. [A ^vMEME] ... represents a core intelligence that forms systems and directs human behaviour, ... it impacts upon all life choices as a decision making framework, ... can manifest itself in both healthy and unhealthy forms, ... is a discrete structure for thinking, not just a set of ideas, values or causes, ... and it can brighten or dim as the Life Conditions change. (pp. 4-5)

The very nature of a spiral shows that “everything connects to everything else” (p. 26) giving us the knowledge that in order to move forward we need to understand where we have come from as “human systems ... evolve through levels of increasing complexity” (p. 29).

Beck and Cowan (1996) used colours to talk about the eight ^vMEMEs that make up the spiral’s central core. The eight ^vMEMEs have been broken down into two different tiers: the first

six ^vMEMEs comprise the first tier or the old paradigm, and the last two ^vMEMEs comprise the second tier or the new paradigm (p. 196).

Old Paradigm

In tier one, the first ^vMEME is beige. This stage is the essence of human survival. Behaviour is automatic, instinctive, and has minimal impact on the environment (p. 197). The second ^vMEME is purple. At this stage humans show allegiance to elders, preserve sacred places or rituals, and people bond together to endure and find safety (p. 204). At the red level, the third ^vMEME, people are expressing themselves without shame or guilt, escape domination by others, and fight to gain control at any cost (p. 215). At the blue ^vMEME, people find purpose in life, they sacrifice their self to the way of the truth, control impulsivity through guilt, and enforce the principles of rightful living (p. 229). The orange ^vMEME, or the fifth level, is characterized by people striving to autonomy and independence, playing to win and enjoying competition, and seeking out the good life and abundance (p. 244). The sixth and last ^vMEME in the first tier is green. This level is characterized by human behaviour that liberates humans from greed and dogma, explores the inner beings of self and others, promotes a sense of community, unity, and equity and people reach decisions through consensus (p. 260).

New Paradigm

In tier two, Beck and Cowan (1996) started with the seventh ^vMEME, which is yellow. Human behaviour at this level focuses on functionality and competencies. People pursue self-interest without harm to others, experience the fullness of living on earth, demand flexibility and open systems, and find a natural mix of conflicting truths (p. 275). There is an acceptance of the inevitability of nature's flows. The eighth ^vMEME, turquoise, is characterized by human behaviour that focuses on the good of all living entities. The self is seen as part of a larger

conscious whole, global networking is seen as routine, and there is a blending and harmonizing of human behaviours in order to create a strong collective (p. 287). There is an expanded use of the human brain and mind. The focus within this research project will be on the 'MEME levels of blue (moral compass or authoritarian structure), orange (success-driven leadership), green (community structures or consensus-driven leadership), and yellow (integrated structures or systems-systemic leadership) (pp. 324–326).

It has been noted in Spiral Dynamics that “new value systems emerge in response to changing life conditions. Each new system transcends but includes those which have come before it” (Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 4.3). Beck and Cowan (1996) talked about the integral change equation, coined by Clare Graves, whereby organizations should ask themselves the question “how should who manage whom to do what?” (p. 145). It is noted that by using this integral change equation, you can “craft the congruent leader style and organizational structure” (Spiral Dynamics Group, p. 4.4). By the term “how” he meant “management procedures, teaching styles...development schemes, or other systems appropriate to diverse 'Meme profiles” (p. 145). By “who” he meant “the specific person, agent, or group which does the influencing” (p. 146). With the term “whom,” he was referring to “the follower, employee, helpee, or client organization taken as is” (p. 146). And with the term “what” he was referring to “the knowledge to be gained, the task to be accomplished, the goal to be achieved, or the outputs to be produced” (p. 146). Beck and Cowan noted that “when one of the [elements of the equation] is altered, the others feel the impact” (p. 146).

Beck and Cowan (1996) took this change process one step further when they talked about “streaming the spiral” (p. 153) to introduce second tier, higher-order thinking, thinking whenever

needed. These authors noted that to align the spiral within an organization there are ten elements that an organization needs to work through.

1. Deciding what business you are really in;
2. Chart big picture patterns and flows in the milieu;
3. Take inventory of resources, functional capacities, and life-cycle stages;
4. Establish set points and map the organizations psychological DNA;
5. Develop and propagate a strategic vision;
6. Connect everything to everything else;
7. Design an ideal hypothetical model fitting structures to functions;
8. Liberate, realign, and reshape current systems to fit the new model;
9. Place the right person into the right job with the right tools and support; [and]
10. Build in ongoing realignment processes for continuous shifts and changes. (pp. 154–169).

This process of streaming allows organizations to integrate, align, and synergize their functions (Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 4.6).

Bringing the Theories Together

Combining these theories to map my literature review gave profound depth and understanding to the complexity of the issues at hand in my research project. Figure 3 shows how the three theories overlap with one another. By using the four quadrant theory to map out the various perspectives along with the developmental levels and spiral dynamics to give each of the four perspectives depth around the values at play within each of the four quadrants, I am able to ensure that the literature reviewed is comprehensive and complete.

Figure 3 shows how the three developmental levels and the full spectrum of the spiral are at play in each of the four quadrants. The figure also shows how each of the developmental levels coincide with the various levels in the spiral. The traditional subculture brings in the early ^vMEMEs of beige (survival senses), purple (tribal orders and harmony), red (egocentric personalities and power-centered leadership approaches), and early blue (authoritarian structures) (Beck & Cowan, 1996, pp. 323–324). The modern subculture brings in the ^vMEME of late blue

and dominant orange or the values of authoritarian structures and success driven leadership (p. 324). As well, the postmodern subculture brings in the MEME of green, consensus-driven leadership (p. 324). Lastly, the integral subculture brings in the MEMEs of yellow and turquoise which are the second tier value systems which are the values of systems-systemic leadership and holistic structures (p. 326).

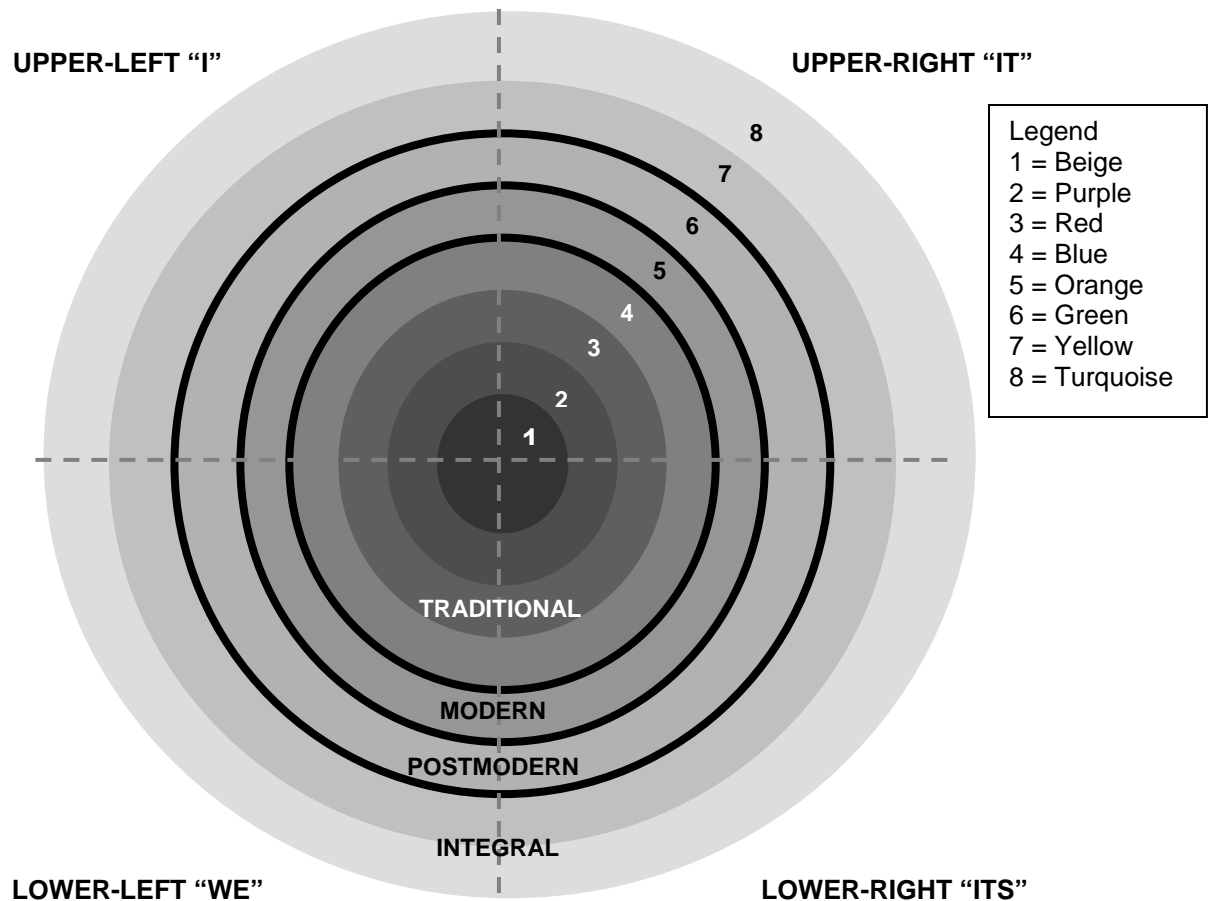


Figure 3. Integrated model of the three theories framing the literature review.

Note: Developed from Wilber (2000), Brown (2004b), and Hamilton (2006).

Mapping the Literature Review: Providers and Users

Seeing the value in the multiple perspectives offered by using an integral approach, I have used two four-quadrant models of reality as the framework for mapping this literature

review. Using the four quadrant model, the literature has been reviewed through the perspectives of the providers and users of leisure services. Section one will focus on the intentional, behavioural, cultural, and social perspectives of the providers of leisure services as illustrated in Figure 4.

	Internal	External
Personal	Upper-Left “I” Intentional (subjective) <i>How a provider thinks about leisure</i> Individual provider attitudes, philosophy Training of providers	Upper-Right “IT” Behavioural (objective) <i>What affects how a provider acts in leisure</i> Individual provider demographics Changing face of a provider
Group	Lower-Left “WE” Cultural (intersubjective) <i>How providers relate to leisure</i> Philosophies of leisure service delivery History of leisure service provision “Relationships” that contribute to how leisure services are provided	Lower-Right “ITS” Social (interobjective) <i>How we produce/make leisure</i> The role of government Traditional services, resources, and infrastructure

Providers’ Future of Leisure Services

Figure 4. Literature review roadmap from providers’ perspectives.

Section two will focus on the intentional, behavioural, cultural, and social perspectives of the users of leisure services as illustrated in Figure 5.

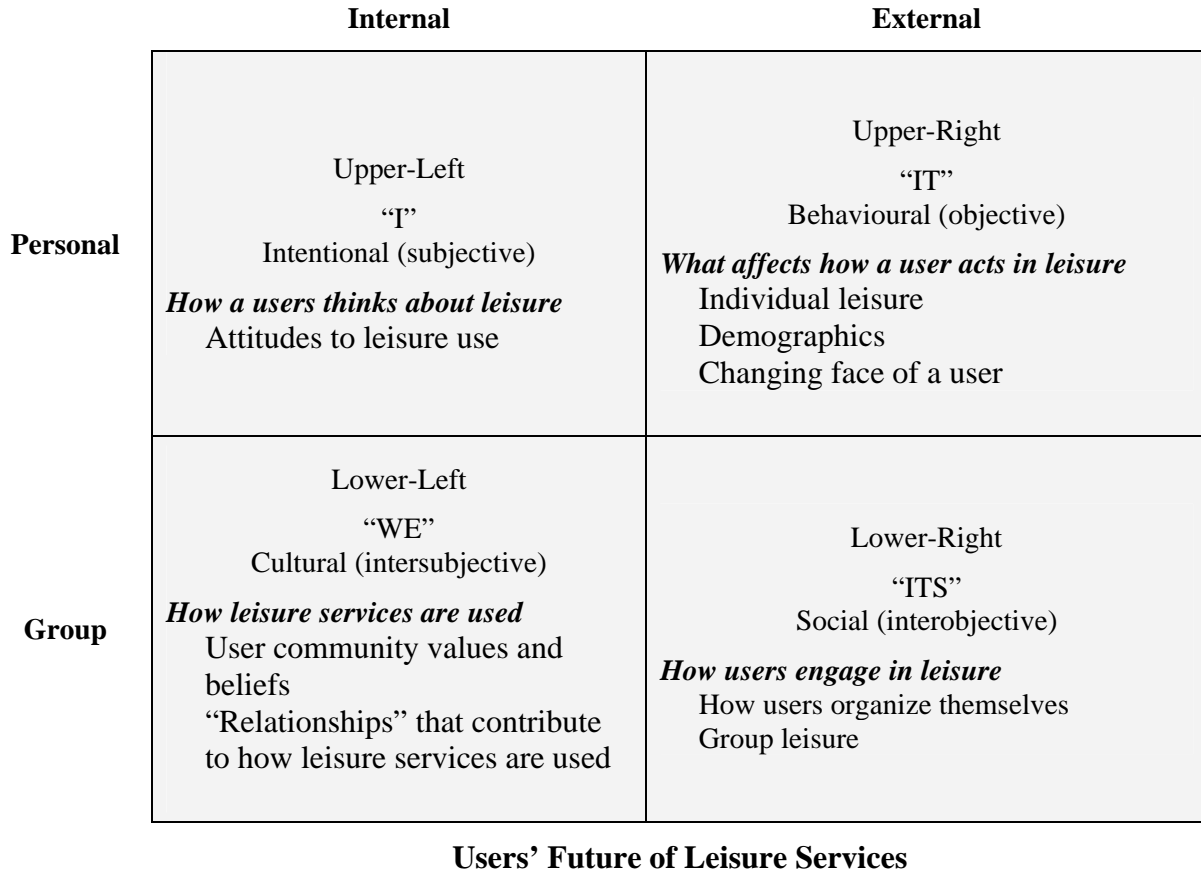


Figure 5. Literature review roadmap from users’ perspective.

The third section of the literature review discusses what leisure services will look like in the future. In this section, all four quadrants are brought together to give an overview of the different perspectives and how they impact leisure services. The picture of the future, as outlined in the literature, clearly shows how each of the four quadrants, or perspectives, need to be considered in an interrelated fashion, in order for leisure service provision to be successful. Using this integral model will demonstrate the complexity of perspectives that need to be considered in this project.

Road Map Summary

Using an integrated approach the literature will be reviewed within each of the four quadrants from the perspectives of the users and providers of leisure services. Where appropriate

and applicable, I will note the value system being presented from various perspectives in the literature. In the end, I believe this will provide a comprehensive review of what the literature has been saying about the various perspectives at play in leisure service delivery.

Section One: Providers

Upper-Left: How a Provider Thinks about Leisure

Two literature sources spoke about two different yet complimentary topics around the philosophical approaches to leisure service delivery and repositioning strategies for leisure service delivery. The authors spoke about the importance of the leisure service provider, knowing what approach they were using and why, in order to provide leisure services effectively.

According to Henderson et al. (2001), “Knowledge of philosophies and paradigms and how they function can assist us in understanding leisure and the ways it manifests itself through leisure service delivery systems” (p. 52). These authors spoke of five different philosophical approaches to leisure service delivery: idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and humanism. From the literature, these authors felt that all of these philosophies show up in leisure service delivery, but that there is an attraction by leisure service professionals to the humanism philosophy because it is “action oriented ... [and] it stresses purposeful living, higher functioning, and a sense of social consciousness” (p. 47). Henderson et al. believed that humanists “promote a more individualistic approach to the provision of recreation opportunities” (p. 47). This individualistic approach was evidence that the value systems of humanistic approach are in the success-driven (orange) and consensus-driven (green) ^vMEMEs (Beck & Cowan, 1996).

Kaczynski and Crompton (2004) took a slightly different, yet related, approach to that of Henderson et al. (2001). As opposed to talking about leisure service delivery philosophies

specifically, they talked about repositioning strategies, which is when an organization determines what is important to its clients/customers and repositions the organization so they can be perceived by their customers as achieving these goals (p. 128). Henderson et al. talked about “real positioning.... psychological repositioning.... and competitive repositioning” (pp. 128–129). Kaczynski and Crompton stated that leisure service agencies

typically offer an array of services so adopting a single position across all of these services may not be realistic.... [and that the] ... key to effectively repositioning park and recreation services is for them to align with the prevailing concerns in the community. (p. 129)

Lower-Left: How Providers Relate to Leisure

The approach to leisure service delivery has changed and developed over the years based on the changing needs, demands, and interests of communities and individuals. As noted by DeGraaf, Jordan, and DeGraaf (1999), the “basic distinguishing characteristic between the approaches is the extent that customers or constituents are involved in the planning process, and conversely the amount of planning and supervision provided by the leisure service programmer” (p. 28). When looking at the various approaches and how they developed over the years, “on one end of the spectrum, leisure service professionals take on all the responsibility of planning leisure experiences” (p. 28), which has a very blue value-system feel to it. It is the traditional, rightful, or purposeful way of doing things (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 332). Whereas on the opposite end of the spectrum, “the leisure service programmer is more of an enabler and collaborator empowering people to plan for their own leisure needs” (p. 30), which spoke more to the orange and green value systems, in that it talked of independence through collaboration and working together.

DeGraaf et al. (1999) used a chronological table to show how different authors wrote about the various ways to provide leisure services over the years. In the early years, Danford and

Shirley (as cited in DeGraaf et al.) wrote about the *traditional approach* to leisure service delivery. In this approach, the leisure service provider offers programs and services that have been successful in the past, and the leisure service professionals are seen as knowing what is best for participants and providing it (Edginton, Hanson, & Edginton, 1992). Edginton and Griffith (1983) referred to this approach as the “direct service delivery approach ... [whereby] ... service delivery is product oriented” (p. 36), meaning the “leisure service manager identifies consumer needs, manages resources within complex bureaucratic structures, and creates and distributes services” (p. 37). Farrell and Lundegren (1983) referred to two approaches that fit into this traditional approach to leisure service delivery. One was the “cafeteria style” (p. 26), where the leisure service provider provides a wide variety of programs and services to participants with little or no input from participants on what their needs or interests are. The other was “programming by perceived needs of the participants” (p. 24), where the leisure service provider makes assumptions about the needs and interests of the participants. In its time, the traditional approach to leisure service delivery was acceptable and successful.

When leisure services stepped away from its traditional roles, it moved into approaches that involved increased participant participation in program planning and delivery. Edginton and Griffith (1983) referred to this approach as an “enabling or indirect service delivery approach ... also known as the community development or locality-development process” (p. 37). In their terms, this approach

suggests a different relationship between the professional and the consumer ... wherein the professional works with participants to control, provide, or influence variables that affect individual or community leisure experiences ... [and] ... individuals are encouraged to help themselves control their own leisure, and to operate independently of the formal recreation and leisure service delivery system. (p. 37)

Farrell and Lundegren (1983) talked about an approach called “programming by desires of participants approach” (p. 22), which has similar characteristics to the delivery approach noted by Edginton and Griffith. In this approach it was assumed that “desires of participant groups can be ascertained” (p. 23), and there was some way of measuring that the activities were actually meeting the needs of the participants.

There are a number of other approaches that are also being used more recently to provide leisure services in conjunction with the indirect service delivery or community development approach noted above. The “human service approach ... [regarded recreation as a] ... form of human experience [and as] a tool for achieving important social outcomes in the modern community, such as improving health and fitness, or reducing juvenile delinquency” (Kraus, 1985, p. 31). DeGraaf et al. (1999) talked about a very similar approach to that of Kraus, which they called the “social advocacy approach” (p. 30). This approach talked about how leisure services has advocated for the “rights of disadvantaged populations, worked to right social injustices, and to force organizations to change the way they were distributing resources” (p. 30), which very much spoke to the green value system, in that everyone should be treated equally regardless of personal, socio-economic conditions. Farrell and Lundegren (1983) talked more about another approach called “programming by objectives” (p. 21), whereby performance or behavioural objectives are used to guide program planning and development, which related to the orange value system, the success-driven form of leadership (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 324). Lastly, Kraus wrote about “the quality of life approach ... [where it is understood that] ... recreation represents a critical element in happy living, contributing broadly to relaxation and health, personal pleasure, family togetherness, and neighbourhood solidarity” (pp. 30–31). This statement was very much a community-structured (green) and integrated (yellow) way of

thinking, in that it spoke about recreation as a vehicle or form of intervention for improving social conditions for everyone, which is a higher-order way of thinking.

It is important to understand and see all of the various approaches that have been and are used to provide leisure services. As noted by Farrell and Lundegren (1983):

It is unreasonable to believe that any single approach will be the only one needed.... [It is more likely that] each approach will probably be found to be appropriate at various times...and therefore each must be studied for its own value and be available for use when the occasion arises. (p. 21)

From a values-based perspective, Beck and Cowan (1996) agreed each situation or challenge is unique; therefore, there is no one cookie-cutter approach to problem solving systemic challenges.

Upper-Right: What Affects How a Provider Acts in Leisure

There are a number of factors that can affect how providers of leisure services act in leisure service provision. The demographics of the providers, their age groupings, and their beliefs, values, and education can all affect how they chose to act as professionals in the field. Each person comes with their own set of beliefs, values, and perspectives. I was unable to find any literature that specifically spoke about how these factors affect the providers of leisure services. However, in looking at my sponsoring organization as an example, eleven out of the sixteen decision-making staff were women, and of those eleven women, nine are middle-aged (40 to 55 years). Of the sixteen decision-making staff, over 80% have been with the department for more than 10 years. Everyone had a post secondary level of education either at the college or university level. All of these factors impact how leisure services are provided, yet it appears to be an area that has not been taken into consideration in the literature.

*Lower-Right: How Providers Provide Leisure**Traditional Roles of Government*

It is important to recognize the role that government has played and continues to play in the provision of leisure services. As long as the nature of government maintains its traditional roles in leisure service provision, it can be expected that the government will continue to play a role in providing recreational opportunities to all people within the country regardless of age, gender, or ethnic background. “The public has generally supported the view that all governmental entities should provide basic opportunities for recreation activities to every member of the community” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 17). After all the mission of government is “to serve the public without excluding anyone from its programs” (p. 182).

Some of the most commonly accepted rationales used to justify government involvement in the delivery of leisure services included:

Government is the only agency supported by and for all people, government has financial resources to acquire, establish, improve and operate facilities, government has the authority of eminent domain that allows acquisition of private lands for a greater public good, government provides a source of continuity and permanency, and legal precedent has been set over the years. (Henderson et al., 2001, pp. 181–182)

According to Henderson et al., government has been known for carrying out “societal functions in an orderly fashion. Without government, anarchy and chaos likely would engulf us” (p. 182).

Traditionally, “the conventional or customary practice of the government has been to support fitness, sport, recreation and parks, so the continuation of this practice is thereby legally justified, although not required” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 77). In Canada, municipal recreation services are

typically involved in providing community facilities (parks, playgrounds, halls, arenas, swimming pools, trails, etc), offering programs (craft classes, day camps, sports, leagues etc.), providing leadership and administrative support to local clubs and organizations, and regulating leisure opportunities through local by-laws. (p. 81)

Henderson et al. (2001) elaborated on these traditional roles of government by adding the roles of “management of land and natural resources, provision of technical assistance, financial assistance, direct service delivery, enactment and enforcement of regulations” (p. 183).

Changing Roles of Government

The government is involved in leisure service provision on many levels that involve the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Searle and Brayley (1993) noted that “with the exception of a few specific areas of activity, the federal government has passed the responsibility for public recreation to the provinces” (p. 77). However, “there is no legal requirement for public sector involvement in recreation, but the conventional wisdom and practice establishes public recreation as a fundamental aspect of our community lives” (p. 84). It is important for the government to remain involved in leisure service provision because of the value of the industry to the general public. As Searle and Brayley noted, “Leisure has been used instrumentally by governments at all levels to contribute to economic growth, promote national unity, and promote a sense of pride among Canadians” (p. 3).

Searle and Brayley (1993) talked specifically about five distinctive roles that “a public leisure service organization will play ... regardless of the level of government at which it operates” (p. 81). The first role, a very blue role, is that of a “direct service provider of services” (p. 81). This role gives leisure services a purposeful path to follow; one that provides structure and order (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 231). In this role, “the government develops and maintains leisure facilities, operates programs, and delivers services using public funds” (Searle & Brayley, p. 82). This is similar to what is thought of as traditional roles of government.

The second role is that of an “arms length provider of services ... [In this role], ... the government may create a special purpose organization that is publicly supported, but operates

outside the normal apparatus of government” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 82). This role could be seen as blue-orange in that there is a “cautious ... controlled move back toward independent thinking” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 238).

Enabling or coordinating services “is the third role that a government recreation agency might play” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 82). In this role, government identifies agencies that could provide certain services and uses their expertise and resources to coordinate the wishes of others. This orange way of thinking speaks to recreation professionals recognizing and having faith in their abilities and skills to help others through their “affluence and influence” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 247).

The third role involves “supporting and acting as a patron of leisure service organizations” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 83). In this role, “the government may recognize that an existing organization already provides a valuable service and can be encouraged to continue doing so through specialized support (usually financial)” (p. 83). This statement speaks to the green value system in that it talks about collaboration and working together for the better of everyone involved.

Lastly, “The government may act as a legislator and regulator of activities and organizations. Using its authority to create laws and establish regulations, the government can exercise protective control over agencies and individuals engaged in the provision of leisure services” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 83). This concept of “bringing order and stability” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 229) speaks to the blue value system.

There is likely no one role that government should take in providing public recreation services. “Some recognize that one role could be appropriate in a particular situation but not be suitable in another” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 83). However, if the present situation we have

where “government is currently withdrawing direct services and resources [we could] predict that there will be more emphasis on governments acting in the enabler and coordinator role and less evidence of direct service provision” (p. 84), which could speak to the increasing complexity of the role of government in leisure service provision.

Partnerships

This discussion around partnerships covers perspectives that fall into both the lower-left (how providers relate to leisure) and lower-right (how users engage in leisure, ITS) quadrants; however, for simplicity, I will discuss partnerships in the lower-right (how providers produce or make leisure) section of this literature review.

In today’s market place, companies and corporations are finding it increasingly more challenging to do it alone. In the media, we hear about organizations facing budget cutbacks, limited resources, and highly competitive markets. In order to grow, develop, and in some cases stay afloat, many organizations are looking at new and creative ways to do business efficiently and effectively. As a result, organizations are looking at partnerships, alliances, or other collaborative ways of operating.

Value of partnerships. The concept of partnerships between organizations is not new in the business community. The dictionary definition of partnership is

A legal contract entered into by two or more persons in which each agrees to furnish a part of the capital and labor for a business enterprise, and by which each shares a fixed proportion of profits and losses. 2. A relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal. (Lexico Publishing Group, 2006, ¶ 1)

Syfert (2003) supported this definition by saying, “Partnerships are a means for a local government’s elected officials and employees, the private sector’s workforce, non-profit agencies, and the public to come together for the good of the community” (p. 9). It will be

important for the leisure services industry to consider the fact that “not only are partnerships essential in challenging economic times, but they also bring various segments of the community together to meet common needs” (p. 9).

There was a general consensus in the literature about the reasons why organizations choose to form partnerships. Whether the organizations are like-minded or unrelated, the reasons for forming partnerships remain the same. Partnerships can give the partnering organizations access to additional financial resources (Harrison, 2005; Secret to their success, 2005; Tyler, 2002), access to new technologies and skills (Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989; Harrison), new business development and geographical expansion opportunities (Harrison; Sparks, 1999), strategic marketplace advantages (Harrison), risk sharing (Harrison; Sparks), access to new products (Harrison), and access to more customers (Sparks). In all cases, each organization had to determine the worth of the partnership and create a win-win situation in order to ensure there was value in forming an alliance with another organization. All of these authors are speaking about the value of partnerships from an orange way of thinking in that they see partnerships as a way to appeal to the need for “competitive advantage and leverage, and to improve profit , productivity, quality and results” (Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 1.17).

Defining effective partnerships. Organizations entering into a partnership hope to function more effectively than they would as separate entities. Tyler (2002) likened a partnership to that of a marriage. In order for a marriage, or any relationship between people or groups of people to be successful, there are certain elements that need to be in place to give the partnership the best chance at prospering. A review of the literature outlined a number of key elements that organizations should consider implementing or developing before they embark in a partnership with another organization.

Selecting an appropriate, compatible partner is noted by a number of authors as a key component of success in a partnership (Best Practices, 2006; Kuglin, 2002; Syfert, 2003; Tyler, 2002). Best Practices further elaborated on this statement by saying, “The key to successful strategic alliances and partnerships is the selection of compatible partners who have similar cultures, strategies, and needs” (p. 35). Not all authors shared the concept of an appropriate partner needing to have similar organizational cultures. One author stated that the organizational cultures can be different, but the partnering organizations need to have complimentary strengths (Secret to their success, 2005).

Developing a shared, clear, jointly defined vision for the partnership is a critical element to a successful partnership (Korine, Asakawa, & Gomez, 2002; LaGrassa, 2003; Secret to their success, 2005). Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that a “shared vision sets the agenda and gives direction and purpose to the enterprise.... it must appeal to all who have a stake in it” (p. 131). “Visions are about hopes, dreams, and aspirations. They’re about our strong desire to achieve something great” (p. 125). Developing a shared vision gives the partnering organizations an opportunity to define joint dreams and hopes. Without a shared vision that has been developed and adopted by all those who will have to live by it, the partnership will flounder.

From the outset, it is imperative that an organization establish a solid, trusting relationship with the partnering organization (Korine et al., 2002; LaGrassa, 2003; Secret to their success, 2005; Tyler, 2002). Without trust, organizations will be wary of taking the risks necessary to establish the partnership and thus limit its growth. LaGrassa explicitly stated that “most partners agree that the most important factor to a successful partnership is trust” (p. 14). LaGrassa further stated that for trust to be maintained in the relationship there needs to be a number of checks and balances in place to ensure trust is being maintained (p. 14). Establishing

trust within the partnership can be achieved in a number of ways. Clear communication (LaGrassa), working through problems together (Tyler), making the partnership a priority (Korine et al.; LaGrassa), and collectively taking risks (Korine et al.) have been shown to help develop trust and respect for each organization within the partnership.

Authors identified a number of other elements that contribute to the success of partnerships. Involving all stakeholders on a regular basis in decision making (Korine et al., 2002; Syfert, 2003; Tyler, 2002), being able to respond quickly to issues (Korine et al.), and having “contingency plans that allow partners to quickly navigate potential roadblocks” (Best Practices, 2006, p. 35) were proven to be success factors in developing and maintaining partnerships.

Challenges and risks of partnerships. Partnership development and maintenance does not come without challenges and risks. The challenges that authors discussed were varied and numerous. Challenges identified in the literature included the amount of time it takes to establish a partnership being usually longer than originally expected (Tyler, 2002), development of a partnership is complicated (Harrison, 2005), “interrelationships mean more conflicts of interest” (Sparks, 1999, p. 106), both parties need to be fully committed to the partnership (Tyler), and recognition that partnerships are risky (Harrison; Tyler).

Another challenge of partnerships concerned the free flow of information. Authors seemed to be split on how much free flow of information, or transparency, should occur in the partnership. Korine et al. (2002) stated that there should be an “open exchange of facts and experiences” (p. 47) when determining a partnership, whereas Hamel et al. (1989) stated, “Companies must take steps to limit transparency” (p. 136) in order to protect themselves. There

is a need for further research of current information on this area to determine which thoughts are most supported today.

Kuglin (2002) discussed a risk of partnerships that was not touched on by other authors. He stated that “more and more companies are being judged by the company they keep” (p. 30), which implies a company’s reputation could be tarnished by association. Unfortunately, “right or wrong we assume the same reputation and values base as our partners” (p. 32). Companies proud of the reputation they have established could be wary of partnering with a less-accepted organization. As a result, choosing a partner well is of critical importance. Sparks (1999) stated, “There will be a big premium of developing the skill of finding the right partners” (p. 106).

One of the most-noted risks of embarking on partnership development was failure of the partnership meeting expectations. Harrison (2005) noted that “50%—perhaps even more—of alliances fail to meet expectations” (p. 29). Sparks (1999) further supported this statement stating, “60% of partnerships are outright failures or seen as limping along” (p. 60). Kuglin (2002) provided some insight into why this might be the case when he stated that “approximately 50% of all alliance partnerships do not have joint business plans to anchor their partnership” (p. 34).

Despite the challenges and risks that partnerships face, there was a general consensus among the authors, which supported the value of establishing partnerships. With careful, clear planning, the right partners, and a genuine joint-vested interest in the outcome, partnerships can serve organizations very well. The rewards to the organizations of a successful partnership tend to outweigh the risks. As Hamel et al. (1989) stated, “Proceed with care—but proceed” (p. 136).

Partnerships in parks and recreation. Partnerships are an emerging trend in Parks and Recreation departments. Because of “organizational downsizing, funding cuts and increasing

workloads, partnerships provide the opportunity to join forces in an effort to reach common goals” (Grantham, 1997, p. 26). Hunter (2001) stated, “The creation of strategic alliances around key community issues and need would be vital if the field was to remain relevant and effective” (p. 40). The leisure industry already utilizes partnerships on a daily basis to “find ways to stretch our services over a great reach” (Dooling, 2001, p. 6). Frittenburg (1997) noted that “shrinking budgets and call for efficiency have caused many municipalities to search for new ways of doing business” (p. 6). Parks and Recreation departments have also recognized that partnerships have “improved effectiveness and efficiency of our programs” (Turner, 2001, p. 26). Therefore, the reasons Parks and Recreation departments have looked into partnerships as a new way of operating are no different than any other businesses.

The field of Parks and Recreation has also learned what it takes to create a successful partnership. Frittenburg (1997) noted, “Successful contract relationships require well articulated objectives and operating specifications inclusive of the pre-established performance thresholds and monitoring systems” (p. 6). Since partnership development is a relatively new way of doing business in the leisure services industry, “an overwhelming majority of government officials believe an increasing expertise of municipal decision makers in managing the process of creating mutually beneficial partnerships will be key in implementing successful agreements” (p. 6). Statements like these that talk about developing competency, capacity, and expertise in people or organizations relate to perspectives in the upper left quadrant.

There were a number of articles written about successful partnerships in Parks and Recreation throughout Canada. The issues the industry faces today are still the same as they were ten years ago in terms of financial concerns. There is an increasing need to look at new ways of improving corporate efficiency and effectiveness. With careful adherence to the elements

required to create successful partnerships and by remaining aware of potential challenges, partnerships can be formed to ensure service to our communities in the area of Parks and Recreation remain strong and viable in the future.

Section Two: Users

Upper-Left: How a User Thinks about Leisure

How a user thinks about leisure can be influenced by their age cohort and the general values of society. Various age cohorts have been identified as having unique values that affect their behaviours, beliefs, and philosophies around leisure. Noting the differences between the cohorts is important, as it shows the variance in attitudes between the groups; all of which leisure service professionals are trying to serve. As Raines and Hunt (2000) stated, “Growing up in different eras causes people to see the world differently.... There really are generational personalities” (p. 11). The two cohorts I will discuss here are the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are the group of people who were born between the years 1946 to 1964 (Foot & Stoffman, 1996; Raines, 1997; Raines & Hunt, 2000; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). They are a generation noted for being “powerful from the beginning, its members becoming trendsetters for the rest of society” (Raines, p. 26). This sentiment was also noted by Foot and Stoffman when they stated, “One-third of Canadians today are boomers, and for that reason alone, when they get interested in a particular product or idea, we all have to sit up and take notice” (p. 19).

The baby boomer generation has had a tremendous impact on the work place and are said to have a certain attitude characteristics towards work. The baby boomer generation is noted as

being a “primary force behind a new way of doing business that includes such practices as participative management, flattened pyramids, employee involvement, quality circles, team-building and empowerment (Raines, 1997, p. 28). Baby boomers are noted as being workaholics, driven, view work as a career, are diplomatic, are attracted to and impressed by authority, they seek validation, are team-oriented, and they are relationship- and results-oriented when it comes to their attitudes towards work (Raines & Hunt, 2000, pp. 32–37; Zemke et al., 2000).

As this cohort ages and moves closer to retirement, they are believed to have particular views on leisure. Raines (1997) stated, “Many are asking themselves if this might not be the right time to slow down and work a bit less, find more time for gardening, reading and fitness—in short, a life outside of work” (p. 29). Dychtwald and Flower (1990) also noted that “[this generation’s] definition of recreation will change them, becoming progressively more active and adventurous, and physical as well as intellectually challenging—in short, more intensely gratifying” (p. 115). These authors also believed that as a result of this changing definition of leisure:

In the decades ahead, the range and scope of adult-focused recreational opportunities will blossom. Imagine the new hobby craft centres, adults sports camps, sophisticated computer games, adventure and travel clubs, theme-focused retirement communities ... and recreation counselling centers that will proliferate in the years ahead. These are other futuristic options will be the outgrowth of what today’s retirees make of their new-found time off. (p. 121)

Foot and Stoffman (1996) described what they saw as emerging trends in leisure services that would meet the needs of this cohort. They stated,

A nation of older people is a society of gardeners and walkers. These gentler, more individualistic pursuits replace the more vigorous activities of youth partly because the human body becomes less flexible and less responsive as the years take their toll. Another important reason is that middle-aged people have busier schedules ... and naturally gravitate away from activities that require more time and more than one participant. (p. 109)

These authors believe that “resting will become one of Canada’s most popular leisure activities in the years to come” (p. 110) and that performing arts, bird watching and walking, golf, travel, gambling, and volunteering are all activities that will increase due to the interests of this cohort (pp. 115–125).

Generation X

Generation Xers were born between the years 1960 and 1980 (Foot & Stoffman, 1996; Raines, 1997; Raines & Hunt, 2000; Zemke et al., 2000). They are noted as being “Disillusioned with the economy and politics [and] people [who are] focused on themselves.... Whether they joined a health club, enrolled in a self-help group, or went on a macrobiotic diet, individuals sought to fulfill their personal goals” (Raines, p. 35). This is a generation that will say “with conviction that they want a lifestyle with more balance, that they want to work to live—not live to work” (p. 38), as opposed to what they have seen with the baby boom generation. They are also likely to live in a world “where freedom from preoccupations of survival and security-related concerns will likely not occur” (Pavelka, 1993, p. 31).

When it comes to the Generation Xers attitudes towards work, they are noted as being self-reliant, sceptical, financially savvy, balanced, reluctant to commit, have blurred life-stage boundaries, unimpressed by work position titles, are technologically literate, and are highly diverse (Raines, 1997, pp. 38–41). They are also task- and results-oriented, they do not care much about what others think of them, and they are unfazed by power and authority (Raines & Hunt, 2000, pp. 32–37). Pavelka (1993) noted that Generation Xers “have the highest rate of multiple job holdings ... [and] ... the prospect of a permanent job has given way to the prospect of permanent contract employment” (p. 31). They are a unique group in the workforce and are quite different from the baby boomer cohort, which can cause challenges in the workplace.

The employment trends of Generation Xers effect their leisure pursuits. “They have little free time, given the patterns of multiple job holding and combining work with school” (Pavelka, 1993, p. 31). “Leisure may increasingly be focused on development of the freedom to become what one has the ability to become” (p. 31). It has been noted that Generation Xers may enjoy traditional ideas of leisure solely for the purpose of leisure, such as sports, reading, and travel (p. 31). Due to their concern over job security and long term employment, they are likely to embrace traditional forms of leisure. Pavelka noted that leisure practitioners need to be aware that with Generation Xers, there is likely to be a “continued greying of work and leisure, education (formal and informal) and leisure, increased time restrictions, increased propensity towards non-scheduled activities, increased propensity towards short high-intensity activity and a desire to truly incorporate leisure within one’s lifestyle” (p. 32).

Societal Values

Henderson et al. (2001) stated, “A person’s value system gives direction for choosing between alternative forms of behaviour and determining the relative importance of any experience” (p. 7). Therefore, if we understand the value system of society we can predict the types of activities people are looking for (Foot, 1998). In years past society as a whole held more common social values. Now-a-days, “We find there are few widely shared social values and mores in our communities. Instead there is increasing segmentation of values and attitudes” (Johnstone, 1999, p. 35). This issue poses challenges for leisure service professionals. With such wide-spread segmentation within society, the only way to really satisfy people is “By relating to our customers individually [so we can] better meet their needs ... [because users will] ... expect their individual needs to be understood and met” (p. 35).

Lower-Left: How Users Relate to Leisure

Society has a “greater appreciation of leisure as a right to be enjoyed ... [however] ... the work ethic remains at the heart of the Western value system” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 8). As a result, time in general, and in particular for leisure, is precious and scarce (Culligan & Murphy, 1989; Henderson et al.). People have the desire and need for immediate results, outcomes, or achievements. Henderson et al. stated, “The values of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous display as well as most people’s desire for immediate action and convenience packaging have had their effects on personal and social behaviours and the concomitant attitudes about recreation and leisure” (p. 8). This statement illustrates how the stress of the orange value system (success-driven leadership) sets up the need for leisure services to move into the green value system (consensus-driven leadership), the next higher order of thinking. Johnstone (1999) elaborated on this attitude and value system by saying that “citizens are keenly interested in experiences that give meaning to their lives (spiritual quest); in escape and respite from the complexities of everyday life; in short duration, safe, high risk, stimulating experiences; and in many small indulgences” (p. 35). “Being sensitive to human issues and developing an understanding of the inner self” (Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 1.17), as illustrated in the first part of Johnstone’s statement related to consensus-driven leadership, the green value system. The latter part of Johnstone’s statement spoke to the orange value system in how people want to “seize the day and take some calculated risks” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 244).

With the advancement of technology, as a society we are more productive and more efficient than ever before; however, as opposed to making life easier, technology has actually resulted in us expecting more from ourselves. “The backlash has been that people also tend to approach their recreation like their work by packing a number of recreation activities into a small

amount of time” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 291), which is a very orange viewpoint. Henderson et al. further stated, “Recreation professionals concerned with this pattern must emphasize the *quality* of the experiences they provide as well as the role of recreation in stress reduction” (p. 291), which is a green way of looking at what leisure services provides. With time being precious and scarce, people are “prepared to pay an even higher premium for services which allow them to maximize the use of their available time” (Culligan & Murphy, 1989, p. 130).

With more people working from home, it will be a continuous challenge to pull people away from their work for leisure pursuits (Henderson et al., 2001). Recreation professionals will need “to be creative in getting people to take time to get out of their homes and virtual communities and into their immediate neighborhoods to recreate” (p. 291). Culligan and Murphy (1989) believed:

The successful use of leisure does not yet attract the same social approval as being successful in business... [As this trend develops], it is conceivable that we will readjust our system of social values to take a more approving, more admiring attitude to those who devote themselves, not so much to creating wealth, but to showing how skillfully they expand and use their “free” time. (p. 131)

Dychtwald and Flower (1990) elaborated on this point when they stated, “The true status symbol of the coming decades ... will likely be a combination of successful work and free time, a sense of personal well-being, and the freedom and wisdom to fill one’s life with productive, fulfilling, and expressive activities” (p. 120).

Upper-Right: What Affects How a User Acts in Leisure

As in all businesses, it is critical to know your consumers in order provide a product or service successfully to that clientele. In the area of leisure services, the customer is the general public or society as a whole. However, communities are changing and emerging as the population changes. In order to understand just how communities are changing, we need to look

at demographics. “Demographics affect every one of us as individuals, far more than most of us ever imagined. They also play a pivotal role in the economic and social life of our country” (Foot, 1998, p. 8). For this reason, the way society will act and behave towards leisure services will be affected by the change in demographics. Foot stated that “demographics explain about two thirds of everything” (p. 8).

Changing Society Values

Society is changing. It is well documented that the population is aging, and that in the years to come, this older population is going to play a significant role in every aspect of society (Foot, 1998; Henderson et al., 2001; Searle & Brayley, 1993). However, there are other aspects of society that are changing that people may not be aware of as acutely. Henderson et al. believed that “society seems to be less stable than before in many ways, and family structure reflects this instability” (p. 4). The family unit today looks considerably different than it did in years past. There is an increase in the number of single-parent families, blended two-parent families, childless families, multiple-generation families, and traditional nuclear families (Searle & Brayley). The population that makes up society is also changing. “The population is growing in many areas of the country, and the nature of that population is changing in terms of ethnic diversity, age, and income equality” (Henderson et al., p. 289). Johnstone (1999) elaborated on this point by stating that society can expect to see “an increase in the number of people of visible minorities and more people with special needs” (p. 35), and he also believed there will be “Increasing disparity between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’” (p. 35).

Aging Population and Leisure Service Delivery

The aging population will “likely be more active, have more money, and live longer than older adults previously in our society” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 5). It is said that the older

population will likely “demand more physical and intellectual activities” (p. 289), as well as activities that are meaningful, valuable, and add to their personal growth (Johnstone, 1999).

The one activity that older adults do more of as they age is volunteer their time to meaningful causes (Foot, 1998). This bodes well for the future of non-profit organizations as they are “complicated organizations to run, and they are likely to become more complicated as governments back out of the delivery of services, leaving us all more dependent than ever on non-profit organizations for many of these services” (p. 173). Due to the fact that the “population [is] aging, a new source of highly skilled professional managers is becoming available to guide these organizations through this difficult and challenging period” (p. 174). The aging population will be a valuable resource for all agencies to tap into, granted the infrastructure is there to support the use of this resource. The older population’s “increased free time and schedule flexibility should also enhance the opportunity to develop more volunteers for community recreation programs and service activities” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 248). If the predictions are correct, the aging population will be looking to continue to contribute to society in some meaningful way, which could be exceptionally valuable for the leisure service industry.

While the older population is increasing, it is important to note there are declining numbers of children and youth relative to the entire population (Henderson et al., 2001; Searle & Brayley, 1993). Leisure service professionals need to be prepared to accommodate the needs of the older population, because in “the next twenty years, the largest segment of society will be those who are middle-aged” (Searle & Brayley, p. 223). This could include: (a) accommodating new forms of leisure and recreational activities that the older population creates; (b) redesigning and modifying facilities to accommodate the interests, needs, and limitations of older adults; (c) upgrading the skills of staff to learn to deal with older adults; (d) eliminating or reducing

other leisure services to other age groups in order to reallocate resources to services for the older population; and (e) opening facilities at more varying times of day to accommodate the varied schedules of older adults, or any combination of these options (pp. 247–248).

Participating in leisure services has a much greater impact on the lives of older adults than simply the direct benefits of the activity in which they participate. It is critical for leisure service professionals to recognize the greater impact of the services they provide to the individual. Searle and Brayley (1993) noted that for the frail elderly, as well as other groups of people, leisure services should “provide more than just opportunities to pass time, but should help to build self-esteem, develop supportive social networks, and teach self-reliance skills” (p. 250). This statement brings in the perspective from the upper-left quadrant (perspective of the individual) showing the overlap between the perspectives. Pirk and Foley (1995) elaborated on other roles that they see leisure services helping to manage, such as the “growing social problems, including unemployment, lack of meaningful work, juvenile crime, violence, poverty, and racial unrest” (p. 8), which brings in the perspectives from the lower-left (WE) and lower-right (ITS) quadrants.

Lower-Right: How Users Engage in Leisure

Different people, age groups, genders, socio-economic status, and ethnicity all affect how and why users engage in leisure services. Although I could find no formal literature that specifically spoke about how these factors affect people’s choices for engaging in leisure services, I have decided to share both my professional perspective on the matter along with information that came out of this research project from both interview and focus group participants.

Interviewees shared how they notice that cultural diversification and socio-economic status within their municipalities affects the types of leisure services that people are interested in or are needing. One interviewee from my research spoke about how a certain low-income population existed in the neighbourhood of their facility, yet this group was not accessing their services. The municipality was able to partner with other agencies and put on free programs for families to learn how to play with their preschool aged children (I-5). Another interviewee spoke about the general profile of one of their communities in saying,

It is an inner-city, high population of immigrants, high population of seniors and young people. Basically the ethno specific population that would be outstanding there is the Chinese population. And then of course we have two major social housing developments within that community itself. (I-4)

In this case, the program or service that was highly successful in this neighbourhood was a basketball program, as it was of interest to this demographic group and was a sport relatively inexpensive to be a part of.

Interviewees and focus group participants spoke about how the physical structure of the facilities is something that can attract or repel people from programs and services. One interviewee spoke about how they opted to reconfigure the entire front entry of the facility, in order to deter one group of people and attract another, by making their facility more open, welcoming, and friendly (I-5). Another interviewee spoke about the importance of creating a facility that the community really felt was theirs, and that they [community members] would be awed at when it is was open (I-3). Focus group participants spoke about how some users are attracted to facilities that have the comforts of home versus having a feeling of glitz and glamour (FG). The physical structure was noted as something providers felt attracted users to their programs and services.

Focus group participants spoke about how the program or services that are provided were what attracted people to the facilities, over and above the physical structure itself. One participant noted that as a result of their facility offering a certain type of program, a whole group of participants whom they have never seen in the building before are now participating. It was felt that if these specific programs were not offered, these users would not utilize the facility (FG). Interviewees shared these thoughts, especially when they spoke about programs or services that were developed specifically to attract a certain segment of the population verifying that users will come to a facility for a particular program or service despite the physical structure itself (I-4; I-5).

Section Three: The Future of Leisure Service Delivery

The future of leisure service delivery is dependent upon many complex factors. How will we best provide or create leisure services in the future? What will communities demographically look like in the future? How will the demographic shift affect the culture and values of communities? How will the history of leisure service provision affect leisure service delivery in the future?

Searle and Brayley (1993) identified six key areas that will play a role in determining the future of recreation and leisure in Canada. From the perspective of the providers, the areas of government policy, technological advancement, the aging population, cultural diversification, and economic prosperity will play a role in how leisure services are provided (p. 25). The issues of government policy, economic prosperity, and technological advancement come under the social ITS, lower-right quadrant, as these issues affect how we produce or provide leisure to the community. The aging population issue, which falls into the upper-right behavioural IT quadrant, recognizes that the work force is aging, and there is change in the face of who provides leisure

services. Finally, cultural diversification comes falls into the cultural WE lower-left quadrant, as this issue will affect how providers relate to leisure. By looking at the four quadrants in relation to one another, we can see how leisure services will be impacted in the future from the various perspectives. From the perspective of the provider, the upper-left quadrant, or the intentional “I,” perspective appears to be missing.

From the perspective of the users, the issues of cultural diversification, the aging population, and the evolving role and nature of the family will impact how users use leisure services (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 25). Using Ken Wilber’s (1998, 2000) model of reality, the issues of an aging population and the evolving role of the family fall into the upper-right quadrant, or the behavioural-external perspective of IT. These roles will affect how people act or behave in leisure services. Cultural diversification falls into the cultural WE lower-left quadrant, as this issue will affect how we relate to each other in leisure. It appears that from the perspective of the users, the upper-left (how a user thinks about leisure) and the lower-right (how users engage in leisure) are not identified and need to be considered in order to complete the picture.

Upper-Left Quadrant: Provision of Services

There is an increased interest in looking at new ways of delivering leisure services to communities for a number of key reasons. Burke (1995) talked about five of these reasons as being that governments have

borrowed too much money and are facing international financial pressure to curb spending, the public is angry with government over the tax burden, government is perceived as being less efficient than private business, and government is cutting back on ... services. (p. 11)

These factors impact how leisure services are provided now and will continue to impact leisure services in the future.

It is thought that leisure service organizations should move away from a direct service provision model and adopt a new model of service delivery where leisure service professionals “work side-by-side with constituents to plan, implement, and evaluate programs” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 80). This statement could be indicative of the need to move from the orange, self-serving value system into a more collaborative green, consensus-driven value system. It is thought that leisure service professionals “may become more like facilitators and educators of recreation opportunities and experiences” (p. 380). Parr and Lashua (2004) supported this statement by saying, “The role of a leisure services programmer becomes an ‘experience facilitator’ rather than simply an ‘activity provider’” (p. 4). Henderson et al. believed,

Most individuals have the skills and abilities to become stewards of their own leisure. If recreation and leisure are valuable to people, recreation professionals should support individuals and their communities in self-identifying and meeting their own leisure needs and interests. At the same time, citizens will need to be challenged and empowered to take responsibility for their leisure with the support of recreation and leisure service professionals. (pp. 80–81)

Recreation professionals need to possess the skills and knowledge to be supportive of the leisure pursuits that the citizens or the community sees are valuable.

In order to change how leisure services are provided, effective leadership is required. Henderson et al. (2001) went so far as to say that there will be a “need for flexibility, creativity, vision, and cutting-edge leadership ... if recreation and leisure are to remain essential in our society” (p. 379). Specifically, Henderson et al. stated that two kinds of leadership will be important, “(1) professional leadership that gives direction to techniques and program strategies which seems like a very orange statement; and (2) citizen involvement that gives the program validity and the movement political credibility” (p. 379), which is a very green, collaborative, or consensus-driven statement. Citizen involvement in the provision of leisure services will continue to be essential in the future. There is a possibility that leadership could be become even

more shared than what we see today, through the use of “collaborative partnerships that grow from interests expressed by individuals as well as other community agencies” (p. 379).

Recreation professionals will need to have the leadership skills to bring people together and empower them to help themselves through their expert guidance.

Lower-Left Quadrant: Culture and Value Changes and their Impact

In my opinion, Henderson et al. (2001) stated one of the major concerns public leisure service agencies have over making significant changes to the way leisure services are provided: “It is difficult to ascertain whether or not people would be interested or willing to provide leisure for themselves and their neighbours given that people have gotten used to professionals typically providing a variety of services” (p. 80). Pirk and Foley (1995) talked about how costly it is to be simply a provider of services and the resulting culture that gets created by operating in this manner. These authors stated, “Recipients tend to be passive since they did not actively identify their needs and were not encouraged to develop independent action... [Therefore], the community develops no ownership or control and tends not to fight to save their services when they are threatened” (p. 9). Culturally, leisure service providers have created a relationship with their customers where the customer is dependent on the leisure service professionals to provide opportunities for them to recreate. I believe this creates a “we want you to do this for us” attitude within a community versus one that is more powerful where the citizens work in conjunction with leisure service professionals to create opportunities for themselves. This is a blue statement in that it is speaking, in an unhealthy way, to authority, chain of command, duty, and speaks of rules and regulations (Beck & Cowan, 1996). Pirk and Foley elaborated on this point by saying that they believe “traditional, one-dimensional, segmented recreation and parks is dead; hopefully, new human service and holistic community-centered agencies will emerge” (p. 8).

In the future, the value of leisure services will be based on the added impact the community believes this service provides. Henderson et al. (2001) believed that “recreation and leisure professionals will be valued by members of communities based on the services and facilities offered and the human and environmental values upheld” (p. 382). Newbold (1995) took this point and brought it down to family values and taking personal accountability by saying,

The vision for the future will be one in which residents reclaim a sense of community that is based in the neighbourhood and in the family unit. This new vision is one that requires us to have a great deal more personal accountability in the choices we make concerning ourselves and our families. (p. 48)

This vision of the future showed that we need to consider moving from the collaborative, harmonious green system into the higher order thinking of yellow, which will allow us to use, see, and connect with all of the other value systems and use that knowledge to be able to massage and infiltrate the systems at play (Beck & Cowan, 1996).

Upper-Right Quadrant: Demographic Changes

There is no doubt that the aging population is going to play a significant role in society in the years to come. It is critical to understand the impact of this demographic on society in order to predict the best way to provide leisure services to them. Searle and Brayley (1993) noted that “Not only is the median age increasing but the proportion of older Canadians (65 years of age or older) in the population is expected to be an unprecedented 17 percent by the year 2021” (p. 247). The upcoming older population is highly-skilled, educated, and will have more disposable income than the previous groups of older adults (Foot, 1998). Foot further stated that “the aging population [is] more interested in staying healthy, having fun, and doing good—and less interested in conspicuous consumption” (p. 125), which is a very green or collaborative, consensus-driven (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 325) way of being.

Lower-Right Quadrant: How Will We Create Leisure Services

Funding to provide leisure services is an ongoing problem and constant struggle for organizations. Recreation and leisure service professionals “recognize the need to strengthen and broaden the base of financial support. This change will occur through a combined effort of greater citizen support, the exploration of new funding sources, and improved long-range planning” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 381). Newbold (1995) believed, “We need to leverage resources out in the community and build coalitions not around providers, but around citizen groups that are empowered to identify unmet needs” (p. 47). It is important for citizens to recognize the importance of leisure services, because they will then “tend to support bond issues and the expenditure of tax dollars for recreation operations” (Henderson et al., p. 381). By increasing the base of support from citizens by involving them in the planning and implementation of leisure services, the more potential there is for increased financial support (p. 380).

Finding new sources of funding is not an easy task. It takes special skills, tactics, and creativity to develop and use various funding sources. Henderson et al. (2001) talked about how “Leaders of recreation agencies will need to become astute in fundraising concepts and strategies, ... programs need outcome-based processes that are monitored and evaluated, ... and professionals must also consider what difference they make in people’s lives” (p. 292). Ensuring staff are knowledgeable and have the skills to access funds and resources, are able to market their services effectively, and understand the value of the service they provide will be critical to the success of leisure service delivery in the future.

Summary

Looking at the literature from the perspective of users and providers of leisure services, through Ken Wilber's (1998, 2000) four-quadrant model of reality, gives us a clear indication of all of the perspectives that need to be considered in the provision of leisure services. It is important to initially look at the perspectives separately and then pull them together to see how they relate to and affect one another.

It is critical for the providers of leisure services to understand the attitudes, beliefs, and needs of their clientele around leisure services. This includes understanding the demographic shift in today's society, the aging population, along with the changing values and beliefs of today's world, modelled effectively by Beck and Cowan (1996) in *Spiral Dynamics*, and how these factors affect the way people view and utilize leisure services. The culture and behaviours that we are seeing in society today directly impact how leisure services should be provided. As the values of the users of leisure services change, providers need to adapt all aspects of their service delivery to meet their needs and to serve their clientele effectively. This includes changing the role and boundaries of government agencies in leisure service provision, developing relationships with other agencies to allow for new ways to enhance or develop services, and looking at what the providers of leisure services look like—their training, their age, their values, and the motivations. It is a complex, intertwined system of perspectives that need to be considered in order to develop an effective leisure service delivery model.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Overview of Research Approach

The research questioned examined in this project was: “What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department’s ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?” The primary methodology employed in this study was action research using qualitative research methods. This research methodology was guided by the principles of appreciative inquiry.

Defining a guiding principle frames the values and ethics I used as a researcher. As a researcher it was important for me to feel that I am contributing to the greater good of the organization I am working with. An appreciative inquiry (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003) was used in this research project because it

identifies the best of “what is” to pursue dreams and possibilities of “what could be.” It is a co-operative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system—those factors that hold the potential for inspired, positive change. (Cooperrider & Whitney, n.d., ¶ 6)

Furthermore, an appreciative inquiry approach seeks to go “beyond participation to foster inspiration at the grass-roots level” (¶ 5). By engaging the research participants in this way, I allowed participants to “imagine a better future based on their current capacities, and then move toward that future” (¶ 20).

The interview and focus group questions were developed using an appreciative inquiry approach. The questions were framed in a way that allowed research participants to focus on what is working well in their organizations and how those things could be built upon. By using this approach, I was able to engage research participants in a positive way, which created a safe environment that encouraged open, free communication about their ideas and thoughts.

Action research is used to take action on problems that people, groups, or organizations are facing. This research process allowed the people involved to undergo a process that was “rigorously empirical and reflective (or interpretive), engage[d] people...as active participants in the research process, [and] result[ed] in some practical outcome related to the lives or work of the participants” (Stringer, 1999, p. xviii). Stringer stated, “Community based action research ... commences with an interest in the problems of a group, a community, or an organization. [It] is seen as a process of inquiry that is ... democratic ... equitable ... liberating [and] ... life enhancing” (pp. 9–10). This approach was chosen for my research project due to its “collaborative approach to inquiry” (p. 17). Engaging participants by using their thoughts and ideas allowed me to create an environment that supported co-creating change.

The Master of Arts in Leadership and Training program at Royal Roads University required learners to use action research as the principle form of research methodology. This competency-based leadership program used this research method because it allowed the learner to demonstrate leadership competencies in an organization while dealing with an issue around organizational change.

Research Participants

My research project was broken down into two research phases: (a) interviews and (b) focus group. Within each phase of the research, participants were selected differently. The research methodology was chosen due to the type of information I wanted to collect. In both cases, the purpose of the interactions with research participants was to “enhance the social and emotional lives of all people who participate” (Stringer, 1999, p. 28).

Interviews

In this phase of the research, the focus was on interviewing key people within outside organizations in the leisure services field. In particular, I focused on organizations that were using a different operating model than that of the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department. These organizations were somewhat similar in size and demographic make up to that of New Westminster; however, the study was not limited to these like organizations.

With the help of the connections and knowledge of my project sponsor, I was able to identify organizations and key people within those organizations to approach to be a part of my research. I interviewed six people from organizations within British Columbia (City of Richmond, North Vancouver, Vancouver, and Surrey), Alberta (City of Calgary), and Saskatchewan (City of Saskatoon). Once the organization and key individuals were identified, they were contacted and invited to voluntarily participate in a phone interview (see Appendix A: Telephone Introduction—External Interview Participants).

Focus Group

Research participants for this phase of my research were internal staff from my sponsor organization. I conducted one focus group with 10 people in attendance. The focus group participants were a mix of people who hold decision-making positions within the Parks and Recreation department. Thirteen people were invited via an email invitation (see Appendix B) asking for their voluntary participation in the research; ten people actually participated. The people invited held decision-making positions within their organization, as facility managers, recreation programmers, and administrative staff. It was important to have staff members from each of these areas within the organization, as they all play a unique role in how leisure services are currently being provided. Administrative staff are the ultimate decision-makers for the

department. They are responsible for budgets and ensuring that programs and services are delivered in a fiscally responsible manner. Therefore, I felt it was important to engage the administrative staff from the beginning of the process by inviting them to participate in the focus group. Facility managers are responsible for program delivery that is specific to an area of recreation (i.e., aquatics, museums, or ice arenas). Recreation programmers are directly responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating recreation programs and services. Having staff from all three of these areas contribute their knowledge and expertise about leisure services provided a broad perspective on the topic of service delivery.

Other Considerations

My role within the organization did not have me directly supervising any of the staff who were involved in my research project. For this reason, I felt that all of the potential participants I identified were able to participate openly and freely in the focus group discussion. There are friendships within the group, but those relationships did not create any personal conflict or ethical issues.

Research Methods

By using an appreciative inquiry philosophy, I set the framework for research participants by explaining how I planned to go through the research process. By using this philosophy, I was able to focus on the potential of the organization and the people within it. With this philosophy as a guide, interview and focus group questions were developed.

Tools or Instruments

Interviews

Interviews were chosen as one of two methods used for gathering data. I planned to interview six key people from outside organizations within British Columbia (City of Richmond,

Vancouver, North Vancouver, and Surrey), Alberta (City of Calgary), or Saskatchewan (City of Saskatoon). A series of open-ended questions were developed to gather the data necessary for my research (see Appendix C). As a researcher, I was interested in “understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events” (Taylor & Bogdan, as cited in Berg, 2006, p. 97). I wanted to understand how staff within outside organizations perceived their operational models, as well as get an in-depth look at how those staff people felt about the way the model operates.

There were challenges to using interviews to collect data. “A major problem with the interview process is that questions are easily flavoured by the researcher’s perceptions, perspectives, interests, and agendas” (Stringer, 1999, p. 68). In order to overcome this issue, I asked another learner to help me frame the questions to avoid these issues. Another challenge with interviews was the data collected only reflected “the views and opinions of the individual, shaped by the social process of living in a culture” (Berg, 2006, p. 160). I had to take this limitation of the interview process into consideration during the data analysis phase of this project.

The interviews were conducted over the phone. This was more appealing to the interviewees as it was more respectful of their time and changing schedules. Berg (2006) noted that “telephone interviews lack face-to-face nonverbal cues that researchers use to pace their interviews and to determine the direction to move in” (p. 108). In order to overcome this issue, I ensured that my questions were “specific ... and formal or semi-structured” (p. 108) in nature.

Once the interviews were complete, I transcribed the information and presented it back to the interviewee for verification via an email attachment. Interviewees responded to the email stating that the attached transcription was an accurate account of the interview. This step was

important in order to “verify the accuracy of the resulting text” (Stringer, 1999, p. 70). Another purpose of this step was to ensure that the interviewee felt they were heard and that their voice and opinions were respected.

Focus Group

Focus groups allow for “a far larger number of ideas, issues, topics, and even solutions [to] be generated through group discussion than individual conversation” (Berg, 2006, p. 146). This method was appropriate for gaining information from the staff within my organization. Although Berg stated that focus groups should contain “no more than about seven people” (p. 145), I had ten people at the focus group meeting. Although having more people in the focus group was challenging, these challenges were overcome with proper planning.

The structure of focus groups is “intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about behaviours, attitudes, and opinions they possess” (Berg, 2006, p. 145). For this reason, it was important that ground rules for the focus group were clearly outlined at the beginning, which created a safe, trusting environment that encouraged active, honest participation by participants.

During a focus group, “interactions among and between group members stimulate discussions in which one group member reacts to comments made by another” (Berg, 2006, p. 146). Generating this level of conversation within a group was generally good. However, “group influences can distort individual opinion” (p. 160); however, this did not pose problems to collecting reliable, valid data. When reviewing the data, it was important to remember that the data collected from the focus group might reflect “the collective notions shared and negotiated by the group” (p. 160) versus that of the individual participants.

In the focus group, a series of open-ended questions were posed for discussion (see Appendix D). With the permission of the research participants in the focus group, I brought in an outside assistant, another Master of Arts in Leadership and Training learner, to observe and help take notes at the focus group. This person acted as my unbiased eye; someone who could help to ensure I did not make assumptions or misinterpretations of the data.

Study Conduct

In order to conduct the research effectively, the project was broken down into phases.

Discussion with Sponsor

My sponsor had been working in the field of leisure services for many years. He has held many different positions within the field and due to his connections, I felt he had a very good understanding of what was happening in the field as a whole. As a result, he was able to identify agencies that have gone “outside of the box” in the way they are providing services to their communities.

Data Collection

Interviews

Interviews were conducted over the phone. Six people representing different organizations were invited to participate in this research project: four from within British Columbia, one from Alberta, and one from Saskatchewan. Key people from the identified organizations were invited by an initial email to participate on a voluntary basis in an interview (see Appendix E). The invitation stated I would follow up with a phone call to set up an interview time. During the follow up phone call, the official telephone invitation script (see Appendix A) was read in detail, and at the end of the letter reading, people were asked if they would like to set up a time for a phone interview. Once a date and time were chosen, an email

confirmation was sent that included the details of the interview along with the letter of informed consent (see Appendix F), a copy of the telephone invitation script (see Appendix A), and the actual interview questions (see Appendix C), so they were not surprised by what was going to be asked during the interview. I asked to use a recording device to capture the interview. Once the interviews were complete, I transcribed their responses, gave the information back to the interviewees, and asked for their feedback to ensure recording accuracy. This correspondence was all done by email with the interviewees.

Focus Group

At the same time as the interviews were being conducted, I held a focus group meeting with internal staff from three different teams within the Parks and Recreation Department: administrative staff, facility managers, and recreation programmers. People from these three work groups were invited via an email invitation to voluntarily participate in my research project (see Appendix G). Once participants expressed interest in attending the focus group, a follow up email was sent to each participant, which included the informed consent letter (see Appendix H) and the focus group questions for their review (see Appendix D). Participants were asked to bring their signed informed consent letter with them to the focus group. From the focus group I was able to determine what they felt were the areas on which the department should be focusing to improve service delivery of leisure services to the community. I requested permission to use a recording device to gather the data from the focus group. The data was then transcribed.

Analyze Data

After the completion of the interviews and the focus group, all information was compiled and an initial analysis was conducted (see Data Analysis section). Key themes from the data were pulled out and prepared in a way that could be presented back to my sponsor. Based on the

information that internal staff identified from the focus group, I looked for themes or ideas from the interviews with outside organizations that seemed workable in the New Westminster Parks and Recreation Department. Data from the interview responses was extracted that seemed new, different, and workable, based on the operating philosophy and values of my sponsoring organization.

Report to Sponsor

The pre analysis of the data was presented to my sponsor for his input. The general findings and the direction the project was taking were presented. He was supportive and curious about the findings to date and looked forward to seeing the final product.

Further Analysis and Recommendations

Analyzing the additional information from the focus group was the final piece of my data collection. Data collected from the focus group was used to fine tune the recommendations that were ultimately put forward to the sponsoring organization for consideration.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was the phase of the research where I made sense of the data that had been collected. It is the phase where “you must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns, and interpret data” (Glesne, 1999, p. 130) that has been collected. It is the time when the researcher must be creative in order to interpret and understand all of the data that has been collected.

Glesne (1999) stated, “Data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds” (p. 130). While collecting the data, I kept a detailed research journal to capture my thoughts and ideas on the information collected, my feelings around how the process was going, and other details I observed while working through the research process. This allowed me to capture and remember details that helped me make

sense of the data in the final stages of the research. Throughout the data collection and analysis phase, I ensured that I eliminated data that did not fit my research or that could be linked back to an individual, facility, or another identifying link.

While analyzing the data, I started “selecting, categorizing, and labelling information” (Stringer, 1999, p. 176) as it was collected, to help me frame and focus the research as it was occurring. Once the data was collected and confirmed to be accurate, I went through and themed the interview and focus group comments using Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996). I determined into which of the value systems each comment fit and assigned the appropriate corresponding Spiral Dynamics colour. This was done for each interview and focus group question. Within each question, it became apparent which was the overriding value system. I then compared which value system the interviewees tended to fall in and compared that to the sponsoring organization. This allowed me to see where we are versus where we want to be and possibly how we could get there based on where other organizations are. This type of analysis gave me an indication of where the current mind set of the organization, which would help me to formulate recommendations on how to move the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department forward.

The next step of the analysis was to use the integral model of reality (Wilber, 1998, 2000) and determine on which perspective or quadrant the organizations are tending to focus on and how that compares to where they ultimately want to be. Using this model also allowed me to see what aspects of integral thinking are missing, inhibiting, or promoting growth within the Parks and Recreation department. This model showed me how balanced the organization was in their thinking.

Each of the comments from the interviews were coded using the names of the Wilber's (1998, 2000) four quadrants (UL, LL, UR, or LR) and were then mapped to see how often each quadrant was touched upon. This was then compared to the data collected from the focus group to see how the sponsoring organization compared to the various other organizations. This level of analysis provided insights into where the participating research organizations are at in terms of values and integral theory, and I was able to compare that data to where the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department is currently and where they want to go. Once the data was mapped and analyzed using both Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996) and integral theory, recommendations were formed based on the sponsoring organization's operating philosophy and their over all operational goals and objectives.

In order to use quotes from my research participants in this project, I developed a coding system. Each interviewee was assigned a number along with the letter "I." For example, comments from interviewee number five were coded as "I-5." For the focus group, I took a slightly different approach. The focus group was coded using letters and page numbers from the transcription. For example, if a comment came from page six of the focus group transcription, the data was coded as "FG, p. 6." Using this system allowed me to accurately quote the participants directly in the project finding section in Chapter Four.

Developing trustworthiness and validity of the data collected was crucial to the reporting phase of the research project. Trustworthiness of the data was established by reporting on the "credibility ... transferability ... and dependability" (Stringer, 1999, pp. 176–177). To do this, I had participants verify that the information collected was accurate and developed credibility through prolonged engagement with research participants (Stringer). In order to validate my research methodology, I asked my project sponsor to do a peer review of my methodology

process. By analyzing the data in this way, I was able to provide evidence that “the research has been carried out rigorously, that the procedures and processes of inquiry have minimized the possibility that the investigation was superficial, biased, or insubstantial” (p. 176).

Ethical Issues

As a researcher, it was imperative that I adhere to ethical principles to ensure the well-being of research participants. As stated by Palys (2003), “Research ethics refers to principles that guide the way we interact with research participants and the commitment to safeguard their rights and interests” (p. 80). The Royal Roads University *Research Ethics Policy* (2004) outlined eight principles that I had to adhere to while conducting my research.

Respect for Human Dignity

Palys (2003) stated, “We have a *humanistic obligation* to treat people with dignity and to safeguard their interests; even critical inquiry requires us to look first for the moral high ground and to treat adversaries the way we would like them to treat us” (p. 81). Safeguarding participants by ensuring their well-being was the governing principle guiding my research. I did this by stating that nature of the research project in the telephone script and focus group invitation letter of invitation (see Appendices A and B) and through the informed consent letters (see Appendices F and H) noting that people were able to participate in this research project at their own free will and could withdraw at anytime without prejudice.

Respect for Free and Informed Consent

In order to satisfy this principle, I ensured that I was “clear and realistic about what is being offered, making neither grandiose claims about the prospective utility of the research nor any promises that [I am] not prepared to keep” (Palys, 2003, p. 88). Communicating to participants that participation in the research project was both “voluntary ... and that they may

freely choose to stop participation at any point” (Glesne, 1999, pp. 116-117) ensured that I had adequately addressed this principle through the telephone script, focus group letter of invitation and informed consent (see Appendices A, B, F, and H).

Respect for Vulnerable Persons

According to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [Tri-Council], 1998), a vulnerable person was defined as “persons whose situation or characteristics may make them unable to provide free and informed consent to participate in research. This group includes children, institutionalized persons, those who have cognitive impairments, and those in a position of inferiority” (p. i.5). My research did not involve vulnerable persons as per this definition.

Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

Developing a trusting working relationship with research participants was critical to the success of my project. To ensure people felt safe sharing information with me, I needed people to feel confident that I would protect their privacy by keeping the information they share confidential. I did this by having all electronic data stored on my personal, password-protected computer and all written information was secured in my home. Palys (2003) stated, “The best way to inspire confidence in research participants is to show them how vigilant you are in safeguarding the information that others give you” (p. 91).

Respect for Justice and Inclusiveness

In order to ensure fairness and equity, invitations to participate in my research were sent to men and women, of any culture and of any age, holding decision-making positions within the

leisure services industry. This included, but was not be limited to, department heads and people holding management and supervisory positions within the field of study.

Balancing Harms and Benefits

People willingly volunteered their time to participate in my research. To respect their time, I ensured that the interviews and focus group I conducted were well organized, efficient, and effective. To ensure accuracy in the data I collected from my interactions with research participants, I asked for a follow up meeting.

Minimizing Harm

My research involved interviews and focus group discussions with human participants. To ensure research participants were not subject to “unnecessary risks of harm” (Tri-Council, 1998, p. i.6), I clearly communicated the purpose and use of my project during the interviews. During the focus group, I insured that participants felt a sense of emotional and physical safety by communicating the intent of my project clearly and by providing an appropriate, safe meeting location.

Maximizing Benefit

Glesne (1999) stated that “ethical decisions are made on the basis that moral action is that which results in the greatest good for the greatest number” (p. 125). In keeping with this concept, I provided the recommendations from my research project to everyone involved or who was interested in my research project. Upon completion of my project, I offered to present my project to any interested parties.

In order for my research project to be successful, it was imperative that ethical issues were considered and dealt with at every step of the research process. One way to ensure my research was ethical was to have “continual communication and interaction with research

participants throughout the study” (Glesne, 1999, p. 129). Establishing relationships with research participants that are based on trust, respect, and mutual understanding through ongoing, open communication was the foundation of how I conducted my research.

The discussion around ethical issues is not complete without acknowledgement of the biases that I brought in to this research project. I have been involved with the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department for over fifteen years in varying capacities. My long-standing involvement in the department fuelled my interest in seeing change happen within the organization. Most recently my work within the Parks and Recreation department has been within a facility that operates very successfully and efficiently with a community development model. As a result of this success, I have a bias towards this model.

In order to eliminate any issues that my biases may cause in the collection and reporting of data, I asked for assistance from people not involved in my organization. For the interviews, I sought the advice and guidance of my faculty supervisor in helping me ensure that I was reporting on all the data—not just specific elements. For the focus group, through the informed consent letter, I informed the research participants that I would be involving an outside person, likely another researcher, to observe the focus group. Confidentiality of the research participants was ensured by removing any identifying data that could be linked back to an individual.

Summary

The research approach outlined in this chapter shows the complexity of this research project and the considerations that have been taken into account at each step of the action research process. The research participants and methodology were chosen carefully and with purpose in order to gather relevant data, and the conduct of study outlines the cyclical nature of the action research process. Throughout the data analysis, ethical principles were identified and

followed in order to protect the confidentiality of all people involved in this research project.

This project has followed a rigorous research approach, at every stage, as outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project studied the research question: “What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department’s ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?” This chapter presents the project findings and themes that were discovered using an integral approach in the data analysis. The findings from the interviewees are presented, first followed by those from the focus group, which was held with members of the sponsoring organization, the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department.

Interview Findings: Western Canada Providers

Findings from interviews held with representatives of other leisure service organizations have been analyzed through the filter of the integral model, in order to show the different perspectives of themes that emerged from the data. Section one will focus on the findings from the perspective of the providers of leisure services and section two will focus on the findings from the perspective of the users of leisure services.

Individual Perspective: Change in Mindset

Change in mindset affects how an individual thinks about leisure services. For this reason, this theme falls into upper left quadrant (individual perspective). Within this theme, three sub-themes emerged: a change in mindset around ways of thinking, ways of being, and a need for flexibility within existing operations. Interviewees spoke about the importance of needing their leisure service organization to be able to shift their mindset around their ways of being and thinking towards incorporating flexibility into their operation, in order to meet the needs of their operation. In their opinion, this was a critical element in making partnerships work and be effective.

Way of Thinking

Changing the way staff and the community think about leisure services evolved as a theme from the interviewees. From a staff perspective, one interviewee spoke about “encouraging staff to think outside of the facility and think about their influence on people’s lifestyles and on the community” (I-2). Another interviewee spoke about this concept from the perspective of determining what is best for the community versus their own self interest by stating, “We have grown, learned, developed; we are meeting the needs of our community, and in many cases, like any good consultant, we would ultimately be trying to work ourselves out of the job” (I-6). This same interviewee talked about how her organization needed to be of the mindset that even though in some cases community organizations are totally running certain areas of service delivery, their Parks and Recreation Department may not be out of that line of business forever. This interviewee stated,

Even though we turned over the work completely to the [outside] organization, so they are running it exclusively which allowed us to get out of that line of business. Are we out of it forever? Who knows. We are out of it as long as a gap doesn’t exist in the community. (I-6)

This Parks and Recreation Department needed to have the mindset that things change and they need to be willing and able to re-evaluate and adapt as necessary. After all, as one interviewee noted, “We are part of an overall spectrum of leisure services delivery” (I-6). The important part is that “recreation services are being provided.... It’s not about who’s providing; it is just the fact that it is being provided to the community” (I-6). This change in mindset in the way of thinking has allowed a number of organizations to grow, change, and adapt both as individual organizations and as part of a team of partners to meet the changing leisure needs of their communities.

Ways of Being or Acting

When it came to partnerships, a number of interviewees spoke about the need to change their mindset about being open to the possibility of doing things differently than has been done in the past. One interviewee spoke about the idea of “instead of having security guards, have outreach workers who have the social service skills to talk to the people that are homeless or that are on drugs or that have any other type of issues” (I-5). Further to this comment, the interviewee stated,

Using your staff resources as efficiently as you can and sometimes that even means looking at contracting out some services or maybe look at our partners and see what they are offering. Look at what everyone else is doing in the community and if we can contract out any services that make sense maybe that is best for the community because we are growing so fast. (I-5)

Another interviewee spoke about how “we are not going to worry about whose turf it is. We want to worry about the program being delivered” (I-6). This same interviewee used the example of the various service providers in the city becoming “feeder systems to each other,” instead of being in competition with each other. And lastly, one interviewee spoke about the need to change the organization’s mindset to be one of forward and reflective thinking, allowing the organization to plan versus react to situations. This particular organization was encouraged to “sit down for a minimum of an hour and a half every week to put some really good strategic thinking in to where you want your organization go to go and what that’s going to look like” (I-6). All of these examples show how the various organizations, represented by participants who were interviewed, have had to think differently in the way leisure services are provided in order to provide services effectively.

A Need for Flexibility

Flexibility within existing systems allows an organization to evolve and grow as the need arises. Many participants spoke about this theme, but from varying perspectives. Participants spoke of the need to acquire expert staff in order to meet the changing demands of leisure service delivery. Some success stories interviewees spoke about required skill sets their existing staff did not have. For example, one interviewee stated that one of the projects their organization took on “really stretched our capacity and expertise.... The whole area of innovative funding and sponsorship.... We had to look at outside expertise” (I-1). Therefore, the organization needed the flexibility to go out to acquire a staff person with these skills in order to see a particular project through to completion.

Along similar lines, two different interviewees identified the need for flexibility around staff skill development, in order to prepare them for new positions. This was important in order to prepare staff to take on new responsibilities as their roles within the organization changed with the evolving way leisure services were being provided. For example, one interviewee stated that “whether on a full-time or part-time basis, almost creating another level, which will take some of the responsibilities that have been at the coordinator level” (I-2). Another interviewee stated, “We want to get our coordinator’s in all areas do more of the work that our section managers currently do.... Just to see what they want to do next or what they want to work on” (I-5). These participants recognized the changing needs within their organizations, due to the challenge created by large numbers of people retiring and how their organizations wanted to provide continued services. These situations required participants to look at how to develop existing staff, and they needed the flexibility within their operation to do so.

In order to meet the changing needs of service delivery, some participants went so far as to develop whole new positions or departments within their recreation departments. For example, one interviewee stated,

We created a full-time marketing and communications division. And I would say that that is pretty critical to understand your marketplace and to ensure we are looking at things from a customer perspective not a staff perspective. (I-2)

Another interviewee spoke about going to council to get dedicated resources for a staff person to oversee a major project that was currently being done “in house and off the corners of the desks of those whose plates were already full.... [We needed someone to] spearhead the process” (I-3). Lastly, one interviewee spoke about why they developed a whole new department within their organization to improve service delivery:

When we started doing our reorganization, we recognized that we absolutely needed to find a way to create some strategic capacity. We need to embed strategic thinking into our operation. We need to accelerate and raise up the amount of strategic capacity in our organization. So as a recreation business unit we developed a new section, or work unit, called strategic planning and policy. And in this division that is what they do. We advise senior management on strategic initiatives. (I-6)

This same interviewee further stated,

We amalgamated into our unit the marketing unit. So now we have an entire arm that does research. So what an amazing way to support strategic development is to back it with research. And that is in the recreation side of things. (I-6)

Having the ability to adapt the organizational structure in these ways was critical in order to improve the way services were being provided in each of these organizations.

On another level, several interviewees noted the need to find alternate ways to deal with existing processes within their operation. For example, one interviewee stated that they had to make “some legislation changes because of how we’ve been building and/or developing or selling land. So there’s been some major levels of government involvement in making some of this change happen” (I-3). These changes were needed in order to make the project happen.

Another interviewee spoke about the challenges they have around seeking equity for their patrons when it came to pricing and their fees and charges policy. The interviewee stated that they need “to have exceptions in order to make it work” (I-5). This interviewee recognized the need to have some aspects of the operation consistent, but they needed flexibility within an existing policy to make things work for their clients.

In a more proactive sense, one interviewee spoke about the need to build flexibility into the systems that govern the way services are provided, in order to be responsive to the needs of the community and their partners. This interviewee stated,

We may use any one of our three roles and do that through building community capacity and have someone do that on our behalf or work in partnership with another organization to do that as a cosponsored initiative or we will do it directly depending on the circumstances in the community or the community need. (I-6)

This same interviewee continued by saying, “In every situation we analyze which one of the three roles (direct provider, partner, or community builder) we need to take on in order to provide the best programs and services to the community” (I-6). Having this level of flexibility built into their governing systems allowed this organization to be responsive to their community’s needs.

Individual and Cultural Perspective: How We Want to be Known

Another theme that emerged from the data was about how leisure service professionals want their contribution to the community to be known. This theme overlaps between the upper-left (individual) quadrant and the lower-left (cultural) quadrant, as the context in which the theme was discussed talked about both how leisure service professionals relate and think about leisure.

Leisure service professionals believe in the value of leisure services to a community, and they want their stakeholders to see them as providing an effective, valuable, high-quality service.

Specifically, the two sub-themes that developed were how leisure service want to be seen in the big picture and how they want to be known based on their values.

Big Picture

There is no doubt that leisure service professionals believe in the greater benefit of leisure services to a community, beyond the services they directly provide. Examples of what interviewees stated are: “What we would really like our patrons to understand is that the things that are provided in the community are essential to the health and well-being and quality of life of the citizens” (I-1); “Recreation is a very valuable component of people’s lives. It should not be lost with all the other things going on out there” (I-4); and “We believe recreation is an essential component of human development” (I-6). Other comments included: Recreation is a means to social ends” (I-6), and that recreation programs are

one of the most important things for the community.... And that recreation also helps in community safety, helps deter youth crime, helps people stick to their goals. All of those things...that it is not a frill but that it is essential. (I-5)

One city’s big picture view was that they wanted the community to be “so vast and vibrant ... that nobody even notices us in the background.... It is about the community building their own capacity to meet their own needs using the resources that exist within their own community” (I-6).

A number of the interviewees also had a viewpoint on how they wanted their staff to perceive what it is that organization provides to a community. One interviewee stated,

We want to be known as having the highest quality and highest calibre programs in the city. We want to set the benchmark for programming so that are the partners and the other providers in town have a social obligation to reach that standard. (I-6)

One interviewee spoke about how they want their staff to understand the importance of being “more relevant beyond [their] own facilities” (I-2), and that they encourage “staff to think outside of the facility and think about their influence on people’s lifestyles and on the

community” (I-2). In order to ensure the community or partners perceive leisure services in the way the professionals in the field want them to, interviewees felt it was important that people within the organization understand the magnitude of value that leisure services provide to a community.

Values Based

Internally in all interviewed organizations, leisure services appeared to enjoy a very cooperative, trusting, respectful work environment. Interviewees spoke highly of the culture within their workplaces. One interviewee described their culture as: “We want to be shown respect, and we want to have fun, and we want work to be a fun place to be, and we do want to be innovative and creative” (I-2). Another interviewee spoke highly of the “respect for others and the supportive work environment” (I-3), when describing their work environment. Being fiscally responsible was identified as a contributing factor to helping create a culture of trust, cooperation, and respect. Leisure service professionals wanted to provide “a wide variety of recreation opportunities at an affordable price” (I-3), and they wanted to do so in the most cost-effective, efficient way possible.

External to the organization, leisure service professionals wanted to be known for providing “great service ... having good variety and good quality programs that are accessible” (I-3). One interviewee also stated that they wanted to be known for providing leisure services “that are very effectively run ... quality programs at an affordable price, and that we are doing the most we can with the resources that we have” (I-5). Having these values frame how recreation services are provided was a shared theme between all interviewees.

Behavioural Perspective: What We Look Like—Our Challenges

Leisure service delivery faces challenges both today and in the near future. These challenges affect how leisure service professionals behave in leisure which situates this theme in the upper-right (behavioural) quadrant. The sub-themes that emerged that are affecting the way leisure services professional behave as providers of leisure services are the aging workforce and traditional or old ways of operating.

Staff Are Aging

Leisure service professionals seem to really enjoy their work. Of the six people within different organizations who were interviewed, almost everyone spoke to some degree about their long term staff (I-1; I-2; I-5). Some organizations have “people who have been here for 25 or 30 years at a fairly senior level” (I-2), and other organizations have “a combination of people who have been around for a long time and some people who have come from different operations” (I-2). This can have both pros and cons to an organization.

Interviewees spoke about these long-time staff and a need for succession planning. One interviewee stated, “With all of the pending retirements that we are looking at, I believe we could have major gaps in expertise and skill in our organizations” (I-1). Another interviewee spoke about how the issue of people retiring is posing challenges by stating, “We are also faced with retirement challenges. We had two retirements this year, and that is probably going to continue” (I-2). One interviewee noted that their organization is really starting to pay attention to the importance of upcoming retirements and succession planning: “We talk more about succession planning and retirement happening and people leaving here, there, and everywhere to go to other jobs that it really made everyone in senior-level management sit up and say people are our strongest resource” (I-3). Pending retirements, which cause job openings in all organizations, are

also posing another problem, as noted by one of the interviewees: “Over the course of the last four or five years, we have been in a serious staff turnover situation as with many organizations” (I-3).

Organizations are noticing that they need to develop the skills in their existing staff, in order to manage the changing ways services are being provided. Interviewees noted they are now needing people who can “go and make partnerships happen and go to a lot of tables and state what we as recreation services can provide” (I-5); and “We need skills such as an ability to do negotiations, to do collaboration, to look at team interdependence, to do conflict resolution and collaborative development” (I-6). These skills are a “radically different skill set than being a direct provider” (I-6). Despite the need for these new skills, one interviewee reminded us that there is still a need for staff to “understand the value and benefit of recreation and have some have a core level belief in recreation as a means to social ends” (I-6).

Systemic Perspective: Traditional Operations versus We are Better Together

The lower-right (systemic or social) quadrant brings in the perspective about how leisure services are created.

Traditional Operations

Tradition is hard to change. Organizations become ingrained in a way of operating especially when, at one point in their history, their ways of operating were successful. One interviewee stated, “It’s historical, it’s long-term, and therefore difficult to change” (I-1). Interviewees from a few of the organizations identified that working with old operating systems that do not meet the needs of today was a challenge. Interviewees stated, “The partnerships always change and what we had in the seventies does not reflect what we have today. And some people are still caught in the old operating agreements” (I-4). Similarly, another interviewee

stated that the “model is outdated in terms of its ability to deal with all of the issues” (I-1).

Tradition sticks and is hard to change, and despite one interviewee’s desire to believe that their organization does not “do things one way because we have always done it that way” (I-2), they did admit “there is a bit of that” (I-2).

We Are Better Together

There was overall consensus between all six interviewees that, despite some of the challenges that partnership development, acquisition, and maintenance create, partnerships are important, or even key, in the provision of effective leisure services. Good partnerships can be hard to find, but working effectively together with others can provide exceptional experiences and opportunities for everyone involved. Whether that is outside agencies, non-traditional partnerships, interdepartmental partnerships, or newly-developed work teams within an existing department, all stories involved working with other people, together and effectively. Even in cases where there were significant obstacles, working through those challenges, as a group in new and different ways, elevated the partnership or team as a whole to a new more effective way of operating. Within this theme the sub-themes that emerged effectively mirrored the quadrants: (a) the elements of a good partnership, (b) the value of partnerships, (c) the challenges of partnerships, and (d) how partnerships require a change in mindset in order to be effective.

Value of partnerships. According to interviewees, there is no doubt that their organizations or municipalities have noticed the value of forming partnerships. The values interviewees shared were primarily around the sub-themes of increased opportunity and fostering team development.

Value of partnerships: Increased opportunity. Without a doubt, one of the primary reasons to pursue partnerships is increased opportunity. As one interviewee stated, partnerships

allow “partners to maximize opportunities and to be able to provide affordable recreation opportunities” (I-3). Many organizations used partnerships to develop or acquire new infrastructure (I-1; I-3; I-5; I-6) or to provide programs or services to a group of people who were not already being served (I-3). One interviewee stated that they were “able to offer other things inside of recreation services [due to] the bylaws of their societies” (I-4).

Partnerships are seen as a way to change the view on the value of recreation services. One interviewee stated that, through partnerships, “The profit-making sector [could learn to] see the need to provide back to the community” (I-4). As the profit sector embraces the importance of recreation services, they are more apt to financially back projects. In another organization, this change in view point had already occurred, and the recreation services in a high-risk area of the community were significantly improved, because recreation was seen as a key element in the revitalization of the community (I-5). Partnerships were also seen as a way to “expand cooperation with external agencies for either job-training opportunities, more partnerships in program delivery, or expanded opportunities for both the residents in and around their area” (I-3). When speaking about their desire to be involved in the school system, another organization was able to see opportunities there for recreation services based on the expertise they bring to the table:

To be part of the curriculum and have courses on recreation, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. It could even be a two week course as part of their physical education program. We can just go in there and teach and facilitate children and youth in how to be more healthy and make healthy choices.... It is believed that “working together with all of the partners, great things happen. (I-5)

Value of partnerships: Fosters team development. Internal to an organization, partnerships have been shown to be beneficial in the area of team development. Interviewees spoke about how partnerships have a way of pulling people together. This was evident in a

participant's comments that "staff [were] involved at all levels ... corporate approach working strategically across the whole corporation ... [and] ... all departments worked together to pull a proposal together in a very short time" (I-1). Another interviewee spoke further on this point by stating, "Everyone was working together. Everyone was excited because they were seeing that what they were doing was making a difference" (I-5).

Partnerships create an environment where people gain an understanding of how each other operates, creating an environment of respect. One interviewee talked about the importance of people understanding: "I want people to have their noses in other people's business, because I want them to care what's going on in the whole operation. Not just their piece in it" (I-2). Another organization spoke about how working together and having to rely on each other improved their internal working relationship by stating, "This project was the real thing. So it has allowed us to grow and develop our internal relationships working with others in the organization" (I-1). One organization spoke about how, through discussions or communications, they came to understand each other more effectively

I didn't sit in my office and come up with these three roles, I sat in engagement sessions with all of these providers across town, we determined what this is going to look like and who was going to do what role. It became very clear that we are in this together. (I-6)

All interviewees spoke about the value of partnerships in how they create an environment of respect and understanding for the people or agencies involved.

Partnerships are as much about the people with whom you work as they are with external agencies. If organizations are open to it, partnerships provide opportunities to develop staff. One interviewee talked about how partnerships allow staff the opportunity to look at their operation and work with their staff to determine what it is "they have and what they need in terms of the skill base to do that next job" (I-2). Another organization used the opportunity of partnerships to

“change the staff around a little bit. Some staff had been there for a long time and they were just tired of it. They really just didn’t even want to be a part of it anymore” (I-5). Both of these examples fostered team development and created an opportunity for individual growth and development, which they felt would better the organization in the long run.

External to the organization, participants posited partnerships encourage team development as well by encouraging people, who come from different service agencies, to work together. An example an organization gave was:

But it is not the dictatorial relationship. We would go in and say that we had just conducted a needs assessment and the community is saying that they would like to see ski programming. And then we would ask if they would like to do that, do they want us to do that work together determine whether we want to look for a partner to do that. And then determine what that would look like. (I-6)

One organization learned that it is through the collaborative work between partners that user needs are able to be met and identified. One organization stated, “If the community, being that the public, private, or not-for-profit sector is not able or is unwilling to fulfill a gap that exists for whatever reason, the municipality will take over and fulfill that gap” (I-6).

Working together in collaboration minimizes the mindset that organizations within the same municipality are in competition with one another. All interviewees spoke about the need and importance of providing services to the community. By working together in partnership, participants felt this goal could be accomplished effectively versus multiple organizations trying to serve the same group of individuals. One interviewee spoke directly about this concept, stating, “It limits or minimizes the amount of competition among recreation service providers. That instead of being in competition, we are not in competition. We are a part of an overall spectrum of leisure services delivery” (I-6). However, this is a concept that requires an

organization to have a complete shift in mindset, whereby they are not only speaking partnership language, but really living it within their organization.

Challenges of partnerships. As with any relationship, partnerships come with their challenges. As interviewees shared their experiences, role identification and the community's response to partnerships emerged as two of the main challenges that their organizations are currently facing.

Challenges of partnerships: Role Identification. One of the main challenges with partnerships that interviewees spoke about concerned role identification. Most organizations that have been operating within partnerships for many years are now facing challenges on clarifying each partner's role, especially as these roles have needed to be modified or adapted due to challenges organizations are facing in providing services. Interviewees made statements like: "The bottom line is we haven't been able to clarify the roles into a system that is workable all way around" (I-1); and

There are some associations that really don't see or have a lot of clarity around what the roles and responsibilities are which does create challenges for staff to work with them. It creates tension sometimes, it creates situations where there's a lack of understanding between the levels. (I-4)

Altering the way a partnership operates can be challenging, especially if they are entrenched in tradition. There needs to be a system in place that allows the partnership to develop and grow with the changing needs of the day.

Leisure services are challenged by how their partners, the community, and other agencies view what their role is in the community. One organization spoke about how "if they wanted change to happen it would be around what people think about the recreation [department]. What they think the recreation [department's] role is in promoting people to live healthy lifestyles" (I-

2). Another participant spoke about how expertise of recreation professionals should be brought to the table and recognized for its value when stating,

We are not the experts and health. We are not the experts in education. We are not the experts in social services. But I think what we need to do is to be able to bring the strength of recreation, Parks and Recreation, to the table and look at how we can partner with the other experts or people who are able to deliver the things that we are not. (I-4)

It was interesting to note how one interviewee spoke about how the community and their partners responded once the city had declared the partnership role in leisure service provision.

But the collective sigh of relief did come when we declared our role. The quick sigh of relief was “thank goodness you are not in competition with us.” And we have a policy and a document that says so. And council said so. (I-6)

Challenges of partnerships: Community response to partnerships. Partnerships can sound like a good endeavour to embark upon; however, interviewees identified a number of challenges when looking at a community’s readiness to engage in partnership. One interviewee stated they were not sure what the community’s response might be to partnership: “We don’t know what the reception might be. People might say ‘no’ or things like ‘I don’t have time’ or ‘go away and do it for us,’ which is fair enough” (I-2). Another participant spoke about a concern around the ability of some community non-profit organizations to take on the responsibilities necessary within the partnership, by stating that “the skill level of some of the non-profits that we are working with, they don’t have the capacity to take on some of the responsibility that they should be taking on” (I-4). Yet there are other agencies where the general community sees high-functioning partnerships as the norm, and that is all that they know. One interviewee stated that the model they have been operating with “has been operating [in partnership] for decades. So we have a situation where the community was used to providing service without us ... using us as a guide or an advisor but not as a mandator or even provider” (I-6). Lastly, as one interviewee noted, there can be the challenge of having “people that are community minded that are not able to look

at [their role] beyond their personal interests, to remember why they are there as a board member” (I-4). Each community’s needs and openness to partnership in service delivery should be reviewed and worked with when developing partnerships.

Aging infrastructure. Aging infrastructure also falls into the lower-left quadrant. Half of the interviewees identified aging infrastructure as a challenge they face. The interviewees who did not mention this as an issue were working within various types of partnerships to acquire, develop, and operate newer facilities within their communities. One interviewee stated that “we are doing a facility plan because we have aging infrastructure like everyone” (I-2). Those organizations dealing with older infrastructure spoke about the challenges of maintaining older facilities. One interviewee’s hope was to “have the ability to renew them when they are having problems. When their life span has ended and we need to do something with them as opposed to rigging things for another five years and hoping they will last” (I-4).

Elements of a good partnership. Trust is one of the most critical elements to creating a good partnership. Interviewees spoke specifically about two ways they have been able to develop trust with partners: one being communication, the other being commitment.

Elements of a good partnership: Communication. The first element identified as key to a good partnership was the development of effective working relationships within the partnership. One interviewee went so far as to say that “effective relationships are critical” (I-1). It was identified that these relationships are created through effective communication and commitment of the partners to the partnership.

Effective communication can come in many forms. The first way to develop effective communication was noted as being through the involvement of everyone involved in the partnership. One interviewee stated, “Information needs to be shared as much as possible with as

many people as possible. And that is very time-consuming and you really have to think about that so we're always working on that." (I-5). One interviewee also noted that the involvement of everyone within the partnership needs to start at the beginning, and stated, "It started out about four years ago when there was a lot of social, roundtable discussions that occurred with multiple levels of government and/or organizations" (I-3).

The second way effective communication was developed was through open lines of communication and listening to what people have to say. One interviewee stated, "We need to listen to all of the people that we work with and serve and ensure we are acting in a timely and sensitive way" (I-4). Another interviewee stated, "Using the results of our needs assessment and our strategic planning process, we will be talking about what we are doing, how we can do a better job and then how do we best make that happen" (I-2). It is was important for people to feel heard and what better way for that to happen than by implementing people's ideas.

Participants felt effective communication is something that is required not only at the outset of partnership development but through the whole term of the partnership. One interviewee stated, "involving key stakeholders at every major milestone along the way" (I-3) was important to avoid surprises to the public. Another interviewee stated, "We have agreed to as partners ... [that] there will be an ongoing operating committee which will be made up of members from each of the partners" (I-3). Effective communication takes ongoing work to make it happen. Effective communication is a "continuous process of engaging the community [through] open lines of communication, [and] working together as an operating team to ensure ... maximum capacity and efficiency" (I-3).

There was one other type of communication noted by one interviewee that I found to be of interest. This interviewee stated, "We really are using partnership language, and we are trying

really hard to focus on the partnership instead of our role [versus] their role” (I-2). What I found to be of interest in this quote was that this organization was focusing on ensuring that partnership language is being used within their organization, not just within partnerships with outside agencies. This interviewee’s quote showed an understanding that staff need to align their actions with their words, both within the organization as much as they do with their outside partners. One other interviewed agency organization did not make a direct reference about their efforts to use partnership language, but through various words and phrases that were used throughout the interview, it became evident that this agency organization lived and breathed what it meant to be a partner in everything they do.

Elements of a good partnership: Commitment. Commitment by partners creates trust and respect within the partnership, which are two of the most fundamental elements of a good relationship. Ensuring you have the support or commitment of all parties involved is essential to moving initiatives or projects forward. One interviewee stated,

We had council support, we had senior management support, and then we worked at the community partners so we had community partner’s support, and we worked with the participants asking them what they want to determine the need of the participants and to determine the need to the community. So everyone in the community, everyone in the city, was on board. (I-5)

When this kind of support is generated, everyone involved within the partnership is able to count on each other to follow through with their commitments.

A number of interviewees spoke about the importance of having city council’s support before moving forward with any projects. Council was noted as being an equal partner with any other hands-on partner within a given project. One interviewee stated, “I would have to say that what is either the biggest supports or barriers is the political readiness of your council” (I-1). Another interviewee spoke about the challenges or concerns of agreeing to be a partner on a

project, because of running the risk of council backing out. This can happen since councillors are re-elected every few years, resulting in an organization's inability to remain a committed partner: "It is a frustration or hesitation that we have when we become partners at tables, and we go to negotiate in good faith at these tables and try to build some support as we go along from our council" (I-3). A further statement recognized, "So at all steps along the way, we go to our partners to say yes absolutely we are in, and at the table that we just need to get council's approval. So at any given time on any given day, council could choose to say no" (I-3).

Some of the interviewees spoke about how they try to overcome these commitment challenges through proactive measures. One interviewee stated,

We have a formal council orientation that we do once the new council is in. Part of that includes us providing council with an update on our existing business plan with a heads-up on where things are in terms of major projects within each of our departments within the Corporation. (I-3)

Another interviewee talked about how operating dollars were committed to a project by city council before the project began, showing their ongoing support for a major project. The interviewee stated, "We were given \$90,000 into our operating budget to provide programs that would break down the barriers for people that weren't accessing our facilities" (I-5). These proactive measures have proven to be effective in these organizations to date, but both of these organizations recognized that at no time can they take their situation for granted. Continuous work to ensure ongoing commitment has been a regular part of their operation.

Interview Findings from Western Canada: Users

It is important to note that from the perspective of the users, interviewees gave very few comments. Stories that were told and information that was shared primarily came from the perspective of being a provider of leisure services. There was one theme that emerged from the data around the changes in the users of leisure services: who we serve.

The population is changing. Unanimously, all interviewees noted that in particular the increase in the aging population is challenging the ways they currently provide leisure services.

One interviewee noted:

Our population is changing. We have to make sure that what we are providing is meeting the needs of individuals that live in our communities. Not just what we have always provided. Because as their needs change our services need to change. We've even had to consider redefining senior services because not everybody wants to be deemed a senior and I don't think typical senior services meet the needs of all seniors anymore. The seniors are looking different because 70-year-olds are not what they used to be. (I-2)

Another interviewee stated, "It would be nice to have a lot more services for [seniors] and be able to reach out to them. People are going to be living a lot longer and there are going to be more seniors in the future" (I-5).

Four interviewees noted their communities are growing and changing rapidly (I-3; I-4; I-5; I-6). Comments like "We know we are getting bigger and bigger; we know there's going to be an increase in demand" (I-5); and "There has been unprecedented growth over the last few years" (I-6) were stated by two of the interviewees. Due to the rapid growth in one of the communities, a new challenge faced by the organization was that "all of these people living in the suburbs expect all of the same programs and services and opportunities and amenities that they would get in every other community" (I-6). This municipality is challenged to keep up with the pace of the growth in this particular city.

Focus Group Findings: New Westminster Providers

In order to give a holistic perspective of what emerged, data collected from the focus group was also analyzed using the integral model. Data will be presented in two sections, as was done for the interview findings. This first section will focus on the themes that emerged from the perspective of the providers, and the second section will focus on the themes that emerged from the perspective of the users.

Individual Perspective: There is a Want and a Need for Direction

One of the themes that emerged from focus group participants is there is a want and a need for direction. This theme fits into the upper-left (individual) quadrant in that it talks about how leisure providers think about leisure services.

A need for a vision and wanting direction were used interchangeably by participants. Even though these terms have different meanings academically, the purposes they provide are similar. Knowing the direction an organization is going provides a focus and something to strive towards. This theme falls into the lower-left (cultural) quadrant as well; however, for simplicity, it will be discussed in the upper-left (individual) quadrant.

Participant comments kept coming back to their desire to understand and be clear about their direction or role within leisure service provision to the community. Comments to support this desire for direction included: “Where is it that we want to go in the big picture? What type of services are we delivering?” (FG, p. 10). Another participant supported this statement by saying, “I think we are lacking in an overall department vision, plan, or direction” (FG, p. 9). One participant used a specific example that verified their uncertainty as to where they felt departments should be providing services by stating, “Do we provide piano exams or not?” (FG, p. 10). In the context of how this statement was made, I interpreted the statement to mean there are questions as to what degree do they provide the service of offering piano lessons. Are they in the business of providing children to the exposure of playing the piano, or do they offer lessons to the degree that children can be tested and graded on their skills? What business are they in? Having a clear role or direction in how the department fits into the overall spectrum of leisure services would help answer those questions.

Participants seemed to agree that trying to be something to everyone was not only exceptionally challenging, but also not sustainable in the long run. One participant stated,

We need to define who we are and determine exactly what we are going to be good at and focus in on that because we can be all things to all people. Let's strategically pick and choose what we are going to tackle into it really well of course with the Parks committee and council's blessing as well as support and buy in and then make conscious decisions about what we are going to be good at and make conscious decisions about what we are going to let the community or private sector deal with and just simply not deliver that because we are spreading ourselves too thin and we can't do it. (FG, p. 14)

Another participant stated, "There is an expectation by residents, taxpayers or customers, that we should be all things in all areas. Now that in reality is pretty much a recipe for disaster when you try to be all things to all people" (FG, p. 14). Focusing on how the department best serves the community and focusing on that area of service delivery could allow the department to really shine in the areas where they excel.

Participants also reflected on the times in the department's past, where they felt their role was clear and how beneficial that definition was to the organization. One participant stated, "Back in the early eighties when we changed facilities around into more single-purpose facilities, we had a plan in place ... that worked for us because we knew where we were going. We knew what our role was" (FG, p. 9). All of the long-term staff in the focus group reminisced positively about what this way of operating had created. They knew what they were to do, and they went out and did it exceptionally well.

Cultural Perspective: We Enjoy Some Success and We are Proud

Focus group participants kept coming back to aspects of their operation that are successful and of which they are proud. This theme falls into the lower-left (cultural) quadrant, in that it talks about how leisure service providers relate to leisure. The four sub-themes that emerged were the organizational culture within the department, the exceptional staff who work

within the department, their past successes, and how they want to be known for their value in the community.

Organizational Culture

In the context of how the department provides services, participants stated they “pride ourselves on [their] customer service aspect, that it is amazing ... how accessible [their] staff are to the public” (FG, p. 1). They also spoke about their appreciation and value for the “personal approach and our hands-on/or human contact approach” (FG, p. 1). Other participants spoke about “service commitment” and how “trust is used to describe [them]” (FG, p. 21). These are values that are not only appreciated by the staff, but are believed to be critically important to their customers in that there is a belief that this way of operating “ultimately ... carries over into how the public feels about our services” (FG, p. 21).

From the perspective of how they, as a group, operate within the department, participants spoke about how they value the openness and approachability of staff. One participant stated, “I value our open-door policy. I could call anyone in the department, including our department head, if I wanted to then I could say, ‘Gee I’ve got this problem and I would like to bounce some ideas off you’” (FG, p. 19). Another participant stated, “There is respect amongst my peers, we are all pretty good at what we do in that we can go ahead and make decisions and feel empowered to do so” (FG, p. 20). As a result of this type of organizational culture, participants agreed that

this is a good place to work. People are friendly, they get along, they do what’s right, they work towards a solution instead of the power play or perpetuating problem. People’s intentions are great and that spills into the working relationships and the relationships with customers. (FG, p. 20)

As the focus group progressed and even as people started to disagree or challenge one another, it was clear that this culture that is talked about is also practiced.

Exceptional Staff

New Westminster Parks and Recreation department has been very proud of its exceptional staff who help provide and deliver recreation programs and services. It is believed that through these exceptional staff, programs and services are what they are today. One participant stated, “Our reputation is around the quality of our services that are already in place and that is something that has allowed us to come to this stage, to maintain that standard and respect because of what we’re doing well” (FG, p. 1). Another person stated an opinion about what makes their operation work so well:

I believe it comes down to staff and the choices that you make when you hire staff. You can come up with the best idea for programs but if you find a staff person who can’t carry through your concept and idea your program won’t go anywhere. (FG, p. 3)

One participant elaborated on what makes a great staff, in noting that a high priority of the “front-line staff [is that they] are customer focused. And that their interpersonal skills are far above average” (FG, p. 3). One participant noted that, as a department, they should “make sure that [they] collectively use that expertise” (FG, p. 12).

Past Successes

Elements within this theme fit into both the lower-left quadrant (cultural) and lower-right quadrant (systemic). For simplicity, this theme will be discussed here in the lower-left quadrant.

On several occasions participants would refer back to the successes they enjoyed in the past when the department changed over to a facility-based model. Participants were recalling best practices from the past that had worked well for the organization at the time, and some participants certainly seemed to see value in reinstating today. Some examples participants gave were: “At one time we used to be involved in getting information out to doctors and physicians within the community” (FG, p. 5); and

In the early eighties when we changed facilities around into more single-purpose facilities, we have a plan in place at that time that worked for us because we knew where we were going. We knew what our role was. But that has long since finished. And we have just been continuing on doing the same thing and are little boxes since then. (FG, p. 9)

Another participant talked about the philosophy around how the group used to function as a team and why they valued this ways of operating. The participant stated, “Way back when, when you are in Parks and Recreation, it didn’t matter where you were. When we ran a Parks and Recreation program, whether it was in Queensborough or at a school, we were all Parks and Recreation” (FG, p. 5). New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department has a good contingency of long-term employees within their team-holding, decision-making positions within the organization. This group of people remember very clearly the feelings they had around working as a team, what opportunities that created, and how things could be if they were all working together more effectively.

To be Known for Their Value in the Community

Participants spoke about the value or benefit of the services they provide to the community. Their overall hope was for the community and decision makers within the city to recognize their value and importance as well. One participant spoke about the many roles recreation services provide in the community by stating,

Recreation is important for building relationships, community involvement, intergenerational programming, neighbourhood support, opportunities to make friends, opportunities to participate in community and the whole area of cultural appreciation which we touched on such as diversity, cultural teachings, heritage, and outdoor participation. Although our field as recreation, I think recreation is a means to an end for a lot of these things that people are coming to recognize. (FG, p. 16)

Another participant stated their hope was to see that

the public supports the concept of recreation as a public good then we’ve gone along way. And we have to educate people that we are more than the fun and games people, that we are enhancing lifestyles. We have to find a way to make ourselves as relevant as

possible in some measurable way so the taxpayers believe we are an important service. (FG, pp. 16–17)

Participants shared the value of wanting to be validated for the services they provide.

They wanted to be seen and noticed for being more than fun and games. Participants wanted to infiltrate the community and have everyone understand the “holistic aspect ... of the benefits of recreation” (FG, p. 19).

Behavioural Perspective: There is a Desire for Change

Although the theme of flexibility could also fall into the upper-left (individual) quadrant, I have opted to put this theme in the upper-right (behavioural) quadrant. The context, in which focus group participants were referring to this theme, was how their desire for change of incorporating flexibility into existing systems and aging infrastructure was affecting how they behave or act as providers of leisure services.

A Need for Flexibility

Comments from focus group participants spoke to their desire and need for more flexibility to be worked into these existing systems, so they can be effective in their work. One of these existing systems was the facility-focused environment. One participant stated,

We have the facility focused environment using centralized systems and I think that is very frustrating. We are always looking for consensus and hoping to do things all the same and yet we so strongly cling to that facility focus. (FG, p. 11)

Another participant stated, “We are struggling to see if there is a way of trying to open up some of the pricing challenges. It is based on salary increases, the bargaining agreement” (FG, p. 12).

Lastly, a participant spoke about the centralized systems of operation that impact leisure services beyond the department level:

There are a lot of things that the city requires us to maintain our recreation facilities and that is around ... the physical plant aspect, how staff are treated, it is how people are paid, it is how things are bought, it is almost every process is put upon us and we are only ever

responding, never part of the planning, and we never have anything that supports the business we are trying to do. (FG, p. 12)

When participants spoke about these issues, they were frustrated. I interpreted that to mean they felt confined or limited in the way they are able to provide services, which affected their ability to service their customers in the most effective way possible.

Improved or New Infrastructure

Old infrastructure is challenging the staff in their ability to provide services. As one participant stated, “One problem we have with our facilities is that they are old” (FG, p. 6). It was believed by staff that the “facilities aren’t enough to bring people in, in that they are old buildings” (FG, p. 1), and there is “competition [with] other municipalities that border [New Westminster that have] brand-new fancy facilities, and we are still plugging away with our old buildings” (FG, p. 6). There is a belief that the new facilities are a draw to bring people in. When the facilities were first built, they were unique and were a draw to bring people in, but as one participant stated they “just don’t have the same kind of draw as they used to” (FG, p. 7).

The recreation facilities within New Westminster are also single-use facilities, which pose challenges for the department. One participant stated, “The era that our facilities have been built in, the architecture and design, are very, very different than it is now. So our facilities are primarily linear use facilities” (FG, p. 7). By having facilities that are set up this way, families have to go from facility to facility to participate in various programs. Staff believed that a new multipurpose facility would provide convenience to their customers, in that “families could then come in and branch off and do different things” (FG, p. 18). Since the department “hasn’t done anything new facility wise in a long time” (FG, p. 11), it was believed the aging facilities were a limitation on developing new areas of recreation programming and improving existing services.

Systemic Perspective: A Need to Come Together

Within the lower-right (social or systemic) quadrant, the theme that emerged was around the need and desire, by the focus group participants, to come together as a team. However, two sub-themes emerged that appear to be preventing the team of participants from accomplishing their goal. These two sub-themes included: (a) their current ways of operating are challenging them, and (b) their views on external partnerships are not necessarily congruent with one another.

Current Ways of Operating Challenge Us

Some staff believed that the facility-based way of operating is a departmental strength. One staff person stated that, as a result of this way of operating, “Staff are really just focused on one facility; you can keep better control over the quality of programs and services as opposed to staff that might be stretched and worried about more than one facility or set of programs” (FG, pp. 1–2). Another staff person stated, “We really do have those separate entities and I think that has been a service and the strength of our department over the years” (FG, p. 2). On the other side, there are staff within the organization who really value a more collaborative approach. One staff person stated, “I think the team approach is really important. Whenever there’s a crisis we will jump in and help each other out” (FG, p. 2).

However, as the focus group progressed, it became clear that people really do want to work together as a team to provide programs and services; however, the current facility-based system was seen as posing challenges to actually working collaboratively, causing frustration amongst the staff who want to see this collaborative approach happen. Some challenges mentioned were: “Being facility-based also makes it difficult to cross promote programs” (FG, p. 7); and “I think we are not connected to [community associations] because we are so facility

based” (FG, p. 5). Participants also made comments like: “I am going to keep my examples to [my operation] because that’s what I know” (FG, p. 8); “We all do our own little thing” (FG, p. 13); and “You can’t get consensus; because when you ask my opinion about my facility and I ask your opinion about your facility, you know very well what you’re doing, and I know very well what I’m doing” (FG, p. 11). What I heard in these statements was frustration with the current way of providing services, a desire to see things be different, and a group of people who can speak very well about their individual operations—but not about the collective operation. Each person represented a single facility, yet what they wanted was a collaborative team approach.

Participants started to problem solve this situation by offering ideas and thoughts on what needed to happen in order to pull people together as a team, and they identified what they believe is limiting them from working together. For example, one participant stated, “If we had one person that oversaw our whole area, perhaps we would have more continuity from one facility to the next” (FG, p. 12). Another mentioned, “It could be something as simple as when you register for the Parks and Recreation program at any facility, you get an active living T-shirt” (FG, p. 6). Lastly, one participant made a slightly different statement by stating, “If we were more centralized and more aware of what’s going on in all of the facilities and use those resources out there collectively, I think we would be far better off” (FG, p. 14).

External Partnerships

The concept of working with external agencies was brought up a number of times during the focus group. About half of the staff appeared to have significant experience in working in collaborative environments within partnership arrangement, and the other half had little or no experience. I believe this comes from the operation being facility-based, and the opportunities

for working in a collaborative work environment have not been easily accessible to date for all facilities. As a result, there were differences of opinion about how and why the operation should be working in partnership.

A few of the participants spoke about the value of working in partnership either with external agencies, other departments, or the general public. One participant stated, “It makes our services more customer driven when the participants or consumers have a voice in what we’re trying to do. It keeps us current as to what the needs in the community are” (FG, p. 3). Further to that comment, one of the participants stated their belief that

sometimes it sounds as though we have our specified outcome and I think we need to have an idea of where we’re going, and that is a professional expertise that we bring to the process, but the outcome is driven by the community’s desires. (FG, pp. 3–4)

Another participant stated, “Program evolution is very community driven, and there is a shared responsibility for the success of the services and programs” (FG, p. 6). When it came to how we should be viewing other agencies, one participant stated, “We should be working with them rather than being in competition with them. We could be complementary to them and what is going on out there” (FG, p. 12). One of the participants stated that they wanted the department to be seen as a “trusted and valued partner for every family” (FG, p. 3). All of these comments spoke to the value of and philosophy behind how these participants felt about the value of working in partnerships.

Contrary to points mentioned so far, other participants had a very different view point. Some of the comments by participants were: “It is community driven but you still know what outcome the community really wants as a staff person” (FG, p. 4); “We are very staff driven” (FG, p. 4); and “I think we are competing with businesses” (FG, p. 9). One participant stated, very honestly, that “In terms of the community telling you what they want, we do the odd survey

here and there but basically, in our facility we are deciding what we think the community wants” (FG, p. 4). These comments had a significantly different flavour about how some of the participants felt they need to operate in order to be successful within their facility. It was simply how they had been operating for years, and their methods had proven to be successful for them.

Focus group participants who have had experience working in partnerships shared the challenges they have faced and how they saw the current system of service delivery hindering their ability to effectively partner with outside agencies. One participant stated, “It is very challenging to try to respond to the community and to identify their needs if you don’t have any resources available to us to do that job. We lose credibility in that situation” (FG, p. 12). Further to that comment, a participant added, “There is no linkages of our service delivery within our department, and there are no linkages within other community organization’s” (FG, p. 11).

Focus Group Findings: New Westminster Users

Focus group participants focused their responses to the questions that were presented from the perspective of being providers of leisure services. Participants often came back to the question of wondering what the community wants in the way of leisure services and showed a genuine desire to determine what the community’s needs are so they could provide services more effectively. The questions were not framed to solicit a certain perspective of responses from participants. Knowing that focus groups have limitations and risks where “group influences can distort individual opinion” (Berg, 2006, p. 160), it is important to note that the perspective of being a provider of services was focused on by the group.

Study Conclusions

The theories of Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996) and integral theory (Brown, 2004a, 2004b; Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006; Wilber, 2000) were used to develop the

conclusions of the project findings. Using these theories helped to paint a picture of what was going on in the organization and how this information could be used to enhance the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department's leisure-service delivery.

Spiral Dynamics

Spiral Dynamics allows us to see how “everything connects to everything else” (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 26). This theory provides a way of looking at a situation to determine what is limiting an organization from achieving its desired outcomes. From the data it was evident that people within the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department are interested in moving developmentally from the traditional way of operating to the modern, postmodern, and integral way of operating. Using the integral change equation, “how should who manage whom to do what?” (p. 145), allows us to look at how to effectively implement change within the organization. This theory frames the project conclusions and will help paint a picture as to where the organization is being held back, thus affecting the organization's ability to grow and develop their leisure service delivery.

Traditional Blue is Confining

In Spiral Dynamics, blue is the value system that “sets human destiny and limitations, prescribes what is right and wrong, gives meaning and purpose to human existence” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 300). Within the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department, the internal team appeared stuck in elements of the blue value system, the traditional rightful or purposeful way of doing things (Beck & Cowan, p. 229). Talking about the need for flexibility recognizes that the existing blue parameters are causing challenges and new orange (modern, strategic, success driven) parameters are needed. As stated in the literature by Henderson et al. (2001), there is a “need for flexibility, creativity, vision, and cutting-edge leadership ... if

recreation and leisure are to remain essential in our society” (p. 379). Many of the interviewed organizations spoke about the changes they needed to make in order to move their operations forward. Examples of new positions being created, hiring consultants, and adapting programs, services, or lines of business were all ways of incorporating flexibility into their operations. In all cases, these changes were done to meet the changing demands of how the organization needed to operate in order to serve the public well.

Interviewees and focus group participants both spoke about the importance of role identification, or in some cases a desire for direction. This is asking for expanded blue or strategic orange parameters; a need for “purpose in causes ... [and] ... orders from authority ... [as well as a need for being] ... goal oriented ... [and] ... successful” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 332). Although everyone spoke about role identification in slightly different ways, whether it be for identifying how a partnership is to work together or what role leisure services played in a particular community, the reasons were the same. As Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated, “vision sets the agenda and gives direction and purpose to the enterprise.... It must appeal to all who have a stake in it” (p. 131). When roles were ambiguous, or when the direction in which the organization or partnership was going was not clear, frustration, chaos, and conflict started to develop. As Beck and Cowan noted, “The blue ^vMEME is required to sort the social mess out. When [it] arrives, people gladly accept authoritarianism to clean things up and get the trains running on time again” (p. 231).

Modern Orange and Post-Modern Green Conflict

The operation within the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department is very facility-based. Over the years, facilities have been empowered to offer programs and services in the most effective way that serves the customers who partake in each facility’s area of service

delivery. The challenge is in the way the system is set up. Each facility operates as a unique entity, yet under a collaborative umbrella, causing an actual atmosphere whereby each facility operates using a success-driven type of leadership, as seen in the orange value system (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 324). This appears to create conflict within the group, especially when some participants have a green value system in that they value and operate in a truly collaborative, consensus-driven environment, where others have a more orange (seeking a competitive advantage or success-driven) value system (Beck & Cowan, p. 325). However, as a whole, the operation talks the language of the green value system, in that they value teamwork, collaboration, and consensus-driven leadership. There is a lack of congruency within the team as to what value system they are operating in, which causes people to not really understand each other's operation. As Pirk and Foley (1995) stated, "Traditional, one-dimensional, segmented recreation and parks is dead; hopefully, new human service and holistic community-centered agencies will emerge" (p. 8).

When looking at the responses from the interviewees who represented various outside organizations, many of them spoke, acted, and believed in a collaborative approach to leisure service delivery. In other words, there was congruency within their value systems that allowed them to grow and develop as an organization. In the stories people shared, problems tended to arise when a situation arose that forced the organization, individual, or partnership to have to go back and re-look at the value systems they had in place and evaluate those value systems to see where they needed to be altered, in order to move a project or initiative forward. Even in the stories about the challenges within their organization, interviewees spoke about the need for the team or partnership to create an environment that was beneficial, fair, and equitable for everyone

involved. It is through this continuous realignment of the organization's values that appeared to allow these organizations to move beyond the traditional ways of providing leisure services.

Post-Modern Green is Desired

There was no doubt that Parks and Recreation services, as a whole, is recognizing the need for, sees the value in, and recognizes the importance of working in a collaborative, consensus-driven or green approach in providing services. All of the interviewees and many of the focus group participants spoke about the value of partnerships, despite the challenges they bring. Many participants spoke about the tremendous benefit for their organization, individual, and team growth, and their communities. As Syfert (2003) noted, "Partnerships also bring segments of the community together to meet common needs" (p. 9). Partnerships are a means for "a local government's elected officials and employees, the private sector's workforce, nonprofit agencies, and the public to come together for the good of the community" (p. 9). Although many organizations had very different types of partnerships, different experiences, and varying reasons as to why partnerships developed, in the end working in collaboration was seen as the way for Parks and Recreation to remain strong and viable in the future. The New Westminster Parks and Recreation department talked about wanting this type of collaborative work environment, yet it will be difficult, if not impossible, to fully achieve until their role and direction is redefined.

Focus group participants talked about the value of operating in a green, consensus-driven, collaborative value system (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 325). Speaking about and understanding the value of collaboration, team work, and everyone being equal falls into the green value system way of thinking. The literature supported the need for recreation services to become more collaborative in their approach to service delivery. It is thought that leisure service organizations should move away from a direct-service provision model and adopt a new model of service

delivery where leisure service professionals “work side-by-side with constituents to plan, implement, and evaluate programs” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 80). Parr and Lashua (2004) supported this statement by saying, “The role of a leisure services programmer becomes an ‘experience facilitator’ rather than simply an ‘activity provider’” (p. 4). As Hunter (2001) stated, “The creation of strategic alliances around key community issues and need would be vital if [Parks and Recreation] was to remain relevant and effective” (p. 40).

Overall, the interviewees used team-based, equality-for-all, cooperative language, and all of their success stories were about some sort of collaborative venture. From the stories shared, it appeared that many of the participants had a system in place that supported the group achieving a true collaborative (green) way of operating. Even in the stories that were shared about their challenges within their organization, they spoke about the need for the team or partnership to be clear on their direction or role and to create an environment that was beneficial, fair and equitable for everyone involved.

The New Westminster Parks and Recreation focus group participants shared historical stories that demonstrated how the department has experienced and seen the value of internally operating in a green, collaborative, value system as an organization. As a result, they know and understand what a truly collaborative, equitable, consensus-driven work environment can look like. They have seen it work, they have reaped the benefits of operating in this fashion, and they want that feeling or way of being back. In those days, the organization had a clear goal or direction. They collaborated together to work through a new way of operating and together as a team they were successful.

Integral Yellow is the Ultimate Goal

All interviewees and focus group participants spoke about the broader value of Parks and Recreation services to the community. Everyone shared in the understanding that recreational services provide a far greater service in a community than simply providing programs and services. Seeing the systemic implications of services these organizations provide, the desire for integrative and open systems, and the big picture views brings leisure services into the integral yellow value system (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 275). The literature spoke about the big picture view of what leisure contributes to a community in a slightly different, yet related way. Kraus (1985) stated, “Recreation represents a critical element in happy living, contributing broadly to relaxation and health, personal pleasure, family togetherness, and neighbourhood solidarity” (pp. 30–31). The professionals involved in this research project were certainly able to see the systemic impact that their profession has on a community, and they collectively all shared that value.

Summary

In summary, the facility-based system was set up to operate in an orange value system (success-driven and competitive). The internal team wanted green (collaboration, team work and equality). The internal team was divided between these two orange and green value systems based on their operations, and the whole operation was constrained by the blue value system (tradition, order and stability, and authoritarian structures), because of the centralized systems causing a lack of flexibility, preventing both the orange and green value systems from being fully realized. Focusing on the challenges the blue value system was creating for the organization, and massaging them to work with what the Parks and Recreation department was trying to achieve in their desire for collaboration, was fundamental to seeing the organization progress in their

service delivery. Over time, creating congruency within these values would be helpful for the organization.

Four Quadrant Integral Theory

Using Wilber's (2000) four quadrant theory, the data can be looked at in a slightly different way in conjunction with Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996). By mapping the data into the four quadrants with Spiral Dynamics, another picture gets created.

According to Wilber (2000), in order to have a full understanding of any quadrant, "[each quadrant] needs to be seen in the context of all others" (p. 67). All of the quadrants are interrelated. When the comments from the focus group were mapped into the four quadrants and then analyzed based on Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996), it became clear what is going on in the organization.

Looking at the Individual

In the literature, Henderson et al. (2001) stated that there will be a "need for flexibility, creativity, vision, and cutting-edge leadership ... if recreation and leisure are to remain essential in our society" (p. 379). These authors went on to say that leadership for leisure service provision could become even more shared than what we see today, through the use of "collaborative partnerships that grow from interests expressed by individuals as well as other community agencies" (p. 379).

Both interview and focus group participants spoke about the value of developing staff and effectively utilizing the existing expertise in their organizations. However, the interviewees were able to incorporate a considerably greater amount of flexibility into their existing systems to accommodate, gain, and utilize staff effectively. This is a green way of operating; one where

resources are shared and a sense of community and unity are promoted (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 260).

However, the difference between the two groups was that the Western Canada interviewees appear to be implementing a collective, teamwork-based approach, where the New Westminster focus group participants spoke about wanting this ability, yet they were limited by operating structures such as being facility-based. Facility-based operating was creating a group of people who are experts in their own areas of the operation, yet have little understanding of the operations in other facilities. This way of operating puts the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department in the blue/orange value system in this quadrant, as this system allows them to be “unbound by what others say and do ...[and] ... there is a strong desire [within each facility] to lead the pack” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 249) within their given operation.

Looking at the Culture

From the cultural quadrant perspective, both interview and the focus group participants believed in the importance of the collaborative, team-based approach to service delivery. The words focus group participants used were from the green value system, in that they were focusing on collaboration, team work, and equality for all. The words and philosophies focus group participants used were very much in line with what the literature had said is the future of recreation services. As stated by Henderson et al. (2001), “Recreation and leisure professionals will be valued by members of communities based on the services and facilities offered and the human and environmental values upheld” (p. 382).

Interviewees shared this same value system from a cultural perspective. They spoke about the importance of working together with partners to increase opportunities for the organization, as well as how working together can foster team development and growth within

the organization. Interviewees seemed to view recreation service providers as people who helped people achieve their recreational needs. This philosophy was supported in the literature as being a way leisure service providers should be in the future. As DeGraff et al. (1999) stated, leisure service providers are “more of an enabler and collaborator empowering people to plan for their own leisure needs” (p. 30).

Looking at the Behaviour

As providers of leisure services, both the interviewees and focus group participants spoke about the importance and need for a defined direction and role clarity, in order to provide services or effectively work with partners. Interviewees who have had tremendous success in working with partnerships or redefining their service delivery models were able to do so primarily because they stopped and spent time identifying the role of the organization or partnership. This was noted as being a critical component to their success. Creating these structures and determining the rules of engagement for a project is part of the blue value system (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 229). In order for the green, collaborative endeavours to be realized, this blue value system had to be clearly identified and realized. Where focus group participants have been struggling is in a lack of a clear direction or role from the employee’s perspective, causing frustration and conflict within the group, which is affecting their ability to function effectively as a team.

Looking at the System

Systemically, leisure services professionals want the profession to be seen for its full value in the community. Both interviewees and focus group participants spoke eloquently about what they believe is the systemic value of leisure services. Interviewees spoke about how they have been able to adapt and change their way of operating, in order to bring their skills and

expertise to the table to assist in community initiatives. This has allowed their organizations to move out of being confined by the blue (authoritarian structures) value system and move into the orange (success driven) and even green (collaborative) value systems. The New Westminster focus group participants spoke about the challenges and lack of flexibility in existing systems. This was seen as causing limitations in their ability to develop new ways of doing business, thus showing how the structures and boundaries of blue are affecting their ability to grow and develop as an organization. As Searle and Brayley (1993) noted, although there are many different roles that government can assume, it is important to note that “one role could be appropriate in a particular situation but not be suitable in another” (p. 83).

Observations

As a researcher, there are a number of observations I noted while analyzing the data from the interviewees and the focus group participants. Primarily, the observations came from how people spoke and what they spoke about.

The recreation professionals who participated in this research project had tremendous passion for the work they do. There was a strong belief in the work this field does and the value that leisure services provide to a community. Everyone interviewed gave me the impression that the people who work in their organizations in leisure services understand this value, but there is a continuous struggle to validate this importance with external decision makers and partners. Participants spoke with excitement, depth, and knowledge about their operation, their customers, and the way of doing business that worked best for them. Serving the customer to the best of their ability was their primary focus, and based on their successes to date, the customers notice and appreciate all that is done for them. Keeping a finger on the pulse of the community's needs was certainly a priority for everyone.

When the various interviewees shared their success stories, all had complex situations that had various obstacles to be overcome. The energy and excitement in people's voices, despite the challenges they faced, was refreshing to hear. In all cases, the stories were ones that challenged employees to do their best work, organizations had embarked into new territory, and no one reached their desired outcome alone. As a result of coming through the challenges and being successful as a team or a group of partners, the group collectively was identified as being stronger.

When I really listened to the New Westminster focus group participants, one of the observations I had was around hearing people talk in one language, yet seeming to act in a different manner. As an example, a number of staff spoke about the value of collaboration, team work, and coming together to provide services, yet amongst the participants, I felt levels of turf protecting happening between the participants. Many of the participants have had tremendous success working in partnership with outside agencies. Yet, it seemed that people forgot that the same concepts that apply to working within and creating a successful external partnership need to happen amongst the team members of an internal unit. The internal team is just as much a partnership as any other formal agreement made with outside agencies within their own unique operations. What I noticed was a great ability to talk about and understand what will and has made them successful, and yet it appeared they had a challenge within their team to actually act in this way internally.

From a values perspective, it is my interpretation that all people involved in this research project are good people who work in good organizations, and everyone wants to do the best job they can for their community. Their hearts are in the right place, and they genuinely want to

ensure that everyone residing in their communities enjoys the benefits of recreation somehow. In the truest sense of the word, these professionals really are trying to serve.

In looking at how research participants responded to the question about what they would dream of changing for their organization, I noted a couple of interesting observations within their responses. Dreaming was challenging for people. Some participants wanted to know what the boundaries were for that question, or they would make subtle jokes about not having time to really dream, or that they have never really thought about it. With the focus group participants, their responses had a theme to them. I noticed that all answers to the question, with the exception of one, were what I would call reactionary responses to existing problems and were focused on the department's needs and wants. The responses were very much solutions to existing problems versus visionary in nature.

Summary

The City of New Westminster has been challenged by the fact that the cultural quadrant (lower-left) is very green, in that people want and appreciate the collaborative, team-based culture of the organization. The other three quadrants are a mix of the blue and orange value systems to different degrees. The upper-left quadrant (individual) is blue/orange, the upper-right (behavioural) is blue/orange, and the lower-right (systemic) quadrant is primarily blue. As a result, the department will not achieve the collaborative, team-based culture that they talk of wanting, without finding ways to develop the value systems in the other three quadrants to support this desire. Each quadrant is related to the other; and, therefore, no matter how hard the organization tries to achieve the collaborative culture they are striving towards, they will fall short until all other quadrants catch up.

In looking at the interviewees' responses, their remarks appeared to be more equal across the quadrants. They appear to have had flexible, adaptable systems within which to work, encouraged or required staff to learn the skills necessary to support a collaborative work environment, and supported the individual by providing them opportunities to take on new positions or areas of responsibility. The whole picture across the quadrants developed through the interviewee responses was more congruent than what was noticed in New Westminster Parks and Recreation department's focus group. As a result, the outside organizations that were interviewed seem to have created an internal environment that has allowed the organization to grow, develop, and adapt their ways of providing leisure services.

From a service delivery perspective, it is important to note that these concluding remarks are from the perspective of people who provide leisure services. It is imperative to determine and understand what the values are of the public and other partnering organizations, so that a conscious attempt can be made to align those values with those of the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department. If other people or organizations within the spectrum of leisure-service delivery do not value or want a collaborative approach to service delivery, then the organization should rethink their desire for creating this value system. As stated by Kaczynski and Crompton (2004), "The key to effectively repositioning park and recreation services is for them to align with the prevailing concerns in the community" (p. 129). Ultimately, the value systems of all parties involved (partners, public, council, and other non-profit sport organizations) need to be congruent in order to function as effectively as possible. Determining a way to align these values is critical to the organization's success.

Scope and Limitations of the Research

It is important to note the scope and limitations of this project. These factors could limit the application of the research findings and conclusions in other organizations that provide leisure services.

One of the limiting factors in this research project was that only one person was interviewed from each outside organization invited to participate in this research project. Therefore, only one perspective from those organizations was heard and used to develop the overall picture of leisure services from that organization. The person interviewed was often someone in a prominent decision-making position, meaning they had a view of the operation and how they wanted it to operate versus how it might actually be operating from the perspective of the more front line staff. The interviewees told their story, from their perspective of the organization they were representing. This perspective may not be shared and may only be part of the reality of each of the interviewee's organizations.

Another limiting factor was that I was unaware of what the community's desires and wants are in the way leisure services are provided. The scope of this project did not include hearing the perspectives or views of the community or the users of leisure services. The most recent document that outlines the community's perspectives on leisure services was created to serve the years between 1998 and 2002. Without knowing what the community wants, it is challenging to fully develop a way to improve the way services are delivered. As Kaczynski and Crompton (2004) stated, "The key to effectively repositioning park and recreation services is for them to align with the prevailing concerns in the community" (p. 129).

This research project only deals with one element of the system that effects how leisure services are provided. In order to get a complete picture of how to enhance leisure-service

delivery, all elements of the system would need to be involved in order to fill out the picture of how leisure services are provided. The community, city council, other non profit sport organizations, and governing bodies of leisure services need to all work together to continually improve service delivery.

It is important to note that I have worked in the field of Parks and Recreation with the City of New Westminster for many years. Although every effort was taken to ensure the data was analyzed and collected in the most ethical fashion, it is possible that a different researcher may have interpreted the data differently.

The theories used to analyze and interpret the data were based on sound theoretical evidence; however, the project conclusions are developed based on my academic understanding and interpretation of those theories. Although I believe they are sound and accurate, another person using these theories may have a slightly different interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research project explored the question: “What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department’s ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?” Based on the findings and conclusions from this research project, recommendations that could enhance the provision of leisure services were developed for implementation consideration. Although the recommendations are specific to the sponsoring organization, some other agencies may find them appropriate for their situations. The recommendations have been framed using the “integral change equation [whereby posing the question] how should who manage whom to do what?” (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 145) creating a holistic way of looking at the recommendations’ successful implementation.

Study Recommendations

Based on the existing goals mentioned in the *New Westminster Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan, 2006/2007* (Gibson, 2006) and the *Strategic Plan: January 2006* (City of New Westminster, 2006), the following recommendations are being put forth. Key messages from the strategic plan were that “corporate effectiveness/ efficiency” (p. 4) is a priority and that the city is “constantly searching for and adopting new ways of doing business” (p. 3). The *Parks and Recreation Departmental Business Plan, 2006/2007* (Gibson, 2006) further stated, “We will be productive, innovative, and progressive—constantly looking for new ways of doing business.... We are committed to community development approaches.... We value teamwork.... [and] ... We will maintain quality in all aspects of service delivery” (p. 2). Aligning the recommendations with the guiding documents already in place shows how implementation is possible and workable within the organization’s existing structure.

Focus on the Individual

A team is only as strong as its individual members. By focusing on developing the individual, meaning each person within the team of leisure-services providers, the entire team has a better chance of being productive and efficient. As Henderson et al. (2001) stated, “A person’s value system gives direction for choosing between alternative forms of behaviour and determining the relative importance of any experience” (p. 7).

Recommendation One

Focus on developing individuals, by engaging staff in personal growth and development training opportunities where there is a focus on developing strong personal awareness skills. People within a team, a partnership, or any collaborative endeavour need to have an understanding of what they bring to the table in the form of mindset, attitude, how they impact others, and where their perspective comes from. As noted by Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), “Mindset is the leverage point for transformation. Without initially transforming their mindsets, leaders and employees would continue to operate in their old ways, thus stifling the organizations ability to implement its new design and execute its new business strategy” (p. 78). In the literature it has been stated that “being sensitive to human issues and developing an understanding of the inner self” (Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 1.17) is critical to being effective as an individual and as a team member or partner. Further to this comment, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson stated, “Leaders ... who place personal mindset change for themselves and employees at the center of their organization’s transformations will succeed. Those who refuse to acknowledge this need will fail” (p. 27).

Recommendation Two

Foster individual uniqueness, but not to the detriment of the team. To be a collaborative, high-functioning team, everyone within the team needs to understand, agree, and buy-in to what it means to be a part of the team. A team is a partnership. Whether the team consists of partners with outside agencies, interdepartmental relationships, or within an intradepartmental team, the same philosophies exist. Syfert (2003) stated, “Partnerships [or teams] bring various segments of the community [or department] together to meet common needs” (p. 9).

Recommendation Three

Develop expertise in staff with the help of the Human Resource Department, so staff are prepared to take on new roles and responsibilities as the need arises. Although there was little literature on this topic in the field of leisure services, the interviewees who were part of this research project all spoke about the importance of developing new and different skill sets in staff, so they are prepared to operate differently. The skills that staff require to be direct service providers are very different from those skills needed for community or partnership development. As one interviewee noted, they needed skills in

negotiations ... collaboration... team interdependence ... conflict resolution, and collaborative development. So being a partner is a radically different skill set than being a direct provider. Being a community developer is a different skill set that we had to acquire. (I-6)

These are competencies that can be obtained through various existing training programs that could be brought to the organization.

Focus on Behaviour

How people behave in the organization says something about the organization’s values and ways of being. Behaviour is something that becomes more natural and effortless when the words and actions are aligned.

Recommendation Four

Actively seek out partnerships with external agencies that have common values and goals. As partnerships appear to be the way of the future for leisure services, as the organization moves forward, choosing partnering agencies with care will be imperative. As stated by Hunter (2001), “The creation of strategic alliances around key community issues and need would be vital if the field was to remain relevant and effective” (p. 40). Further stated by Syfert (2003), “Partnerships are a means for a local government’s elected officials and employees, the private sector’s workforce, non-profit agencies, and the public to come together for the good of the community” (p. 9). Some examples of organizations that might be appropriate for leisure services to partner with are the local health authority, non-profit agencies that serve the leisure needs of different segments of the population than municipal leisure services, and private companies that are looking to become more a part of the community. There was an abundance of literature that supported the value of partnerships. It was noted that partnerships can give the partnering organizations access to additional financial resources (Harrison, 2005; Secret to their success, 2005; Tyler, 2002), access to new technologies and skills (Hamel et al., 1989; Harrison), new business development and geographical expansion opportunities (Harrison; Sparks, 1999), strategic marketplace advantages (Harrison), risk sharing (Harrison; Sparks), access to new products (Harrison), and access to more customers (Sparks).

Recommendation Five

Determine the community wants and needs around service delivery, while keeping in mind the need for a holistic approach. The way the organization behaves is driven by the philosophy that has been adopted by the organization. Literature supported how recreation professionals are attracted to the humanism philosophy because it is “action oriented ... [and] ...

stresses purposeful living, higher functioning, and a sense of social consciousness” (Henderson et al., 2001, p. 47). It is important to remember that, although determining a philosophy helps to guide the organization, the key to Parks and Recreation being effective is that they are able to align their philosophy or values “with the prevailing concerns of the community” (Kaczynski & Crompton, 2004, p. 129). New Westminster Parks and Recreation should continue to work towards determining what the community values, so they are able to act alongside the community in the community’s best interest.

Recommendation Six

Align the actions of employees with the words of the department. As noted by Beck and Cowan (1996), congruency with one’s values is critical for organizational effectiveness. New Westminster Parks and Recreation is wanting green behaviours, such as collaboration, team work, and equality for all people involved. In order to accomplish this, the behaviours of staff, the way the team operates internally, and the beliefs of individuals need to be in line with this same value system. This can be accomplished by having staff participate in team development programs designed specifically for the leisure service industry, as well as training that focuses on developing shared mental models of teamwork. Until these behaviours become the norm within the organization, it will be challenging for the organization to achieve their operational values of “team work [and] community development approaches” (Gibson, 2006, p. 2).

Focus on Culture

The organizational culture appears to be enjoyed and appreciated by employees and has created and allowed for many successes within the department. There are ways the organization could build upon the culture that currently exists in the operation.

Recommendation Seven

Foster a team approach to problem solving and overall ways of operating at every opportunity internally within the organization. Creating a truly collaborative work environment internally within the organization is critical before jumping into collaboration with external agencies. Using the internal environment is a great practice ground for everyone involved to try out, learn about, and determine how they, as individuals and as a team, really feel about collaborative work. Creating a safe, open, and trusting internal environment first allows two things to occur. One, the team will naturally develop and grow, creating a stronger, more capable team. And secondly, when people take time to reflect on how they feel about the experience, they are better prepared to see and recognize what strengths and weaknesses they bring to the table when they go out to develop external partnerships. According to the literature, this trust and respect for people within partnerships or teams can be created through clear communication (LaGrassa, 2003), working through problems together (Tyler, 2002), making the partnership a priority (Korine et al., 2002; LaGrassa), and collectively taking risks (Korine et al.).

Recommendation Eight

Salvage from the past what was loved and what was successful. The organization has enjoyed many successes over the years. Some of the operation's service delivery successes are now creating challenges within the organization. As opposed to focusing on the challenges this old way of operating is creating, choose to take those best practices from the past and use that experience to develop and grow the culture people are saying they want. Remember what it took to come together, years ago, to completely change to facility-based services, what was created out of working together towards a common goal, and what it took to be successful. Service delivery today does not need to be what it was years ago; however, there are very successful

processes that many members of the team have previously experienced and that could be used to help move the operation forward. As noted by Beck and Cowan (1996), in this purple value system (customs, traditions, and safety),

change rituals may consist of elaborate ceremonies of ‘saying good-bye’ and the celebrations associated with entering a new relationship. It should be emotional and full of symbols. These processes are not taken lightly since [this value system] exists deeply within each of us and is often brought tearfully closer to the surface during times of uncertainty. (p. 165)

In this type of change process, not all of the processes that were loved can be carried forward. Taking time to grieve the old way of doing things, and together creating a way to embrace the new way of operating, is one way to bring the team together. Salvage what was loved, grieve what can no longer be, and together move forward.

Recommendation Nine

Before deciding to move forward, go backwards and ensure the organization’s values are aligned. Each time that change creates an impact on the way the department operates, it is important that, before the department starts to move forward, they go back and ensure that their values align with this new way of operating. Doing this will help the organization avoid conflicts and frustration that can be caused by misaligned or incongruent values from the way things were to the way things are going to be. Recalibrating these value systems each time allows the organization, as a whole, to move forward while fostering an environment that allows for individual uniqueness within the operation. Beck and Cowan (1996) referred to this as “streaming the system” (p. 151), where the people within the organization, usually decision makers, are able to see where they have been, where they want to go, and where they are now. This process of streaming allows organizations to integrate, align, and synergize their functions

(Spiral Dynamics Group, 2006, p. 4.6). This allows people or elements within the operation to align their values with that of the operation's big picture.

Recommendation Ten

Create a culture where dreaming and reflection (both individual and team based) are valued, encouraged, and appreciated. Dreams give "life and work a sense of meaning and purpose" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 112). It fosters an environment of what could be versus focusing on the limitations of the organization. Dreams and aspirations that staff have for the organization create a drive from within staff to do something great (p. 112). "By focusing on the ideal we also gain a sense of meaning and purpose from what we undertake. It's one thing to go on an adventure just for the fun of it; it's another to do it because it feeds the soul" (p. 126). Using an "appreciative inquiry approach" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 1) would be recommended to implement this recommendation, as this approach "to personal change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are themselves transformational... Human organizing and change, at its best, is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation" (p. 1).

Focus on Systemic Change and Adaptability

Parks and Recreation operates within a complex system. There are elements of this system that are important to understand and keep in mind in order to enhance leisure service delivery.

Recommendation Eleven

Determine and clearly define what role Parks and Recreation will play in the overall spectrum of leisure service delivery in New Westminster. In my opinion, this recommendation is fundamental in starting the process to implementing these recommendations. Without a clear role

or direction, the department has nothing to guide all other decisions. A clear role also focuses the department on what they are good at, what they can become experts in, and helps to channel their resources effectively. Farrell and Lundegren (1983) stated that although it is important to define a role or direction for the organization:

It is unreasonable to believe that any single approach will be the only one needed.... [It is more likely that] ... each approach will probably be found to be appropriate at various times...and therefore each must be studied for its own value and be available for use when the situation arises. (p. 21)

Kouzes and Posner (2002) further stated, “Shared vision [or role] sets the agenda and gives direction and purpose to the enterprise.... It must appeal to all who have a stake in it” (p. 131). More than one role may be appropriate as “some recognize that one role could be appropriate in a particular situation but not be suitable in another” (Searle & Brayley, 1993, p. 83). The important point is that, as role or roles are identified and known within the operation, this alone will help unite people for a common purpose.

Recommendation Twelve

Understand the community’s values and wishes. From a systemic point of view, it is imperative that the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department understand what the community wants, what they look like (demographics), and what they value. Without this information, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to align the organization’s values with the community. As Johnstone (1999) stated, “[We need to relate] to our customers individually [so we can] better meet their needs ... [because users will] ... expect their individual needs to be understood and met” (p. 35). As the department’s comprehensive plan comes together, it would be my recommendation to seek clarity from the community as to what they value in the way of leisure services. Aligning community and the organization’s values, internally acting in accordance with those values, and then together developing what leisure service provision looks

like or should look like in the community will enhance the department's ability to provide leisure services. After all, as Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated, "Values serve as guides to action" (p. 48).

Recommendation Thirteen

At every opportunity, incorporate flexibility into existing systems or new systems that affect leisure service provision. As some systems can be imposed on the organization, it is important to proactively look at a system's impact on the whole operation. If there is reason to believe that these systems will challenge the organization's values, either look for ways to create flexibility within those systems or look at adjusting the organization's values to avoid frustration and conflict within the team. Henderson et al. (2001) stated that there is a "need for flexibility, creativity, vision, and cutting-edge leadership ... if recreation and leisure are to remain essential in our society" (p. 379). Pirk and Foley (1995) further stated that they believed that "traditional, one-dimensional, segmented recreation and parks is dead; hopefully, new human service and holistic community-centered agencies will emerge" (p. 8). It is important to recognize that the Parks and Recreation department is part of the over all municipal structure; therefore, although flexibility within the larger governing systems could be beneficial to their department, departments should not isolate themselves from the larger system of which they are a part. Inadvertent isolation would contradict the value of working collaboratively with partners.

Summary of Recommendations

It is important to note these recommendations have been created using a systemic approach. Recommendations can not be looked at in isolation from each other. They build on and support one another and, therefore, need to be considered, developed, and implemented in a systemic fashion in order to be successful. However, in my opinion, the starting point that seems

workable and manageable with the organization's current circumstances is defining the role or roles the department wishes to have in the way of leisure-service delivery in the community, in conjunction with all other leisure service providers in the city. This recommendation done in conjunction with determining what the community of New Westminster values and wishes for in the way of leisure service delivery will provide a wonderful starting point that will frame how the people in the organization will act, develop, and work together as a whole.

Organizational Implications

Implementing change takes time, effort, and commitment by everyone involved in the organization. The recommendations put forth are ones of a transformational nature, in that they are more complex than simply doing things differently. They are holistic and complex in nature, in that they require the people involved to think and act differently and will take work on each individual's part as well as the whole organization. Transformational change is noted as "the radical shift from one state of being to another, so significant that it requires a shift of culture, behaviour, and mindset to implement successfully and sustain over time" (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001, p. 39). It is for these reasons that this type of change needs to be taken slowly and done sensitively with great care. The recommendations are framed around creating positive change within the organization in order to enhance leisure-service delivery, while keeping in mind the elements of the system that impact how leisure services are provided. The boundary critique systems diagram in Figure 1 shows the elements of the system that need to be considered and brought into alignment in order for leisure services to be provided effectively. Within New Westminster, the stakeholders within the systems surrounding leisure services are the Parks and Recreation department administration, city administration, city council, the

community (residents and community service providers), and provincial and national governing bodies

The ten participants from the sponsoring organization were people who hold key decision-making positions within the organization. As a result of their participation, these participants had a chance to hear different people's perspectives, thereby, gaining a level of understanding about where each other's position in terms of their thoughts and ideas on how leisure services are currently provided. As a result, these participants have already begun the change process simply by listening to each other and gaining a different type of respect for one another. The recommendations have been developed in a systemic way, in that they build on one another and, therefore, can not be looked at in isolation of one another.

Individual Recommendation Implications

Recommendation One

Encouraging employees to participate in personal growth and awareness training opportunities is potentially very positive for the organization, as well as for the individuals. Asking people to take a look at themselves (their mindsets and behaviours) will be challenging to implement. Some people may simply not be interested in looking at themselves this closely. If the organization were to proceed with developing staff in these ways, they would need to ensure that the proper support systems were in place to create a safe, open, and honest environment. As stated by Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001), "Significant transformation cannot happen without the simultaneous transformation of a critical mass of leaders' and employees' mindsets and behaviour" (p. 27).

Recommendation Two

It is imperative that all people within the organization recognize their part in the greater team of the department. The department needs its employees to understand that, although their operation is unique, they still are part of the team, and they need to act as one in order for the organization to move forward. Without this recommendation being implemented, the organization runs the risk of not developing that collaborative, team-based culture that is supposed to drive the whole operation in the future.

Recommendation Three

It has been noted in this research project that the future of leisure-service delivery is changing. With those changes come different demands on staff. The organization needs to dedicate time and resources to developing staff so they are prepared to take on and deal with the changing circumstances the organization finds itself in. If the staff are not prepared for these new opportunities, those opportunities could be missed by the organization.

*Behavioural Recommendation Implications**Recommendation Four*

Partnerships have been shown to be critical in the provision of leisure services, in order to effectively meet the needs of the entire community. Agencies need to work together in order to effectively utilize the scarce resources that are available today. True partnership acquisition and development will be new for some facilities; however, overall, the department will be stronger in the community if everyone understands the value and importance of collaborating with other agencies. Some elements of the operation may need assistance in understanding how and with whom they could be partnering in the community, as there may not be an obvious fit.

Recommendation Five

Without determining what the community, or the customer, wants in the way of leisure-service delivery, the organization runs the risk of providing services to the community that the community either does not want or that they do not value, resulting in wasted resources. By learning what the community wants allows citizens or users to be engaged in the provision of services resulting in a greater likelihood of the programs being successful and prosperous.

Recommendation Six

Aligning the words that describe what the department is striving towards with the actions of employees will be highly beneficial to the organization. This will result in decreased conflict within the team, a more congruent values-based workplace, and a more productive and efficient work team. Although challenging to implement, this recommendation is fundamental to the organization being effective in working with partnering agencies.

*Cultural Recommendation Implications**Recommendation Seven*

Fostering a team approach to problem solving within the organization creates an environment where people learn to rely on, trust, and respect one another. Although the organization already prides itself on its team approach, by taking team work to the next level of proficiency, the organization has the potential to grow exponentially. This recommendation allows the team to practice in the safe internal environment that is already created and make the best of those existing practices even better.

Recommendation Eight

Salvaging what was loved from the past gives long-term employees a sense of validation and significance for getting the organization to where it is today. This helps the organization

move forward through the change process, as then staff do not feel that all of the old ways of operating, which were loved at one point, are being lost. With so many long-term employees, it will be critical to show them that their previous work was appreciated and is respected.

Recommendation Nine

As the organization moves forward, going back to ensure the values of the organization are suitable for the new initiative ensures everyone clearly understands the direction and purpose of the organization. This helps to reduce conflict within the organization by ensuring everyone is on the same page.

Recommendation Ten

Dreaming moves an organization forward, gives it purpose, and gives employees something to aspire to. Without a dream, the organization could become complacent. If this results, some staff may become bored, causing them to look outside the organization for other employment opportunities. Other staff who do not see the value in having a dream have no reason, other than personal desire, to do their jobs any differently each day. Therefore, without a dream, the organization could become stagnant, with either unhappy or uninspired employees creating an unhealthy, unproductive workplace.

Systemic Recommendation Implications

The systemic recommendations will require time to implement. Once the role or roles of the leisure services department in the provision of services to the community is firmly determined and understood, decision makers will need to look for opportunities to incorporate the necessary flexibility within the operation as the systems change and develop.

Recommendation Eleven

Understanding the community's values and wishes is imperative to helping the organization determine how best to provide leisure services. Getting this information can be challenging and time consuming; however, without this information, the organization could be spinning its wheels trying to go in a direction for service delivery that the community is not interested in, causing organizational inefficiencies and wasted resources.

Recommendation Twelve

Incorporating flexibility into the organizations operating structures is going to take considerable time and effort to implement. In some cases, developing flexibility within systems such as the Collective Bargaining agreement may never occur. What is important to remember is that any opportunity that presents itself to re-look at an existing system in a way that is in line with where the organization wishes to go, should be taken aggressively. This will require decision makers to continually be looking far ahead into where they would like to take the organization.

Recommendation Thirteen

Without clearly defining what role the New Westminster Parks and Recreation department will have in the spectrum of leisure services within the municipality, the organization will continue to be challenged by a lack of resources, organizational inefficiencies, and increasing conflict amongst the staff within the department. Defining the roles of the organization identifies the organization's values, which provide purpose and direction, and "clarity of these values is essential to knowing which way ... is north, south, east, and west. The clearer we are the easier it is to stay on the path we have chosen" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 48).

Summary of Implications of Recommendations

The implications to the recommendations identify what the organization could expect with each of the recommendations that have been put forward. With any change initiative, there will always be the possibility of disturbance in the organization. Some people will come immediately on board with the new way of operating and other will not. Careful consideration, time, and engagement of those most affected by the change needs to be a top priority of the people implementing the change initiative. A disturbance to the known way of operating needs to occur in order for the organization to grow and move forward.

Implications for Future Research

This research project focused on how New Westminster could enhance the delivery of leisure services to the community. Many of the conclusions are supported by research contained in the literature review; however, there still are some areas where further research would be valuable. These areas include:

1. What is the best way to implement systemic change in a multi-faceted government setting?
2. How does a leisure-service provider stay on top of what a community wants and values?
3. How does an organization effectively implement personal awareness training?
4. In the training of leisure-service providers, how can institutions move beyond theoretical information into more experiential learning?
5. What is the most effective way to implement organizational change with many long-time employees?

CHAPTER SIX: LESSONS LEARNED

The experience of designing, implementing, and carrying out this research project has been a profound learning experience. In the spirit of true systemic thinking, I have looked at what I learned on the personal journey of completing this action research project with an integral lens.

Individual Learning

In the beginning, I had a plan that involved a logical, systematic way of approaching this project. Although this plan was important and helped to keep me on track, some of my greatest learning came when I had to deviate from my plan, try something new, or take more time on a particular section than I had originally allotted. I often felt I was in a state of chaos, but challenged myself to determine a way to enjoy that chaotic state and learn from it. The internal conflict of allowing myself time to think, ponder, and reflect versus getting things done based on my personal deadlines was a struggle for me. I had to believe in myself that I could make the writing happen once the thoughts were clear in my mind. The time it took to think and reflect challenged the pragmatic side of me, as I watched my personal deadlines come and go; however, in the end the value of taking that time is permanently engrained in my mind. As a result, I learned a great deal about myself as both a person and a researcher.

Academically, I learned a tremendous amount about my profession. I found literature that I did not know existed and was exposed to resources that I will certainly revisit as I continue to develop as a professional in my field. A number of my references were from many years past; however, even at that time, authors could see or anticipate where the profession was heading yet as a profession, we are only really starting to experience and implement some of these different, more effective, ways of operating.

Behavioural Learning

From a behavioural perspective, I learned the value of talking about my project all the time to as many people as possible. In hindsight, I wished I had started this earlier in my project journey; however, I did reap the benefits of talking with others early enough. It was while driving to work every day or walking my dogs in the woods that I found myself having the most coherent, interesting thoughts. Many times I wished I had carried my digital recorder with me, so I could have been saving my thoughts as they developed versus relying on my memory at some other point in the day. I learned the value of creating time and space to try new learning styles, to think and reflect, as well as to journal. Lastly, I learned the importance of taking care of me throughout this process. This included taking time to exercise, enjoy the outdoors, relax, and spend time with precious friends.

Cultural Learning

Culturally, I learned the need to involve as many people in my project as possible, while respecting the fact that not everyone is necessarily interested in research projects. I would have liked to have had a team of people within the organization whom I could go to and bounce ideas off. I would have liked to create an environment within the organization that helped people see the value of spending time for reflection. Towards the end of the project, when I felt I had more information to share, a few employees were able and interested in sitting with me to discuss my findings. These interactions were very productive and beneficial for both my learning and theirs. I also learned that I needed other people to be a part of this process with me. Whether that was coworkers, friends, family, or loved ones, I needed them all to be involved so I felt supported and understood. Looking back, this is certainly one area I would focus more on. There was a team of people who helped to make this project happen. I was certainly not in it alone.

Systemic Learning

Lastly, from a systemic point of view, I learned that not all people involved in my project understood the importance of their part in it, nor was my project a priority in the lives of others. It was up to me to communicate the importance of each step of this project to anyone directly involved. Looking back, there are small areas that I could have improved upon around communicating this importance to people involved in the process. For example, I could have been clearer about the importance of getting the interview transcriptions back in a timely fashion. Also, I learned that having a good system in place to collect, record, document, and store the information gathered throughout this whole project was critical. You never know when you may need to go back and find references, records of data collection, or jotted notes of personal reflections.

From an academic perspective, I was surprised to find little research specifically in the field of leisure services in the areas of what affect how a leisure service professional provides leisure services (how their age, gender, beliefs and values affect the way they provide leisure services) and how age, gender, ethnicity affect how users chose to engage in leisure services. These two perspectives were ones that appear to be missing in the literature and therefore could be worthy of future research.

Learning that I am a strong systemic thinker was a profound learning experience for me. This was a blind spot to me in my capabilities. Becoming aware of this ability within myself was probably the largest piece of personal learning that I am taking away from this project. I have a very strong analytical mind and looking at problems and challenges in a systemic way has now become an everyday practice both at work and in my personal life. Looking at the world in this way actually helps organize and make sense of all of the perspectives that I think of and can see

at any given moment. The systems theories that I have used throughout this project were challenging to understand, let alone incorporate into this major project. However, in hindsight, it was through the use of these theories that I was able to create a system of my own that allowed me to work through this project, organize, understand, and analyze data and literature which allowed me to create a very thorough project that I am proud of.

Summary

When I started this project, I had the naive view that I would be able to spend the better part of a year focusing primarily on school. Somehow I forgot the possibility that life is ever changing and evolving and is very much an action research project all on its own. I learned that, in order to claim to myself that I had learned something, I needed to make my learning personal and see my life as a project that required attention, reflection, and action. This project taught me so much more than what I set out to learn. In the end, what I learned was not from the project, but because of it, and I learned that I still have a tremendous amount to learn.

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APPENDIX A: TELEPHONE INTRODUCTION—EXTERNAL INTERVIEW

PARTICIPANTS

Introduction to Participant

My name is Trisha Davison and I am a Recreation Programmer with the City of New Westminster. As part of my Master's Degree in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University, I am completing a research project on developing a leisure service delivery model for the future of our profession. This project is being sponsored by Dean Gibson, Director of Parks & Recreation with the City of New Westminster.

The purpose of my research project is to look at determining an effective service delivery model for community recreation services in the City of New Westminster. I have identified your organization as one that I would like to include in my study as I believe you are providing leisure services in a unique or different way than what we are doing in the City of New Westminster. I believe your insights on how you have arrived at where you are today with your organization would be valuable for my organization to hear and learn from.

I would like to invite you to participate in a voluntary interview to discuss your organization. This can be set up at your convenience. I anticipate the interview to take approximately one hour of your time. The questions will be open ended encouraging you to discuss openly the best practices of your operation. Questions will be provided in advance in order for you to feel prepared for the interview.

In Person Interview: If we are able to meet in person, I would like to request your permission to record the interview with a digital voice recorder. I will also be taking some brief notes during the interview as necessary.

Over the Phone Interview: If you would prefer to conduct the interview over the phone (or if demographics force us to meet this way) I will be taking notes as you talk. If the situation allows, I would like your permission to conduct the interview using a hands free device allowing me to record the interview using a digital voice recorder.

As a signed letter of informed consent may not be possible, I would like to email you the informed consent letter and ask you to simply respond to the email if you are willing to participate in this research project.

This research project is bound by the Royal Roads University Ethical Guidelines. All data shared during the research will be kept anonymous and organized into themes. At no time will specific individual data be linked with a participant and shared without the individual's consent being obtained before hand.

Participation in the project is completely voluntary and participants can choose not to take part or to withdraw confidentially from the research at any time.

Should you wish to verify the authenticity of this project, please contact Marilyn Hamilton, PhD by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION TO FOCUS GROUP

Dear Colleagues;

Please accept this introduction and invitation to participate in my research project. My name is Trisha Davison and I am a Recreation Programmer with the City of New Westminster. As part of my Master's Degree in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University, I am completing a research project on developing a leisure service delivery model for the future of our profession. This project is being sponsored by Dean Gibson, Director of Parks & Recreation with the City of New Westminster. If you have any questions about the project or your participation please do not hesitate to call (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or email xxxxx@xxxxxx.xx .

Project Question and Purpose: The purpose of this research is to look at determining an effective service delivery model for community recreation services in the City of New Westminster.

Research Participation & Time Commitment: I am looking for 8 - 10 volunteers to participate in two focus groups. The first focus group will be approximately 2 hours in length. A series of questions will be posed allowing you to talk about what is great about our current service delivery model as well as where you think we could improve. The same people will be invited back to a second focus group session approximately 3 weeks later to discuss the points raised in the first focus group meeting in conjunction with information that I will be collecting from outside agencies on their service delivery models. This second focus group will be approximately 1.5 hours in length. Participants will be encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas throughout the process. The first focus group session will occur in the beginning of October. The second focus group will occur in early November. The focus groups will be facilitated by myself. An outside person may be brought in to view the focus group to help with the collection of data.

The data will be collected using flip charts, note taking, and taped recorded dialogue. The data will then be transcribed by an outside transcriptionist. Once the data is themed, research participants will have the opportunity to validate the themes with the researcher. This will be done on a voluntary basis by those who participated in the focus groups. I anticipate this to take approximately 30 minutes.

Confidentiality: All research participants will complete an informed consent form prior to their participation. This research is bound by the Royal Roads University Ethical Guidelines. All data shared during the research will be kept anonymous and organized into themes. At no time will specific individual data be linked with a participant and shared without the individual's consent being obtained before hand. Participation in the project is completely voluntary and participants can choose not to take part or to confidentially withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

Sincerely; Trisha Davison

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWEE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department's ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?

1. Tell me a story about a situation that is an example of what is best about your current operation.
 - a. Why is it working so well?
 - b. Describe a few of the people or positions within your organization that are critical to what is working so well.
 - c. What would allow you to continue to build on what is working so well?
2. Tell me a story about a situation that is an example of what is not working in your operation.
 - a. Why isn't it working? What is missing?
 - b. Describe what would need to change in order to improve the situation.
3. In a perfect world, how would you like all of your patrons and customers to describe the way you provide leisure services?
 - a. Today?
 - b. In 5 – 10 years from now?
 - c. What in your current operation would allow you to achieve this?
 - d. What would need to change?
4. Tell me about the core values you most appreciate in your organization and why?
5. If you had a magic wand and could change 3 things about your current organization's delivery model what would they be and why?
6. Can I come back to you for further clarification on the information you provided me with and/or to get supporting documentation on the concepts we discussed today? (For example, an organizational chart)

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department's ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?

1. Give me an example of what you think is best about the way we deliver leisure services to this community.
 - a. What makes it work so well?
 - b. How can we continue to build on what is working well?
2. What challenges do we face with the way we currently provide leisure services?
 - a. What are some ways we could improve this situation?
 - b. Why isn't it working?
3. In a perfect world, how would you like all of our customers to describe the way we provide leisure services today?
 - a. In 5 – 10 years from now?
4. Tell me about the core values you most appreciate in our organization and why?
5. If you had a magic wand and could change 3 things about our current organization's delivery model what would they be and why?

APPENDIX E: INITIAL INVITATION TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Sent via email

I am seeking your expertise!

I am a graduate student with the Master of Arts in Leadership & Training program with Royal Roads University in BC. I am conducting an action research project that is examining leisure service delivery models to determine how the profession can best provide efficient and effective service in the future. Although I am contacting you wearing a “student hat”, I have worked in the field in a middle management position for over 9 years with the City of New Westminster.

Dean Gibson, Director of Parks & Recreation in New Westminster, is my project sponsor for this research. He has suggested that you would be the best person to talk to in your organization.

I have chosen to contact your organization because you are noted within the field of Parks and Recreation as leading the way in developing new and different ways of providing leisure services. I believe you could provide me with valuable information on your experience with your leisure service delivery model.

What I would like to do is contact you by phone next week to set up a time to have a telephone interview. At that time I can also explain in more detail the concept around my research. I would be very appreciative of your participation in this project. If you have any questions or concerns before I connect with you next week, feel free to respond to this email or call me directly at the number listed below.

I look forward to connecting!

Sincerely,

Trisha Davison (w: xxx.xxx.xxxx)

Masters Students, Royal Roads University

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS)

Email or In Person Version

This research project forms part of my studies to complete a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University, School of Leadership Studies. The research project is titled: Leisure Services: A Service Delivery Model for the Future. The researcher and Master's candidate for this project is Trisha Davison. Trisha Davison's credentials can be established by contacting the Director of the School or Program Academic Lead, School of Leadership Studies at (250) 391 - 2600. This project is being sponsored by Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation with the City of New Westminster.

This document constitutes an agreement to take part in a research project, the objective of which is to examine ways the City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department's may enhance its ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community.

This part of the research will consist of interviews with approximately five different key people within different organizations throughout British Columbia and possibly across Canada. The interview will consist of open ended questions that will focus on and encourage you to share the best practices of your organizations leisure service delivery model.

I would like to request permission that the information from the interviews be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Depending on the circumstances this may not be feasible. I would then ask permission to manually record the information by taking notes during the interview.

All information will be transcribed and then themed anonymously combining concepts, words and phrases. After the information is transcribed, I will ask you to verify the accuracy of the information by sending you a copy of the information to review. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible.

Prospective research participants are not compelled to take part in this research project. If an individual does elect to take part, she or he is free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly if employees or other individuals elect not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

By signing this letter or by responding to an email containing this letter, the individual gives free and informed consent to participate in this research project, and agrees to keep confidential any personal information shared during the focus group sessions.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G: INITIAL INVITATION TO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Sent via email

Hello everyone!

I am seeking your thoughts and expertise!

I am wearing my “student researcher” hat as I send you this email to invite you to participate in a focus group with me for my school project. I am in the final few months of completing my Masters Degree in Leadership & Training and as partial fulfillment of my degree I am conducting an action research project. My project focus is on “What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster’s Parks and Recreation department’s ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?”

At this stage, all I need from you is to know if you can attend this focus group at the noted day and time above. Once I receive confirmation from everyone, I will send along more detailed information.

This focus group will be fun, interactive and will draw on your expertise as well as our hopes and dreams for our department. And of course....refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Thank you,

Trisha

APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (FOCUS GROUPS—INTERNAL STAFF)

This research project forms part of my studies to complete a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University, School of Leadership Studies. The research project is titled: Leisure Services: A Service Delivery Model for the Future. The researcher and Master's candidate for this project is Trisha Davison. Trisha Davison's credentials can be established by contacting the Director of the School or Program Academic Lead, School of Leadership Studies. This project is being sponsored by Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation with the City of New Westminster.

This document constitutes an agreement to take part in a research project, the objective of which is to examine: *What service delivery model would enhance the City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department's ability to provide or deliver recreation services to the community?*

The research will consist of one research group from within the organization who will be invited to participate in one focus group. People invited to participate in this research project will be people who hold decision making positions within the department: Administrative staff, Facility Managers, and Recreation Programmers. Through dialogue during these focus groups, staff will share their thoughts and ideas on our current service delivery model as well as what they see are areas we could develop and enhance in the future.

Information shared during these activities will be noted on flip chart paper, note paper and audio-taped. All information will be transcribed and then themed into an anonymous format, combining concepts, words and phrases. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible. A current and fellow Masters Degree student will be invited to sit on this focus group so I can draw on her unbiased perspective in the data analysis section of my research.

Prospective research participants are not compelled to take part in this research project. If an individual does elect to take part, she or he is free to withdraw at any time with no prejudice. Similarly if employees or other individuals elect not to take part in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

By signing this letter, the individual gives free and informed consent to participate in this research project, and agrees to keep confidential any personal information shared during the focus group sessions.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____