



OUR VISION

Urban Parks Master Plan Leisure and Recreation Trends Analysis

We have an
uncompromising
commitment to a
better quality of
life for individuals,
families and
communities –
today and
tomorrow.

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Introduction

In the development of long-range plans for the delivery of recreation and parks services, consideration of trends and demographic projections can provide a valuable picture of what Edmontonians of the future may require or desire. Although the Urban Parks Master Plan has a ten year time horizon to 2013, this document projects the demographics of Edmonton into the years 2015 and 2025 and discusses the implications of demographic change in light of trends in leisure participation, citizen expectations, recreation as a promoter of community and individual health, and trends in park design and development. The expanded time horizon of this document reflects the fact that the changes made in the next ten years will shape the physical form of urban parks well beyond that time frame.

Much of the current literature discusses the benefits of recreation and parks to both individuals and their community. Planning for the future allows municipalities to not only respond to changes and trends, but to intervene and create a city with the characteristics of a healthy community.

Information and data have been compiled from a variety of sources including Statistics Canada; City of Edmonton documents; the Alberta Recreation Survey; a review of periodicals, including those published by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association; a review of Internet sites including the Leisure Information Network, Athletic Business and PERC Online; a review of academic journals in the area of leisure research; a review of “futurist” writers; and a review of information published by related recreation agencies, such as the Canadian Fitness and Leisure Research Institute. Footnotes have been used extensively to ensure that credit is given for the information presented.

Key Trends

Predicting the future is difficult. Intervening variables can change what is forecast and predictions based on past behaviour may not be the most accurate reflection of the future. For example, one of the key variables will be the performance of the Edmonton economy. If the demand for and prices of oil, natural gas and other natural resources decline and if there is little economic diversification, there will be considerable impact on Edmonton. Population growth and employment growth will not be as strong as predicted. Migration of young workers from other Canadian provinces will decline and the population will “age” more rapidly. An economic downturn can mean less spending on recreation both by consumers and governments. There may be other factors that intervene.

However, based on the current information available, the following trends are expected to impact recreation and park service delivery in Edmonton.

Population Growth

The population of Edmonton and the Edmonton CMA will increase and put pressure on existing park facilities and result in demand for more parks. Growth will occur throughout the city, but rates will vary between districts. From 2000 to 2025, 10.9% of the total growth in the City will occur in

the inner city (defined as those residential areas primarily developed prior to the 1980s). In the north suburban quadrant, growth rates will vary between 26% and 31% from 2005-2025. In the west suburban quadrant, growth rates will vary between 15% and 22%. The southeast quadrant will experience rates of 12% and 16% in the first two 5-year periods, increasing to a range of 29% to 33% in the final three 5-year periods. Southwest Edmonton will have high growth rates in 2005-2010 (31% and 40%), declining to an 11% growth rate by 2025.

Ageing Population

The number and proportion of older people in Edmonton will increase, resulting in greater demand for trails and natural areas. The older people of the future will be more active than previous generations at the same age due to current levels of activity, the desire to “postpone” ageing, and the desire to receive the health benefits of active living. However, levels of strenuous activity will still decline and the demand for sports fields that accommodate more strenuous physical activities will not increase.

The number of younger people will remain relatively constant indicating that parks and outdoor facilities that exist now will continue to be used. The children of the Baby Boomers will start having children in about 2005, peaking in 2010-2012. Issues of location may arise if parks designed to meet the needs of younger people are located in neighborhoods where the population has not cycled to include young families. Young people in Edmonton will represent more diverse ethnic cultures since immigrants tend to be younger and because the Aboriginal population is younger than the Canadian population as a whole and is increasing rapidly in Edmonton. There will be a need to encourage use of parks by this culturally diverse population or change what is offered to appeal to a greater variety of cultures.

Access

Access to recreation services will be an issue from two perspectives:

- some population groups are underserved and not benefitting from what recreation participation can offer: low income people, ethnic minorities, Aboriginal people, women and girls, people with disabilities;
- some population groups will actively seek more equitable access: women, people with disabilities, and perhaps in the future, the larger proportion of older adults.

As identified in the Integrated Service Strategy, it will be important to respond to high priority communities. Though solutions may lie in the areas of programming, outreach, marketing and pricing and allocation policies, changes to these operational procedures will impact on park planning and design.

Needs assessment procedures must ensure all segments of the population are represented; it may be appropriate to consider different forms and types of park developments specific to these underserved populations.

Individualism

Values have shifted, resulting in increased demands for meeting the needs of individuals in addition to market segments. People are looking for services that meet their individual needs, that

can be accessed any time of the day or week, that are unstructured, and involve less time and commitment. Technology may allow for customization of service provision.

The Benefits of Recreation in Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

More importance is being placed on the value of participation in recreation and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle and as a way to prevent disease. Recreation will have a growing role in the promotion of healthy lifestyles and urban wellness generally. If efforts to change behaviour and promote greater participation are successful, there will be increased demand for parks, playgrounds, sports fields, paths and trails.

Recreation as a Solution to Social Problems

Recreation is becoming more widely recognized as a tool for social change. Its potential for improving the quality of life for people is significant. Particular interest will arise in using recreation programs and services to counter the disadvantages experienced by people with low incomes and people with disabilities; to reduce crime and youth crime; to reduce risk factors for youth at risk and to break down ethnic divisions.

Relationship and Partnership Building

As Edmonton Community Services strives to improve access and address social issues, it will be essential to develop relationships and partnerships with many facets of the community: immigrant groups, police, youth workers, community leagues, Aboriginal communities, those who work with the poor, etc.

Serving the recreation needs of a diverse community requires a collaborative approach. Understanding of various groups and individuals and working together will result in more successful outcomes.

Alternative service delivery, including partnerships, contracting and privatization will become a greater part of the public dialogue as Community Services strives to meet community needs within budgetary constraints.

Volunteerism

Volunteers will continue to be important for the recreation sector. The retirement of the Baby Boomers may result in a greater number of available volunteers. However, although volunteers over 65 contribute the greatest number of hours, they have the lowest rate of volunteerism. Support for volunteers and voluntary organizations will be important, as will attracting people to volunteer positions.

Activity Trends

Low cost, spontaneous, individual, less structured activities are becoming more popular. People are looking for experiences. Younger people will look for extreme activities and even older people will seek safer versions of adventure activities. Participation in outdoor activities will continue to grow, although there will be a switch to less strenuous activities by ageing Baby Boomers. Currently popular outdoor activities include walking, gardening, cycling, spectating at sports events and picnicking. Participation is expected to increase for mountain biking, in-line skating,

cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, visiting historical places, sightseeing, biking and bird watching.

Opportunities exist to serve those who are not participating: low income individuals and families; children, particularly those from low income families; adolescents, whose activity levels tend to decrease with age; girls, whose activity levels tend to decrease with age; women, who participate at lower rates than men; and minority groups. Efforts to address participation barriers, particularly cost and lack of time, may yield positive results.

People are becoming more active, but are still not active enough for optimum health. Recreation activities will continue to compete with passive leisure alternatives such as television and the Internet, and sport participation is declining. Government programs and policies will try to promote more physical activity. Access to safe parks, playgrounds, trails and paths will be important factors in increasing activity levels.

Attitudes Towards the Outdoors

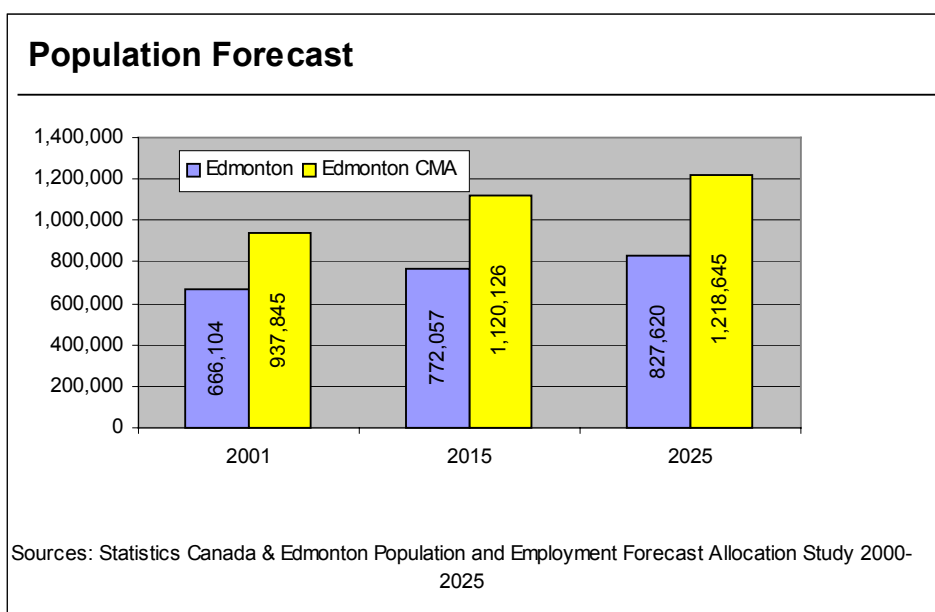
Edmontonians support and value the city's parks and open spaces. The benefits of parks to the community are recognized by both those who use parks and those who do not use parks. Parks will become more important as places of respite from urban life and will be seen as "public places", not just places for recreation. Access to nature and nature interpretation will have growing importance.

Environmental preservation will continue to be important to Baby Boomers and may increase for others as awareness of environmental issues such as food and water safety become personalized. The use of pesticides on public and private land will be an issue of concern.

Demographic and Geographic Considerations

Population

Edmonton's population is expected to grow by 17% from 2000 to 2015 and by an additional 7% from 2015 to 2025. The Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which is defined by Statistics Canada and includes the urban and rural municipalities surrounding Edmonton, is expected to grow by 21% from 2000 to 2015 and by an additional 9% from 2015 to 2025.¹

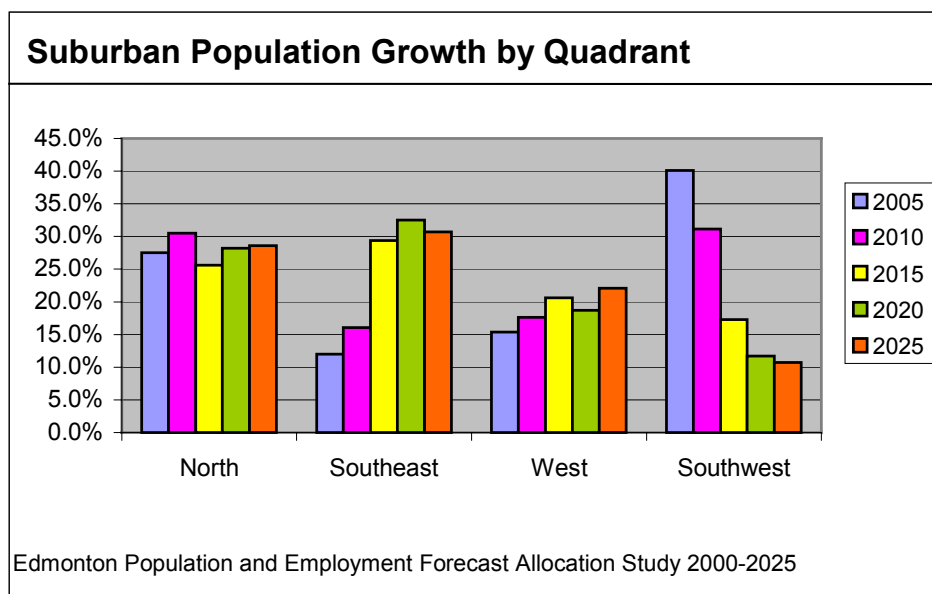


This increase in population will put pressure on existing parks and recreation facilities and create demand for more facilities and parks. Population growth may also result in more crowding and as a result managers of open space will have to deal with increased use, congestion and possible deterioration of the park environment.²

¹ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025 – Summary Report*, p. 21.

² Godbey G, *Leisure and Leisure Services in the 21st Century*, p. 24

It is expected that the majority of residential growth will occur in the suburbs. Growth rates will vary by suburban district over the next 23 years as indicated in the following chart. In addition, 10.9% of the total growth will occur in the inner city (defined as those residential areas primarily developed before the 1980's).³

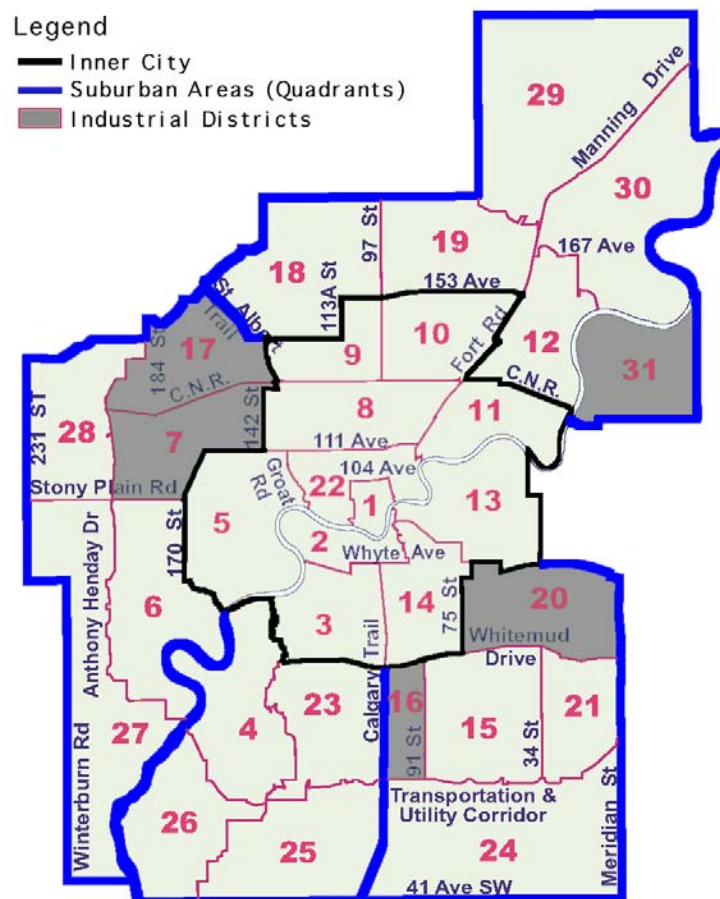


The districts are shown on the following map.⁴

³ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025 – Summary Report*, p. 29

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 32

City of Edmonton Quadrants



The following map indicates areas of population growth and decline within Edmonton. The two areas where populations are expected to decline, Kaskitayo and Mill Woods, will decline by 689 and 5356 people respectively.⁵

⁵ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025 – Summary Report*, p. 42

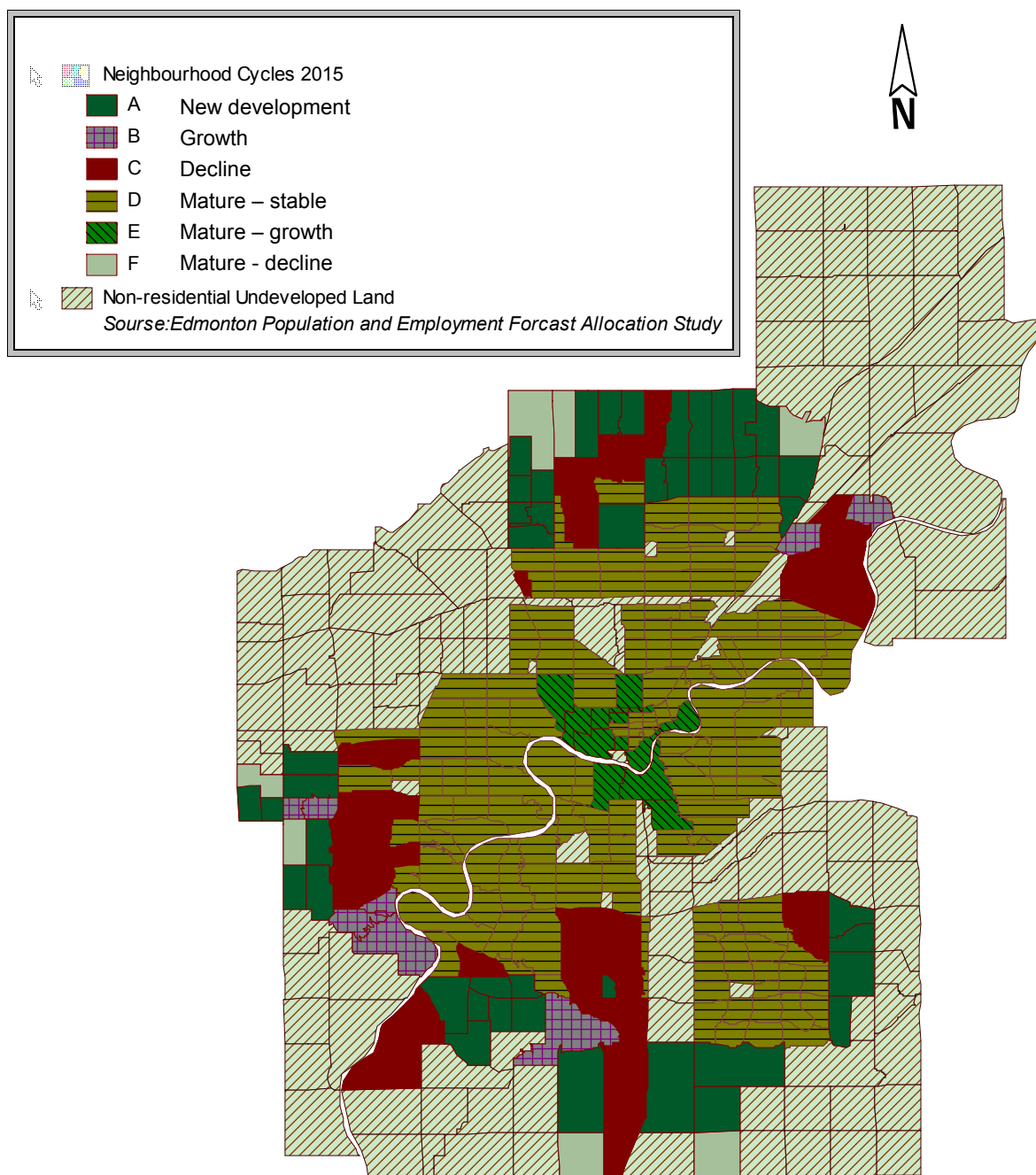
A neighbourhood goes through four stages in its life cycle:

- New Development, where growth is due primarily to in-migration as a neighbourhood is developed,
- Growth, which occurs when young families in the neighbourhood have children,
- Decline, which is due to the out-migration of young adults from the family home,
- Maturity where population may increase, decrease or stay the same depending on net migration. The population will stay the same or increase if young families replace empty nesters or there is re-development, especially if density increases. The population may decline if net migration is negative; this may be amplified by less desirable economic and social conditions.⁶

As neighbourhoods move through the cycle, park space development should change to reflect the population it serves. For example, active sports fields may be in demand early in the cycle and more passive and nature related parks needed later in the cycle. If change does not occur, people will travel by vehicle to the facility they need, creating traffic and parking issues.

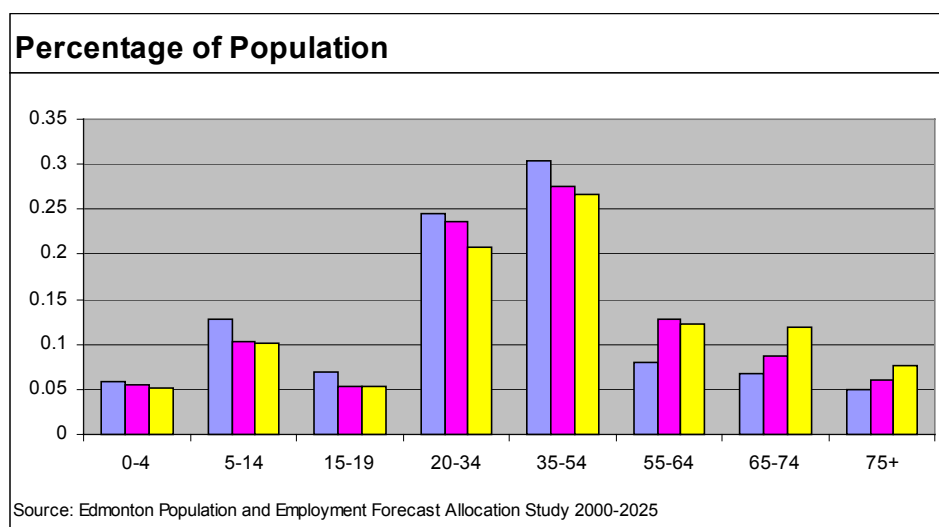
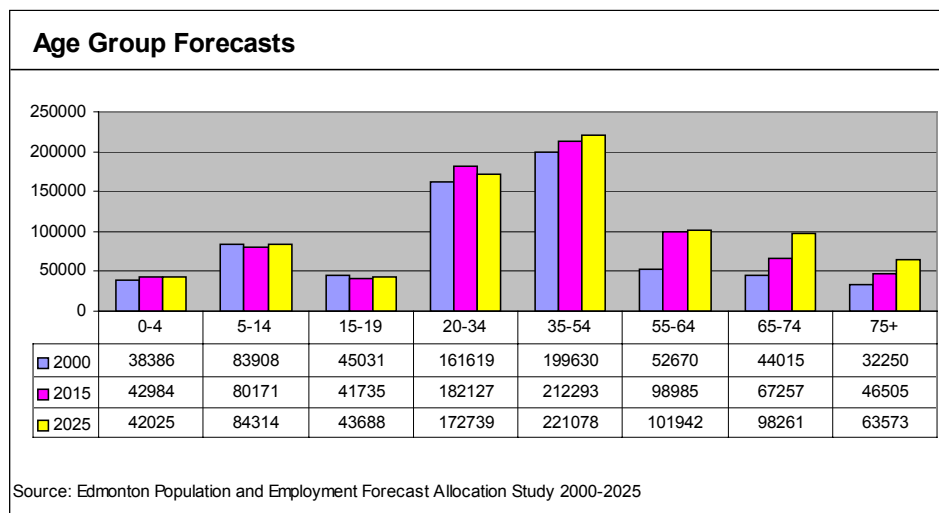
The following maps show neighbourhood cycles predicted for 2015 and 2025.

⁶ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025 – Summary Report*, p. 38 & 39



Age

During the period 2000-2025, the population will be ageing, as both the actual number of those over 65 and their proportion of the total population increase. The proportion of the total population comprised of those over 65 will increase from 11.6% in 2000, to 14.9% in 2015, to 19.6% in 2025. The proportion of the population under age 20 will decline from 25.4% in 2000, to 21.4% in 2015, to 20.6% in 2025. However, the actual number of people in this category remains fairly constant.⁷ Currently, the major source of population growth in Edmonton is young trades people migrating to Alberta from other provinces in Canada, due to the prospering economy. If this trend continues, there may, in fact be a greater than predicted increase in those aged 20-34.



⁷ Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025, Technical Report, p. 67

Those born during the depression and World War II have been in a situation to succeed economically, with little competition from a relatively small age cohort. This group, whose members are recently retired or currently retiring, is powerful and affluent. They are the drivers of what is seen as a demand for quality and service. It is expected that the Baby Boomers, those born from 1947-1966, will continue to demand the same high levels of service and quality.⁸

The first of the Boomers will not reach retirement age until 2012 with the peak of the boom (those born in 1961), reaching age 65 in 2026.⁹ Some of the “front end Boomers” may be taking early retirement, but those at the end of the boom, who have not prospered to the same degree due to labour force competition from the large group ahead of them, will likely need to work longer. There will be a need to respond to the diversity that will exist within this group of seniors – there will be young seniors, generally still healthy and prosperous, mid-seniors, still living at home, but constrained by health problems and senior seniors, usually living in nursing homes or care facilities.¹⁰

At age 65 in 1996, Canadian men could expect to live 16.1 more years, with 12.7 of those years dependence-free and 1.5 years with moderate dependence (ie. help with meals and shopping). Women at age 65 can expect to live 20 more years, with 13.5 dependence-free years and 2.7 years of moderate dependence. The difference between men and women can be attributed to the fact that men tend to be afflicted by acute diseases that cause death fairly quickly and women tend to suffer from more chronic diseases which are debilitating but not fatal. Trends since 1986 have shown a greater increase in life expectancy for men than women, plus greater proportional increases in independent living for women.¹¹

Much has been written with regard to the ageing of the Baby Boomers, and its effect on recreation and park services. Generally, as people age, they become less physically active, although there is evidence that current generations are more active than previous generations at the same age. One might also expect a delay in the reduction of physical activity, because many of the Baby Boomers are currently active. A drop in participation in strenuous activity may indicate a switch to less strenuous activities such as walking, birdwatching, gardening, hobbies, cultural pursuits, etc.¹²

Another force working against a decline in activity due to ageing is the desire to delay the ageing process and remain healthy.¹³ Other motivators will be the desire for a balanced lifestyle, desire for intellectual stimulation and an emphasis on personal responsibility for health.¹⁴

There is evidence that the older adults of the future will prefer intergenerational community recreation services rather than age-segregated programs for seniors.¹⁵ Currently, only 10% of

⁸ Foot D, *Boom, Bust and Echo 2000*, p. 110

⁹ Ibid, p. 143

¹⁰ Kassian R, *The Impact of the Ageing Population on Edmonton Parks and Recreation Services Programs and Facilities in the Next 5-10 Years*, p. 25

¹¹ Martel L and Belanger A, *Dependence-free Life Expectancy in Canada*, p. 28 & 29

¹² Foot, p. 148

¹³ Popcorn F, *Clicking*, p. 236

¹⁴ Roach D, *The Grey Wave – Trend Spotting Workshop*, Powerpoint presentation

¹⁵ Kassian, p. 13

older people are regularly involved in seniors' centres; most are involved with friends, family and routines that existed prior to retirement.¹⁶

The children of the Baby Boomers, the Echo, entered their 20s at the turn of the century and this age is typically a time of relatively high participation in recreational activities.¹⁷ This group will also be starting their own families in about 2005, with the largest increase between 2010 and 2012. This will result in a demand for services for children, although not to the extent of the demand created by the Boomers when they were children.¹⁸

While the ageing of the Boomers may indicate no need for more park facilities to meet the more strenuous physical activity needs of the population, the fact that the number of people under the age of 25 is expected to remain constant indicates that what is currently available will continue to be used. As Boomers switch to less strenuous activities, their need for more active sport facilities will decrease and the demand for facilities to accommodate individual, less active pursuits will increase. Trails will increase in importance and there will be an increased demand for natural areas.¹⁹ Planning for parks will need to accommodate older people as well as children. Older people need more access to shade, water, restrooms and resting areas.²⁰ Older park users will also put more importance on safety, quality of maintenance, and contact with the environment. They will avoid park use during times of extreme temperatures, both hot and cold.²¹ Youth needs could be accommodated with temporary facilities or those that could be converted to activities more suited to an older population.²²

Family and Household Structure

In 1996, of the population living in private households, 86.4% lived in family households and 13.6% lived alone or in non-family households.²³ Of those in family households, 82.8% were married or common law families and 17.2% were single parent families. There was a slight increase in the number of single parent families from 1991-1996.

Family Structure, 1991-1996		
	1991	1996
Married/Common Law Families	83.8%	82.8%
Single Parent Families	16.2%	17.2%

Source: Community Services Business Forecast to 2010

¹⁶ Kelly J, *Academy of Leisure Sciences, White Paper #1 – Leisure and Retirement*, p. 2

¹⁷ Foot, p. 153

¹⁸ American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZAA), *2020 Trend Report*, p. 7

¹⁹ Wickens A, *Parks and Recreation Planning for Boomers and Busters*, p. 5, 6 & 8

²⁰ Godbey et al, *The Northeastern United States in the Next Two Decades – Implications for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service*, p. 131

²¹ Godbey, p. 99 & 101

²² Wickens, p. 5, 7 & 8

²³ www.statcan.ca, Canadian Statistics

A potential impact of this change, is the fact that single parent families tend to earn less than two parent families. Family status and low income have been found to influence the prevalence of childhood emotional and behavioural problems.²⁴ Lower levels of income are one of the key indicators of reduced levels of participation in recreation activities.

However, family structure itself may not impact children's participation in sport. Despite the commitment required to encourage a child's participation in sport such as driving to games or practices, participation rates by children from lone parent families were very similar to those from two parent families (53% and 54% respectively).²⁵

It is expected that families will continue to become more diverse as Canadians develop more diverse values. The 2001 General Social Survey revealed that the number of common law relationships increased by 20% since 1995 while the number of marriages increased by 3% over the same period. Step-families comprised 12% of Canadian couples in 2001 compared to 10% in 1995.²⁶ Younger Canadians, in particular, embrace more flexible definitions of "family".²⁷ This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of young Canadians in 2001 chose common law relationships as their first union rather than marriage.²⁸

These diverse families will require different approaches to attract them to parks.²⁹ For example, a market may emerge for "quality time" activities for children and a separated parent.³⁰ It may be necessary to reduce cost barriers for low income, lone parent families and ensure low or no-cost activities are available.

²⁴ Browne G et al, *Benefiting All the Beneficiaries of Social Assistance is "Within out Reach"*, p. 4

²⁵ Kremerik F, *A Family Affair: Children's Participation in Sport*, p. 21 & 22

²⁶ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, July 11, 2002

²⁷ Adams M, *Sex in the Snow*, p. 12 & 102

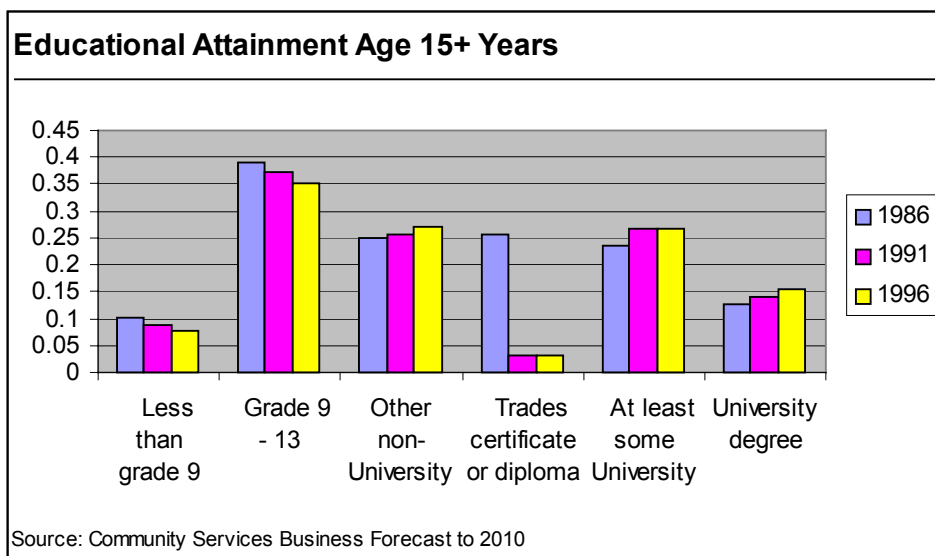
²⁸ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, July 11, 2002

²⁹ Godbey et al, p. 46

³⁰ Clarke B, *Evolving Municipal Roles in the Delivery and Support of Sport Services*, p. 96

Education

The number of Edmontonians with at least some post-secondary education has been increasing due to an increase in the number of women attending post-secondary institutions and the demands of the labour force for more educated workers and for continuing education of those workers. It is expected that the number of post-secondary students in Edmonton will increase until 2015, when it will level off due to the demand for workers.³¹ The trend towards a more knowledge-based economy will result in an increase in demand for continuing education.³²



The population as a whole is better educated than in the past. The Seniors Advisory Council found that young seniors were better educated than older seniors and that when one looked at adults in general, each ten year grouping had more education than the older group above it.³³

Education is becoming entertainment and recreation. People of all ages are putting more emphasis on education: software, the Internet, children's computer programs, baby education, and travel that includes education are a few examples.³⁴ An extension of this trend is greater interest in natural and historic interpretation.

Levels of participation in physical activity have been found to be positively correlated with levels of education.³⁵ Increasing levels of education in the population in general should result in increased levels of physical activity. Higher levels of education are also associated with higher levels of participation in arts, culture, historical visitation, and gardening. Educated people want more information regarding leisure, they are more willing to try new activities, are more likely to

³¹ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025, Summary Report*, p. 49-51

³² Drucker P, *The Next Society*, p. 10

³³ Kassian, p. 2

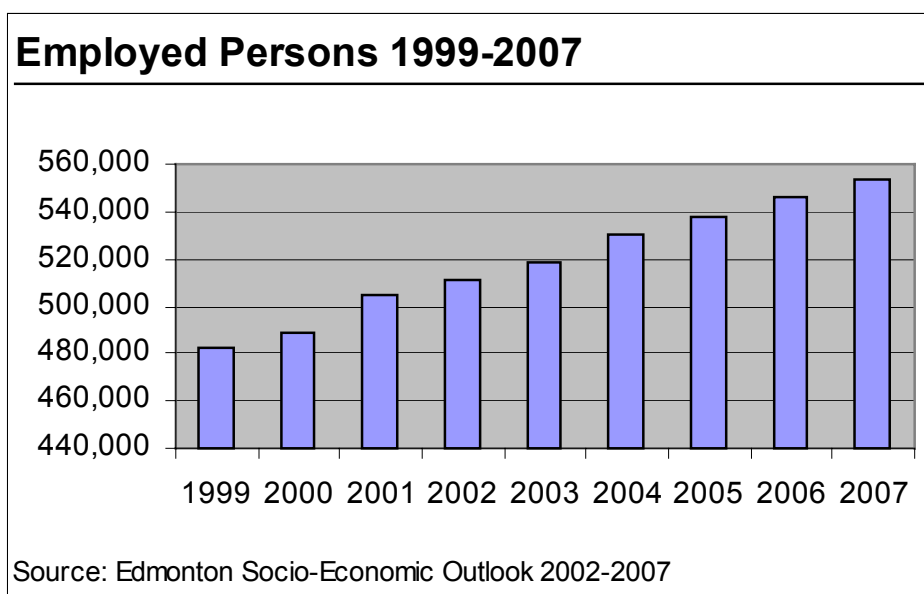
³⁴ AZAA, p. 27

³⁵ Spence JC et al, *1999 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity*, p. 14

exercise, read and travel, and will demand better quality services. There is also less gender distinction in terms of leisure activities for those with higher levels of education.³⁶

A population with higher levels of education will participate more frequently in recreation activities of all kinds and will look for recreation activities with an educational component.

Employment Status



The number of employed persons has increased from 1999 to 2007. Employment of the working age population (25-64 years) is expected to increase from 2000 to 2025. While this age category is expected to increase by 17.5%, the number of people from this age category working will increase by 20.5%, driven by the number of jobs projected for the Edmonton region. It is expected that the number of seniors working will increase partly in response to the demand for workers. The trend towards early retirement is beginning to reverse in the United States. In Canada, the rate of employed seniors has fallen since 1974, but remained constant throughout the 1990s.³⁷ From 1997 to 1999, the number of workers in Canada aged 55 and over increased by almost 20%, more than any other age group.³⁸

Based on almost 20 years of polling, Angus Reid has a less optimistic view of the economy. Reid believes that globalization of the economy and improved technology and automation will reduce the number of “decent jobs” in Canada to such a magnitude that it will not matter how well-trained and willing workers are, there will not be work available. Work will become more part time, more home-based and more workers will be self employed, contract employees without security and

³⁶ Godbey, p. 101 & 120

³⁷ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025, Summary Report*, p. 55 & 56

³⁸ Crompton, S and Vickers, M, *One Hundred Years of Labour Force*, p. 12

benefits. He believes there will be reduced public services, a weakened social services safety net and diminished national prosperity until 2010 – 2015.³⁹

Other sources also predict a change in the nature of work – more contract workers, more part time workers, more temporary workers, especially among older workers. The type of work being done will also change. “Knowledge workers” will be the dominant group in the workforce and can be defined as positions requiring theoretical knowledge such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, engineers, etc. There will be growth in the sector defined as “knowledge technologists”: computer technicians, software designers, laboratory analysts, paralegals, etc.⁴⁰

A change to a knowledge-based society brings pressures to succeed and high levels of competition in the workplace. Recreational interests can provide avenues for personal success when success in work is not possible due to intervening factors.⁴¹ There are opportunities for the development of recreation programs that help businesses attract and retain employees who are looking for balance between work, leisure and family life.⁴²

It is estimated that the number of Edmontonians who work from home will increase by an average of 3% per year until 2025.⁴³ There may be an increased demand for social and community programs in response to the isolation often experienced by those who work from home.⁴⁴

The nature of free time will change with changes in the workplace. Workers may have more control over when leisure time is available, perhaps allowing individuals to consolidate smaller amounts of time and allowing more time for outdoor recreation and more time-intensive forms of leisure.⁴⁵ Technological changes, such as portable phones, pagers, e-mail, and computers can blur the line between work and leisure and impact on how people structure their leisure time and may result in increased demands for access to recreation services 24 hours a day.⁴⁶ Recreation opportunities that are located near the workplace may become more important if one requires a brief respite from work.

Income

In 1990, the average income for a family in the Edmonton CMA was \$59,145 in 1995 dollars and this declined to \$56,090 in 1995.

Although there are indications that the currently prosperous Baby Boomers will become wealthy seniors, pensions, savings and spending will affect their economic status as seniors.⁴⁷

³⁹ Reid A, *Shakedown*, p. 193

⁴⁰ Drucker, p. 3, 4 & 10

⁴¹ Drucker, p. 11

⁴² Munroe T, *Trends Analysis for Parks and Recreation :2000 and Beyond*, p. L

⁴³ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025, Technical Report*, p. 66

⁴⁴ The Economic Planning Group of Canada, *Tourism and Recreation Market and Product Trends*, p. 88

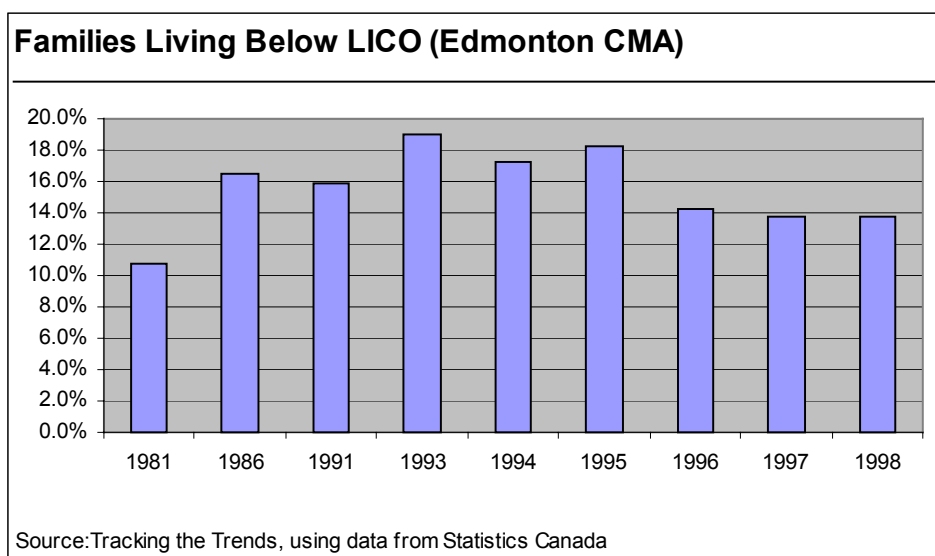
⁴⁵ Godbey et al, p. 60

⁴⁶ AZAA, p. 31

⁴⁷ Kassian, p. 26

The poverty level in urban Canada deepened between 1990 and 1995. Poverty in Canada as a whole has been relatively stable since 1993, when the labour market improved. Generally there is a reduction in poverty levels in response to employment, although if the quality of jobs and corresponding rates of pay are low, the result will be an increase in the number of “working poor”.⁴⁸ The total number of employed individuals in Edmonton is expected to grow by 26% by 2025.⁴⁹

Low Income Cut Off, or LICO, is often used to indicate levels of poverty in Canada. The figures are determined by Statistics Canada based on the percentage of income spent on food, shelter and clothing, with the size of family factored into the calculations. The following chart shows the trend in the percentage of families living below LICO; the following map shows geographic locations of low income citizens in Edmonton.



It is generally believed that the gap between low and high income groups is increasing. Different approaches are needed to serve the “haves” and “have nots”. Strategies may focus on fees and charges, transportation, or communication.⁵⁰ Those who are in the “have” category will have a wide range of recreation choices available to them. The “have nots” will have fewer options and for many, their only option will be publicly funded parks, facilities and programs.⁵¹ The challenge to service providers will be to ensure access to those with lower incomes.

High income Canadian adults have less leisure time than low income adults, approximately 40 minutes less per day. Although both groups spend the majority of their leisure time watching television, low income people spend 50 more minutes per day watching television. High income Canadians are twice as likely to attend a concert or participate regularly in sports. They are also more likely to attend festivals, or go to museums and art galleries.⁵²

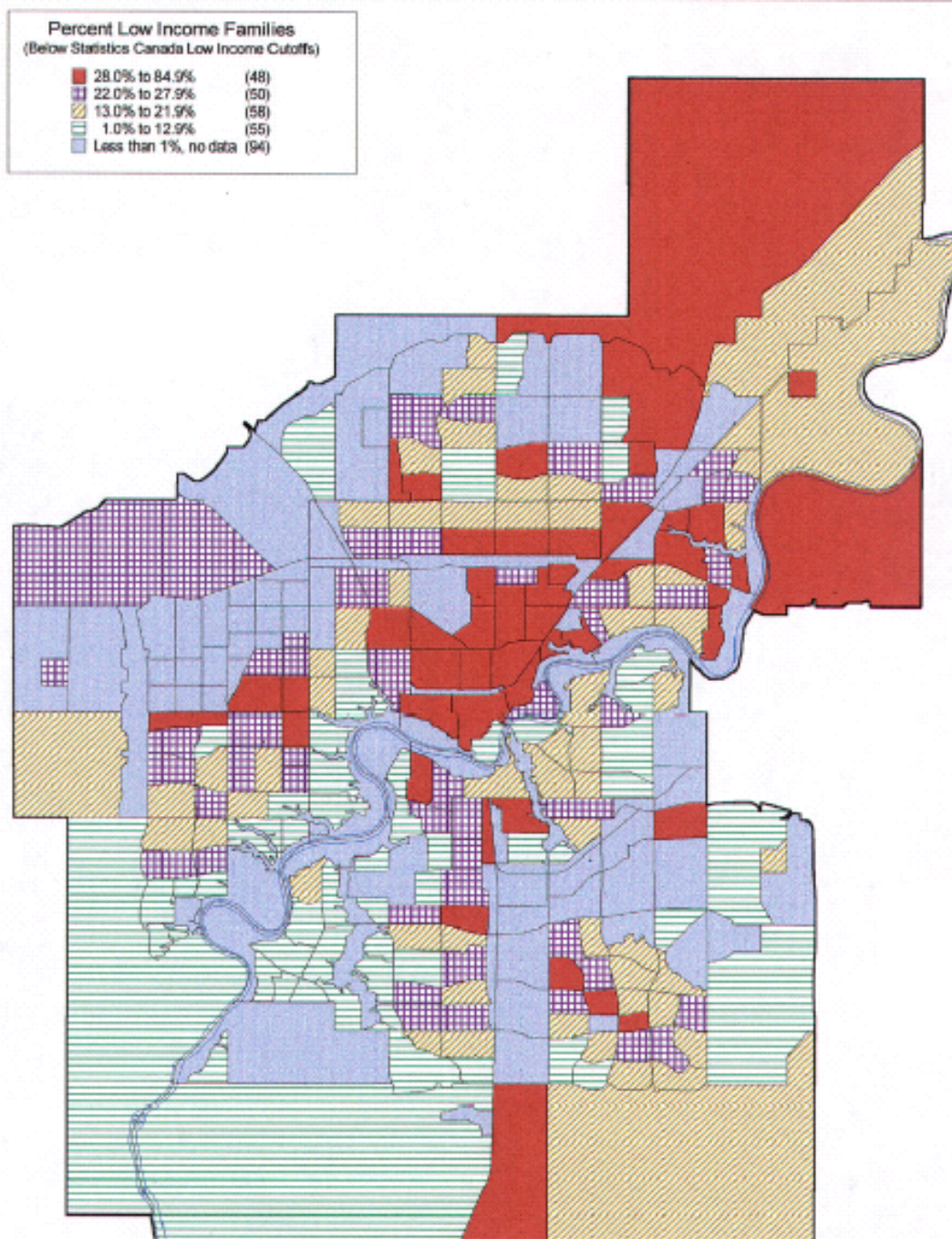
⁴⁸ Lee K, *Urban Poverty in Canada – a Statistical Profile*, p. 92 & 93

⁴⁹ *Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast Allocation Study 2000-2025, Summary Report*, p. 54

⁵⁰ Godbey et al, p. 45

⁵¹ Munroe, p. H

⁵² Williams C, *Time or Money? How High and Low Income Canadians Spend Their Time*, p. 10 & 11



Income level is the strongest predictor of children's participation in supervised sports. In 1994, over 60% of children from very poor homes (less than 75% of LICO), almost never participated in supervised sports compared to 27% from homes with more than 125% of LICO. Benefits of participation in supervised activities include improved self-esteem and social adjustment and lower rates of school drop out.⁵³

Cultural Diversity

In 1996, Aboriginal people comprised 4.1% of Edmonton's population; 17.8% of the population was comprised of visible minorities. Eight percent of Edmonton's population was composed of recent immigrants who had come to Canada within the past 15 years. Since 1991, the rate of increase in immigration in Alberta has been the same as the rate of population increase from those born in Canada. The majority of recent immigrants to Canada are from Asia and the Middle East.⁵⁴ As immigration from Europe decreases, activities that are culturally linked to Europe, such as classical music, may see support decline.⁵⁵

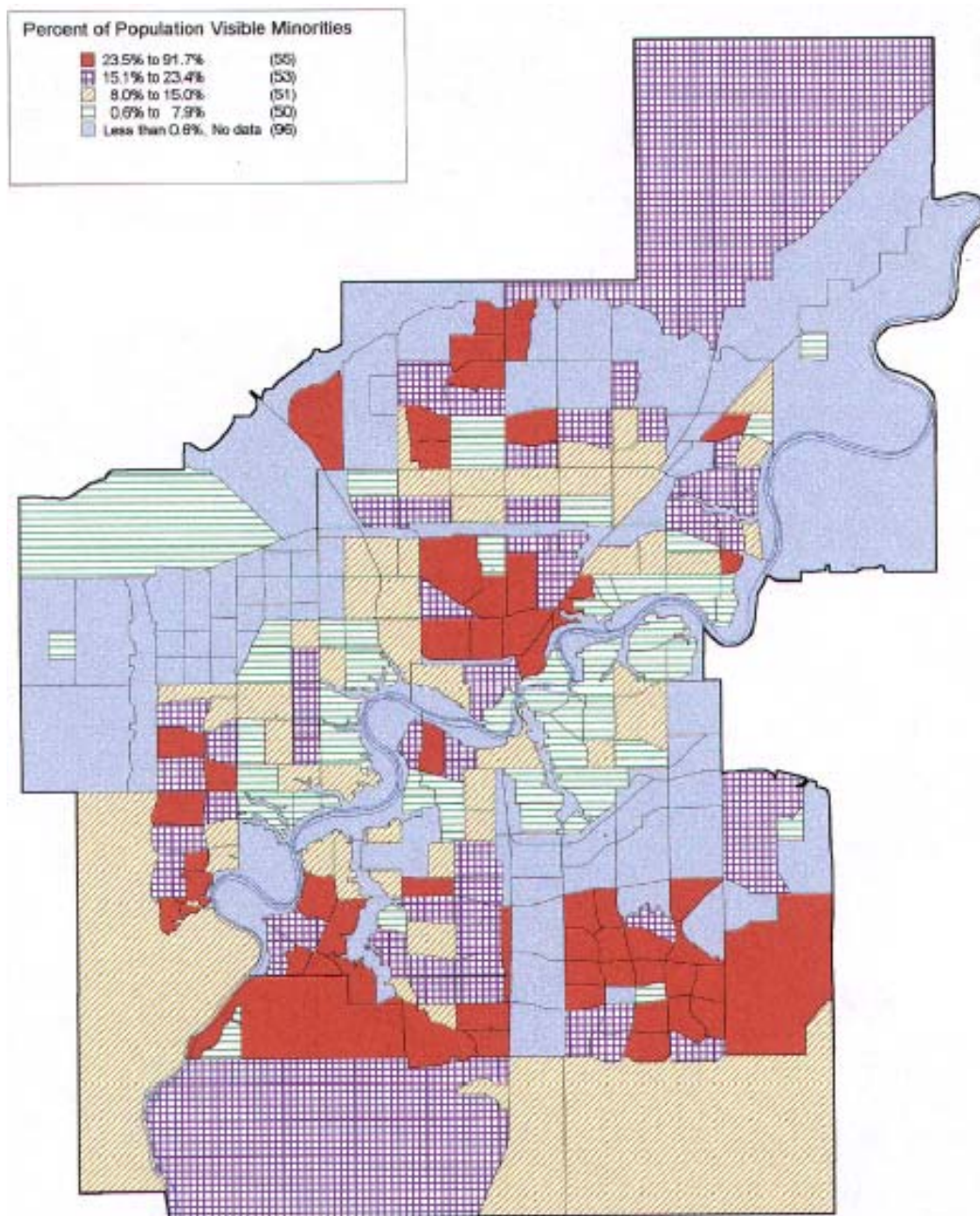
Aboriginals and Visible Minorities in Edmonton, 1996		
	Number	% of Population
Aboriginals	25,300	4.1%
Chinese	38,060	6.2%
South Asian*	22,525	3.7%
Black	10,360	1.7%
Filipino	10,000	1.6%
Southeast Asian**	8,395	1.4%
Arab/West Asian***	7,570	1.2%
Latin American	6,350	1.0%
Korean	1,785	0.3%
Japanese	1,365	0.2%
Multiple visible minority	2,150	0.3%
Other	1,590	0.2%
Total	134,086	21.9%
*East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan		
**Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese		
***Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan		
Source: Community Services Business Forecast to 2010		

The following maps show areas of residence for those of visible minority background and Aboriginal origins.

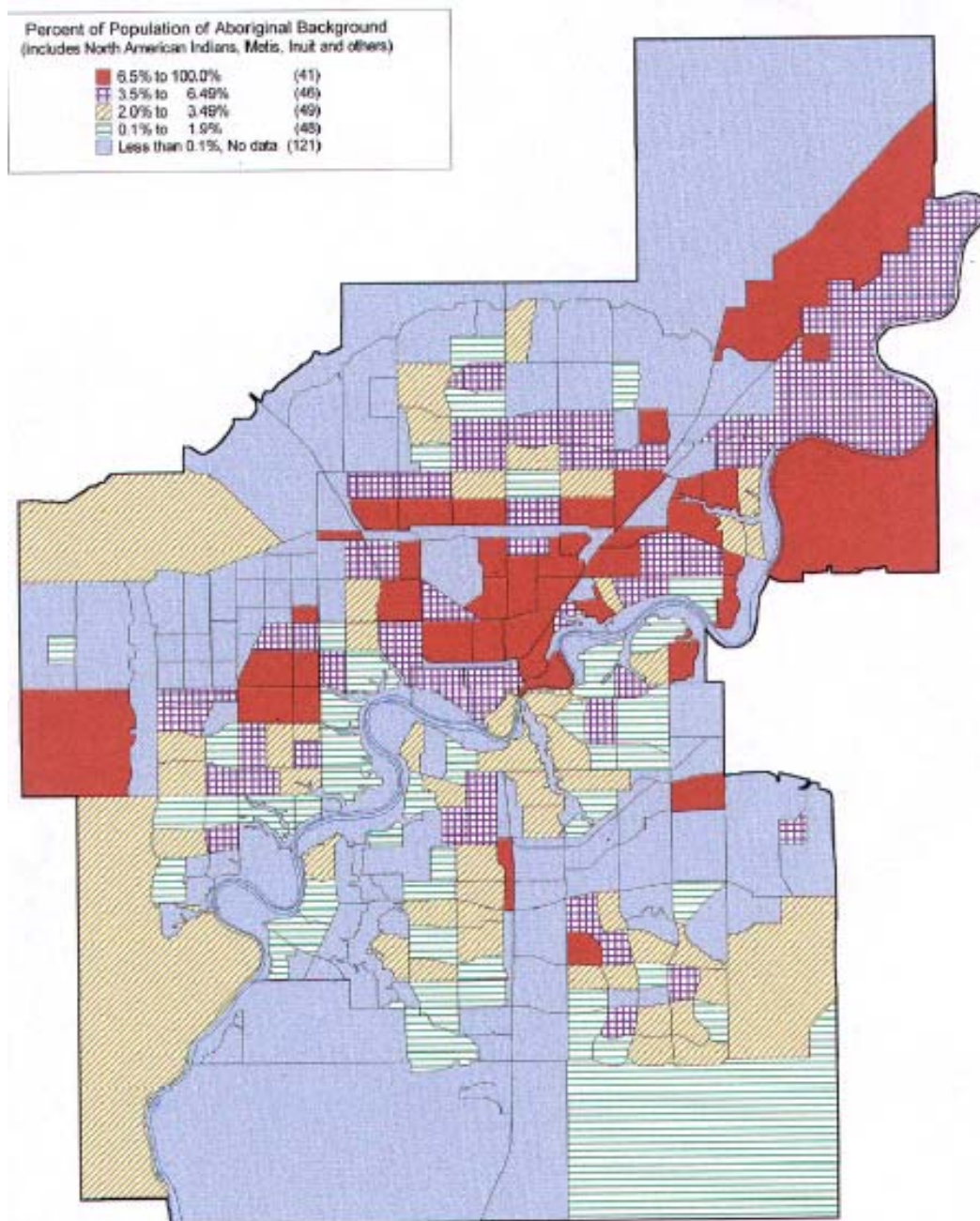
⁵³ Human Resources Development Canada, *Applied Research Bulletin*, Fall 1999, p. 9

⁵⁴ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, November 4, 1997, p. 2 & 10.

⁵⁵ Godbey, p. 109



Data source: 1996 Census of Canada



Data source: 1996 Census of Canada

Immigration, which brings younger people to the host country is also based on the demographics of the source country. Asian countries are experiencing diminishing birth rates and are therefore ageing, resulting in less emigration. Latin American countries will be the next major source of immigrants to Canada, followed by Africa in the distant future.⁵⁶

It is generally accepted that Canada will continue to become home to more diverse cultures. There are two responses in the literature to this diversity. Do we encourage various cultural groups to participate in traditional North American recreational pursuits, or do we change our services to include those more culturally suited to various immigrant groups?

Andy Wickens, Manager of Toronto Parks and Recreation believes ethnic activities will “merge with the mainstream in the long run” but that there is a need to accommodate ethnic needs in the short term. Others suggest a balance between integration and preservation of ethnic values, practices and lifestyles. Sensitivity to this balance is of special importance when addressing the needs of older immigrants.⁵⁷ Some predict less cultural assimilation as ethnic populations increase in size, resulting in a need for municipalities to adapt to cultural differences.⁵⁸ In order to deal with a population that will be increasingly diverse, staff will require knowledge of different cultures and fluency in several languages, as well as familiarity with youth activities and activities for older adults and women.⁵⁹

Response to diverse ethnicity requires a collaborative approach, to understand needs and values and to work cooperatively, recognizing the differences between ethnic groups.⁶⁰ Some ethnic groups hold values that limit access to leisure opportunities. For example, in some ethnic groups women may be limited in their involvement in leisure activities relative to women in the mainstream culture. Other barriers include lack of knowledge about services, unwillingness to participate outside one’s ethnic group, lack of transportation or difficulty communicating.⁶¹ Barriers may exist due to experiences in countries of origin: fear, lack of trust, and family disruption. The circumstances of immigration can also prevent participation. Parents may be busy working, taking educational courses and learning English, leaving children unsupervised and with responsibilities to care for siblings or grandparents. Children and youth may feel torn between cultural and family expectations and joining Canadian society.⁶²

Because recreation participation rates for ethnic minorities tend to be lower, participation in recreation activities may not increase unless minority participation also increases. More expensive activities should expect slower growth for the same reason, since minority groups tend to have lower incomes. In the United States, it is predicted that increases in participation will be most extensive for minority populations, who will become increasingly important markets to the recreation industry.⁶³ Market research has shown that youth, the second generation, “hold the key

⁵⁶ Foot, p. 266

⁵⁷ Kassian, p. 7

⁵⁸ AZAA, p. 9

⁵⁹ Pederson G, *Illuminating Our Future – Parks and Recreation in Canada – What the Resource People Said*, p. 38

⁶⁰ Malloy DC et al, *The Impact of Culture Upon the Administrative Process in Sport and Recreation: A Canadian Indian Perspective*, p. 117

⁶¹ Bolla P et al, *Serving the Multicultural Community: Directions for Leisure Service Providers*, p. 118

⁶² Gruszczynska S, *Walking Side by Side*, p. 9-11

⁶³ Murdock S, *An America Challenged: Population Change and the Future of the United States*, p. 139-142

to unlocking ethnic markets”, since they know more about Canadian society and often act as interpreters and advisors to their parents.⁶⁴

Broad ethnic groups, such as “Asian” and “Hispanic,” are very diverse within these categories and will require different ways to inform them of recreation opportunities. However, all ethnic groups will look for safety, cleanliness, easy access to parks, positive staff, contact with nature and memorable experiences to take home.⁶⁵

Recreational opportunities can facilitate greater understanding between ethnic communities. Over 55% of Canadians agree that physical activity opportunities help people of different cultural backgrounds to “get along”.⁶⁶ Community garden projects have been found to create bridging between diverse groups within communities.⁶⁷

In Ottawa, interviews were conducted with six different ethnic groups and some common areas for collaboration with municipal parks and recreation were identified:

- Access to better facilities could improve the programs being offered by groups;
- Multilingual staff or volunteers and multilingual publications would improve communication with ethnic communities;
- Groups would welcome support for program development and delivery;
- There is a need to increase understanding of barriers experienced by seniors and women in ethnic groups;
- Leisure education is needed with respect to the benefits of recreation and municipal recreation services.

All of the groups involved in the study emphasized the necessity for collaboration, where the municipality is a resource, sensitive to the various cultures.⁶⁸

The City of Calgary has several initiatives with respect to leisure education and outreach:

- Through English as a Second Language programs, tours of parks, facilities and attractions are given to new Canadians along with language instruction and information about how to access recreation services. Tours are also conducted for Aboriginal newcomers to the city.
- A list of multilingual contacts is printed in their seasonal program guide.
- Program accommodations are made to encourage inclusiveness such as allowing children to be fully clothed in swim classes.
- Groups use facilities for meetings and are given passes for spouses and children to use the recreational amenities.
- Programs such as ethnic dance are offered in collaboration with the ethnic community and open to the public.
- Relationships have been established with local groups and facility and park needs discussed. For example, parks staff are meeting with the Sikh community regarding playing fields for traditional games.

⁶⁴ Karyo Communications, *Intercultural Marketing Plan – Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture*, p. 8

⁶⁵ Godbey et al, p. 56 & 57

⁶⁶ Craig C et al, *Foundation for Joint Action: Reducing Physical Inactivity*, p. 23

⁶⁷ Glover T et al, *Race and its Relationship to the Benefits of Community Gardening in St. Louis*, p. 129

⁶⁸ Bolla et al, p. 127-130

- Relationships have been established with organizations that work with immigrants and provide services such as housing.⁶⁹

In Surrey, barriers to the multicultural community have included language, attitudes, lack of space for organizing community activities, and park amenities that do not meet the needs of ethnic groups. Specific examples of desired park amenities included chairs and tables to encourage use by seniors and adults and covered areas for hosting events and activities. Strategies identified to reduce barriers and increase participation included building relationships with the multicultural community, providing diversity training to staff, developing volunteer host programs with multiple language capabilities, printing flyers in different languages, and increasing multicultural programming.⁷⁰

Aboriginal Population

The number of Aboriginal persons in Alberta is expected to grow by 31% between 2001 and 2016. Edmonton's Aboriginal population is young in contrast to the general population and most families are larger and more children grow up in lone parent families. Although Edmonton's Aboriginal population is better educated than the national population, Aboriginals have lower levels of education than the general population of the city. Levels of income are lower and unemployment is higher for Aboriginal people. Aboriginals are over-represented in the criminal justice system (including young offenders) and child welfare systems. Fewer Aboriginal children attend school than the general population.⁷¹

One cannot assume that Aboriginal people share the same values and interests with respect to recreation and leisure as non-Aboriginal people. To better meet the needs of Aboriginal populations, there is a need to develop partnerships to maximize community harmony and the use of resources and to provide the best possible services to the community.⁷²

Administrators must appreciate native culture and apply awareness of Aboriginal culture in policy development and program implementation.⁷³ Although there is a dearth of research in the area of Aboriginal populations in urban settings, research with regard to Aboriginal communities has found that Aboriginal people live within at least two cultures, the Aboriginal culture and the dominant Canadian culture. Problems have been found in trying to transfer a recreation framework across cultures since commonly perceived recreation benefits may not transfer to other cultures. Collaboration is seen as the key to successful recreation services because it does not dictate from the predominant administrative system or abandon communities to attempt to find their own solutions.⁷⁴

Implications

The themes in a discussion of cultural diversity are

- the need to learn about and understand cultural differences;

⁶⁹ Gruszczynska S, *Telephone interview and brochures provided*

⁷⁰ Karyo Communications, p.7-16

⁷¹ *Community Services Business Forecast to 2010*, p. 21-23 and *Edmonton Social Plan – Release 3*, Section 8.2, p. 1

⁷² Turner H, *Implications of Demographics*, p. 1

⁷³ Malloy et al, p. 117

⁷⁴ Fox KM et al, *Cultural Perspectives, Resilient Aboriginal Communities and Recreation*, p. 148-183

- establishment of relationships with communities to determine needs and areas where assistance could be provided;
- outreach to cultural groups to welcome diversity and inform them of available services, parks and facilities;
- multilingual information services;
- collaborative efforts.

Once relationships have been established, possible impacts for future park use and development can be more fully understood.

Accessibility Factors

In 1991, 15% of Edmonton's population had a disability, an increase from 1986. Disabilities were most common among older people, indicating that the proportion of people with disabilities is likely to increase as the population ages. The most common disability was mobility disability (limited ability to walk, move or stand), which is experienced by 49% of Edmonton's disabled population, followed by agility impairment (limited ability to bend, dress or handle small objects), which is experienced by 45% of the disabled population. Hearing impairment affected 24% of Edmonton's disabled population and 11% of people with disabilities suffered vision impairment. The majority of disabilities were classified as "mild".⁷⁵ Residents of the Capital Health Authority region can expect an average disability free life of 68 years.⁷⁶

The following map indicates areas of residence of people with disabilities.

Research supports the role of leisure services in the prevention of physical and mental deterioration and enhancement of the well-being of people with disabilities. Although the ageing population will be more active and healthy than previous generations, there will be a growing population of older adults with disabilities who will require adapted services. Older adults with disabilities will seek integrated recreation opportunities with non-disabled peers.⁷⁷

As the number of people with disabilities increases in Edmonton, so will the demand and need for programs and outreach, as well as physical environments that welcome disabled people. The need to plan for mobility issues will increase in importance.⁷⁸

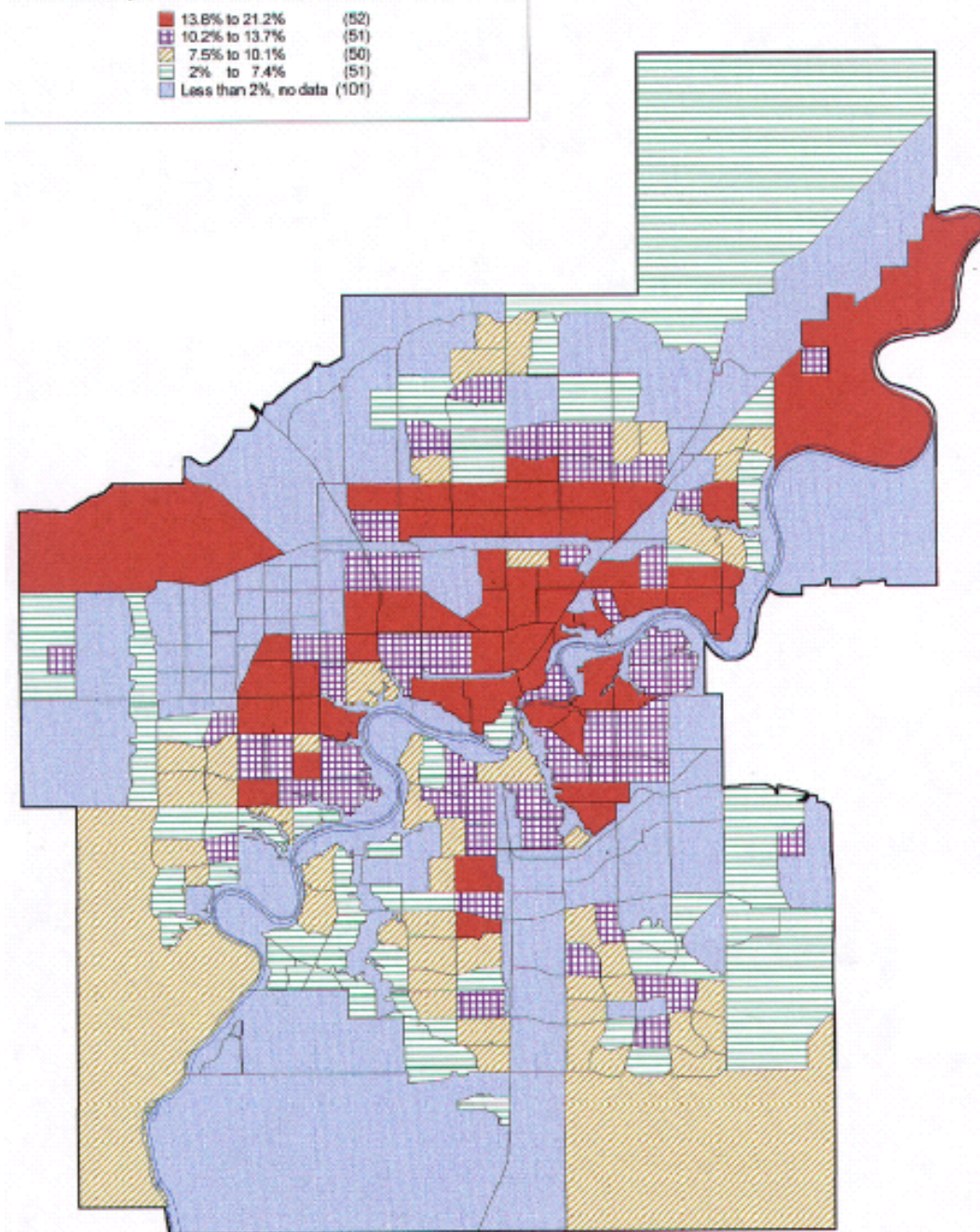
⁷⁵ *Edmonton Social Plan – Release 3*, p. 4 & 5

⁷⁶ Shields and Tremblay, *The Health of Canada's Communities*, p. 11

⁷⁷ Kassian, p. 29 & 30

⁷⁸ Wickens, p. 9

Percent of Population With Activity Limitations (Disabilities)



Health Indicators

Some basic indicators of overall health in a community include life expectancy, infant mortality, low birth weight, and teenage pregnancies. In addition, the definition of health and well-being is becoming broader and the role of leisure in improving physical, emotional, and mental health is recognized.

The role of active living in the prevention of disease is becoming more prominent. Physical activity reduces the risk of many conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, obesity, type II diabetes, osteoporosis, depression and cancer. It can increase life and health expectancy and contribute to more independent living in later life.⁷⁹ Twelve percent of those aged 12 years and over who live in the Capital Health Authority region report poor or fair health.⁸⁰

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy in the Capital Health Authority region was 78.8 years in 1996.⁸¹ In Canada, life expectancy has increased steadily when one looks at the broader picture. In 1920-22, average life expectancy was 59 years; in 1950-52, it was 69 years and in 1996, it was 78.3 years.⁸² For those born in 1998, life expectancy is 96.⁸³ Life expectancy has been shown to be higher in urban areas where education is high.⁸⁴ Life expectancy has also been shown to be higher in countries where income inequality is less.⁸⁵ If the income gap does increase in Canada, life expectancy may be reduced.

Infant Mortality and Low Birth Weight

Infant mortality (children who die before their first birthday) is an indicator of health and prosperity in a community and has declined from 8.3 per 1000 born alive in 1987-89 to a rate of 5.8 per 1000 in 1997-1999.⁸⁶

Children born with low birth weight (less than 2500 grams) are more likely to have life-long health problems. Despite the possibility for prenatal intervention in many of the factors associated with low birth weight such as alcohol consumption and smoking, the low birth weight rate has been relatively constant for the past 15 years at approximately 6%.⁸⁷

Teenage Pregnancies

Teenage pregnancies are an economic and social disadvantage to both the mother and child. The teen birth rate (aged 15-19) in Edmonton has declined since 1991 from 47.1 per 1000 to 25.5 in 1999.⁸⁸ Of teen births in 1996, 86.6% were out of wedlock.⁸⁹

⁷⁹ Health Canada, *Canada's Physical Activity Guide*

⁸⁰ Shields and Tremblay, p. 11

⁸¹ Shields and Tremblay, p. 11

⁸² www.statcan.ca and *The Daily*, July 4, 2002

⁸³ Active Living Coalition for Older Adults, *A Blueprint for Action for Active Living and Older Adults*, p. 2

⁸⁴ Shields and Tremblay, p. 20

⁸⁵ Siedentop, *Valuing the Physically Active Life: Contemporary and Future Directions*, p. 266

⁸⁶ *Edmonton's Children Background Report*, p. 8

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 9

⁸⁸ *Edmonton's Children Background Report*, p. 29 & 30

⁸⁹ *Edmonton Social Plan: Release 3*, Section 8.4, p. 15

Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease and stroke are the number one cause of death in Canada. Although difficult to determine actual figures, it is estimated that 25% of Canadians have cardiovascular disease. Although mortality rates have declined steadily since the mid-1960's, due mostly to decreased smoking and improved medical care, the actual number of deaths have increased. By 2016, the number of men dying from heart disease will not change, but the number of women dying will increase because women live longer. As the population ages, it is predicted that the number of people who suffer strokes will increase. The risk factors for heart disease are smoking, inactivity, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol. The Canadian Heart Health Surveys, completed in 1985-90 indicated that 41% of men and 33% of women had 2 or more of the major risk factors. Many of the behavioural risk factors such as smoking, inactivity and obesity begin in childhood.⁹⁰

Obesity

Obesity is a major cause of heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure. A study released in the International Journal of Obesity, April 2002 included the following figures:

- One half of Canadian adults aged 20 to 64 are overweight, and one quarter of those individuals are obese;
- 33% of Canadian boys aged 7-13 are overweight, and 30% of those boys are obese;
- 27% of Canadian girls aged 7-13 are overweight, and 33% of those girls are obese;
- From 1981 to 1996, obesity increased by 55% in men and 33% in women;
- From 1981 to 1996, obesity increased by 400% in boys and 350% in girls.

The incidence of obesity can be reduced by increasing physical activity and reducing sugary and fatty food in the diet.⁹¹

Diabetes

There are currently more than 2 million Canadians with diabetes and this is estimated to increase to 3 million by 2010. As the population ages, the incidence of diabetes will increase. Risk factors for diabetes include high blood pressure, high blood glucose, high cholesterol, obesity, age, and genetics. Individuals of Aboriginal descent are 3 to 5 times more likely to develop diabetes, primarily type II diabetes. Latin Americans, Africans, Asians and Hispanics living in North America also have a higher incidence of diabetes. Physical activity can reduce many of the risk factors and is also an aid in managing diabetes.⁹²

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis affects one in four women over 50 and one in eight men over 50. Physical activity, particularly weight bearing activity, such as walking, can help increase bone mass and improve coordination and balance to reduce falls. As the population ages, the incidence of osteoporosis will also increase.⁹³

⁹⁰ Health Canada et al, *The Changing Face of Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada 2000*, p. 1, 23, 70, 71 & 87

⁹¹ *Tales from the Scales, Canada is Bulging Out All Over*, www.heartandstroke.ca

⁹² www.diabetes.ca

⁹³ www.osteoporosis.ca

Mental Illness

Twenty-one percent of Albertans will suffer a mental disorder during their lifetime, 9% of whom will experience depression. Physical activity, including such things as walking, gardening, and stretching, and involvement in hobbies and activities are identified as stress relievers. Good mental health can be encouraged through balanced lifestyles including leisure activity, physical activity and volunteerism.⁹⁴ In 1996, 28% of adults in the Capital Health Authority region reported experiencing high stress and 10% of those over the age of 12 reported depression.⁹⁵ Forty percent of Canadians feel stress sometimes and 16% feel this way very often. Women tend to feel higher levels of stress and feelings of stress begin to decline after age 45. As well, those with a sedentary lifestyle report feeling stressed more often.⁹⁶

Cancer

Physical activity can reduce the risk of breast, colorectal and prostate cancer. It reduces the incidence of obesity, a risk factor in 6 different types of cancer. The probability of developing cancer during one's lifetime is 38% for women and 41% for men. One in 9 women will develop breast cancer and 1 in 16 will develop colorectal cancer. One in 8 men will develop prostate cancer and 1 in 15 will develop colorectal cancer. The incidence rates for cancer can be expected to increase proportionally with the ageing population, since cancer is primarily a disease of older Canadians. The mortality rates for all cancers have declined since 1988 for men and since 1974 for women due primarily to reduction in smoking and early detection.⁹⁷

Healthy Ageing

Active lifestyles can reduce frailty in older adults. It is estimated that if older adults increased their cardiorespiratory function by 20%, independent living could be increased by as much as 8 years.⁹⁸

Implications

Several government initiatives have identified recreation and leisure, particularly physical activity as a means to increase health in Canada. The Report of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health identified the following recommendations:

- the establishment of provincial objectives in several areas including physical activity and environmental quality;
- a role for Alberta Health and Wellness in providing the best information about healthy choices and factors that affect health including diet, exercise and stress;
- the provision of regular exercise time as part of every school day.⁹⁹

On June 18, 2002, the federal government passed Bill C54, the "Act to Promote Physical Activity and Sport". It provides direction to policies that improve the health and well-being of Canadians by encouraging them to increase their physical activity levels and by reducing barriers to

⁹⁴ www.cmha.ab.ca

⁹⁵ Shields and Tremblay, p. 11

⁹⁶ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *1997 Physical Activity Benchmarks Report*, p. 19-21

⁹⁷ Canadian Cancer Society et al, *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2002*, p. 15 & 16

⁹⁸ Heart Health Coalition, B.C. – *Setting the Pace: A Plan to Improve the Health of British Columbians Through Physical Activity*, p. 25

⁹⁹ Premier's Advisory Council on Health, *A Framework for Reform*, p. 42

participation. Policies will also increase participation in sport and encourage sport excellence.¹⁰⁰ In April 2002, the Canadian Sport Policy was endorsed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada. Among its goals are to increase participation in sport, to improve access to sport and to improve excellence in sport.¹⁰¹

The World Health Organization's World Health Day 2002 slogan was "Move for Health", recognizing the importance of physical activity and health.¹⁰²

Should economic times of constraint persist, fear of the costs of health care may become prevalent. As a result, participation in active lifestyles will increase as people become more aware of the health risks that can be avoided through physical activity. Emotional and physical well being may be more important to people than material wealth.¹⁰³

An emphasis on an individual's responsibility for their own health holds some danger in ignoring the social context in which people live. Concerns have been expressed that the focus on individuals and their activity level may result in "individual blame" for their state of health or state of ageing, which may ignore systemic issues such as poverty or health issues over which there is no individual control.¹⁰⁴

Within leisure services, an emphasis on privatization and user-pay, as well as a potential shift in emphasis to the adult market as the population ages may decrease access to physical activity by lower income groups and youth.¹⁰⁵

Several environmental factors have been identified as positively impacting physical activity levels. For preschool children, just being outdoors was the strongest factor affecting activity levels. The number of play spaces near their homes and amount of time using those spaces also increased activity levels. For school aged children, most of their physical activity takes place in organized sport or activity classes. Improvements in such programs for adolescents may counteract the tendency for reduced physical activity as the child ages. Children are less active in the winter; support for winter activities could be increased. Adults are more likely to walk in their neighbourhood if there is a mixture of housing, retail, entertainment and commercial uses in the neighbourhood and if trails are designed to encourage walking. A further factor influencing activity levels of adults is the location of fitness facilities. Exercisers have been found to have more facilities around their homes than non-exercisers, even after controlling for age, gender and education level.¹⁰⁶

Incorporating physical activity naturally into a person's lifestyle may be one of the most effective means of increasing physical activity levels.¹⁰⁷ Examples include walking to school, gardening, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, etc.

¹⁰⁰ www.canadianheritage.gc.ca

¹⁰¹ *The Canadian Sport Policy*, p. 5

¹⁰² www.who.int

¹⁰³ Reid, p. 218

¹⁰⁴ Michalski J, *What Matters to Canadian NGO's on Aging*, p. 16

¹⁰⁵ Siedentop, p. 272 & 273

¹⁰⁶ Sallis J et al, *Environmental and Policy Interventions to Promote Physical Activity*, p. 383 & 384

¹⁰⁷ King A et al, *Physical Activity Interventions Targeting Older Adults*, p. 330

Parks of all types contribute positively to the health of residents. Studies have shown parks have a positive impact by reducing stress and encouraging exercise, which is especially important in an ageing population. Older adults who use parks make fewer visits to the doctor than those who do not use parks, even when controlling for the effects of age, health conditions, income and education. Fifty percent of older adults said their mood or state of mind improved after visiting a local park.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, some studies indicate improved human health just by viewing trees. Natural areas decrease airborne pollutants providing a benefit to human health. Urban forests decrease carbon dioxide to counteract global warming and provide shade that can reduce the incidence of skin cancer and reduce the consumption of energy.¹⁰⁹ Office workers with a view of trees and landscapes have been found to be more productive than those without a view.¹¹⁰

The growing importance of recreation for the prevention of disease and promotion of healthy lifestyles provides opportunities to municipal service providers. An inviting park system will partially address inactivity, if those who are inactive can be encouraged to participate. As awareness increases and efforts are made to change behaviour and increase participation, the demand for recreation services will increase. Promotion of the health benefits of recreation may lead to increased support for parks and service provision.

Youth at Risk

Children can be defined as high risk when they experience more than three of the following risk factors:

- parents experiencing a high level of marital dissatisfaction,
- parents have divorced,
- inadequate household income,
- primary caregiver is experiencing depression,
- more than 4 children in the family,
- mother was 19 years old or younger when child was born,
- ineffective parenting styles,
- alcohol abuse by mother or father,
- learning disability diagnosed.¹¹¹

Risk is a continuum and all youth can be considered at risk with more at the low risk end of the continuum and fewer at the chronic deviance end of the continuum depending upon risk factors.¹¹²

One study showed that about 4% of Canadian 10-year-olds live in very stressful situations and nearly half of those exhibited behavioural difficulties. This rate of behavioural difficulty was five times higher than those not exposed to any risks. Those high risk children with good relationships

¹⁰⁸ Godbey et al, p. 136

¹⁰⁹ Croy D, *Green Spaces Deliver Many Benefits*, p. 43-44

¹¹⁰ O'Sullivan, p. 99

¹¹¹ Human Resources Development Canada, *Applied Research Bulletin Fall 1999*, p. 24

¹¹² McKay S et al, *The Impact of Recreation on Youth in Transition*, p. 284

with siblings, friends or teachers had behavioural difficulties similar to those with no risks.¹¹³ Peer support has been found to be important in interventions to promote physical activity in youth.¹¹⁴

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, conducted in 1998-99, collected data that indicated that children who participated in organized activities outside of school, such as clubs, sports, music or art tended to have higher self-esteem, better social skills and did better in school. For youth aged 12 to 15, those who rarely participated also were more likely to smoke.¹¹⁵

A study was conducted of 765 sole support mothers on social assistance in Ontario, along with their 1300 children and youth aged 0 to 24 years who were offered subsidized recreational opportunities. The participation rate for the activities was 76% and yielded the following results:

- psychologically disordered children maintained social, academic and physical competencies, similar to that of non-disordered children;
- families reduced their use of social and health services;
- there were positive outcomes for the mothers as well as children;
- there was a 10% greater number who stopped social assistance;
- children were less anxious, more self-confident and made new friends.¹¹⁶

The benefits of recreation to youth at risk include the following:

- decreased substance abuse and smoking,
- better socially productive attitudes and social development,
- positive effect on self-esteem and self confidence,
- reduced boredom and deviant behaviour,
- decreased stress,
- better health,
- more desirable peer socialization,
- improved school achievement.¹¹⁷

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association was involved in a National Youth At Risk Pilot Project, which found that the most successful programs were ones that combined non-competitive sports or physical activity with socialization and self-awareness. The five most popular activities were hiking, indoor non-competitive sports, cultural events, girls-only nights, and swimming.

Lessons learned from the project were:

- recreation has value to youth at risk;
- it is important to involve youth in program planning;
- a multi-sectoral approach was essential;

¹¹³ Human Resources Development Canada, *Applied Research Bulletin Fall 1999*, p. 24

¹¹⁴ Edwards P, *Evidence-Based Strategies for Increasing Participation in Physical Activity in Community Recreation, Fitness and Sport*, p. 11

¹¹⁵ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, May 30, 2001.

¹¹⁶ Haldane S, *Scientific Research Supports Recreation for Children Living in Poverty*, p. 40-41

¹¹⁷ McKay S, p. 285-286

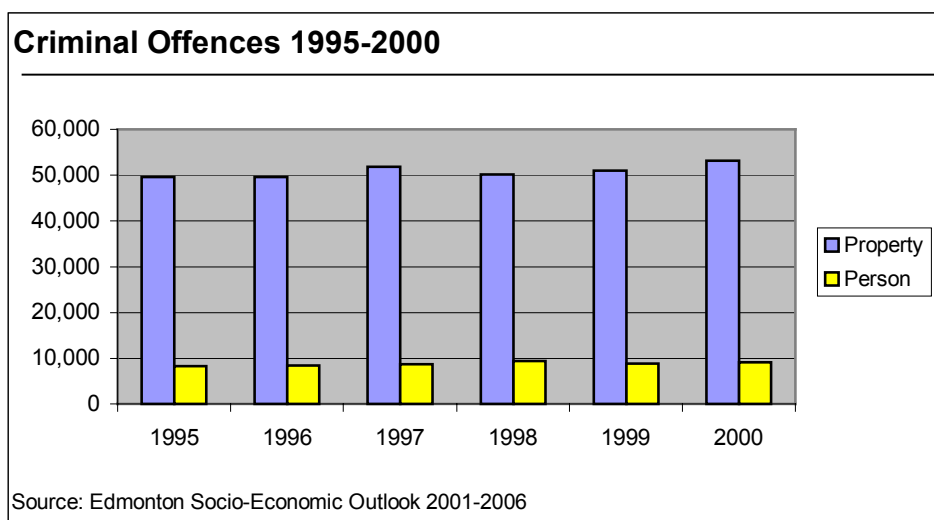
- time to build partnerships and reach consensus is important;
- one-to-one communication is important in reaching and encouraging youth;
- programs take time to build.¹¹⁸

A review of programs in the United States found a need for clear program goals; sufficient planning and evaluation; contact between program planners and youth and youth involvement in decision making; and consistent, competent leadership. Late night hours were also seen as advantageous.¹¹⁹ Programs need to provide for positive development and prevention of problem behaviour using a strategy involving schools, communities, agencies, parents and youth. Suggested program goals include emotional support, sense of belonging and value, skill building and mastery including personal, social and recreational skills, and community service.¹²⁰

Generally, the responses to the recreation needs for youth at risk tend to be programming rather than park facility development, although those programs may use parks and depending on program requirements, may impact on park planning.

Safety and Security

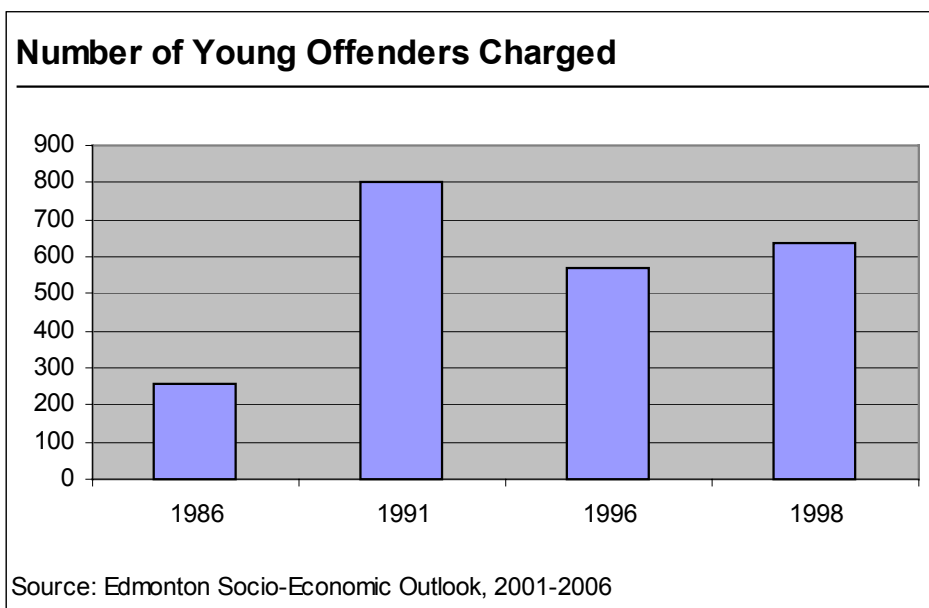
The following two charts show no clear pattern in the number of criminal offences and number of young offenders charged.



¹¹⁸ Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, *Summary of National Youth at Risk Pilot Project*

¹¹⁹ Witt PA, *The Six Year Test*, p. 90

¹²⁰ Witt PA, *Youth Development – Going to the Next Level*, p. 53



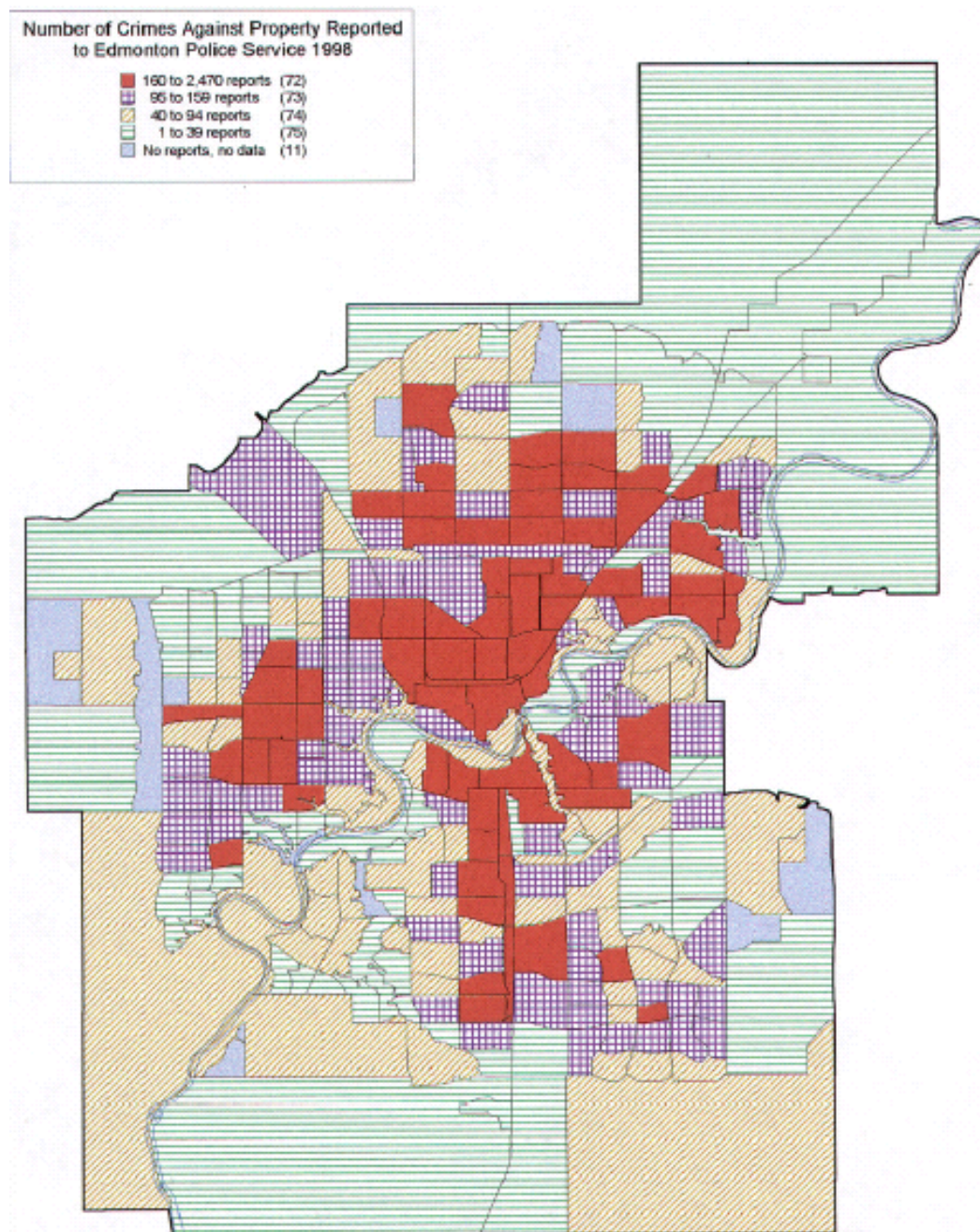
The following maps show the geographic location of crimes against property, crimes against persons and crimes committed by youth in Edmonton.

Crime rates cycle with demographics. Teenagers participate in more property crimes, moving into more violent crime in their 20s and early 30s. Those still involved in crime as they age tend to move into non-violent crime, such as fraud. The ageing population should result in reduced rates of violent crime. However, this may be counteracted as the Echo generation moves into their 20s.¹²¹ Migration of young workers from other provinces may also contribute to a slower decline in the violent crime rate. As noted in the population section of this report, because of population increases, the number of people under 20 remains relatively constant even though their proportion of the population will decrease, which may indicate little change in the number of youth crimes.

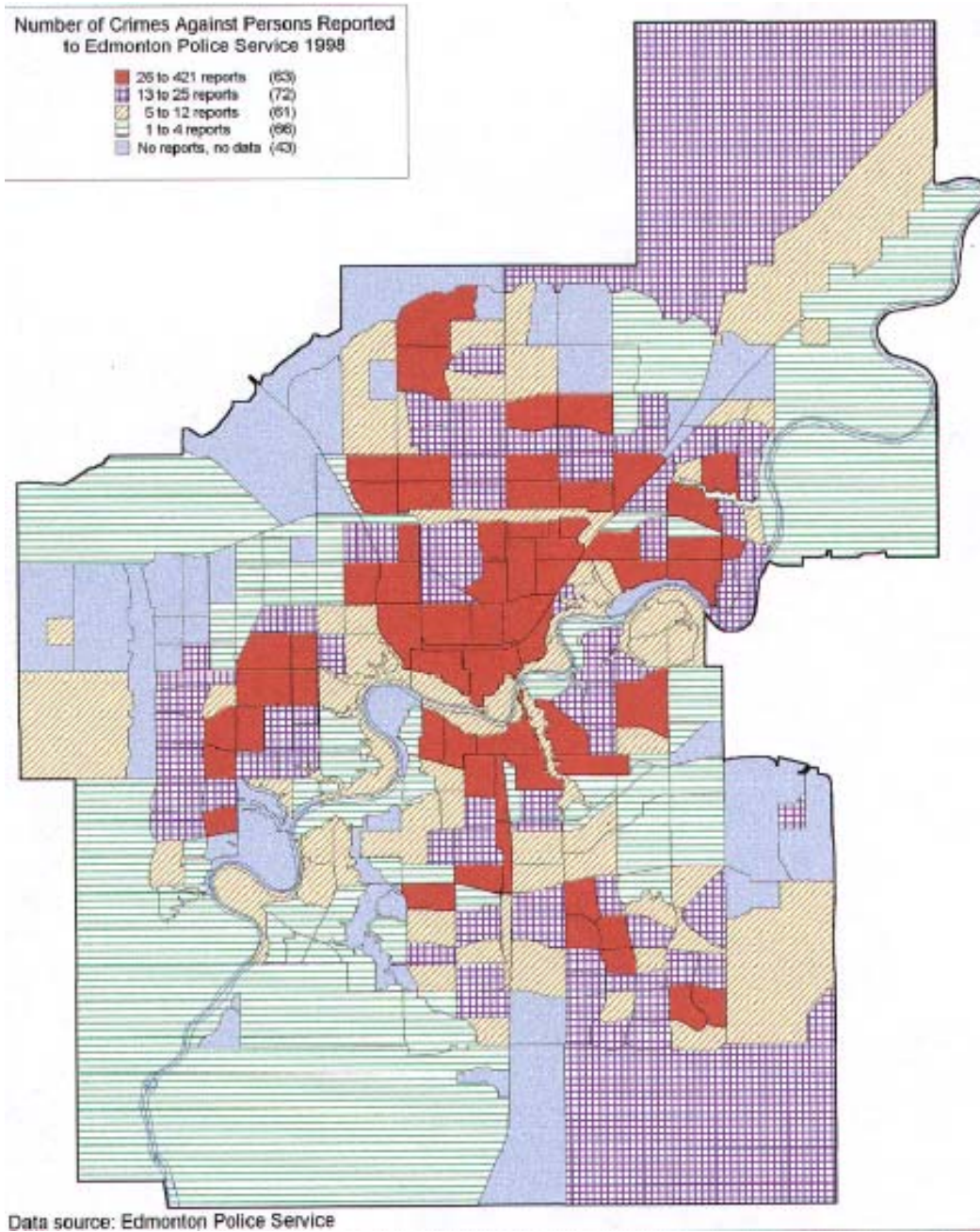
Two other factors which may affect crime rates, are the increasing gap between rich and poor and increasing average temperatures, both of which increase the incidence of crime.¹²²

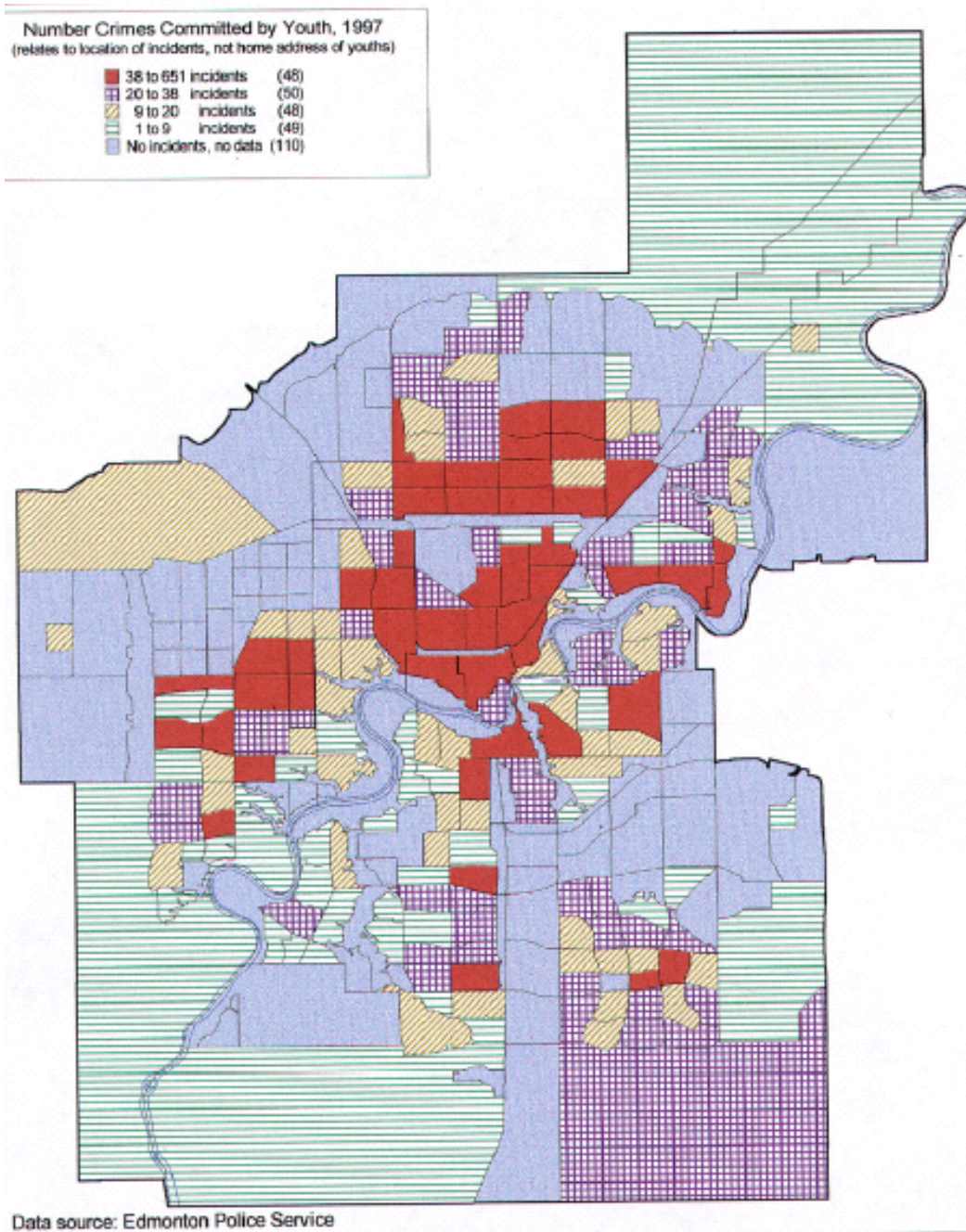
¹²¹ Foot, p. 192

¹²² Godbey et al, p. 134

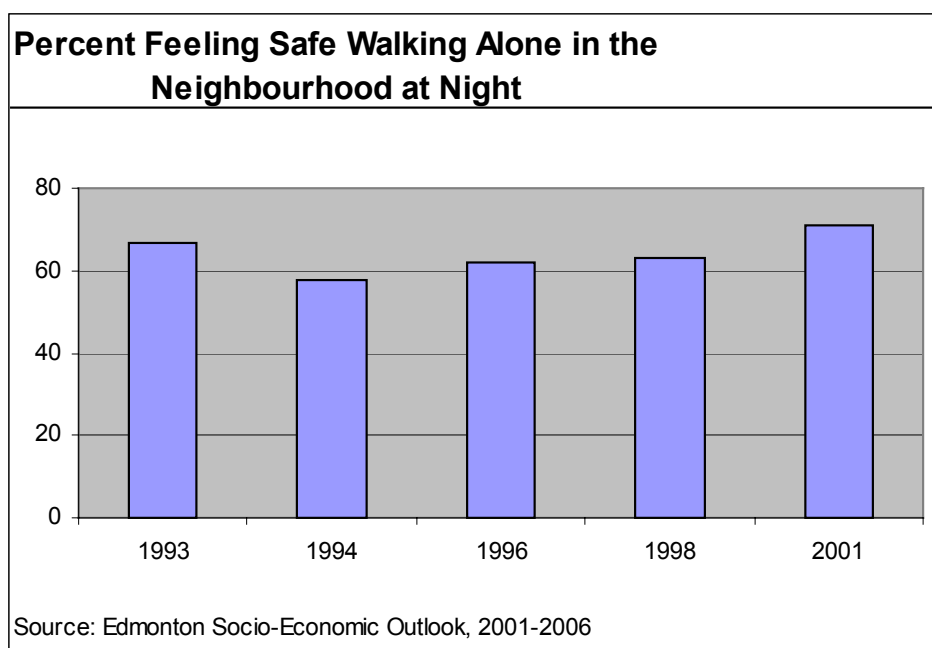


Data source: Edmonton Online Service





From the following chart, it can be seen that the percentage of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night is increasing in Edmonton.



Older people are more fearful of crime than younger people; reports of perceived safety may decline as the population ages¹²³, even though seniors report the lowest rate of personal victimization.¹²⁴ Women are more fearful about using public transportation after dark, walking alone and being home alone. Fearfulness also increases with the amount of television people watch.¹²⁵

Fear of crime will influence where people, especially those with children, spend their leisure time. Those who can afford it, may purchase memberships to private clubs, play areas and restricted access beaches, and will pay admissions to visit zoos, aquariums, museums and parks. There will be a need to reduce perceived risks to visitors to public attractions.¹²⁶

Safety of parks was identified by parents as the most important factor in deciding to use a park, although lights, toilets and drinking water were also important.¹²⁷ Seventeen percent of Alberta parents worry a great deal when their children are playing outside and 18% worry to a moderate degree. Nineteen percent of parents worry somewhat and 26% worry a little, while 19% do not worry at all.¹²⁸

¹²³ Foot, p. 191

¹²⁴ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, November 2, 2000.

¹²⁵ Godbey et al, p. 134

¹²⁶ AZAA, p. 22

¹²⁷ Sallis et al, p. 383

¹²⁸ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Alberta Results of the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor*, p. 6

Women rated urban parks as the second most feared area after streets and alleys and suggested the following improvements: emergency phones at trailheads, better lighting in parking lots, clearly marked trails and more park staff visible on the trails.¹²⁹

Adequate lighting, maintenance and surveillance may encourage more use of facilities, trails, paths and sidewalks.¹³⁰ Innovative alternatives could be created such as the “Walking School Bus” or “Cycling School Bus” programs, where groups of students are accompanied by one or more adults to walk or cycle to school.¹³¹ Areas which have lighting, but no activity, can lead to an increase in crime. It may be necessary to remove lighting to direct people elsewhere.¹³²

Parks have been seen to have a cycle related to crime. Often gradual increases in graffiti, vandalism, littering and vehicle break-ins can lead to decreased perceptions of safety, an increase in more serious offences and decreased legitimate use. This may lead to confrontations between legitimate and non-legitimate users. Park use will decline even further. Intervention at early stages with immediate repair of damage and programming to attract users can head off decline. Other responses may include redesign to enhance natural surveillance, increased patrol of sites, video and other technological surveillance measures, and community involvement with park monitoring and programming.¹³³

Vandalism reduces enjoyment of parks and recreation facilities, contributes to a climate of fear and negatively impacts public safety. In Mississauga and Regina, community-based programs have been developed to reduce vandalism. In Mississauga, an interagency committee oversees a “Facility Watch” program directed towards reporting vandalism and inappropriate behaviour, as well as encouraging respect for parks and equipment. A communication campaign, including brochures, posters, signage, public service announcements, a school education program and Internet information, encourages residents to use the 24-hour hotline to report incidents and vandalism. The city also has a zero tolerance policy for players, coaches and spectators at sporting events to discourage vandalism and violence.

Regina has an interdepartmental municipal committee that develops strategies to reduce and eliminate unacceptable actions, especially those related to antisocial behaviour of some teenagers. The committee has developed a reporting system in order to identify problem areas; developed consistent procedures for dealing with incidents; instituted an environmental design review process to identify potential “trouble” spots; and is developing a community involvement process to encourage the community to take more ownership of parks and facilities.¹³⁴

Providing free activities led by qualified leaders and coaches in low-income areas can increase participation by children and youth in those areas and also help to reduce crime.¹³⁵ In San Francisco, there was a 28% drop in crime in one neighbourhood after the first year of their community garden project. After the 1992 Los Angeles riots, there was no evidence of damage to

¹²⁹ Schneider I, *Stress and Fear Among Urban-Proximate Female Recreationists: Experience, Explanation and Alternatives*, p. 293 & 294

¹³⁰ Craig et al, p. 43

¹³¹ www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/WSB-booklet-e.pdf

¹³² McKay T, *What Makes a Park Safe*, p. 22

¹³³ Pendleton MR & Thompson HC, *The Criminal Career of Park and Recreation Hotspots*

¹³⁴ Lorenz D and Schultz J, *Community Based Programs to Fight Vandalism*, p. 14-16

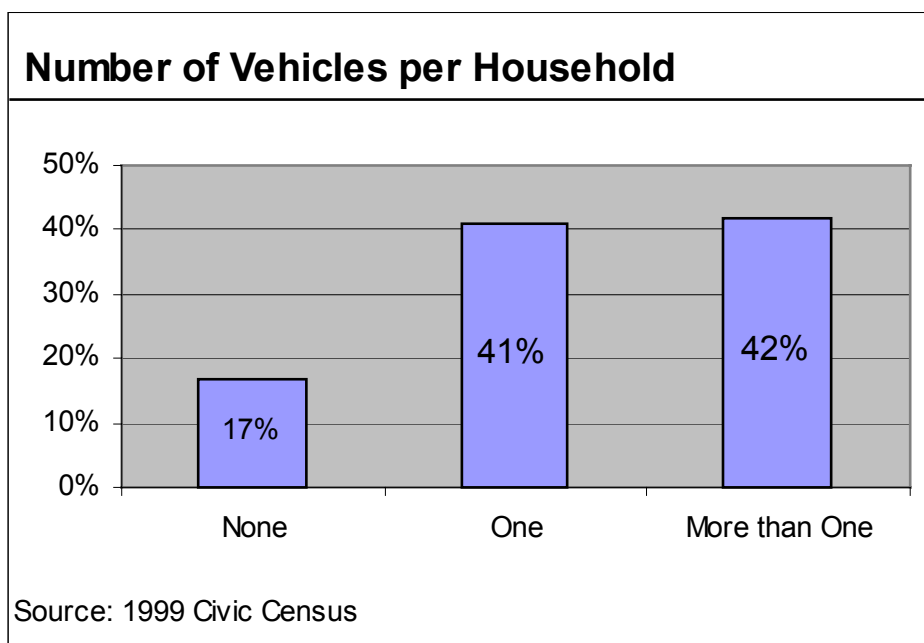
¹³⁵ Edwards, p. 21

community gardens and parks and 77% of residents in areas most affected by the riots ranked improved parks and recreation as absolutely critical or important.¹³⁶

Three U.S. studies cite positive impacts on youth behaviour through recreation programs. In one community, there was a 28% decrease in arrests after an academic and recreational support program for teenagers was implemented.¹³⁷ In Phoenix, juvenile crime dropped 55% when community recreation facilities stayed open late nights in the summer and crime rates went up when facilities returned to regular hours in the fall. In Philadelphia, after police worked with volunteers to clean up vacant lots and plant gardens, thefts and burglaries dropped in the precinct by nearly 90%.¹³⁸ Further lists of programs and their impacts can be found in “Healing America’s Cities” at www.tpl.org.

Vehicles and Transportation

Eighty-three percent of Edmonton households have access to at least one vehicle.



Americans typically make three to four automobile trips per day with about one third of the travel related to free time activities.¹³⁹

Vehicular travel will remain prevalent since it allows for the most flexibility and adaptability of travel schedules. Use of vehicles is encouraged by single use zoning within municipalities, where one does not usually find essential services within walking distance of home.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ *Healing America’s Cities*, www.tpl.org

¹³⁷ Heart Health Coalition, p. 21

¹³⁸ Munroe, p. 27

¹³⁹ Godbey, p. 64

¹⁴⁰ Godbey et al, p. 124 & 126

In suburban neighbourhoods, walking is used more often for both work and non-work trips, if the neighbourhood is more oriented to public transportation than automobile transportation.¹⁴¹ The College of Family Physicians of Canada encouraged city planners to include active transportation (bicycling and walking) in their planning for communities as a way of improving health.¹⁴²

Strategies for increasing active living in communities include urban planning and transportation planning that encourages walking and cycling:

- provision and maintenance of paths, trails and green spaces;
- creation of cycling and walking routes that link residential, community facilities, business;
- provision of bicycle parking;
- creation of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes;
- integration of active transportation with passive modes of public transportation.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Sallis et al, p. 384

¹⁴² *Active Living*, p.11

¹⁴³ Craig et al, p. 43

Leisure and Activity Trends

Leisure Time

One of the main complaints about daily life for Canadians is not having enough time. In 1995, two thirds of Canadians reported they were working longer hours than a few years prior. Sixty percent of Canadians polled in 1996 said their leisure time had shrunk. As a result “time savers”, such as fast food restaurants and drive-through windows are booming.¹⁴⁴ This is part of a process that Geoffrey Godbey describes as “time deepening”, which when applied to recreation may include the following:

- speeding up the activity : using a golf cart instead of walking,
- substituting an activity that takes less time for another more time-intensive activity: playing squash rather than tennis,
- multi-tasking: watching television, reading during commercials, while running on a treadmill,
- scheduling leisure activities within very tight timelines: piano lessons, a half hour for supper, soccer practice for an hour, followed by a trip to the library before it closes.

Time deepening often produces the opposite of what one might desire from recreation – stress and not experiencing the activity fully or not being able to participate in the activity of choice due to time constraints.¹⁴⁵

A more flexible workplace may lead to more available leisure time.¹⁴⁶ Demographics may also lead to an increase in free time due to delayed entry into the work force, smaller families, and retirement or change to part time employment by older people.¹⁴⁷

Americans have 30 to 40 hours of free time a week, an increase of 7.5 hours/week between 1965 and 1995. However, this time is in small chunks and more difficult to synchronize within the household since more household members are employed. These small chunks of time are often spent watching television, which showed an increase of 6 hours/week between 1965 and 1995.¹⁴⁸ It has been said that the rise in popularity of television has reduced the amount of civic activity in the community as time that was previously spent “publicly” has become “privatized”.¹⁴⁹

Of the estimated 40.6 hours of free time Canadians have each week, over one third (15.4 hours per week) is spent watching television, the largest use of free time.¹⁵⁰ Albertans watched television an average of 19.7 hours per week in the fall of 2000, little changed from 1999.¹⁵¹ This

¹⁴⁴ Reid, p. 33, 190 & 211

¹⁴⁵ Godbey et al, p. 65

¹⁴⁶ Foot, p. 102

¹⁴⁷ Godbey et al, p. 64

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 59, 63, 64 & 66

¹⁴⁹ Reid, p. 99

¹⁵⁰ Statistics Canada, *Overview of the Time Use of Canadians in 1998*, p. 5 & 6

¹⁵¹ www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Culture/arts23.htm

is a downward trend from the highs set in 1995 and the early 1990s.¹⁵² The downward trend is seen in all age groups, but the greatest decline has been seen in children and young adults.¹⁵³

In addition to watching television, Canadians spend 11.2 hours per week socializing (excluding restaurant meals), 3.5 hours per week on passive leisure activities such as reading, 1.4 hours per week on sports, movies and other entertainment events and 7 hours on active leisure including sports.¹⁵⁴ Between 1986 and 1998, leisure time has increased, but not because people are working less; the time is coming from spending less time on personal care activities such as sleeping, eating, washing and dressing. Women tend to have less leisure time than men.¹⁵⁵

In the year 2000, Statistics Canada estimated that 53% of Canadians over the age of 14 used the Internet at home, work or in another location during the 12 months prior to the survey. This is three times the 1994 rate. Because of increased Internet use, 25% of users reported they watched less television, 15% spent less time reading, 10% spent less time sleeping, 11% spent less time on leisure activities and 11% spent less time performing household chores.¹⁵⁶ As the amount of time spent on-line increases, users sacrifice increasing amounts of time with friends and family.¹⁵⁷

Competition with passive recreation pursuits will continue to be a challenge to the providers of recreation and parks services.

In 1996, 49% of Edmontonians reported they have less time for recreation and leisure than 5 years prior; 21% reported having more time and 30% said they had about the same amount of time. Respondents most likely to report more time available were between the ages of 55 and 75. When asked about how they felt about their time, 37% reported always feeling rushed, 48% reported occasionally feeling rushed and 15% never felt rushed. Those between 21 and 55 years of age were the most likely to report always feeling rushed. Those over the age of 65 were most likely to never feel rushed. Feeling rushed increased with household size and was higher among respondents who were employed full time.¹⁵⁸

Eighty-four percent of high income Canadian adults and 73% of low income adults felt rushed at least a few times a week. Although they are more likely to feel pressed for time on weekdays, 60% of high income people and 47% of low income people felt rushed every day of the week. The group who feel pressed for time the most are dual income parents of children, especially the women in that group.¹⁵⁹

In 1992, 62% of adolescents aged 15-19 felt rushed every day or a few times a week and by 1998, this had increased to 68%. As well, 49% felt moderate or high levels of stress.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, October 23, 2001.

¹⁵³ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, January 25, 2001.

¹⁵⁴ *Overview of the Time Use of Canadians*, p. 5 & 6

¹⁵⁵ Fast J et al, *The Time of Our Lives...*, p. 20

¹⁵⁶ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, March 26, 2001

¹⁵⁷ Williams C, *Connected to the Internet, Still Connected to Life?*, p. 14

¹⁵⁸ Harper J et al, *The Use and Benefits of Local Government Recreation and Park Services – Edmonton, Alberta*, p. 8 & 11

¹⁵⁹ Frederick J, *Tempus Fugit...Are You Time Crunched?*, p. 7

¹⁶⁰ Mannell R et al, *Adolescents' Experience of Busyness, Time Pressure and Well-Being: Positive and Negative Effects of School, Work, volunteer and Extracurricular Involvement*, p. 212

There is evidence in the United States that people are reporting less stress than in the past. The National Institute of Health asked if individuals had experienced substantial stress in the previous two weeks. The number who replied positively was 50% in 1985, 56% in 1993 and 48% in 1995. This trend was across all groups.¹⁶¹

In response to time pressures, providers of recreation services could offer less time consuming options to park users or try to “slow down” the visitor and provide respite from time deepening.¹⁶² Parks can be designed to provide tranquility through minimizing the intrusion of development on the park space, providing more contact with nature and promoting interpretive opportunities that promote greater connection with nature.¹⁶³ As people perceive stress and a need to “simplify life” in a technological world, natural settings and activities located near where people live will be sought for retreat and an opportunity to “reconnect with the natural world”.¹⁶⁴

Activity Trends

Participation

The Alberta Recreation Survey has been conducted periodically since 1981, with the latest survey conducted in 2000. Walking for pleasure has remained the most popular activity since the survey began. Low cost, spontaneous, health promoting activities have remained popular while activities requiring advanced organization, greater time commitments or which are more expensive have become less popular.¹⁶⁵

The following chart shows the percentage of households participating in outdoor recreation activities in 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000.

¹⁶¹ Godbey et al, p. 66

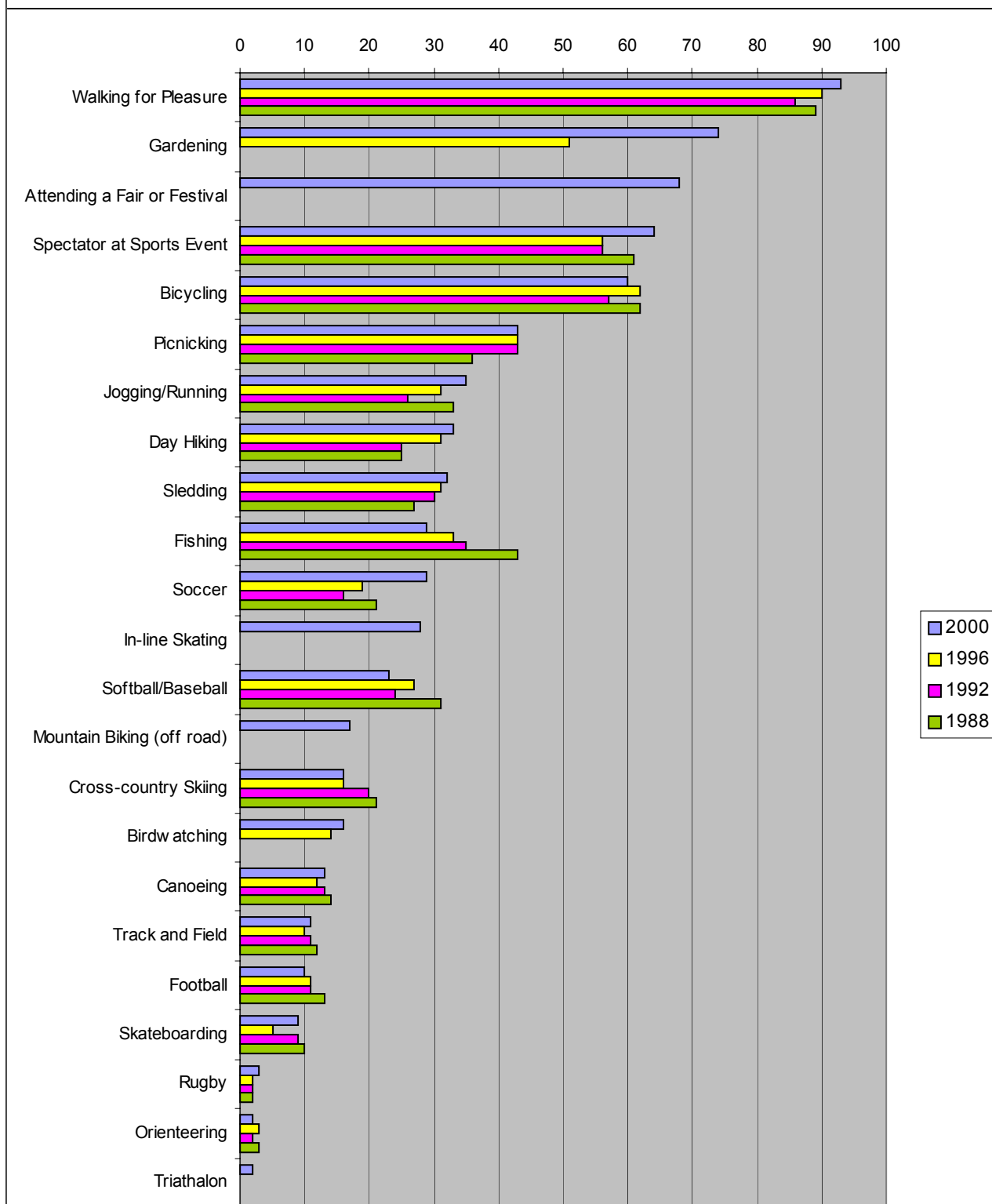
¹⁶² Ibid, p. 65

¹⁶³ Godbey, p. 74

¹⁶⁴ AZAA, p. 23

¹⁶⁵ *Edmonton Socio-Economic Outlook 2001-2006*, p. 31

Percentage Household Participation - Outdoor Activities



Source: Alberta Recreation Survey - 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000

Canadian adults participate most frequently outside of an organized setting, but only 20% report participating only in non-organized activities. Organized activities include competitive events (20% participate) and non-competitive organized activities (60% participate).¹⁶⁶

As people age, participation in team sports decreases and participation in home based activities increases, suggesting opportunities for skill-building, outreach and support for such things as home exercise, individual sports and gardening.¹⁶⁷

Respondents to the Alberta Recreation Survey were also asked to name their favourite activity. The top five favourite outdoor activities in 2000 were walking for pleasure, camping, bicycling, gardening and hiking/backpacking. Those who chose walking or gardening typically participated 51 or more times, while those who chose camping, bicycling, and hiking/backpacking typically participated 11-30 times. Walking for pleasure was the favourite outdoor activity among all age groups and all household types and was mentioned more often by women.¹⁶⁸

Single parent families participated in the least variety of outdoor activities, but were most likely to participate in outdoor activities over facility-based activities. Couples with and without children and those with a household income of \$30,001 to \$50,000 participated in the greatest variety of outdoor activities. Those with incomes of less than \$10,000 participated in the least variety of activities.¹⁶⁹

Respondents were asked to name an activity they wished to start. Five of the top ten activities were outdoor pursuits: canoeing/kayaking/rafting/rowing, bicycling, in-line skating, hiking/backpacking and running/jogging.¹⁷⁰

It is expected that participation in outdoor recreation will increase as levels of education, urbanization and household income increase. Activities which are increasing in popularity are in-line skating, mountain biking, walking, golf, snowboarding, rock climbing, wildlife viewing, nature study, and birdwatching.¹⁷¹

In 1996, 75% of Edmontonians reported using local parks either occasionally (46%) or frequently (29%). Those from smaller households were more likely to report not using parks, as were retired people.¹⁷² Of low income Edmontonians who were aware of recreational areas, 84% used neighbourhood parks, 79% used the River Valley Parks, 66% used the River Valley Trail system, 55% used toboggan hills, 51% used ball diamonds, sport fields and tennis courts and 41% used outdoor skating areas.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ Craig et al, p. 16

¹⁶⁷ Edwards, p. 19

¹⁶⁸ Alberta Community Development, p. 2-3

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 3

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 5

¹⁷¹ Clarke B, p. 82 & 83

¹⁷² Harper et al, p. 17

¹⁷³ Criterion Research, *City of Edmonton Community Services Department Awareness and Participation Survey*, p. 13

In 1998/99, participation in activities outside of school among children aged 4 to 15 peaked by the early teens at 92% and declined to 83% in children aged 14-15. Differences between the sexes were evident among teenagers with fewer girls participating than boys.¹⁷⁴

When children participate in sports and the arts, they gain skills and enrich their quality of life, but the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth found that many children almost never participate. Thirty-five percent of Canadian children aged 6-11 almost never participated in supervised sports. Sixty-six percent almost never participated in the arts. Sixty-seven percent almost never participated in community programs. For those that did participate, the majority participated in supervised sports a few times a week, while participants in arts and community programs tended to participate once a week. Unsupervised sports were participated in more often with only 16% reporting having almost never participated and the majority of participants involved most days.¹⁷⁵

Gender, income and availability of community facilities were strong determinants of participation. More boys than girls participated in sports and more girls than boys participated in the arts and community programs. Children from low income households were least likely to participate in all three categories, but particularly supervised sports. The presence of good parks, playgrounds and play spaces was strongly associated with increased participation in supervised sports and to a lesser extent, associated with participation in unsupervised sports and the arts.¹⁷⁶

Extreme recreation activities, where risk is inherent, are experiencing an increase in participation due to such contributing factors as changing attitudes and values towards those of hedonism and self-gratification as well as increased exposure of activities through marketing and television. Activities include those that have become accepted as almost mainstream, such as skateboarding, mountain climbing, snowboarding, BMX bicycling and mountain biking, as well as new or hybrid activities: street luge (luge on skateboards), buildering (building climbing), extreme mountain biking, sky surfing (parachuting wearing a snowboard), and extreme races, involving difficult terrain, very long distances and perhaps a combination of activities. More young females and older adults are participating in adventure recreation, although older adults are choosing less risky, more controlled adventure activities. There is a search for personal meaning in challenging outdoor settings and education and equipment advances have decreased risk. High risk activities will continue to evolve and some will become safe enough and mainstream enough to be included as public services.¹⁷⁷

In the United States, more Americans ride skateboards than play baseball. From 2000-2001, 600 skateparks opened in the U.S. As well, there were 29 million in-line skaters, double the number of soccer players.¹⁷⁸ As participation in adventure recreation increases, perceptions of risk will decline and perceptions of competence will increase. Adventure tourism and recreation are the fastest growing sectors in North America and the world.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, May 30, 2001.

¹⁷⁵ Offord DR et al, *Sports, the Arts and Community Programs: Rates and Correlates of Participation*, p. 16

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 30

¹⁷⁷ Hunter D, *Extreme Recreation*, p. 14

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 14

¹⁷⁹ Ewert A and Galloway S, *Adventure Recreation: What's New for Resource Managers, Public Policy Analysts and Recreation Providers*, p. 26-35

Surveys in the United States have shown increases in participation from 1960-1995 in bicycling primarily due to technological advances although growth has slowed since 1982. Camping and skiing, both downhill and cross country, have also increased since 1965. Activities showing large increases between 1982 and 1995 were birdwatching, walking, hiking, picnicking, sledding, attending an outdoor concert or play or sports event and participating in outdoor team sports. The five fastest growing outdoor recreation activities predicted to the year 2050 (based on number of participants) are cross country skiing, downhill skiing, visiting historic places, sightseeing and biking. The slowest growing activities are expected to be rafting, backpacking, off-road vehicle driving, primitive camping, and hunting.¹⁸⁰

Futurists

David Foot devotes a chapter of his book, *Boom, Bust and Echo 2000*, to a discussion of recreation trends expected as a result of the population ageing.¹⁸¹ He believes that demographics explain two thirds of everything that happens. He predicts increases in gambling, gardening, up-market and adventure travel, home fitness (to provide convenience), reading, resting, hobbies, birdwatching and walking. There will be increasing support for trail development, such as the Trans-Canada Trail, although conflict will continue between trail users. Mountain bikers and in-line skaters tend to be younger and therefore relatively less numerous, but the popularity of these activities is increasing.

Foot predicts a decline in the use of fitness centres and sporting facilities as Boomers give up strenuous activities. The demand on hockey facilities will peak in 2002 and Foot recommends adaptability to curling, a more popular pastime of older people. Although advances in equipment technology make participation in tennis and downhill skiing easier, participation will decline and downhill skiing may be replaced by cross country skiing. Golf participation will increase with the ageing of the population as more retirees have the necessary free time to golf. As Boomers decrease their own sport participation, they will also decrease their sports spectatorship, although this will be offset somewhat due to the overall increase in population, the increase in immigrant populations who tend to be younger and the Echo generation entering their peak participation years.

Families with children tend to have less time, energy and money. Foot states that Boomer families have been focussed on “two kids and a mortgage”, and staying at home for leisure was the activity of choice. As the children become older, the Boomers will be going out more, to museums, theatres, church activities and cultural events.

Faith Popcorn, who predicts trends based on popular culture, describes 17 trends for future consumer behaviour, some of which apply to recreation and parks and some of which conflict with each other.¹⁸² She coined the phrase “cocooning” to describe the tendency to stay at home and, in contrast to Foot, expects the tendency to continue as a result of fear of violence, disease, pollution, etc. She sees a rise in participation in home based activities such as gardening, sewing and quilting. This search for security will cause people to link with those who hold similar interests in “safe” locations such as fitness centres and private clubs.

People will seek personal satisfaction through “fantasy adventure”, where there is a sense of adventure, but minimal risk, such as indoor rock climbing, adventure travel, and outdoor activities

¹⁸⁰ Cordell HK, *Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends*, p. 219-258 & 349

¹⁸¹ Foot, p. 148-176

¹⁸² Popcorn, p. 29-44, 47, 51, 59-104, 235-276

such as in-line skating and mountain biking. People will seek a “pleasure revenge,” the pursuit of instant gratification as a way of “striking back” at a society which is not meeting their expectations. Examples include smoking, eating high fat foods, and reducing exercise. People will also seek “small indulgences” to treat themselves in a low cost way, including enjoyment of nature at parks, nature preserves, and bird sanctuaries or going for a walk outside.

Popcorn describes “down ageing” as the attitude of renewal and rejuvenation that ignores age. People will be willing to start new things at a later age, including physical activities such as fitness activities, walking, cycling, and climbing. People will seek not just longevity, but quality of life. They will take personal responsibility for their own health, with a holistic view including mental health and physical fitness.

Women will be one of the key sectors of the marketplace; they “look for relationships before making a purchase” and will seek support and personal service after they make their purchase. For women, connections with people are important. Parks that are inclusive and that encourage human interaction and the human touch will succeed with women.¹⁸³

Michael Adams has reviewed Canadian society based on values and concludes that there is more diversity in values than in the past and less support for both traditional values and institutions. Canadians are searching for individual autonomy, personal pleasure and immediate gratification, as well as spiritual fulfilment.¹⁸⁴ He believes there will be a demand for services that will be responsive to the needs of the individual: recreation spaces that are open 24 hours a day; activities that need less equipment, less structure and less planning; activities for women wanting to participate in traditionally male activities; activities that cross age boundaries and multi-purpose facilities. People will look for “safe” risk taking, and spiritual experiences in their leisure time.¹⁸⁵

Geoffrey Godbey has been a professor of recreation management at Penn State University since 1979 with research interests in ageing, time use and the impact of change on leisure and recreation. He believes people will be looking to buy an “experience” or to be “fully engaged” in a leisure pursuit that will generate memories. Beyond the actual park environment, visitors will want to experience “what is worth doing, seeing, hearing, touching, feeling and ultimately remembering.”¹⁸⁶ The type of experience may vary with demographics. Boomers value contributing, spiritual fulfilment and learning, while the younger generations look for fun, “smart risk” and put less value on sacrifice and causes.¹⁸⁷

Godbey believes that increasing diversity in the population will result in more variation in behaviour including leisure activities. There will be fewer age, class, and gender distinctions in people’s choices.

In the United States, participation in outdoor recreation from 1990 to 2050 is expected to grow, but at a slower rate than population growth, due to the generally lower incomes of ethnic minorities. Rates for individual activities will vary with ethnicity, income, population density, proximity of parks,

¹⁸³ Popcorn, p. 143-144

¹⁸⁴ Adams, p. 6

¹⁸⁵ Adams M, *Presentation to Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, October 1999, p. 48-50*

¹⁸⁶ Godbey et al, p. 155-157

¹⁸⁷ AZAA, p. 26

weather and climate change. The popularity of observing, identifying, photographing and understanding plant and animal life will increase.¹⁸⁸

Godbey describes the effect of climate change on recreation behaviours. The increase of harmful radiation from the sun and the effects of global warming, which will be seen in increased temperatures and more extreme weather, will result in a need to educate people about protecting themselves and parks may need to provide increased shade, shelter and access to water. Scheduling may change to avoid mid-day activities and seasons may be extended into the spring and fall.¹⁸⁹ Winter seasons may be reduced and facilities may be required to provide shelter from increased extreme and unpredictable weather and higher temperatures.¹⁹⁰

Physical Activity

Trends in physical activity and inactivity vary depending upon the context of the survey and the definition of physical activity used in the study. Generally, Canadians are becoming more active, but levels of activity still need to be increased. The relationship between inactivity and lower levels of income and education are supported by studies that included those questions.

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found that although Albertans have become more active, with inactivity declining from 74% in 1981 to 63% in 2000, only 37% of Albertans were sufficiently active for optimal health benefits. Over half of children and youth aged 5-17 were not active enough for optimal growth and development, although 85% did some activity at home, 70% participated in physical education at school, 51% participated in other physical activities at school and 64% participated in physical activities elsewhere. Forty-one percent of parents reported their children prefer participating in unorganized physical activities and 52% said their children liked organized and unorganized activities equally.¹⁹¹

The National Population Health Survey, conducted in 1996/97, found that 49.8% of Albertans aged 12 and over were inactive and only 25.7% were sufficiently physically active during their leisure time to achieve optimal health benefits. However, 32% had increased their physical activity in the previous year and 29% intended to increase their physical activity in the next year. This survey found that for Canadians as a whole, the levels of activity and inactivity had changed little since 1994/95. As well, those with the most physically demanding jobs tended to be more physically active than those whose employment was predominantly sedentary. Men were found to be more active than women and those with higher levels of income were more active.¹⁹²

The 1999 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity found 55.4% of adult Edmontonians participated in regular physical activity or exercise compared to 56% in 1997 and 51.5% in 1995. Those with higher levels of education and income had higher levels of physical activity participation.¹⁹³

The Canadian Community Health Survey, conducted in 2000/2001 found that 48% of Albertans were moderately physically active or active, an increase from 44% in 1994/95. Within the Capital

¹⁸⁸ Godbey et al, p. 67, 69, & 71

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 143 & 149

¹⁹⁰ Sasidharan V et al, *Climate Change: What Does it Mean for Parks and Recreation Management*, p. 56

¹⁹¹ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Alberta Results of the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor*, p. 1, 2 & 7

¹⁹² Health Canada, *National Population Health Survey Highlights, Physical Activity of Canadians*

¹⁹³ Spence et al, *1999 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity*, p. 5 & 14 and *1997 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity*, p. v

Health Authority, 54% were moderately physically active or active. In Canada as a whole, women were found to have increased their activity levels and were almost as active as men.¹⁹⁴

In 2000, the most popular outdoor physical activities for adult Albertans were gardening, walking, bicycling, baseball/softball and running/jogging. In 1997, the rankings were walking, gardening, bicycling, running/jogging and baseball/softball. Skating ranked ahead of jogging/running in both years, but it is unclear if this was indoor or outdoor skating. In 2000, the most popular outdoor activities for children aged 5-17 were playing at the playground (age 5-12 only), bicycling, walking, tobogganing/other winter activities and in-line skating. In 1997, the rankings were bicycling, walking, running/jogging, in-line skating and baseball/softball. Playground activities and tobogganing were not included in the analysis in 1997. Skating ranked ahead of in-line skating in 2000 and ahead of running/jogging in 1997, but again, it is not clear if this was outdoor or indoor. Trends noted from 1981 to 1997 for children aged 13-17 were significant increases in participation in walking, skating, in-line skating and soccer.¹⁹⁵

Canadians also build activity into regular routines by taking the stairs (80%); doing chores for exercise (66%); walking all or part way to work, school or errands (64%); or bicycling to work, school, or errands (24%). The level of participation declines with age with the exception of walking which declines to age 64 and then increases.¹⁹⁶

Ninety-five percent of Albertans had local parks and outdoor spaces in which children could be physically active and these were used often or very often by 41% of children and somewhat often by 32% of children.¹⁹⁷

In order to increase participation in physical activity, it has been shown that the most successful programs and facilities are local, accessible, and safe and attractive (especially important for youth and seniors). A second characteristic is an “inclusive, persistent group” and specifically for children and youth, competent, caring adult leadership. A third characteristic is challenging activities that allow participants to feel a sense of accomplishment.¹⁹⁸

The 1997 Physical Activity Monitor identified three key factors in helping Canadians to be active: safe streets and public places; affordable facilities, services and programs; and access to paths, trails and green spaces. Parents identified the following factors as important in helping children to be active: safe streets and public places; school-based facilities, services and programs; access to outdoor spaces; and access to paths and trails.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ www.statcan.ca, *The Daily*, May 8, 2002.

¹⁹⁵ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Alberta Results of the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor*, p. 1 & 2 and Craig et al, p. 51, 54 & 56

¹⁹⁶ Craig CL et al, p. 4 & 14

¹⁹⁷ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Alberta Results of the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor*, p. 5

¹⁹⁸ Siedentop, p. 270

¹⁹⁹ Craig et al, p. 31 & 34

Sports

In 1998, 34% of Canadians 15 years of age and over participated in sport, a decline from 45% in 1992. More men than women participated (43% compared to 26%) and participation declined with age. The gender gap increased by 3% due to a greater decline in participation by women. Participation rates were positively related to increasing levels of income and education. Participation in Alberta declined from 44.9% to 36.8%. Factors related to the decline in participation include the ageing population, economic pressures, limited leisure time and the wide variety of competing leisure activities. Factors which may improve levels of sport participation in the future are the rising levels of education in Canada and the increase in two-income families, which may reduce cost barriers.²⁰⁰

The most popular sports in 1998 were golf, hockey, baseball and swimming compared to hockey, downhill skiing, swimming and golf in 1992. Although hockey fell to second place, there was little change in the numbers participating in the sport. Sixty percent of golfers participated once or twice a week and 20% golf three or more times a week. The decline of downhill skiing's popularity may have been due to the costs involved in participating. Women preferred swimming, golf, baseball and volleyball and men preferred hockey, golf, baseball and basketball.²⁰¹

Fifty-five percent of active Canadians belonged to a local club, community league or amateur sport organization in 1998, compared to 34% in 1992. There was a surge in women's involvement in these organizations. In Alberta, 61% of participants were involved in a club. The number of people coaching sport doubled and the number of women coaching tripled, although levels were still less than those for men. The number of people acting as referees also increased, but the number involved as administrators or helpers declined.

In 2000, twenty-eight percent of low income Edmonton households reported that a member of the household participated in organized sports. The majority participated in soccer (60%), baseball/softball (27%) and hockey (18%).²⁰²

The 1998 General Social Survey indicated that about 54% of Canadian children aged 5-14 participated regularly in organized sports and participation was impacted by the parent's participation. Children had higher rates of participation if their parents were participants and/or volunteers. The top five sports in which children participated were:

- soccer – 31%
- swimming – 24%
- hockey – 24%
- baseball – 22%
- basketball – 13%.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Sport Canada, *Sport Participation in Canada, 1998 Report*, p. 1, 15, 4, 11 & 62

²⁰¹ Ibid, p. 22 & 2

²⁰² Criterion Research, p. 38

²⁰³ Kremarik F, *A Family Affair: children's participation in sport*, p. 21 & 22

Recreation Expenditures

In the Edmonton CMA in 1999, 97.8% of households reported recreational expenditures and the average expenditure was \$3515. This category is broadly defined and includes recreation and sports equipment, computer equipment, photographic goods, musical instruments, collector's items, camping supplies, recreation vehicles, bicycles, boats, operation of vehicles, home entertainment, entertainment, use of recreation facilities, and package travel tours.²⁰⁴

Spending on recreation in Canada increased by almost 40% from 1982 to 1999, growing fastest in households with children. The increases were largest for computers (515% increase) and cablevision (253%). Spending on athletic equipment rose minimally – fewer households were purchasing athletic goods, but those that were, spent more on their purchases. The amount of money spent on event admissions increased by about 43% primarily because households were spending more money, not because more households were buying.²⁰⁵ Recreation and parks departments are competing with the increasing use of computers, home entertainment systems and the Internet. This also indicates that organizations need to be electronically accessible to serve customers better.²⁰⁶

Consumer spending surveys in the United States show increases in spending on goods and services related to outdoor recreation from 1985 to 1995, with an overall increase of 9%.²⁰⁷

Older adults will have more money and will spend more of it on travel and recreation, but they are knowledgeable consumers, more likely to question, less likely to tolerate poor service, quality and value. They buy what they want when they want it.²⁰⁸ Consumers will demand quality and individuality in what they purchase. "Vigilante Consumers" will expect service and expect to "get what they pay for."²⁰⁹

For the Echo generation, the children of the Baby Boomers (born between 1980 and 1995), who will be moving out from their parents' homes, starting families, etc., price will be a factor in their decision making. Inexpensive family activities will continue to be needed.²¹⁰

Special Populations

The number of disabled people seeking community recreation opportunities increased in the United States between 1994 and 1999 due to reduced hospitalization, increased awareness of legal rights and longer life expectancies. This demand is expected to continue to increase.²¹¹

²⁰⁴ Statistics Canada, *Spending Patterns in Canada*, p. 84 & 86

²⁰⁵ Kremarik F, *The Changing Recreational Spending Patterns of Canadian Families*, p. 13-18

²⁰⁶ Clarke, p. 96

²⁰⁷ Cordell, p. 289

²⁰⁸ Roach, Powerpoint presentation

²⁰⁹ Popcorn, p. 293

²¹⁰ Wickens, p. 7

²¹¹ LeConey S et al, *Utilizing the Therapeutic Recreation Process in Community Settings: The Case of Sue*, p. 71

In the United States, in 1995, the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment found the ten most popular outdoor activities of Americans with disabilities were walking, picnicking, visiting a nature centre, attending sporting events, birdwatching, attending outdoor concerts, boating, fishing, bicycling, and hiking.²¹²

People with disabilities report that participation in outdoor recreation experiences yields positive self-esteem, skill development and improved health. Parents of children with disabilities reported that the use of local parks by the children resulted in physical benefits (reported by 29% of respondents), social benefits (20%), psychological benefits (15%) and other benefits (17%). An additional 14% of respondents reported that the children had the opportunity to learn about and understand and appreciate nature.²¹³

People with disabilities have the same preferences for outdoor environments and have similar motivations for participating as those without disabilities. They appreciate undeveloped nature and are not making demands that wilderness areas and other protected natural areas should be developed to provide easier access. People with disabilities are participating in outdoor recreation and adventure activities in large numbers and in a wide variety of activities and environments. They seek risk, challenge and adventure just as non-disabled people do. In this way, the full range of benefits of outdoor activities are experienced.²¹⁴

The implications for park operators are that there is a need to balance development for access with preservation of the natural environment. Information about the accessibility level of parks should be provided (eg. trail conditions, slope, surface, etc.).²¹⁵

The Internet is being used to provide trail access information detailing conditions on hiking trails including grade, cross slope, surface, width and obstacles. This information is meant to benefit people with disabilities, families with young children, older adults and inexperienced trail users. The information is created using the “Universal Trail Assessment Process”.²¹⁶ Trail information is available in Canada at www.trailpaq.ca, but it does not contain access information.

The website for the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (www.ala.ca) contains suggestions for both participants and community recreation program providers. Included on the website are articles describing successful programs such as “Program Modifications that Really Work” and “In Search of Accessible Recreation”, an article describing a learn-to-skate program.

Low income, ethnic minority and disabled populations are more likely to have chronic diseases related to inactive lifestyles and improving activity levels in these populations could yield positive public health benefits. Two approaches are recommended for program implementation when working with these populations. First, an assessment of needs, attitudes, preferences and barriers should be conducted prior to implementing programs. Some studies revealed that the primary

²¹² Cordell, p. 261

²¹³ Zoerink D, *Benefits of Using Outdoor Areas: Perspectives of Parents with Children Who have Disabilities*, p. 363

²¹⁴ McAvoy L, *Outdoors for Everyone*, p. 28

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 35

²¹⁶ www.trailexplorer.org

barriers were transportation and childcare. Secondly, community involvement in setting priorities, determining program content and program implementation will yield more successful results.²¹⁷

Different subgroups of the population have different ways of participating in physical activity and require different approaches to encourage activity. For example, non-European immigrants were more likely to be inactive in their leisure time than Canadians as a group or European immigrants.²¹⁸ Strategies to increase levels of physical activity are often directed at individuals, resulting in a need to provide individual service and leisure experiences rather than mass marketing.²¹⁹

Telephone supervision of physical activity programs have been effective in encouraging people to remain active, particularly for older adults with low fitness levels. Efforts to reduce isolation of older adults by encouraging partnerships and social supports can also be effective.²²⁰

Recreation will continue to be important to Aboriginal people as witnessed in the Maskwachees Declaration, which was issued from the National Recreation Roundtable on Aboriginal Peoples, held in February, 2000. The declaration states that “sustainable commitment and investment in active living, physical activity, physical education, recreation and sport are essential to promote health and address social issues facing Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples in communities across Canada.” The declaration identifies strengths facing the implementation of the Declaration including the fact that the traditional Aboriginal lifestyle is a physically active lifestyle and there is a willingness to work in partnerships. Challenges include the need to integrate the knowledge of Elders in program design and delivery, the lack of human and financial resources for sport and recreation, and the fact that Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing population segment of the Canadian population.²²¹

Some initiatives being undertaken in communities across Canada include

- appointment of community services staff to service the recreation needs of the Aboriginal population;
- training programs for aboriginal youth as recreation leaders, lifeguards, and instructors;
- leadership development within community centres to transfer decision making to the Aboriginal community;
- sport development programs and “Indigenous Games” for Aboriginal people, particularly youth;
- development of gardens and parks with an emphasis on Aboriginal history, spirituality, and plants used historically for food and medicine.²²²

²¹⁷ Taylor W et al, *Physical Activity Interventions in Low-Income, Ethnic Minority and Populations with Disability*, p. 335 & 340

²¹⁸ Federal, Provincial and Territorial Committee on Population Health, *Toward a Healthy Future*, p. 116

²¹⁹ Craig et al, p. 5 & 38

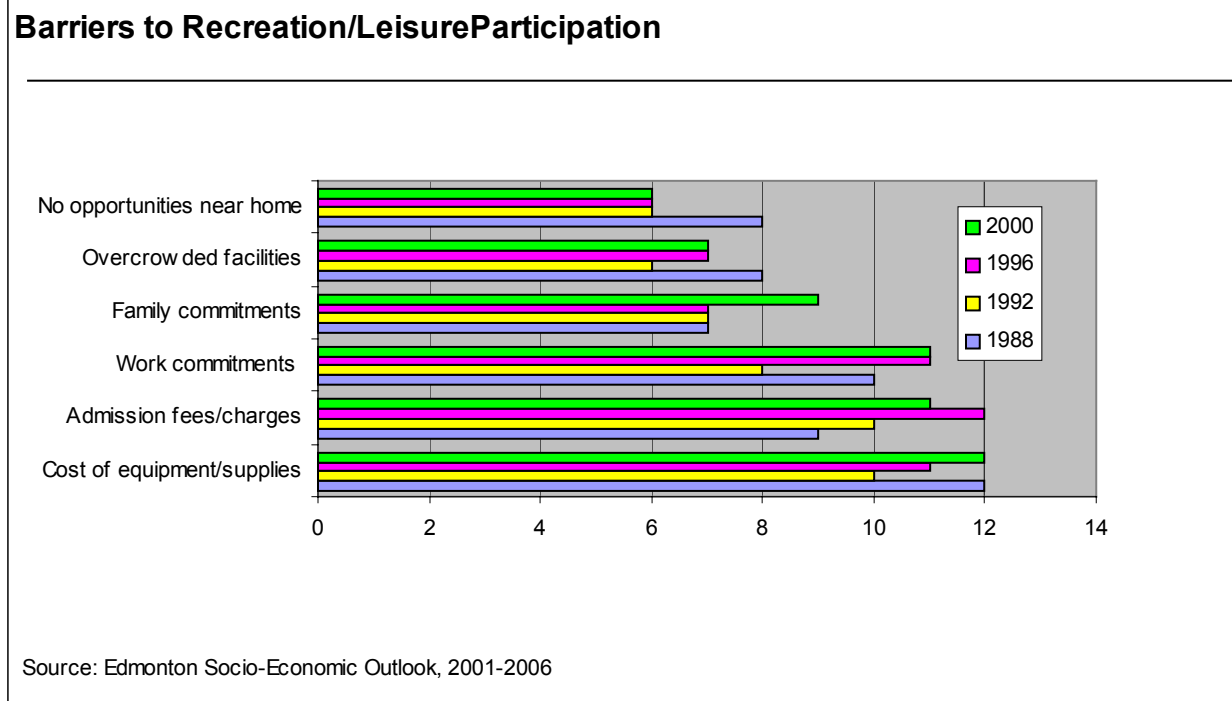
²²⁰ Edwards, p. 14 & 15

²²¹ www.uwo.ca/actage/newletters/2000dec/declaration.htm

²²² *Parks and Recreation Canada, Volume 58, Number 2*, p. 10-11, p. 18-23

Barriers to Participation

The Alberta Recreation Survey asked respondents if there was a recreation activity they would like to start, and asked what was deterring them from doing so. The following chart shows their responses. The largest barriers to Edmontonians are the cost of equipment/supplies and the cost of admission. Lack of time due to work and family commitments was the second most prevalent factor. Overcrowding and lack of opportunities near home have declined in importance as barriers, although they are still deterring factors.



Forty-nine percent of Albertans identified lack of time as their main barrier to participation in physical activity. An additional 35% of Albertans identified lack of time as their second choice of barriers to participation.²²³

A survey conducted in 2000 of low income Edmontonians found the following were barriers to participation at recreational facilities, areas and attractions:

- expense (58%),
- location too far away (32%),
- lack of time (22%),
- conflicts with work schedule (17%),
- poor public transportation (14%),
- inconvenient facility hours (10%).²²⁴

²²³ Spence et al, 1997 *Alberta Survey on Physical Activity*, p. 17 & 18

²²⁴ Criterion Research, p. ii

Municipalities can work towards reducing and eliminating barriers over which they can exert some control. Individual education regarding perceptions of time and putting priority on leisure as a value could result in some reduction of personal barriers.

Volunteerism and Partnership

Volunteers

In 1998, a survey of Edmonton residents by Volunteer Alberta indicated that 53% had volunteered during the previous 12 months and when asked if they had performed any unpaid help, 88% responded affirmatively. The most frequently mentioned activities were fundraising (44%), friendly visiting (40%), providing information on behalf of an organization (40%), organizing and coordinating events or activities (36%) and teaching or coaching (34%). Twenty-eight percent served on a board or committee; 20% volunteered to protect the environment or wildlife; 24% performed or entertained and 13% repaired or built facilities. Seventy-five percent of respondents agreed that volunteers help resolve important issues or concerns in the community and 78% felt the community will need more volunteer resources in the future.²²⁵

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) was conducted in 1997 and found that 35% of people living in the Edmonton CMA volunteered for a charitable or non-profit organization, contributing an average of 145 hours in the year. Twenty-five percent of the volunteers contributed 68% of all volunteer hours. The most common activities were fundraising (46%), organizing and supervising activities or events (45%) and serving on a board or committee (36%). Thirty-three percent of volunteer hours were spent assisting arts, culture and recreation organizations.²²⁶

The NSGVP also found that 70% of residents of the Edmonton CMA made financial contributions to charitable and non-profit organizations and 79% of the donations were made by 25% of the donors. Five percent of those donations were made to arts, culture and recreation organizations.²²⁷

The NSGVP was repeated in 2000 and although it has not been analyzed at the Edmonton level, it showed the following trends for Canada and Alberta:

- 39% of Albertans volunteered, a reduction from 40% in 1997.
- Albertans contributed an average of 139 hours, a reduction from 146 hours in 1997.
- Those in their mid years were most likely to volunteer. Those over 64 had the lowest rate of volunteerism, but contributed the highest number of hours. Those over 75 years of age volunteered less often than those aged 65-74. Youth aged 15 to 24 volunteered above the national average and 18% were required to do so.
- Volunteerism increased in both frequency and number of hours with education.
- Women volunteered more than men, but men contributed more hours.
- Part time workers volunteered most often and those not in the labour force contributed the most hours.

²²⁵ Volunteer Alberta, *Volunteerism in Alberta Edmonton Summary Report*, p. 9, 27, & 29

²²⁶ Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, *Giving and Volunteering in Edmonton*, p. 2

²²⁷ Ibid, p. 1

- Larger households had a higher rate of volunteerism due to the presence of children in the household. Thirty-two percent of households with children volunteered, but contributed fewer hours than those with no children.²²⁸
- Married people volunteered more than non-married people.²²⁹

Although it has been noted that formal volunteering has declined in Canada, of note is the fact that direct personal volunteering that does not involve an organization has increased. In Canada, the percentage of those over 15 who have volunteered in this manner was 64% in 1987, 73% in 1997 and 77% in 2000.²³⁰

Involvement in “intensive community commitments” is defined as membership or participation in a service club or fraternity; membership or participation in a civic, neighbourhood, community, school or political organization; formal and informal volunteering; and regular attendance at religious services. Participation in these activities by adult Canadians was found to be related to involvement in youth groups as a child and having parents who volunteered and as an adult, having a higher level of education and current religious attendance.²³¹

The ageing of the Baby Boomers may result in an increase in both the number of people volunteering and the amount of charitable donations.²³² Individuals seeking value in their lives, seeking greater spiritual meaning and those with the desire to “save our society” will be actively volunteering.²³³ There is, however, some indication that retiring Baby Boomers may be less altruistic and more self centred in deciding whether or not to volunteer.

More women are expected to participate in the workplace resulting in a potential loss of volunteers who are typically female, but financial support may be more forthcoming as businesses are increasingly headed by women.²³⁴

In the United States, there has been a decline in participation in civic and community level groups which has been blamed on the loss of “social capital” as people become isolated and individualistic in attitude.²³⁵ This argument has been countered with a belief that community involvement is just changing to more diverse, loose, flexible involvements that fit better into people’s lifestyles. People are forming Internet contacts, working women are joining different associations, activities are becoming more diverse and short term volunteer commitments are more popular.²³⁶

It is important to recreation and parks service delivery that the work of both formal and informal volunteers be encouraged; their work could not be replaced with paid workers. Knowledge of who volunteers and how to attract ageing Baby Boomers to voluntary positions will be essential to maintaining volunteer programs. Investment in infrastructure such as space, support systems,

²²⁸ Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, *Fact Sheets*

²²⁹ Selbee K and Reed P, *Patterns of Volunteering Over the Life Cycle*, p. 6

²³⁰ Reed P and Selbee K, *Volunteering and Giving: A Regional Perspective*, p. 17

²³¹ Jones F, *Community Involvement: The Influence of Early Experience*, p. 19

²³² Foot, p. 173 & 175

²³³ Popcorn, p. 236

²³⁴ AZAA, p.16 & 17

²³⁵ Putnam R, *Bowling Alone*, p. 65-78

²³⁶ Stengel R, *Bowling Together*, p. 35

training and administration will strengthen volunteer organizations.²³⁷ Training and support for volunteer organizations is increasing in importance as various tasks are downloaded to groups, who may not be equipped to deal effectively with these responsibilities.²³⁸ Prevention of volunteer “burnout” will be important.

Partnerships

In his literature review, J. Mackey writes that from a philosophical standpoint, if the focus of service delivery is client centred and focussed on the benefits of the service, then the service delivery method is secondary. Service delivery can range on a continuum from purely public to purely private. Mackey found that in leisure services, the two most common alternative service delivery mechanisms were contracting and partnering.²³⁹

Partnerships can increase access to resources, both human and financial, reduce duplication, impact more people, and achieve greater results through partners working together.²⁴⁰ Other practical reasons for a municipality to consider alternative service delivery include reducing costs, achieving a profit, deferring capital expenses, accessing outside expertise, increasing efficiency, providing human resource flexibility, allowing the municipality to focus on its core services, and increasing flexibility. Risks, on the other hand, include financial loss, political controversy, loss of control, destructive processes, fraud, decreased access and equity, and human resource conflicts.²⁴¹

One response to the trend to alternative service delivery is the establishment of multi-use complexes that house a wide range of community services including recreation, education, health and social services. To enable such public sector partnerships to exist, provincial statutes and policies must be reviewed to ensure there are no barriers. Such facilities may range as follows:

- campus, where the site and outdoor amenities are shared;
- shared development, where common areas are shared, but program areas are separate;
- joint use, where facilities are shared;
- common facility, where both program areas and program delivery are shared.²⁴²

In the United States, public/private partnerships have been effective in land conservation and greenway development. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) acquires land suitable for open space and park development and transfers it to public agencies for ownership and management. In Austin, Texas, the TPL acquired land and negotiated federal transportation funding for trail system development. In Arlington, the River Legacy Foundation managed the capital construction of the greenway and gifted it to the city for operation.²⁴³

²³⁷ Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, *Background for ARPA's Strategic Plan*

²³⁸ Clarke, p. 91

²³⁹ Mackey J, *Alternative Service Delivery Mechanisms and their Use in the Delivery of Public Leisure Services*, p. 6, 8 & 15

²⁴⁰ Edwards, p. 22

²⁴¹ Mackey, p. 11 & 23

²⁴² Ibid, p. 11, 19, 24 & 25.

²⁴³ Ibid, p. 41 & 42

In Richmond, BC, a soccer pitch and ball diamond were built in partnership with Honda Corporation on land owned by Honda. The field was built by Honda and benefits to the company include the provision of opportunities for employees (who have first priority for use) and lower assessed taxes until the land is needed for expansion of their facilities. The benefit for the city, which pays for maintenance, liability for community use and field allocations, is access to an additional practice field and ball diamond. The city feels it could have done better cost analysis early in the negotiations and asked Honda to maintain the fields since the costs (\$6000) still leave a benefit from the annual tax relief of \$17,000.

The National Capital Commission in Ottawa approached contracting out of services by encouraging employees to start their own businesses. Six businesses were formed and contracts were awarded with no outside competition for three years.

In Australia, operations have been contracted out, but self-bids are allowed and have increased entrepreneurialism within municipalities.²⁴⁴

Partnerships may not always be appropriate and require assessment based on the criteria of meeting public needs and ensuring active management of partnerships and controls over public funds and assets. Britain has phased in compulsory contracting and has found that the biggest problem has been lack of competition for the contracts and the results have been large fee increases to the public. In 1997, Graeme Hodge completed a study of 245 cases of contracting out in the United States, Britain and Australia and found “no hard evidence of efficiency gains for providers or benefits to the public.”²⁴⁵

The use of partnerships such as trusts, endowments, sponsorships and stewardships is one way for the community to deliver services, but they need guidance from the public sector. One can determine the success of transferring more services to the volunteer sector by comparing the results achieved with the costs of community development activities.²⁴⁶

Various writers have suggested that the keys to successful partnerships are:

- clear goals going into the partnership,
- partnerships where both partners have a compatible vision,
- careful analysis of financial costs and benefits,
- time dedicated to the partnership even after the project is operational,
- adequate control of funds and assets.

²⁴⁴ Mackey, p. 34, 35, 39 & 46

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 8, 36, 37, 50 & 52

²⁴⁶ *Emerging Issues in Municipal Recreation in Ontario – Discussion Paper, p.10 & 16*

Attitudes

Environmental Preservation

Ninety-three percent of Edmontonians believe the quality of life in the city is good, very good or excellent and one of the most frequently stated reasons for this is parks and green spaces including the river valley system. Eighty-seven percent say they are very or somewhat satisfied with parks and green spaces.²⁴⁷ Respect for the natural environment was ranked second of ten community values by interested Edmontonians during the planning process used to develop the Integrated Service Strategy.²⁴⁸

In 1997-98, 88% of Canadians recycled and/or composted, 64% bought environmentally sensitive products, 69% used energy-saving devices, and 59% avoided consumer products for environmental reasons in the previous year. Twenty-eight percent of adults supported an environmental group, 51% gathered information about environmental issues and 27% based their vote for or against political candidates or parties because of their environmental stance.²⁴⁹

David Foot believes that environmental concerns are being “eclipsed by convenience”.²⁵⁰ However, Faith Popcorn expects environmental concerns will gain support stemming from a desire for a better quality of life and a better society as well as fear for water and food safety.²⁵¹ Michael Adams, author of *Sex in the Snow*, divides the adult population into three broad age categories and then further into tribes. There are tribes in every age category that are concerned for the environment, totalling approximately 35% of the population. The majority are in the Baby Boomer category who will continue to support environmental initiatives. David Roach also believes that Boomers hold environmental preservation as core values.²⁵² Geoffrey Godbey expects environmental preservation to gain a higher profile as awareness of the affects of environmental change and degradation become more widespread and personally experienced.²⁵³

Approximately 60% of Americans feel their government spends too little on the environment and protecting the environment is third on their list of critical public issues that require government support. This concern, however, appears to be easily replaced as more immediate issues emerge. As well, personal knowledge around environmental protection is limited.²⁵⁴

At the same time as interest in preservation of the natural environment seems to be well supported, there is an increase in the desire to participate in outdoor activities and use the natural

²⁴⁷ *Results of the 2000 Citizen Satisfaction Survey*, p. i & ii

²⁴⁸ *Towards 2010 – Report to the Community*, p. 5

²⁴⁹ Federal, Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health, p. 107 & 108

²⁵⁰ Foot, p. 127

²⁵¹ Popcorn, p. 315-338

²⁵² Roach, Powerpoint presentation

²⁵³ Godbey et al, p. 150

²⁵⁴ AZAA, p. 41 & 42

environment for recreation purposes. If Baby Boomers do continue to value environmental preservation, support for environmental initiatives will continue.

Pesticides

The use of pesticides in both public spaces and on private land is becoming an issue for Canadians. Ten municipalities in Quebec and one in Nova Scotia have bylaws that ban or restrict the use of pesticides. The bylaw of the Town of Hudson, Quebec, which bans the use of pesticides on private property was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in June, 2001. The Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development produced a document related to pesticide use in May, 2000 and recommends a five year de-registration of cosmetic use of pesticides due to the risk to human health. In December, 1999, a private member's bill was introduced in the House of Commons "To Prohibit the Use of Chemical Pesticides for Non-essential Purposes." The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has developed a plan for reducing overall pesticide use.²⁵⁵

The City of Toronto surveyed residents in 2002 with respect to their awareness, use and attitudes towards lawn pesticides. The survey of residents, all of whom lived in a house with a lawn, found that 80% were aware of the vulnerability of children to lawn pesticides and over 70% believed that pesticides were a source of environmental pollution. Fifty percent of respondents felt it was somewhat important to have a lawn with no visible weeds or insect damage and 30% felt it was very important. At the same time, about two thirds believed pesticides should be used as the last resort. Forty-five percent of residential lawns had been treated with chemical pesticides at least once between 1999 and 2000. Factors relevant to the use of pesticides included hiring a professional lawn company, the belief that it is important to have a weed-free and insect damage-free lawn and if the lawn was a large size.²⁵⁶

Seventy-seven percent of respondents did not agree with the statement: "When it comes to using chemicals on lawns, some people think that as long as what they're doing is on their own lawn, they should have the right to do whatever they want." Seventy-eight percent of respondents agreed that, "The City of Toronto should restrict the use of pesticides on golf courses, school yards and university and college campuses." Female respondents were more likely to agree with this statement. Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated support for restricting the use of pesticides on residential lawns.²⁵⁷

A survey of Metropolitan residents over the age of 18, commissioned by the Toronto Environmental Alliance in 1997, found that 72% supported banning pesticide spraying on public parks and 64% supported banning pesticide spraying on private property. In 2001, Ontario residents over the age of 18 were interviewed and found that 82% supported a by-law restricting the use of cosmetic pesticides on residential properties. A survey in 2000 of residents in Caledon, Ontario found that 67% supported a total ban on cosmetic pesticides on private residential property.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ www.pestinfo.ca

²⁵⁶ Ying J, *A Survey of Toronto Residents' Awareness, Uses and Attitudes Towards Lawn Pesticides*, p. i

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. ii

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 2-3

A 2002 survey of Ottawa residents 18 years and older found that 48% of respondents with a lawn used pesticides. Those who believed a weed-free lawn is important and those who used professional lawn services were more likely to use pesticides. Three quarters of residents considered pesticides to be at least a moderate hazard especially to children, pets, water quality and wildlife. Women were the most concerned and those over 55 were the least concerned group. Residents who used pesticides were less likely to view them as hazardous. More than half of pesticide users were interested in trying non-chemical methods to treat their lawns, although there was uncertainty about their effectiveness.²⁵⁹

Sixty-one percent of Ottawa residents strongly supported and 25% generally supported the city's policy of maintaining sports fields without using pesticides or herbicides and 56% strongly supported and 29% generally supported the maintenance of other green spaces without pesticides and herbicides.²⁶⁰

In 2001, Ipsos-Reid Corporation conducted a survey commissioned by manufacturers of pesticides and found that 69% of Albertans felt weed control products were necessary and safe if properly used, a belief more widely held by men than women. Sixty-four percent of Albertans opposed government prohibition of weed control products. There was no indication if those surveyed had lawns or if they were urban or rural residents.²⁶¹

With travel between countries increasing as a leisure trend, there may be impacts for the natural environment as the transportation of diseases and pests may also result.²⁶² Climate change, which will create warmer temperatures, may bring invasions of pests and diseases normally not found in this area.²⁶³ The use of pesticides on public and private land will continue to be an issue for municipalities.

Natural Environments

Park naturalization began in Edmonton in the 1960s and is now common in many municipalities and supported by plans, development policies, bylaws and procedures. This trend is popular because of its benefits:

- lower maintenance,
- reduced use of pesticides,
- creation of habitat and promotion of biodiversity,
- improved water and air quality,
- moderation of temperatures,
- increased passive recreation opportunities.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Decima Research Inc, *2002 Pesticide Use and Attitude Survey – Final Report*, p. 1-3

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 23

²⁶¹ Ipsos Reid Corporation, press release

²⁶² Godbey et al, p. 135

²⁶³ Sasidharan et al, p. 58

²⁶⁴ Ingram J, *Urban Naturalization in Canada: A Policy and Program Guidebook*, p. 4 & 7

In response to the deteriorating environment and increased urbanization, parkland will increase in importance. Natural areas may need to become places of respite from noise, activity and pollution. As well, parks will have a role in responding to reduced biodiversity by planting for diversity. If climate change results in a drier climate, parks will require greater use of native plants, which will adapt more naturally to climate change.²⁶⁵

Park users have generally been found to be concerned with operational factors such as cleanliness and safety and information such as directional signs, information on conditions or hazards and interpretive information, rather than management issues such as erosion and overuse.²⁶⁶

Park Trends

In the United States, there is a trend towards development of cities into more “liveable spaces.” In Chicago, various departments of the city have worked together to improve the quality of life for citizens through such initiatives as redevelopment of asphalt school yards, increased tree and flower planting, redevelopment of abandoned or tax-delinquent lots into neighbourhood parks and gardens, rooftop garden that reduces heating costs, development of natural areas and improved streetscapes. Cooperative programs are being offered, especially after school and during the summer, combining education and recreation and parks.²⁶⁷

The Project for Public Places promotes parks not as recreation spaces, but as community places. It sites four key qualities of successful public places:

- They are accessible – linked visually and physically to their surroundings, easy to get to and to get through, with ample parking and accessible via public transit.
- People are engaged in activities – there is a reason for people of all ages to go there.
- The space is comfortable and has a good image – safe, clean, with places to sit.
- It is a sociable place where people go to meet friends and take visitors.

The benefits of good public spaces include:

- supporting local economies,
- attracting tourism,
- providing cultural opportunities,
- encouraging volunteerism,
- reducing crime,
- improving pedestrian safety,
- increasing use of public transportation,
- improving public health
- improving the environment.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Godbey, p. 44, 50, 52 & 161

²⁶⁶ Cordell, p. 427

²⁶⁷ Daley R, *Chicago Invests in Citizens*, p. 41-47

²⁶⁸ www.pps.org

Successful parks offer amenities and activities – a reason for people to visit. A sense of ownership and citizenship can be created through involvement of the community.²⁶⁹

A trend being seen in the United States is the development of multi-sport outdoor facilities, which may include sports fields and courts, trails, bike paths, playgrounds and water play areas and which also preserve and accent the natural environment as much as possible. Indoor recreation facilities are often located on the same space. The appeal of these facilities is their inclusive, multi-generational nature.²⁷⁰

In Mississauga, planning for park space for outdoor sport activity focuses on clustering of similar fields which decreases maintenance and staffing costs and provides better scheduling and a sense of “home field” for players. It is their contention that people are willing to travel for the “value added” of quality sports fields.²⁷¹

In the United States, there are more than 600 dog parks in existence and 400 in the planning stages. One group in California found justification for the establishment of a dog park based on the fact that there were more dogs in Marin County than the number of tennis, soccer and softball players combined.²⁷²

Concerns about food quality and the trend towards vegetarianism will increase the demand for community gardens.²⁷³

Ninety-three percent of Canadians support the expenditure of tax dollars to create and maintain opportunities for physical activity. Eighty-two percent support the use of tax dollars to create dedicated bicycle lanes and paths.²⁷⁴

Both those who use parks and those who do not use parks perceived individual benefits, household benefits and community benefits from local parks. Those with higher incomes and higher levels of education perceived greater individual and community benefits. Benefits included, “place for kids to go, relaxation and peace, open spaces, exercise/fitness/conditioning, nature, place to play, place for recreation, place to go, and gathering place.”²⁷⁵

²⁶⁹ Whitson D, *Changing Concepts of Public Places*, p. 23

²⁷⁰ Bynum M, *Space Odyssey*, p. 68

²⁷¹ Monteith Planning Consultants, *City of Mississauga, 1999-Future Direction for Recreation and Parks*

²⁷² Johnson R, *From Bored Walks to Bark Place*, p. 51

²⁷³ Godbey, p. 52

²⁷⁴ Craig et al, p. 8

²⁷⁵ Harper et al, p. 20-27

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