

## **CHAPTER 3 PLAN ELEMENT – PROGRAMS**

**DRAFT**

The Park District will continue to provide a comprehensive array of recreational programming to accommodate the interests of island residents, regardless of age, skill level, or income. These programs promote physical health, as well as mental and emotional well-being. The Park District's Recreation Division has the following seven sub-areas that categorize program offerings:

1. Active Adult  
Includes activities for active adults such as programs in cultural arts (drawing, painting, writing, etc.), life design, dynamic aging, informational island tours, and intergenerational programming with local schools.
2. Aquatics  
Includes activities such as the learn to swim program, recreational swimming, water exercise, leisure water activities, competitive swim team, and water safety courses.
3. Community Outreach  
Includes activities such as summer concerts, outdoor movies in parks, all day camps for youth and special events including the Haunted Hayride, Winter Wonderland, Breakfast with Santa, and mEgga Hunt.
4. Gymnastics  
Includes activities such as youth and adult instructional classes, camps, specialty classes such as Parkour, Ninja and Family Fit, open gym, and competitive teams.
5. Outdoor Program  
Includes activities such as programs in hiking, mountain biking, kayaking/canoeing, sailing, skiing, snowshoeing, climbing, nature and environmental education.
6. Sports & Fitness  
Includes activities such as walking and running, strength and physical conditioning, baseball/softball, basketball, disc golf, soccer, volleyball, pickleball, sports league play, yoga and Tai Chi.
7. Youth & Teen  
Includes activities such as after school programs, youth camps, the teen center, and enrichment/instructional classes to enhance personal well-being including health, nutrition, drama, crafts, chess and more.

### **PROGRAM DELIVERY CRITERIA**

Park District program offerings will be conducted in District parks, facilities, and trails. Park District program offerings may also be conducted in schools and other public facilities, as well as at non-profit and for-profit sites and facilities. When practical and consistent with the Park District's mission statement, and depending on demand, cost, and feasibility, the Park District may also participate in programs conducted by other public, non-profit, or for-profit organizations.

When new programming has been proposed and it has been determined to be consistent with the District's mission and level of service, the Park District will assess whether the program should be run by District staff or an outside contractor. Whenever possible, programs will be run by District staff. The following criteria will be used to determine when a recreation program should be contracted with an outside party:

- The recreational service requires use of specialized equipment, facility, or land not currently available to the District.
- The recreational service requires an individual with a special set of skills, training, or experience not currently available to District.

The Park District recognizes that there will be instances when the District will contract for recreation services that do not fall within the listed criteria. These special cases will require evaluation and approval by District leadership.

## **PROGRAM PRICING CRITERIA**

After establishing that a recreational service meets the Park District's mission and level of service, pricing will be determined using the cost recovery options indicated below, while also considering public benefit and District goals for program delivery. These could include the following:

### **Full Cost Recovery Programs**

The goal for full cost recovery programs is to recover all direct and indirect costs. In some instances, the District may add a surcharge to defray long term life cycle costs for maintenance and repair, and/or to reinvest in similar facilities elsewhere in the system.

### **Partial Cost Recovery Programs**

The goal for partial cost recovery programs is to partially recover direct and indirect costs. Partial cost recovery programs may also include providing scholarships to eligible individuals or user groups.

### **No/Low Cost Recovery Programs**

The goal for no/low cost recovery programs is to provide public benefit to the community through offering certain events, activities and programs at low or no cost.

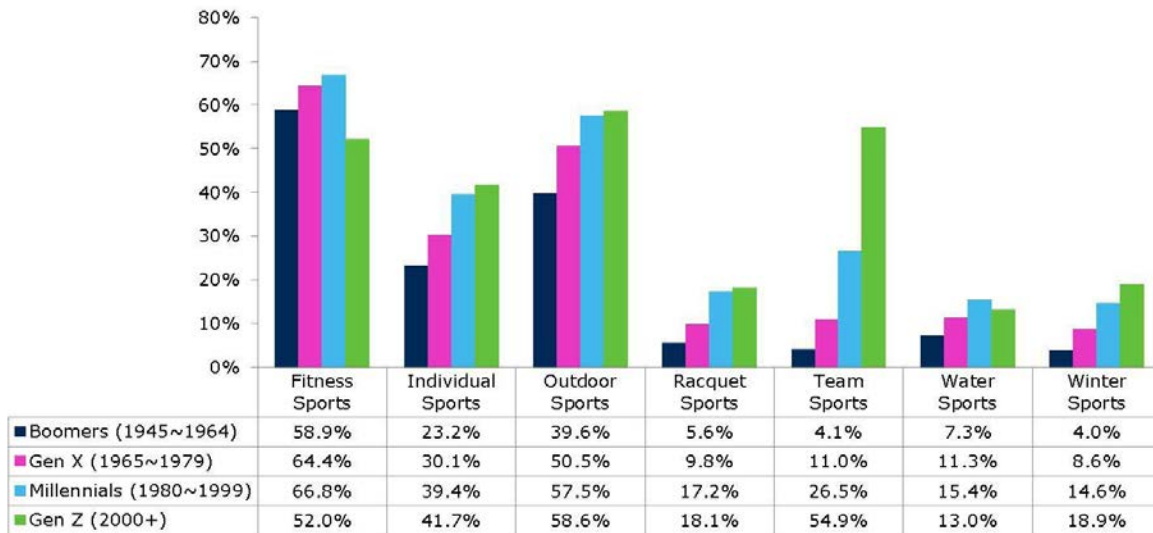
## **NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS**

National recreation trends often have relevance for local park and recreation communities such as the Park District.

### **Participation by Generation:**

Regarding the participation of different ages in sport activities, the following chart summarizes findings from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2019 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report.

(see chart on next page)



The information provided in this chart is interpreted as follows in the above referenced SFIA report:

**Activity Category Segmented by Generation (U.S. Population, Ages 6+)**

*Standing out amongst the categories was the Gen Z domination in team sports. Over half of this generation participated in a team sport during 2018. When digging deeper, a disappointing trend appeared. Gen Z team sport participation declined over the last 6 years, losing 0.2% on average annually. Luckily, this generation hasn't fallen completely off the active bandwagon. Their focus turned to fitness sports which gained 5.2% since 2013. While this activity category was dominated by Gen X six years ago (65.5% part rate), Millennials and Gen Z began to move to the forefront. In 2018, well over 60% of Millennials and 50% of Gen Z participated in fitness activities. Both groups gained participants over 2017, 0.6% and 0.4%, respectively.*

*While fitness sports tend to be the go-to for staying active, outdoor activities were just as important. Overall, 60% of the U.S. population ages 6+ participated in an outdoor activity. When split by generation, over half of Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X enjoyed a run, a bike ride, a camping trip, or even a fishing trip.*

**Sport Participation Data:**

Also included in the above referenced SFIA report, is sports participation data summarized by the report below: (See Appendix \_\_ for actual SFIA data).

*Since 2013, participation in casual high-burning calorie activities has increased 3.4% on average. This suggests Americans are starting to realize the potential for high-intensity activities but are falling short in the frequency of such activities. Here, casual is defined as once-to-twice a week. The health and wellness industry's recommendation is much more: Americans should be involved in high-calorie activities for 150 minutes a week (roughly five days of 30 minute activity).*

*While many Americans see the benefit of 150 minutes of activity, most don't dedicate that much time for it. Lack of disposable income, family responsibility, increase in work hours, and the need to unwind takes the forefront. While these barriers are the same among inactive Americans, it holds true for those who are casually active. The focus to improve these barriers should be*

*shifting to the latter population.*

*Looking at the trends of individual activities, the interest has been changing. At the beginning of 2018, the sport and fitness media boasted about the emergence of high impact/intensity training (HIIT). This activity began to increase in popularity due to the high-calorie burning properties while taking less time out of the day (30 minutes or less for a workout). HIIT did see a modest increase, acquiring 135,000 participants in 2018, but it was not the most gainful activity. Day hiking increased by 6.6%; that's a gain of roughly 3.0 million Americans ages 6 and over. Hiking was followed by trail running, another outdoor high-calorie burning activity*

*Over the last three years, Americans have started to turn to the outdoors for their physical fitness, such as trail running and hiking. While the overall participation rate for outdoor activities showed a modest decrease of 0.7% over the last year, this loss can be attributed to the slowing interest in hunting activities and weather-dependent water sports. Weather affected some sports participation in 2018. Overall, winter sports had the biggest decline at 2.8%. Other sports, however, like surfing, stand-up paddling, and trail running thrived.*

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report 2019 was utilized to evaluate national sport and fitness participatory trends. SFIA is the number one source for sport and fitness research. The information provided here and in the study are based on online interviews carried out during 2018 from more than 20,000 individuals and households.

## **RECREATION PROGRAMS**

In accordance with criteria outlined earlier in this chapter, during the next six years, the Park District will continue to offer and/or facilitate programming as indicated below through the Recreation Division's seven sub-areas that are used to categorize program offerings.

### **Active Adults:**

**Overview:** Active Adult programming is more about an attitude than an age and invites those who value curiosity, innovation and personal exploration. Active Adult programs offer a new perspective on community-building that is based on interactivity and meaningful engagement. The department's offerings are constantly growing in an effort to develop a broader menu of options, and also to create opportunities for people to follow their own interests more deeply. Active Adult programs are offered throughout the island at various Park District locations in order to meet participants in their own neighborhoods. One of the new program threads is titled Dynamic Aging under which many courses, workshops and events are offered.

**Participation:** 2500 participates in 2017

**Public Recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated under the "Recreational Segments" component of the survey that adult and active adult programming are the top two priorities. Community comments in this section indicated participation in the following programs: Tai Chi Chin, Discover Bainbridge, art programs (painting, pottery, creative writing), and walking groups. Suggestions for future programs consisted of expanded arts program offerings and hours, language classes, meditation classes, strengthening and stretching classes, and further expansion of evening adult programming.

**Trends/Goals:** Increasing program opportunities for the younger, more active adult is paramount, as this age group has a strong interest in leisure activities, a desire to remain fit and engaged, and the disposable income to pay for such programs. From traditional social activities, to a variety of fitness and sports activities, to educational and social service offerings, the role of active adult programs and facilities is expanding. Currently the active adult segment of the island's population is one of the largest user

groups on the island. The fastest growing segment of the society are the Baby Boomers who are entering the active adult age groups in record numbers. Meeting the needs of this group is important now and as it grows in the coming years. Indoor walking tracks, exercise areas, pools and classroom spaces are important to this age group.

The increasing demand for programming and more active pursuits has put a squeeze on the number of indoor recreation facilities available for active adult activities. Providing smaller assessment rooms and meeting space has become an important amenity in newer facilities. Partnerships with health care providers for fitness-based services have also gained in popularity. The key trends for the active adult program area are: community engagement, education, intergenerational opportunities, and the expansion of fitness/wellness and cultural arts programming.

## **Aquatics**

**Overview:** The Aquatics Department houses many kinds of programming that serve all ages, infants to active adults. Within the Aquatics Department are programs that offer structured as well as unstructured recreation opportunities to a broad demographic. Structured opportunities include swim lessons for all ages, classes in diving, water polo, water fitness, competitive swim teams for youth and adult swimming as well as diving, and American Red Cross certification courses. Unstructured opportunities include open and family swim times, lap swimming and unstructured water exercise. Aquatic birthday parties and facility rentals are also available. The Aquatics Department runs year-round providing the community with a unique resource that is highly valued on the Kitsap Peninsula.

Within the Aquatic Center there are three unique bodies of water that serve specific uses. 1) The Don Nakata pool which serves instructional and rehabilitative purposes; 2) The Ray Williamson pool which is used for training and competition swimming; 3) The spa which is used for hot water modalities. In addition, the Aquatic Center has two multi-use meeting areas which serve as classrooms, board room, site for all day youth camp, and Teen Center location.

**Participation:** The Aquatics Center is used all year long and is stretched to capacity with multiple user groups utilizing the facility seven days a week from 5:00 am to 9:30 pm. In 2018, the Aquatic Center served the following:

- 3,000 swim lesson participants (youth and adult)
- 278 team participants (BI Swim Club, BAM, Diving)
- 22,300 general users (open swim)
- 2,220 water exercise participants
- 400,000 total facility visits annual

In addition to the general programs offered in 2018, the aquatics department also hosted the American Red Cross Academy, American Exercise Association, and three large swim meets for the Pacific Northwest.

**Public Recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated they would like to see more offerings and space for both structured and unstructured activities. It was noted multiple times that the space in the Aquatics Center is limited, and that this can only be alleviated with a new facility. Additional input indicated a need for more opportunities for open water swimming.

**Trends/Goals:** In the upcoming years based on the community's feedback, the Aquatics Department will strive to continue providing the high level of service that has been enjoyed by island residents. In addition, the department will continue to creatively schedule and optimize every bit of water space to meet the growing needs of the community, while maintaining the high quality of District programs.

## **Community Outreach**

**Overview:** The Park District's Community Outreach Department sponsors a variety of special events for all ages in the community. Family events, concerts, and dances are some of the many events held throughout the year

### **Participation:**

#### 2018 Estimated Attendee Count

- MEgga Hunt: 2,000
- Concerts (overall): 4,800
- Movies in the Park (6): 900
- Haunted Hayride: 1,750
- Winter Wonderland: 1,500

#### 2019 Estimated Attendee Count

- MEgga Hunt: 2,100
- Concerts: 5,600
- Movie in the Park (4): 1,000
- Haunted Hayride \_\_\_\_\_ (forthcoming)
- Winter Wonderland \_\_\_\_\_ (forthcoming)
- Breakfast with Santa \_\_\_\_\_ (forthcoming)

**Public Recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated the outdoor summer concert series to be of high importance, with annual community holiday events also highly enjoyed by island residents. In addition, the community stressed the importance of keeping these large community-based events free to island residents.

**Trends/Goals:** The Community Outreach Department will look for opportunities to expand the concert series in the future and will continue to pursue hosting smaller community-based events going forward.

## **Gymnastics Department:**

**Overview:** The Gymnastics Department offers classes for all ages, beginning with toddlers and continuing through competitive levels. The department also offers classes in Parkour, Ninja, fitness, and cheer, as well as specialized skills clinics and camps. The developmental gymnastics program helps to introduce and refine total body awareness, strength and coordination. Because gymnastics classes are offered all year, the department can instill in children the need for physical activity as a lifestyle. The mission of the Gymnastics Department is to "Provide each student with a diverse gymnastics experience in a safe, caring, fun environment that supports positive self-esteem, self-discipline, motivation, and excellence in learning".

Gymnastics programs are offered in two facilities: 1) a 3,000 sq/ft facility at Battle Point Park called the Transmitter Building; and 2) a 4,000 sq/ft shared space at Bainbridge High School referred to as the "gymnastics room".

**Participation:** Participation varies throughout the year. The peak season is usually late fall to early spring, the slowest months are late spring through summer. In 2018, the gymnastics programs had 6,900 participants registered for classes, camps, participation in open playtime, open gym or birthday parties. This is up from 2017 at which time the number of participants was 5,525. Nationwide, gymnastics participation is up, especially for ages 7 and over. Many people participate in gymnastics because they understand the benefits to include gaining a firm foundation for other sport activities as well as basic life

skills. In addition, many participants understand that gymnastic programs tend to have skilled staff and high-quality facilities.

**Public recommendations:** The island and users from around Kitsap county have been participating in gymnastics with the Park District for over the past 38 years. Recently, the increase in participation has been both in traditional gymnastics classes and non-traditional gymnastics programs such as Ninja and Parkour. Residents and participants recognize that there is great need for a new gymnastics facility due to the overcrowding of current facilities. Adding gymnastics space as part of an indoor athletic facility at Sakai Park has been indicated as a priority.

**Trends/Goals:** According to 3rd Level Consulting report on Gymnastics Center Trends, trends in gymnastics are for programs in Parkour, free running, Ninja Warrior, adult gymnastics and fitness such as CrossFit, and calisthenics classes for all ages (\*see reference link end of paragraph). There has also a surge in offerings for perceptual motor development and special ability classes. The Park District's gymnastics program has kept up with the growing trends and will continue to develop programs that interest islanders and residents of Kitsap county. Some programs considered for future development are Special Olympics programs, performance groups, family or multi-generational classes, and competitive teams. It is the goal of the Gymnastics Department to create programs that help participants grow physically and emotionally through movement and the mental challenge of learning new skills.

\*(<https://usagym.org/pages/memclub/pdfs/17stateoftheindustry.pdf>)

## **Outdoor Programs Department**

**Overview:** The main goal of the Outdoor Program Department is to bring more youth, families, and adults outdoors. The department offers a wide assortment of classes, with something for every age and skill level. It has a diverse staff with varied background and experience who are excited to share what they know.

The backpacking and day hiking programs offer one-of-a kind experiences that reward participants with the best the backcountry has to offer. Hikes take participants from low valleys to high peaks and everywhere in between. Trip leaders are well-trained, safety-oriented, and passionate professionals with a desire to get participants outdoors to enjoy the beauty of the northwest.

Mountain biking is a lifelong recreation activity that is fun, physically challenging, and a great family activity. Program participants explore some of the best mountain biking Washington has to offer.

The Outdoor Program Department offers a varied boating program that emphasizes on-the-water time, expanding skill sets, and safe water practices. Participants are provided all technical gear for day trips, camps, classes, and expeditions. Programs include kayaking, rowing and paddling. In addition, the department offers sailing, one of the fastest-growing water sports today. Participants sail in Flying Junior (FJ) and Opti dinghies on Eagle Harbor and Port Madison. Sailing courses are taught by U.S. Sailing certified instructors and experienced teachers.

The department also has a Gearbank that is available to participants and others who want to enjoy the outdoors on their own. It is understood that one of the largest barriers to getting outdoors is the lack of equipment. To address this, the department provides outdoor equipment of high quality to the community at a reasonable cost.

**Participation:** The outdoor department has an average participation rate of about 2,600 participants for each of the past two years. Ages range from 7 years to adult. The areas of largest growth have been in the boating and mountain biking programs.

**Public recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated outdoor programming such as hiking, biking and boating/kayaking as a top priority. Water access and trails for these programs were also mentioned as important.

## **Trends/Goals:**

According a survey done by the “Outdoor Foundation” day hikes, backpacking, snowshoeing/Nordic, mountain biking, sailing and paddling programs are continuing to grow in popularity nationwide \*(see reference link end of paragraph). Other activities of growing popularity are fishing both fresh and salt water; road, BMX and mountain biking; and camping. \*(<https://outdoorindustry.org/oia-participation/>)

Washington residents spend an average of 56 days outdoors recreating. Most of them typically travel 10 miles or less for outdoor activities. Bainbridge Island is unique in the number of outdoor programs it provides through the Park District’s Outdoor Programs Department. Park District outdoor activities are offered throughout the island, Kitsap County and the Northwest. The high quality of outdoor programs is due to the talent and passion of well-trained staff.

Outdoor Programs Department goals include developing and promoting outdoor recreational programming for individuals and families in parks within walking distance from local neighborhoods and households; this will include activities such as biking, hiking, sailing and paddling programs; expanding department exposure during large events such as Concerts in the Parks and National Boater’s Day; developing low barrier points of entry for public or private schools so students can get engaged in more outdoor activities; adding more equipment to the Gearbank as a way of encouraging more participation in outdoor activities.

## **Sports and Fitness Department**

**Overview:** The Sports and Fitness Department provides the community with a variety of leagues, camps, clinics, classes, and other activities for all ages and skill levels that encourage a healthy lifestyle, fun, and the value of play. The skills and habits acquired through these activities can last a lifetime.

Sport offerings range from basketball, soccer, pickleball, tennis, volleyball, lacrosse, and wrestling to seasonal recreational leagues. A variety of indoor and outdoor opportunities are available for those who wish to participate in sports.

Fitness opportunities offered by the department are among the best on the island and include indoor and outdoor options. Fitness activities and classes include yoga, personal training, social runs, circuit training, and meditation.

The assortment of sports camps offered throughout the year is among the best in WA state. In addition to the many summer camp offerings, the Sports and Fitness Department offers camps during school breaks and on holidays and school conference days. Examples of camps provided by the department include track, lacrosse, fencing, baseball, softball, t-ball, skateboarding, soccer, tennis, ultimate frisbee, volleyball, flag football, golf, cheer, and rugby. Camps are also offered for multi-sports, tot sports and backyard sports.

Adult sports activities play an important role in health and the enjoyment of life. Adult offerings include tennis, open gyms, basketball, pickleball, softball, volleyball, and fitness. They provide a way to meet new people, acquire friendships, and form relationships with other adults. An example of this is the walking program which has become very popular and provides an opportunity to explore island trails and open space while engaging with others.

**Participation:** Sports participation through the Park District has grown over the years. In 2017-2018 4,000-5,400 people participated each year in youth and adult lessons, camps, leagues, open gyms and fitness activities. Continued growth is anticipated as more people pursue health and fitness goals.

**Public recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated the following sports are among the most popular: racket sports such as tennis



and pickleball, disc golf, basketball, soccer, gymnastics, walking and running. This includes organized sports or teams as well as youth and adult sports leagues.

In the survey work conducted by Enviroissues, input regarding an indoor sports complex at Sakai Park indicated 55% considered an indoor recreation complex to be priority. Current indoor recreation facilities on the island are limited to the Aquatic Center and Transmitter Building with some indoor use provided by school gymnasiums. There is great need for an indoor multi sports recreation facility that would include indoor space for multi-use courts, indoor sports field, gymnastics room, and elevated track.

**Trends/Goals:** Sports and fitness trends are constantly changing. Areas of growth in fitness include group fitness such as high intensity interval training; fitness for older adults including personal training; functional fitness; and exercise as medicine. Participation in traditional sports/leagues continues to grow including baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, football, basketball. Some newer sports are growing in popularity such as virtual sports, cricket, pickleball and ultimate frisbee. One of the fastest growing sports on the island and in the nation is pickleball.

Department goals for the Sports & Fitness Department include acquiring more space for racket programs so offerings for group play/league tournaments can be expanded; acquiring more equipment and space so fitness and personal training programs can be expanded; expanding after school and “out” of school offerings; incorporating intramural sports into the grade schools, middle schools and high school so there is an alternative to traditional sport teams for youth who may have other preferences for physical activity; expanding adult programming to provide leagues for flag football, kickball, basketball, pickleball and volleyball; expanding fitness offerings to include additional activities such as group training, body weight training and wearable technology activities.

### **Youth and Teen Department**

**Overview:** Youth and Teen Enrichment provides opportunities for young people to experience a wide variety of activities during their free time after school. By trying new things, exploring new places, and making new friends, young people begin to develop personal interests and abilities. Young people deserve opportunities to try activities which interest them. Families deserve worry-free after school plans and easy transportation options.

The Park District strives to have after-school activities for youth and teens at every public school on the island or within walking distance. After-school programs offered by the Youth and Teen Department in school facilities include active art and science workshops, chess and strategy game clubs, coding, eSports and theatre classes, and space science and engineering-based programs.

Since schools do not have enough room to accommodate all the activities the Youth and Teen Department wants to provide, Park District facilities and contracted spaces are also used. Some after-school programs that are not held in schools include ukulele, sewing, chess, games, active art, and science activities.

During “no school” days (holidays, early release days, winter/spring breaks, extended summer break), the Youth and Teen Department provides activities for young people who need somewhere to go while parents are at work or who want to do something fun when school is not in session. Safe activities that young people can enjoy during “no school” days include all-day chess festivals/tournaments, active art and science workshops, Red Cross babysitter training, and many more. During the summer, the department offers a variety of summer camps/programs for youth and teens in areas such as arts & crafts, chess, creative writing, and imagination/book/adventure themes that can include pirates, mermaids, unicorns, dragons, and wizards.

Also under the direction of the Youth and Teen Department, is the Eagledale Pottery Studio which offers pottery classes to youth and teens as well as adults. This facility has flourished and expanded considerably in past years. Much of the older equipment has been replaced with new and updated

equipment creating a more efficient studio and making it easier for participants to create finished pottery pieces. Due to creative new programs offered by an experienced and dedicated staff, more people are taking pottery classes through the Park District than ever before. A new program recently added is open studio time allowing artists of all ages and abilities to use the studio under supervision to create imaginative pieces on their own.

**Participation:** The Youth and Teen Department has grown in past years. In 2017, participation was hovering around 2,350, while in 2018, the department grew to over 2,750 participants. The greatest participation is in youth/teen classes and camps. The most significant increase in participants is in youth/adult pottery and art.

**Public recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated the importance of painting, pottery, and creative writing programs as well as dance, youth education-based programs, camps and special events. Also indicated was a need for expanded offerings and hours to give those who work or do other daytime activities an opportunity to participate in activities and classes.

**Trends/Goals:** Future trends are leaning towards activities that offer multiple forms of creative self-expression. Current examples of this include the department's mural camps and many of the pottery classes. Additional trends lean towards art program experiences that include a social component.

The Youth and Teen Department plans to offer nature-based leisure time through the increase of after-school youth, pre-school and family activities that connect with nature and in doing this promote the daily "Green Hour" concept. By expanding appropriately for year-round nature exploration and by re-designing day camp programs, the department intends to advocate for healthier outdoor leisure time choices for all ages. Additionally, many in the community with special needs will benefit from increased options for outdoor time.

Additional department goals include: 1) increasing generational programming to expand the ages and definition of families while exploring how to market this effectively; 2) increasing offerings for underserved young children and teens; 3) participating in the design and support of common spaces within the Park District to enhance generational gathering.

Department goals to encourage participation and skill development at the Eagledale Pottery Studio include: 1) continuing efforts to improve the studio so it serves as a long-term resource to the art community and specifically for students of all ages and abilities; 2) increasing short-term introductory classes, expanding skill-specific workshops, and hosting specialists and speakers for demonstrations to provide more opportunities for the community to experience ceramic art; 3) developing and promoting opportunities for students of all ages to exhibit their work.

Looking ahead, people of all ages will continue to look for connection with others around shared interests. The next decade will see an interesting blend in the use of leisure-time as increasing technology-based activities mix with lower-tech pastimes such as handmade ceramics and local outdoor exploration. As screen and data connectivity increases, people will more frequently seek meaningful ways to make connections and unplug during their free time.

### **Teen Center:**

**Overview:** The Teen Center has been providing year-round activities for teens of middle and high school age for almost three decades. Dedicated and experienced staff are always on hand to supervise and instigate fun with participants.

Two years ago, the Teen Center moved from its stand-alone location on the high school campus to a designated area inside the Aquatics Center. This new location along with program improvements, expanding the age requirement, and providing new amenities has helped revitalize the Park District's teen

center. Many regulars stop by to hang out with staff, socialize with friends or play games. Four middle school dances have been held in recent months and are growing in popularity. The participants enjoyed the social interaction these provided and danced in many different and creative ways.

The Teen Center provides resources, experienced staff and with its dedicated space at the Aquatic Center has become a safe place for tweens and teens to go to and be themselves.

**Participation:** With its new location and an outstanding, caring staff, Teen Center participation has increased significantly over the past few years. Approximately 3,259 teens used the teen center in 2017 with an increase in 2018 to 7,084. Participation is expected to continue growing given the wide variety of activities offered, the assortment of new electronic and traditional games, and the comfortable furniture that is easy to move around.

**Public recommendations:** According to the public outreach effort conducted by the firm Enviroissues, community input indicated a need for more indoor spaces to facilitate recreation during the cold, wet, and dark months of the year. Additionally, 14.4% placed teen activities as a first priority. Input provided on potential improvements for Sakai Park indicated that 25% find a need for multi-generational spaces with meeting rooms, digital computer lab, teen center and educational training spaces.

**Trends/Goals:** According to Demco's "Ideas and Inspiration on the Top 5 Teen Zone Trends" having activities that promote learning through play is a growing trend (\* see reference link end of paragraph). Noted in this was the importance of having activities that promote and use science, technology, engineering and math to encourage individuals to pursue careers in these fields. In addition, it noted the importance having collaborative and flexible spaces. An example of this is lightweight, moveable furniture where any space can be easily reconfigured for different activities, moods or group activities. It indicated that 75% of teens have access to smartphones and as such, having integrated technology spaces, games and equipment are essential. "Having technology and power access in your teen zone is a draw for teens. They encourage teens to stay and hang out". \*(<https://ideas.demco.com/blog/teen-zone/>)

It is the goal of the Teen Center to continue providing a variety of creative and innovative programs that keep teens occupied and entertained. An additional goal to is find more ways to connect with teens, so they feel listened to by adults and by people who care about who they are as individuals. The best ways to define a teen space or zone is by asking and listening to teens.