

2007

PRINCE GEORGE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT Strategic Plan



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PRINCE GEORGE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Strategic Plan

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1. List of Active Communities Project Deliverables
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PRINCE GEORGE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT

STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince George Active Communities Strategic Plan has been developed to address the ActNow BC goals to increase physical activity and healthy eating by 20% by 2010. A hard-working committee representing School District 57, YMCA, Northern Health and the City developed project objectives with indicators to address the Active Communities Initiative. Visions and goals were developed for each of the indicators:

- Plans and Policies
- Opportunities and Participation
- Supportive Environments
- Communication, Education, Community Identity and Involvement
- Accessibility

Three research reports pertinent to Prince George were compiled and are attached in the appendices.

Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Survey Report – June 2007

Recreation Facilities Food Environment Audit Report – June 2007

Active Communities Initiatives Report – June 2007

The Active Community provincial initiative has been going strong now since 2005, other communities in the north like Fort St John and Quesnel have been working since 2006 to improve and increase physical activity with their citizens. Now that Prince George has registered as an Active Community there are many ways to increase physical fitness and healthy eating with Prince George residents. Prince George's physical activity levels and healthy eating behaviors are below the provincial average and people want to become more active and improve eating habits but require a unified approach to increasing awareness, education and resources. Recreation facilities, groups and sporting teams all want to benefit from healthy eating by developing nutritional health policies, which currently are unavailable. Residents identified fifteen opportunities that would promote and increase activity by enhancing leisure and community infrastructure, services and programs. The 2006 census numbers for Prince George indicate the city population at 70,981, to meet the 20% challenge means engaging 14,196 people to get active and eat healthier. Currently half of Prince George population is sedentary and not accessing recreation facilities, city trails and programs, there is a potential to maximize usage by getting Prince George moving.

Prince George has the capacity to become a provincial and municipal leader with the Active Communities Initiative. City financial leadership, resources and infrastructure will be required to assist this endeavor. The City and this community are motivated to create change and improve the health and wellness of residents. Prince George can achieve its goal of 20% by 2010.

BACKGROUND

ACTNOW AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

The Government of British Columbia launched **ActNow BC**, a comprehensive healthy living initiative, in the spring of 2005, with the goal of making British Columbia the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. **ActNow BC** focuses on five key areas:

- ↔ Healthy eating
- ↔ Physical activity
- ↔ Healthy body weight
- ↔ Tobacco cessation
- ↔ Healthy choices during pregnancy

Specific goals have been identified in the ActNow initiative for each of these areas. The physical activity goal is to increase by 20% the proportion of the BC population who are physically active or moderately active during their leisure time by 2010.

Active Communities is one initiative that has been developed to help meet this physical activity goal, commonly referred to as the '20% by 2010 Challenge'. The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is responsible for the administration of this program, funded by LegaciesNow. Communities are encouraged to register with the BCRPA as an Active Community, to form an Active Communities Committee, and to develop a strategic plan to increase physical activity in their community in order to meet the **20% by 2010 Challenge**.

The City of Prince George registered the fall of 2006 as an Active Community and has formed an Active Communities Committee. Active living and healthy eating are closely linked; the City of Prince George combined these two goals together to increase physical activity and healthy eating by 20% by 2010.

RATIONALE FOR PRINCE GEORGE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT

The World Health Organization (WHO), which refers to the escalating global epidemic of obesity as "globesity," estimates that there are more than 1 billion overweight adults globally, of whom at least 300 million are obese. ¹

Canadian Community Health Survey ² stated:

"At the most fundamental level, overweight and obesity result from an imbalance between caloric intake and usage. In support of this perspective, health and nutrition experts cite increasingly sedentary lifestyles resulting from urban planning and technological changes in the way we work; they also point to increasing portion sizes and the poor availability of nutritional food choices in schools and workplaces. However, "there is no consensus as to whether the current obesity epidemic in North America is primarily the result of high levels of physical inactivity or high dietary intake of energy-dense foods, and it is likely that both dietary intake and physical inactivity have played a role in the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity."

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. In Canada, about two thirds of total deaths are due to cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease (bronchitis and emphysema), and diabetes.

- Cardiovascular diseases, including coronary artery disease and stroke: these diseases are responsible for 38% of all deaths among Canadians each year, and are one of the leading reasons for hospitalization.
- Cancer is the second most important cause of death in Canada, causing 29% of all deaths each year, and accounting for almost one-third of potential years of life lost. 50% of cancers are caused by an unhealthy lifestyle.
- Respiratory illness includes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (almost entirely smoking-related).
- Diabetes: Over 2 million Canadians are estimated to have diabetes with 60,000 new cases diagnosed each year. These numbers are expected to rise as the population ages and rates of obesity rise. The majority of people with diabetes (90%) have type 2 diabetes (formerly referred to as adult onset or non-insulin-dependent diabetes). Diabetes is a major cause of coronary heart disease and a leading cause of blindness and limb amputations. More preventable type 2 diabetes is being found in children with marked obesity. Among Aboriginal people, the prevalence of diabetes is three times higher than among non-aboriginal Canadians.
- Common risk factors: At a population level, physical inactivity and poor diets contribute to overweight, high blood pressure (and hypertension), high blood cholesterol (and hypercholesterolemia), and glucose intolerance (and diabetes) which are all risk factors for chronic, non-communicable diseases.

Two-thirds of Canadians have at least one modifiable risk factor for chronic disease: smoking, low levels of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits or overweight and obesity.

Health Care Costs:

- The cost of obesity in Canada in 1997 was estimated at \$1.8 billion or 2.4% of the total healthcare expenditures for all diseases. The 3 largest contributors were hypertension (\$656.6 million), type 2 diabetes (\$423.2 million) and coronary artery disease (\$346.0 million).
- About \$2.1 billion, or 2.5% of the total direct health care costs in Canada, were attributable to physical inactivity in 1999. A 10% reduction in the prevalence of physical inactivity has the potential to reduce direct health care expenditures by \$150 million a year.

Public Health Agency of Canada: Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth - 2006 ³:

For the majority of Canadians, current physical activity patterns are not optimal for health. While less is known about the eating practices of Canadians, we do know that the proportion of Canadians reporting poor eating habits is increasing.

- In 2001, 21% of Canadians reported their eating habits as fair or poor compared to 17% in 1997, and 15% in 1994.
- Unhealthy diet: over-consumption of dietary fats and under-consumption of dietary fibre are risk factors for several cancers and cardiovascular disease. Diets containing substantial amounts of a variety of vegetables and fruits may reduce the overall incidence of cancer by over 20%. Improved diets can reduce coronary heart disease and stroke mortality by at least 20%, and diabetes mortality by at least 30%.

There appears to be an increase in sedentary living and unhealthy eating among Canadian children and youth.

- While data on healthy eating among children and youth is sparse, in the cross-national WHO/Health Canada survey, school-aged children and youth reported a slight reduction in the consumption of nutritious foods and an increased consumption of less nutritious foods such as french fries, hot dogs and potato chips between 1990 and 1998. Almost one-quarter of boys in Grades 6 and 10 reported that they ate potato chips daily. The number of Canadians who are overweight or obese has steadily increased over the last 20 years.

DESCRIPTION OF PRINCE GEORGE PROJECT

The goal of this project was to assist the City of Prince George and the Active Communities Committee in developing a comprehensive health promotion strategy to increase physical activity and to encourage healthy eating in Prince George.

The City is uniquely positioned to lead the Active Communities initiative in Prince George however the City cannot deliver the program effectively on its own. To be successful, the Active Communities initiative must engage and mobilize the community at a grassroots level.

There are numerous opportunities for people to be active in Prince George however there is no unified approach to promote physical activity and healthy eating which is realistic, based on sound research and extensive community involvement; including collaboration with organizations, recreation and education stakeholders, first nations, and community members. The key to the success of motivating Prince George residents to eat healthy and become active, is the identification of barriers to participation and the development of strategies that will engage the inactive and result in a positive change in behavior.

The City of Prince George received funding through Union of BC Municipalities – 2010 Legacies Fund to develop the Active Communities Strategic Plan. Three phases; research, consultation and the development phase were approved in the development of the strategic plan. Timelines with project activities and project deliverables is attached (Appendix 1). The project started April 24, 2007 with completion slated for September 17, 2007 when the Active Communities Committee presents the final reports to Mayor and Council.



Project Objectives

1. Research, analyze and document current recreation, sport and community activities that could contribute to the Active Community Plan.
2. Collect and tabulate physical activity statistics and types of food and beverage sales in recreation facilities and sport and recreation venues to create a baseline for measurement.

3. Research barriers to participation and accessibility, with consideration of the social determinants of health and socio-economic factors and recommend solutions to identify and address these gaps.
4. Research and assess successful healthy and activity based initiatives in Prince George and other communities and provide recommendations for collaboration or implementation, that might be considered in the community plan.
5. Coordinate community and stakeholder consultations to educate, solicit feedback, and empower participants so that they feel engaged in the planning process and committed to the goals of the initiative.
6. Identify partnerships between the City and other service providers that would encourage physical activity and health and wellness.
7. Propose a marketing plan with recommendations on how to create community awareness and branding identification.
8. Include an evaluation tool to monitor and track physical activity participation rates to assist Prince George in reaching its goal of increasing physical activity and healthy eating by 20%.
9. Develop a strategic plan to identify vision, goals and priorities for the five identified indicators listed:

- **Plans and Policies**
- **Opportunities and Participation**
- **Supportive Environments, Collaborations and Partnerships**
- **Communication, Education, Community Identity and Involvement**
- **Accessibility**

The Active Community Strategic Plan is a living document that will be a framework for the Active Community initiative and will assist the City of Prince George and the Active Community Committee/Team in moving forward towards reaching the goal of motivating Prince George citizens to become 20% more active, make healthier food choices and to lead healthier lifestyles.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT REPORTS

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY REPORT SUMMARY (APPENDIX 2)

Activity Synopsis:

48.9% of Prince George residents meet the World Health Organizations definition of being physically active. The Canadian Health Survey has the British Columbia provincial average of people who are physically active at 58%. Prince George residents were asked if the physical activity they participate in is consistent in the last year and the majority answered it was consistent.

Nutrition Synopsis:

Prince George residents often make unhealthy food choices specifically not meeting the minimum guidelines of the Canada Food Guide for fruit and vegetable consumption. Respondents have made the association between the food offered at recreation parks as being unhealthy and have made the decision to refrain from eating there. Although there is a strong correlation between the people who eat unhealthy seven days a week and those who eat at a recreation park of facility often.

Accessibility Synopsis:

Based on the survey people perceive or believe that their families or household members are more active than themselves. When asked for specifics about type of activity a lot commented that their families, specifically children are involved in a sport a few times a week. This doesn't meet the required level of exercised as defined by the World Health Organization.



Other Data Synopsis:

People in Prince George that eat unhealthy/junk food do in fact still eat some fruits and vegetables and are participating in activity. As current research has indicated, Prince George residents are like other Canadians, and with higher income levels and education are in actuality more physically active and tend to eat healthier. In Prince George females tend to eat healthier along with the younger age groups. The 45-54 age group is a lot higher than the provincial and Canadian average for unhealthy eating.

NUTRITIONAL AUDIT REPORT SUMMARY (APPENDIX 3)

Contractors

There are a variety of service providers that contract their food services out and a number of the recreation facilities have contractors that provide all the food services for the facility/club/organization and others have contractors that provide vending machines for the facilities. Each facility has entered into an agreement with the contractor and several are exclusive and don't allow for a lot of input from the facility staff. Some of the contracts are exclusive and don't permit people to bring in other food at some of the facilities, like at the Aquatic facility and UNBC. As part of some agreements, a few of the facilities have the contractors providing sponsorship to the facility for events, which could include product or funding.

Facilities and Schools

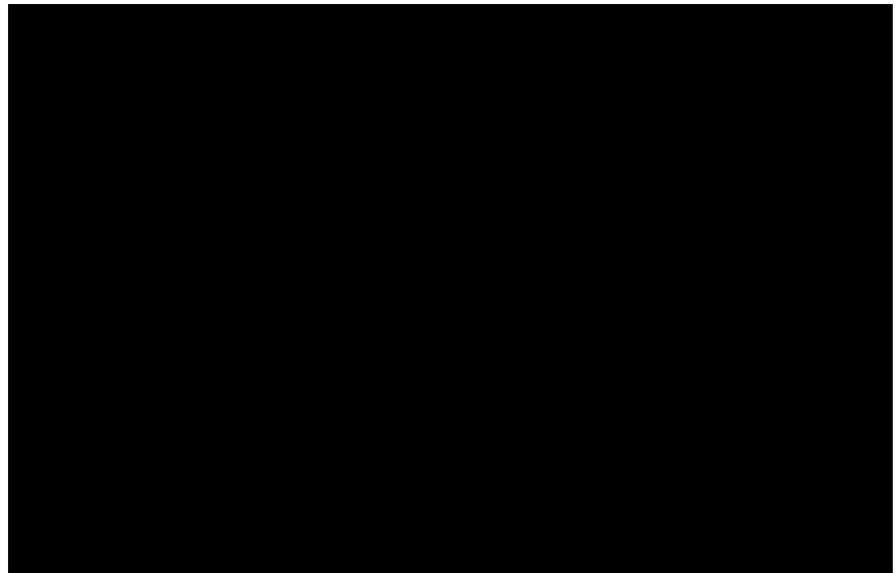
Six schools returned the nutritional audit, four of the schools were elementary schools and two were high schools. Minor Soccer and Minor Hockey both have concessions/snack bar to raise money for their clubs. Minor Soccer has contracted their concession out and Minor Hockey runs theirs with volunteers. Youth Around Prince George (YAP) have their own facility, with a kitchen, which they share with the Prince George Friendship Centre. The City of Prince George Leisure Department returned their audit however additional information in regards to contractors that have concessions/snack bars in the arena was unavailable at the time of completion of the report. BCGEU completed the audit and recognize there are vending machines at their member's workplaces but didn't have specific information about what was in the vending machines or what their members have regarding policies, etc... Carney Hill Neighborhood Centre provides a lot of food service to their clients and participants but don't have vending machines at their facility, all other respondents indicated they have vending machines. The YMCA provides childcare and supplies snacks to the children that participate in some of their programs.

Vending Machines

Most of the facilities and schools that responded have beverage vending machines and some also have snack machines. The majority of the beverage machines have all the refreshments in one vending machine, but some of the facilities have a water vending machine. All the vending machines in the audit have sweetened pop as one of the main beverages available, as highlighted in the table below. With the snack machines, the chocolate bars are the largest quantity.



Vending Machine Beverage Items



Nutritional Health Policies

The recreation facilities and schools that filled out the nutritional audit haven't developed nutritional health policies for the general public, their sporting groups or the children they provide food and beverages for. A few have unwritten rules that food must be healthy and the people handling the food must have their Food Safe Certification. Both the Minor Hockey and Minor Soccer Association would like to implement a nutritional health policy for their sporting teams, vending machine and concession.



- *School District 57 has developed a nutritional health policy for all their schools but the schools that completed the audit weren't familiar with it or haven't executed it in their schools.*
- *100% of stakeholders who completed the Nutritional Audit do not have nutritional health policies*
- *5 % of those same stakeholders said they had unwritten rules about food and beverages sold or provided for members.*

INITIATIVES RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUMMARY (APPENDIX 4)

Research was compiled providing global, national, provincial and local perspective on the following areas:

- Physical Activity
- Nutrition
- Active Transportation
- Accessibility
- Participation
- Opportunities
- Barriers
- Aboriginal Health
- Initiatives

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute state that the Barriers to becoming active for children and adults are:

- Convenience
- Lack of Programs
- Safety
- Maintenance of Facilities
- Skill and Ability
- Cost
- Information
- Social Support

The top 10 barriers to activity for *Pre-retirement* adults are:

1. Not enough time
2. Not enough energy
3. Lack of motivation
4. Illness or injury
5. Lack of Skill
6. Ill at ease
7. Cost
8. Fear of injury
9. Lack of facilities
10. Lack of a partner with whom to be active

Based on data collected through the 2002/03 Canadian Community Health Survey the least likely to participate in sport is:

- Women
- Older adults
- Adults with lower levels of education
- Adults in households with lower income
- Adults who are not working for reasons other than retirement
- Adults who are widowed, divorced or separated
- Adults who are live in smaller communities

General Population in British Columbia Identified Barriers to Becoming More Active - Adult

- 17% strongly agree that they are not good at doing sport and physical activities;
- 24% strongly agree that the dollar costs of participating in physical activities and sports are too high for them;
- 25% strongly agree that there is not enough information provided about the available opportunities for physical activity and sport;
- 13% strongly agree that they don't know how to go about building more physical activity into their lifestyle ;
- 24% strongly agree that the hours and class times offered by local center's are not suitable for them;
- 17% strongly agree that it's too hard to get to places to be active;
- 11% strongly agree that the sport and recreation facilities are not well maintained;
- 20% strongly agree that the programs and facilities are not the right type for them;
- 24% strongly agree that it's too hard to find other people to be active with;
- 19% strongly agree that it's not enough places to be active as a family;

- 16% strongly agree that it's too hard to find the right type of coaching or instruction;
- 13% strongly agree that they have concerns about safety and keeping them from walking or bicycling;
- 13% strongly agree to much traffic in area for walking or bicycling;
- 13% strongly agree that badly maintained sidewalks and bicycle lanes keep them from bicycling;
- 14% strongly agree that poorly lit sidewalks and streets keep them from walking or bicycling.

Prince George residents identified the following recommendations towards activity and healthy eating:

Data was compiled from the Prince George Active Communities (2007) physical activity telephone survey, the consultation meetings and questionnaires, and the public meeting. Some of the opportunities mentioned or listed are similar to the Canadian and British Columbian report on Physical Activity and Sport the Canadian Lifestyle and Research Institute and some are unique to Prince George.

1. Increase priority for active transportation; bike, walking paths and trails, sidewalks, linkages to communities
2. Lower user fees for sport and recreation
3. Solutions to seasonal issues
4. Assist resident's to make positive change
5. Recruit volunteers
6. More health and wellness programs in the workplace
7. Increase communication and coordination of programming and services
8. Create awareness and education
9. City taking a more active role
10. Subsidy programs more user friendly
11. Schools getting more involved; better school usage agreement
12. Need more Family Programming and Events
13. More entry level recreation and sport programs for the sedentary or inactive
14. Improve maintenance of school and city community fields
15. Enhance and increase culturally relevant information and role models

STRATEGIC INDICATORS

- **Plans and Policies**
- **Opportunities and Participation**
- **Supportive Environments, Collaborations and Partnerships**
- **Communication, Education, Community Identity and Involvement**
- **Accessibility**

PLANS AND POLICIES

VISION

Develop, implement and support plans and policies that promote physical fitness, healthy eating and overall wellness amongst residents of Prince George.

GOALS

1. Create A New Active Communities Committee to more fully represent Prince George.

Representation should include:

- Sporting organizations; youth and adult; indoors and outdoors (3 members)
- Active Transportation; bicycle, walking, transit, environmental stakeholders (1 member)
- Community nutrition and public health nursing School Based Team (2 members)
- Education; College/University, public and private schools including First Nations Support Services (3 members)
- City of Prince George; community services, parks, short and long term planning (2 members)
- Corporate Business; private fitness, unions, Chamber of Commerce, small and large business (2 members)
- Multicultural; Immigration and Multicultural Services, Sikh, First Nations (2 members)
- Related community groups and clubs; seniors, YAP, AiMHi, library (2 members)
- YMCA and Northern Sports Centre (2 members)
- School District 57 (1 member connected to Administration)

Rationalization:

There is a potential to have twenty committee members, realistically the participation will be around twelve that participate regularly. The advantages of having more than less committee members, is there will be representation from a cross section of the population. Most municipalities have between ten to fifteen people sitting on their active community teams or task forces. A large committee will also assist the initiative in creating more awareness as members will become champions to create synergy and spread the word. The committee would be an advisory body to council and should be facilitated by the City of Prince George Community Services department. A mandate and objectives for the committee would need to be developed but in essence the committee would provide direction and support for the strategic plan. The city has the infrastructure and mandate to support the committee and across the province Active Communities are being administered by municipalities.

2. Hire an Active Living Coordinator to implement the strategic plan in conjunction with the Active Communities Committee and the City of Prince George.

Rationalization:

Some of the more active and larger communities like Fort St John, Kamloops, Kelowna, Langley and Penticton all have a recreation or active living coordinator hired or have re-allocated staff to implement the Active Communities strategic plan. The positions vary from part time to full time and describe the work allocation at approximately 30% community committee work and initiatives, 50% Active Community initiative development, implementation and facilitation and 20% administration. The Active Living Coordinator would be very community focused and working to engage and mobilize Prince George to become healthier and more active. This position is usually incorporated into leisure or community services departments.

In other regions, BC Recreation and Parks Association has approached municipalities to direct the Active Community Initiatives in their communities, in order for this initiative to be successful it needs to be spearheaded by the City of Prince George because a significant portion of the funding allocations are attached to the provincial government and UBCM.

Prince George is unique in its delivery of recreation services and programs with the addition of community associations. These community associations play an integral role in providing leisure and recreation to their communities but are feeling the pressure of low enrollments, lack of volunteer support and very limited budgets to maintain the current level of services they are already providing. To provide increased support and capacity for the Community Associations and other recreation delivery agencies it would be beneficial if an Active Living Coordinator worked closely in partnership with them. This would help to address their constraints and effectively work toward increased improvements in community recreation services and programs, thereby significantly benefiting the overall goal of increasing physical activity and healthy eating in Prince George by 20% by 2010.

3. Support the collaboration of the Transportation, Planning and Leisure Services departments to develop, enhance and implement models of Active Transportation within Prince George.

Rationalization:

Prince George has already completed a significant amount of the groundwork necessary to plan for Active Transportation by developing a city wide trail system study, a cycle network study and a pedestrian study. Some growth has occurred with sidewalk improvements and expansions as well as designating bicycle lanes around Prince George. Walking, hiking and cycling are key ways to increase activity in sedentary people as its low in cost, accessible at anytime, anywhere and achievable for inactive and overweight participants. The City can

support Active Transportation by re-aligning policies to make Active Transportation a consideration in short and long range planning to include land use and development,

community plan development, transportation networks, neighbourhood planning, parks and trails development, city social and environmental plans.

The City planning departments attended an Active Transportation workshop the BC Recreation and Parks Association hosted in June and this was a very valuable step to creating awareness and education and bringing the City departments together to work collaboratively to promote Active Transportation in Prince George.

4. Develop a City-wide nutritional health policy for all municipal facilities and incorporate into the policy all contract vendors and non-profit organizations that operate concessions in municipal facilities.

Rationalization:

Municipalities around the province are taking the lead at a progressive rate in health and wellness planning by creating nutritional health policies for all municipal facilities. Communities are realizing that healthy eating plays a vital role in decreasing obesity and increasing physical activity.

The City of Prince George has the opportunity to develop nutritional health policies for all municipal facilities that will mobilize other recreational facilities, sporting groups and even corporate business to become proactive and execute their own nutritional health policies.

A Municipal Recreation Facilities Environmental Audit task force has recently developed a tool kit (Appendix 5) municipalities can access that will provide resources and information on how to carry out municipal nutritional health policies. The nutritional audit and physical activity and healthy eating survey all confirm there is a lot of potential for positive change to occur if residents have the opportunity to access healthy food and beverages.

5. Facilitate other recreation facilities and organizations to develop and implement nutritional health policies in facilities and concessions attached to sporting and recreation teams, venues and events.

Rationalization:

This goal ties in with the supportive environments and communication and education indicators. Groups, organizations and employers will require education and awareness about the current health status of Prince George residents and how they can contribute to the health and wellness of their members, participants and employees. This process will take time and patience to put into action, as it means changing behaviors and paradigms of the sedentary population. Once the City has developed their nutritional health policy the next step would be to utilize a few of the Active Communities stakeholders who already have bought in to champion a task force to develop their own nutritional health policies. Suggested stakeholders could be the Minor Soccer Association, YMCA, School District, Youth Around Prince George and the Prince George Friendship Centre. The Active Community committee is

fortunate to have support from Northern Health to provide nutritional direction, knowledge and expertise.

6. Develop and provide an evaluation process for organizations, business and individuals.

Rationalization:

Evaluation is critical to the success of meeting the 20% goal of increasing physical activity and healthy eating in Prince George. A physical activity and healthy eating survey was conducted with 304 people in Prince George to determine an accurate baseline measurement of physical activity and healthy eating patterns (Appendix 4). The latest 2006 census numbers for Prince George indicates the city population at 70,981, to meet the 20% means engaging 14,196 inactive people to improve their activity and healthy eating levels. Municipalities are re-administering the survey every one to two years to determine participation rates and there are opportunities through BCRPA to apply for funding to implement the survey.

Community stakeholders were asked in the consultation process if there is evaluation or follow up to any of their wellness, activity or healthy eating programs and most of them aren't using evaluation to determine participation rates in their programs or determine how to effectively improve user rates.

BC Recreation and Parks Association has an evaluation toolkit that has been built upon the Active Communities Self Assessment Checklist and Planning Guide and has been designed so that communities can utilize the toolkit on a regular basis (e.g., quarterly, bi-annually, annually) to inform initiative implementation and monitor progress. These resources would be very helpful for organizations, businesses and individuals who are offering active community or wellness programs and wanting to measure personal activity or healthy eating rates on a personal level.

OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION

VISION

Engage, mobilize, encourage and recognize community efforts to provide opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.

GOALS

1. Develop a system that will provide more low cost opportunities to access public and private recreation facilities, programs, clubs and associations

Rationalization:

Cost has been indicated as one of the top four reasons that deter people from participating in physical activity and sport. This is a complex dilemma as user fees all vary and are set to cover costs to run and operate facilities, programs and provide services. Even with allocating user fees, most recreation facilities have to be subsidized in order to cover all operating costs.

Some communities have made the decision to leave user fees alone and focus on developing specific programs to assist those with low income. The problem with this solution is the stigma some people face to be categorized into these groups and then who makes the decision where to place them. Other communities have chosen to reduce user fees specifically for the Active Communities initiative by having participants, in essence, become Active Community members and use passports to identify them as members.

Both systems are worth recommending to meet the needs of low income participants who can't afford the user fees. It would be advisable to access a poverty group or develop a task force of people/agencies who work with or are on low income assistance to determine which programs will delineate away from stigmatization and prove successful. Kelowna applied a coupon system and distributed the free coupons to community social agencies and allocated responsibility to them to determine how many free usages are distributed to their low income clients.

There are many low income access programs the Canadian Recreation and Parks Association have developed as well as the BCRPA and the Healthy Living Alliance that indicate success.

By combining both systems the Active Community Committee can meet one of the needs of multicultural groups who prefer to participate in physical fitness and sport within their own community. An example would be to collaborate with the Sikh Temple and have them provide a walking group for Sikh women that leaves from the Sikh temple and has registered them as Active Community participants so they can go to the gym at the aquatic facility for a reduced rate.

2. Enhance volunteer recruitment and commitment

Rationalization:

Volunteer involvement was mentioned in the stakeholder meetings as a barrier to increasing physical participation. Volunteer Prince George is the primary recruitment and referral agency serving Prince George and area since 1991. It provide services to over 100 member organizations seeking volunteer support and was approached and are very willing to coordinate and develop a comprehensive volunteer strategy to assist the team in meeting the 20% by 2010 challenge. This initiative is unique and will create community spirit, momentum and participation, all great reasons to get involved.

3. Support and facilitate community initiatives and stakeholders

Rationalization:

Prince George community groups have started making positive changes by providing some creative active living programs (Appendix 6). It will be essential for the Active Communities Committee to continue to encourage and support this movement. Success of all programming is dependent on sustainability and if initiatives are driven by community need, there is a better chance of accomplishing the 20% goals. Currently there are over sixteen different active community initiatives occurring in Prince George but all of them are working in isolation.

As more awareness occurs, more community initiatives will appear. It will be important to have the Active Living Coordinator work closely with the groups to facilitate communication, a high delivery and implementation standard, marketing, funding awareness and evaluation support. An example would be the mall walking program the Pine Centre Mall and Volunteer Prince George is delivering in September. This initiative could benefit with support to plan, implement and evaluate. The Active Living Coordinator could assist them with his/her expertise; by helping promote the initiative using promotional resources; including the web site, make sure the event is promoted as an Active Community event with the logo and slogan and provide an evaluation tool that will assist in future planning and also enable the City to count the participation rates. A large portion of the Active Living Coordinator's duties will be to approach and mobilize other recreation providers in the community to incorporate Active Community initiatives into their activities, events and programs.

An important strategy will be to coordinate the marketing and branding so that all community initiatives use the developed Prince George Active Communities logo and slogan will educate the residents the initiatives are all related.

There are over 180 local community organization and businesses that are dedicated to physical activity, active promotion and healthy eating. These range from sports clubs to dance troupes to gardening groups to health organizations.

If even half of these organizations increased active community programming to include ten new members and ten of their sedentary members became more active it would address approximately 1800 people (12% of the 20% target).

Stakeholders (38) took part in the consultation process (Appendix 5) and received information about ActNow BC, current health status of residents and the Active Community strategy.

The objectives were:

- a) To raise awareness in the general public and to service providers of the initiative for "Active Communities."
- b) To build relationships, partnerships and a sense of ownership with other related active healthy living initiatives and service providers who can assist in providing facilities and services to meet these community needs.

- c) To help identify the issues and possible solutions to an acceptable service delivery model from a variety of different perspectives, the relative acceptance of which can be tested through a public process.

Stakeholders were asked in the consultation questionnaire if they would be interested in becoming part of the initiative and 98% replied yes and provided information for future contact.

4. Implement walking programs and leaders/champions

Rationalization:

It's time to show Prince George residents what is available for walking and hiking trails around Prince George and the best way to accomplish this is by creating walking clubs and programs that recreation providers like the YMCA could assist with. There are many successful provincial and international walking programs to follow that could be put into action. Healthy Living Alliance will be allocating funding through the BCRPA this fall to enable communities to develop and offer walking opportunities.

Fort St John and Penticton have designed web sites where people register, log and track their walking progress. Community Associations could be asked to develop a challenge where they motivate people in their regions to beat other communities. Walking leaders and champions could be found to provide basic walking clinics and introduce residents to some of the wonderful hiking and trails around Prince George. Walking, cycling and a hiking brochure could be created listing all the trails and sites and made available at all recreation facilities, clubs and even at Ogas stations. Sponsorship could be investigated to provide free tours to specific groups (new mom's) of all the facilities that provide walking opportunities i.e. Northern Sports Centre, Arena's, Masich Place, Pine Centre Mall, Forests for the World.



If this goal is decided on by the Active Community Committee, a majority of the resources and the Active Living Coordinator's time would have to be allocated in order to develop a comprehensive, effective walking initiative. Walking is considered to be the most effective way to accomplish reaching the 20% goal and getting sedentary people moving again.

5. Develop Passport Program

Rationalization:

The passport system is a great way to create synergy as people in the community would register to become an Active Community/Living participant. The passport would allow the individual to keep a record of his/her progress and would identify to all the stakeholders the participant is eligible to receive a 5% to 10% reduction in user fees.

Recreation Facilities, clubs and community associations could become Active Communities Champions, including expanding to business to become corporate champions when they register and agree to consider reducing user fees, creating an excellent promotional campaign.

Sponsorship and community partnerships would have to be

created in order to cover the printing costs associated with developing the passport books. In other communities of relative size 10,000 to 20,000 passports have been printed and distributed. People need to believe in the Active Community initiative and they are more prone to do this if they consider themselves a member and are contributing to making Prince George healthier and meeting the 20% goal.



SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS, COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

VISION

Facilitate and integrate physical activity and healthy eating in supportive environments that improve community capacity and value and contribute to an active lifestyle.

GOALS

1. Promote and support health and wellness in the workplace

Rationalization:

20% of Canadian companies offer comprehensive wellness programs which is very similar to the makeup of Prince George businesses, so there is a lot of potential to initiate active community plans into the workplace. Employees are enthusiastic about options to get active and eat healthier and would like to see more health and wellness programs available. A

recommendation would be to create a Prince George health and wellness committee that could mentor other businesses and corporations to get involved, provide support and resources to save time and money for the employer. It is also beneficial to have businesses that have been successful with health and wellness programs and projects market the concept. The BCRPA has a lot of workplace wellness resources available and there are many successful models occurring in other communities.

2. Work to increase the use of Active Transportation

Rationalization:

The population of older seniors is forecast to increase by 16% over the next five years, the largest percentage increase among all age groups. This age group is going to need transit for everyday use, as an effective alternative to automobile use. It is anticipated that there will be increased demand for custom and accessible conventional transit service in Prince George. Public transit supports the active communities' goals as it enables commuters to walk or bike in between bus stops which are increasing physical activity and the healthy lifestyle and decreasing air emissions and pollution. There could be an opportunity to engage environmental groups to improve air quality and green transportation through active transportation.

There is an expectation that transit will play a much bigger role in active transportation. Many communities have expressed the desire to encourage alternatives to driving through the promotion of transit oriented land use design and transportation infrastructure improvements. These improvements benefit pedestrians and cyclists.

The Active Communities Committee should work closely with the City of Prince George and BC Transit to provide input and feedback into Prince George's transit business plan and advocate for policies and recommendations that support Active Transportation. Partnering with Prince George transit to promote Active Transportation during their BC Clean Air Day would be a great way to market and promote lateral objectives. There is also a great opening to spread the Active Community message by utilizing buses as a promotion tool.

3. Work collaboratively with the health sector

Rationalization:

Northern Health is working diligently to meet the Act Now goals and very receptive to creating partnerships and providing resources and expertise in health and nutrition. The Active Communities Committee should work with Northern Health to develop a strategy to create awareness with northern health clients about the Active Community initiative. Opportunities to instill healthy eating and physical activity education, programming and resources would be a natural fit as both agencies are trying to meet the Act Now mandate of 20%. Some ideas would be to join the HEAL network and develop nutritional strategies to start addressing healthy eating in Prince George. Collaborating with the Northern Health School Based Team to develop strategies to inform and enhance the work nurses are presently

doing with school youth around physical activity and healthy eating. Public health nurses attached to the School Based Team access every school in Prince George and work with the teachers to support the Actions School BC program.

4. Develop the opportunities provided through community events and festivals; cultural, social, agricultural, health, industrial, sports and leisure

Rationalization:

Prince George has some very effective and successful events and festivals like the PGX, Rivers Day, Children's Festival, Aboriginal Day, Music Festival, Forest Expo, Home Show, Canada Day Celebration, Pride Celebrations, Provincial and International Sporting Events and Fund raising events like Relay for Life. Promoting the Active Community initiative at these functions would educate and promote physical activity and healthy eating. Registration to participate can be costly, so sponsorship or donations will be required to assist with expenses. Once the Active Community Committee is established and a coordinator is hired it would be a natural progression to have an active community event or festival in place no later than the spring of 2009. Most Active Communities have an annual event and many of them unveil their strategic plans on World Health Day. BCRPA has resources and specific proclaimed days and events to help promote Active Communities.

5. Encourage School District involvement

Rationalization:

Schools are the perfect place to encourage children to become more active and learn about healthy eating, they are a captive audience. A close working partnership with school administrators and Actions Schools! BC will be one avenue to creating success of meeting the 20% goals. Creating challenges and programs that will allow students to participate will require:

- Ensuring that teachers are not solely responsible for administration of program initiatives
- Will be free or subsidized
- Will be coordinated and administered by an outside reputable and respected agency
- Will provide free access to recreation facilities
- Will provide incentives, milestones and rewards
- Will enhance partnerships and communication

Recommendations are to work with Northern Health to access schools, get Heal Schools piloted and established in Prince George and utilize their communication methods to create awareness and education in the schools. There are 15, 716 students in the Prince George schools, if the Active Community Committee starts small and targets five schools that are already starting to make inroads towards physical activity and nutrition they have the ability to impact on approximately 1000-2000 children along with their family members, the

potential is there to reach up to 4,000 people. If those five schools become champions in the School District, then other schools will be encouraged to come on board.

6. Work with City Departments to develop and enhance activity and healthy eating.

Rationalization:

The Active Communities Committee will need to work with municipal and social planning in order to develop opportunities to increase green space and provide safe access and development around trail usage, sidewalks and creating connectors routes to communities. Along with participating in healthy eating initiatives the City is currently supporting like the food security task force, urban agriculture initiatives and farmers market.

COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND INVOLVEMENT

VISION

Create an Active Community Health Strategy that will be identifiable and recognizable for all residents which will educate, secure support and assist in making informed positive choices and changes about physical activity and healthy eating for life.

GOALS

1. Create awareness and education

Rationalization:

Prince George residents were asked in the Physical Activity and Healthy Eating telephone survey (2007-Appendix) about their awareness with the Active Community Initiative or 20% by 2010 Challenge and 81.5% were not familiar with either goal. Creating awareness in workplace, schools and using traditional programming models are currently reaching about 60% of the population, there is still a large percentage of the population that requires awareness and education to be enticed to take action towards adopting 30 minutes of exercise and taking a hard look at their present eating habits.

A large majority of the citizens don't participate in organized or planned activity so a key strategy will be to reach these people. By creating awareness with families around the wonderful opportunities in Prince George to participate in unorganized and unplanned activity will be essential. Educational and awareness campaigns that focus on easy ways to get motivated and maybe



highlight different opportunities through media like an active Prince George regular radio spot and newspaper column.

A survey by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) found that Canadians would be more physically active if they had more information on physical activity, health and well being (33%), had help planning activity into their daily schedule (23%) and had professional help choosing suitable activities (23%). Not surprisingly it is the approaches that target these gaps in the population that come most highly recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in their analysis of over 100 interventions five suggestions for creating awareness are:

- **Community-wide Campaigns**⁵ can raise the proportion of people who are physically active by 5% and result in a 16% increase in energy expenditure. This could include:
 - SummerActive / WinterActive
 - Move For Health Day
 - Everybody Gets To Play
 - Fitstart
 - Active Workplace
 - Active Aging
 - Inactive High Five
 - Girl Power
- Individually adapted health behaviour change programs can increase the time people are physically active by 35% and energy expenditure by 64%.
- Social support interventions in community contexts can increase the time spent physically active by 44% and the frequency of activity by 20%.
- Improved access to locations combined with informational outreach can increase physical activity by 48% and the percentage of people exercising three times a week by 25%.
- Point of decisions prompts can increase stair use by 54%.

2. Develop and execute a marketing strategy with a communication plan and branding exercise

Rationalization:

People should be able to recognize and identify with the Active Community Initiative. A detailed marketing plan needs to be developed and includes a communication plan and branding exercise.

Using key messages, like a logo and slogan consistently in communications materials will help build awareness of the Initiative. An effective strategy will tie all of the Active Communities activities and events together, adding strength and power to the Active Communities brand.

Some options to creating community pride and identification is to include the community in the design around the logo and slogan. One suggestion is to have the community design the logo and slogan in a City wide contest. The recommended choice is to have a graphic designer design three options for a logo and slogan and then go out to the community to vote on one of the selections. This would save time and provide the design and development quality required.

Objectives:

- To have a clearly defined message about the Prince George Active Communities initiative
- Create awareness and educate the citizens of Prince George about physical activity and healthy eating
- Keep stakeholders and community informed throughout the implementation of the strategic plan
- Create a web site the community can access with all relevant information available

PROPOSED MARKETING TIMELINE:

Marketing Activity	Deadline	Distribution Method
Create and distribute Press/Media release about strategic plan	October 1, 2007	Newspaper, e-mail and fax
Create an informational flyer/brochure	November 2007	Word of mouth, e-mail and fax
Develop Marketing Plan	April – May 2008	Committee / City / Stakeholders
Have Graphic Artist Design Slogan and Logo	June 2008	Committee / City
Slogan and Logo Contest with schools and community	September-October 2008	Committee / Schools / Advertising Agency / Stakeholders Radio, newspaper, TV
Design web site and activate	June 2008	Through City website and linking to other agencies
Develop Activity Bag with resources	July 2008	Committee, stakeholders, City

The BCRPA has developed a marketing toolkit and communication plan template to assist Active Communities teams to produce an integrated, comprehensive promotional strategy.

3. Develop and implement a Passport System

Discussed in Opportunities and Participation – Goal 5.

4. Develop and implement an Activity Bag for users

Rationalization:

The activity bag would be the same concept as a toolkit that community members such as community associations, stakeholders and corporate business could access to assist in developing active community wellness and health initiatives. This could include wellness plans, nutritional health policies, marketing and communication templates with logo and slogan, evaluation tools, programs and campaign ideas, health resources and data, community initiatives and contact information. The activity bag could assist the stakeholder develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive active community program, project or campaign.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

VISION

Provide Active Community initiatives that are all encompassing, offer equal right of entry to all people, improve access and minimize barriers for special populations facing social determinant factors.

GOALS

1. Reassess Joint Use Access between City and School District

Rationalization:

Accessing school facilities was mentioned as a challenge for some of the City Community Associations. Some of the schools limit access for the community associations and as most of the programs they provide are at a low cost, they need a facility that doesn't cost money to rent or operate.

Many community groups have excellent free or low cost access to school facilities also school classes have access to may civic facilities. The Joint Use Agreement has facilitated a great deal of physical activity for Prince George residents. It is essential that this cooperation continues and that the agreement is reviewed on a regular basis. All these facilities need to be utilized to their capacities to help promote and encourage active lifestyles. Issues should continue to be addressed to ensure this maximum usage of both School District properties and Civic facilities. Some accessibility and cost issues inhibit some groups and classes and these should continue to be discussed and taken into consideration.

2. Review the Effectiveness of Current Subsidy Programs

Rationalization:

The City and the YMCA both provide subsidy programs for those on fixed or low incomes. Concerns were expressed by participants who attended the consultation meetings and filled out questionnaires that the subsidy programs need to be evaluated and modified to be more users friendly and accessible for those people needing financial subsidy to become physically active. There was misinformation about what the subsidies provided and the eligibility requirements, indicating there is a need to improve the present subsidy systems. If the Active Communities Committee is going to be effective reaching the 20% goal, subsidy programs will be a very integral component to meeting those goals. Other communities have taken out the eligibility requirements to allow anyone who personally identifies as low income access to funding and some have allocated the social agencies to make the determinants on eligibility as they work with low income individuals and have the sensitivity training to accomplish this process more effectively.

3. Provide culturally relevant information and role models

Rationalization:

Cultural groups and associations in Prince George recommended a need to have culturally relevant information about physical activity and healthy eating and role models to assist in promoting these two goals. Association and identification of physical activity and healthy eating related to their culture is an important factor for other cultures to participate in events and programs. Developing or using physical activity and healthy eating programs that target and reach specific cultural groups will be the most effective approach to meet the 20% challenge. The Active Community Committee should have multicultural representation on the Active Communities Committee and task forces to assist in providing the expertise and networking to meet cultural requirements.



4. Enhance or Provide Active Community Initiatives for Sedentary People and Specific Target Groups

Rationalization:

Creative solutions will need to be considered to reach the sedentary or inactive. The traditional sport and recreation programs are very effective at programming for the active but are ineffective at reaching approximately 50% of the Prince George population. Specific target groups include; women, minorities, disabled, seniors, low or fixed income, single parent families, inactive, obese, uneducated, mentally unhealthy, youth, and students. There are groups and associations in Prince George that work with most of these specific target groups, creating education and awareness that will lead to partnerships and collaboration is vital. BCRPA and other agencies have developed programs for the sedentary and target groups. Accessing that information and resources would be the first step in trying to reach a portion of the community that could benefit from physical activity and good nutrition to become healthier individuals. Some very effective campaigns are:

- SummerActive / WinterActive
- Move For Health Day
- Everybody Gets To Play
- Fitstart
- Active Workplace
- Active Aging
- Inactive High Five
- Girl Power

PROPOSED BUDGET

Note: This does not address City infrastructure improvements or additions

PROPOSED BUDGET	2008	2009	2010	Project Total
Part-time Active Living Coordinator	\$29,000	\$30,800	\$32,000	\$91,800
Marketing & Community Awareness	\$20,000	\$22,000	\$24,000	\$66,000
Special Programs for Sedentary Groups	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$53,000
Physical Activity & Healthy Eating Survey	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$14,000	\$36,000
Promotional Materials (i.e. Activity Bag, Passport)	\$16,000	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$54,000
TOTALS	\$90,000	\$100,800	\$110,000	\$300,800

DELIVERY MODEL TIMELINES

PLANS AND POLICIES	2007	2008	2009	2010
Create A New Active Community Committee				
Hire Active Living Coordinator				
Support the Collaboration Of City Departments to Develop, Enhance and Implement models of Active Transportation in Prince George				
Develop City-wide Nutritional Health Policy				
Facilitate Community Nutritional Health Policies				
Develop Evaluation Process For Organizations, business and individuals				
As part of the Evaluation Process: Implement Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Survey				

OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION	2007	2008	2009	2010
Develop a Low Cost Opportunities Strategy				
Enhance Volunteer Recruitment and Commitment				
Support and Facilitate Community Initiatives and Stakeholders				
Implement Walking Programs and Leaders/Champions				
Develop Passport Program				

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS, COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS	2007	2008	2009	2010
Promote and Support Health and Wellness in the Workplace: Develop a City Wide Wellness Committee				
Work To Increase Active Transportation; specifically with PG transit				
Work Collaboratively with Health Sector				
Develop Opportunities Provided Through Community Events & Festivals				
As part of Incorporating into Community Events and Festivals: Host Active Community Event Fall of 2008				
Encourage School District Involvement				

COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND INVOLVEMENT	2007	2008	2009	2010
Create Awareness & Education				
Develop and Execute Marketing Strategy with Communication Plan and Branding Exercise				
As part of the Marketing Strategy: Implement Logo and Slogan Contest				
As part of the Marketing Strategy: Implement Communication Plan and Develop Website				
Develop & Implement Passport System				
Develop and Implement Activity Bag				

ACCESSIBILITY	2007	2008	2009	2010
Re-assess Joint Use Access between City and School District				
Review the Effectiveness of Current Subsidy Programs				
Provide Culturally Relevant Information & Role Models				
Enhance or Provide sedentary or specific target group programs / campaigns				

ENDNOTES

1. *WHO: Controlling the Global Obesity Epidemic (2002).*
Available at www.who.int/nutrition/topics/obesity/en/
2. Canadian Community Health Survey (2004).
Available at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/income_food_sec_sec_alim_e.html
3. Public Agency of Canada Report: Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth – 2006.
Available at www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-ReportCard-2006.pdf
4. *Creating Effective Communication for Physical Activity Trends 1998-2003. CFLRI.*
Available at www.cflri.ca
5. *Physical Activity.*
Available at www.thecommunityguide.org

APPENDICES

All Appendices are bound in a companion document.

Appendix 1: List of Active Communities Project Deliverables and Timelines

Appendix 2: Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Survey Report – June 2007

Appendix 3: Recreation Facilities Food Environment Audit Report – June 2007

Appendix 4: Active Communities Initiatives Report – June 2007

Appendix 5: MRFEAT Toolkit Overview (Draft)

Appendix 6: Prince George Community Initiatives