

# RECREATION & LEISURE INFORMATION SYSTEM

## SYSTEM OVERVIEW & ACTION PLAN

March 31, 2003

### KEY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the recreation and leisure information system are to:

- Design and build a survey system that can be used in a consistent manner for many years, thereby producing a growing body of comparable data on the recreation and leisure preferences and activities of Edmontonians.
- Design the methodology and sampling so that the Department is guaranteed an acceptable level of statistical reliability. The Department should be assured that the results we are gathering are representative of the opinions and preferences of the citizens of Edmonton, and that any conclusions we draw from this information will be accurate within acceptable margins of error (e.g.,  $\pm 5\%$ , 19 times out of 20).
- Maintain as much comparability between the main survey system and any subordinate surveys as possible. While it may not be feasible to utilize exactly the same questions for all sub-population survey methodologies, particularly in the case of focus groups, key information should be gathered in a consistent fashion wherever possible. This will enable us to link/compare/pool data from all of our research sources to the greatest extent possible.

### INFORMATION GATHERING

#### **Proposed Methodology**

##### **Public Survey**

It is proposed that a random telephone survey (the Edmonton Recreation & Leisure Survey) be conducted **every two years** by a contracted consultant. The survey will employ a standardized questionnaire. The target sample size for each deployment will be 1200 responses from residents over 18 years of age, stratified by broad age groupings and by gender. A limited number of additional questions could be added to the base questionnaire, if needed, on a one-time basis. The basic questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

The rationale for increasing the frequency of the survey (i.e., over the 'every four year' schedule of the Alberta Recreation Survey) is:

- Given the increasing demands on department units and staff to use up-to-date empirical evidence to guide their decision-making, it is important that we make a reasonable effort to ensure the information we have at their disposal **is** as current as possible.
- It would be desirable to build up a substantial pool of data reasonably quickly. This will allow us to conduct analyses on smaller sub-populations using the pooled data from more than one year's survey results. If we are only surveying every four years, it will be several years before we have amassed a large enough pool of data to look analytically at some of the smaller sub-populations.
- After three or four cycles of biennial surveying, we can assess the rate of change in the results we are obtaining. As was the case with the city's Citizen Satisfaction Survey, we may find that the results are not changing significantly over a two-year span, and we can then consider a shift to a less frequent survey — possibly every four years, alternating with the Alberta Recreation Survey.

### Special Surveys

Special information gathering processes targeting the recreation and leisure needs and preferences of specific Edmonton subpopulations will be deployed on an *as required* basis. Examples of target groups could include:

- Seniors,
- Single parent families,
- Low-income citizens,
- Ethnic groups, etc.

It would likely prove necessary in many instances to employ different sampling techniques, such as focus groups, since a random telephone survey may not be very effective for some groups, e.g., those whose first language is not English or those who may not have a telephone or a fixed residence. While the core focus of these special surveys could address topics similar to those in the main public survey, this process is fundamentally centred on *discussion*, and as such the results would not be directly comparable to those obtained from the telephone survey. Rather than objective statistics, the outcome is more subjective — a broad *sense* of how members of a given sub-population meet their recreation and leisure needs, and what *some* of those needs are. With a discussion process, it is easier to add questions to address specific issues than in a structured telephone survey.

### Issue-Specific Surveys

- The quickest, least expensive and most effective way of gathering information relating to narrow issues is probably to utilize the services of a private consultant operating a periodic omnibus survey. Such surveys are conducted on a regular basis, are designed to be representative of the entire city population, and generally include a wide range of questions on behalf of more than one sponsor on many different topics, including consumer preferences, marketing questions, etc.
- Hargreaves and Associates of Edmonton offers a monthly omnibus survey. The cost of joining the survey is currently \$230 per question, which includes a brief report with a basic analysis of the responses to the question(s) and the demographic profile of all respondents. The lead-time required for each survey is only two weeks in advance of the next scheduled survey, so the department could have the results from a survey in as little as a month from the time a decision was made to participate. Such surveys have the additional benefit of

giving one the opportunity to gather information in a relatively low-profile fashion, since many different companies and organizations may be sponsoring questions on any one survey deployment.

## **INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**

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### **Proposed Tools**

#### **Major Reports**

As discussed under Deliverables on page 5, a report summarizing the preliminary results of all scheduled and special surveys will be produced shortly after the completion of each research initiative. Generally, these will be posted as hot-linked PDF documents<sup>1</sup> on both *citynet* and the City website, so they will be accessible to staff and to partner agencies and the general public. A one-page Executive Summary in PDF format will be distributed via an e-mail list to staff and partner agency representatives who have asked that they be kept informed of new research developments. This summary will also include a hyperlink to the full document.

If subsequent, more in-depth analysis of the results were undertaken, the findings would likely be issued as research bulletins (see below).

#### **Research Bulletins**

The purpose of the research bulletin series will be to deliver *bite-sized*, useful and interesting extracts from more in-depth recreation and leisure findings to staff, partner agencies and interested others in a simple and quickly digested format. Bulletins will be typically no more than a page and a half in length, will be focused on a fairly narrow topic, and will be designed to be read and easily understood in ten to fifteen minutes. The ultimate intent is that readers will feel motivated to read these bulletins because they have learned through experience that the information is relevant to our business, user-friendly, easy to assimilate and remember, and helps them better understand our recreation and leisure environment.

#### **Research Source Index**

During the initial needs assessment phase of this project, focus groups were held with Department staff to gather suggestions relating to research information needs. One topic that received considerable discussion was the use of e-mail circulation lists (particularly by the Business Planning Unit) to keep staff (and interested others) aware of research, publications and other useful information relating to the whole range of the department's areas of interest. There was general agreement that, while this information was generally seen as valuable, there were some disadvantages:

- Only a few of the recipients of any one mailout were interested in that particular topic; most of the messages were not immediately of interest to the majority of recipients, although they were always of value to *some* of the people on the mailing list.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., the PDF document will contain clickable hyperlinks to other locations within that document, and also possibly hyperlinks to websites.

- A large amount of information was sent out this way, but there was no realistic way for staff to store all of these email messages in a searchable and retrievable format.

In response, focus group participants said they would like some way to access/search this information *only when they needed it*. This would also relieve them of considerable email traffic.

Following discussions with corporate IT staff, a simple computerized system was prototyped to allow designated staff to capture useful information sources from the Internet into a database system (the **Research Source Index – RSI**). This is being developed to capture information across the **full range of department interests** — not just recreation and leisure research. City staff can then search this database for items of interest to their work. The information captured in the database for each entry is:

- Article/item title,
- Year the information pertains to (not necessarily the publication date),
- The URL of the website,
- A paragraph summary of the article/item,
- Up to four keywords describing the article.

A user wanting to search the database can select up to four keywords from a pre-defined pull-down list, and will then be presented with all of the entries matching those keywords. The resulting listing contains active hyperlinks, so the user can immediately click on any articles/items that are of interest and his browser will take him to that website.

This system, because of its simplicity, is seen as having wide potential applications by IT, and they are contemplating making a generic variant of it available for all corporate departments as part of the new website deployment.

This system is still in the final testing stages, but will be deployed shortly through *citynet*. Once it is seen to be operating smoothly, it will be made available to community partners, other municipalities and the general public through the City website. This will not take place until the new website is rolled out.

A small committee will be struck to oversee the management of this system. The committee will develop and implement procedures to maintain the database, including criteria and authorization to add entries, identify and delete outdated or dead links, and evaluate performance of the system.

## **ACTION PLAN**

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Edmonton Recreation & Leisure Survey (actual surveying in September/October)	✓		✓		✓	
Special Surveys	<i>as required</i>					
Issue-Specific Questions (Omnibus Survey)	<i>as required</i>					
Research Source Index	<i>ongoing</i>					

## **DELIVERABLES**

<b>TOOL</b>	<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
Edmonton Recreation & Leisure Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preliminary Results – frequencies for all questions, transcribed responses for subjective (written) answers, selected cross-tabulations</li> <li>Comparison between most recent Edmonton Recreation &amp; Leisure Survey results and most recent Alberta Recreation Survey results</li> <li>Brief bulletins presenting detailed examination of results – trends relating to barriers to participation, reasons for participation, and correlation between activities, sub-populations, etc.; profiles of related types of activities; other topics which may be identified as the survey database grows.</li> </ul>	<p>immediately following survey completion</p> <p>December of survey year</p> <p>intermittent, over the following year</p>
Special Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete report on results obtained, including analysis and implications</li> </ul>	<p>within a month of survey or focus group completion</p>
Issue-Specific Questions (Omnibus Survey)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple analysis of the results obtained, plus a demographic profile of respondents</li> </ul>	<p>within 2-3 weeks of survey completion</p>
Research Source Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results will identify all sources that have been catalogued that meet the search criteria identified by the user.</li> </ul>	<p>immediate and ongoing</p>

## **TIME AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

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### **Main Survey**

Assuming there are no major additions of questions in any given year, the consultant work on the survey should cost between \$15,000 to \$18,000 for each deployment, every two years. In addition, between 3-4 months of staff time would be required, to prepare and oversee the contract, and to conduct additional analysis of the results and prepare and distribute bulletins outlining these more detailed results. The amount of staff time required should decrease as our experience with the system (including templates and repeatable analysis formats) builds up. No additional out of pocket expenses are anticipated in implementing the ongoing Information Distribution phase.

Analysis, preparation and distribution of major reports and bulletins may take 2-3 man-months per year.

### **Special Surveys**

Because of the probable variability in these projects, it is difficult to provide accurate cost estimates. As a general guideline, however, a rough cost estimate can be arrived at using the following:

- A focus group session, with 8-10 participants, costs approximately \$2,500, which includes a summary report of the discussions.
- The complexity and diversity of issues being considered influence the number of focus group sessions needed. Where there is a greater possibility for broadly divergent opinions within the population under study, one should consider more than one focus group, to give better assurance that the range of opinions will be heard.
- Issue-specific telephone omnibus surveys will cost under \$300 per question, which includes analysis of results.

### **Research Source Index**

Maintenance work on the RSI system should only require a few days per year, most of which could be done by clerical support with a minimal amount of instruction.

## **EVALUATION**

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All of the core system elements will be the target of regular program evaluation.

In the case of survey components, an evaluation of the survey questionnaire and methodology will be done 8 - 9 months following the implementation of each survey, once the analysis has been done and the results obtained can be evaluated against information requirements and objectives. The bulletin system will be evaluated annually, as will the RSI system.

Document name:	System Overview And Action Plan.Doc
Prepared by:	Rod Keith
Most recent update:	March 31, 2003

## APPENDIX A

### EDMONTON RECREATION & LEISURE SURVEY 2002

1. In general, how do you feel about the amount of time you have available to deal with your daily tasks?  
Would you say you ...

1=always feel rushed even to do things you have to do  
2=only sometimes feel rushed  
3=almost never feel rushed  
4=don't know/not stated

2. Which part of your day do you value more highly?

1=your work  
2=your leisure time  
3=both are equally important  
4=don't know/not stated

3. Compared to 2 years ago, would you say you have

1=about the same amount of leisure time  
2=more leisure time  
3=less leisure time  
4=don't know/not stated

- 4a. During the last 12 months, has anyone in your household including yourself, taken part in the following recreation **activities in Edmonton?**

#### Activities you can do at home

<input type="checkbox"/> watching TV/videos/DVD	<input type="checkbox"/> reading
<input type="checkbox"/> playing computer/video games	<input type="checkbox"/> gardening
<input type="checkbox"/> crafts or hobbies	

#### Things you can do with your family or friends

<input type="checkbox"/> visit museums/galleries	<input type="checkbox"/> picnic
<input type="checkbox"/> walking/hiking	<input type="checkbox"/> tobogganing
<input type="checkbox"/> ice skating	<input type="checkbox"/> golf
<input type="checkbox"/> bowling	<input type="checkbox"/> attending festivals
<input type="checkbox"/> attending events as a spectator	

#### Things you can do by yourself or with others

<input type="checkbox"/> attending a course	<input type="checkbox"/> fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> biking	<input type="checkbox"/> weight training
<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts (dance, music, drama)	<input type="checkbox"/> personal fitness/aerobics
<input type="checkbox"/> running/jogging	<input type="checkbox"/> downhill skiing/snowboard
<input type="checkbox"/> cross-country skiing	<input type="checkbox"/> in-line skating/rollerblade
<input type="checkbox"/> martial arts (judo, tae-kwan-do, karate, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> swimming

#### Sports you can do with others

<input type="checkbox"/> tennis	<input type="checkbox"/> football
<input type="checkbox"/> volleyball	<input type="checkbox"/> basketball

☐ soccer  
☐ ringette  
☐ ice hockey  
☐ badminton

☐ baseball/softball  
☐ gymnastics  
☐ racquetball/squash  
☐ figure skating

- b. Which activity is your personal favourite? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Which activity is **most often** taken part in by your household? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What would you say are the most important benefits that you and members of your household get from taking part in these activities?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
5. People have many reasons for taking part in recreational activities. On a scale of 1 meaning not at all important to 4 meaning very important, how important are each of the following reasons to your decision to take part in your favourite recreation activities

	Not At all Important	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
To compete with others	1	2	3	4
Because you are good at it	1	2	3	4
To show others you can do it	1	2	3	4
To improve your skills and knowledge	1	2	3	4
For a challenge	1	2	3	4
For excitement	1	2	3	4
To keep busy	1	2	3	4
To help my community	1	2	3	4
To be creative	1	2	3	4
For physical health or exercise	1	2	3	4
To be with my family	1	2	3	4
To meet new people	1	2	3	4
To relax	1	2	3	4
For pleasure	1	2	3	4
To do something different from work	1	2	3	4
To enjoy nature	1	2	3	4
To be alone	1	2	3	4
To be away from your family	1	2	3	4

- 6a. Is there any recreational or leisure activity that you **DO NOT** take part in now that you would like to start doing in the next 12 months?

1=Yes

2=No (**go to Q7**)

- b. If Yes, Which one(s) \_\_\_\_\_



7. There are many reasons that **PREVENT** people from taking part in recreation activities. On a scale of 1 meaning not at all important to 4 meaning very important, how important are each of the following reasons to your decision to **NOT** take part in recreation activities.

	<b>Not At all Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Admission fees or other charges for facilities or programs	1	2	3	4
The cost (rental or purchase) of equipment, materials or supplies	1	2	3	4
Recreational facilities or areas are overcrowded	1	2	3	4
Recreational facilities or areas are poorly maintained	1	2	3	4
You don't know where to take part	1	2	3	4
There is no opportunity near your home	1	2	3	4
The cost of transportation	1	2	3	4
Lack of transportation	1	2	3	4
Recreational programming does not accommodate my personal cultural or religious requirements	1	2	3	4
Time pressures from other things in your life	1	2	3	4
You don't have the skills required to take part	1	2	3	4
You are physically unable to take part	1	2	3	4
You are not at ease in social situations	1	2	3	4
Recreational facilities are not physically convenient for you to use	1	2	3	4

- 8a. Have you done any volunteer work connected with culture, recreation, sports or parks in the past 12 months?

1=Yes

2=No ( go to Q9)

- b. **If yes**

What type of group have you been involved with? (**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY; DO NOT READ – PROMPT IF REQUIRED**)

☐ conservation, parks, nature

☐ cultural

☐ community league or association

☐ service club

☐ school

☐ sports team or club

☐ church

☐ sports event

other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**My final questions are to help us group your answers with those provided by others who have taken part in this survey. The information you provide will remain confidential and will not be shared with any other agency.**

- 9a. How long have you lived in Edmonton? \_\_\_\_\_ years (if less than 1 year, enter 1)

- b. Do you own or rent your home? 1=own 2=rent

10. What are the first 3 characters of your Postal Code? \_\_\_\_\_

- 11a. How many children or teens in your household are in the following age groups:

☐ 4 years & under

☐ 10 to 14

☐ 5 to 9

☐ 15 to 19

b. Which of the following best describes your household? (**READ - Check ONE only**).

- ☐ Couple with children under age 18 living at home
- ☐ Couple with no children under age 18 living at home
- ☐ Single parent with children under 18 at home
- ☐ live by yourself (single adult)
- ☐ Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which of the following would best describe your work status

- ☐ employed full-time
- ☐ student (full-time or part-time)
- ☐ employed part-time
- ☐ retired
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. In what year were you born? 19\_\_\_\_ 98=refused

14a. Part of the role of the Edmonton Community Services Department is to help those people who might be experiencing economic or other difficulties. How well do you feel that your current personal or financial situation allows you to take part in recreation and leisure activities.

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b. So, would you say that you consider yourself to be

- 1= experiencing difficulties financially
- 2=living reasonably comfortably
- 3= living very comfortably
- 4=don't know/refused

c. And in which of the following categories is your total annual household income, before taxes?

- |                        |                         |                      |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1=< \$20,000           | 4=\$40,000 to \$59,999  | 7=over \$100,000     |
| 2=\$20,000 to \$29,999 | 5=\$60,000 to \$79,999  | 8=don't know/refused |
| 3=\$30,000 to \$39,999 | 6=\$80,000 to \$100,000 |                      |

**Interviewer Record:**

Gender: 1=Male 2=Female

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Int#: \_\_\_\_\_