

## REGIONAL RECREATION COMMITTEE

### Final Report

#### COMMITTEE MANDATE

The Regional Recreation Committee (RRC) was created on June 17, 2015, and stems from the provincial government's 2014 program for investment in recreation planning through the RSCs. The RRC was mandated to advise the Board of Directors (BOD) of the RSC on any issues related to planning and developing recreational activities in the Chaleur region. Since its creation, the committee has met 14 times in order to meet the objectives stated hereinafter.

**The role of the RRC** was to oversee the development of the first regional recreation action plan. The RRC was therefore mandated to:

- (a) Specify the mandate of the study;
- (b) Prepare terms of reference for hiring a consultant;
- (c) Review proposals; and
- (d) Recommend a consultant to the RSC.

Once it was up and running, the RRC was to supervise the ongoing study, advise the consultant as needed, review interim reports and perform a detailed analysis of the final report before being presented to the BOD with its recommendations.

Once the planning phase has been completed and the regional recreation plan has been adopted by the CRSC, the mandate, composition and structure of the RRC will be reassessed by the CRSC in light of the recommendations that have been formulated and retained.

The RRC could then be responsible for implementing and monitoring the regional recreation plan. The province has already announced that a second round of funding will be available to assist with the implementation of proposals that were retained during the planning phase. The RRC could also be involved as a consultant and coordinator with the various stakeholders in the region in matters of delivery of recreation services, regional actions and government interventions.

#### STUDY MANDATE

**The main goals of this study, as per defined the by the committee and adopted by the board, were as follows:**

- ✓ Ensure a better regional coordination for the development and maintenance of the recreational, sports and cultural infrastructures.

- ✓ Evaluate the economic and social sustainability thresholds concerning the development and operation of recreational and sports infrastructures and programs.
- ✓ Foster the development of a high quality recreational and sports program for the people who live in the Chaleur region's territory.

**The purpose of this study was to achieve three objectives:**

1) **Asset mapping** which was to include:

- ) Inventory and evaluation of the public sport and recreation facilities (internally carried out by the Chaleur RSC);
- ) Operational and managerial analysis of the public sport and recreation infrastructures;
- ) Inventory and evaluation of the sport and recreation programs;
- ) Inventory and evaluation of the participants;
- ) Inventory and evaluation of the human capacity of the organization to offer sport and recreation programs;

2) **Recreational needs assessment** which was to include:

- ) Identification of future sport and recreational development priorities at the regional or sub-regional level.

3) **Determine the strategic position** of the region in terms of recreational activities which was to include:

- ) Assessment and identification of collaborative possibilities;
- ) Development of an equitable cost sharing formula between the partners.

**Scope and objectives of the recreational planning study process**

It is expected that the regional recreation study is to guide the Chaleur Regional Service Commission in the development of a long-term vision in the area of recreation and sports in **determining the current assets established in the territory** and, lastly, identifying the existing deficiencies in terms of recreational and sports infrastructures and programs according to the general principles of the “**Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing**”. The study shall accomplish the following exercises:

The study was to accomplish the following main exercises to meet the above-mentioned three objectives:

1. Review existing plans, documents and statistics in order to understand the region's socio-economic situation.
2. Review existing reports, plans and any documents showing the physical condition of the infrastructures.
3. While taking into account the realities of the rural setting such as the Chaleur region, the consultant was to **document, identify and meet with the stakeholders currently involved in the offer of programs** in recreation and sports, to understand the current situation of the services provided and the capacity to offer programs to the citizens.
4. Based on the infrastructure inventory provided from the CRSC, identify existing **public** recreational and sports **infrastructures** and assess them in terms of structural condition, participation levels, organizational structure and operational structure.
5. Identify the **deficiencies and/or the over capacity of public** recreation and sport **infrastructures** to better understand the related future needs.
6. Identify existing **recreational and sports programs** and assess them in terms of accessibility, level of participation, organizational structure and operational structure.
7. Identify the **deficiencies and/or over capacity** in terms of recreation and sport programs to better understand the related future needs.
8. Develop an **equitable sharing formula** of the operational, maintenance and development cost of the public infrastructures.
9. Make recommendations to the Board of Directors of the CRSC so that it can **adopt a strategic vision** with regards to recreation and sports and embrace the idea of collectively pursuing long-term planning objectives for the Chaleur region as a whole.

The study was also to include a **public consultation** process taking into account:

- ) Consultation user groups of the facilities and programs in order to gather their opinions on the priorities relating to recreation and sports.

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## **SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE CONSULTANT**

The selection process for choosing a consultant was subject to a rigorous and transparent exercise.

Firstly, the terms of references, defined by the RRC and adopted by the BOD, was added to the request for proposals. The latter was published on-line on the New Brunswick Opportunities Network for two weeks.

Thereafter, a subcommittee of the RRC, comprised of four members and accompanied by the support staff of the CRSC and the provincial coordinator, analyzed the proposals through a point system. The results of this exercise were presented to the RRC and the recommended consultant by the committee to carry out the study was adopted by the BOD on March 23, 2016. This consulting firm, based out of Toronto, is called Sierra Planning and Management.

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## **WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE CRSC's PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

The planning department proceeded with an inventory of sports and recreation infrastructures of municipalities and LSD of the Chaleur region. A total of 127 sports and recreations equipment distributed over 68 sites have been listed. A database has been developed containing at least 40 fields concerning the location, the contact persons, the physical characteristic and the equipment state. The state of the equipment is up to date as long as this information has been given by the contact persons. The database can produce multiple types of reports in both official languages and a detailed form for the equipment. An example of the form is also annexed. These forms may be consulted by authorized persons on a shared folder placed on Dropbox.

These facilities have been mapped in the Geographic Information System (GIS) by the commission.

The following chart gives a summary of the equipment category and the number of equipment identified in each municipality and the LSD.

	Bathurst	Beresford	Nigadoo	Petit-Rocher	Pointe-Verte	Belledune	DSL	Total
Outdoor Base					1			1
Baseball	6	3		1	1	3		14
Basketball	1					1	1	3
BMX / Skateboard	2			1		1		4
Community Centre	1	1	1	2		1	4	10
Recreation Centre	1						3	4
Curling	1	1						2
Golf	2							2
Gymnasium	13	1		2	1	1	4	22
Outdoor rink	2	1			1		2	6
Indoor rink	2	1		1		1		5
Pool	1							1
Track and Field	2			1			1	4
Beach	1	1	1	1		1	1	6
Non-motorized trails	3	1			1		3	8
Soccer	7	1	2	2		1	3	16
Softball	3	1	1	2			1	8
Tennis	4	1	1	1	1	1		9
Volleyball	1	1						2
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Nombre de sites</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>68</b>

## RRC – ANALYSIS OF THE WORK BY THE CONSULTANT

The report of the consultant is comprised of seven main sections:

- 1) Current Situation
  - a. Policy Alignment
  - b. Geography of the Region and Settlement Trends
  - c. Sports and Recreation Facilities of the Chaleur Region.
- 2) Consultation
  - a. Public
  - b. User Groups
- 3) Needs Analysis Based on a Standard Approach

- 4) Asset Management Approach
- 5) Regional Vision for Recreation
- 6) Regional Plan Recommendations
- 7) Recommended Cost Sharing Mechanism

## **Feedback of the Committee**

### **1) Current Situation**

#### a) Policy Alignment

The first part of the report highlights the importance of National and Provincial Recreation Framework Policies on which a foundation and a set of principles guide the province's sport and recreation system. It is recommended that the regional plan draw on this national and provincial framework to establish a sport and recreation delivery system to maximize the level of health and wellness of citizens.

#### b) Geography of the Region and Settlement Trends

This section provides an overview of the Chaleur region's demographics and highlights its key characteristics. It also provides interesting links regarding the distribution of facilities by population rank and per capita cost. These elements could be used to support the development of cost-sharing mechanisms.

#### c) Sports and Recreation Facilities of the Chaleur Region.

This section raised several questions about the source of the data provided and its accuracy. A more thorough review will be required to validate the detailed description of the main facilities in the Chaleur region. The facilities and equipment inventory, developed by the planning department, can complement this exercise in a second phase. Another factor to consider in more depth is the evaluation of existing facilities in order to identify the required investments in the years to come. This point will be reviewed later on in this report under the Asset Management section.

### **2) Consultation**

Two surveys were developed in collaboration with the Planning Department and the Provincial Coordinator. The first survey was intended for the general public in the region and the second for user groups. Although these surveys are not scientific, they provide interesting avenues for developing a regional plan. The participation rate is also worth mentioning, with 703 responses

from the general public and 36 individual responses for user groups (representing 24 user groups).

a) Public

Seventy-five percent of respondents were from urban areas (Bathurst, BNPP and Belledune) and the difference was from local service districts.

Interestingly, the top-rated physical activities in a series of forty most popular responses are unstructured activities such as walking, hiking and cycling. Group sports such as hockey and soccer are found in 18 and 38 positions respectively.

Overall, the majority of respondents are satisfied with existing facilities. Respondents also indicated that they are using facilities in a neighboring community. This was particularly evident for regional scale facilities such as the arenas and the Aquatics Center in Bathurst, but also for more local facilities such as soccer and ball fields. In light of these findings, 65 % of respondents supported the cost-sharing plan for recreational facilities and 57 % favored a cost-sharing mechanism based on a taxation system instead of a user fee approach (27 %).

b) User Groups

As mentioned earlier, the survey was completed by 36 respondents representing 24 user groups. The detailed list can be found on page 42 of the report. The answers reveal that the decline in population is identified as an important challenge to attract enough players, especially in sports and leagues aimed at young people. The decline in population also makes it difficult to recruit coaches. The lack of volunteers also limits their ability to grow programming. Other challenges raised include lack of funding and lack of capacity at the facility level to hold regional and provincial competitions. The majority of groups are satisfied with the rental fees and the participation in recreation groups is largely regional.

### **3) Needs Analysis Based on a Standard Approach**

This part of the report identify two approaches to set service delivery standards for recreation.

The first approach rests on population and the second on participation.

The consultant's report states that facilities that have been historically developed in response to the needs of the region, such as an arena or aquatic center, will use a population-based standards for facility provision, while participation-based standards will serve as an alternate measure for future facility provision. The Committee emphasizes that an efficient system for regional data collection is required for this approach to be considered in our long-term needs analysis.

The consultant then presents his population-based needs analysis for the existing indoor and outdoor facilities in the region. The list of these facilities can be found on page 57 of the consultant's report. The results show that, overall, the region's standard of provision is medium to good compared to the national median (data compiled through a review of 21 communities across Canada). Based on these criteria alone, three types of facilities may require longer-term adjustments in service provision. These are the indoor rinks, soccer fields and ball fields. In fact, the consultant indicates that the region could provide for the needs of the population with one less arena. In terms of soccer and ball fields, these show an under-supply in comparison with Canadian standards. However, the public survey did not indicate that residents found access to this level inadequate, but user groups pointed out that they sometimes found it difficult to book sufficient play time. A standard regional booking system would allow us to better understand the use of these facilities.

#### 4) Asset Management Approach

This section is the **cornerstone** of the consultant's report because any recommendations proposed by the consultant in section 7 of this report will be based on an asset management approach in accordance with PSAB 3150 (Public Sector Accounting Board).

The asset management approach includes three main steps.

a) Establishment of a recreational asset inventory system.

The work undertaken by the Planning Department is a good start and will continue to be fueled in collaboration with the municipalities and other owners of the assets.

b) Valuation and condition assessments

The consultant recommends that the municipalities should undertake recreational infrastructure assessment exercise. The consultant recommends that this would need to be cost-shared among the partners to such an exercise (whether this is some or all of the communities). It is recommended to conduct an assessment of deferred maintenance needs as well as life cycle replacement needs. It could be overseen through a standing committee to ensure a common and regional approach.

c) Asset Management Outcomes

Asset management is a decision-making tool. In fact, this exercise will provide stakeholders with a regional overview of the asset conditions, maintenance and replacement costs after the assets life cycle. While this approach is not an end in itself, it serves as a starting point for regional reflection on the long-term needs for investment in sports and recreational infrastructure.

#### 5) Regional Vision for Recreation (still to come)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6) Regional plan recommendations

The consultant proposes more than 50 recommendations for the regional plan. This part of the committee's mandate required many meetings and in-depth reflections. Each of the recommendations have been viewed. This exercise occasionally motivated lively debates and has not always been unanimous. However, the committee's recommendations in regards to the consultant's proposed plan will give you some ideas on how to develop a regional plan.

#### A) INDOOR ICE

##### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

##### **Summary of the Consultant's recommendations:**

The proposed strategy for indoor rinks is to maintain and invest in all existing arenas, despite the operational justification for decommissioning an ice rinks.

It is also proposed to establish regional collaboration to improve customer satisfaction, profitability and planning for ice time requirements.

In addition, it is recommended that the commitment on cost sharing of capital investment be approved at the regional level while discarding the option of a sub-regional approach. The cost-sharing formula should also be based on use rather than on ability to pay (property taxes or population or combined formula).

The consultant recommends the transition of ice allocation policies and procedures, currently managed individually by each municipality, towards a regional allocation policy.

The CRSC would be the body that would undertake this regional planning, which would relate to a regional committee made up of municipal members and LSD, which in turn would require approval from their respective councils.

##### Recommendation 1:

##### **Each municipality should continue its current planning for investment in its arenas.**

Several members question the reasoning of continuing to maintain investments in the five existing arenas while national standards indicate that there is one too many arenas in the region. Other members agree to continue to maintain all rinks and are not prepared to recommend the closure of any ice pad without obtaining more data on the level of use of all rinks in the area. All members agreed that further research is needed to validate the provision need for this service.

Recommendation 2:

**The City of Bathurst should not contemplate the repurposing of the second ice surface at the KC Irving Centre on the basis of lower than desired utilization.**

All members agree with this recommendation, especially if you look at the potential of sports tourism, for example.

Recommendation 3:

**It is recommended that all existing ice arenas are maintained and provided with required investment to ensure their continued use over the plan period.**

Members agree with this recommendation, but future investments must be justified on the basis of a regional plan/vision.

Recommendation 4:

**As described in the cost-sharing recommendations of this plan, the RSC should oversee the full and complete development of an asset management framework for all recreation facilities.**

All members agree and also recommend that RSC should oversee the development of a comprehensive asset management framework for all recreational facilities, not just rinks.

Recommendation 5:

**Working with local municipal partners and representatives of the user groups, the RSC should work to transition ice allocation policies and procedures from the current practice of allocation by each individual municipality, to a regional allocation policy.**

All members agree with this approach. However, associations, such as Minor Hockey, will need to unite to make this approach work. Some members question how to proceed with this approach when facilities are owned and planned locally (each municipality). Contradiction with recommendation 1. Also, the choice of skating rink is often influenced by the sports club or association. Efforts must therefore be done to work with these groups to help harmonize a regional approach related to ice time management.

Recommendation 6:

**In order for this to succeed, this plan recommends an approach to cost sharing not on the basis of capacity to pay (either property assessment or population or a combination) but on the basis of usage.**

The committee questions the proposed approach for the cost-sharing formula for arenas. The consultant suggests a formula based on usage. Some inaccuracies in the data collected and the possible changes in the year-to-year usage rate does not favor a stable and precise formula. In addition, a capacity to pay approach would allow all LSD / municipalities to contribute.

Recommendation 7:

**The RSC should be the body to undertake all of this regional planning, reporting to a regional committee comprised of municipal and LSD members which in turn will seek approval from their respective councils.**

All agreed that future arena investments should be based on needs and a regional vision and that this exercise could be undertaken by CSR. However, contrary to the consultant's recommendation, the committee does not rule out the option of cost sharing arenas by subregion.

Most members agreed with this recommendation. But some members do not want to rule out the possibility of a sub-regional approach, as contra-indicated in the study.

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## **B) INDOOR AQUATICS**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

#### **Summary of the consultant's recommendations:**

The region is currently served by one indoor aquatic facility. Built in 1983. According to the City of Bathurst, the facility will likely require replacement in the next 10-15 years. At current, cost estimates for a typical pool complex with additional ancillary space, excluding land and any extraordinary site-related development costs, are in the order of \$17.5 to \$22.5 million.

The Region benefits from a dedicated indoor aquatics facility. This means that a large rural service area also benefits from this asset which is typically only found in larger urban centres (30,000+ population). Currently there is no regional or sub-regional cost sharing for the aquatics facility. Indoor aquatics facilities often carry the highest deficits for any type of recreational asset. However, when compared to other assets in terms of the number of participants using indoor pools, the cost per user is often not significantly higher than that for indoor ice arenas.

The pillars of the plan for aquatics are as follows:

1. Recognize and protect the aquatics centre as an important element of the quality of life for residents across the region.
2. Accordingly invest in life cycle replacement as necessary.
3. At 33 years of age, commence planning and cost-sharing solutions for a new aquatics facility predicated on a new facility within 10 years.

4. Adopt the principles of co-location and multi-use in defining the future concept for aquatics. This should include consideration of the potential for the development of a multi-use recreation complex, with the location subject to detailed analysis and discussion with all municipal partners.
5. Cost-sharing: regional cost sharing of existing operational deficits should be implemented in the short-term.
6. Cost sharing for capital replacement of the existing facility should include all communities (municipalities and LSDs) within the Chaleur RSC.
7. Cost sharing the operating deficit of a new aquatics centre is as important as cost-sharing the capital cost. Whereas the capital costs will likely be funded in part by grants from upper levels of government, operating costs are likely to receive little or no offsetting annual grants. Operating costs for a facility over its expected functional life can easily exceed the capital costs of construction.
8. Adopt a partnership approach to development and operations: in addition to considering co-location with other recreational assets, the opportunities should be explored for partnerships with the schools boards in respect to both capital cost sharing and operating cost sharing for a new facility. Typically, access by the schools to municipal pools is heavily subsidized and may even involve free use by the schools. The opportunity in this plan is to undertake full and deliberate discussions with all prospective partners including the schools, colleges (as the future may allow) and non-profit organizations such as the YMCA. The aim is to determine the range of options open for consideration other than the traditional standalone municipal facility designed, funded and operated by the City. A new and innovative approach is required for any aquatics replacement plan.

Recommendation 8:

**Undertake a new facility condition assessment for the existing pool as a basis for asset management and future facility replacement planning.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 9:

**Contingent on the condition assessment, itemize the long-term planning for a replacement aquatics centre as a task of the Chaleur RSC Recreation Leadership Assistant.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 10:

**The RSC must take the lead in establishing consensus among the municipal and LSD partners as to the range of options and cost shares structures.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 11:

**It is recommended that the City of Bathurst implements a data collection system for program and drop-in registration that includes the home/resident community of all users of the aquatics centre.**

All members agree with the collection of data but not necessarily that the costs will be based on usage. Members prefer further discussions before deciding which formula best applies to the Aquatics Center.

Recommendation 12:

**The operating costs of the current facility (or alternatively the annual operating deficit) should be borne region-wide.**

Most members are not in favor of paying for the deficits of facilities of a neighboring municipality without having a say in how the expenses are incurred for these facilities.

Recommendation 13:

**It is recommended that the operating deficit cost-sharing formula for this facility in the near term be based on population.**

Some members do not agree on a population-based cost-sharing formula as it does not recognize the principle of ability to pay. The distance to the site must also be part of the equation.

Recommendation 14:

**The plan does not recommend the use of assessment data as this represents a measure of “capacity to pay”.**

Not all members agree with a formula based on usage. For some, the ability to pay must be considered in the formula.

Recommendation 15: (Set aside until the end of the exercise.)

**The aim of this plan is to embark on change, and not necessarily achieve full implementation of cost-sharing within the short-term. As such, a flexible approach to the timing and means of implementing this cost-sharing of operational costs is important. The particulars of this flexible approach can only be worked out through regional standing committee but we recommend the following:**

- a. **Transition to cost-sharing the deficit in a phased manner – e.g. open up 25% of the deficit to be cost-shared in year 1, 50% in year 2, 75% in year 4 onwards; or**
- b. **By agreement, open up a maximum of 50% of the annual deficit to be cost shared and develop an agreeable phasing plan to implement this mechanism over time.**

Recommendation 16: (Set aside until the end of the exercise.)

**It is recommended that cost-sharing approaches for operational deficits for arenas and the pool be kept separate from one another.**

Recommendation 17:

**As guidance to future planning, it is recommended that the cost share formula for a replacement facility take into account the full range of options including formula which include weighted assessment in addition to population, and include full accounting for those elements of a multi-use facility which are regional in nature (e.g. aquatics) versus local in nature (e.g. gymnasium, meeting rooms, fitness facilities, etc.).**

Most members agree with a weighted assessment formula for new regional facilities. However, certain members do not agree with the 50 % population and 50 % tax base approach. Others also mention that this recommendation must not limit itself to the aquatic center, but also to other new facilities with a regional vocation.

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## **C) CURLING**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

The region is served by two curling clubs (Bathurst, Beresford). The Beresford curling facility underwent significant renovations in 2012 and as such is unlikely to require additional upgrades over the plan period. The condition of the Bathurst Curling Club is unknown.

Recommendation 18:

**The municipalities should each continue to maintain the region's two curling facilities, monitoring utilization to ensure that they remain well utilized, and therefore a valuable investment for the municipalities.**

Since these infrastructures are either owned and/or managed by associations, it is too early at this phase to make a recommendation to this effect, especially with the current lack of data in this matter.

## **D) PUBLIC GYMNASIUM**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

Gymnasiums are mainly provided to residents through regional school systems. User groups using gymnasiums indicate that they have sufficient access to meet their needs. The majority of gyms are located in Bathurst, while school gyms are offered in other municipalities and in several of the major LSD communities.

#### Recommendation 19:

**The provision of gymnasiums should remain primarily a responsibility of the local school boards in the Chaleur Region.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

#### Recommendation 20:

**The main thrust of regional efforts should be to ensure that public and user groups access to these school gymnasia is maximized. The RSC should therefore monitor through partnership with the school boards the nature and extent of utilization of these spaces. Given the currently strong community use of school facilities, the RSC should support those municipalities interested in assuming a greater role in the management and booking of school board gyms and sports fields in return for enabling greater access and programming by the municipalities or their delivery agents, where possible and appropriate.**

For the most part, the members agree with this recommendation. An example is given such as the Miramichi model that seems to work well.

#### Recommendation 21:

**The RSC Recreation Leadership Assistant should oversee the development of regional capacity building to maximize program development (through community volunteers) utilizing the resources of the schools and in particular the gym spaces. (This recommendation does not apply to gymnasiums owned by the municipality or other body.)**

While members stressed the importance of developing a partnership between CRSC and school boards to maximize the use of gymnasiums, one must be aware that school boards may want to maintain their independence. It would then have to be negotiated.

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 22:

**Future planning for the aquatics centre should include consideration of double gymnasium and/or indoor field house uses to improve the range of facilities under the control of the municipal sector.**

The members believe it is too early to position oneself on this recommendation. More studies will be required to confirm or not the need to incorporate a double gymnasium or an indoor field house to the future aquatic center.

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**E) INDOOR SOCCER/INDOOR FIELD HOUSE USES**

**Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

The Nigadoo Sportplex is an important facility that is well used by soccer groups year-round, and more generally by residents for the walking track. The aging facility is an arena converted into a soccer field and an indoor walking track.

The development of new modern indoor soccer facilities is often undertaken by none profit groups (the user groups in partnership with third parties) or by the private sector in larger communities.

This plan recognizes that the municipal sector can play an important role in maintaining existing facilities and in undertaking a study to consider, in the long term, the addition of new interior fields within a multi-use recreation complex. The facility would house the new aquatic center, as well as dry grounds such as a gymnasium and indoor sports field.

Recommendation 23:

**The municipality needs to conduct a fulsome building condition assessment of the Nigadoo facility to identify required capital upgrades over the next ten years. The RSC should coordinate this assessment based on a standardized approach for all facilities.**

The members recognize the importance of a full assessment of the Nigadoo Sportplex. The standing committee could help the village with this exercise. Some question, however, a regional approach versus a centralize approach as presented in this recommendation. However, some do consider that a multi-use sports complex more economical and easier to manage than single function facilities spread across the territory.

Recommendation 24:

**As a facility that is utilized on a regional basis, the RSC should work with the facility booking manager to ensure that booking data is collected on a weekly basis that includes (a) duration of booking, and (b) home constituency of booking groups.**



The members agree that the CRSC works with the village of Nigadoo to gather the usage data. However, a standard data collection system must be implemented for all the facilities of the region.

Recommendation 25:

**As a regional facility, capital upgrades to the facility should be considered as part of the mandate of the regional standing committee and if approved costs shared between regional partners.**

The members agree with this recommendation, but it should also include the operation deficit as it is the case with the recommendation for the aquatics center.

Recommendation 26:

The artificial field at ESN/Petit-Rocher Arena is a valuable facility that has the benefit of being co-located with a full-size outdoor natural soccer field. There was some community interest in a club house for the soccer facility. There was also expressed interest in lighting at the artificial field to extend the period of play.

**Identify opportunities to provide space for local soccer groups within the existing plans for capital expansion of the arena facility, rather than the development of a standalone club house.**

The Committee would rather opt for a clubhouse separate from the arena by considering access to the school's facilities. However, this could have its own challenges in terms of accessibility during the summer months.

Recommendation 27:

**Invest in lighting at the artificial field. As a facility that is used on a regional basis, this investment should be subject to a regional cost-sharing formula.**

According to some users of the artificial soccer field in Petit-Rocher, lighting is necessary to prolong play time and to accommodate provincial tournaments, national championships, etc. This vision fits well for sports tourism. The members therefore agree with this recommendation.

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## **F) OUTDOOR SOCCER FIELDS**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

While the population-based standard of provision of soccer fields is relatively low compared to other communities across Canada, the public and user-group that responded to the surveys indicated that residents are largely satisfied with the level of provision.

Recommendation 28:

**To allow the soccer groups to continue to grow their sport as per their vision, this plan recommends that the region adopts a target of 1 soccer field per 4,000 residents.**

The Committee foresees the renovation of the current soccer fields instead of adding new ones considering the users' satisfaction with the level of provision. The committee also questions if the soccer strategy shouldn't favor a more centralized approach.

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**G) BALL DIAMONDS AND MULTI-USE FIELDS**

**Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

Standards of provision are in line with communities (on a regional population basis) of a similar size. Community consultation suggests that for some facilities there are booking constraints.

Recommendation 29:

**The RSC, working with municipal staff, should monitor the utilization of all ball diamonds over time.**

Several members question this recommendation because they are not convinced that the ball fields are over utilized. For example, the ones in Pointe-Verte are used at 0%. Also, certain ball fields are owned by sports associations rather than the municipalities. All are in agreement, however, that a position cannot be taken on this because of lack of data.

Recommendation 30:

**The local municipalities should respond to resident concerns over maintenance and amenities at existing fields.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 31:

**It is recommended that the RSC co-ordinate the condition assessment as part of the asset management reporting process for all outdoor fields under municipal control.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 32:

**The supply of ball diamonds should be maintained.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

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## **H) TENNIS COURTS**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

Outdoor tennis courts provide a valuable amenity to many residents including opportunities for informal use of the tennis courts by residents for general, unstructured recreation use. This may include formal games or tennis or use for other related sports such as pickleball.

#### Recommendation 33:

Residents who responded to the survey indicated the importance of tennis courts as important local amenities. They also indicated that many of these courts needed repairs and better maintenance.

**The municipalities of the region should invest in their facilities by first conducting asset condition assessments, and subsequently establishing the costs of reinvestment in the courts, and equipment.**

#### Recommendation 34:

**Municipalities should consider the potential for the development of multi-use opportunities for these courts – to include other uses such as half-court basketball where utilization and need demonstrate that conversion of one or more tennis courts is warranted.**

#### Recommendation 35:

Regionally, the RSC has a role to play in responding to the growing demand for sports which are geared to an aging population.

**The growth of pickleball should be a specific area of future research and consultation to determine interest from the local communities in creating pickleball courts on existing tennis courts – either on a dedicated use basis through conversion of the courts or by adding pickleball lines to existing tennis courts.**

#### RRC feedback to recommendations 33, 34 and 35.

The survey indicates public interest for Tennis. There is a consensus that a regional assessment of all tennis courts should take place to determine if they are in good condition according to demand and if they are any underused, to foresee a conversion into pickle ball courts since we already have the asphalt, the poles, which would save time, energy and effort but mostly money; this would become regional. The tennis club is in a better position to evaluate the courts with the support of the regional committee. There should be a possibility of having indoor courts also.

## **D) OTHER FACILITY TYPES**

### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

The regional plan has an interest in the equitable distribution of many outdoor and indoor facility types but also recognizes that the level of service varies between the urban and semi-urban municipal communities and the more rural and remote parts of the region.

As such, this plan does not include standards and recommendations for geographic distribution of recreation assets which are more localized in their use – this includes parks, playgrounds, local trails, and outdoor rinks.

#### Recommendation 36:

**Each municipality and LSD must determine its own approach to the level of service it seeks to provide its residents but this should also recognize that where the level of service is reduced, and residents utilize services provided in other municipalities, there is an obligation to work toward an equitable sharing of costs.**

#### Recommendation 37:

**At a regional scale, there are required minimums that all municipalities and LSDs should conform to with regard to local services. The most important of these is effective asset management of existing facilities such as playgrounds and outdoor fields.**

#### Recommendation 38:

**The Chaleur RSC should work with constituent municipalities and LSDs to (a) add existing play structures infrastructure to the facility inventory; and (b) conduct asset condition and lifecycle planning for all equipment.**

#### Recommendation 39:

**It is recommended that future planning for playground and other small scale community amenities include an assessment of the potential for funding to be achieved through site plan agreement with sub-division developers for residential and commercial development, as well as sponsorship and grant programs available from national corporations.**

#### RRC feedback to recommendations 36, 37, 38 and 39

There is a consensus that these facilities should be maintained at a municipal level rather than at a regional level, as much on the planning side than on the cost-sharing side.

## J) TRAILS

### Consultant's recommendation in bold

Followed by RRC feedback

Trails development is long term in nature and to be most effective in terms of generating true recreation and tourism potential, must cross jurisdictional boundaries to create an integrated regional trails network. Trails plans, active transportation plans and shoreline plans all offer regional solutions but often the implementation is limited by the unwillingness or lack of resources of one municipality to work collaboratively under an agreed timeline to complete development.

The opportunity for the RSC is to coordinate the implementation of regional trails. The Chaleur Trail Plan (Belledune to Bathurst) originally proposed and funded by the Sentiers Verts Chaleur Green Trails is a comprehensive trail program connecting all six municipalities. As of November 2016 the proposed route, concept design, capital costs and a phasing plan have been developed.

The implementation of this trail system will rest on availability of capital grants, fundraising and municipal capital expenditure. To be successful the plan will require an appropriate cost sharing mechanism. The appropriate mechanism should be considered in the context of the trails plan itself and the intended benefits to each municipality.

#### Recommendation 40:

**It is recommended that all municipal partners consider the potential for linkage to the broader open space planning that each is responsible for. This project should be overseen by the Regional Services Commission which will have a mandate to develop an implementation plan (including a funding plan) for the trail that is approved by each of the municipalities.**

#### Recommendation 41:

**The RSC should fund the development of an active transportation plan for the region. The trails plan advocated by the trails user group should form part of a broader regional discussion of biking, hiking, open space and healthy living.**

#### Rétroaction du CCRL pour les recommandations 40 et 41 :

There is consensus that the trails project is a great opportunity for the region. The RSC should work in collaboration with existing groups (Chaleur Green Trails, Bathurst Green Trails, NB Trails) without, however, insuring its supervision, as it is recommended. It could help on the financing side. It is also mentioned that the trails should be accessible during winter and summer. It is suggested that the permanent committee verifies with Chaleur Green Trails to see if there is an openness for collaboration.

## **K) SPECIALIZED FACILITIES: ATLAS PARK**

**Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

Recommendation 42:

Atlas Park was developed as a reclamation of a former quarry. The outdoor facility is well used by residents from Pointe-Verte, and surrounding communities. The indoor facility is not used to its full capacity. Over the long term there is consideration to revitalize the indoor facility at a cost of more than \$1 million.

**The Village of Pointe-Verte needs to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of continuing to maintain the indoor facility. The RSC should assist in this process, helping determine the regional opportunities for this unique facility.**

The Pointe-Verte representative disagrees with the description of the recommendation since the Facility is not used as much outdoors than indoors.

There is consensus that a greater assessment should be undertaken. The RSC would be there to support this process as with the arenas. There is a possibility to link the trails with the existing Chaleur Green Trail's project. Scuba diving is unique in the Atlantic and there is a lot of potential to be developed.

## **L) GOVERNANCE OF REGIONAL PLANNING**

**Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

Success in regional planning can only occur if the municipal and LSD partners agree to an acceptable governance structure that oversees all research, planning and recommendations for regional collaboration. As with other aspects of the plan, evolution of approach to governance is expected and should be encouraged through a review and update of this plan at the end of Year Three (3) of its implementation.

Recommendation 43:

**Create a Regional Recreation Standing Committee.**

- 1. The work and outputs of the Regional Standing Committee must be consensus-driven to be effective.**
- 2. The RSC Recreation Leadership Assistant administers the work of the standing committee and has an appropriated budget for carrying out substantive research and capacity-building tasks per the established mandate of the standing committee.**

3. **The mandate of the standing committee is to implement the regional collaboration measures which comprise the regional recreation plan.**
4. **The standing committee has input to and directs the work of the Recreation Leadership Assistant but does not have direct day to day interaction with the assistant. The assistant reports to the Executive Director of the RSC.**
5. **The standing committee reports to the Board of the RSC. Neither the Board of the RSC nor the standing committee has authority to bind the individual councils that comprise membership of the RSC.**
6. **As such, approval of any action by the Board which imposes an action on the part of the municipal councils will require approval by each municipal council. In the case of the LSDs, the approval of the Province will be required including if necessary LSD resident referenda to approve budgetary support for cost sharing. The support of the Councils and LSDs for cost-sharing may necessitate active participation by the Province to incentivize such collaboration.**

There is consensus that a standing committee be created, but the structure should be determined later in collaboration with the RSC Board.

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#### **M) DEVELOPING AND APPLYING ASSET MANAGEMENT AS A DECISION-MAKING TOOL**

##### **Consultant's recommendation in bold**

Followed by RRC feedback

It is appropriate for the RSC to develop a regional recreation asset management framework rather than wait for each municipality to conduct its own process. Asset management planning is the central recommendation of this plan and the basis for all future capital cost-sharing.

As the responsibility for the assets rests with the individual municipalities, agreement is required to enable the RSC to govern the process and financial resources will need to be allocated to enable this work to be completed. This funding will be required over several fiscal years.

To implement a centralized asset management planning process the following is recommended:

##### Recommendation 44:

**The RSC is given authority to undertake the research and reporting on behalf of all participating municipalities.**

There is consensus that the RSC should be overseen by the RSC on behalf of the municipalities without, however, giving it the ultimate authority to do so as stated in the recommendation. (This process could be done through a memorandum of understanding instead.)

The Province is in the process of imposing municipalities to apply an asset management framework. It is important, however, that the process adheres to the same standards as those being developed by the province. Currently, the province is in its first phase. There is a possibility of receiving federal funding. The RSC could be responsible for obtaining these funds.

Recommendation 45:

**Sharing of the cost is therefore recommended on the same basis as the current funding of the inventory – namely pro-rata for each community based on its share of assessment and population base in equal measure (50% of the distribution of costs is based on relative share of total assessment in the region and 50% on relative share of total population).**

The committee members present agree with the formula 50 % tax base, and 50 % population base to distribute the costs related to asset management.

Recommendation 46:

**These specific reports should be cost-shared based on 50/50 cost share between the local municipality (as facility owner) and the RSC. Both the Local municipality and the RSC benefit from the work.**

The committee does not understand this recommendation.

Recommendation 47:

**The Regional Standing Committee oversees the asset condition and valuation process.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.

Recommendation 48:

**The Regional Standing Committee (via the work of the RSC Recreation Leadership Assistant in collaboration with local staff and stakeholders) will approve the proposed estimates of local versus regional use of existing facilities.**

The members agreed with this recommendation.



Recommendation 49:

**It is recommended to limit the categories for assessment of regional function to the following:**

- 1. Indoor ice**
- 2. Aquatics**
- 3. Trails**
- 4. Indoor Soccer**
- 5. Sports Fields**
- 6. Prospective multi-use elements of a new aquatics centre including gym and field house**
- 7. Atlas Park**

It will be up to the standing committee to determine the categories. Therefore, the recommendation is rejected.

Recommendation 50:

**As part of the asset management plan, the future capital costs to maintain the function of each facility will be established and debated by the Regional Standing Committee.**

This recommendation should be determined in phase two.

Recommendation 51:

**Employ a Regional Recreation Leadership Assistant.**

The members of the committee support this recommendation.

- 7) Recommended Cost Sharing Mechanism

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## **RRC CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The consultant's report offers interesting avenues for establishing better regional coordination in the development and maintenance of recreational and sports infrastructure and programs. This working document will become a useful framework for the second phase of this exercise.

The Committee considers, on the other hand, that the consultant made some recommendations prematurely, considering the authenticity of certain data. This merely reiterates the need to further develop the database developed by the Planning Department and to create a standard system for collecting regional data on users and user groups.

The committee is also of the opinion that the following steps should be undertaken in a second phase as if this fall:

- 1) Establishment of a Regional Standing Committee for Recreation (October 2017)
- 2) Hiring a Regional Recreation Planning Coordinator (December 2017)
- 3) Establishing a measurable decision-making process through asset management (which includes asset conditions and costs of repairs) (January-June 2018)
- 4) Identification of local, sub-regional and regional facilities (October 2018)
  - a. In collaboration with the Standing Committee and the Regional Planning Coordinator
  - b. In consultation with municipalities and LSD
  - c. With the approval of the Board of Directors of the CRSC
- 5) Application of the cost-sharing approach to regional facilities through a pilot project (January 2019)