

Appendix D: Emerging Trends

It is important to understand emerging trends which directly affect the park and recreation industry in order to meet Lakewood's future park and recreation needs. An understanding of trends will better position "parks and recreation" as an essential service to the community.

D.1 Population and Demographics

Following is a synopsis of emerging trends and a discussion on the implications to parks and recreation.

Population decrease - Lakewood lost 48 persons over the past decade. One possible cause could be the reduction of residents at Western State Hospital reflected by a 15% decrease of institutionalized population since 2000.

Aging - Lakewood's median age increased from 35 in 2000 to 36.6 in 2010. Specifically, there was a 42% increase of baby boomers aged between 55 and 64 and a 17% increase among seniors over 75 years old. The only older adult group that trended lower (about 9%) was found between 65 and 74 years of age.

Among various age groups, the most significant drop occurred between age 35 and 44. Almost 25% of that age cohort left Lakewood between 2000 and 2010. In addition, there was a decrease of about 7% in the younger population aged below 20. This suggests the continuous trend of 'empty nesters' in the community.

Racial diversification - the percentage of the Caucasian or white population dropped 9% while the population with Hispanic or Latino background increased 80% mostly came from Mexico. While there was not much change in the total numbers of Asians more came from the Philippines, China, Vietnam and other parts of southern Asia, and fewer from northern Asia including Japan and Korea. The 40% increase of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders was mainly comprised Guamanian/Chamorro, Samoan and other Pacific Islanders besides Hawaiians

Rising obesity - high-tech leisure activities include internet surfing, computer and video games, social networking and watching television. Partly due to inactivity, adult obesity rates increased from 10% in 1990 to 24% in 1996 and are projected to rise to 35% by 2015 and 37% by 2030 nationwide. In our State, obesity

has steadily been on the rise since 1991. Washington State obesity rates have increased by nearly 0.85% each year with 62% of adults either overweight or obese by the year 2009. In Pierce County in 2010, the Pierce County Health Department estimates nearly 28% and 64% of adults are obese or overweight respectively and 10% of Pierce County children are obese.

Popularity of walking and bicycling - the 2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) estimated that walking would grow 23% and 34% in the next 10 and 20 years respectively. In 2003, the Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO) forecast a significant growth in walking among older adults aged 50 and above with a resulting rate above the national average.

D.2 Society and Economy

High unemployment - the recent recession has lingered longer than expected resulting in high single-digit unemployment rates for all age groups in the nation, state, and county.

While the current national unemployment rate has stayed slightly below 9% in early 2012 the average rate for 20 to 24 years old was close to 15%. Unemployment has more than doubled among older adults aged 55 and over since the recession began in December 2007. The unemployment rate in Pierce County was around 9% as of year-end 2011.

Rising poverty rate - the wealth disparity between whites and minorities has grown to the highest level in a quarter-century. According to US Census Bureau, the recent recession has erased decades of minority gains resulting in whites having around 20 times the net worth of African Americans and 18 times that of Hispanics. The recently released 2010 census data showed a 6.4% drop in the median household income from \$52,823 in 2007 to \$49,445 in 2010 nationwide.

The total 15.1% poverty rate in the nation in 2010 was 15.1% with the steepest increase among children with one in five being affected. In Washington State, more than 47% of single mothers with children younger than five were living in poverty in 2010.

In Lakewood, a large portion of persons living in poverty lived in Springbrook and Tillicum/Woodbrook neighborhoods. As of May 2010, almost 64% of Clover park School District

Lakewood Demographic Changes

Population	2010	2000	Change	% Change
Total population	58,163	58,211	-48	-0.08%
Younger population under 20	14,797	15,961	-1,164	-7.29%
Adults aged 35-44	6,822	8,829	-2,007	-22.73%
Older adults aged 55-64	7,054	4,963	2,091	+42.13%
Older adults aged 65-74	4,003	4,385	-382	-8.71%
Seniors aged over 75	3,894	3,320	574	+17.29%
Population aged over 18	44,939	43,998	941	+2.14%
Median Age	36.6	35.0	1.6	+4.57%
Race				
One race-White	34,506	37,734	-3,228	-8.55%
One race- Black/African American	6,849	7,132	-283	-3.97%
Asian	5,206	5,208	-2	-0.04%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	1,506	1,070	436	+40.75%
Ethnic Background				
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	8,877	4,941	3,936	+79.66%
Household				
Total households	24,069	23,792	277	+1.16%
Family households	14,412	15,076	-664	-4.40%
Married-couple family with own children under 18 years old	3,440	4,171	-731	-17.53%
Average household size	2.36	2.38	-0.02	-0.84%
Total housing units (HU)	26,548	25,345	1,203	+4.75%
Occupied HU	24,069	23,763	306	+1.29%
Vacant HU	2,479	1,582	897	+56.70%
Percent Vacant HU	10.30%	6.66%	3.64%	+54.71%
Persons Per Occupied HU	2.42	2.45	-0.03	-1.35%
Relationship in Household				
Spouse	9,456	10,557	-1,101	-10.43%
Other relatives	3,532	2,626	916	+35.02%
In group quarters	1,268	1,488	-220	-14.78%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

students qualified for free or reduced-fee lunches.

High tech/high touch - in 2003, over 90% of 15-year old students in the nation had access to a computer at home for homework, games, networking and surfing the internet. In 2009, social networking accounted for 11% of all time spent online in US. Twitter processed more than one billion tweets and averaged almost 40 million tweets per day. Almost one in four internet pages viewed at one of the top social networking sites, up 83% from 13.8% a year before. The 2011 MLL Needs Assessment Study revealed that over a third of the respondents endorsed the use of electronic and digital media as the preferred mode of information distribution.

Greater parks and recreation recognition

- nationally, there is an emerging recognition of the significant role that parks and recreation services play in improving the quality of life of communities. Parks and open space are catalysts for both community building and economic development. A series of *Parks Forum* discussion papers released by American Planning Association (APA) directly associate well-maintained parks and greenways with a strong sense of place and community identity; enhanced property values; and business, future homeowner and tourist attractions.

D.3 Climate Change and Environment

Growing environmental awareness - climate changes in the Pacific Northwest are predicted to decrease the availability of water during summer due to snow pack runoff and less rain. Less water along with

more heat and insects may stress trees and other park features. There is a renewed awareness towards environmental preservation to mitigate climate changes. Many cities have developed best practices and strategies to address open space and urban forest preservation, wildlife habitat and natural area restoration and invasive plant management. Currently, Lakewood is updating a Shoreline Master Program to preserve the resourceful shoreline.

Green practices -another fast growing trend is the construction of “green” buildings using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) strategies to improve energy savings, CO emission reductions and stewardship of resources. Since the inception of the LEED certification system in 1998, the US Green Building Council has grown to encompass over 14,000 projects in the US and 30 countries covering over a billion square feet of development area.

The design of community centers, providing year-round access to recreation opportunities for all age groups, has stressed both LEED certification and the use of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Regarding maintenance and operation, the trend is to utilize ecologically-sound management practices, such as recycling programs, reduced use of pesticides, energy-efficient installations, water conservation, and bio-swale additions in park design to reduce water runoff. Recently, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) highlighted “sustainability” as an important consideration for its grant programs.

Smart Growth as a climate action - *smart growth or sustainable development*, seeks to control urban sprawl in order to address climate change, reduce carbon footprint and prevent obesity. The American Planning Association (APA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) recognize that land-use decisions affect the lives of future generations.

Principles of Smart Growth are introduced to encourage mixed uses, compact and walkable neighborhoods, transit-oriented developments, a range of housing and transportation choices, open space

preservation and public participation. LEED certification encourages sustainable neighborhood design (LEED-ND).

Broader scope of sustainability - to comprehensively address sustainability, a fourth pillar, *culture*, has been added to the 3 well-established “triple bottom lines”— *equity (people), economic (profit) and environmental (planet)*.

Through the celebration of culture and heritage, communities become more vibrant and have a deeper sense of place. This Legacy Plan is built upon this wider scope of sustainability as culture has a significant role to play to champion all 4 pillars through parks and programs in a balanced manner.

D.4 Park and Recreation Industry

Less emphasis on “One-Size-Fit-All” - the way of defining “level of service (LOS)” standards has been evolving. Instead of addressing “equality” by paying attention to “one-size-fit-all”, a new approach has recently emerged to focus on “fairness and equity” of how parks and recreation services are provided.

The new approach places a stronger emphasis on local need assessments and community-led park master planning processes to address local and site specific needs, accessibility, locations, barriers, partners and transportation etc. In other words, local needs should be met through a same level of park provision standard, but not necessarily the same types of facilities or amenities.

Urban linear parks - promote leisure walking and active transportation within a compact built environment. Urban parks are commonly paved plazas or courtyards adorned with public art and water features, or linear urban trails as a component to complete streets designed with widened boulevards, pedestrian walkways, city streetscapes and bike facilities.

In some cities, community gardens play the role of urban parks to replace backyards lost in high-density living. “Pathways for play” is another emerging form of linear parks encouraging children to be more. The concept is designed to infuse play elements, such as adventure playgrounds made up of manageable and loose parts, into linear networks of pathways.

Sports trends - sports participation is highly impacted by local competition, interests and culture. The 2011 Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) Survey on Team Sports announced that "After two years of negative participation growth for most of the mainstream team sports, this past year we are starting to see a turnaround in participation for sports like Tackle Football, Soccer, Basketball and Baseball.

These rates go up in the low single digits with respect to both total and core level participations. Lacrosse (33% growth) and other niche team sports, like Rugby (20% growth) and Volleyball, are experiencing continued strong growth.

After two years of strong participation performance, indoor team sports like Indoor Soccer have cooled off."

Extreme sports - are appealing recreational and athletic options for many. A 2008 SGMA Report found that for those aged 6 years and older, the most popular extreme sports in the US, listed in a decreasing order of participation, were - in-line skating, skateboarding, mountain biking, snowboarding, paintball, cardio kickboxing, climbing (indoor, boulder), trail running, ultimate Frisbee, wakeboarding, mountain/rock climbing, BMX bicycling, roller hockey and boardsailing/windsurfing.

Integrating parks and recreation with the health profession - there is a growing awareness of the importance and relevancy of the park and recreation profession in the arena of health prevention. Almost everything park and recreation programs offer promotes community wellness including physical, social, emotional and environmental health, in turn contributing to building healthy communities. An increasing number of grant opportunities have become available for park and recreation programs from health care agencies, such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP).

Wider collaborations - forming partnerships with different agencies and alternative providers as well as engaging volunteers are recognized as efficient ways of doing business. Over 95% of park and recreation agencies have formed partnerships to extend their reach, increase

programming and expand funding capabilities.

According to a 2009 Recreation Management article, the most common partners included local schools (75.2%), local government agencies (69.1%), non-profit organizations (59.8%), state government (43.9%) and private corporations, service clubs or local businesses (38.5%).

Furthermore, the collaboration trend has further extended to include other professions from a broader regional context. One great example is the recent success of Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department in securing a Community Transformation Grant from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP). **Diverse funding** - is resulting as agencies continue to seek more diverse solutions to create and sustain healthy finances. Park and recreation agencies aggressively pursue alternatives to expand funding sources beyond general fund tax dollars, including grants, contributions and donations, corporate sponsorships and naming rights, etc. Other measures include improving program cost-recovery and exploring park facilities as self-sufficient revenue centers.

Transparent decision-making - in response to the public's interest in more accountability, park and recreation agencies are increasingly stressing the importance of making informed decisions based on transparent criteria supported by the public. Engaging the public and managing performance has become the norm in conducting business among public agencies. There is also an increasing use of business models to improve efficiencies with emphasis on strategic planning, data mining, core business alignment, best practices, smart operation and customer service.

Agency accreditation - to achieve industry best practices, the number of park and recreation agencies seeking agency accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) has grown steadily. Between 2001 and 2005, a total of 29 agencies received CAPRA accreditation. Between 2006 and 2010 the number increased to 47 agencies.

The ultimate acceptance of the park and recreation profession will be based on the

quality of services an agency provides and its ability to anticipate and respond to changing trends within society. Nowadays, the park and recreation industry faces on-going challenges of meeting or exceeding the expectations of an increasingly diverse community with stiffer competition for tax dollars.