
PARKS, FORESTRY & RECREATION DIVISION UPDATE – 2006 ACTIONS TOWARDS ACHIEVING “OUR COMMON GROUNDS” STRATEGIC PLAN TARGETS

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide an update on Parks, Forestry and Recreation Community Recreation 2006 programs, services and achievements towards fulfilling the targets set out in “*Our Common Grounds*” Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Parks, Forestry & Recreation Programs and Services

Parks, Forestry & Recreation is responsible for the delivery of high-quality, community-based recreation programs and services to all Torontonians. PFR staff strive to ensure Toronto residents have positive recreational experiences that enhance their quality of life, promote social inclusion and contribute to lifelong active living.

PFR provides directly operated instructional and drop-in recreational programs for people of all ages and abilities in the following areas:

- Swimming
- Skating
- Fitness & wellness
- Skiing
- Programs and Services for People with Disabilities.
- Camps
- Art
- Sports
- Clubs

PFR also supports community groups and organizations that utilize facility space and parkland for recreational opportunities and community events.

In order to manage and deliver recreation services to the 2.5 million residents of Toronto, the PFR Community Recreation branch is comprised of **four** sections:

- **Community Recreation** (Toronto & East York, Etobicoke-York, Scarborough, North York)

- **Aquatics**
- **Customer Service**
- **Standards & Innovation**

In addition, Community Recreation has established nine functional Service Teams to review and develop services, standards and policies from a city-wide perspective. The functional areas are:

- Active Living
- Adapted and Integrated Programs for people with disabilities
- Aquatics
- Arts
- Customer Service
- Early Years/Children
- Older Adults
- Youth

Community Recreation Services has 404 full-time staff and 9,274 part-time staff who provide recreation programs and services at:

- 134 community centres
- 71 indoor pools
- 60 outdoor pools
- 111 wading pools
- 51 indoor arenas
- 839 sport fields
- Over 200 TDSB School locations
- Numerous permitted community facilities

By the Numbers - 2006

Parks, Forestry & Recreation offers a wide variety of recreational programming for all ages and abilities. The following are some key 2006 performance measures.

2,933,499	Total drop-in program attendance an increase of 43,195 from 2005
2,319,522	Total attendance at 537 special events in which permits were issued
453,637	Number of program registrations, representing an increase of 3.4 per cent from 2005
342,350	Number of early years/child registrations in 2006
244,035	Number of calls answered by the call centre
105,430	Number of unique child registrations
81,230	Total number of camp registrations
60,228	Total number of courses offered, representing an increase of 3.3 per cent from 2005
34,185	Number of youth program registrations
17,598	Number of youth enrolled in 298 leadership programs
14,700	Number of facility permits issued
2,800	Number of lifeguards and instructors who provided aquatic programs
1,400	Number of participants who competed in the 2006 Toronto Senior Games

“Our Common Grounds” Targets

In July 2004, Toronto Council approved 53 recommendations in “Our Common Grounds”, Parks, Forestry and Recreation’s Strategic Plan for the next 15 years. The strategic plan provides guidance in three major areas – environmental stewardship, child and youth development and lifelong active living.

Community Recreation plays a significant role in supporting environmental initiatives, however it’s focus is primarily on targets in the areas of child and youth development and lifelong active living including:

- A 20 per cent increase in the number of children participating in registered programs.
- A 40 per cent increase in the number of youth participating in programs.
- A 20 per cent increase in the city’s population enrolled in programs to 190,000 more by 2020.
- A 40 per cent increase in seniors participating in programs by 2010.
- A 1,000 per cent increase of people with a disability enrolled in programs over five years.
- A 20 per cent increase in the number of Torontonians who are physically active by 2020.

The following are PFR Community Recreation Branch accomplishments in 2006 that contribute to recommendations in “Our Common Grounds”:

Child and Youth Development

Recommendations in “Our Common Grounds” Report Specific to Community Recreation Branch*	2006 Accomplishment
<p>28. Implement the Youth Recreation Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained 112 youth from priority neighbourhoods for jobs in sport coaching and aquatic leadership through The Toronto Sport Leadership Program. Twenty-five youth were hired by the City, with others finding employment with the YMCA and Harbourfront. • Hosted the 5th Annual Stomp Urban Dance Competition/Showcase which featured over 300 participants and 1,000 spectators.
<p>29. Parks, Forestry and Recreation should lower its hiring age from 16 to 14 for some positions, provided youth have completed the Leadership Training Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented in January 2006. Positions included wading pool attendant and junior camp leader.
<p>30. Expand the Youth Outreach Program to reach out to new immigrants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 960 newcomer youth were contacted in 2006 by 4 newcomer Youth Outreach Workers.

Recommendations in “Our Common Grounds” Report Specific to Community Recreation Branch*	2006 Accomplishment
32. Provide daytime drop-in and recreation opportunities for homeless and out-of-school youth to build their self-esteem and connection with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 420 homeless and out-of-school youth participated in daytime programs including: Downtown East End Slow-pitch League, Moss Park Soccer League and the John Innes CC ball hockey and flag football leagues.
33. Ensure each centre has at least one unstructured but supervised after-school drop-in program for youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented eight new after-school and two social club programs targeting youth and youth with a disability as a result of City Council approved enhanced youth funding.
34. Provide physical activity opportunities and leader-in training programs in each district, in partnership with other agencies, for youth with a disability or special needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed Adapted & Integrated resource booklet for the public. In 2006 there were 3,397 registrations. An increase of 48.6 per cent from 2005. Consultation with disability community on priorities achieved in 2006.
35. Establish youth councils for all community centres so that youth have their say.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 new youth councils were developed in 2006.
38. Implement the Children’s Recreation Strategy Fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented the After-School Recreation Care (ARC) program, for children six to 12 years of age, at 10 locations. When fully expanded in 2009, the program has a potential of employing 360 youth, while serving 3,600 children living in the 13 priority neighbourhoods.
39. Increase the number of children registered in programs by 20 per cent by 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total registration is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2004 321,162 2005 328,879 2006 342,350 The % change from 2004 to 2006 is 6.6%.
41. Ensure all children in Toronto have the opportunity to learn to swim.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided free basic drowning prevention swim lessons to 3,600 children at summer public swims and camp swims

Recommendations in “Our Common Grounds” Report Specific to Community Recreation Branch*	2006 Accomplishment
	<p>through the first Roving Swim Instruction Squads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted the Lifesaving Society’s Swim to Survive program with TDSB and the TCDSB for 600 grade three, four and five students at 13 schools.
<p>44. Ensure staff at all levels reflect the diversity of all the communities we serve and invest in staff training to achieve a welcoming environment for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Forestry & Recreation hired 498 recreation workers from priority neighbourhoods in 2006. • Established an Access & Diversity Unit and a Community Engagement Unit in PFR.

Lifelong Active Living

Recommendations in “Our Common Grounds” Report Specific to Community Recreation Branch*	2006 Accomplishment
<p>36. Finalize and seek support for the Seniors’ Recreation Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Adult city-wide functional committee has been established to create the Seniors’ Recreation Strategy Implementation Plan.
<p>37. Increase the number of physically active Torontonians 10 per cent by 2010 and 20 per cent by 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented the Power of Movement initiative to increase the levels of physical activity in Toronto. The initiative reached over 61,000 people through 300 workshops, 105 new programs and 75 public education events. Over 790 staff were trained and 10 new community partnerships were developed • Toronto’s first Canada Games Day was organized and held at Lamport Stadium, with over 1,000 children, six to 12 years old, participating in the free all-day event
<p>40. Provide new Canadians, especially those from warm climates, opportunities to learn and play Canadian winter sports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnered with Maple Leaf Sport and Entertainment and Upper Canada College to provide free hockey development programs for children 7 to 13 years old with an emphasis on

Recommendations in “Our Common Grounds” Report Specific to Community Recreation Branch*	2006 Accomplishment
	attracting new Canadians to the sport of hockey, through programs such as, Hockey in the Neighbourhood.

Community Engagement

PFR seeks input from residents to ensure that programs are responsive to community needs. In 2006, staff worked with over 50 advisory committees, over 800 community groups and facilitated many community consultation meetings and focus groups to create:

- Advisory Councils
- Recreation programs
- Special events
- Workshops
- Neighbourhood Action Teams
- Snack/breakfast programs
- Homework clubs
- Adapted and integrated programs for people with disabilities
- Volunteer recognition events

Internal Partnerships with Other City Divisions

In 2006, PFR Division integrated services with other City Divisions to share expertise and to maximize resources. The following are some key examples.

After-School Recreation Care (ARC) Program - A partnership with Children’s Services to provide after school recreation care programs to children in the City’s 13 priority neighbourhoods.

PFR Neighbourhood Teams – A partnership between the division’s branches to improve service delivery, increase community outreach and to engage residents in the City’s 44 wards. By the end of 2007, teams will be operating in all City wards.

Inter-Divisional Youth Service Group - A partnership with Toronto Culture, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Public Library, Social Development Finance & Administration and the Safety Secretariat to co-ordinate youth services in the City of Toronto.

Neighbourhood Action Teams - A partnership with other City divisions to provide co-ordinated and integrated planning and program delivery at the local level in order to strengthen neighbourhoods.

Seniors Roundtable & Seniors Forum - A partnership with Public Health, TTC, Social Development Finance & Administration, the Provincial Government and external community agencies to improve services for seniors across Toronto.

Integrated Children's Staff Team - A partnership with Social Services, Public Health, Social Development Finance & Administration and the school boards to create initiatives such as The Best Generation Yet, Best Start and Children's Report Card.

Waste Diversion - A partnership with the Solid Waste Management Division to achieve City Council approved waste diversion targets. The partnership includes staff and public education and the creation of eco-friendly facilities.

External Partnerships

PFR relies on external partnerships to deliver quality programs and services to residents. These are some key highlights for 2006:

Seneca College - Partnership to provide enhanced training to the After-School Recreation Care program staff which allows staff to gain credit towards an Early Childhood Education or Recreation diploma.

Girls Unlimited - Partnership with Toronto Public Health, Toronto Community Housing, Boys and Girls Clubs and community agencies to co-ordinate resources in order to get girls to be more active.

Hockey in the Neighbourhood - Partnership with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment and Upper Canada College, to provide free hockey development programs for children seven to 13 years old with an emphasis on attracting new Canadians to the sport of hockey.

Doug Philpott Tennis - Partnership with the Doug Philpott Foundation which provides summer tennis programming to children and youth in priority neighbourhoods.

Sport Groups – Partnership with community sport groups to provide sport leagues and programming. In 2006 PFR partnered with over 2350 community sport organizations.

Volunteer Management Program – PFR staff work with over 10,000 volunteers at our community recreation centres and at other PFR neighbourhood facilities. In 2006, the Division established a formal Volunteer Management Program to better coordinate the resources of our tremendous volunteers and to recognize their considerable contributions towards the delivery of our programs, as well as, the organizing and running of community events in our parks and facilities.

Black History Month – PFR Division partners with various African-Canadian organizations to organize this annual event.

High Five - Partnership with Parks and Recreation Ontario for the evaluation of children's programs to ensure quality standards. Over 500 programs were evaluated in 2006.

Swim to Survive - Partnership with the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board to provide basic swimming instruction to students.

CONCLUSIONS:

Looking Ahead – 2007

PFR will continue to work towards achieving the targets in the Division's strategic plan. In order to improve recreation programs and services, the Division will be leading the following policy development initiatives:

- Aquatic Service Planning and Indoor Pool Provision Strategy
- Sport Strategy Framework
- Access to Recreation – Full Cost and Pricing Study

PFR will strive for even greater success in 2007 as it continues to build upon partnerships with participants, volunteers, residents, Advisory Councils and our diverse communities.

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