

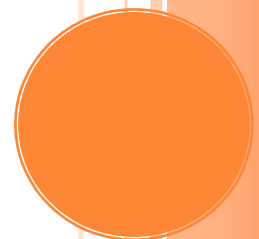
PROGRESS REPORT

Year 2 of Sparwood's Active Community Initiative

Summary of discussion from the public input meeting held in the Recreation Centre in Sparwood the evening of November 27, 2008

Information compiled by Gary Walker, Director of Recreation and Community Services for the District of Sparwood

December 1, 2008



PROGRESS REPORT

Year 2 of Sparwood's Active Community Initiative

Following a presentation by National Geographic writer and adventurer, Bernice Notenboom, the 55 people attending this session discussed Sparwood's Active Communities initiative in small group settings. A summary of feedback is as follows

SUMMARY

- There is good collaboration on this initiative in the community between the Health Care Service sector, the Corporate body, and the District of Sparwood.
- Most people felt that there were more people being physically active, and that those who were already active were becoming more physically active
- There is room for improvement – in particular more convenient opportunities for sedentary people, better transit connections and more frequent runs, better communications and training opportunities
- Volunteers are active in Sparwood. Groups like the Food Bank, the Running Club, and the Curling Club are all run by volunteers. More volunteers are needed though, and some groups are struggling due to a shortage.
- The Corporate body has been particularly involved in helping people become more physically active

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FEEDBACK

1a) What degree of collaboration between the municipality, school district, health region, transportation authority, private enterprise, volunteer organizations, and community agencies exists in the planning for the Active Community movement in Sparwood

Most felt that the effort to work together was paying off, and that results are apparent in the Corporate Challenge, and projects being worked on between the Health Care Services and the Recreation Dept. Other examples include the Health Fair, Flu Shot day, the ElkView employee appreciation day, Walk with the Mayor, etc.

More work is needed to bring in the schools and small businesses

1b) Is the volunteer sector supportive of building community capacity regarding the Active Community Plan. There is some support through groups like the Cross Country Ski Club, the Running Club, and the Hiking Club. Sparwood could use more groups and volunteers like these.

1c) Do you believe that the proportion of the population that is active is increasing.

There was some debate about this, but for the most part those present felt that there was an increase in the level of physical activity. This is particularly apparent through the Corporate Challenge and the Steps Out programs.

2a) Is the proportion of the population that is active, more active on a regular basis?

The consensus was that, yes, the active people are more active on a regular basis

2b) Are opportunities aimed at helping inactive (sedentary) individuals to become active because of your Active Communities Initiative available, and what can be done to provide additional opportunities?

Although there are some opportunities available to help inactive people become active, more can be done. Some suggestions were: trail improvements (paving), indoor walking facilities, and perhaps more diverse programs aimed at this group (example – spouses and locals group in the corporate challenge, a social / activity club, etc).

2c) Are there opportunities to participate in physical activity targeting persons of all ages in the community available, and what can be done to provide additional opportunities?

Although there are opportunities for all ages, more can be done. Getting to and from facilities and programs could be facilitated with more frequent bus runs and additional bus stops. Communications may be improved by making more use of school newsletters and notices. There was a suggestion that there be more parent and tot activity programs (maybe with cooperative babysitting).

3a) Are there opportunities to learn new skills targeting individuals of all ages in the community, and what can be done to provide additional opportunities?

There are programs for children to learn to swim, skate, etc, but fewer opportunities for adults. There are weight training classes, personal training programs, group fitness classes, but not so much for new skills. Men are not always comfortable in the current group fitness classes because they are mostly women. Other suggestions were cross country ski lessons and couples dance classes.

3b) Is there a high degree of awareness within the community about the benefits of physical activity, and what can be done to increase awareness

There was some debate about this. Some felt that there is awareness but a reluctance to act. Others that some people just don't know about the benefits

3c) Are there opportunities for community leaders to learn new skills, and what can be done to provide additional opportunities?

Although there have been opportunities for leadership training in the past, currently there are not obvious programs. Perhaps coaching courses could be made available?

4a) Are there effective guides to link people with the community's opportunities that support physical activity such as trails, programs and facilities, and what can be done to enhance this?

The guides and brochures exist, but some felt that more could be done to help make the community aware of facilities and programs. Examples included: signing of trail heads.

4 b) Are people aware of how to get started and sustain an active lifestyle, and what can be done to increase awareness?

Awareness has improved. Suggestions to increase awareness included the installation of closed circuit TV monitors, a quarterly community magazine, and use of student newsletters. The internet wasn't mentioned.

4c) Are there initiatives or programs that reinforce and support changes towards being more physically active, and what can be done to provide additional incentives or programs for this?

The consensus was that the programs exist. Incentives may include a competitive element like in the Corporate Challenge, opening the Leisure Centre Saturday and Sunday mornings, and additional promotion.