

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Exploring Emerging Recreation
and its Planning Challenges:
the Case of Disc Golf in Calgary.

by

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Abstract

This document studies the emerging recreational activity of disc golf through the examination of its recent conflict-ridden integration into urban parks in Calgary. This research was inspired by a case of recreation conflict that did not appear to be sufficiently understood by the user group and municipal staff. The thesis of this document proposes that planning for the emerging sport of disc golf by municipal officials and representatives of the user group can suffer from severe limitations in research, procedure and organizational capacity. These limitations can contribute to serious conflict between recreation interest groups. The findings indicate that this proposition is consistent with the Calgary context. Recommendations are presented to improve disc golf planning and management in Calgary based on effective planning research, sound management of recreational resources, and community involvement best practices. The research has also produced resource material based on several public surveys conducted during the term of this research.

Acknowledgements & Dedication

My thanks go out to all those that have supported me in this project. My supervisors at the University of Calgary, Professor Don Schultz and Dr. Douglas Brown, guided me through this project with insight and understanding. Craig Burrows-Johnson, Disc Golf Guru, has been outstanding in his support with reference materials from the ‘CBJ Disc Golf Archives.’ I also want to thank Dr. William K. Stell, resident of the Triwood Community, for his openness and the use of his personal files. Don Patrician at the City of Calgary was very helpful by providing accounts of his experience and understanding of the emerging recreation activity of disc golf. And a special thanks to the disc golfers of Calgary that responded with such enthusiasm to my survey – keep the faith.

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This document is dedicated to all those who use urban parks: dog walkers, mountain bikers, bird watchers, picnickers, and disc golfers. At the end of the day, we all have to live together.

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1 Introduction

1.0 Project Background

Leisure activities are fundamentally social phenomena. Rojek notes that leisure gives definition to the way in which people “construct meaning and negotiate ordinary life.”¹ It then follows, based on the fundamental differences in humans, that “leisure relations are not fixed and definite.”² From these two points, Rojek proposes that “leisure relations involve continual struggle, negotiation and bargaining.”³ Based on this thinking, we arrive at an understanding that interpreting and planning for leisure is a complex phenomenon. And in particular, leisure relations cannot be easily understood, explained and anticipated.

While being met with enthusiastic acceptance from citizens and politicians alike in other municipalities around Alberta (14 courses have been installed), the sport of disc golf has faced serious challenges in Calgary. Over the past 2 years the primary 18-hole course in the city was closed due to the installation of a constructed wetland, and the alternative site in West Confederation Park was met with severe community opposition. The subsequent vandalism of the target baskets made the course unplayable. Research was needed to uncover some of the roots of these challenges to development and conflicts in the sport’s recent history, and to offer some strategies and tools that can be used to achieve more harmonious incorporation of this recreation activity in the urban park environment.

1.1 Purpose

The inspiration for this project came from a documented case of conflict over recreation space in Calgary. This particular event sparked the interest of the researcher to examine

¹ Ibid., 104.

² Chris Rojek, “Leisure Time and Leisure Space,” in Leisure for Leisure, ed. Chris Rojek (New York: Routledge, 1989) 191.

³ Ibid. 192.

the dynamics of the conflict and the recreational user group that was involved. The project seeks to contribute to the developing body of planning knowledge dealing with emerging recreation activities.

The purpose of this Master's Degree Project (MDP) has been to study the recreational activity of disc golf through the examination of its recent conflict-ridden integration into urban parks in Calgary. This research was motivated by several cases of leisure space conflict that did not appear to be sufficiently understood by the recreation user group and municipal staff. The thesis of this document proposes that planning for the emerging sport of disc golf in Calgary by municipal officials and representatives of the user group can suffer from severe limitations in research, procedure and organizational capacity. These limitations can contribute to serious conflict between recreation interest groups.

The thesis was supported using several approaches. A conflict that developed in a city park between a group of community residents and disc golfers was analysed using various planning literature, primary source data, and reports from key informants. A clear understanding of the causes and effects of this conflict emerged from this analysis. This MDP has also produced resource material based on several public surveys conducted during the term of this research. Based on the findings, this document has also proposed some planning recommendations to improve recreation planning and avert similar conflict events in the future.

Research Goals

1. To analyse the development of the recreational activity in Alberta with particular attention to the conflict that arose with the closure of the established and trial courses in Calgary. Within this history, the planning and community consultation processes will be analysed and critiqued in light of current planning literature and examples of best practices.
2. To complete a participants' survey study that will assist in future recreation planning by providing a clear understanding of the participants: their age,

residential location, family size, income, attitudes, and other recreational practices.

3. To investigate and analyse the city-wide knowledge and attitudes toward the recreational activity in Calgary. This goal will contribute to the greater purpose of providing planning resources and information that can be used by communities and practitioners alike.
4. To develop a disc golf facility planning model that is based on effective planning research, community consultation and participation practices. This process should also pay attention to the best practices of site design.

1.2 Origins of the Flying Disc

The modern flying disc or Frisbee™ developed from pie and cookie tins used by the Frisbie Pie Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The company began operating in the early 1870s, and soon students in nearby universities began playing with the tins by throwing them back and forth after they had consumed the baked goods held inside.⁴ As time went on, inventors began to adjust and modify the pie tins to improve their aerodynamics and achieve better distance and accuracy.

Walter Frederick Morrison is credited with making many of these alterations in the post-World War II years. Amid the UFO fear of the 1950s, Morrison designed the “Pluto Platter” from plastic rather than the tin of the Frisbie Pie Company pie plates. The new flying disc resembled a flying saucer with many colours and a dome shape on the top.⁵ He went on to work with the Wham-O Company that manufactured toys and games.

⁴ Brian Swingley, “From Frisbee Golf to Disc Golf,” www.cincinnati-discgolf.com/Sport/to_disc_golf.htm, accessed 17 May 2002.

⁵ Ibid.

The name Frisbee was trademarked in 1959 in a bid by Wham-O to give its disc a distinctive name.⁶ The name was borrowed by Wham-O executive Rich Knerr who noticed the students of the Ivy League schools continuing to throw around the pie plates from the Frisbie Pie Company; they called it Frisbie-ing.⁷

Wham-O executive Ed Hedrick further developed the flying disc through additional design modifications. He added circular ridges around the edge of the disc that came to be known as the “Lines of Hedrick.” The ridges were thought to act as ‘Vortex generators,’ which create minor turbulence that limits low pressure that often develops when air flows over a wing.⁸ In 1964, Hedrick registered the “Wham-O” Pro-Sport 9Frisbee in 1967, US Patent 3,359,678.⁹ Over 200,000,000 discs with the patented “Lines of Hedrick” have since been sold; enough to stretch end to end from New York to California 6.3 times.¹⁰

1.3 Origins and Growth of Disc Golf

Following the development of the Frisbee, Hedrick and his colleagues at Wham-O sought other means of popularizing their invention. Hedrick went on to form the International Frisbee Association which had over 112,000 members by 1972. Participants took part in trick, distance and accuracy competitions.

In the mid 1970s, Hedrick invented the game of disc golf, which is similar to ball golf in many ways. Golf discs are thrown from a tee area to a target, often called the “hole.” The object is to complete a set course through a park environment in the fewest number of throws of the disc. The activity relies on the vegetation and the topography to provide challenging obstacles to test the skill of the golfers as they move the disc with

⁶ UK Ultimate, “The History of the Frisbee,” www.ukultimate.com/history.asp, accessed 17 May 2002.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Michael Gold, “The Fairy Tale Physics of Frisbees,” in *Newton at the Bat: the Science in Sports*, ed. Eric W. Schrier and William F. Allman (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1984) 51.

⁹ Swingley.

¹⁰ Ed Hedrick, “33 Years With The Frisbee: A retrospective of the past and future of disc golf,” from www.discgolfassoc.com/history.html#Frisbee, accessed 17 May 2002.

consecutive throws toward the target. The ‘hole’ is completed when the disc is “putted” in to the target basket.¹¹

Figure 1.A Original Disc Golf Target Basket



Source: The Disc Golf Association

Disc golf was seen as a way to expand the appeal of the Frisbee™. Originally, the game was played in an informal way in parks and open spaces with trees, trash cans and other objects serving as targets to test human accuracy and the innate desire to challenge one’s skills. This manner of play continues to exist with many people creating and playing what have come to be know as ‘object’ courses where players design a series of targets to function as a course. The game was formalized when Headrick invented the first Pole Hole®, catching devise, consisting of 10 chains hanging in a parabolic shape over an upward opening basket, US Patent 4,039,189, issued 1975.¹²

It has been estimated that 5 million people have played disc golf since its inception in 1975. Currently there are 1,210 golf courses in the World, and over 20 thousand members of the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA).¹³ The activity has been integrated into urban, state and provincial parks and is enjoyed by people of all ages, regardless of economic status.

Disc golf is most often played free of direct charge to the user, though it should be recognised that public parks are a resource that cost a great deal to establish and maintain. Recent developments have included private courses where players pay to play in much

¹¹ PDGA.COM, “What is Disc Golf?” <http://pdga.com/information.php>.

¹² An Abbreviated History of Disc Golf: An Abbreviated History of Disc Golf, in www.discgolfassoc.com/history.html#targets, accessed 17 may 2002.

¹³ Ed Headrick, letter to the City of Pasadena, 27March, 2002, www.discgolfassoc.com/saveoakgrove.html, accessed 17 May 2002.

the same way that green fees are paid at ball golf courses, and charges are required at certain courses to use parking facilities.

1.4 Disc Golf as 'Play'

In its current form, Disc golf can be generally seen as an example of *play*; a concept which has been well explored in leisure theory. Huizinga provides insight into the characteristics of *play*:

...a free activity standing quite consciously outside the 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their differences from the common world by disguise or other means... True *play* is always limited in its objectives ...it is not real life.¹⁴

Figure 1.B Disc Golfer Putting



Photo: Michael Barr

Though it is not necessarily the case that disc golfers surround themselves with secrecy and disguise, many disc golfers find affinity participating in an activity that is not, despite its meteoric growth, part of the recreational mainstream. Certainly the activity is also limited in its objectives with no higher purpose being accomplished through the throwing of a piece of plastic at a galvanized metal target.

Nevertheless, Goodale and Godbey note that *play* has some specific functions that are important for both mental and physical health. *Play* often involves vigorous physical activity where dexterity, strength and coordination are developed. Mental or intellectual

¹⁴ Johann Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (1953), 13, quoted in Thomas Goodale & Geoffrey Godbey, The Evolution of Leisure: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives (State College: Venture Publishing Inc., 1988) 169.

development comes from communication with others, problem solving and creative interpretation which arises during the course of the *play*.¹⁵ Disc golf fulfils many of these functions by challenging players to creatively determine approaches to targets and then employ coordination and dexterity to accurately throw the disc.

Disc golf is truly limited in its objectives and stands squarely on the side of being ‘not serious’ for most of those who participate. It is often played in an impromptu and informal way without planning and scheduling requirements found in many other aspects of modern life.

1.5 Modernism, Postmodernism & Disc Golf

Despite its roots in *play*, disc golf has developed a professional administration over the past 20 years. Its main objective has been to forward the activity through support for course development, public education, and sanctioning competitive events for players of all calibres. However, this development bears some tension with the general nature of *play*. It represents the adoption of management and administrative methods often associated with the world of commerce and industrial production, which are based on goal setting, rationalization and specialization.¹⁶

These moves toward Modernist tenets of maximizing efficiency and administrative effectiveness are also antithetical to the thematic character of Postmodernism which infuses the activity. Within Postmodernism the division between high and low mass culture is being eroded. Theorists also argue “that Postmodernism celebrates theatricality, and frivolity, symbolism, eclecticism...where purity of form is rejected for structures which playfully mix forms and historical styles.”¹⁷ Disc golf demonstrates this rejection of purity in form through simulation and imitation in its representation of ball golf. It also

¹⁵ Goodale and Godbey, 175.

¹⁶ Ibid., 113.

¹⁷ Chris Rojek, Decentring Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1995) 137.

shows a decomposition or blurring of the distinctions between high and low culture that are reinforced through its differences from ball golf and the country club.¹⁸

Modernism has also created a bureaucratic environment that is directed at producing “coordinated and calculable action.”¹⁹ Disc golf has faced some difficulty fitting into this mould because it has existed virtually unmonitored in many locations and thereby remains a difficult phenomenon to predict (or calculate) and plan for.

¹⁸ Ibid., 7-9.

¹⁹ Ibid., 69.

2 Methodology

2.0 Introduction

This Master's Degree Project has two overall goals: first, to examine the recreational activity of disc golf in both its broadest socio-cultural context as an example of post-modern recreation, and in its specific context as a phenomenon in Calgary; second, to propose a facility planning process that is based on analysis of local planning experience along with current planning theory and practice. The methodology was developed with a view to attaining these goals. The techniques that make up this methodology will be explained in this chapter.

2.0.1 Research Strategy

The research strategy combined several different methods of inquiry to explore the recreational phenomenon of disc golf in Calgary. Broadly, it can be described by the definition of *case study* given by Robson:

Case study is a strategy for doing research, which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.¹

Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through several different surveys, case study analysis, and participant observation techniques. Generally speaking, the strategy could be called an example of 'naturalistic inquiry.' This method of inquiry supports the value of flexibility, adaptability, intuition, emergent design and inductive data analysis in the research process, and is a response to the inflexibility of positivist research paradigms.²

Many of the following methodologies were employed simultaneously following the development of the research proposal. This was done for two main reasons: to ensure that preparation for the field research would be completed in time for the disc golf playing

¹ Colin Robson, Real World Research (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Limited, 1999), 52.

² Ibid., 59-61.

season; and to take advantage of information as it emerged from both the literature review and informant interviews to guide the research discovery. The research methods that make up this project are: a disc golf player survey, a literature review, a telephone survey of the city of Calgary, and key informant interviews.

2.1 Player Survey

A survey of disc golf players was one tool used to gather several types of information about the recreational user group in Calgary. In total, three types of information were sought by using this instrument: demographic, attitudinal (attitudes and beliefs regarding the activity), and behavioural (regarding the participants' recreational behaviour).

2.1.1 Survey Method

This survey employed non-probability sampling. The survey is considered to be non-probabilistic in nature because not all members of a particular population (in this case, disc golfers in Calgary) had an equal chance to be included in the sample.³ This was impossible because of a lack information about the size of the user group, and the difficulty associated with contacting a rather disparate and unorganized recreational user group.

Within the method of non-probability sampling, the technique called 'purposive sampling' was used for this survey. Purposive sampling relies on the researcher or evaluator seeking out subjects who will satisfy the needs or specific purpose of the project.⁴ The purpose of one part of this project was to produce data about the demographics, attitudes and recreational behaviour of disc golfers in Calgary. To satisfy this purpose, the survey was purposefully administered to disc golf players at the one disc golf course in the city operating at the time of survey. This technique of sample selection was found to be quite effective at managing the heterogeneous character of certain

³ Carole Cutler Riddick, and Ruth V. Russell, *Evaluative Research in Recreation, Park and Sport Settings: Searching for Useful Information* (Champaign: Sagamore Publishing Inc. 1999), 155.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

population groups, and capturing their diversity in relation in to a particular topic - which in this case, was playing the sport of disc golf.

2.1.2 Questionnaire Design

The survey questionnaire consisted of 38 questions. The questions were designed to elicit the following general information requirements of parks and recreation assessment that have been adapted from Hudson:

- Who are the people playing? (Demographic characteristics)
- What do they think about the activity? (Attitudes and beliefs)
- How do they participate? (Behaviour)
- What do they need/want relating to the activity? (Needs and interests)⁵

A mixed format of questions was used to satisfy these informational needs. The mix consisted of open-ended and closed questions, along with attitude measurement questions where respondents indicated how strongly they agree or disagree with a particular statement based on a 5 point Likert scale. Each question was developed based on the type of information being sought. For example, open-ended questions were used to probe respondents about their feelings regarding the importance of disc golf in their lives. In this case, providing a set of answers for the respondent to choose from would have limited the depth and variety of the subjects' responses. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to freely express their feelings and attitudes within the given writing space on the questionnaire. On the other hand, questions probing demographic information were generally closed.

The sequence of questions was designed to keep the interest and attention of the subject. The questionnaire consisted of four elements. The first element was an introduction to the nature of the research project and the survey procedure. The second element was a section of seven questions that could be considered 'warm up' questions. These were close-ended question that were generally easy to answer; this element was aimed at building rapport with the respondent. What Kelsey and Grey call "the meat" of the survey

⁵ Susan Hudson, How to Conduct Community Needs Assessment Surveys in Public Parks and Recreation. (Columbus: Publishing Horizons Inc., 1988), 39.

was the third element; these were more difficult questions that asked subjects to reveal something about their attitudes, experiences and feelings. Twenty-three questions made up this part of the survey. Demographic characteristics (age, gender, income, family structure, employment, education) were the fourth element of the survey. By nature, demographic questions are slightly easier to answer than other types of questions because they do not require communication of attitudes and beliefs, but just call for a reporting of the facts. Also, Kelsey and Grey note that when a respondent has already invested time in the survey, it is unlikely that he/she will choose to leave the final demographic section incomplete.⁶

The literature tells us that the selection of the language used in a questionnaire is an important part of its design. Both the vocabulary used and structure of questions are important to the subject being able to understand what information is being requested. The wording used in questionnaires should be kept relatively simple, and appropriate to the educational background of the respondents. Since very little was known about the education level of the disc golfers to be surveyed, caution was exercised and the wording was designed to be understood by someone with junior high school education. As well, an attempt was made to keep sentences short (to avoid respondent confusion), and to keep the wording of questions value free (to encourage all types of responses).⁷

Pre-testing or piloting questionnaires is a necessary part of designing a successful survey instrument. Through pre-testing, the researcher is able to find any problems with the way questions were constructed that could confuse respondents, or complicate the process of coding data for analysis. Data coding requires that respondents are answering one clear question at a time so the data presented can be properly given a code for entry into a statistical software platform. For example, a question that asked: “how old are you now, and how old were you when you started playing disc golf?” could have invited confusion

⁶ Craig Kelsey and Howard Grey, The Citizen Survey Process in Parks and Recreation (Reston: The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1986), 16.

⁷ Riddick, and Russell, 189-191.

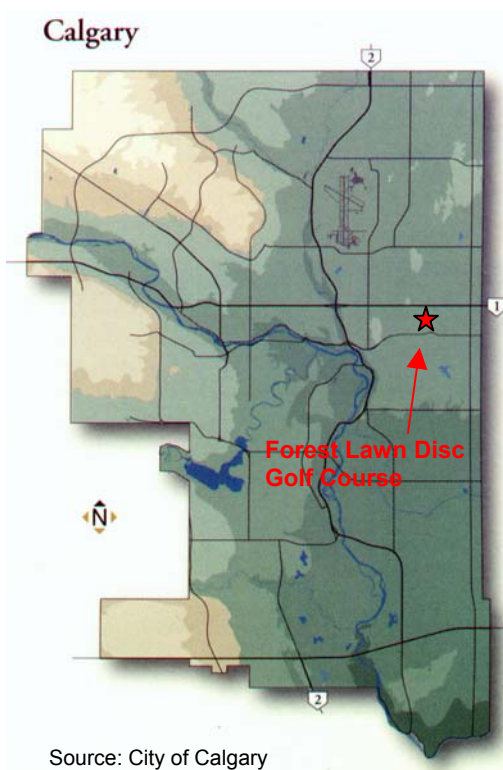
and compromised data due to uncertainty over which part of the question should have been answered. Pre-testing the survey also ensured that the questions asked adequately respond to the type of information sought.

The Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey was pilot tested on several members of the Calgary disc golf community following receipt of approval for research on human subjects from the University. They were selected because of their familiarity with the research goals and with the activity. They advised on certain elements of content that needed to be modified or deleted, and suggested questions that could be added to the questionnaire. The survey instrument is attached in Appendix 1.

2.1.3 Location of Survey

The researcher administered the Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey at the Forest Lawn Disc Golf Course. The course is located in the park area that lies on the west side of 54th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues in the Southeast quadrant of Calgary.

Figure 2.A Location of Forest Lawn Disc Golf Course



This was the best place to survey disc golf players because it is the only official course currently operating in the city. For the purpose of this inquiry, an official course is one that has been approved by the City of Calgary Park Development and Operations Business Unit, and that contains target baskets and a well marked layout indicating direction of play.

It should be noted that this course has only been in existence since the summer of 2000, and is thought to receive a smaller volume of play than the former course located at Pearce Estate Park in

the city's Southeast, a well known disc golf location for ten years. The relative novelty of the course at Forest Lawn might have limited the number of players using the facility during the survey process.

Figure 2.B Forest Lawn Disc Golf Course

Figure 2.C Forest Lawn Disc Golf Course at 14th Avenue & 52nd Street SE



Source: Navtech



Photo: Hugo Haley

Research equipment included a lawn chair and folding table that were set up at the location of the 1st tee on the course. Survey material was kept on the table and the chair was offered to people while completing the survey. The 1st tee location was selected because players congregate there to await playing companions, or for preceding groups of players to begin play: it is the main meeting place on the course. Players were asked to complete the survey after the researcher introduced himself as a student researcher from the University of Calgary, and asked them to complete an informed consent form.

2.1.4 Time

The survey was conducted beginning on Thursday, June 21, 2001, and continued for 7 days until Wednesday, June 28, 2001. This time frame was selected to develop an understanding of the usage patterns of the facility on both business days and weekends.

One week was selected for the study time frame to ensure the examination of patterns of play and usage of the facility would be less susceptible to distortions caused by the weather or community events. The particular week in June was selected partly to meet the schedule of the researcher and most importantly, because it was before the recreation patterns of the city are altered in July due to the Calgary Stampede.

The researcher was present at the survey post from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to canvas participants. The only exceptions to these times were when rain forced the survey to start after 8:30 a.m., or surveying to stop before 10:00 p.m. The times were selected because it is possible that people would be playing disc golf at any time there is sufficient day-light; however, it should be noted that seldom in the seven days of field research did anyone use the disc golf course before 11:00 a.m. The time of day that had the greatest number of recreational users was between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

2.1.5 Weather Conditions

Weather conditions played an important role in the success of the survey process. In short, when the weather conditions were poor, there were few or no people using the course and thus fewer people completed surveys. It is important to plan a survey time frame that allows for some days to produce no data. For example, on Tuesday, June 26, 2001, the weather was overcast with intermittent showers throughout the day and a high temperature of just 6° C. The wind was gusty throughout the afternoon, contributing to less than ideal conditions for disc golf. Only ten uses of the facility were recorded, and only two surveys were completed by yet un-surveyed players during the entire day. At 6:00 p.m., when more sustained showers began, it was determined that continued surveying would produce no significant data. This day contrasted with the day before, Monday, June 25, 2001, when the high temperature was 12° C, the sun was shining, and there were only patches of high cloud. Nineteen surveys were completed on that day, and 95 uses of the facility were recorded.

2.1.6 Data Entry and Processing

“Coding is the translation of words into numbers.”⁸ Data were translated from selected words and written text in the surveys to a numerical code for the purpose of entry into the SPSS statistical program. Coding word answers in the survey into a numerical form was easy for the closed ended questions. Coding was more difficult for the open-ended questions. Many of the surveys produced different answers, particularly to questions that probed people’s feelings. Such questions required more codes to reflect more diverse answers. Judgement also had to be used to interpret and then group similar answers with the same code.

2.1.7 Data Analysis and Use

Data from 135 surveys were entered, and the program application was run to calculate the frequency of each response. Tabular and graphical output of the data was produced using both SPSS and Excel programs.

Data analysis is the stage of the survey process where the question is asked: “What does it all mean?” A great deal of the data from this survey were interpreted through examination of the frequency tables. These tables show the general characteristics of a phenomenon by grouping data into categories reflecting the total observations in each category.⁹ Frequency analysis was the primary method to examine the survey because the majority of the data were nominally scaled. This means the data could only be classified into categories that were mutually exclusive (responses could not be in two categories) and were exhaustive (each item or measurement appears in at least one category).¹⁰

For each question the ‘mode’ of the data established a measure of central tendency, which is important for understanding the dominant element in a category, and for drawing conclusions from statistical representations. The ‘mode’ of the data is the most

⁸ Craig Kelsey and Howard Grey, 35.

⁹ Robert Mason, Douglas A. Lind, and William G. Marshall, Statistics: An Introduction, third edition (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers), 16.

¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

common response of a set of responses.¹¹ This measure of central tendency was selected because it is the only choice for nominally scaled data. Mean and median were not used to analyse the data because they are only suited to interval and categorical data.

More sophisticated analysis calls for the search for interrelationships in the data. Cross tabulations examine the ratio of one response to a response in another question, and look for significant relationships between the two. This method was used to understand the significance of relationships in the data. Cross tabulations were performed on the data to test the connections between certain demographic characteristics and either attitudinal or behavioural responses. These calculations were performed using the SPSS statistical package. An example of cross tabulation is to test for a significant relationship between income and the method that a subject uses to travel to the disc golf course. The *chi*-squared calculation is performed by the statistical computer program to determine the significance of the relationship between the variables.

The nature of multiple response questions (where respondents are asked to provide several answers) does not allow for them to have chi squared correlation analysis performed on them. Simple cross tabulations were performed in these cases to identify basic relationships in the data. For example: the three responses that people gave regarding what they thought were the important elements of disc golf etiquette were cross-tabulated with information on the respondent's age. This test was performed to determine whether there was a different understanding of proper behaviour in the park setting held by different age cohorts.

2.1.8 Ethnography

“Ethnography is the scientific study of people's customs, habits and differences as these unfold in daily social interaction. It relies on systematic observation of day to day human interaction to render a portrait of behaviour.”¹² Ethnography was used in this study to

¹¹ Riddick and Russell, 220.

¹² William Kornblum, “Ethnography: A tool for Park Planning and Management,” *Trends* 34, no. 2 (1997):

better understand the activities in the park where the player survey was being conducted. The goal of the research in this part of the inquiry was to understand how the park functioned and what activities were practiced there. Ultimately, this research method looked at the compatibilities of various activities within the park space. One example was to determine if the children who used the park to gain access to the schools adjacent to the site would have any conflict with the disc golfers who also used the park space. Observations of all activities in the park were recorded during the player's survey period. These activities were divided into the categories of:

- Walking,
- Sun-bathing/resting,
- Biking/ running,
- Game playing,
- Dog walking,
- Disc golf rounds played.

Detailed notes about the unique characteristics of the park users were also recorded. These notes identified the age and appearance and apparent destination of the observed. Any patterns associated with any of the behaviours were also noted.

2.2 Phone Survey of Calgary Population

The objective of the Disc Golf Telephone survey was to gather data on the level of knowledge of disc golf amongst the general population of Calgary. As well, citizen attitudes about the game were probed to provide information that could be used when considering further integration of disc golf facilities into city parks.

This telephone survey research instrument was intended to balance the findings of the non-probability methods of the player survey, with probability methods that provide a more representative, or unbiased sample of the city of Calgary. This would allow generalizations or inferences about the knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of disc golf among citizens in the larger population to be made with a specific degree of

accuracy or error.¹³ A representative sample for Calgary that has a population of 876,519¹⁴, required a sample of 399 people. This sample size produced results that were accurate to within five percentage points.¹⁵

2.2.1 Sampling Technique

It was important to use a stratified random sample for this survey instrument. A more representative survey of the city could be achieved by breaking the total population into subgroups. A representative survey relies on identifying the correct proportion of people in certain sub-groups in the wider population; these are called ‘strata.’ The strata in this survey were selected by geographical distribution of population in the four quadrants of the city. Once the strata were identified, the same percentage of subjects were drawn into the sample as were present in the larger Calgary population.¹⁶

The list of random telephone numbers that was needed to reach the target sample was obtained with the assistance of Telus Advertising Services. A list of 1600 residential numbers was obtained from the company based on a random selection of postal codes from each quadrant of the city. Calculations using the 2001 Calgary Civic Census allowed a population percentage (relative to the entire city) to be identified for each of the four quadrants. Of the required 399 respondents, the number of respondents from each quadrant was then determined. The following table shows the size of each quadrant as a percentage of the City total, and indicates the number of responses needed in each of the strata.

¹³ Riddick and Russell, 150.

¹⁴ City of Calgary, Civic Census 2001, (Calgary: City Clerks Department, 2002), 1.

¹⁵ Prof. Tak S. Fung, Mathematics and Statistics Professor, University of Calgary, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 7 September, 2001.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

Table 2.D Table of Responses Required from Each City Quadrant

Quadrant	% Of Calgary population	# Of responses required
NE	25.5	102
NW	26.0	104
SE	28.2	113
SW	20.1	80

2.2.2 Questionnaire Design and Delivery

The telephone survey was designed to be quite simple and short: simple because the purpose of the survey was only to gather general information; short in order to obtain completions with a small time commitment by participants.

In total, the survey consisted of six questions that probed general familiarity with disc or Frisbee™ sports or games, and tried to gather information about people’s attitudes and understanding of them. Only closed ended questions were used in this survey design because they are the most simple and time-efficient to administer. As well, closed ended questions make the task of coding data simple because all respondents have answered according to the options that were provided to them.

One of the key elements of the questionnaire design was the greeting that would encourage people to respond to the questions and not hang up. It was important for the researcher to introduce himself clearly by giving a first name and mentioning he was a student. This gesture, along with the notification in the greeting that the survey would only take a short period of time (between thirty seconds and two minutes), was important to the success of the instrument.

The telephone survey was conducted by the author between 5:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. from Wednesday, September 12, 2001, through Wednesday, September 19, 2001. These hours

were selected based upon the recommendation of the market researcher for the City of Calgary.¹⁷

During the course of the telephone survey, a total of 1,072 numbers were called, from which 399 responses were collected. 516 numbers registered no answer or an answering machine was activated indicating the resident was unable to answer the call. Only 157 refusals to participate in the survey were recorded. The low number of refusals to participate in the questionnaire is attributed in part to a well-designed introductory greeting and the short time requirement of the questionnaire. Some of the reasons for non-participation in the survey were:

- “I’m eating dinner,”
- “I don’t have enough time,”
- “I don’t do surveys,”
- “I don’t know anything about recreation -- I’m old.”

2.2.3 Data Entry and Processing

Data entry was completed as responses were being gathered using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Responses were coded largely in advance and this contributed to the ease of data entry. This pre-coding of data was possible with closed ended questions as the respondents were asked to choose from a set of answers. Data were then processed using SPSS, which yielded a frequency distribution of the response categories.

2.2.4 Limitations and Error in Sampling

The notion of error when conducting probability sampling refers to the degree of difference between a sample and a measured population. This is expressed in terms of a percentage. The degree of confidence is another calculation that gives an indication of the error associated with a sample. The degree of confidence refers to the level of certainty that a particular sample is accurate within the expressed percentage range of sampling

¹⁷ Jennifer Arthur, Market Researcher with City of Calgary, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 26 April 2001.

error; this is expressed in terms of confidence limits such as 95 samples in 100, or 99 samples in 100.¹⁸ The confidence level of the sample in this survey was 95 percent.

When conducting a “random sample” there are occasions that might result in a disproportionately large representation of one group. For example, females might be more apt to answer the phone in a home and thus might skew the sample from the balanced ratio of men and women found in the larger society.

The Disc Golf Telephone Survey had certain limitations that must be mentioned:

- The sample did not include unlisted telephone numbers;
- The instrument was unable to reach people who do not have a residential telephone number (have no phone or use only a cellular phone);
- The times of day that were selected to contact people would have excluded people who work night shift employment from participating in the survey;
- People with language barriers could not understand the survey.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Literature Sources and Subject Areas

Primary and secondary source literature came from several different locations. The majority of secondary source material was accessed through the online article databases (environmental design, geography and kinesiology) at the University of Calgary. Primary materials such as letters and meeting minutes were acquired from local government officials and several community groups. This information proved to be crucial to understand the positions of various stakeholders, along with the dynamics and tone of their interrelationships. These groups include: the City of Calgary, the Alberta Disc Sports Association (archives of Craig Burrows-Johnson), the Friends of West Confederation (archives of Dr. William Stell), and the Calgary River Valleys Committee.

2.3.2 Literature Selection

Reviewing all the literature in any of the larger subject areas would have been impractical given the time constraints of the project, and more importantly, could have clouded its

¹⁸ Kelsey and Grey, 24.

well-defined focus and direction. In the case of the public participation theories, literature was confined to the readings of Innes and Booher, Arnstein, Forester and Roberts. The materials were selected because the authors are leading theorists and practitioners in the field. Their readings provided analytical tools and frameworks used in both the analysis of the case study and the development of recommendations. Selections for reading in the areas of leisure theory were made under the advice of one of the research supervisors.

2.4 Key Informant Interviews

The purpose of key informant interviews was to gain an understanding of the recreational phenomenon in its local context. Disc golf is a subject all but absent from leisure research. People with specialized knowledge of the activity or related events were invaluable to the researcher since scant information on the research topic was contained in books, journals, newspaper articles or the public record of civic documents.

Key informants also provided useful interpretation of literature relating to the phenomenon. For example, meeting minutes can convey the record of what was said, but key informants can provide insight as to the subtext, mood, and feeling of a particular event. The perspectives of key informants on events related to the phenomenon have proven invaluable to this research. There were 12 different key informants that were interviewed during the research.(See List of Interviews Cited in the Text.) All those who were asked to participate agreed to be interviewed. All those that were interviewed agreed to be quoted in this document. All participants were given the opportunity to verify the record of their interviews prior to publishing.

2.4.1 Sample Selection and List of Interviewed Stakeholders

The sampling method used for the selection of interview subjects was the ‘snowball’ method. In this technique, "the researcher identifies one or more individuals from the population of interest. After they have been interviewed, they are used as informants to identify other members of the population, who are themselves used as informants, and so

on.”¹⁹ The researcher progressively uncovered more about the research topic and the network of involved actors using this method. Thus, the research moved through a web of social, professional, and political connections related to the phenomenon, while adding subjects to the sample. This method of sample selection allowed the researcher to determine who is interviewed based on whether they could contribute information to addressing the research question. This method is effective at uncovering the sometimes obscure reality of a particular social or political locality or event.²⁰ The broad phenomenon of disc golf, along with the more specific cases of disc golf course design and of the conflict surrounding the closures of the disc golf courses in Calgary, was uncovered by tapping into the associated social and business networks.

Several groups of people were interviewed to provide specialized information in topic areas related to the phenomenon. These groups included:

- City managers and planners mainly from the Park Development and Recreation Planning departments of:
 - The City of Calgary,
 - City of Vancouver,
 - City of Edmonton,
 - Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources;
- Community associations and organizers from the Friends of West Confederation, Triwood Community Association;
- Disc golf organizers and proponents from the
 - Calgary Disc Golf Association,
 - Toronto Island Disc Golf,
 - BC Disc Golf Association,
 - Professional Disc Golf Association,
 - The Friends of West Confederation;
- Other park users.

¹⁹ Colin Robson, Real World Research (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1993) , 142.

²⁰ Sasha Tsenkova, “Lecture in Research Methods,” Faculty of Environmental Design, Calgary, 13 March 2001.

2.4.2 Interview Methodology and Analysis

Generally, all interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach. The interviews were conducted in person, by phone, and by using e-mail. Questions were prepared in advance for each of the interviews, but the flow of the meetings was not rigid and the interviewer had the opportunity to stray from the pre-set questions to other discussion points. This methodology yielded the most flexibility and best complemented the ‘snowball’ sample selection technique.

The process of interview analysis focused on distilling the information that was gathered using several analytical tools. Summaries of key events, chronologies, and network mapping (mapping the relationships between certain actors) were all undertaken to understand the relationships associated with the phenomena of disc golf course conflict, closure and development. The findings of these interviews were then verified against other information already collected, or in light of successive findings.²¹

2.5 Conclusion

The various research approaches (surveys, literature review, and key informant interviews) afforded a broad range of opportunities to obtain first-hand information and opinions about disc golf in Calgary. The findings of the research are discussed in the following chapters.

²¹ Tsenkova, 1 April 2001.

3 Theoretical Context and Analysis

3.0 Overview

Much of what planners do relies on applying theory that has been developed through academic and professional research to the context of current practice. Theory informs practice, and it also assists us in analysis and critique of practice. This in turn supports development of more current theory.

This chapter provides an explanation of the theories that are drawn upon to support the thesis: that planning for the emerging sport of disc golf in Calgary suffered from severe limitations in research, planning procedure and organizational capacity. These limitations can contribute to serious conflict between recreation interest groups. This thesis in turn supports the proposition that the conflict examined in the case of conflict in West Confederation Park was not entirely an example of NIMBY behaviour, but was actually the result of a complex set of issues and circumstances. These ideas provide the framework for analysis of the case that will be presented in Chapter 5.

The analysis of the data draws on three recognised theories in planning literature:

- The NIMBY theory of land use conflicts,
- Parks and recreation conflict,
- Public consultation and collaborative planning theories.

3.1 The NIMBY Syndrome

The acronym NIMBY stands for the expression: *not in my backyard*. The expression is a generally negative acronym that is used to describe either: contentious projects, or project opponents in land use conflicts. This theory is important to the case examined in this MDP because it is the explanation that Parks and Recreation planners with the City of Calgary, along with observers of the case and other stakeholders, have cited to explain the conflict at West Confederation Park (see interviews). Interviews revealed that observers from these groups claimed that the residents in the area exhibited a NIMBY attitude toward the introduction of a trial disc golf course in a park in their area. However, the document will show that this symptomatic characterization of the project

opponents by planners and players is inadequate. First, we will explore the NIMBY theory that will be related to the case discussion later in the document.

Discussions of NIMBYism and the NIMBY syndrome gained prominence in the 1970s. It was a time when citizens began to successfully oppose facilities that were generally considered to be beneficial to society, but were considered to come with serious localized costs.¹ NIMBY opposition grew from debates over the location of child care facilities, affordable housing projects, prisons, nuclear plants, waste disposal facilities and aids hospices in the 1990s.² Nevertheless, NIMBY is not a new phenomenon. Though its examples have become more prevalent in the last 10 years, during the 19th century there were examples of community opposition to slaughterhouses, rendering plants, and saloons throughout North America.³ Dear notes that “residents usually concede[d] that these 'noxious' facilities... [were] necessary, but not near their homes, hence the term 'not in my backyard'.”⁴ The general idea from a historical and contemporary perspective is that many of these facilities are desirable from a broad social perspective, but generally unwanted close to home.

In its early understanding, NIMBY opposition was framed by negative characterizations from many commentators as “policymaking ... corrupted by self-interested or irrational citizens who abuse the democratic process and lead policymakers away from optimal solutions to social problems.”⁵ This perspective characterized citizens as:

- overly emotional,
- motivated by narrow, selfish interests
- obstructing policies that would provide for the collective good.⁶

¹ Gregory E. McAvoy, “Partisan probing and democratic decision making: rethinking the NIMBY syndrome,” *Policy Studies Journal* v.26, no.2 (summer 1988), 274.

² Herbert Inhaber, *Slaying the NIMBY Dragon*, (London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 5-8.

³ Robert W. Lake, “Rethinking NIMBY,” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, winter (1993): 87-93.

⁴ Michael Dear, “Understanding and overcoming the NIMBY syndrome,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 58, no.3, (1992) 288-300, quoted in Kate Burningham, “Using the language of NIMBY: a topic for research, not an activity for researchers.” *Local Environment* 5, no. 1 (Feb. 2000), p56.

⁵ McAvoy, 274.

⁶ Ibid.

Though the understanding of the NIMBY phenomenon has developed beyond labelling groups NIMBY, to more sophisticated understandings of social and political contexts, many of these characterizations continue to represent how present day practitioners understand certain land use conflicts.

3.2 Evolution of NIMBY Syndrome Literature

The literature on NIMBY has evolved since its inception in the 1970s. It now includes a diverse collection of case studies that provide a perspective interested in moving beyond simple descriptive accounts. The literature has begun to uncover the complexities of the broader socio-political system from which land use conflicts have emerged. This provides the opportunity for students and practitioners alike to develop understanding which holds the potential to focus on the root causes of conflict and then to work toward preventing similar pitfalls in the future.

3.2.1 Three Perspectives on NIMBY

Burningham points to the three distinct theoretical perspectives of NIMBY Syndrome literature highlighted by Freudenburg and Pastor. The first explains NIMBY as an irrational or ignorant response where the public are considered to be wrong in their opposition to a land use decision. Practitioners holding this perspective often respond by trying to educate the public, or by overruling them because they are deemed to have limited or incorrect knowledge. This interpretation presents a dichotomy between the expert and the layperson (or local resident) at its core. In this context, the public are seen to have an information deficit, which needs to be rectified by properly understanding the scientific information.⁷

This perspective has come under great challenge for several reasons that have been highlighted in more current literature. The first challenge to seeing NIMBY protesters as irrational and ignorant comes from empirical studies that compare the education levels and knowledge of *experts* to those of opponents. These studies have found the differences

⁷ Burningham, 56-57.

tend to be very small or non-existent. As well, the authors point to studies that show that decision making bias and logical errors are present in the work of *experts* as well as in the general public. Judgemental errors that scientists or planners are open to include: overconfidence, insensitivity to erroneous assumptions, and failure to understand how methodological choices have influenced apparently solid results.⁸

The second perspective taken in the NIMBY literature sees the phenomenon as a selfish response that is not based directly on safety concerns of a proposed facility, but is based on fear that the proposed facility will cause devaluation of the protester's property values. This school of thought sees the selfish understanding of NIMBY in a rational manner. It is rational because resistance is rooted in financial self interest that is supported by the economic principles of a free market system.⁹

This perspective is challenged through the results of studies that show people do not simply operate in society as utility maximisers. Many people contribute to charities or other public goods such as public broadcasting beyond what would be considered economically rational. This contributes to the view that economically strategic behaviour does not have the same sort of influence over citizen behaviour that many economists have purported.¹⁰ It also suggests that there are other reasons inspiring resistance to certain cases of land use opposition.

The third perspective found in the literature presents the NIMBY phenomenon as an example of public prudence. It is a perspective that sees the public possessing a broader understanding than the experts; they often are seen to be acting reasonably in distrusting scientists' assessment of risk.¹¹ The distrust of scientists in assessing the risk of certain

⁸ William R. Freudenburg and Susan K. Pastor, "NIMBYs and LULUs: Stalking the Syndromes," Journal of Social Issues 48, no.4 (1992): 46.

⁹ Freudenburg and Pastor, 43.

¹⁰ Freudenburg and Pastor, 48.

¹¹ Burningham, 57.

projects is justified in terms of the empirical evidence that has shown many cases where risk has been tragically underestimated .

This perspective is consistent with the growing awareness of errors in experts' judgement and probabilistic assessments. This perspective is arrived at through a reasoned and informed process, rather than an uninformed, unreasoned, reactionary, parochial or selfish process. It is therefore viewed as a more acceptable basis for citizen opposition. This perspective is consistent with part of the opposition movement that will be examined in this MDP. Nevertheless, this view is challenged by the assertion that organizations or individuals leading opposition that has called for public prudence were not made up of the general public, but were rather experts in their own right, and thus open to the same critique of expert fallibility noted above.¹²

The main difference among all these perspectives lies in how they characterize the public. One perspective sees the public as problems, while others see them as rational and prudent. According to Freudenburg and Pastor, there is too much focus on the individual motivations and characterizations of the project opponents, and too much effort spent to slot the conflict into theoretical models from literature.¹³ They call for a focus on the organizational and political contexts of the conflict. They argue the analyst or policymaker will discover the root causes of the conflict through this type of focus. This profound probing beyond the descriptive nature of the dispute will yield more useful information to the planner, rather than simple and shallow understandings. This attention to the social and political contexts of conflict is the approach that is taken in this MDP.

¹² Freudenburg and Pastor, 49.

¹³ Ibid., 52.

3.2.2 New NIMBY Perspectives

In an attempt to further explain the phenomenon, broader understandings of certain cases have been brought forward. Irwin et al. explore the perspective that decision-making processes contribute to conflict that is characterized as NIMBY. They posit that citizens' groups often have to adopt a reactive stance to a proposed development or project because there has not been sufficient opportunity for public involvement prior to implementation.¹⁴ This perspective takes the position that the political context should be further explored, as was suggested by Freudenburg and Pastor. However, the position put forward by Irwin et al. suggests that there are certain cases where NIMBY is present, and other times when the conflict is more determined by context. They make the case that the protest is either NIMBY or non-NIMBY, with the non-NIMBY being morally superior to the NIMBY. Their perspective does not break with convention because they do not discount the notion of NIMBY all together.

While the acronym continues to be “firmly associated with limited and self interested responses to local environmental change,” another current perspective presented in the literature explores the persistence of the *language of NIMBY*.¹⁵ The *language of NIMBY* refers to the use of the term as a description for conflict situations, that risks damaging their understanding and resolution. Here the NIMBY label is more of a value judgement that is assigned based on the positive or negative view held of the protesting group by the commentator. This can serve to undermine group protest and obscure fruitful analysis of disputes.¹⁶ This perspective is applied to the analysis of the case in this MDP. This document will show that while there might be some NIMBY elements in a land use conflict, understanding the cause of the dispute is often obscured when the NIMBY label is used to explain community opposition. Planners and policy makers must respond by searching for *real* answers.

¹⁴ Burningham, 58-59, quoting George A. Irwin et al, “The Social Management of Environmental Change,” *Futures* 26, no.3 (1994): 323-334.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

3.2.3 Summary

Citizen resistance to potentially noxious land uses dates back to the 1800s. Citizen resistance was often futile in light of the accepted paradigm of the modern world, which above all equated progress with industrial development, technically efficient management, and consumption.

By the 1970s, the western world had begun to more widely question modern society's firm reliance on industrial technology and trust of technical bureaucracy. The new view emerged that technology was sometimes dangerous and experts were not always right. Citizen opposition increased during this era, and along with it came the response from the conventional wisdom which characterized it as misinformed, selfish and parochial, and later prudent (but still uninformed and unreasonable). Fortunately, the literature has moved beyond this point and now presents more than a simple understanding of NIMBY. It provides us with several other perspectives of this phenomenon that alert us of the need to move beyond the existing perspectives that rely on the *language* and *labels of NIMBY*, toward an analysis of the broad socio-political and organizational contexts for land use conflict and opposition. Movement beyond assigning blame to opponents and name calling will provide a more effective analysis of the conditions of conflict, yielding information that is more value free and focused on the prevention of further conflict.

3.3 Conflict in Parks and Recreation Settings

Generally, recreation managers and the public have seen recreation conflict simply as competition in which one activity (or activity group) competes versus another for scarce resources (often space). Academic studies of conflict in parks and recreation settings began in the early 1980s to present specific, detailed and descriptive interpretations of conflict events. This was the first wave of research into parks and recreation conflict that provided some of the theoretical foundations from which we work today. Studies also began to emerge which explained the conditions that caused conflict phenomena. These studies have generally focussed on cases of crowding and clashes of norms of

recreational users.¹⁷ Theory has helped us to define and study conflict between recreation groups and its sources. The recent trend in this research has been to move to broader understandings of the social and political conditions and context for conflict. This trend will thus lead to better tools for preventing future conflict as well as assist in resolving existing difficulties.

3.3.1 Why Study Recreation Conflict?

The study of recreation conflict and its avoidance are important for several reasons. First, it is important because a high quality of visitor experience is desired for citizens visiting park settings; second, because the incidence of conflict in recreation settings can often lead to damage or destruction of recreational resources.¹⁸ Through research, we can learn from existing and past incidents of conflict to better understand the root causes of these events, and develop strategies to avoid them in the future. While most current research examines conflict between user groups in wilderness settings, there is a limited body of literature that deals with conflict between groups or organizations in urban park settings.¹⁹ Therefore, there is a need for further research and understanding of conflict in urban parks and recreation settings.

3.3.2 What is conflict in Parks and Recreation Settings?

The definition of conflict in parks and recreation settings provided by Jacob and Schreyer gives us perhaps the clearest description of the phenomenon: “goal interference attributed to another’s behaviour requiring social contact.”²⁰ This germane definition allows for a wide scope of conflict involving many different actors and activities. Along with their definition, Jacob and Schreyer provide a simple and effective analytical framework to understand and analyse cases of conflict as complex and dynamic phenomena. This framework will contribute to exploring and understanding the case study in the next

¹⁷ Ingrid E. Schneider, “Revisiting and Revising Recreation Conflict Research,” Journal of Leisure Research 32, no.1 (2000), 129.

¹⁸ Ingrid. E Schneider, “Responses to Conflict in Urban Proximate Areas,” Journal of Park and Recreation Administration 18, no.2 (2000 a), 38.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ G. Jacob and R. Schreyer, “Conflict in Outdoor Recreation: a Theoretical Perspective,” Journal of Leisure Research 12, no.4 (1980), 369.

chapter, and will prove useful in dispelling the simple understanding that the case is just an example of NIMBYism (as discussed in section 3.2).

Jacob and Schreyer present four major factors that allow us to describe outdoor recreation conflict. They are:

1. Activity style – represents various personal meanings and behaviours assigned to an activity by participants;
2. Resource specificity – is the significance attached to using a specific recreation resource for a given recreation experience;
3. Mode of experience – accounts for the varying expectation of how the natural environment will be perceived by different users;
4. Lifestyle tolerance – involves the tendency to accept or reject lifestyles different from one's own.

While all four factors will not always be present in individual cases, research has shown that several of them will be evident in examples of recreation conflict.²¹

Activity Style

This factor is made up of the personal meanings and behaviours that recreationists attach to an activity that often lead to conflict with other recreationists. Generally, it is not the recreational behaviour that is at issue, but contrasting standards of behaviour and meaning.²² These standards of behaviour and meaning are conditioned by: the participants' status within the recreational community; the intensity of their participation; their range of experience; and how recreationists have defined the quality of that experience.²³ Conflict with other users of a park space becomes more possible as people's expectations of a recreational experience and appropriate behaviour during its practice become more specific.

²¹ Ibid., 370.

²² Ibid., 371.

²³ Ibid., 372.

Resource Specificity

This factor is based on a normative pattern of behaviour held and accepted by a recreationist toward a recreational place and how it should be used. Expectations of behaviour are determined by the users' personal and cultural evaluations of the place. When one group of recreationists shows differing norms of behaviour to another group, they also indicate values toward the resource which are different. Conflict will often result from these differences.²⁴

Modes of Experience

The way that recreationists interact with the natural environment is also considered to be a factor from which recreation conflict can develop. For Jacob and Schreyer, *modes of experience* are understood on a continuum that relate to the focus of the individual on the recreational environment. By *focus*, the authors refer to the specific attentiveness of the individual's relationship to the environment. *Un-focussed* recreation has a primary goal of movement through a setting with limited attention paid to the scenery. If the goal of movement is not interfered with, then there is little conflict. On the other hand, *focussed* recreation is more attentive to the specific features of the natural environment, where the experience of movement is often interrupted to closely examine the natural environment.²⁵ The distinction is best illustrated by mountain bikers as un-focussed recreationists, and bird-watchers as focussed recreationists. When there is interaction between the focussed and the un-focussed, conflict often arises.

Tolerance of Lifestyle Diversity

Often groups reinforce their own association with a recreational user group by stereotyping other groups. Inferences are made about other groups' *activity style*, *resource specificity* and *mode of experience*, which can develop into value laden generalizations. The stereotyping process establishes '*in-groups*' and '*out-groups*,' which then contribute to difficulty sharing resources and finally, conflict. "If group differences

²⁴ Ibid., 373-374.

²⁵ Ibid., 374-375.

are evaluated as undesirable, or a potential threat to recreation goals [by one group], conflict results when members of the groups confront one another.²⁶

3.3.3 Urban vs. Rural Recreation Conflict

Visitor responses to stress in parks and recreations settings have contributed to our understanding of the phenomenon of recreation conflict, and suggest management strategies that are more site specific and anticipatory. Schneider has shown that recreationists have differing responses to conflict in different recreation area types. Her research has shown that wilderness recreationists differ from urban proximate area recreationists (urban proximate area = within 45 minutes driving time of a metropolitan area) in their use of *confrontive coping mechanisms*, and their likelihood to embark on *planful problem solving*.²⁷

Confrontive coping mechanisms indicate the recreationist is likely not to shy away or avoid the source of conflict, but rather acknowledge it and begin to generate a response to the problem (or engage in *planful problem solving*). This coping strategy contrasts emotionally based strategies where emotions are more internally focussed and attention is drawn away from stress or the meaning of the stress is changed internally²⁸. Research has also shown that wilderness recreationists tended to respond as if no conflict had happened more often than urban proximate area visitors. These results are explained by the private and serene perception of wilderness settings, which encourage emotional rather than behavioural responses.²⁹

The research into urban and rural recreation conflict shows there is a relationship between the strategies recreationists use to cope with conflict, and the setting of the recreation. Though this research does not examine the urban context specifically, its conclusions suggest that as the recreational area becomes more urban or moves closer to

²⁶ Ibid., 376-377.

²⁷ Schneider,(2000 a), 45-49.

²⁸ 40-41.

²⁹ 48.

people's homes and neighbourhood settings, the ways of coping will move further away from internally focussed emotional methods to become more outwardly confrontational and more problem focussed.

3.3.4 The Role of Stress in Recreation Conflict

Schneider and Hammitt point to the influence of psychology literature when they examine intensity of recreation conflict and people's coping responses. They point to a relationship of conflict and stress put forward by Paterson and Neufeld. This idea suggests that stress severity in recreation conflicts is linked to three items:

1. the number of goals that have been threatened;
2. the importance of each goal;
3. the degree to which they are threatened.³⁰

Understanding stress severity has been particularly useful in explaining conflict in urban park settings. In these settings there is often a multiplicity of actors and activities, each with different goals and values attached to a contested piece of park space. We have begun to understand that the behaviour of parties in recreation conflict is not 'irrational' or 'crazy,' but is rather a manifestation of the stress caused by recreation conflict which is caused by real structural factors.

3.3.5 Examples of Conflict in Urban Recreation Areas

Civic park space in Calgary has come under increasing use by diverse recreationists as the city population has approached 900 000 people. It has been already noted that the examples of conflict in urban recreation areas have not been well documented, though we can point to some current examples of parks and recreation conflict in Calgary that will inform our discussion.

³⁰ Ingrid E. Schneider and William Hammitt, "Visitor responses to On-site Recreation Conflict," Journal of Applied Recreation Research 20, no.4 (1995): 264, quoting R.J. Paterson and R.W.J. Neufeld, "Stress Response and the Parameters of Stressful Situations," in Advances in the Investigation of Psychological Stress, ed. R.W.J. Neufeld (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1989) .

Most notable have been the recent conflicts with mountain bikers and dog walkers in Bowmont park in NW Calgary. The response to these conflicts has been to begin a process to develop a new recreation plan for the area. The strategy aims to balance the needs of all parties, while ensuring the integrity of the ecosystem.³¹ While some of the citizens felt there was no room for the two activities to share the same environment, that view has been challenged by work with representatives of both stakeholder groups and local government. They have tried to negotiate solutions that give groups what they need; not necessarily everything they want.

There are some parallels between the difficulties faced by the emerging sport of mountain biking (and its representative association), and the disc golfers of Calgary. It seems that both groups struggle to achieve legitimacy in light of an existing parks management apparatus (both governmental and non-governmental) that either doesn't understand emerging or non-traditional recreational activities or chooses to view them as illegitimate. The following quotation from the local mountain bike association website shows the feeling that mountain bikers hold for the management process in which they have participated:

What is becoming increasingly apparent is that many Aldermen and the City Administration view your lifestyle negatively. The Nose Hill Management Advisory Committee (MAC) continues to be stacked with biased members who discriminate against bike usage. Our attempts to create meaningful cycling representation on the MAC is [sic] continually stonewalled by the Administration. We have argued that having one person who understands cycling issues, needs and desires, out of a fourteen member committee does not create meaningful representation.³²

It seems that some of the challenges that mountain bike advocates have had to overcome stem from the perception of bicycle impacts on the environment. Initially, the decision to limit the trail use for mountain bikers on Nose Hill Park was determined by the opinions of the Nose Hill MAC. They believed the impact of mountain bikes on trails was more

³¹ Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance, Bowmont Park Open Houses, www.cmbalink.com/bowmontopenhouses.html; accessed 21 December, 2001.

³² Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance, Nose Hill Update Nov 21 2000, <http://www.cmbalink.com/nosehill.html#Update>; accessed 21 December 2001.

damaging than walking and hiking. This position was confirmed in March 15, 2000 by the report of the City Council Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services. In light of both these anti-cycling positions, the city naturalist claimed in a 1999 letter that cycling had no additional environmental impacts on trails than other activities.³³ This example shows how even professional ecological management opinions were disregarded by both a citizens committee and the civic administration to satisfy what appeared to be an ideological perspective.

It should be noted that the mountain bike organization has been forced to no longer use many of the trails previously enjoyed by hikers and cyclists on Nose Hill. Nevertheless, it seems that their situation has improved in the past year with three new members being added to the Nose Hill MAC and the permission granted to build a pilot trail in the park.

This example shows that there have been other examples of conflicts in parks and recreation settings in the growing city of Calgary. Analysis and attempts at resolution of these conflicts have shown that there is a deep ideological and political component to the tensions. These more broad contextual factors in the development of the conflict and attempts at its management must be recognized. It should also be noted that mountain biking is an emerging activity similar to disc golf in that its history dates back to the mid 1970s and that it has yet to find management strategies that satisfy all stakeholders (though it might be further ahead than disc golf).

3.3.6 Participants in Recreation Conflict

Modern recreation areas are increasingly used by a diversity of people. Therefore, assuring effective representation for all groups has become more of an important issue in recreational planning. As well as understanding the coping mechanisms and responses to stress that affect users of parks and recreation settings, managers and planners must also understand who the stakeholders are in a particular recreational setting where conflict has

³³ Dave Elphinstone, "Memo to: Members of the Nose Hill Park Management Advisory Committee 19 August 1999," www.cmbalink.com/envimppr.html ; accessed 21 December 2001.

emerged. When writing on stakeholder relations in national parks, Caneday and Kuzmic commented on the need for understanding the multiplicity of values held by stakeholders, and the benefits that these groups derive from particular parks and recreation settings.

Knowing which voices were at the discussion table and which were not would permit managers an opportunity to balance the diversity of voices from the various stakeholder groups and assuring the appropriate representation during difficult policy decisions could reduce conflicts over implementation of management plans.³⁴

Identifying stakeholders and ensuring their participation has been shown to contribute to effective management of conflict situations. Concepts of stakeholder identification and participation will be further discussed in section 3.4 of this document.

3.3.7 Social Carrying Capacity of Parks

Often the intensity of a particular activity can be tied to an examination of conflict in parks and recreation settings. Carrying capacity is the theoretical concept which planning literature presents to discuss intensity of a particular activity, and the effects of that activity on a facility. Management strategies for these areas are often included within this discussion.

Whereas Manning notes carrying capacity was first seen as “the relationship between the visitor use and environmental conditions,”³⁵ this has shifted to take in other perspectives. Initially, “carrying capacity of recreational lands could be determined primarily in terms of ecology and the deterioration of areas. However, it soon became obvious that the resource oriented point of view must be augmented by consideration of human values.”³⁶

Values and norms of behaviour are elements that are not static. They change along generational and cultural lines, and are often put under pressure with changes in the

³⁴ Lowell Caneday and Tom Kuzmic, “Managing the Diverse Interests of Stakeholders,” Parks and Recreation 32, no.9 (1997): 125.

³⁵ Robert E. Manning, “Social Carrying Capacity of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Areas,” Parks and Recreation 32, no.10 (1997): 32.

³⁶ Ibid.

physical environment. As well, norms and values are not easily measured or predicted; often they must be determined, in a broad sense, through negotiation between various stakeholders. The importance of respecting norms and values of park users lies in the responsibility of public managers to the quality of the visitor experience. An example of a value that has influenced the social carrying capacity of parks, and the quality of the visitor experience, is the level of crowding that users are prepared to deal with. Difficulties have arisen when trying to determine the level of crowding considered acceptable by a park group: how much is too much?³⁷

To further understand the concept of carrying capacity, the distinctions have been made between the *descriptive* and the *prescriptive* elements of social carrying capacity. The *descriptive* deals mainly with the ability to measure objective elements such as the level of visitor use, and the percentage of people that feel crowded. Conversely, *prescriptive* components deal mainly with the amount of change that is deemed acceptable by the users of the park or facility. This is referred to as the *limits of acceptable change*.³⁸

To operationalize these concepts, park and facility managers have turned to develop indicators and standards of quality. Indicators are measurable variables that have been created to define resources and social conditions in a park. Standards of quality refer to the minimal acceptable conditions related to these variables or expectations of experience. Both of these components can be measured, though setting standards of quality has required an approach from managers where opinion is canvassed, and negotiation between stakeholders and understanding of context are also figured in.

3.3.8 Summary

Recreation conflict is explored in the literature as competition between recreationists in the use of park space that is based on goal interference. The framework provided by Jacob and Schreyer regarding participants and nature of activity include five elements:

³⁷ Manning, 33.

³⁸ Ibid., 34.

activity style, resource specificity, mode of experience, and tolerance for lifestyle diversity. This framework provides a useful tool for descriptive analysis of conflict situations.

The literature has also suggested that analysis of conflict is augmented by application of additional theory. Urban and rural park environments have demonstrated different intensities of conflict and coping mechanisms to deal with confrontation. *Social carrying capacities* and *limits of acceptable change* have also contributed to the understanding of conflict scenarios by giving more depth to the notion of *mode of experience* suggested by Jacob and Schreyer. Most important in the recreation conflict literature is the argument of Schneider, that the study of this phenomenon must move beyond the descriptive to understand the social and political context of the phenomenon.

3.4 Public Involvement

Public involvement is important to the discussion in this MDP because it has been identified in the literature as being tied to the success or failure of planning processes. Public planning processes have been identified by stakeholders as having failed in the disc golf facility planning process in West Confederation Park. Often when participation strategies are insufficient or ineffective, conflict between stakeholders ensues.

Public involvement in the planning process has its roots in our conceptions of democracy. It is an essential element of the western democratic tradition that finds its inspiration in the writings of Aristotle. He believed that active citizen participation drew on and developed the highest human capacities, and constituted the path to the good and virtuous life.³⁹ Over the centuries, theories of democracy and citizen participation in governance have evolved and been influenced by the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill. Rousseau believed that participation in community governance was a method through which the citizen could have a degree of control over one's life, and the process

³⁹ Diane Day, "Citizen Participation in the Planning Process: An Essentially Contested Concept?" Journal of Planning Literature 11, no.3 (1997): 424.

of collective governance would gain legitimacy through broad participation leading to an increase in sense of community. Mill believed that participation at the local level was an educational tool for citizens to actually learn about democracy.⁴⁰

Political, social, and physical environments have changed a great deal since these theorists wrote. Cities and countries have become much more populous, making participation less practical in the precise way Rousseau and Aristotle suggested. Now, governance is conducted by a technical bureaucracy staffed with experts that are directed by elected officials. However, this technical element became necessary for governing larger and more complex societies. In this context, the ability of the individual to exercise direct control over his or her environment is limited. This leaves us wanting for theories and practices appropriate to the current context, but respectful of our democratic values. There is an essential tension between democracy (and by extension, citizen participation) and bureaucracy, of which planning is a function. Day clearly summarises this tension and highlights its significance:

The relationship between bureaucracy and democracy is simultaneously symbiotic and paradoxical because bureaucracy is responsible for administering the programs that sustain the democratic state but is also a constant source of tension, friction, and conflict in the democratic state... citizen interests are to be realized indirectly by actions of elected representatives, and the policies that they formulate are to be implemented by bureaucrats acting in organizational structures that are antithetical to democracy.⁴¹

As noted in the above quotation, tensions are present in the current planning environment. There are however, some theories that attempt to deal with this apparent tension through innovative theory and processes. Much of this work actually strives to return to the notions of involvement and deliberation that were laid out initially in the works of Rousseau and Mill. These collaborative planning and consensus building theories will be explained in the following section; they serve as the theoretical basis for some of the recommendations that will come from this document.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 425.

⁴¹ Day, 429.

3.4.1 Development of Public Involvement Theory

Contemporary involvement in planning and governance processes has been traced by some theorists to the community based struggles of the 1960s. These struggles took place in the context of the civil rights movement, the rise of women's liberation, the anti-war movement, and the challenges of alternative cultures.⁴² It has also been noted that the recent history of public participation or consultation is connected to the urban renewal movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Participation was legislatively mandated in the United States through the Urban Renewal Act of 1954. However, this legislation called only for the creation of advisory boards made up of citizen leaders in an effort to have them share the goals of the participating agency. In these early stages of contemporary participation, citizens were not involved for idealistic reasons, but rather when it was judged to be expedient for project success.⁴³ Roberts, along with Innes and Booher, deal with the institutionalized theories and methods of participation, and contrast them with the emerging models that they deem to be more democratic, effective and appropriate for our times. Their review and analysis serve as the theoretical basis for the discussion in this document.

3.4.2 Participation vs. Consultation

Roberts highlights an important dichotomy in the language of participation. He sees a critical difference between the notions of public *consultation* and the ideas of public *participation*. *Consultation* occurs when the public has not been directly involved in developing material or in project decision making. Rather, they are 'receivers and reviewers' of information developed by the project proponent. *Consultation* includes education, information sharing, and negotiation, the goal being better decision making by the project proponent.⁴⁴ *Participation* on the other hand, actually brings the public into the decision making process. The *participatory model* has allowed stakeholders to

⁴² Henry Sanoff, Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2000), 2.

⁴³ Day, 423.

⁴⁴ Richard Roberts, "Improving Decisions- Public Involvement in Environmental Impact Assessment: Moving to a 'Newthink'," 3; available from Praxis Research, www.praxis.ca, accessed 15 September 2001.

participate more directly in the decision making process through either joint planning and design or delegated authority. The goal of the *participatory model* has been to build more of a feeling of ownership among participants, while creating non-confrontational communications that ease conflict and foster positive debate.⁴⁵

Innes and Booher focus on the same general dichotomy between what they call *traditional* participation and *interactive* or *collaborative* methods. *Traditional* participation is a series of steps in a public decision process often made up of hearings, meetings, information sessions, written public comments, focus groups and opinion polls. These methods are not interactive or collaborative: “citizens serve only as the object of the research, but not as active participants in policy making.”⁴⁶ They have effectively been subjects in public opinion research.

Unfortunately, public opinion research is both detached and mechanistic. Innes and Booher argue that singular reliance on this type of information will only provide perspectives on current public opinion. These perspectives will not necessarily be well informed; they will be unstable as conditions evolve or as policy gets implemented.⁴⁷ Thus Innes and Booher suggest more interactive or collaborative methods for involving the public.

The traditional methods of public participation in government decision making simply do not work. They do not achieve genuine participation in planning decisions; they do not provide significant information to public officials that makes a difference to their actions; they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard; they do not improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make; and they don't represent a broad spectrum of the public. Worse yet, they often antagonize the members of the public who try to work through these methods. Moreover they pit members of the public against each other as they each feel compelled to speak of the issues in polarizing terms to get their point across.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Roberts, 4.

⁴⁶ Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher, “Public Participation In Planning: New Strategies for the 21st Century,” (Working paper 2000-7, Institute for Urban and Regional Development. University of California at Berkeley, November 2000), 9.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.

The above perspective might discount the valuable aspects of social science research. It should be noted that the study conducted for the purpose of this project (Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey and the 2001 Disc Sports Phone Survey) was intended to provide background information to the planning and deliberative processes that are necessary for further disc golf site development.

3.4.3 Degrees of Involvement

Participation has been examined by many theorists over the years, though Arnstein has had perhaps the most enduring impact on the literature. Her “Ladder of Citizen Participation,” is a method to understand the degree to which citizens have gained power over the planning process. There are 8 *rungs* or *levels* to her ladder which begins with *manipulation* and *therapy*. Both of these *rungs* fit into the category of *non-participation*, where the interests of the power-holders are served by co-opting the public. *Manipulation* is a process where proponents use the involvement process to either ‘educate’ the public or ‘engineer their support.’ This is what Arnstein calls the “distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by power holders.” *Therapy* concentrates on “adjusting the values and attitudes to those of the larger society.”⁴⁹

Figure 3.A Ladder of Citizen Participation

1	Citizen Control	→	Degrees of Citizen Power	<i>Degrees of tokenism</i> are the next section of the ladder. The <i>rungs</i> found within this section are called:
2	Delegated Power			
3	Partnership			
4	Placation	→	Degrees of Tokenism	
5	Consultation			
6	Informing	→	Non Participation	
7	Therapy			
8	Manipulation			

informing, consultation and *placation*. Participants at this level are able to have a voice and be heard, but there is no process or assurance that these views or opinions will change the planning process. There is little dialogue in this sort of a process.

⁴⁹ Sherry R. Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” Journal of the American Institute of Planners 35, no.4 (1969): 218.

Degrees of citizen power are the final section of the ladder. Here, citizens are seen to have more decision making clout. The levels within this portion of the ladder are: *partnership, delegated power* and *citizen control*. Arnstein notes that her typology is simplified, though it illustrates the point that citizen participation is not a monolithic term. The extent to which citizens actually have the ability to exercise control is nuanced and has gradations.⁵⁰

Roberts provides a similar understanding of the levels of public involvement. However, his understanding is more geared to the field of environmental impact assessment. It is less coloured by the class and racial struggle of the 1960s and less mixed with the language of equity politics than Arnstein's view. Roberts sees a continuum that begins with *persuasion*, and leads through: *education, information feedback, consultation, joint planning or shared decision making, delegated authority, and self determination*. This continuum leads from the project proponents or planners engaging in a public relations exercise, to the point where they actually delegate decision making power to the public stakeholders.⁵¹

In an attempt to reconcile some of the tensions present in the traditional models of participation, Innes and Booher recommend a new paradigm of citizen participation that moves beyond the traditional citizen/government typology: "where the government is viewed as a sort of black box without much differentiation among its parts, and the citizenry is a mass of individuals with opinions to be heard, tabulated and analysed."⁵² They see new methods of public involvement being invented that employ collaborative methods of discourse and allow multi-way communication around tasks and issues. This is a type of process which has involved the public directly with planners and decision makers, and has allowed real learning and change to take place on all sides.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., 217-218.

⁵¹ Richard Roberts, "Public Involvement: From Consultation To Participation," 10; available from Praxis Research, www.praxis.ca, accessed 15 September 2001.

⁵² Innes and Booher, 25.

⁵³ Ibid., 4.

3.4.4 Planning Models and Participation

Innes and Booher's advocacy of a new paradigm or model for citizen participation is based on their analysis of citizen participation as fitting into 4 competing tacit planning models or professional perspectives. They claim that these perspectives are held by professionals, public officials and other participants, and they provide a concept of how planning should proceed, and who should be involved in it. The models show different perspectives on the types of information that are relevant to planning, and what the role of the public or various interests should be.⁵⁴ They provide this project with a framework for analysis of the planning processes involved in the case study.

The models that inform the theory and analysis of Innes and Booher are:

The technical/bureaucratic model, holds that planning is best conducted by professional technocrats. In this model, planning is about: assessing alternatives to best meet goals, developing comparative analyses and projections, making recommendations to decision makers based on information, assessing the impacts of policies and suggesting changes. Public participation has only a small role to play in setting goals and direction for this model of planning. Therefore, where there are “diverse interests, or where the interests are highly interdependent, creating multiple options and unpredictable complex scenarios, this planning model does not work well.”⁵⁵ This model might not be entirely appropriate for the social, cultural and political conditions of the 21st century city which are continually becoming more diverse with interest groups vying for more limited resources.

The political influence model is characterized by agency heads, elected officials or trained professionals, who design plans based on the desires of certain constituencies. These constituencies are important for loyalty or political support. “The key planner in political influence planning is essentially a ‘fixer’ who works with everyone behind the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 14.

scenes, amasses power by giving out resources to different powerful players, who in return offer loyalty and support the package that this political planner puts together.”⁵⁶

Public participation has only an accessory position in this model and often takes place after the deals have been made. The role that participation plays in this model is to give the impression of democratic legitimacy to the process, though there is very little likelihood that significant changes will be made to the plan. “Indeed, it is this deal making component that is behind a great deal of the impression citizens often get that public participation is merely for show as opposed to actually designed to get input.”⁵⁷

The social movement model explains the response of citizens when they are shut out of the planning and decision making process.

Social movements confront existing power structures through solidarity, vision and idealism. “The vision itself is often the starting place rather than a result of research or study. It becomes a position which may be difficult for movement leaders to back off from, even if other options seem equally desirable. The vision holds the movement together.”⁵⁸

The collaborative model posits that planning practice should happen through face-to-face dialogue among stakeholders. Innes and Booher present the following list of necessary elements to the implementation of the *collaborative model*:

- 1) The full range of interests must be involved;
- 2) The dialogue must be authentic in the sense that people must be able to speak sincerely and comprehensively to each other; that what they say must be accurate and that they must speak as legitimate representatives of stakeholder interest;
- 3) There must be both diversity and interdependence among the collaborators;

⁵⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 17.

- 4) All issues must be on the table for discussion with nothing off limits – the status quo cannot be sacred;
- 5) Everyone in the discussion must be equally informed, equally listened to and thus empowered as members of the collaborative discussion; and
- 6) Agreements are only reached when consensus is achieved among the vast majority of participants and only after substantial serious effort has been made to satisfy the interests of all players.”⁵⁹

Innes and Booher claim that this model of planning is well suited to conditions where diverse interests have a stake in an issue.

None of the above models provides an absolute and exclusive understanding of planning practice. However, analysis that is conducted using an accepted framework becomes easier to interpret, and benefits from a consistent approach. We can use aspects of the models to better understand the planning and participation that shaped the case study.

3.4.5 Know the Public

Understanding who makes up the public is important to the effectiveness and ultimate success of consultation processes and the planning project. Over time, understanding of who makes up the public has changed significantly. Today there is an attempt to expand the range of stakeholders included in consultation processes to reflect the diversity of people and groups in cities.

Roberts contends that many planners and managers see the public as a homogeneous and stable population. And he suggests they could not be further from the truth in this assumption. For Roberts, there is not one single public, but rather a number of publics that come and go from civic involvement if they feel affected by an issue. “In effect there is a constantly shifting multiplicity of affiliations and alliances that group and regroup according to the issues and their understanding of the issues, perception of risk, and the natural evolution of informal structures...”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid., 18-19.

⁶⁰ Richard Roberts, “Public Involvement: From Consultation To Participation,” 6; available from Praxis

Innes and Booher point to changes in the nature of society that have implications for planning and consultation processes. Now, diversity of life experience, values, knowledge and resources, have developed an information age society that is not based so much on hierarchical structures, but is defined by network relations between many actors.⁶¹ The implications for planning are that the accepted views of who the public are have changed. Information technology and the modern age have created the conditions for diversity and change in existing structures, and have made necessary new understandings of society. Along with the new social visions comes the need for public service institutions to respond with a new understanding of their constituents and new methodologies for planning in this changed environment.

No methodology will work to deal with public consultation in all conditions all of the time. Organizations must have different strategies and techniques to involve many publics within the community. For Roberts, no single formula will work to consult publics; the involvement approach is very dependent on the issues and the characteristics of the affected communities.

3.4.6 Role of Planners

Within traditional models, the role of planners has been confined to serving their political masters within the bureaucratic or political apparatus. However, there is new opportunity for planners to exercise their own power when practicing collaborative planning: no longer are they confined “to serve power or challenge it.”⁶² Innes and Booher point out that planners have the ability to contribute to building trust between groups by first bringing them together, and then framing the flow of information between them. The process of framing the discourse is important because it is often where interests collide. The planner has the power to ensure that a collaborative network develops by facilitating

Research, www.praxis.ca, accessed 15 September 2001.

⁶¹ Judith Innes and David E. Booher, “Network Power in Collaborative Planning,” (Working paper 2000-1, Institute for Urban and Regional Development. University of California at Berkeley, April 2000), 17.

⁶² Innes and Booher, “Network Power in Collaborative Planning,” 26.

the discourse between agents, which can produce solutions that reflect the interests of all stakeholders.⁶³

3.4.7 Success and Failure of Public Involvement

We are all familiar with what has been said of ‘the best laid plans...’ Indeed it has been said that public involvement processes often go awry. Not all public involvement projects work as they were planned or as they were anticipated to function. Roberts presents us with some information oriented to understanding the reasons for procedural failures of public involvement planning.

He notes that public involvement processes have been successful in the Canadian experience when sufficient time and resources are dedicated to developing their strategic plans. However, there are often problems when these measures have not been taken. Failed involvement processes are often encountered when little time is devoted to prepare strategies, action plans or to establish realistic resources and timing requirements. Inappropriate strategies are also often characterized by ad hoc methods where organizations do not have consistent and coordinated approaches.⁶⁴ This point is particularly appropriate for large bureaucracies that might have many departments involved in a certain project.

Roberts notes that there is often little internal cooperation or consultation in these processes. He cautions against public involvement failure arising when internal publics, staff and consultants are not exposed to proper information sharing, education and consultation. Recently, some involvement processes have dedicated close to 20 percent of project resources and time to consultation with internal publics (within proponent organizations and stakeholder organizations).⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Roberts, “Public Involvement: From Consultation To Participation,” 11.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 16.

In a similar cautionary tone, he comments on the resources available to the management of the public involvement process. “If public involvement processes are added on top of too large a workload, there will be a tendency to skim the surface of issues and miss valuable opportunities.”⁶⁶ This comment is particularly relevant to understanding the success and failure of public involvement managed by public sector organizations. Many such organizations have recently had their budgets either frozen or rolled back during the public sector cuts of the 1990s.

Public involvement processes are also in jeopardy when groups have been excluded from the planning process. When certain groups are left out of a consultation process, they can become mobilized in opposition to proposals that decision makers would seek to pass without their approval. Additionally, Roberts asserts that no one group represents all of the interests of a particular public and it is important to involve all stakeholders and other groups throughout the public process.⁶⁷ This goal is first achieved by knowing who the stakeholders are (see Section 3.4.5) , and then making sure there is a broad pattern of inclusion in the involvement process.

Public involvement is difficult by its nature. It is a complex task to include and hear equally all the stakeholders which might need to be involved. The process takes time and good planning and above all, commitment to a fair and inclusive process to be successful. In light of all of these statements, Roberts comments that: “if the process is perceived as being simple, it is not being done, or has not been done properly.”⁶⁸

3.4.8 Summary

Public involvement lies at the very root of our democratic ideals. While in the age of the Greek philosophers there was time to consult all citizens regarding civic issues, the current nature of our large and complex bureaucratic society precludes such direct democracy. Roberts, Innes and Booher present theories of public involvement that respect the need for the current bureaucracy to implement social projects, but present new

⁶⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 16.

methods for citizens to give direction to these initiatives. Along with Arnstein, they clarify the distinctions in the nature and effectiveness of public involvement from public relations exercise in its most meagre state, to citizen control in its most robust. Models to understand the types of planning processes and the forms that public involvement takes are useful tools in the analysis of public planning processes. The technical bureaucratic, political influence, social movement, and collaborative models give us this structure for understanding.

The role of planners has evolved from being an informed expert to one of framing discourse and facilitating the involvement of all stakeholders. Public involvement processes are not easy; they require significant resources of time and personnel along with committed participants and resource people that are well informed and coordinated.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the planning and social science theory that will be drawn upon to support the thesis statement of this paper. NIMBY theories of land use conflict have evolved from understanding protest and protesters as irrational and uninformed, to the current state, which presents the language of NIMBY as a damaging element in the search for root causes and solutions to land use conflict. These theories allow us to better understand the proposition that the recreation conflict over disc golf was an example of NIMBY resistance by local residents. Theory suggests that analysis has to be conducted to uncover the deeper and more complex factors and inter-relationships of this conflict.

Theories examining parks and recreation conflict have presented useful frameworks for description and analysis. They have recently begun to explore the realm of urban recreation conflict as distinct from and more confrontational than rural recreation conflict. The most current literature in the field calls for further attention to the broad social and political factors that have contributed to incidents of conflict.

Public involvement theory shows how process is informed by a particular planning paradigm that also determines the legitimacy and success of the exercise. As well, it provides a critique of practice where the proponent of a project has tried to inform or co-opt stakeholders with one way communication and propaganda. Collaborative theories where power is not focussed singularly in the hands of the proponent, but rest more broadly with all stakeholders, point to the most effective methods for achieving meaningful public involvement. Collaborative planning theory holds that the use of inclusive process has produced the most effective ways to avoid conflict over contested land uses.

Each of these areas of theory contribute to create the instrument that assists in decoding the elements of the case. They collectively provide a lens that does not allow the researcher to focus narrowly on individual protestors and participants when discussing NIMBYism or examples of parks and recreation conflict. This lens constructs an inclusive understanding of protest and conflict, which brings the realms of social and political context into focus.

4 Disc Golf in Alberta: Issues, History, Study Context

4.1 Introduction

The development of disc golf in Alberta began 21 years ago when the first course opened in Edmonton. During the 1980s, very slow growth characterized the activity with only one new course opening in Calgary. Since then, however, there has been significant growth of the activity in the province. This growth can be traced to a number of elements that will be outlined in this section of the document. Recent growth factors include:

- Increased interest in disc sports;
- Inclusion of the activity in the Alberta Seniors' Games;
- In-migration of people.

The history of disc golf in Alberta cannot be characterized singularly as a process of smooth and rapid growth. Rather, there have been impediments to the development of the activity primarily in Calgary. Contentious interpretations of planning documents have been responsible for policy and park development decisions that have negatively affected disc golf players through course closures. This chapter will introduce the circumstances surrounding the closure of Pearce Estate Park disc golf course. This event is significant because it is representative of the challenges that emerging recreational activities face; in particular, competition from other interests that have more financial and political clout. Additionally, these examples provide the context for the case of intense resistance and conflict that occurred in West Confederation Park.

4.2 Catching On: Locations Around Alberta

Currently there are 13 disc golf courses in Alberta. Edmonton's Rundle Park course was developed in 1980 and is located in the river valley park system. The disc golf course was built along with a traditional (or 'ball') golf course as part of the overall park development plan. The course consists of nine baskets and was recently renovated by

changing the target basket placements to increase variety and reduce wear on the course.¹ The Edmonton area has two other courses: one located in busy Hawrelak Park, and the other located just north of the city at the Lilly Lake Resort.

**Figure 4.A, 4.B Third Hole
Rundle Park, Edmonton**



Photo: Hugo Haley

Other courses are located in Canmore, Cardston, Lethbridge, Lacombe, Nordegg, Olds, Redwood Meadows and Three Hills.² The geographic spread of the courses is quite broad in the southern half of the province and the majority of them are located in towns.

Calgary had one course at Pearce Estate Park from 1989 until its closure in the spring of 2000. A new course in the community of Forest Lawn opened in the summer of 2000. The closure of the Pearce Estate Park course will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.

4.3 Growth in Disc Golf Participation

There are several means by which people have been introduced to the activity of disc golf. The 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey revealed three methods by which people became involved in the activity. They either started by playing Ultimate, were introduced by

¹ Roland Provost, Maintenance Crew Leader Rundle Park East Side, interview by author, Edmonton, Alberta, 5 October 2001.

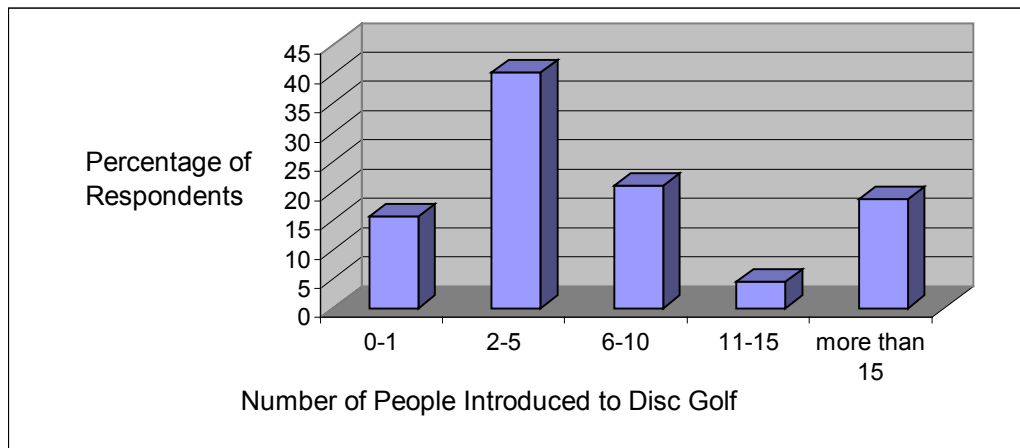
² The Alberta Disc Golf Page, <http://members.shaw.ca/discgolf/>; accessed 3 December 2001.

people who play disc golf, or saw disc golf being played while walking in a park that had a course.

4.3.1 Grass-roots development and social networks

Over three-quarters of survey respondents said that they had taken up the activity because friends had introduced them to it. The player survey revealed that many respondents often introduce new players to the activity; forty-four percent of those surveyed said that they had introduced more than six new players to the activity.

Figure 4.C Players Introduced to Disc Golf



This finding indicates a very simple and organic pattern of growth that is supported by the social networks of the participants. Growth by word of mouth or through friends demonstrates the activity has not yet been heavily institutionalized and is characteristic of an emerging form of recreation. The activity does not have a huge association that supports its development – up until last year the PDGA was run out of a person’s basement.

4.3.2 Emergence and Awareness of Disc Sports: Ultimate Leads the Way.

Some of the development of disc golf can be attributed to growing awareness and interest in other disc sports. Disc sports are considered to be any sports or games that are played using a Frisbee or flying disc. They include: *Double Disc Court*, *Guts*, *Discathalon*, *Maximum Time Aloft (MTA)*, and *Ultimate*.

Double Disc Court (DDC): is a little like tennis with flying discs. There are two players on each team and two discs in play. The teams stand in square courts of about 13m a side, separated by 17m and throw the discs at each other. The aim is to catch the other team holding both discs at the same time (two points). A team also scores a point if the other side drops one of the discs, or throws a disc which lands outside the square that they are throwing into. Scoring is cumulative, to a maximum of two per rally. Games are usually played to 15 or 21 points.³

Guts is played by two teams of 5 players. They stand on lines 14m apart. One team throws the disc at the other team and the players on the other team try to catch the disc, with one hand. A dropped disc scores one point for the throwing team. Throws must be within reach of the catching team or one point is scored for the receiving team. Games are usually to 15 points.⁴

Discathalon is a competition that combines the accuracy needed in disc golf with the aerobic qualities of ultimate. Competitors throw discs around a very specific course which includes many mandatory flight paths. The objective is to complete the course in the fastest time. Most competitors carry several discs, throwing one disc at a time while picking up others on the run.⁵

The objective of *Maximum Time Aloft* is to keep the disc in the air for the longest time possible. Time is recorded from when the competitor releases the disc to when the thrower touches it again. Catches must be made cleanly with one hand for the time to be scored.⁶

³ Australian Flying Disc Association, "Other Disc Sports," www.afda.com/discsports/other_disc_sports.htm#ddc.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Ultimate is played by two teams of seven players each. The object of the game is for a team to pass the disc from player to player, up the field, and catch the disc in the opposing team's end-zone. Players cannot run with the disc. After catching the disc they must stop running and must plant a pivot foot (as in basketball). The movement of the disc continues when they throw the disc to another team-mate further up field.

The game is non-contact and is played without referees. Instead, each player does his best to make an honest call on fouls during the play, and trust the calls of his fellow players.

The game functions under the assumption that nobody in Ultimate would try to cheat.

This is referred to as the "The Spirit of the Game."⁷

Recent growth in disc sports has been led with dramatic growth observed in Ultimate. This activity has grown in Calgary from a small league with a handful of teams at the beginning of the 1990s, to a sport with two leagues of more than 50 teams each. In both cases the teams have approximately 12 players per team. The Calgary Ultimate League was the first league for Ultimate in Calgary. Data available for the past four years show substantial growth in league participation.

Figure 4.D Teams in Calgary Ultimate League

Year	Number of Teams in league
1998	18
1999	36
2000	51
2001	68

Source: Calgary Ultimate League⁸

The Calgary Sport and Social Club has seen its Ultimate league grow to 54 teams of approximately ten players per team in six years. Growth in this league has been sustained at the rate of approximately ten new teams per year.⁹

Growth and interest in other disc sports is relevant to disc golf because there appears to be a correlation between involvement in one activity and participation in another. The

⁷ Ottawa Carleton Ultimate Association, "What is Ultimate?" from www.ocua.ca, accessed 20 May 2002.

⁸ Brent Perkins, League Coordinator, email to author, 5 December 2001.

⁹ Rob Gillespie, Director of Calgary Sport and Social Club, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 4 September 2001.

2001 Disc Golf Player Survey (see Appendix) showed that 11.5% of surveyed golfers had gained their introduction to disc golf by first playing Ultimate. The correlation between these activities can be attributed to the same basic nature of the necessary equipment. As well, people find it easy to participate in both activities because many of the throwing techniques are interchangeable. Therefore, people do not need to learn a new set of techniques entirely; they just have to learn the variations on the theme of throwing the disc. With continued growth in Ultimate leagues, it can be reasonably expected that there will be continued crossover to Disc Golf and a continued growth pattern in its near future.

4.3.3 The Alberta Seniors' Games

In 1996 the Alberta Seniors' Games made disc golf one of their official sports. The objectives of the Seniors' Games are to provide all seniors, regardless of age or ability, the opportunities:

1. To pursue greater levels of physical, social, intellectual and creative achievement through friendly competition and participation;
2. To enhance a sense of community spirit by bringing Albertans together.¹⁰

The inclusion of disc golf in the Seniors' Games is perhaps the most important factor in course development in the province. Every two years the Games are hosted in a new town, which is required to build a new disc golf facility to accommodate seniors' competition. Since 1996, there have been four courses built in various small towns and cities around the province. The courses built for the Seniors' Games are located in Lethbridge, Three Hills, Cardston and Olds. Though they comprise less than half of the total courses in the province, courses will continue to be constructed as long as the activity remains a component of the Games.

The sport was introduced to the Games for several reasons. The first reason was because there were some seniors in the Calgary area who had begun playing the game at Pearce Estate Park, and other who were playing in an informal way in parks with no official

¹⁰ Alberta Senior Citizens Sports and Recreation Association, www.cadvision.com/srsport/altasrgames.htm, accessed 5 December 2001.

layout (these are referred to as “object courses”). Second, the Seniors Sport organization had a mandate to provide “opportunities to develop equal opportunities for all seniors regardless of age, sex, ability, or handicap.”¹¹ It was thought that the activity matched the intent of this goal.

It appears, however, that interest among the seniors is not continuing to grow. In the first year that the activity was part of the Games, interest levels were supported by strong promotion across the province through information sessions and clinics. The first year showed the highest levels of participation in the qualifying process to compete for the 16 berths in the Games.¹² The following table shows the levels of participation in both qualifying competition and the Seniors’ Games.

Figure 4.E Disc Golf Participation in Alberta Seniors’ Games

Year	Participants in Qualifying Competitions	Seniors’ Games Participants
1996	82	16
1998	72	16
1999	62	16
2001	Data not yet available	15

Source: Alberta Senior Citizen’s Sport and Recreation Association, 2001.

The table shows that the participation in the activity has waned slightly since its introduction to the Games. These data might indicate that the first few years were a time when many people were just trying out the activity, and have since realized that they are more interested in other activities. As well, the table may indicate that information sessions and clinics must continue to be offered with the same regularity to ensure interest levels and participation do not continue to slide.

To the credit of the activity, distribution of the courses in small towns and cities throughout the province has provided the benefit of a tourism resource for the host communities. Courses have been often used as tournament facilities and destinations for

¹¹ Alberta Senior Citizens Sports and Recreation Association, www.cadvision.com/srsport/whatis.htm, accessed 10 December 2001.

¹² Ruth Becker, Alberta Seniors’ Games, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 10 December 2001.

travelling disc golfers in years subsequent to the Seniors' Games. For a small initial investment, disc golf courses have continued to bring golfers back to those communities. The 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey showed that Calgary disc golfers played predominantly at the Forest Lawn Disc Golf Course at the time of the survey. However, 69.4 % of survey responses indicated that they had played at the Canmore Nordic Centre; 26.1% indicated they had played in Fernie; while 17.2 % of those surveyed indicated that they also played at courses in Olds and Edmonton. (Note: the question asked which courses players usually play at and gave three spaces for response. Please see Appendix 1 for additional information.)

4.3.4 Population Growth

During the 1990s the Province of Alberta performed better economically than most of the other provinces in Canada. Between 1995 and 2000 the province had the highest rate of economic growth in the country along with the creation of 219,000 new jobs.¹³ These conditions of economic prosperity encouraged many to come to Alberta from other parts of the country. Population growth in Calgary over the 1990s provides the most telling example of the sustained population growth from in-migration. From 1990 to 2000 net migration to the city was 101,192.¹⁴ It is difficult to determine what result the prosperity and population growth in the Province has had on the development of disc golf; however, it is likely that there is some connection. When there are jobs available in an area that is prospering economically, many of those that come seeking employment are young people in search of opportunity. Many of these young people have come to Alberta in recent years from Ontario and British Columbia where there is more participation in disc sports generally, and disc golf in particular.¹⁵ Further surveys of disc golfers could ask players where and when they began playing to firmly determine the effects of population in-migration to the development of the activity in Alberta.

¹³ Government of Alberta, "Alberta's Economic Results," www.alberta-canada.com/economy/ecores.cfm , accessed 5 December 2001.

¹⁴ City of Calgary, City of Calgary Census 2000 (Calgary: City Clerks Department, 2000), 1.

¹⁵ Ottawa Carleton Ultimate Association, <http://www.ocua.ca> ; accessed 6 May 2002.

4.4 Disc Golf in Public Parks

Disc golf has functioned well as a component of multi-use parks. There are often other activities like dog walking, cycling, jogging, bird watching, and picnicking that also take place in parks with disc golf facilities. However, there are two fronts upon which the activity's place in public parks has been challenged. There have been concerns for public safety and the potential for environmental disturbance.

4.4.1 Public Safety

Public safety is often a concern of many stakeholders when discussion begins of disc golf course installation. Research has not yielded any significant descriptions of injury due to being hit with a flying disc. However, there is one report of a couple of accidental hits at Showa Park in Japan. While no one was injured, rules were instituted at the park to limit disc weight to 150 grams.¹⁶ No similar incidents have been noted in any of the literature as having taken place in North America.

Disc golf is often noted as having a positive effect on public safety in public parks. The first course was installed in Oak Grove Park, Pasadena, California. Oak Grove Park was very close to several schools and universities and had become a familiar place for youth to get high. Hedrick writes:

“[the park] had degenerated into a drug store... The small town of La Cañada was a bedroom community with several thousand children, young adults and scientists that worked at J.P.L.[Jet Propulsion Laboratory], yet had no place to enjoy healthy recreation. Oak Grove Park was the headquarters for recreational drug use among the students with drugs being distributed out of the backs of cars. It was so bad that the Sheriff's Department wouldn't go into the park on Saturday or Sunday.”¹⁷

The park went on to become more usable because of the constant flow of disc golf players through the site. Many other parks have been locations for undesirable and illegal behaviour until disc golf began to erode the privacy required for those sorts of

¹⁶ Disc Golf Association, “Why 150,” available at www.discgolfassoc.com/news-why150.html, accessed 6 May 2002.

¹⁷ Ibid.

activities.¹⁸ Recreation authorities in Richmond, Virginia report that disc golf play has transformed a park from “an unsafe area where drug deals were commonplace to a rich recreation area...as utilization of the park increases, crime decreases.”¹⁹ This same scenario has taken place in many other park locations throughout North America along with Pearce Estate Park and Centenary Parks in Calgary.

4.4.2 Environmental Impacts or Disturbance

Figure 4.F, 4.G Example of Environmental Disturbance from Erosion & Mitigation Measure



Photos: Hugo Haley

Environmental impact or disturbance is defined by Forman as an event that significantly alters the pattern or variation in the structure or function of an ecosystem. Function refers to the flow of mineral nutrients, water, energy and species, while structure is the distribution of energy, materials, and species in relation to the size, shapes, numbers, kinds and configurations of landscape elements.²⁰ Benson notes that disc golf courses change the function by adding opportunities for recreational use of a park

with minimal effect on park structure.²¹ These changes he notes can occur due to soil compaction and erosion. They are referred to as ‘minimal’ due to the ease with which

¹⁸ Chris Tuten and Carol Conkell, “Disc Golf: A Lifetime Activity,” *Strategies*, March-April 1999, 21.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ R.T.T. Forman, *Land Mosaics* (1997), quoted in Jerome Edward Benson, II, “Toward a Valid Disc Golf Design Algorithm: Using landscape Ecology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to Assess Recreational Facilities’ Sites” (Master of Science Degree in Forestry Thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, May 2000).

²¹ Benson, 86.

they can be managed through thoughtful course design. Benson's approach to design is based on *landscape ecology* that yields engaging and harmonious course designs that protect the structure of the park environment.²²

While course design can be managed to have minimal disturbance on the ecology of an area, the use that a site receives will also contribute to site disturbance. Stankey et al. note that "concentrated impact reflects the concentrated nature of a recreational use."²³ This perspective is echoed by the City of Calgary Natural Area Management Coordinator, Dave Elphinstone. Disc golf is not able to be defined as either 'good or bad' for the environment, but should be understood in light of all recreation activities having disturbances. The significance of these disturbances changes under different conditions of intensity and location with each requiring different management responses.²⁴

4.5 Course Closure, Controversy & Case Study Context

In 1989, permission was granted for a provisional course to be installed at Pearce Estate Park in southeast Calgary. William Pearce donated the site of his estate to the City of Calgary in the 1920s to be used as a park for the enjoyment of all Calgarians. Initially, the disc golf course in the park was promoted by some members of the Calgary disc sports community who had been involved with the disc sport of Ultimate.²⁵ Pearce Estate was the primary course for the Calgary area until its closure in the spring of 2000.

The course consisted of nine holes equipped with target baskets that were spread through the mature vegetation of the former estate. The course saw increasing amounts of use throughout its existence, though no formal studies of its usage patterns were undertaken.

²² *Landscape ecology* is defined by Forman as: the study of the structure, function, and change in a heterogeneous land area composed of interacting ecosystems.

²³ G.H. Stankey, R.C. Lucas, and D. Lime, "Crowding in Parks and Wilderness," *Design and Environment* 7, no.3 (1976): 38-41., quoted in Benson, 24.

²⁴ Dave Elphinstone, City of Calgary Natural Area Management Coordinator, interview with author, Calgary, Alberta, 11 October 2001.

²⁵ Ultimate is a disc sport that is played by two teams of 7 players on a field with similar dimensions to soccer. The objective is for team-mates to pass the disc between each other, while moving up the field. Catching a pass from a team-mate in the opponent's end zone scores points.

Anecdotal accounts have estimated the volume of play reached 30,000 annual uses by the late 1990s (Note: one use consisted of one completed round of the nine baskets). However, the course was never granted official status by the City of Calgary through a signed formal lease agreement.²⁶

Lease agreements formalize the relationships of regular recreational user groups and parks administrators. They outline the terms and conditions of facility use for a particular activity. These agreements provide clarity regarding the acceptable use of a facility, and provide security to the user group that they can continue their activity. This is an important component of the course history and development which will be examined later in this document.

The attempt to establish a replacement disc golf facility at West Confederation Park is the case examined in this MDP. Relocation of disc golf play from its location at Pearce Estate Park became necessary in the spring of 2000. The project proponents of an interpretive wetland for the site first presented this necessity. This document traces the failed facility relocation attempt, which faced vehement community opposition, and led to the eventual vandalism of the facility. Both of these factors persuaded the Parks Department and the local disc golf association to seek other more hospitable sites for the activity.

The conflict that marred the attempt at recreational facility planning and development in West Confederation Park involved several stakeholders. These included:

- officials from the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Calgary;
- members of the Alberta Disc Sports Association;
- the Triwood Community Association;
- and the Friends of West Confederation Park.

²⁶ Penny Remmer, Planner, City of Calgary Community Vitality and Protection, interview by author, Calgary Public Building, 7th floor, November 6, 2001

This case was, however, more complex than can be explained by cataloguing the tensions between one group and the goals of another (which will be discussed later in the document). Here the conflict has been framed in the context of the conditions and events which preceded it. This perspective provides the reader with a richer understanding of the events of the case, and a solid basis for the researcher from which to make recommendations for future recreation planning.

4.5.1 History of Pearce Estate Park Disc Golf Facility

Pearce Estate was dedicated to the City of Calgary for use as a park by the family of William Pearce, an early civic leader and engineer. The park became the site of the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery in 1973. The facility was designed to provide fish stock for the purpose of enhancing the recreational activity of sport fishing in the province. This location was selected for a fish hatchery mainly on the strength of the groundwater available at the site that is available at a low cost.²⁷ Pearce Estate Park was also a site for day use picnicking, and hosts the Bow River regional pathway along its northern edge. The Park became a disc golf facility in 1989. Prior to this change in use, for many years the park had remained a marginally used civic green space, which became a well known location of prostitution, drug use and trafficking informally known as ‘needle park.’ The increased park activity following the installation of the disc golf course had made a significant difference in the amount of ‘undesirable’ behaviour in the park. Park planner, Michael Kenny, makes the following comment regarding the impact that disc golf has had on the prevalence of undesirable behaviour in Calgary parks:

“It’s good to see the parks being used. Occasionally parks are being used for things that they weren’t designed for. The presence of disc golfers helps us achieve some sort of monitoring, they can help us – they are our eyes in the field – we get feed back [from them] and then we can try and mitigate some of those activities.”²⁸

²⁷ Reid Crowther and Partners, Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland Design and Development Plan (Calgary: Reid Crowther and Partners Ltd. 1999), 3.

²⁸ Michael Kenny, City of Calgary Superintendent of Parks Planning: South Area, telephone interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 14 September, 2001.

Some examples of undesirable behaviour in Calgary parks include: drug use and trafficking, prostitution, vandalism and littering.

4.5.2 Policy Context

The Urban Parks Master Plan (UPMP) is the major policy document in place to guide the use of Pearce Estate Park, and many other city parks. Beginning in 1989, the plan was developed over a five-year period to provide a “comprehensive document that looks systematically at the entire river valley system.”²⁹ The language of the UPMP will be examined in this section to demonstrate its lack of precision. This ambiguity only exacerbated the opportunity for stakeholders in Pearce Estate Park to become adversarial and polarized, ultimately leaving issues unresolved.

The plan designated most of Pearce Estate Park for ‘naturalization’ because of its importance as a staging area for wildlife.³⁰ The plan defines naturalization as “a reclamation technique that uses native species, indigenous to that specific site, that are naturally sustainable, implying minimum maintenance, once well established.”³¹ The plan provides for three park types to be included in the river valley:

Manicured – designed as the traditional high-maintenance groomed park, for areas that will be used intensively for such activities such as outdoor sports, picnicking, holding festivals and other gatherings where large numbers of park users are anticipated.

Naturalized – designed to rehabilitate previously disturbed areas for less intensive park use; to create a more natural appearance through the reestablishment of native vegetation, and to reduce long-term maintenance requirements.

Preservation – designed to provide protection and maintenance of currently undisturbed natural areas and enhancement of existing natural features. Human access to these areas would be limited.³²

²⁹ Urban Parks Master Plan – Citizen Advisory Committee, Urban Parks Master Plan (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1994), 3.

³⁰ Ibid., 74.

³¹ Ibid., glossary of terms.

³² Ibid., 27.

Though these descriptors denote the general features of the park types, the functions of the parks are clearly stated in only two of the three descriptions. The function and intensity of use in ‘manicured’ and ‘preservation’ parks is clearly defined, though these elements remain unclear in the definition of ‘naturalized’ park land. This ambiguity about function and intensity in the definition has led to confusion and contention regarding what uses could and should be accommodated within a ‘naturalized’ setting at Pearce Estate Park. To add to the confusion, active and passive uses were not defined in the UPMP. Disc golfers believed they were participants in a passive activity because the primary components were walking and throwing a flying disc, both activities that have a low intensity.³³ Other Pearce Estate Park stakeholders challenged this position on the grounds that disc golf was a high intensity activity based on the number of people who used the Pearce Estate site.³⁴ This had been estimated at 30 000 recreational uses per year.

4.5.3 Pearce Estate Interpretive Wetland: Competing Agendas and Conflict

The members of the disc golf community and the planners of the Pearce Estate Design Development Plan (PEDDP) interpreted the meaning of the “naturalized park” definition differently. The PEDDP planners indicated that disc golf was in conflict with the UPMP at the Pearce Estate location.³⁵ Disc golf proponents who participated in the public consultation process of the UPMP believed the activity was consistent with many of the vision statements of the plan. In particular, disc golfers believed their activity was compatible with Principle Three of the UPMP vision, which states that “the primary use of the river valley system will be for passive, low intensity, informal, unstructured activities.”³⁶ The Alberta Disc Sports Association claimed disc golf is consistent with

³³ Tanya Trimble, Presentation Notes, Commissioner’s Report of the SPC on Community and Protective Services CPS99-47 (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1999), appendix 4.

³⁴ Bill Morrison, Chair, Land Use and Development Sub-Committee, Calgary River Valleys Committee, Letter to Alderman Joanne Kerr, 20 July 1999.

³⁵ Reid Crowther and Partners, Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland – proposed design development plan handout for community meeting (Calgary: Reid Crowther and Partners Ltd. May 1999)

³⁶ Urban Parks Master Plan – Citizen Advisory Committee, 12.

principles number 6, 11, 14, 17 of the UPMP (see Appendix 3 for vision principles of the UPMP).³⁷

The designers of the PEDDP interpreted “naturalization” to be compatible with the project. This plan was presented by its proponents as being directly relevant to seven of the eighteen principles of the UPMP vision statement, and consistent with the proposed improvements for the park cited in the UPMP. These improvements included the ‘naturalization’ of the riverbank and the Pearce Estate Landscapes.³⁸ ‘Naturalization’ within the scope of the PEDDP included the construction of a complex of streams and marsh features that would treat the aquaculture discharge from the fish hatchery, provide outdoor opportunities for interpretation and teaching of ecological processes, and encourage the regeneration of natural and diverse environments.³⁹ The plan would produce a “...condensed collection of habitats [that] will provide the opportunity to interpret virtually all the common stream and wetland ecologies of small streams in the southern Foothills region.”⁴⁰ However, it can be argued that this plan fails to restore a previously disturbed environment through vegetation native to the site (as per UPMP guidelines for naturalization). The plan actually requires the further disturbance of the site with heavy equipment to prepare the introduction of “eco-technology areas and demonstration habitats... [that] will require the use of plants that are not indigenous to this immediate reach of the Bow River [to] create... a variety of habitats that would not normally occur on this site.”⁴¹

While the language of the plan allowed for diverse interpretation of important definitions, it led to frustration for both sides, who genuinely believed that the UPMP supported their position on the use of the park. These frustrations came to a head at the public open house to present the Pearce Estate Interpretive Wetland on May 26, 1999. The open house was

³⁷ Tanya Trimble, 1999.

³⁸ Reid Crowther and Partners, 4 -5.

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁴¹ Reid Crowther & Partners, 14.

designed to gather input on the proposed Design Development Plan. However, this event became a forum where the proponents and opponents aired competing positions, with the overwhelming opinion expressing a call to maintain the disc golf facility. Support for disc golf was expressed 51 times in the summary of public comments, while support for removal of the activity was mentioned by the public 14 times.⁴² Other comments praised the plan, but called for alternative design scenarios to be developed that would accommodate disc golf. It was also noted that there was no involvement of the disc golfers in the wetland design process (though this would have been unlikely since the plan called for complete relocation of the activity). Other concerns mentioned related to the security issues, cost of the project, and removal of the beach volleyball facilities.

It appears that there was no desire from the designers of the park to alter their development plans for the wetland to incorporate the existing disc golf use. Many of the examples of public comment reflected a desire for the new design of the park to incorporate disc golf through a design that was cooperative; however, it appears that the project designers lacked the will to achieve this sort of solution. This is reflected in the statements in the original Design Development Plan that disc golf was just a temporary activity in the park and that it would “not work well” with the proposed plan.⁴³ The likely reason no cooperative solutions came forward was because discussions between wetland proponents and disc golfers had become quite polarized following the public meeting, and potential for productive working relationships had been poisoned.

An atmosphere of distrust in the process began to emerge as the development plan moved closer to the political level and its final decision before City Council. The River Valleys Committee (RVC) sent a letter to Alderman Joanne Kerr in July of 1999 that forcefully objected to playing disc golf at Pearce Estate Park (see Appendix 6). The disc golfers felt that the RVC, which was to advise City Council on river valley issues, had become an

⁴² Linda Stewart Public Consultation Services, “Record of Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland Proposal Public May 26 1999 Open House,” (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1999).

⁴³ Reid Crowther & Partners, 8.

instrument of the wetland designers. Disc golfers questioned the impartiality of the RVC to support the PEPDD because its chairman was also the lead designer of the interpretive wetland from the firm of Reid Crowther.⁴⁴ Even without firm substantiation of influence being exerted over the citizens' committee, its appearance left the possibility of a cooperative solution more remote, and compromised confidence in due process.

4.5.4 Council Direction and Failed Implementation

The dynamics of the situation had been calmed slightly through the Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community and Protective Services decision of July 21, 1999. The SPC found that the wetland project should be approved in principle, but that a contract/lease agreement should be brokered with the Alberta Disc Sports Association (representing disc golfers) to allow for continued use of the park over the medium term(see Appendix 4).⁴⁵ Nevertheless, this directive from the Council Committee was never enacted, while construction of the wetland did begin at Pearce Estate Park. This led to further frustration among disc golf players and advocates accompanied by feelings that they had been disregarded.

There were several reasons for the failed implementation of the directives of the SPC. It became apparent that there were several processes being pursued within the Parks Department. The public consultation consultant involved in the open houses indicated the Parks Department had problems coordinating management of both projects: the development of the interpretive wetland, and the accommodation of disc golf until alternative sites were found.⁴⁶ The lack of project coordination within the City structure is thought to result from City involvement in the wetland project being managed through the office of the City Naturalist, while the task of finding an alternative disc golf location

⁴⁴ Craig Burrows-Johnson, Alberta Disc Sports Association, interview with author, Calgary, Alberta, 2 March 2001.

⁴⁵ City of Calgary, "Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland: Alberta Disc Sports Association Agreement with Alberta Environment and the City of Calgary for Pearce Estate Park," Commissioner's Report of the SPC on Community and Protective Services CPS99-47 (Calgary: City of Calgary, 1999), attachment 2.

⁴⁶ Linda Stewart, Public Participation Consultant, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 1 November 2001.

was managed by other planners in Calgary Park Development and Operations and Recreation.⁴⁷ As such, issues of coordinated intervention were not well managed.

Lack of coordinated planning to enact the recommendations of the SPC is one of the factors which contributed most heavily to the difficulties in developing an alternative disc golf site at West Confederation Park. During this process, significant pressures were placed on the Parks Department planners and administrators to manage the redevelopment imperative within the scope of a smooth transition to an alternative site for disc golf. This lack of coordinated planning can be understood as the basis for allowing the rushed removal of the course at Pearce Estate Park before the replacement site could be properly given a trial run, and initial community concerns could be dealt with.

While negotiations were proceeding with the community associations to approve identified alternative sites, pressure was building to have disc golf removed from the Pearce Estate location. Michael Kenney, Park Development Planner for North Area of Calgary, said that there was firm direction from Council to find alternative sites prior to the removal of the activity, but that there was also concern coming from inside his department that continued play at the site was not compatible with the construction of the interpretive wetland; safety concerns were mentioned.⁴⁸ It remains unclear, however, why development of the interpretive wetland was proceeding so quickly before alternative sites for disc golf could be properly piloted and implemented.

4.5.5 Money and Influence do the Planning

Why was there pressure to develop the wetland quickly and move disc golf out? One possible reason could be that money provided by the provincial government was funding the project. Often when governments have money to spend on projects, it must be spent within certain timeframes to comply with funding guidelines. Institutional time frames do

⁴⁷ Don Patrician, City of Calgary Non-traditional Sport Coordinator, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 13 November 2001.

⁴⁸ Michael Kenney.

not always match the time needed to deal with human or community issues – in this case, the key issue was determining suitable replacement sites for the Pearce Estate disc golf facility.

However, the more likely source of pressure for the rapid ousting of disc golf from Pearce Estate Park came from the agendas of the corporate sponsor of the Wetland Development, BP Amoco. A volunteer day at the site of the sponsored project was planned to coincide with their annual world corporate conference. This event required that the facility be entirely available for the BP event.

The event took place on Wednesday July 19, 2000, at Pearce Estate Park with over 650 volunteers participating (made up mostly of BP Amoco employees and shareholders). The volunteers landscaped the 14 sections of the new coldwater stream by spreading 550 tonnes of topsoil, planting 3800 aquatic plants, and building a footbridge. This work was completed in one day because the site had been prepared for the event by the placement of the soil and the plants throughout the site. The day culminated with the ‘official valve opening’ to start the water flowing down the newly landscaped stream and the beginning of the BP Amoco Torch Classic – the largest intra-company athletic event in the world.⁴⁹ This event had been in the planning stages for over two years. The volunteer effort was coordinated jointly by BP Amoco, Alberta Environment and the City of Calgary to create a plan to mobilize people, sponsors and equipment to ready the first phase of the project.⁵⁰ It should be noted that BP donated \$135,000 in cash and in-kind resources to the wetland project.⁵¹

What was not mentioned in any of the promotional material put out by the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery (Alberta Environment) or BP Amoco was that for the events to

⁴⁹ Barb Ainslie, “Pearce Estate Volunteer Day a Huge Success” Partners in Preservation: a volunteer newsletter, issue no.4 (fall 2000), 5 ; available from www3.gov.ab.ca/env/parks/volunteer/newsletter_fall2000.pdf , accessed 11 December 2001.

⁵⁰ “Leadership Awards- BP Energy Canada Silver Winner Introduction to the Organization,”

www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/programs/pro_BP.html, accessed 11 December 2001.

⁵¹ Ibid.

take place, the site had to be free of disc golf. The removal of the target baskets from Pearce Estate occurred upon 24 hours notice during the first week in June, 2000. A planner with Park Development and Operations confirmed that the rapid removal of the target baskets was prompted by the desire for BP Amoco to use the site for its annual volunteer event that coincided with its corporate agenda.⁵² This corporate agenda was not synchronized with the process required by Council to find alternative sites for disc golf prior to the closure of the facility at Pearce Estate. The result was that a trial course in West Confederation Park became the only official site for play in the city. This situation was complicated by the fact that the trial course was to be installed within a community that was showing significant opposition to the activity. It would therefore require specific management and negotiation to ensure the trial courses' success.

4.5.6 Effect on the Disc Golf Users

The closure of the course at Pearce Estate Park displaced an entire recreational community prior to the permanent establishment of an alternative site. Following this closure, the entire playing population found themselves in a very uncertain and tenuous position on being able to continue to play disc golf in Calgary.

The Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey found that the results of the course closure at Pearce Estate had some profound effects on the user group. The survey found that 24.5 percent of respondents felt a sense of frustration, loss or disappointment because of closed courses. Also, several active members of the disc golf community had participated in the development of the UPMP.⁵³ They felt that they had been betrayed by the process following the closure of Pearce Estate. These were particularly frustrating events because they had to surrender the only facility in the city based on an unclear, inconsistent, or incorrect interpretation of planning material which they had helped to develop. Even though there was clear direction from Council to accommodate use of the

⁵² Penny Remmer, Planner, City of Calgary Parks and Recreation, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 6 November 2001.

⁵³ Burrows-Johnson, interview.

site in the short to medium term for disc golf, the accommodation was unilaterally ended. These circumstances set the stage for the struggle at West Confederation Park.

5 Recreation Conflict at West Confederation Park

5.0 Introduction

The introduction of a trial disc golf course at West Confederation Park resulted from efforts of the City of Calgary Parks Department and local representatives of the Alberta Disc Sports Association (ADSA). This trial course was eventually unsuccessful because a local grassroots movement developed to oppose the installation of the facility. Opposition to the course developed into a serious conflict between community members and course proponents, which took on a very public and eventually destructive form.

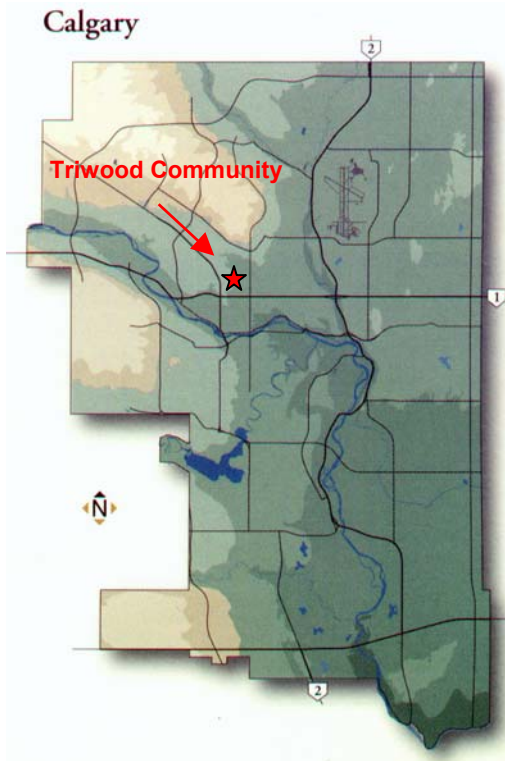
Chapter 4 introduced the recreational activity context that influenced the events explored in this case study. The events that made up the case of conflict between recreation interests at West Confederation Park are traced in this section of the document. A description of the stakeholders is presented along with their positions and goals related to facility development or opposition. Information in this chapter was gathered from a number of sources: planners with the Calgary Parks and Recreation Business Unit, politicians, private consultants, community activists, members of the disc golf community, the public record and print media.

This chapter will also present information supporting a perspective that all parties involved in the conflict over park usage at West Confederation Park contributed to the eventual outcome of the dispute. This perspective also argues that the unfortunate events of the case were not the responsibility or fault of one group, but resulted from several actors' conflicting perspectives, issues and actions.

5.1 Site Context

The purpose of this section is to describe the study area and its existing conditions at the time of the conflict. This information should provide the reader with information to better understand and interpret the events of the case.

Figure 5.A Location of Triwood Community



Source: City of Calgary

The Triwood community is located at the base of Nose Hill between 14 Street N.W. and the community of Brentwood. This area became part of Calgary during the City's 1910 annexation. Development of Triwood began around 1959 with construction of single family detached housing in what now make up the communities of Charleswood & Collingwood. The site analysis includes information on the following elements:

- population demographics and diversity,
- housing types and tenure,
- personal incomes and education,
- recreational facilities in the area.

This information will contribute to understanding the case. All of the information in the following section comes from the website:

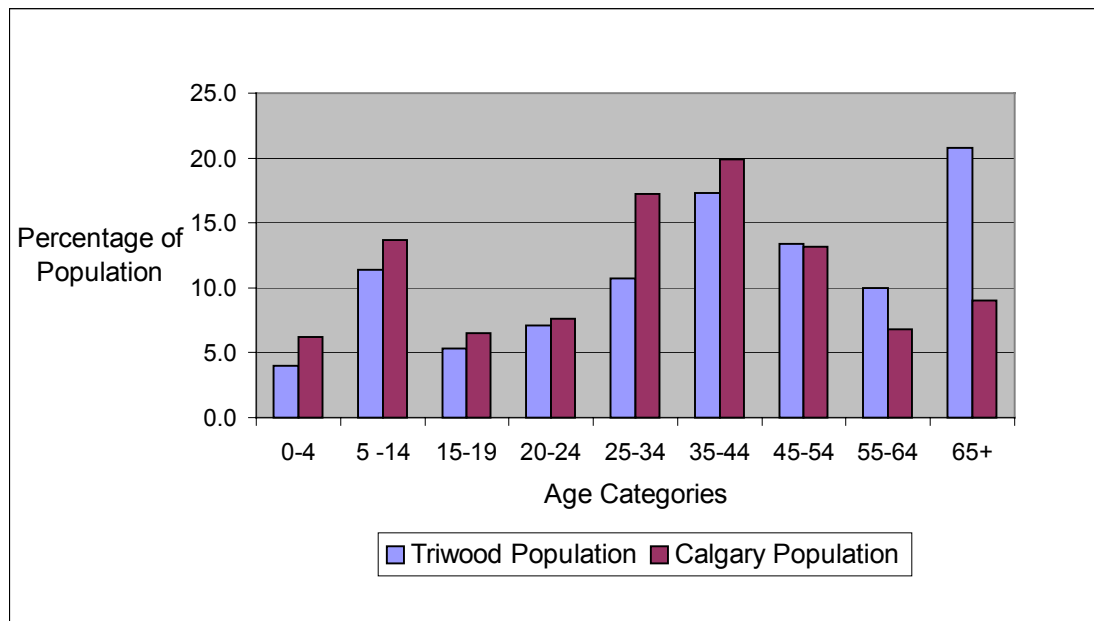
<http://www.gov.calgary.ab.ca/community/my/profile/tri.html>, accessed 6 February 2002.

All this information is from the Statistics Canada Censuses of 1991 and 1996.

5.1.1 Population Demographics

The population of Triwood in 2000 was 6035 people. This reflects a population growth of 11.8 percent from 1996, which is slightly less than the 12.2 percent growth rate of Calgary during the same period.

Figure 5.B Triwood Age Distribution (1996)



Understanding the distribution of the community population by age is important information for the purpose of this study. The above data show the population of Triwood is quite different than the city of Calgary in several important categories. The largest differences between the community averages and the general profile of the city population are in the 25-34 age cohort and the 65+ age cohort.

The difference between the Triwood and the Calgary population profile is most noticeable in the 65+ age cohort where the difference is 11.8 percent. The community profile indicates that 20.8 percent of its residents are seniors, while the figure shows that 11.8 percent more senior citizens live in Triwood than in the rest of the city. There was also a significant difference in the 55-64 age cohort between the city wide percentages and the figures for the community. These figures are significant to the case analysis because seniors are often more reluctant to welcome change.¹ The alteration in the use of an established park facility is an example of attitudinal change toward acceptable activities. This issue will be further explored in the Discussion section of the document.

¹ Penny Visser & Jon A. Krosnick, "Development of Attitude Strength Over the Life Cycle: Surge and Decline," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75, no.6 (1998): 1389 – 1410.

The 24-35 age cohort is another population segment where the difference is large between the community profile and the city-wide data. Calgary has 17.2 percent of its population in this category, while Triwood only has 10.7 percent – a difference of 6.5 percent. The Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey showed that the predominant age group of disc golf players in Calgary was between 25 and 34 (see Appendix 1). The Triwood community had far fewer members of this age group than the city wide percentages. This factor might have contributed to the difficulty of integrating the new activity in the community. The population profiles also indicate that most users of a disc golf facility in Triwood would have initially come from outside the community. This was one of the concerns which was raised by the community opponents to the course.

By examining the predominant ages in the community in light of the Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey, we see that installation of a disc golf course in the Triwood community would not have fit with the demographics of the activity. This indication is based solely on the profile of the current user group rather than the participant profile that will develop as the sport matures and develops further (this is based on an assumption that current players will continue to play, while new people will take up the activity).

As well, the data indicate that there are a high number of elderly people in Triwood. While seniors have been active participants in disc golf, it will be shown in the next chapter that they are also more resistant to change in their environment and surroundings. This factor was not clearly planned for in the introduction of the trial course to the area.

The population of Triwood is also distinguished from the rest of the city by its levels of population diversity. Visible minorities in Triwood make up only 8.1 percent of the Calgary population, while that figure rises to 18.7 percent for the rest of the city. More broadly, the trends between 1991 and 1996 show the immigrant population increased from 20.9 to 21.7 percent of the city, while the figure fell in Triwood from 19.2 percent to 13.8 percent.

These figures show that the population in Triwood has become older and less diverse than the city of Calgary. These data might have implications for recreation planning that

requires a particular approach. More on this subject will be explored in the Discussion and Recommendations sections of the document.

5.1.2 Income and Employment

The income levels of the community are also shown to be higher in Triwood than in the rest of the city, though they seem to be falling at a faster rate. The data indicate that the median household income was higher in Triwood than in the rest of the city. The 1995 Census Canada data showed the median income for Triwood was \$49 664 and the civic median was \$45,777. However, it should be noted that while the median income was higher in Triwood than in the rest of the City, it fell between 1990 and 1995 at a much faster rate than the rest of the city: - 16.1 percent in Triwood, - 8.0 percent in Calgary. These figures indicate that the falling incomes in the area might be linked to the high (or rising) number of seniors. This trend indicates that recreation planning for people on more fixed incomes might develop in the future.

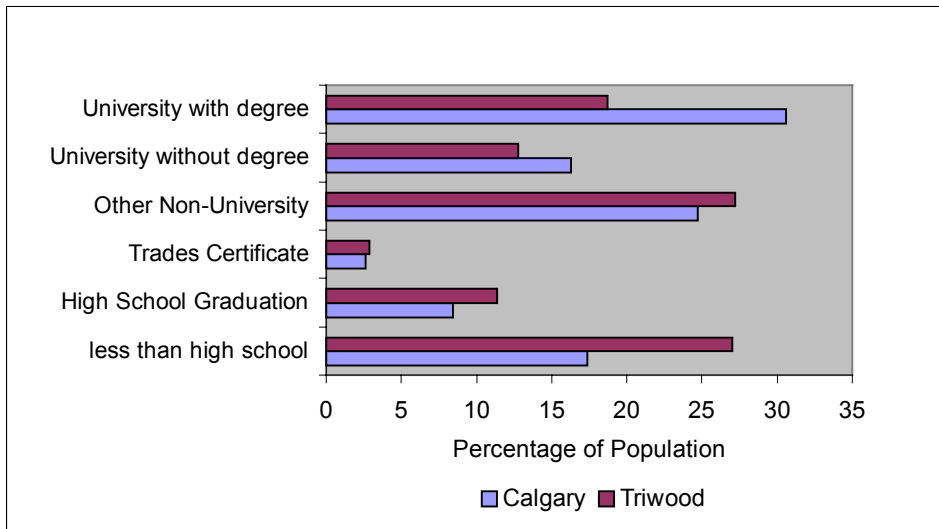
Employment of Triwood residents also changed between 1991 and 1996. Whereas the unemployment rate in the rest of the city declined from 7.2 percent to 5.6 percent between '91 and '96, unemployment in Triwood actually increased from 5.0 percent to 7.5 percent.

5.1.3 Education

The level of education is a significant social resource in a community. Education is important because it contributes to the ability of a community to communicate their concerns to either government or the media. More importantly, education has been linked to resistance to change. Visser & Krosnick argue that greater resistance to attitude change among the well educated is well documented.²

² Ibid., 1406.

Figure 5.C Community Population Education Level (ages15+)



Census Canada data indicate the level of education in Triwood is remarkably high compared to the rest of the city. University degrees were held by 30.6 percent of the Triwood population, while the city wide figures show only 18.7 percent of the population have achieved a similar level of education. It is believed that this factor influenced the ability of the residents to mount effective community based opposition and will be discussed later in the document.

5.1.3 Housing Types and Tenure

Housing types are an important characteristic of a community. They provide indicators of the population density of an area and provide clues about the amount of private open space that is available to residents. The data on dwelling type for the area display some interesting contrasts with data from the city. City wide data show that 57.6 percent of dwellings are single-detached houses, while in Triwood this dwelling type made up 75.3 percent of the total – a difference of 17.7 percent.

The tenure levels for the city and the community also show some significant differences. Tenure levels are an important indicator of the social character of a community. Owners make up the vast majority of the tenancy figures in Triwood with 75.3 percent of the total, while the data for the city show 64.3 percent, a difference of 11 percent. Owners are often more inclined to invest in their residences than renters. As well, owners are also more likely to be concerned about changes to the community environment than renters

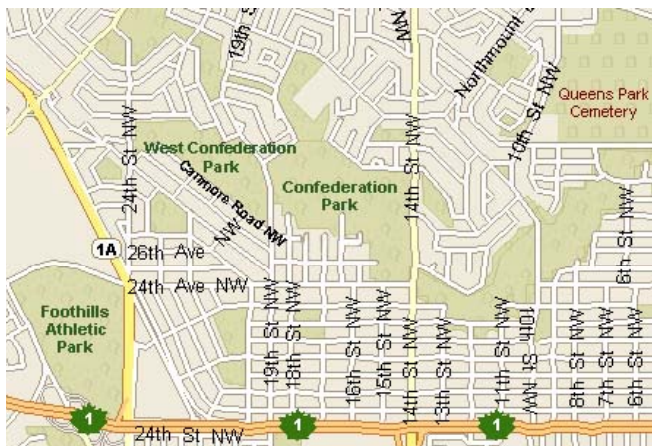
because these changes are often perceived to influence the value of their property investment.

5.1.4 Recreational Amenities

The gently rolling topography of Triwood provides views of the city and Nose Hill Park to the north. There is a significant amount of recreation space found within Triwood. The two largest areas of open space are Confederation Park and the city-owned Confederation Park Golf Course. Within the Confederation Park area, there are several ball diamonds, and a city bike path runs through the area. This area is open to the public at no charge to users. Confederation Park Golf Course operates from early May to September exclusively for ball golf and can be played by members of the public on a green fee or Calgary Parks and Recreation annual membership basis.

West Confederation Park

Figure 5.D West Confederation Park Location



Source: Navtech

West Confederation or Canmore Road Park covers 40 acres and makes up the western edge of Confederation Park. The park was created in 1967 to celebrate the Canadian Centennial. The city-wide bike path runs the length of the park as an east-west commuter route and also functions as a recreational trail

for walkers and cyclists alike. The Confederation Park Golf Course is adjacent to the eastern side of the park and borders 19th street. The park contains several tennis courts and a small wading pool that is used by children and families from May to September. These two uses make up the structured play areas in the park. The rest of the area is used for generally unstructured activities.

Figure 5.E, 5.F, 5.G Images of West Confederation Park



Photos: Hugo Haley

The park exists in its current form because of community resistance to development of an additional 9 holes of the Confederation Park Golf Course to the east. This development was opposed by community residents in the 1960s and resulted in the current West Confederation Park or Canmore Road Park, which includes a small forest feature and originally contained a small wetland at its northern edge.³ Originally, the park was conceived as a space for unstructured recreational activities.

The park is currently used for wading and tennis, along with walking, cycling, game playing, picnicking, and bird-watching. There is no conclusive perspective on how heavy the park usage is. Interviews with 3 community members indicated slightly different responses. Two of the residents believed that the park was only moderately used or the density of users was low, while the third resident commented that the

usage of the facility was quite extensive. It is more likely that the park is moderately used when compared to other parks in the city because the residential density (see 5.2.3) of the area is quite low.

³ Dale Jacobson, telephone interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 20 February 2002.

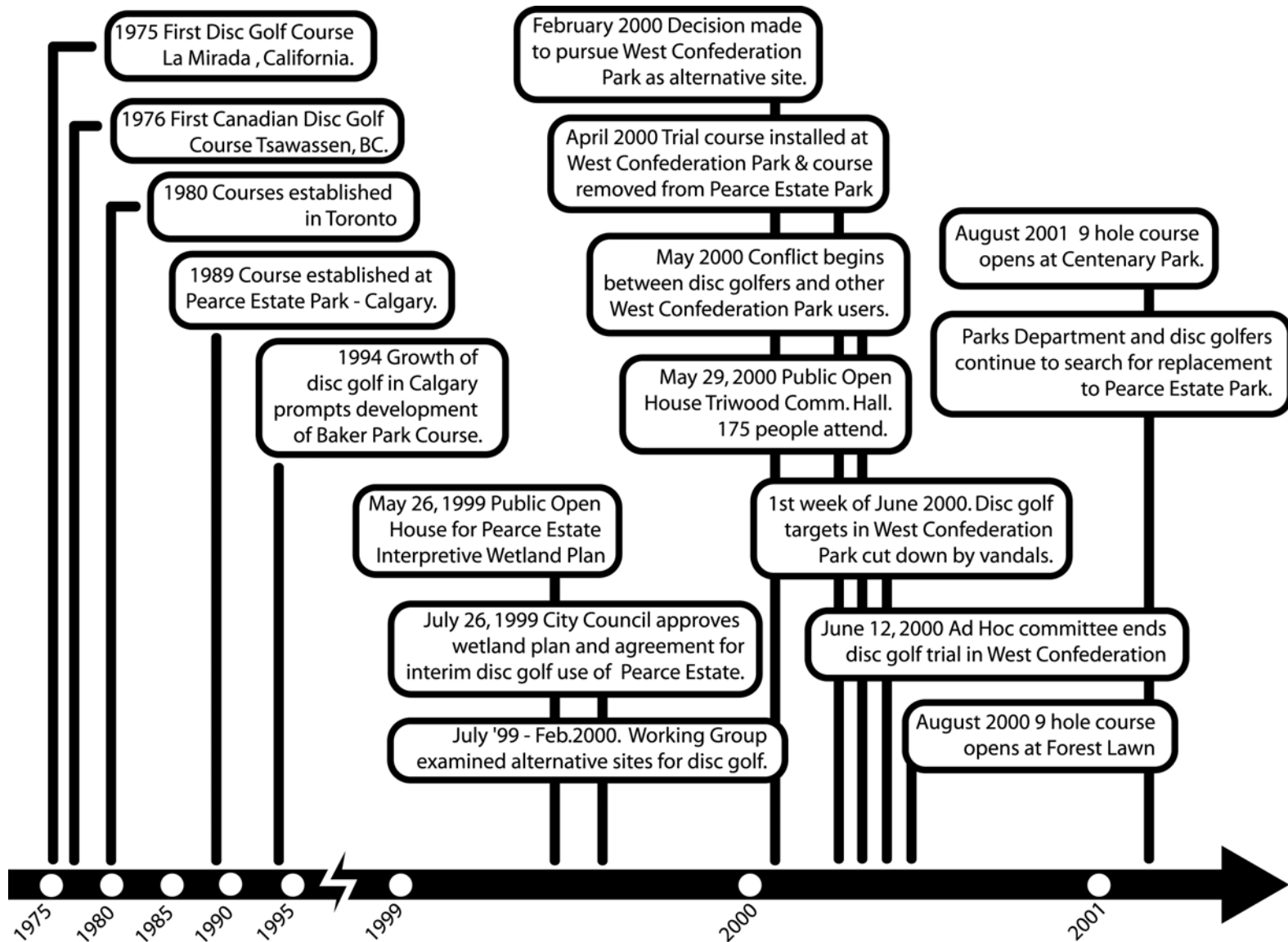
5.2 Disc Golf Development at West Confederation Park

The development of a pilot disc golf course responded to the need to find an alternative location for a competition grade, 18 hole course to replace the Pearce Estate Park course that was scheduled for re-development beginning in the summer of 2000. Alternative sites for disc golf were intended to take the pressure off Pearce Estate when construction would close some of the traditional playing area. The search for sites had to both satisfy the needs of the players and respect the policy positions of the parks department and environmental monitoring groups like the River Valleys Committee. All parties consulted at the time settled on West Confederation Park as the best location for a course in February of 2000.

However, this was not the first time that there was a proposal for a disc golf course in the park. West Confederation Park was proposed in 1994 as an alternative site for disc golf following the closure of the course at Baker Park in the NW of the city. This first attempt failed due to community opposition. The main rationale for selecting the site again in 2000 was that it was the only location that satisfied the rigorous criteria of the interested parties. The City and players realized that there might be some trouble gaining acceptance for the proposal from local residents, but thought their concerns could be mitigated through a well designed course layout.⁴

⁴ City of Calgary Park Development and Operations, "Report to the S.P.C. on Community and Protective Services- Attachment 1 Summary of Locations Investigated," 26 April 2002, 1 .

Figure 5.H Disc Golf Time Line



The above timeline shows the relationships among the development of the disc golf course at West Confederation Park and other pertinent milestones in the history of disc golf and its time in Calgary. The important element to note is that the new course was introduced to West Confederation Park at almost the same time as the historic course layout was removed from Pearce Estate Park. Though there was a smaller redesigned course that remained for a limited time at Pearce, it was not of the same calibre as the old course, or as challenging as the new site in West Confederation Park. Many disc golfers in the city did not play at Pearce following the removal of the historic course. Instead they travelled to play the ‘new’ course at West Confederation.

5.2.1 Public Involvement

Based on City policy for public involvement, the proposed course had to be approved by the local Community Association prior to its installation.¹ Contact with the Banff Trail Community Association had not revealed any concerns with the proposed course.² On January 17th, 2000, representatives of the Alberta Disc Sports Association (ADSA) gave a presentation to the Triwood Community Association where they requested permission to set up a disc golf course in West Confederation Park for a six-month trial period. The Triwood Community Association placed several conditions on their approval of the trial course:

- 1) ADSA was required to present a letter to the Triwood Trumpet (the community association news letter) to inform the residents of the area about the change of use in the park;
- 2) The residents of the community would be polled to evaluate the success of the activity in the park during the trial period. The result would be presented to the Community Association for their evaluation.³

In March 2000, a letter in the Triwood Trumpet from ADSA informed local citizens about the installation of the disc golf course in the park. There were no concerns

¹ Don Patrician.

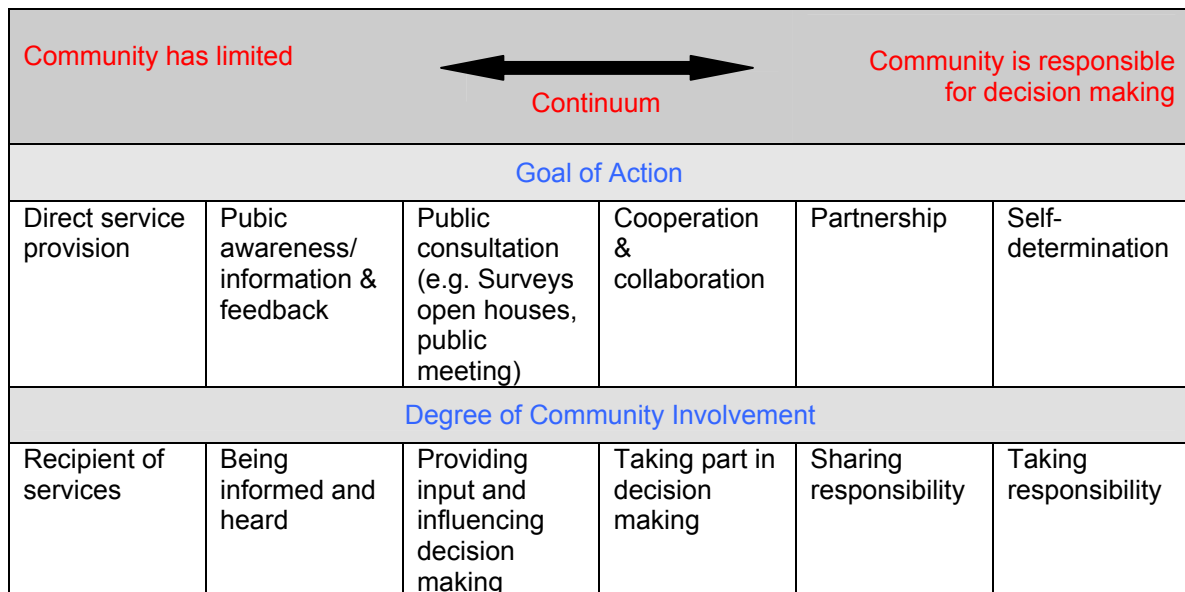
² Craig Burrows-Johnson.

³ Gail Yester, , “Disc Golf Controversy in Triwood,” Triwood Trumpet, October, 2000, Triwood Community Association, 6.

registered either for or against the introduction of the activity as a result of the posting in the community newspaper.⁴

The City of Calgary follows a “continuum of public participation” that outlines and explains community involvement in the development process. The purpose of the continuum is to make clear to communities their level of involvement in the planning process and their ability to influence it.

Figure 5.F City of Calgary Public Involvement Framework



Source: Working Together with Calgarians- A Community Development Framework for The City of Calgary⁵

Given the above continuum, it appears the public process used prior to the introduction of disc golf in West Confederation Park was targeted to achieve ‘public consultation’ (e.g., surveys, open houses, public meetings) with the purpose of gathering input that would influence decision making. This is what the presentation made by ADSA and the Parks Department to the Community Associations were supposed to achieve. In essence, the community had some influence on course development as previously noted, but there was no further collaboration between the community and the proponents (disc golfers and Parks Department) in the process of detailed course design and installation.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ City of Calgary, *Working Together with Calgarians- A Community Development Framework for The City of Calgary* (Calgary: The City of Calgary, 2000), 3.

The president of the Triwood Community Association noted that he was pleased with the process of involvement that his Board had gone through with the disc golf course proposal. The board had managed to influence the development of the course through the request of certain conditions, which he felt had all been satisfied. The President believed the disc golf proposal presented an interesting use for the park.⁶

In a change from the first proposal that was made for the park in 1994, the residents adjacent to the park were not directly consulted. While they would be the ones most affected by changes to the park, they were not given direct notification about the pilot disc golf course, nor was ADSA required to solicit support for the course from community members in the form of a petition. The decision for the 2000 proposal was made by the Community Association Board, which was only made up of a small group of residents, rather than the broad community.

5.2.2 Course Development and Design

The location for the course in West Confederation Park was selected after a committee was struck to examine alternative sites for disc golf prior to the reduction in play at Pearce Estate Park. There was to be cooperation between ADSA, Calgary Parks & Recreation, and the Calgary Parks Foundation to identify alternative sites for disc golf. Specific criteria were used by each group to evaluate sites. There were 16 sites evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

Park Development & Operations Criteria (PD&O):

1. minimal user conflict;
2. existing vegetation can withstand use;
3. adequate parking available;
4. supported by the River Valleys Committee where located within a river valley;
5. supported by adjacent Community Associations, where applicable.

Alberta Disc Golf [sic] Association (ADGA) criteria:

1. minimum of seven to nine acres in size;
2. variety of topography;
3. a variety of natural obstacles (mature trees etc.);

⁶ John Stiles, Past President: Triwood Community Association, telephone interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 4 March 2002.

4. minimum of one site that is wheelchair accessible;
5. manicured area preferred;
6. washrooms on site.⁷

Two sites were selected from this evaluation process that also had the support of the adjacent Community Associations. The two sites were: West Confederation Park and Forest Lawn Athletic Park located at 52nd Street and 14th Avenue SE. A preliminary course layout was planned in the early spring following the approval of the Community Associations.

Course planning for both sites took place with the assistance of PD&O staff to avoid high use and sensitive areas, and to minimize user conflict.⁸ At West Confederation Park, this process went on under the supervision of the office of the City Naturalist, Dave Elphinstone. With his guidance, design of the course was modified to keep activity away from areas in the park that were deemed to have sensitive vegetation. The course layout attempted to make use of the parts of the park that were not highly used. Approximately 60 percent of the park was used for disc golf course. The disc golf tees and targets did not preclude other uses from occurring in these areas. The following areas were not used for disc golf: surrounding the baseball diamond, the clubhouse and the wading pool, and the eastern section of the park between 19th street and the bike path.

Beyond some communication with the Banff Trail Community Association and the initial information meeting with the board of the Community Association in Triwood, the surrounding communities were not involved in any aspects of the facility design process. This indicates that there was little local experience or knowledge of the daily park use patterns that informed the design and integration of the new use.

5.3 Conflict Ignites at West Confederation Park

Within less than a month of the course being installed at West Confederation Park, tensions began to develop between disc golf players and community residents. Some

⁷ City of Calgary Community and Protective Services, 2-4.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

community members were concerned about safety, traffic and environmental protection. There were also allegations of disrespect, improper conduct, verbal abuse and vandalism made by both disc golfers and other park users. Quite quickly, the conflict took on political and public proportions as the Ward Alderman and the Mayor's Office were brought into the debate that was also being aired in local newspapers.

From its humble beginnings as the effort of a handful of people, the resistance to disc golf course installation in West Confederation Park became an issue with city wide notoriety. Many of the Calgarians that responded to the 2001 Disc Sports Phone Survey indicated they had learned about disc golf through the local media in which this story had been covered (see Appendix 2).

The escalation of the conflict to a destructive level was an unexpected and unfortunate element of these events. This destructiveness was demonstrated by the target posts of the disc golf course being repeatedly rubbed with faecal matter (presumably by community opponents), and eventually resulted in the target posts being cut down with a saw by a vandal (or vandals). ADSA agreed after this event to no longer pursue a facility in this location because of concerns over public safety.

When controversy develops there is often an attempt explain or to place the blame for the situation on one group. This assignment of responsibility is often made too quickly and without adequate reflection on the details of the case. The responsibility for much of this controversy has been levelled against the community residents holding a parochial and exclusionary attitude to a new activity in their midst. This has been called a NIMBY attitude. Nevertheless, to achieve a balanced interpretation of the events of the case, all stakeholders' positions and actions need to be evaluated. The following sections explain the positions and the actions of the stakeholders in this confrontation.

5.3.1 Resistance Roots in the Grass: Local Opposition to Disc Golf

Soon after the installation of the disc golf course at West Confederation Park, community resistance to the new facility began to mount. At first, the opposition took the form of posters around the park that announced the need to oppose the new disc golf use in the

park. The main organizers of this grassroots resistance movement were residents of a house that bordered on the park. They had a first hand view of how the change of use in their park was developing, though they were not familiar with the particulars of the disc golf activity.⁹

The posters put up on trees and notice boards in the park by the group were to inform local residents about the “potential areas of conflict between the present users and the Ultimate Frisbee users.”¹⁰ These ‘areas of conflict’ between the new users and neighbours were anticipated by the local residents for several reasons: walkers, joggers and children were not prepared for the possibility of being hit by flying discs in certain parts of the park; there would be increased traffic, parking congestion and noise around the park; and there would be increased use of the park by non-residents who were expected to not care as much for the local environment.¹¹ Additional concerns were raised that the target poles detracted from the aesthetic of the park and that long-time residents should not have to “make accommodations for a structured game which is not compatible with the mandate of the park.”¹² Most of these allegations were put forward without any significant knowledge of the game, its rules and etiquette, or understanding and discussion with members of the other recreational group.

“if people in this community wanted this game here they would have requested it, however the proposal came from outside the community. This is here on a trial basis for the first year. If you wish to **oppose Ultimate Frisbee in West Capital Hill Park** please do something to let your wishes be known...”¹³

Elements of the initial letter posted in the park show that the authors were uninformed about the nature of the activity that had been installed in the park and the rationale for its location there. The text of the poster also clearly indicates a strong tone of resistance to the new activity and the new park users. These attitudes are useful to the practitioner

⁹ Bill Stell, Triwood Community resident, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 11 October 2001.

¹⁰ Triwood Community Resident, letter to Neighbours, April 2000.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

because they indicate the gulf in terms of understanding that existed at the beginning of the conflict that might have been bridged with further outreach to the community.

Issues Important to the Community Resistance

Public Consultation

There were several key issues that appeared to motivate members of the movement opposed to disc golf in West Confederation Park. Interviews and correspondence revealed that local residents were inadequately consulted regarding the new use in the park.

One of the principals of the community resistance organization maintains that the installation of the course was a total surprise to the people living adjacent to the park: it was “imposed without consultation.”¹⁴ This concern referred to the allegedly ineffective consultation that took place prior to the course installation, which alerted very few community residents through the Community Association and an announcement in the local newsletter.

The assumption that the Community Association speaks for the entire community of users was wrong. As several speakers emphasised, the community does not own the park; it is the legitimate playground of all Calgary residents. Besides, only a small majority of community residents, generally those whose special interests such as hockey are served by the Community Association, belong to the Association or read this news letter. Who would expect that the Association is about to make an important decision affecting the lives of residents who are not members?¹⁵

The community member making this statement is clearly not satisfied with the process of community consultation that occurs in the city. Nevertheless it is important to note that he does not reflect in his argument that the association is also responsible for a great deal of other issues in their community role.

¹⁴ Bill Stell, 11 October 2001.

¹⁵ William K. Stell, letter to Alderman Bev Longstaff, 30 May 2000.

Many community members had not realized that the facility was being installed. This has been attributed to limited participation in the community association and limited readership of the community newspaper. The opposition group member also commented on the limited scope of the public involvement process. He traced the roots of this failure back to the British model of government that has – in his words – a strong tradition of bureaucratic authoritarianism. In such a political culture citizens are not encouraged to contribute to the process of government beyond periodic selection of representatives.¹⁶ Regardless of this comment being a defensible analysis of civic political culture, it reflects the perception by local residents of the City’s administration and its practices.

Safety of Park Users

Some community residents felt that there was danger from the use of flying discs in the park. Disc golf was quickly labelled a hazardous “projectile sport” by local opponents. The main concern was with the type of equipment used. The opponents claimed that the discs were far different from plastic Frisbees that were used for informal game playing on the beach or in parkland. Instead, opponents of the activity characterized disc golf as a projectile sport because the discs had weights of between 175 and 200 grams and were possibly life threatening if the leading edge made high velocity contact with anybody.¹⁷ It should be noted that nowhere in the course of this research has information been found where anyone was severely or permanently injured by a flying golf disc.

These perceptions were not pervasive in the area. One local resident noted that the levels of park use prior to the introduction of disc golf were only moderate and the activity was not all that disruptive. He noted in particular that often there was nobody in the park at all when he would go running through the area.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Dale Jacobson, 20 February 2002.

¹⁸ John Stiles, 4 March 2002.

Inter-Group Relations

Some of the resistance to the disc golf course was rooted in the perception of the new park users held by community members. Community members commented that the new user group was overwhelming the existing atmosphere of the park. “Young men were out of place [in the park]. They were loud, drinking beer, and expected folks to make way for them...they were the next thing to aliens from Mars.”¹⁹ Though the park is designated to be a regional park, the space had been traditionally used for walking and passive activities by community members. The arrival of other users was unexpected and shocking to some of the traditional users.

Reported behaviour of some new users was anathema to accepted norms in the park. There were reports of alcohol consumption and marijuana smoking in the park. There were also charges that disc golfers ‘took over’ the park and ordered other park users out of the way, conducting themselves with an aggressive sense of entitlement to the space.²⁰ It is not disputed that there might have been some examples of this sort of behaviour among disc golfers, but it should be recognized that similar behaviour occurs to some degree among many recreational groups including: dog walkers, hikers, softball, soccer and ball golf players.

Aggressive behaviour by some of the local residents was also reported. There were reports of residents deliberately standing in the course to block the target posts hoping to engage players in conflict. In another case, a member of the disc sports association was verbally abused while painting the targets posts during the installation of the course.²¹

Environmental issues

There were also certain environmental issues which dominated the evolving discourse of the resistance to disc golf in the park. In particular, there were concerns that disc golf would be detrimental to the bird populations that use the areas of dense vegetation in the

¹⁹ Bill Stell, 11 October 2001.

²⁰ Dale Jacobson, 20 February 2002.

²¹ John Stiles, 4 March 2002.

park. This area was apparently important to several species for nesting, and to others for migration in the spring and fall. Elderly people in the area were concerned that the bird watching that they liked to do would be jeopardized.²² Material from Park Development & Operations has only mentioned the area as important to a small bird of prey called the Merlin. This species usually nests in abandoned Magpie nests. As well, certain members of the organization were concerned that the only piece of ‘natural prairie’ that had survived since the time of the bison would be destroyed by the compaction from repeated foot traffic.²³

All of these environmental concerns contributed to resistance to the activity from the perspective that it would ‘destroy’ the ‘natural state’ of the park. However, the office of the City Naturalist, who was responsible for the City’s natural area management, said that these concerns could be managed through proper course design and buffering of sensitive areas from the new activity – that there could be integration of disc golf without damage to the park.²⁴ However, these responses to the negative allegations from concerned community members came too late in the debate when the sides had become politicised and polarized.

Actions and Strategy

The force of community resistance grew quite quickly to oppose the course. People are averse to change and bad news travels more quickly than good – these are certain keys to understanding resistance from community groups.²⁵ However, among PD&O there was little expectation of resistance from the community and it thus caught the proponents without a plan to deal with the opposition and controversy. They were unable to turn the tide of the opposition movement once it got going.

²² Dale Jacobsen.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dave Elphinstone, 11 October 2001.

²⁵ Linda Stewart, 1 November 2001.

Organizational Strategy

The tactics of the disc golf resistance were quite insightful and effective. They had a core group of participants that focused on several action items:

1. they mobilized support from other community residents and community groups;
2. they did research into the nature of the activity and the local association;
3. they focussed immediately on the political level to encourage policy change.

These tactics combined to form a strategy that bore quick results.

Within a few weeks of the installation of the disc golf course, a group of community residents organized to form a committee to deal with the issue. They focussed on getting together the names and phone numbers of neighbours who could contribute to the resistance. A communications strategy soon developed to focus on the political leaders at the municipal and provincial levels of government, then a letter writing campaign began to try and remove disc golf as a land use in the park. Most important was a petition to oppose the activity that circulated among neighbours.

Nevertheless, it seems there was a split within the organization. Interviews with members of the groups and review of their written material show that there were two very different positions of concern within the organization. On one hand, a position that the group had not been consulted adequately by the City administration regarding the installation of the disc golf course was central. The other more adversarial and confrontational position was that disc golfers were objectionable park users who were represented by an organization that was bent on misleading the Community Association and tricking them into accepting a 'dangerous' sporting facility.²⁶ It seems that both of these factions were working toward a common goal of having disc golf removed from the park, but their evaluations of the situation were quite different.

²⁶ See Appendix 5: Letter from member of Community Opposition.

Communications Strategy

A petition was started on both north and south sides of the park – in Triwood and Banff Trail Communities. The petition was said to have collected the names of approximately 500 community residents who were opposed to the disc golf course.²⁷ This figure has not been confirmed, and the record of comments at the May 29th, 2000 meeting reflected that only 250 signatures had been collected. Regardless of the number of signatures on the document, the petition was a tool that served both to raise awareness of disc golf issue and galvanize support behind the opposition movement.

The strategy also succeeded in broadening the scope of the resistance to disc golf by including other community members and groups in the movement. Disc golf opponents arranged for the principal of the local school to call for the removal of the activity based on an assessment that it was a dangerous activity. A letter from Marlene Nelson, Principal, École Banff Trail, to Bill Fraser, North Area Superintendent of Recreation, City of Calgary stated that the school had “significant concern” about the disc golf course in the park because the school playground borders on the west end of the park. The letter also stated that the school considers the park an “outdoor classroom” for lessons in science, art, physical education, etc.²⁸ In the letter she also questions why the school was not consulted before approval was given for “an aggressive sport such as disc golf.” She then goes on to request the immediate removal of the course:

“upon considerable reflection and research, in to the nature of this sport, I conclude that, should it become in fact a permanent fixture in this Park, we would simply need to discontinue our usage of this area . I would consider it too risky because of the hazardous, metal targets (tomes), cast-iron manhole tees, flying weighted discs, and the potential for injury to students, staff members and parent volunteers.” “I request the course be removed immediately by the parks’ crew and that all holes be filled. This type of sport requires sufficient space devoted to it so that the safety of unsuspecting park users would not be threatened.”²⁹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Marlene Nelson, Principal, École Banff Trail, letter to Bill Fraser, North Area Superintendent of Recreation, City of Calgary, 12 June 2000.

²⁹ Ibid.

The point raised in the above quotation about not consulting such an important adjacent user points to mistakes in the outreach and involvement strategy used prior to the course installation.

Much of the principal's letter uses the language and rationale of the letter written to Penny Remmer, Park Development Coordinator, by one of the more active members of the resistance to disc golf (who was also the Community Association representative to the school). This point is important because it reflects the ability of the group to influence other community organizations with their perspective. It should also be noted that physical education teachers from this particular school had contacted members of ADSA to provide disc golf instruction in the past.³⁰

One of the more successful public relations events in the opposition to disc golf came on June 7th 2000, when a member of the group questioned Mayor Al Duerr on a local open-line radio program. He asked the mayor if he supported 'projectile sports' being played in passive use areas of city parks. The caller characterized disc golf as a 'dangerous projectile sport activity' that was incompatible with the traditionally passive uses of many parks. The question was presented to make any response other than agreement with the caller's characterization seem unreasonable. In response, the Mayor went on record saying disc golf was not appropriate in city parks. Though he did not have the final say on the use of the park, his words of support to the resistance group (however choreographed) were another blow to the chances of the trial course surviving. His Worship's comments also served to encourage the Banff Trail Community Association to withdraw their support for the activity in West Confederation Park which they confirmed in a letter dated 10 June 2000.

Within the City administration the involvement of the Mayor's Office was also important. One of the principals in the opposition movement claimed that the involvement of the Mayor's Office was necessary for getting the Parks Department to

³⁰ Shawn Nicol, personal communications, 7 April 2002.

change their plans.³¹ Apparently the Mayor communicated with the Ward Alderman, who in turn communicated with the office of the District Superintendent for Programs to discourage further support of the facility.

The various techniques used in this strategy show an adaptive and multi-faceted methodology. Though it developed in an *ad hoc* way, the opposition showed that they were very savvy and brought a high level of public relations know-how to their mission.

Dirty Words: the language of opposition

The language used by groups to communicate their goals and positions fundamentally influence the character of a discourse or dispute. Language has the power to set either a positive or negative tone, which can influence the success or failure of a dispute resolution process. The disc golf opponents used several examples of attacks with negative language in their resistance to the course at West Confederation Park. Negative and, at times, unsubstantiated language was used to characterize the activity and communicate the views of the neighbourhood resistance group. By using this strategy, they were quite effective at painting disc golf, its players and proponents in a negative light. Most of the examples of this type of discussion are found in the letters from the group to the City administration, politicians and the local media.

One such letter to Penny Remmer, Park Development Coordinator with the City, claimed that representatives of ADSA misrepresented themselves and their activity to the Community Associations when they sought approval for the new activity. The letter also painted the group as a bunch of substance abusing park users. The letter even went on to accuse the group of causing alcohol and drug related problems at their former site at Pearce Estate.

[The residents of the community] believe that the Alberta Disc Sports Association misrepresented themselves to the Boards of Triwood and Banff Trail Community Association (portraying themselves as innocent victims of bureaucratic bungling; presenting themselves as a squeaky clean community sports organization and disc golf as a friendly,

³¹ Dale Jacobson, 20 February 2002.

neighbourly activity compatible with traditional park usage's). Where was your research? Surely you were aware of the problem of drugs and alcohol at Pearce Estates. One wonders at the real reasons for their expulsion from the site.³²

The above quotation shows the use of innuendo in the arguments made by the disc golf opponents. This suggested dishonest intentions of a group that wanted to expand its recreational choices, rather than an organized non-profit with over 10 years of volunteer service to the community.

The trouble with drugs and alcohol at Pearce Estate generally involved homeless people and local drug users from the adjacent community prior to the installation of the disc golf course. In an ironic twist to the argument of the disc golf opponent, the installation of the course at Pearce Estate was largely responsible for moving the drug culture and those engaged in the sex trade out of the park.

The community of Inglewood has had an excellent relationship with the Disc Golf community throughout their use of Pearce Estates and we look forward to their return to the site following the completion of the construction of the Wet Lands Project. Our feeling is that not only was the Disc Golf community excellent in their stewardship of Pearce Estates, but also that their constant use provided a considerable measure of safety and security for all users. In short, we approve of Disc Golf for both its minimal environmental impact, and for its beneficial and far reaching social impacts.³³

The accusations of a 'drug and alcohol problem' at Pearce Estate provided another factor to fear regarding the course installation at West Confederation Park.

The opposition group members also developed an explanation of the activity that was designed to shock the uninformed. This line of communication was based on a position that the game was not played using a modified Frisbee or flying disc, but rather referred to the flying discs as 'discus'.³⁴ This invoked a relationship of the disc to a five or ten

³² Dale Jacobson, letter to Penny Remmer, Parks Development Coordinator, 25 May 2000.

³³ Inglewood Community Association, letter to Don Patrician, Calgary Parks and Recreation, 19 March 2001.

³⁴ Dale Jacobson, Alberta, 20 February 2002.

pound piece of track and field equipment; a view of the equipment which served to better politicise the danger of the activity and engender opposition to the course installation.

Hyperbole and exaggeration became readily evident and moved beyond the vocabulary of the opposition. One representative of the community opposition suggested that a monitoring committee for the activity made up of local residents was both insulting and had the potential to put them in personal danger: “It would make more sense to ask for a mounted patrol from District Police Services [to monitor the activity].”³⁵

Generally the language that was used by the opponents to the disc golf activity in the West Confederation Park was hostile and inflammatory. It served its purpose to activate and politicise support for the opposition movement and did not serve to set a positive tone for any sort of deliberative process with disc golf proponents.

Vandalism and Destruction of Property

In an event which stunned many of the parties involved, the disc golf target posts were cut down in the night by vandals. This came during a suspension of play at the course. There had already been several incidents of mischief where people had wiped faecal matter on the target posts. Serious vandalism of the course made it clear that the conflict had reached a new level of aggravation.

The practice of vandalism was not a specific strategy of the disc golf opposition. Rather, it was an unfortunate and reprehensible action in an escalating community dispute. It was likely an unplanned reaction committed by an individual or a few members of the opposition movement. These activities should not be considered normal or accepted tactics practiced by those opposed to disc golf, but they functioned to negatively characterize the rising action. The vandalism might indicate the perpetrators felt threatened that their point of view was not being heard. Possibly, these actions were a reaction to the dynamic of the dispute moving to a more conciliatory stage with the

³⁵ Ibid.

formation of the ad-hoc committee after the May 29th meeting (see section 5.4.4). Vandalism was a last stab to further polarize the debate and prevent a resolution that was amenable to both sides (a win-win).

5.3.2 Calgary Parks and Recreation: Pressure From All Sides

The Calgary Parks, Leisure and Recreation Business Unit at the City had several divisions of their administration that dealt with the issues related to disc golf. Park Development and Operations (PD&O) were the division of the Calgary Parks, Leisure and Recreation Business Unit that were responsible for maintaining West Confederation Park and managing further development of the site. The Recreation division within the Business Unit deals with recreational programming and recreational user groups. Recreation has had a liaison officer for the past 10 years to deal with disc golf and other emerging sports. Both of these sections had to coordinate in order to move the development of the pilot disc golf course at West Confederation Park forward. The PD&O Division dealt with the facility while the Recreation Division dealt with the user group.

The view within the business unit is that disc golf is the most difficult of the ‘non-traditional sports’ to manage and plan for. While other activities like field hockey and cricket use dedicated sites, disc golf is accommodated into flexible multi-use parks. It does not require a dedicated site but management requires the complexity of managing the demands and interests of multiple user groups.³⁶ Working out the nature of this flexibility is part of the challenge faced by recreation planners, and it lies at the root of the conflict in West Confederation Park.

Issues

Until the Pearce Estate closure, there were relatively few issues to deal with regarding disc golf. The only serious management and planning challenge involved the removal of the course at Baker Centre in 1994, which was met with protests from disc golfers. This came at a time when the number of people playing the game had begun to exceed (in the

³⁶ Don Patrician, 13 November 2001.

opinion of the local association) the capacity of the one facility in the city which had an estimated 30 000 recreational uses in one year. The termination of disc golf in Pearce Estate was the next major issue in managing disc golf and required finding an alternative site for this growing recreational activity.

New Locations

Only 3 locations were supported by both PD&O and ADSA. The sites were required to meet a specific set of criteria that is outlined in the PD&O Report to the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services (see section 5.1.2). West Confederation Park was selected as one of the most suitable of these sites because it would provide a championship quality playing environment, similar to the former course at Pearce Estate Park, and it satisfied all the criteria of PD&O and ADSA.³⁷

Time-lines, commitments and pressures

Finding alternative sites for disc golf was a complex challenge for the Parks Department. This task was complicated by the resistance of the recreational user group to leaving their established site. There was also pressure from the interpretive wetland proponents to begin the re-development of Pearce Estate. These issues were managed by separate sections of the Parks department. As previously mentioned, physical development issues were handled by PD&O while the Recreation division dealt with all liaison issues with the user group. There are some indications that the structure of the department divisions led to commitments being made by both sections to the disc golfers and park development proponents: PD&O were committed to the developers of the wetland to provide them with a park ready for re-development, while the Recreation section had offered supportive assurances to the disc golfers that their interests would be protected and alternative sites would be located and established before they were forced to vacate Pearce Estate.

³⁷ City of Calgary Community and Protective Services, "Park Development and Operations Report to the S.P.C. on Community and Protective Services- Alternative sites for Disc Golf Course," (Calgary: City of Calgary, 2000), 2-4.

If the construction schedule of the interpretive wetland was to commence as planned in the spring of 2000, the disc golf relocation process would have to move quickly and smoothly. These imperatives called for the consultation process for the new disc golf course to proceed quickly without any additional involvement of groups beyond the Community Association. As such there were no notices posted in the park prior to the change in use, nor was there any notification of adjacent land owners through direct and effective means. This was in contrast to the consultation conducted at West Confederation Park in 1994 as part of the proposal to install a disc golf course.

Another issue in relocating the disc golf facility was that the main sponsor of the wetland, BP Amoco, thought that disc golf was a ‘hassle’ to their involvement with the wetland. The company was reported to have wanted the activity moved from the facility as quickly as possible.³⁸ The corporate involvement was rumoured in Parks and Recreation circles to have been responsible for the hasty removal of the remaining modified course at Pearce Estate. It has been noted in chapter 4 that BP Amoco used Pearce Estate Park for its International Corporate Games in late July, 2000. Officially, the closure of the modified facility at Pearce Estate was “as a result of the accelerate construction schedule of the interpretive wetland project.”³⁹ This occurred at the height of the West Confederation Park conflict during the week of June 5, 2000.

Actions

During the spring of 2000, the main challenge for PD&O was to take action that would satisfy the pressing issues: of finding a new location for the golfers to play, and of speeding the clearance of Pearce Estate. Their main strategy was to push for development of the trial course at West Confederation Park to satisfy an increasingly frustrated recreational user group.

³⁸ Don Patrician, 13 November 2001.

³⁹ City of Calgary Recreation and Facilities, “Alternative Sites for Disc Golf Course – 03 July 2000,” Report to Council (Calgary: City of Calgary), 2.

PD&O assisted ADSA representatives with their presentation to the Triwood Community Association, but this was the extent of the consultation that the department engaged in with the community. The liaison officer with the Parks Department commented that the City officials did not see any reason for a large public meeting prior to the installation of the course: “we didn’t think there was a need,” and thus took almost a wait and see attitude.⁴⁰ There had been no plan for the “our park, our [tax] money attitude.”⁴¹ It is unclear why the Parks Department did not realize through either of their divisions that there was potential for resistance to disc golf in the park after a similar proposal had been rejected by the Community Association 6 years earlier. The need to move the process along expeditiously is believed to have been the cause.

There were several actions that PD&O did not take in planning for the new West Confederation park course. With the first proposal in 1994 there was concern about the possibility for complaints from residents adjacent to the park. The issue was addressed with a petition from proponents that indicated significant local disc golf support.⁴² This step was skipped in the 2000 proposal when local support (or resistance) was not canvassed to any significant extent. This indicates that certain stages of due diligence were not completed.

Following complaints from community members throughout the month of May, PD&O called a meeting on May 29, 2000, where the disc golf proposal would be explained to community members at large. Notices of the meeting were distributed to 3000 residences in the Triwood and Banff Trail communities. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the concerned citizens about the trial activity and address their concerns. Nevertheless, the meeting was not part of a well planned public involvement strategy by the department; it was an ad-hoc response to the pressure of community resistance to the new use in the park. The event could be best described as ‘damage control’ for a process that was no longer in control. The details of the meeting will be described later in this chapter.

⁴⁰ Don Patrician, 13 November 2001.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Doug Marter, Area Parks Superintendent, letter to Alberta Disc Sport Association, 15 November 1993.

5.3.3 Displaced Recreationists: disc golfers search for a home

Disc golfers have been playing in Calgary since the late 1980s. From roots in the Ultimate playing community, disc golfers have expanded their ranks to include people of all ages and incomes, while the activity has gained wider notoriety in the press and in bureaucratic circles. The 2001 Disc Golf Players Survey showed that this recreational group is mostly made up of 24-35 year old males that have some University education.⁴³ Nevertheless, they remain quite unorganized from an institutional standpoint. Responsibility for disc golf rested for many years with a section of ADSA. The administration of the activity suffered from an inconsistent base of volunteers and a general lack of organizational maturity. These factors limited the ability of the organization to fend off challenges to move it from existing locations and to expand the activity.

It is important to note that the majority of disc golf players are not part of ADSA or the newly formed Calgary Disc Golf Association (CDGA). The Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey found that 65% of disc golf players are not part of any disc sports association.⁴⁴ This figure is significant for several reasons. First, it indicates a limited ability of any local disc sports organization to have effective communication with all players regarding issues of common interest. Second, it shows that the organization does not necessarily represent the norms and behaviours of those who play. These are both important factors that led to problems with managing the integration of the new facility. If the membership in the organization had been more pervasive amongst players there might have been more opportunity to respond to some of the inter-group tensions.

Issues

Removal of the course from Pearce Estate Park was emotional and frustrating for many disc golfers. Reactions to the closures had a profound effect on the recreational user group. The results of the 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey showed that there were negative reactions to the closure of these facilities. The following effects represent some of the

⁴³ See Appendix 1.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 1.

responses to survey questions that probed the effect of course closures on disc golfers (note: some of the following are based on the aggregation of several categories):

- Convenient access to courses has been reduced – 19.1%
- Feeling of disappointment and frustration – 18.6%
- Loss of a challenging course – 14.4%
- Now play less – 11.2%⁴⁵

These responses are significant because they provide some indicators of the mood or feelings of the user group. It is important to understand this collective ethos because it contributed to the way in which the disc golfers interacted with the community group in West Confederation Park.

Many disc golfers felt that they had been ‘bullied out of,’ or unfairly made to leave a well used play facility. Animosity and resentment were also felt toward a more politically savvy group of wetland project proponents that was seen by certain disc golfers to be acting in complicity with parts of the Parks Department and representatives of the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery. These experiences and attitudes complicated the integration process at the new location; they could be characterized as profoundly ‘negative baggage.’ This manifested itself in a sense of entitlement to the new location that the disc golf proponents brought to the project of relationship building with the existing users of West Confederation Park.

Actions

The objectives of the disc golf representatives can be understood quite simply. They are interested in playing disc golf and attempt to develop locations in and around the city to play. Their actions can be summed up as negotiations with both the City and Community Associations to try and develop these facilities, though these ‘negotiations’ have often taken on an adversarial tone.

In anticipation of the disc golf course removal from Pearce Estate Park, ADSA began to work with PD&O to find alternative sites for location of a disc golf facility. Though there

⁴⁵ See Appendix 1.

was a lingering desire among disc golfers to remain at Pearce Estate, ADSA grudgingly cooperated with the Parks Department through the site selection process.

Based on the apparently successful completion of consultation with the Triwood Community Association, ADSA believed that it could set up a new course in West Confederation Park in the spring of 2000. They consequently arranged for groups of volunteers to install the course in the park in mid April.

ADSA did not survey the adjacent community members as part of the consultation process. This was to be done following the trial period in accordance with the instructions of the Triwood Community Association (see section 5.3.1). While broader community consultation was part of the planning process when the group had proposed to set up a course in West Confederation Park in 1994, this was not done in 2000. It is unclear why this process was not undertaken, but short timelines in the redevelopment of Pearce Estate and a limited volunteer base are two likely reasons.

In addition, there were other examples of due diligence that were not taken. When the course was initially proposed for West Confederation in 1994, a demonstration day was held to inform local residents about the nature of the activity. Community outreach of this sort was not done when the course was installed in 2000. In both of these cases, the disc golf proponents could have been more proactive in their community outreach.

Inter-group relations

The relationship between disc golfers and local residents is best described as confrontational. Immediately following the installation of the course, a group of local residents opposed the activity on the basis that it was ‘un-invited’ to the park. Some of the dynamics of this process have already been described previously; however, the position of the disc golfers has not been clearly portrayed.

The feelings of disc golfers regarding the loss of certain facilities had an effect on the collective ethos of the user group. In essence, they were frustrated and disappointed at being displaced from their previous facility, and thus felt a sense of entitlement to a new

location. Entitlement to the park space was manifest in the behaviour of some of the players toward other park users.⁴⁶ There were examples recorded of disc golfers yelling at other park users to move out of the way and get off the disc golf course. This type of behaviour is not generally acceptable in multi-use park environments where the correct etiquette is to wait for other users to pass. This attitude would likely not have been the norm among disc golfers, but indicates that an aggressive and proprietary attitude was present among disc golfers. On both sides there was a feeling of righteousness to the recreational space that antagonized community members and disc golfers alike, and confounded attempts at conflict resolution.

There was very little contact between the two groups until the public meeting which was held on May 29th, 2000 at the Triwood Community Hall. This factor alone might have influenced the feelings of animosity between the two groups. They had never really had positive relations with each other, nor an opportunity to get things off on the right foot.

As mentioned earlier, some of the inter-group tensions between disc golfers and community residents were based on normative perceptions of each other. Any broad characterization of disc golfers as overwhelming, rude and participating in depreciative behaviour is challenged by the results of the 2001 Summer Disc Golf Player Survey. Survey questions examined disc golfer's perceptions of their own behaviour norms and found "respect for other park users" was the most commonly cited example of disc golf etiquette (see Appendix 1). This indicates that the examples of undesirable behaviour might have been the case of a 'few bad apples' that have sullied the reputation of the entire group.

On the other hand, disc golfers perceived much of the resistance from the community association as selfish and meddlesome. The perception was that they were greedily hoarding a big park that was used with very little intensity. This perception was further amplified by the indignation that many felt as a result of the Pearce Estate confrontation.

⁴⁶ Bill Stell, 11 October 2001.

Based on early resistance to the course, and cases of vandalism and verbal abuse between park users, play was suspended by ADSA representatives in an attempt to calm the escalating situation.

5.3.4 Attempts at Managing Conflict: meetings, processes and unrest

The May 29th, 2000, public meeting did not occur in a manner that would have allowed for dialogue to occur. There were 175 people that attended the event at Triwood Community Centre. Both sides brought out all their supporters and the meeting degenerated into a shouting match between the groups. The summary of public comment shows that there was no resolution of the major issues.

The public meeting process was initiated by PD&O in response to calls from the community resistance. PD&O saw this as an opportunity to raise awareness and to promote the plan to have disc golf integrated into the park at West Confederation. It was a chance to share information with community members about the nature of the activity that had been incorporated into the park. This meeting already faced difficulty before it started for several reasons: first, many of the community members had formed an unfavourable opinion about the change in park use; second, consultation is often unsuccessful when it comes after proposed changes or projects are in place - this leads to conflict.⁴⁷

The meeting was challenged by members of the community opposition on the basis that it was a highly directed process crafted by the Parks Department to support the inclusion of disc golf into the park. The public consultation consultant (or facilitator) was challenged for not being impartial and limiting the comments of some of the community residents. Critics charged that it appeared she was intent on forwarding the agenda of the Parks Department.⁴⁸ By her own admission, the goal of the event was to inform the community residents about the rationale for the changes in the park, not to seek additional input for

⁴⁷ Linda Stewart, 1 November 2001.

⁴⁸ William K. Stell, letter to Alderman Bev Longstaff, 30 May 2000.

design or development options. The community resistance, on the other hand, saw this as an opportunity to have some input to the process from which they felt excluded. They became incensed when they realized that this was not the goal of the meeting.

What is wrong with the way the meeting was conducted? To start with, the “Public Participation Consultant” (euphemism for hired gun?) was patently not impartial. Her preference to answer questions herself, rather than refer them to the Parks and disc golf advocates who ostensibly were being questioned, declared clearly that she was merely a mouth piece for the golf advocates. Her insistence on filtering the speaker’s comments, instead of letting their own words be heard (yet allowing an advocate for disc golf to speak!) was insulting and unnecessary. It all conveyed the strong message that the Parks Department and golf advocates were intent on installing disc golf in this park, whether the traditional community users liked it or not—cramming it down our throats, one might say. As Ms. Stewart said, “it is the intent of Parks and Recreation to give a 6 month trial”, and I suppose we were intended to go along without complaining.⁴⁹

A more effective strategy for this meeting process might have been to first get smaller groups from both sides to meet, then larger groups to meet, and then to organize a public meeting.⁵⁰ Instead, the larger format meeting was held, which did not allow the possibility of relationship building between the parties involved in the conflict. Meeting format and process will be further discussed in the discussion chapter of this paper.

The summary of public comment from the meeting shows that there was both support and opposition to the course. The summary of public comment noted 19 comments that were firmly against the introduction of the course, while there were 12 comments that were supportive of the activity. More importantly the meeting showed that there were many questions about the activity and the way that it would be managed in the park that concerned residents. These included:

- The criteria and monitoring to measure the success or failure of the facility;
- Adequate parking to accommodate the increased use of the park;
- The level of activity that would be expected on the course.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Linda Stewart, 1 November 2001.

⁵¹ Linda Stewart Public Consultation Services, “Confederation Park Disc Golf Project Community

The only resolution to come from the event was the formation of an ad-hoc committee made up of community residents and disc golfers to deal with some of the contentious issues of the dispute. The mandate of the committee was to address the concerns raised at the May 29th meeting and to evaluate the potential of a disc golf course at West Confederation Park. The specific criteria for evaluation included:

1. Can conflicts with other users be minimized?
2. Can existing vegetation withstand use?
3. Can natural areas be avoided?
4. Can inappropriate behaviour by golfers be decreased or eliminated?
5. Can vandalism decrease?⁵²

The committee was to send a report on their findings to the Superintendent of Park Development and Operations, Michael Kenny, by the end of June, 2000. This process was intended to deal with the concerns of both sides through a controlled and deliberative mechanism. As previously mentioned, the serious incidents of course vandalism happened shortly before the committee process could begin. The effect was to further destabilize an already unstable process.

The Ward Alderman commented that her role was to mediate among the community, the disc golfers and the parks department. However by that point in the conflict, it was almost impossible to find a win for all parties. There was anger on all sides, and violent incidents were threatened or had already taken place. The Alderman also commented that the anger and the violence were generally caused by a few people that controlled the agenda; they were making life difficult for all park users. At that time, the decision to remove the course was the only action to be taken in the mind of the Alderman.⁵³

Representatives of the Parks Department maintained their original position leading up to the ad-hoc committee meeting, which supported the disc golf trial in the park. However, sources indicate there was some pressure from the political level through a call placed by the Alderman to the Committee Chairman (a parks department employee) requesting that

Meeting-attachment 2,"1-2.

⁵² City of Calgary Parks and Recreation, "Terms of Reference for [Disc Golf] Ad Hoc Committee," June 2000.

⁵³ Bev Longstaff, former Ward 7 Alderman, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 18 March 2002.

he steer the process to have disc golf taken out of the park (and thus the Ward).⁵⁴ The removal of the disc golf trial was the first item voted on and passed at the meeting conducted on June 12th, 2000.⁵⁵ The Alderman did not recall the details of the committee process and therefore could not confirm the above interpretation.

One bureaucrat familiar with the events commented that the influence of the Alderman on the disc golf process was significant at a time when the City was going through a corporate reorganization and many positions were subject to termination. This was a time when bureaucrats felt insecure about the future of their jobs and were not willing to take controversial stands or positions contrary to policy makers.

The decision to remove the trial disc golf course from the park only provided the City administration with an expedient solution to the immediate problem of community opposition. Disc golfers had again been displaced and disillusioned: they didn't have an 18 hole replacement course for the Pearce Estate location, which had been fully removed far before the 2004 final deadline directed by Council. Many disc golfers had also lost faith in the City administration's ability to provide the services they felt they needed (see 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey for detailed effects of course closures on disc golfers).

5.3.5 Summary of the Conflict

The resistance movement to disc golf in West Confederation Park was fraught with contentious issues. These led to actions and negative dialogue that ensured the escalation of the dispute and the polarization of the sides. The resistance movement was motivated and informed to carry out this action, while the proponents of the course (ADSA and Calgary Parks and Recreation) were unwary and effectively unprepared to deal with the movement. The conflict spiralled out of control. Through either their action or inaction, all groups contributed to the events as they unfolded and the acrimony that was left in the wake of this conflict.

⁵⁴ Anonymous source.

⁵⁵ City of Calgary Recreation Programs and Facilities, Report to Council, 3 July 2000, 2.

Disc golfers resented being removed from the two locations in the city and thus conducted themselves with tones of acrimonious entitlement. Some of these feelings were not misplaced because many members of the local association had contributed many volunteer hours to developing the course, only to see it so vehemently opposed and so quickly removed.

Community opposition members felt incensed at how they were left out of such an important community decision process. In turn they exhibited a lack of trust in further city mandated processes.

Calgary Parks & Recreation had fallen victim to its own attempts to deal with too many issues at once. Two of the main unresolved issues were a suitable replacement for Pearce Estate (18 hole championship course) and a recreational user group that had become increasingly impatient. These difficulties would further complicate their attempts to locate disc golf courses in other parts of the city. There were no clear winners in this conflict.

The facts contained in the site and community analysis indicate that course development in this location might have required specialized planning. This information gives more depth to the explanation of the case and contributes to analysis of the events through a wider interpretive lens. This information will be particularly useful in the Discussion section of the document.

Part of this chapter has revealed the polarized and destructive character of the conflict of resistance to disc golf in West Confederation park. It attempts to present a more detailed account of each stakeholder group to better assist in understanding their actions and roles in the dispute. It shows that all stakeholders, through some aspect of their actions, contributed to the unfortunate situation. Through either actions, language, or strategies, each participant shaped the conflict. Therefore, to attribute responsibility for the conflict to only one group is incorrect. It is useful to analyse and learn from this case of recreational space conflict because it provides insight into how future planning and development processes can be better managed.

6 Discussion

6.0 Introduction

The connection of planning theory and planning practice is of great importance to the development of the planning profession. This inter-relationship is a process where theory contributes to our understanding of cases in professional practice. Theory can provide guidance to untangle the often complex web of case actors and events. This analysis can then contribute to how practice is conducted through a learning process which comes out of analysis. The Theoretical Context of Chapter 3 provides useful theories to more fully understand the case of conflict between recreation interests at West Confederation Park.

The discussion and analysis that follow will present a clear interpretation of case events in light of the selected theories presented in Chapter 3. They cover the following topic areas: the NIMBY theory of land use conflicts, conflict in parks and recreation settings, and public involvement and collaborative planning theory. The analysis will also lead to Conclusions & Recommendations that will be presented in the final chapter of the document.

6.1 NIMBY or Not?

The purpose of this section is to determine how the NIMBY theory of land use conflict applies to the case of conflict seen in West Confederation Park. As mentioned previously, many of the commentators on the case have concluded that a NIMBY attitude was practiced by the opposition to the disc golf course in the Park. Others have commented that the events were not *entirely* part of the NIMBY lexicon, but the opposition contained some elements of NIMBY behaviour. This section of the discussion will analyse what Burningham calls, “the descriptive shorthand of NIMBY,” and will determine to what extent the theory of NIMBY applies to the case.¹

¹ Kate Burningham, “Using the language of Nimby: a topic for research, not an activity for researchers,” Local Environment 5, no.1(2000): 60.

6.1.1 Factions in the Opposition Movement

The discussion of NIMBY focuses on an opposition movement's actions and motives for engaging in protest. It becomes clear that assigning the NIMBY moniker has become almost a pejorative to characterize resistance movements. This is mainly when their resistance appears to be irrational or unreasonable.

The key feature of the opposition movement to disc golf in West Confederation Park was that it appeared to have two motivational bases. Section 5.4.1 indicated there was a split within the resistance movement. The NIMBY label will therefore not be assigned to the entire resistance, but only to one faction in the opposition in this case. This faction attacked the new activity on the grounds it was profoundly dangerous, and attacked those who played the game as objectionable and dishonest. The other faction in the resistance focused on the lack of consultation that the Parks Department and the local association had with the adjoining communities regarding the change of use in the park. Research has shown that this was a legitimate basis upon which to criticize the process and the use. The different factions will be each independently evaluated based on the literature and theory of NIMBY. For the purpose of this discussion, one faction will be referred to as the 'NIMBY faction,' while the other will be referred to as the 'critics of process.'

The NIMBY Faction

A 'NIMBY faction' was identified because they demonstrated disreputable characteristics of opposing facility development using unscrupulous means. Their opposition presented several arguments against the activity; each demonstrated ignorance or irrationality. The first of the three theoretical perspectives of NIMBY presented by Freudenburg and Pastor in Section 3.2.1. apply to this faction. The evaluation of this group as irrational and ignorant actors is confirmed by their actions and comments.

The 'NIMBY faction' engaged in a defamatory campaign against disc golfers and their organization, ADSA. The primary examples of this method of communication can be seen in Section 5.4.1 – *Dirty Words: the language of opposition*. To promote resistance to the activity they referred to the people who played disc golf as objectionable, and they

made baseless accusations of disc golf representatives misrepresenting themselves to the Triwood Community Association when they sought approval for the installation of the park. This point was challenged by the President of the Triwood Community Association who did not feel misled in any way.² This faction also conjured up notions of drug and alcohol problems at the Pearce Estate Park disc golf course to discredit the user group. It is clear that they developed opposition perspectives than can be seen as unreasonable and without clear basis in fact or experience.

The ‘NIMBY faction’ also made the argument that the activity was highly dangerous; however, they lacked evidence of any serious injuries involving disc golf. They emphasised the apparent danger of the activity by likening golf discs in a fallacious way with a track and field discus. This comparison was irrational because track and field discus weigh several kilograms, while golf discs weigh between 150 and 190 grams. They then equated the danger of being hit with a golf disc with being hit by a track and field discus. This perspective was misleading to many community residents that had never seen a golf disc, but had the chance to use a track and field discus in school. These positions and representations of the activity are significant because they introduced many local residents to the activity who were unfamiliar with it. It is believed that a significant segment of the opposition movement believed these characterizations of the activity.

Although there were just a few primary organizers of this faction, it was quite influential because of the method with which it attacked the proposed change of use and invoked the spectre of sensationalism in the debate and resistance. The characterization of the faction as ‘NIMBY’ is said to be a shorthand for what McAvoy calls overly emotional, self-interested and obstructionist of the collective good. Nevertheless, this characterization is appropriate for this faction because their tactics and perspective abused the democratic process by polluting the space for civic discussion.

² John Stiles, 12 March 2002.

The ‘Critics of Process’

The ‘critics of process’ was the other faction that was identified within the opposition to disc golf in West Confederation Park. They had a similar goal of stopping the installation of the course as the ‘NIMBY faction,’ though they used a different rationale for their opposition. This group focussed on the limited nature of the public involvement process that preceded the installation of the course. They felt that the public involvement process that the Parks Department undertook was insufficient given the significance of the development or change of use in the park.

Their reaction is consistent with the theoretical perspective of Irwin *et al.* presented in 3.2.2. This theory is based on the notion that reactive stances to particular projects result from limited opportunity for the public to comment prior to implementation. This perspective is confirmed by the correspondence of the main actor in this faction outlined in section 5.4.1. Much of his correspondence reflects the concerns with insufficient public involvement that was practiced by the Parks Department. The perspective held by Irwin *et al.* does not discount the notion of NIMBY protestors, but would not put the NIMBY label on the ‘critics of process.’ They are seen as having a legitimate reason for protest given the circumstances of the course implementation. In this case, a broad section of the affected population was not given a chance to participate.

Synthesis

Exposing the events of the case to a finer grain of analysis indicates that the different factions within the resistance to disc golf can not be characterized in the same way. The ‘NIMBY faction’ has been shown to be irrational and ignorant, while the ‘critics of process’ were indeed quite rational in their opposition to the activity. This analysis provides a more detailed understanding of the conflict and shows that one group of protesters were behaving in a morally superior fashion even though they were seeking to have the course removed from the park.

The discussion of NIMBY is not where the investigation of the conflict should end. Often analysis is completed after the point where blame and responsibility are determined. This

is the point where Burningham implores us to not focus on the language of NIMBY and understand more of the complexity of the conflict. This research has found that a discussion of NIMBY is necessary...but only as a point of departure to explore other theoretical understandings of the conflict.

6.2 Conflict Theory Applied to Disc Golf

Literature on the theory of land use conflicts in parks and recreation settings was shown in section 3.3.2 to be quite diverse. The framework presented by Jacob & Schreyer provides a tool for descriptive analysis of conflict and identification of its component parts. Theory has also shown that urban and rural recreation settings demonstrate different levels of conflict intensity. This results in different participant strategies being used during the course of the conflict. The social carrying capacity of parks has also been shown to influence the development of conflict in park settings. This theory explains how the character and amount of recreational space have influenced examples of conflict between recreation groups. These areas of theory will be examined in relation to the case in West Confederation Park in the following section.

6.2.1 Framework for Disc Golf Controversy Analysis

Section 3.3.2 presented the 4 factors of Jacob & Schreyer's framework used to describe outdoor recreation conflict. Not all of these factors will be present in each case of conflict, but at least one of the factors is usually present.

Activity Style

Defining the disc golf *activity style* has identified some of the elements of the phenomenon that contributed to the conflict seen in this case. *Activity style* can be broken down to components that identify personal meanings, patterns and norms of behaviour.

Research has shown that disc golf participants assign deep personal meanings to the activity. The Summer 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey found two prime reasons why the activity was an important part of players' lives. These were: for 'relaxation and stress relief,' and to 'enjoy the outdoors and fresh air.' An additional important factor was 'to

meet people and make friends.’ These meanings represent therapeutic and social benefits. They contribute to the individual’s sense of well-being. Conflict emerged when course removal or player eviction became challenges to people’s well-being.

Participants also demonstrated various patterns of behaviour related to the activity. Frequency of play made up an important part of the *activity style*. The largest segment of the disc golf population in Calgary was found to play between six and ten times per month. This part of the *activity style* explains part the intensity of use that was experienced in West Confederation Park after the installation of the trial disc golf course.

The survey also found that many people travel outside the city to play additional courses (at the time of survey there was only one course in the city). Most players regularly play the one course in the city, but 81 percent of the them regularly played at least one additional course, while 37.6 percent had regularly played at least four different courses. This factor supports the evaluation that disc golfers are interested in trying out various courses and will drive or travel significant distances to play them. This part of the *activity style* also contributed to the large numbers of players which played at West Confederation Park following the introduction of the trial course. These crowds were part of the reason the community opposition developed to the activity. Many nearby residents felt the park had been overrun.

Contrasting norms of behaviour among players are another important element within the *activity style* that has influenced conflict between recreation groups. These differences in behaviour among disc golf players involve their use of alcohol, tobacco or marijuana during play. Intoxicant use by players was one of the common complaints cited during the conflict in West Confederation Park. Behaviour in which alcohol and marijuana consumption were normalized was not consistent with the accepted behaviour in the park, not to mention that it is illegal. Nevertheless, participant observation by the author has found that many disc golfers do not use these substances while playing, which has led to golfers’ frustration with the public perception that the game is played only by young intoxicated players. This had created a tension between the more conservative players

and the more free spirited players who are seen as some of the ‘bad apples’ in the game. It is believed that these ‘bad apples’ were responsible for the negative perception of the players during the West Confederation Park trial.

Within their group disc golfers hold some contrasting norms toward the environment. These have influenced their *activity style* and have led to conflict with other park users. Certain elements of the recreational user group have shown less respect for park resources than others. This comment is supported participant observations conducted during the summer of 2001. Disc golf parks have shown signs of litter with bottles, cans and cigarette butts. However, local players have responded to these problems by participating in environmental stewardship programs to clean parks that contain courses; however, a similar type of program was not established immediately following the installation of the trial course at West Confederation Park. The new use apparently resulted in some additional litter in the park, which led to claims from the community opposition that the activity was degrading the park environment.³ It is believed that this amount of garbage was quite limited and would have been present with any additional park users.

The above data indicate that the *activity style* of disc golf is quite complex. There is significant meaning drawn from the activity and deep play experience held by many participants. However, there are also patterns and norms of behaviour that have caused friction with other players and other park users. While norms of behaviour show signs of consolidating behind certain values (see 2001 Disc Golf Player Survey – Disc Golf Etiquette), managing this part of the phenomenon is one of the great challenges that will face the local organizers and proponents as the activity develops.

Resource Specificity

This element of recreational space conflict deals with the significance attached to a recreational resource by different user groups. According to Jacob and Schreyer, beliefs

³ Dale Jacobson, 20 February 2002.

regarding the significance of recreational space can influence normative ideas of how the resource should be used. These ideas are based on different cultural and personal evaluations of the place that are often very different among recreational groups engaged in a conflict.

The West Confederation Park case shows a real or perceived clash of the notions of *resource specificity*. The community opposition indicated that the area was a sanctuary of peacefulness and nature in the city. It was used by community members for contemplative activities. It was a place where community residents could go for peaceful recreation or just look at for a tranquil vista of open space.⁴ Jacob & Schreyer's notion of *place as a central life interest* that embodies memories and tradition applies to the way many people used West Confederation Park. The memorial benches which are located along the southern edge of the park are a strong physical manifestation of memories and connection to place and experience. Consistent with the theory, a possessiveness developed on the part of the local residents toward the recreational resource which was reflected in many comments raised at the public meeting of May 29th, 2000.⁵ Jacob & Schreyer contend "conflict results when users with a possessive attitude toward the resource confront users perceived as disrupting traditional uses and behavioural norms."⁶

Disc golfers did not see the park as a place of peaceful contemplation; rather, as a park in which to relax and be with friends. They did not have any destructive desires that they wished to exercise on the place, but simply wanted to be able to play the game they enjoy. Nevertheless, there were cleavages between the ways in which the community opposition and the disc golfers felt the park should be used. The norms of behaviour were certainly different between the social and more contemplative use of the park.

⁴ Ibid. and Bill Stell, 11 October 2001.

⁵ Linda Stewart Public Consultation Services, "Confederation Park Disc Golf Pilot Project Community Meeting- summary of public comment (attachment 2)," 29 May, 2000, (3).

⁶ Jacob & Schreyer, 374.

Research has shown that the opposition believed that the community's relationship with this peaceful sanctuary was in danger of being *devalued* by the new use in the park. Devaluation of the place was experienced from additional noise and through the physical modifications to the park that the activity required. Opponents felt the introduction of the target 'tone' poles and tee off areas marked with manhole covers were an intrusive and dangerous element that lacked aesthetic value in a place of beauty. There was the perception that the new users of the park did not share the same sort of valuation and connection to the place. Jacob & Schreyer calls the users that have a deep history and valuation for the place *high status* users. The qualification of *status* comes from specific or secret knowledge or intimate relationships with the place that many of them have had over time. Disc golfers were the lower status users in this case because they didn't have the same sort of long-term, intimate relationship with the park. They conclude that "conflict occurs for high status users when they must interact with the lower status users who symbolize a devaluation of a heretofore exclusive, intimate relationship with the place."⁷

Mode of Experience

Mode of experience is based on the level of *focus* or attentiveness placed on the environment during a recreational activity. In this regard the disc golfers differed greatly from the typical *mode of experience* of the established users of the park (indicated by the community opposition). Jacob & Schreyer maintain that differences in level of *focus* indicate the potential for conflict among recreationists.

Focus refers to specific attentiveness of the recreationist that is applied to movement through a setting. Disc golfers move through a setting while throwing a disc in the direction of a target. The primary *focus* in this activity is placed on the target. Enjoying the scenery is a secondary *focus* of the activity.

⁷ Ibid.

The community opposition argued that this focus was different than the specific attentiveness to the park environment practised by the established users of the park. They argued that the park was used primarily for nature appreciation and bird watching. This was accomplished by walking in the park while focussing quite closely on the floral and faunal features of the environment. As well, this group did not necessarily cover a specific distance or route.

There was a fundamental difference in the way the disc golfers and the established users used the park. It caused conflict because there was difficulty integrating the park usage patterns of the established users and those of the disc golfers. There were comments by many community members that they felt no longer able to wander throughout the park as they had previously. Many felt they were being yelled at when they crossed areas of the park where disc golf was being played. In many of these cases, disc golfers might have just been alerting the other park users of their presence to avoid startling them. These encounters demonstrate that as *modes of experience* “become more focused, an individual produces more rigid definitions of what constitutes acceptable stimuli and is increasingly intolerant of external stimuli.”⁸

Tolerance of Lifestyle Diversity

The cleavages between the user groups in the three preceding categories led to one group in the conflict stereotyping the other. Value laden generalizations led members of the community opposition to refer to some disc golf players as “aliens from Mars.” There were certainly ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ in this conflict. The community opposition saw themselves as the ‘in-group’ based on their accepted and established pattern of use in the park. The disc golfers were branded the ‘out-group’ based on elements of their unconventional use of the park. Disc golfers also developed their own set of value laden generalizations. They began to brand the community opposition as NIMBY and call them exclusionary and narrow minded. The perceptions that each group held the other highlighted and reinforced the difficulties sharing the park resource.

⁸ Ibid., 375.

Jacob & Schreyer contend that prejudice is a common theme that contributes to life-style based conflicts where stereotyping and intolerance are also present. Prejudice is based on preconceived bias often along racial, ethnic and social class lines. It is believed that an element of prejudice was present along demographic lines in the case of the conflict at West Confederation Park. The dominant age group of disc golf players was in the 24-35 age cohort, while the community resident population, the 'in group,' were underrepresented in this age cohort versus the civic average. This suggests that the age profile of the community lacked the critical age diversity vis-à-vis the profile of the new user group. It is believed that this experience and comfort with the dominant demographic was a factor in the limited *tolerance of lifestyle diversity*.

Limited *tolerance for lifestyle diversity* was also demonstrated by some of the actions and attitudes of disc golfers. An attitude of entitlement to the park prevented a tolerance of other users in the park and desire to share the park with the community users. This was seen as an intolerant behaviour by the local opposition and did little to bridge the gap between the users. Entitlement to the parks space was traced back to the recent experience disc golfers had when they were moved out of Pearce Estate Park.

6.2.2 Intensity of the Conflict at West Confederation Park

The details of the case showed that the members of the opposition to disc golf in West Confederation Park participated in the resistance movement in a very intense manner. The intensity of the conflict can be explained to a certain extent by its urban location. Section 3.3.3 explained Schneider's research finding that urban proximate recreationists are more likely than wilderness area users to use confrontational coping mechanisms when dealing with conflict. The extension of this finding is that conflict intensifies even further as it moves into urban or suburban areas and closer to people's homes.

The intensity of the conflict was highlighted by attendance at the community meeting where an estimated 175 people attended, the petition with 250 signatures, and the punctuation of the dispute with incidents of violence and vandalism.

Stress felt by participants is another element which has contributed to the intensity level of urban parks conflict. Patterson and Neufeld's theory helps us determine that both community residents and disc golfers suffered from stress resulting from the conflict in West Confederation Park

Disc golfers had a number of goals that were being threatened; foremost was the ability to play disc golf in the city. They felt threatened by the experienced of being removed from the course at Pearce Estate Park and believed their continued ability to play the activity was in a high degree of jeopardy. Community opposition members also felt that their continued ability to use the park in the accepted ways was in jeopardy. This goal was particularly important for the people living close or adjacent to the park. In both cases, the group goals that were being threatened were very significant to their lifestyles.

6.2.3 Social Carrying Capacity of West Confederation Park

Section 3.3.7 presented the theory of social carrying capacity in parks and recreation settings. A central element of this theory is based on evaluation of the quality of the visitor experience. This is accomplished by incorporating both *descriptive* and *prescriptive* elements. The *descriptive* part of the site assessment measures objective elements such as visitor use, while the *prescriptive* deals mainly with the *limits of acceptable change* that are tolerated by users of the facility.

A *descriptive* analysis of the introduction of disc golf in West Confederation Park is most effective if it focuses on the crowding which developed in the park after the introduction of the course. This theory brings a more quantifiable understanding to the analysis of conflict situations. Reports from both proponents and opponents have indicated that the course received extensive use in the short time the facility was in place. Extreme crowding events occurred where there were up to 100 people using the 9 hole course at one time. The facility was used more regularly by about 50 people. This intensity of use was a great difference from the use that the park sustained prior to the introduction of the course. There were no clear data on the amount of crowding or use that the park received

prior to the introduction of the course, though it can be reasonably expected that the numbers were never in the range attained during the disc golf trial.

The *prescriptive* element of social carrying capacity deals with the normative evaluation of change that is accepted by the park users. Change can be either large or small, but its acceptability depends on the normative evaluation of the established users. The residents of Triwood and Banff Trail made it clear that many of them were not willing to accept such a significant shift in the way their park was used. The attitude that the park had undergone too rapid and radical a change was indicated by the fiercely negative response to the introduction of the course. If the *limits of acceptable change* had not been broken, the resistance to the activity would have taken much longer to grow.

Research into indicators and standards of quality are another important element in discussion of carrying capacity. This type of research can give park managers the ability to define resources and social conditions at recreation facilities. However, there were no data available from the Parks Department to indicate such conditions in West Confederation Park. This was a serious weakness of their management approach. Section 5.3.2 indicated that Park Development and Operations selected sites for disc golf courses based on five criteria. The first of these criteria was ‘minimal user conflict.’ It does not appear that there was any significant ethnographic research conducted to determine the established pattern of park use prior to the introduction of disc golf.⁹ Therefore it is unclear what information or analysis the evaluation was based on that determined the activity would cause ‘minimal user conflict’ with the established users.

The Parks & Recreation Department carries on very little research dealing with the open space under its management. With the exception of data that it collects regarding frequencies of City Golf Course usage and studies of the Calgary pathways, no work is done on a consistent basis to record the usage patterns of city open space. Recently, the City has begun to undertake surveys of City play-fields to ensure that they are being used

⁹ Don Patrician, Personal Communications, 12 April 2002.

by the recreation groups which book them.¹⁰ However, these are cursory measures of park use, which are only targeted at ensuring that bookings are fulfilled.

6.3 Public Involvement

Public involvement is one of the key underpinnings of democratic society. Section 3.4 outlined how the philosophy of Mill and Rousseau had cemented the value of public processes to give legitimacy to government, and to provide public education regarding civic ideas. This section presented other theories that further explored public involvement. Day outlined that development of complex administrative bureaucracies in the democratic state has led to conflicts and frictions with notions of citizen control. Innes & Booher's tools to analyse public involvement in planning practice were also presented. These models are useful frameworks to understand public involvement and planning in case study analysis. Innes & Booher also draw the distinction between *progressive* and *traditional* forms of public involvement, and outline their benefits and failings respectively. Both Arnstein and Roberts are cited for their analysis of participation processes that place strategies on a continuum or ladder to indicate gradations of involvement. Roberts' findings regarding the failure of public involvement processes are also explored.

A failure of public involvement was one of the main issues upon which members of the opposition to development of the disc golf course in West Confederation Park based their case. This section will present the theoretical material from Chapter 3, while situating the case within it.

6.3.1 Public Involvement Theory and Disc Golf Development

Methods that Innes and Booher call *traditional participation* have been the primary method of public involvement in disc golf planning. At its best, *traditional participation* positions citizens as the subject of research. This is achieved through hearings, meetings, information sessions, focus groups and opinion polls. Public involvement in disc golf

¹⁰ Ibid.

planning in Calgary can be called ‘severely limited *traditional participation*’ because there have only been a few meetings and information sessions held over several years of managing the activity. Innes and Booher argue that traditional participation is both mechanistic and detached. It produces results that are not able to keep up with the instability of policy implementation because subjects are never true participants in the research.

A very simple method of public involvement was used prior to disc golf course development at West Confederation Park. It consisted of one presentation to the affected Community Association, and resulted in a few requirements being imposed upon the proponents. This strategy was narrow and did not focus on gathering input from the entire community. The strategy showed that the degree of involvement of all stakeholders was very limited. In particular, it appears to have overlooked the residents adjacent to the park who would be most affected by the proposed change in use.

Degrees of Involvement

Using Arnstein’s framework, this strategy of public involvement moved beyond *non-participation* to the areas where involvement contains *degrees of tokenism*. The powerless are informed about a project and are permitted to have a voice in the planning process at this level; however, the extent of their voice is limited. The Community Associations were informed and consulted, but this process did not produce any challenges to the planning that had been set out by the proponents (Parks & Recreation, ADSA). The Community Associations were only able to influence the proponents to a limited extent. They were able to ensure that the introduction of the trial course was advertised in the community newspaper, and that the residents should be polled for their views on the disc golf use after the course had been established. These conditions were simply advisory roles that represented placation of the Community Association; power to install the facility still rested with the Parks Department. Public involvement in this case showed no real citizen power, which occurs at the higher levels of Arnstein’s hierarchy.

Proponents engage the public in pure public relations exercises at one end of Roberts' continuum of public involvement. At this extreme, proponents actually try to shape public attitudes without involving them in decision making or planning. Public involvement in the case of disc golf course development at West Confederation Park involved techniques that contained elements of *information feedback* and *consultation* from Roberts' continuum. The proponents were therefore interested in distributing information about their proposal and receiving some sort of commentary on the proposal. This stage of involvement was achieved at the Triwood Community Association meeting and through the advertisement in the Triwood Trumpet, the Community Newspaper. *Consultation* moves slightly beyond simple information dissemination. It includes public involvement that is based in two way communication where goals of the process are mutually understood and accepted. The Parks & Recreation Department engaged in this process to a certain extent by accepting the suggestion to poll the local residents after the introduction of the course.

The techniques of public involvement seen in the case remained firmly rooted in a mode of what Roberts calls *consultation* rather than *participation*. *Consultation*, and its characteristics of *information sharing, education and negotiation*, defined the public meeting that was hosted by Parks & Recreation on May 29, 2000. True *participation*, for Roberts, is achieved when the public are part of the decision making process. A move toward this stage only became a component of the case after the conflict had become polarized and acrimonious. A form of *participation* occurred when the Alderman encouraged the administration to strike a committee of residents, disc golfers and parks representatives to see if solutions to some of the community grievances could be negotiated. Nevertheless, this attempt would have been far more powerful if it had been a proactive component of course development, rather than an attempt to mitigate conflict.

6.3.2 Applying Planning and Participation Models to Disc Golf

It is useful to apply the planning models developed by Innes and Booher and outlined in Section 3.4.4. Their framework of competing models is useful to interpret the actions and perspectives held by many of those involved in recent disc golf planning. None of the

models present a complete analysis of the case; nevertheless, they provide some guidance toward understanding and some insight into more effective planning solutions.

The Technical/Bureaucratic Model

Public participation has only a limited role in the approach of the *technical/bureaucratic model* through setting goals and direction. This model is about assessing alternatives to best meet goals, developing comparative analyses, making recommendations based on information, and assessing the impacts of policy changes. Some of these technocratic functions were attempted in managing disc golf. However, comparative analyses of sites were conducted in a limited way. They did not include community demographic data or evaluations of the current use of each site. Without the requisite information to conduct sound analysis, the administration was also unable to make assessments of the impacts of park development changes on the adjacent community. Analyses also fell victim to frictions and cross-purposes within the bureaucracy that sabotaged their success. In these cases, the failure of the technical perspective of this model can also be linked to competition from the *political influence model*.

The attempt to determine potentially successful alternative locations for disc golf was partially a failure of technical planning in the Parks Department. There was no research into the established patterns of park use which could have given insight to some of the issues brought forward by the opposition to disc golf. Research into the impacts on these users would have been crucial planning information in light of the negative response to the course proposed in 1994. There was also no clear idea of the volume of recreational use that would be transferred to the new course in light of the partial removal of the facility at Pearce Estate Park. The resulting intensive use of the course at West Confederation Park was not anticipated by Parks Managers.

This model also failed to deal with disc golf in a coordinated and technically proficient way. Research has shown that there were different sections of the Parks Department acting at cross purposes and not consulting with each other. On the one hand was the section of the administration that was strongly encouraging the exclusive development of

the interpretive wetland at Pearce Estate Park. On the other hand was part of the administration that was trying to liase with the disc golfers for an interim redesigned course to be set up in the park while simultaneously looking for new locations.

The *technical/bureaucratic* approach appears to represent the public face of the Parks administration. They attempt to project an image that all decisions are arrived at through sound research, rational deliberation, clear analysis, and responsibility to established planning policies; though it appears that much of their research, deliberation and analysis was incomplete. Very little planning data were used when dealing with disc golf, and the policy plans were applied in a inconsistent manner.

The Political Influence Model

Many of the Parks Department's actions while managing disc golf can be explained by Innes and Booher's *political influence model*. This model features administrators, politicians or professionals that design plans based on the desires of certain constituencies. Disc golf was profoundly affected by political influence in several different ways. It was reported that influence from the Mayor's office, and phone calls from the Ward Alderman to the chair of the ad-hoc committee contributed to abandoning the trial course at West Confederation Park.¹¹ The Parks Department position prior to the involvement of the political level was to continue to work toward the operation of the trial course.

The *political influence model* was also apparent in much of the planning at Pearce Estate Park. Public involvement was only an accessory to planning in this process. The purpose of the accessory is to give the guise of democratic legitimacy to the process when it is unlikely to result in any changes to planning. This was evident in the decision of the Parks Department to remove the interim redesigned course at Pearce Estate Park at the beginning of June 2000.

¹¹ Dale Jacobsen, Banff Trail Community member, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 20 February 2002.

The redesigned interim course had been a concession granted by City Council to the displaced disc golfers after their main course had been lost, but this directive was reversed by direction from the Parks Department. This occurred because of reported pressure from the sponsors of the interpretive wetland, BP-Amoco. The removal of the course was explained officially as necessary due to accelerated construction schedules, though it remains unclear why this increase in activity was necessary or ever achieved.

While the structures of political influence are often tough to uncover, they represent the clear basis of decision making in the absence of both thorough research and meaningful participation.

The Social Movement Model

The *social movement model* is applicable to understanding the development of disc golf resistance at West Confederation Park. This model explains that people band together when they are shut out of planning and decision making processes. They form social movements as mechanisms to confront existing exclusionary power structures. Resistance to disc golf in West Confederation Park was an example of a social movement that formed against the power structure of the Parks & Recreation Department.

The local citizens that had been shut out of the planning process had an idyllic vision of the park. Disqualification of the majority of the local park users from the planning process prompted a response of solidarity behind their vision of the contested space. Roberts also supports this notion when he argues that groups can become mobilized in opposition to proposals that decision makers would seek to approve without their consent.

Innes & Booher suggest that the vision is a point that the social movement leaders often have trouble moving beyond or backing off from – even if there are other options which come to the fore. The vision of removing disc golf from the park was the collective position of the opposition movement beyond which certain factions had trouble moving. The proposal of the ad-hoc committee to deal more closely with the community

grievances related to the course installation was a turn away from the vision. Section 5.4.4 showed that the ad-hoc committee represented the possibility of accommodating the use to which the vision of the opposition was fiercely opposed. The final act of vandalism where the targets were cut down is believed to have been committed by factions in the movement that were unable to come to terms with the possibility of their vision being compromised.

The Collaborative Model

This model is preferred by Innes & Booher because it can function well to manage the interests of diverse stakeholders through face to face dialogue. The case study review showed that there were several different stakeholders involved with the issue of disc golf in West Confederation Park. Applying this model has been useful to understand some of the failings of the disc golf planning processes. This model has also contributed to recommendations for alternative planning processes to better manage disc golf.

The *collaborative model* identifies several serious errors in the disc golf planning process at West Confederation Park. The first is that a full range of interests were not involved in planning the disc golf course. Neither the nearby school nor the neighbours in the area were notified effectively, or asked for their input.

The lack of sincere or authentic dialogue among the sides in the dispute was an additional problem with the planning process highlighted by the *collaborative model*. The relationship between disc golfers and the community opposition had always been confrontational, acrimonious and polarized. Dialogue between the community and the Parks and Recreation Department was also characterized by suspicion.

6.3.3 Failure of Public Involvement in Disc Golf Planning

Much of the trouble that has developed with disc golf planning in Calgary over the past few years has resulted from failures of public involvement to develop and implement planning policies.

Roberts shows that public involvement processes are often successful when sufficient time and resources are dedicated to developing their strategic plans. There was little time taken to conduct user group studies that would have identified and involved all key stakeholders in disc golf planning at West Confederation Park. This point is made clear through two examples: only one of the stakeholders (the Community Association) was notified in advance about the change of use; and no data collection was conducted about the usage patterns of the park. Roberts notes that no one group represents the interests of the public, but that many groups must be involved in public processes.

The West Confederation Park Case was the second episode of public involvement failure in disc golf planning. The approach to involving the public in closing the disc golf course at Pearce Estate failed because there was no coordinated approach taken to ensure that all the user groups were effectively accommodated before redevelopment of the site proceeded. Disc golfers were effectively left out of this process.

Roberts tells us that one of the clearest ways to understand public involvement is that it is a complex process when done in a fair, inclusive and successful manner. When it is perceived as being anything but complex, it is often not being done correctly. Public involvement was treated as a simple matter of procedure in the West Confederation Park case. Only one meeting was held with the Community Association and the announcement of the change in facility use consisted of a small note in a marginal publication. The complexity of this challenging involvement process was reflected in the broad and vociferous reaction to it being conducted glancingly.

6.4 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has brought together the theory presented in Chapter 3 and the details of the conflict between recreation users in West Confederation Park. The NIMBY theory of land use conflicts, conflict in parks and recreation settings, and theories of public involvement, were applied to the case of disc golf in Calgary, and specifically, its introduction to West Confederation Park. This chapter has demonstrated

that a more multi-faceted analysis of recreation development and conflict provides a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon.

When the various perspectives on NIMBY were presented, the conflict at West Confederation Park was shown to be more than a case of an irrational user group exercising parochial selfishness over a local park area. Though there were examples of this type of behaviour, the examination highlighted reason in the arguments of one faction opposed to the development of the course. This discussion also revealed that branding the opposition group with the NIMBY label is not constructive to understanding the issues of the case in all their complexity.

The analysis also discussed conflict in parks and recreation settings through the lens of Jacob & Schreyer's theory. By examining the *activity style*, *mode of experience*, and *resource specificity* of disc golf, a more clear understanding is revealed of how the nature of the activity contributed the conflict with the existing park users. The discussion of *tolerance for lifestyle diversity* highlighted some of the prejudice that grew from the conflict based on the aforementioned elements, and introduced demographic analysis to explain some of the conflict and tension between user groups. Additionally, the concept of the social carrying capacity of park spaces introduced the discussion of the *limits of acceptable change*. This exploration of theory showed that conflict between recreation groups needs to be understood in terms of the interaction of recreationists, activity and recreational space.

A discussion of public involvement was necessary to explore the role of the public sector's management of community resources. This section showed that inadequate strategies and techniques to involve both players and community residents in disc golf planning was one of the primary factors leading to conflict in West Confederation Park. Public involvement in the case was further explored through the lens of Innes & Booher's planning models that were used to explain certain actors and processes within the conflict. This analysis indicated the limitations of *technical bureaucratic* planning from insufficient planning research, the impacts of *political influence* on steering

administrative decision making, and the behaviour of *social movements* as they negotiate the compromises of their vision. The presentation of the *collaborative model* also indicated that the process followed in West Confederation Park lacked inclusion of a full range of interests. Roberts' theories were also integrated to highlight some of the failings of the public involvement process that was not afforded enough resources and was rushed by the imperatives of other projects.

Above all, this chapter has demonstrated that recreation conflict and processes of public involvement are by no means simple; they are complex phenomena that involve many actors with different perspectives, and their analysis requires the application of a wide range of theory.

7 Conclusions & Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This document has explored the recreation phenomenon of disc golf in Calgary. It has also explored the case of conflict between recreation groups that emerged from an attempt to establish a disc golf course in a regional park in the city. The thesis of this document proposes that planning for the emerging sport of disc golf in Calgary can suffer from severe limitations in research, planning procedure and organizational capacity. These limitations can contribute to serious conflict between recreation interest groups. More specifically, this document has shown that the conflict was not entirely an example of NIMBY behaviour, but was actually the result of a complex set of issues and circumstances that include aspects of the NIMBY theory among others.

This section provides a synopsis of the case study and proposes some recommendations to improve public planning for emerging sports, and in particular, disc golf. These recommendations are offered to the City of Calgary Parks Business Unit and the Calgary Disc Golf Association. Both of these organizations are responsible for aspects of disc golf planning and will benefit from the assessment that is presented in this document. Generally, these recommendations focus on planning, management and organizational development strategies.

7.1 Summary of Findings

Data gathered during the research represented the first quantitative survey of Calgarians' knowledge and attitudes toward disc golf, and the first survey of the recreational user group in Calgary. The telephone survey of Calgarians revealed:

- The activity has a significant level of recognition in the city,
- The majority of Calgarians would support the introduction of the activity to city parks in their neighbourhoods.

The player survey outlined a number of dominant characteristics of the recreational user group and also indicated some attitudes and norms of behaviour. It found that:

- Players are young, employed and well educated,

- Disc golf represents an important part of players' lives from both a social and physical standpoint,
- Players play often and introduce many other people to the activity,
- Recent course closures have had a profoundly negative effect on players.

Survey data have enhanced the understanding of the recreational phenomenon in Calgary. It is hoped that this information contributes positively to future planning for the activity. Survey data will be even more valuable if they serve as a basis for additional studies of the activity in years to come.

The activity of disc golf is growing significantly, both nationally and internationally. This research has revealed that the activity functions very well in a multi-use park environment and has contributed to regenerating under-utilised parks. Disc golf has also been shown to increase the perception of safety in parks due to the regular presence of players.

This research did not identify any incidents where injuries to other park users resulted from the activity, and very few documented injuries have occurred to players while participating. Research has also shown the activity has only limited environmental impacts that are easily mitigated through effective course design and management. These impacts are primarily from soil compaction and erosion.

There are disc golf facilities being constructed throughout Alberta with some regularity, along with increased demands to expand existing facilities and to install additional ones. Nevertheless, the research of this particular case found that there were flaws in the approach taken to move the disc golf facility in Calgary from its established location to another park. Project scheduling, timing of the removal of the Pearce Estate Course and the installation of the new facility at West Confederation were not well planned or coordinated. This process did not leave sufficient time for the new course to have a gradual increase in use before the old facility was removed. Rather, the new facility became the primary course in the city almost immediately and sustained more use than was appropriate for a trial facility. These issues provided some of the catalyst for the

conflict at West Confederation Park. There were also other reasons this attempt at course relocation failed. They included:

- A limited public involvement process that did not include a large enough segment of the affected population;
- Some planning models followed within sections of the Parks and Recreation Administration that operated at cross purposes;
- A miscalculation of the limits of acceptable change to the park (from the perspective of the existing users);
- A hostile attitude that developed between competing sides in the conflict.

The flaws in the public involvement process during planning of the new course at West Confederation Park drew the strongest criticisms from the opposition. This failure was the result of two main factors:

- There was not enough research conducted into the usage patterns of the facility prior to its establishment as a trial course;
- The public involvement strategy followed was quite simplistic given the complexity of the multiuse park environment being planned for; it failed to identify all the potential stakeholders that would be affected by the installation of the new course.

Several themes emerged from this research. One theme identified is the lack of trust and miscommunication among all parties. There was limited trust felt by the local disc golf association for the Parks Department. Much of this feeling came from the limited input that disc golfers had into the removal of the activity at Pearce Estate Park and the lack of input that they had into the interpretive wetland design development plan. Though some elements of the parks structure were supportive of the disc golfers' attempts to maintain a place to play, there were other parts of the department that had obviously contradictory interests. More recent research has show that there is continued mistrust between the disc golf organizers and the Parks and Recreation Administration.¹ Much of this feeling centres on the lack of any City lease agreements for the use of the new disc golf facilities that have been established in the past two years. The golfers feel that their activity is in a perpetually vulnerable state.

¹ Shawn Nicol, President Calgary Disc Golf Association, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 24 January 2002.

The limited trust between disc golfers and the community members resulted from the disc golfers' arrival in West Confederation Park with limited notice to the existing users. This relationship was further complicated by rude and unpleasant interaction between the groups. The result of this distrust and acrimony was the polarization of the relationship between the two groups, the spilling over of the enmity into the local press, and the inability to find a compromise solution.

There was also limited trust held by the community opposition for the Parks and Recreation Business Unit. This was caused by the lack of effective notice given before the new activity appeared in the park. Feelings of distrust were compounded by management of the public open house. Here many community members felt the Parks Department were not going to be open to discussion regarding the matter. It appeared that Parks had taken a *decide, announce and defend* strategy to managing the situation; this also antagonized the opposition. The result of this distrust was that the strategies employed to diffuse the conflict were ineffective and their goals of establishing a disc golf trial course were not met.

The second theme identified in the research showed a clash between the culture of the emerging recreational activity and the planning and administrative culture that governs the recreational facilities. Disc golf can be seen as an example of post-modern recreation because it takes the historic game of golf and offers up a modification or pastiche on the existing phenomenon. It imitates golf in an irreverent way that highlights a counter culture sensibility. Disc golf is not a game that is perceived as the purview of the privileged, but rather is generally played at no cost with limited equipment. Anyone can arrive impromptu at a course and play, which demonstrates limited structure, regulation and barriers to entry. In these ways disc golf almost mocks the institutions and pretence of golf. This has caused tension in the Calgary context where this activity style has come into contact with the modernist and highly politicised structures and practices of recreation planning. The root of this tension comes from the limited success of bureaucratic planning structures to properly plan for the activity. Some of these problems

have come from the way in which recreation planning has not kept pace with the research necessary to understand the development of the activity. As well, there has been an administrative lag in recognising that disc golf is moving quickly from being a fringe activity to one occupying the mainstream among a younger demographic.

7.2 Recommendations

The two sets of recommendations put forward in this section are targeted at improving management of the activity and management of the user group by Calgary Parks Business Unit staff and the Calgary Disc Golf Association (CDGA). It is hoped that these recommendations contribute to successful planning and development of additional sites for disc golf in the city, and also contribute positively to recreation development. More importantly, it is hoped that the recommendations contribute to re-establishing trust between the Calgary Parks Business Unit and the disc golf community in Calgary.

7.2.1 Recommendations to City of Calgary Parks Department

Recommendation 1 – Develop a plan with the Calgary Disc Golf Association for long term development of disc golf in the city. This plan would set clear targets for the number of sites which need to be developed. Outline the responsibilities of the Calgary Parks Business Unit and the Calgary Disc Sports Association for the development of the activity. A community development approach should be taken by Senior Managers to develop a plan with the Calgary Disc Golf Association. Such a plan would recognise that the activity is growing in the city and that both organizations must engage in proactive processes to ensure smooth sport development. This plan should follow the guidelines of the 1998 document: “Working Together with Calgarians - *A Community Development Framework for The City of Calgary.*”²

It is anticipated that this recommendation will provide a strategy to avert the situation where other planning priorities throw disc golf into crisis. Additionally, this

² City of Calgary, *Working Together with Calgarians - A Community Development Framework for The City of Calgary* (Calgary: The City of Calgary, 2000).

recommendation will begin to bring the culture of the Parks Administration in more close coordination and understanding with the culture of the Calgary Disc Golf Association. Rationale for development of this type of plan is also provided by disc golfers' use of city resources and the Calgary Parks Business Unit's commitment to promote the use and enjoyment of Calgary's open space.

Recommendation 2 – Develop an annual report in cooperation with the Calgary Disc Golf Association to report yearly on the activity. Issues, challenges and opportunities for the year to come would be clearly laid out in this document. The annual report will respond to the directions set out in the disc golf planning process proposed in Recommendation 1. The planning process will be guided and also held firmly accountable by the development of an annual report with the Calgary Disc Golf Association. The annual report will showcase recent disc golf development, identify important issues, and outline new management goals. Developing a collective report will serve the strategic purpose of building collective trust and accountability between the organizations, and the practical purpose producing a document that can educate other City departments and organizations about disc golf. This recommendation is a supporting action within the strategic framework of Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 3 – Develop a monitoring strategy in conjunction with the Calgary Disc Golf Association to record the use of disc golf courses and monitor impacts on the environment. Implementing this recommendation will provide support and direction for disc golf course maintenance that might include minor redesign and alternative layouts. The monitoring strategy will be an component of the disc golf management plan to be reviewed after every season and reflected in the annual report. This recommendations is a practical action to track and ensure facility use is not excessive; it represents good environmental stewardship. Implementing this recommendation will also provide a useful strategic tool to analyse future course development.

Recommendation 4 – Seek to achieve better stakeholder identification and planning information through *ethnography* and a *collaborative* public involvement strategy

when installing new disc golf courses. Implementation of this recommendation should focus on asking the question, “who is likely to be affected by a particular development,” when planning disc golf facilities. The use of *ethnography* to monitor park use is one element that will support this process of stakeholder identification. This process uses observation techniques to identify patterns and methods of park use.

The other focus of this public involvement strategy should be on *collaborative planning* that seeks to involve more stakeholders in the design decisions that pertain to parks planning. The rationale for this recommendation comes from the errors in stakeholder identification that characterised the trial disc golf process at West Confederation Park and the mistakes that were made in course design.

Both of these recommendations are processes that will be positive elements of a disc golf planning process. They will also be a strategic mechanism to support or challenge the development of new courses.

Recommendation 5 – Sign memoranda of understanding with the Calgary Disc Golf Association regarding the use of the parks where there are currently disc golf courses. The City currently enters into usage agreements with other community organizations, and this arrangement should also extend to disc golf. This recommendation has both procedural and strategic purposes: it will serve to clarify the terms in which disc golfers and the Calgary Parks Business Unit propose to use certain parks for disc golf, and will limit the uncertainty that is currently felt by the disc golf community toward the City Administration. It will serve to build trust between the users and the administrators of the parks.

7.2.2 Recommendations to the Calgary Disc Golf Association

Recommendation 1 – Develop a strategic plan to guide the organization. This will also be accomplished under the guidance of the association executive with the assistance of resource people from Alberta Community Development. A strategic plan will give

more firm direction and guidance to the activities of the Association. It will also identify areas of organizational development to ensure that the Association operates in a less reactive manner to events that affect it. Additionally, a strategic plan can also help to guide organizations through periods of personnel change.

Recommendation 2 – Develop a more solid organizational structure for the CDGA.

This would include a committee structure for the organization that deals more specifically with different aspects of disc golf management. These areas could include: awareness and community relations, communications and promotional material, membership and statistics, course development, fund raising, tournaments and league, and new player development. This would be accomplished under the guidance of the association executive with the assistance of resource people from Alberta Community Development and Calgary Parks and Recreation. The rationale for this recommendation is to encourage a more professional body that can manage disc golf activities in the city as this type of recreation gains popularity and demand rises. This recommendation is complimentary to developing the strategic plan for the organization.

Recommendation 3 – Develop an outreach strategy made up of clinics and resource materials to broaden the demographic base of the activity by targeting the senior and youth market segments. This recommendation would be accomplished through the new committee structure of the CDGA. It would serve to raise awareness of the activity and ensure the physical benefits of this type of recreation are not solely felt by the current dominant age group outlined in this research. Successful implementation of this recommendation would ensure the activity enjoys broader appeal, providing further justification for course development and support for the activity, which would help to avert conflict between recreation groups.

7.2.3 Summary of Recommendations

These recommendations aim to deal with some of the perceived challenges faced by parks administrators and disc golf participants that emerged from this case study. There are several reasons why these recommendations to manage disc golf in Calgary had not

been implemented prior to the findings of this study. First, the activity had not reached a critical level of participation until the last few years to call for this level of structured attention from parks administrators. Second, the participants had not organized themselves to the point where there was a local disc golf association. Nevertheless, given the recent history of the activity and the trend toward growth, these recommendations are very timely.

There are some potential difficulties that should ring a cautionary note for each organization that tries to implement these recommendations. It is possible the Calgary Parks Business Unit will commit to some of the disc golf recommendations, but to not ensure managerial commitment and coordination across the various sectors of the business, or to not enough resources to the projects. This would be an unfortunate circumstance given the significant mutual interests each organization.

The difficulties for the Calgary Disc Golf Association of implementing these recommendations are that they conflict with the free spirited and unstructured style of the game. This element has attracted many players to the activity. With any move toward more structure, hierarchy and procedure, the historical ethos of the community in Calgary could be challenged. Additionally, the resources required to implement recommendations might not be available to the CDGA. They could be limited in terms of people that are willing and committed to the organization, and that have the skills and expertise to develop some of the strategies called for.

7.3 The Big Picture

The emergence of disc golf is the central theme of this study. This study examines the development of the activity on several levels. It includes the quantitative elements regarding the number of players and facilities, the culture of its participants, and the structures that guide development of the activity. Over the last 25 years, disc golf has evolved from a previously little known and unstructured activity to one that has rapid growth, wide popularity, and organizations to govern and promote it. This evolution has

been a process riddled with tensions that reflect a transition between the characteristics of post-modernism and modernism.

One of the central tensions highlighted by this study is the friction between the free spirited and unstructured nature of the activity, and the regulation and hierarchy of civic administrations that govern parks space where the activity is played.

The study also highlights the tension between the growing popularity of disc golf and its former underground character. Given current trends, disc golf will continue to grow in North America and Europe for many years. These growth trends in participation and course development are increasingly driven by media exposure, commercial product advertising, and spectator interest in competitions. This has produced a situation where the popular culture of recreation associated with modernism is clashing with the post-modern culture of a fringe activity that was once defined by its particularity and uniqueness. In addition, these tensions are seen at the level of the individual disc golfer. Players who have felt comfortable in an activity culture that was outside the mainstream, may feel less comfortable with the popularity, marketing and competition that have begun to dominate the activity. This may result in the spirit of the activity changing. These situations indicate that disc golf has yet to fully emerge, but is in the process of transforming from one condition to another.

The recommendations contained in this document aim to improve relationships and provide more organizational capacity for disc golf management in Calgary. They are process and procedure oriented, and are consistent with the character of modernism. Nevertheless, the recommendations could be challenged because they run counter to the free-spirited fringe roots of the activity. This is correct to a point; however, the activity is no longer in its nascent state, but has undergone a process of emergence and development. The recommendations respond to the local condition of disc golf in Calgary by trying to normalize relationships and build trust where conflict in recreation space has occurred. If left untreated, conflict threatens again. If planners have sensitivity to emerging forms of recreation and leisure that influence the way citizens use city space,

then the best outcomes of these recommendations will eventually be realised: broad acceptance of the activity, and broad opportunities for participation.

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1

2001 Disc Golf Player Survey: Frequency and Percentage Totals

Introduction

The following section presents the results from the 135 questionnaires that were administered at the Forest Lawn Disc Golf Park in NE Calgary over a period of 7 days from Thursday, June 21st, to Wednesday, June 27th, 2001. The objective of this survey was to gather information about the participants in the recreational activity of disc golf. More specifically, the survey was designed to determine the participants' demographic characteristics, recreational behaviour, attitudes and opinions relating to the recreational activity of disc golf. The rationale for the survey lies in the limited information on this under-researched emerging recreational activity which has seen growing participant interest, though suffers from limited management understanding. It is hoped that this information can then serve the purpose of contributing to planning and development of programs and facilities by both the local player organization and the City of Calgary Parks Business Unit. The tables show the frequencies of each individual response, along with the percentage of the total responses that each category represents.

Methodology

The survey document consisted of 38 questions to which players were asked to voluntarily respond. The questions were a mixture of open and close ended questions to allow a diversity of views to be expressed. The survey location was adjacent to the first tee of the course where players gather both before and after their rounds of disc golf. The research installation consisted of a lawn chair and a folding table for survey material storage. Potential participants were informed that they had the opportunity to participate in a survey that would help to develop information on their recreational activity that could contribute to its further development. The vast majority of the people agreed to participate with much enthusiasm. It should be noted that there were certain groups that were not included in the survey sample:

- 27 minors that use the course and were not able to participate in the survey because the researcher did not have ethics approval to conduct primary research on children. This approval would have required a complete redesign of the survey instrument,
- A total of 8 people that refused to participated in the survey,
- 10 new players were not able to fill out the questionnaire because they had not developed experience of the activity that was required for the completion of the survey.

Data Tables

Please note: dominant responses for each category are highlighted.

1) How many years have you been playing disc golf?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	this is my first year playing	34	25.2	25.2	25.2
	2 - 4 years	55	40.7	40.7	65.9
	5 - 7 years	23	17.0	17.0	83.0
	8-10 years	11	8.1	8.1	91.1
	more than 10 years	12	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

2) How many times in the non-winter months do you play disc golf?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-1 times per month	6	4.4	4.4	4.4
	2-5 times per month	35	25.9	25.9	30.4
	6-10 times per month	42	31.1	31.1	61.5
	11-15 times per month	18	13.3	13.3	74.8
	more than 15 times per month	34	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

3) Do you play disc golf regularly in the winter (December to March) ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	29	21.5	21.8	21.8
	no	104	77.0	78.2	100.0
	Total	133	98.5	100.0	
Missing	0	2	1.5		
Total		135	100.0		

4) What time of day do you usually play?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	morning (8 am to 12 pm)	6	4.4	5.3	5.3

	afternoon (12 pm to 4 pm)	47	34.8	41.2	46.5
	evening (4 pm to sunset)	61	45.2	53.5	100.0
	Total	114	84.4	100.0	
Missing	0	21	15.6		
Total		135	100.0		

5) How did you get into playing disc golf?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	started by playing ultimate	15	11.1	11.5	11.5
	was introduced by people who disc golf	100	74.1	76.3	87.8
	saw disc golf being played while walking in the park	15	11.1	11.5	99.2
	asked to participate in the senior's games	1	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

6) Who are the people that you usually play disc golf with?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	friends	101	74.8	89.4	89.4
	family	7	5.2	6.2	95.6
	new acquaintances I meet at the course	5	3.7	4.4	100.0
	Total	113	83.7	100.0	
Missing	0	22	16.3		
Total		135	100.0		

7) How many new players have you introduced to the sport?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-1	21	15.6	15.7	15.7
	2-5	54	40.0	40.3	56.0
	6-10	28	20.7	20.9	76.9
	11-15	6	4.4	4.5	81.3
	more than 15	25	18.5	18.7	100.0
	Total	134	99.3	100.0	
Missing	0	1	.7		
Total		135	100.0		

8) Is disc golf an important part of your life?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	71	52.6	80.7	80.7
	no	5	3.7	5.7	86.4
	somewhat	5	3.7	5.7	92.0
	not really	6	4.4	6.8	98.9
	not anymore	1	.7	1.1	100.0
	Total	88	65.2	100.0	
Missing	.00	47	34.8		
Total		135	100.0		

Q8 Multiple responses: "Why is disc golf an important part of your life?"

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Inexpensive	1	25	8.2	19.7
Easy to start/ learn / play	2	10	3.3	7.9
Socialize, be with friends & meet people	3	37	12.1	29.1
Its a way of life/ defines community	4	8	2.6	6.3
Exercise	5	38	12.4	29.9
Serenity	6	5	1.6	3.9
Fun / good times	7	35	11.4	27.6
Relaxation and stress relief	8	44	14.4	34.6
Chance to be with family	9	5	1.6	3.9
Involved with volunteer organization	10	1	.3	.8
Enjoy the outdoors and fresh air	11	44	14.4	34.6
Competition	12	13	4.2	10.2
Unable to do other more intensive sports	14	4	1.3	3.1
Can take dog	15	2	.7	1.6
Opportunity to teach activity to student	16	1	.3	.8
Activity to do while traveling	17	5	1.6	3.9
For recreation	18	15	4.9	11.8
Challenge / self improvement	19	12	3.9	9.4
Low impact on the environment	20	2	.7	1.6

Total responses		306	100.0	240.9
8 missing cases; 127 valid cases				

Q9 Multiple responses: "Which are the disc golf courses you usually play at?"

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Forest Lawn	1	128	33.6	95.5
Canmore Nordic Centre	2	93	24.4	69.4
Fernie	3	35	9.2	26.1
Olds	4	23	6.0	17.2
Lethbridge	5	7	1.8	5.2
Pearce Estate Park	6	18	4.7	13.4
Edmonton	7	23	6.0	17.2
Banff	8	1	.3	.7
Baker Park	9	7	1.8	5.2
Vancouver (Juan de Fuca)	10	6	1.6	4.5
Vancouver (Queen Elizabeth Park)	11	3	.8	2.2

Pender Island	12	4	1.0	3.0
Saskatoon	13	1	.3	.7
Three Hills	14	2	.5	1.5
Bragg Creek	15	8	2.1	6.0
Ontario	16	1	.3	.7
P.E.I	17	2	.5	1.5
Kamloops	18	1	.3	.7
Confederation Park	19	1	.3	.7
Other countries	20	4	1.0	3.0
Object or un-official courses	21	12	3.1	9.0
Ymir (Nelson), B.C.	22	1	.3	.7

Total responses		381	100.0	284.3

1 missing cases; 134 valid cases

10) How do you feel the course at Forest Lawn challenges your skill level?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Challenging	18	13.3	13.6	13.6
	Somewhat challenging	72	53.3	54.5	68.2
	Not challenging enough	42	31.1	31.8	100.0
	Total	132	97.8	100.0	
Missing	0	3	2.2		
Total		135	100.0		

Group Q11 "How have the course closures of the past few years affected you?"

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Feeling of disappointment	1	23	12.2	23.5
Courses are more crowded now	2	7	3.7	7.1
Feeling of frustration	3	12	6.4	12.2
Change of lifestyle/ daily routine	4	6	3.2	6.1
Loss of convenient nearby course	5	14	7.4	14.3
Loss of a challenging course	6	27	14.4	27.6
Loss of a picturesque environment to play	7	16	8.5	16.3
Have had to start playing 'object' courses	8	1	.5	1.0
Now play less	9	21	11.2	21.4
Have lost pride in city/envy other cities	10	9	4.8	9.2
Have stopped playing	11	2	1.1	2.0
Loss of community resource and meeting p	12	6	3.2	6.1
Loss of place to recreate with friends/	13	7	3.7	7.1
Profound sense of loss	14	11	5.9	11.2
Have had to drive further	15	18	9.6	18.4
Made me more of an advocate for the sport	17	2	1.1	2.0
Don't feel as safe in Forest Lawn	18	2	1.1	2.0
Difficult to access by bicycle	19	2	1.1	2.0
Not much effect	20	2	1.1	2.0

Total responses		188	100.0	191.8

37 missing cases; 98 valid cases

12) Do you ever play at un-official object courses?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	79	58.5	59.0	59.0
	no	55	40.7	41.0	100.0
	Total	134	99.3	100.0	
Missing	0	1	.7		
Total		135	100.0		

Q13 Multiple responses: "Reasons for playing at object courses."

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
variety	1	14	15.1	19.2
not enough courses in town	2	15	16.1	20.5
Close and convenient	3	18	19.4	24.7
Official courses are too busy	4	8	8.6	11.0
Official course is too far	5	6	6.5	8.2
No other options	6	2	2.2	2.7
To train/teach others	7	1	1.1	1.4
Adaptable to many locations (parties, fu	8	13	14.0	17.8
More challenging	9	12	12.9	16.4
Its fun to design a course	10	4	4.3	5.5
		-----	-----	-----
		Total responses	93	100.0
				127.4

62 missing cases; 73 valid cases

14) Would you be willing to 'pay to play' on private land near the city (assuming a limited price)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	32	23.7	24.4	24.4
	yes	99	73.3	75.6	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

15) Can you think of time when you had a conflict with any other park user?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	114	84.4	85.1	85.1
	yes	20	14.8	14.9	100.0
	Total	134	99.3	100.0	
Missing	0	1	.7		
Total		135	100.0		

15a) Description of conflict.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Felt unsafe due to kids playing ball golf	4	3.0	18.2	18.2
	asked other park users to move from playing area	6	4.4	27.3	45.5
	Confederation Park citizens over park propriety	3	2.2	13.6	59.1
	My fault for not paying attention to other park user	1	.7	4.5	63.6
	Wayward drives	1	.7	4.5	68.2
	skipped a hole where people were sleeping/amorously engaged	2	1.5	9.1	77.3
	conflict with other park user who was intoxicated	2	1.5	9.1	86.4
	Advised a park user to move, then hit them with disc	3	2.2	13.6	100.0
	Total	22	16.3	100.0	
Missing	0	113	83.7		
Total		135	100.0		

16) Would you follow any conditions (placed by either the City of Calgary or the Calgary Disc Golf Association) that limited playing times to control environmental impacts or park user conflicts?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	114	84.4	87.0	87.0
	no	17	12.6	13.0	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

Multiple response for Q17 “What do you think are the most important elements of disc golf etiquette?”

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
No littering	1	35	11.0	27.8
Discretion, Courtesy and Politeness	2	38	12.0	30.2
Respect for other park users	3	65	20.5	51.6
Respect for land and vegetation	4	31	9.8	24.6
Safety	5	36	11.4	28.6
Clean up park environment	6	25	7.9	19.8

Respect for other players and rules of t	7	50	15.8	39.7
Have fun and be supportive of other play	8	20	6.3	15.9
Welcome new players and promote disc gol	9	6	1.9	4.8
Honesty and fair play	10	8	2.5	6.3
No drugs	11	2	.6	1.6
same as ball golf	12	1	.3	.8

Total responses		317	100.0	251.6

9 missing cases; 126 valid cases

18) Would you support a certification process to ensure that all new disc golfers understand disc golf etiquette?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	81	60.0	61.4	61.4
	no	51	37.8	38.6	100.0
	Total	132	97.8	100.0	
Missing	0	3	2.2		
Total		135	100.0		

19) I believe that disc golf is an activity that has few or no environmental impacts.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	4	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Somewhat disagree	18	13.3	13.3	16.3
	Don't agree or disagree	17	12.6	12.6	28.9
	Somewhat agree	65	48.1	48.1	77.0
	Completely agree	31	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

20) I believe that disc golfers are responsible users of public parks.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	2	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Somewhat disagree	2	1.5	1.5	3.0
	Don't agree or disagree	9	6.7	6.7	9.7
	Somewhat agree	57	42.2	42.5	52.2
	Completely agree	64	47.4	47.8	100.0
	Total	134	99.3	100.0	
Missing	0	1	.7		
Total		135	100.0		

21) I believe we need more disc golf courses in the city of Calgary.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	2	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Somewhat disagree	1	.7	.7	2.2
	Don't agree or disagree	1	.7	.7	3.0
	Somewhat agree	1	.7	.7	3.7
	Completely agree	130	96.3	96.3	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

22) I believe the recreational activity of disc golf should continue to be offered free of charge in public parks.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	1	.7	.7	.7
	Somewhat disagree	4	3.0	3.0	3.7
	Don't agree or disagree	9	6.7	6.7	10.4
	Somewhat agree	14	10.4	10.4	20.7
	Completely agree	107	79.3	79.3	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

23) I believe the recreational activity of disc golf is growing in the city of Calgary.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Don't agree or disagree	5	3.7	3.7	5.9
	Somewhat agree	29	21.5	21.5	27.4
	Completely agree	98	72.6	72.6	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

24) I believe that disc golf is a park activity that is compatible with other uses of the parks.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely disagree	5	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Somewhat	7	5.2	5.2	8.9

	disagree				
	Don't agree or disagree	18	13.3	13.3	22.2
	Somewhat agree	26	19.3	19.3	41.5
	Completely agree	79	58.5	58.5	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

25) How do you most often travel to the disc golf course?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	car	118	87.4	92.2	92.2
	bike	4	3.0	3.1	95.3
	walk	1	.7	.8	96.1
	transit	5	3.7	3.9	100.0
	Total	128	94.8	100.0	
Missing	0	7	5.2		
Total		135	100.0		

26) Do you have any health problems that limit you from participating in recreation that is more physically demanding than disc golf?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	11	8.1	8.4	8.4
	no	120	88.9	91.6	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

6 exp.) Explanation of health problem.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	arm injury	1	.7	7.7	7.7
	asthma	3	2.2	23.1	30.8
	knee injury	4	3.0	30.8	61.5
	rheumatoid arthritis	1	.7	7.7	69.2
	concussions	2	1.5	15.4	84.6
	hip injury	1	.7	7.7	92.3
	use wheelchair	1	.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	9.6	100.0	
Missing	0	122	90.4		
Total		135	100.0		

27) Multiple responses for Q27 “Which other leisure activities do you usually participate in?”

Pct of Category	Pct of label	Code	Count	Responses	Cases
	bowling	1	4	1.3	3.3
	walking	2	14	4.6	11.5
	ultimate/other disc sports	3	26	8.6	21.3
	climbing	4	1	.3	.8
	biking	5	47	15.5	38.5
	running/jogging	6	9	3.0	7.4
	baseball/softball	7	4	1.3	3.3
	roller blading / skateboarding	8	10	3.3	8.2
	weightlifting/working out	9	7	2.3	5.7
	basketball	10	9	3.0	7.4
	flag-football	11	3	1.0	2.5
	swimming / scuba	12	10	3.3	8.2
	ball golf	13	30	9.9	24.6
	kids/family	14	2	.7	1.6
	soccer / hacki-sack / rugby	15	7	2.3	5.7
	tennis/racket sports	16	14	4.6	11.5
	martial arts	17	5	1.7	4.1
	volleyball	18	3	1.0	2.5
	hiking, camping, travel	19	36	11.9	29.5
	skiing/snowboarding	20	25	8.3	20.5
	hockey	21	7	2.3	5.7
	reading	22	2	.7	1.6
	work	23	3	1.0	2.5
	movies	24	1	.3	.8
	fishing	25	6	2.0	4.9
	gardening	26	2	.7	1.6
	Pub crawling / Beer drinking	27	3	1.0	2.5
	art / photography / music	28	3	1.0	2.5
	water-skiing / wakeboarding	29	1	.3	.8
	billiards / board games / video games	30	4	1.3	3.3
	Marijuana smoking	31	2	.7	1.6
	sailing / boating	32	2	.7	1.6
	trampoline	33	1	.3	.8
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	Total responses		303	100.0	248.4

13 missing cases; 122 valid cases

28) Do you consider yourself to be a competitive disc golf player?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	64	47.4	50.0	50.0
	no	64	47.4	50.0	100.0
	Total	128	94.8	100.0	
Missing	0	7	5.2		
Total		135	100.0		

29) Are you a member of any disc golf organization?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ADSA	7	5.2	5.3	5.3
	ADSA and CDGA	31	23.0	23.7	29.0
	ADSA and EDGA	4	3.0	3.1	32.1
	ADSA & PDGA	3	2.2	2.3	34.4
	Not a member	85	63.0	64.9	99.2
	BC d.g.a.	1	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	-9	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

30) If not, would you be willing to join?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	64	47.4	79.0	79.0
	no	17	12.6	21.0	100.0
	Total	81	60.0	100.0	
Missing	0	54	40.0		
Total		135	100.0		

31) What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-19	5	3.7	3.8	3.8
	20-24	14	10.4	10.7	14.5
	25-34	77	57.0	58.8	73.3
	35-44	28	20.7	21.4	94.7
	45-54	6	4.4	4.6	99.2
	65-74	1	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

32) Please indicate your gender.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	25	18.5	19.1	19.1
	male	106	78.5	80.9	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

33) What is your marital status?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	married or common law	60	44.4	45.8	45.8
	separated or divorced	7	5.2	5.3	51.1
	single, never married	63	46.7	48.1	99.2
	widowed	1	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

33a) Do you have and children that live with you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no children	108	80.0	82.4	82.4
	have children	23	17.0	17.6	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

33b) Number of children that live with you.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 child	7	5.2	29.2	29.2
	2 children	14	10.4	58.3	87.5
	3 children	3	2.2	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	17.8	100.0	
Missing	0	111	82.2		
Total		135	100.0		

34) Number of children who play disc golf.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	5.9	50.0	50.0
	2	5	3.7	31.3	81.3
	3	3	2.2	18.8	100.0
	Total	16	11.9	100.0	
Missing	0	119	88.1		

Total		135	100.0		
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35) What is your level of education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	completed high school	39	28.9	29.8	29.8
	finished trade or technical school	25	18.5	19.1	48.9
	university (bachelor degree or higher)	60	44.4	45.8	94.7
	other	7	5.2	5.3	100.0
	Total	131	97.0	100.0	
Missing	0	4	3.0		
Total		135	100.0		

35a) Other education.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some trade training	1	.7	14.3	14.3
	none of the above	1	.7	14.3	28.6
	art college	2	1.5	28.6	57.1
	junior high	1	.7	14.3	71.4
	college diploma	2	1.5	28.6	100.0
	Total	7	5.2	100.0	
Missing	0	128	94.8		
Total		135	100.0		

36) What is your work situation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	full-time work	98	72.6	74.2	74.2
	part-time work	8	5.9	6.1	80.3
	retired	1	.7	.8	81.1
	unpaid work in the home	2	1.5	1.5	82.6
	unemployed	6	4.4	4.5	87.1
	other	17	12.6	12.9	100.0
	Total	132	97.8	100.0	
Missing	0	3	2.2		
Total		135	100.0		

36a) Other work situation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Self employed	6	4.4	33.3	33.3
	Student	6	4.4	33.3	66.7
	Athlete	3	2.2	16.7	83.3
	Seasonal employment	1	.7	5.6	88.9
	Pregnant	1	.7	5.6	94.4
	Long term disability	1	.7	5.6	100.0
	Total	18	13.3	100.0	
Missing	0	117	86.7		
Total		135	100.0		

37) What is your personal income, before taxes and deductions?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$19 999	24	17.8	19.2	19.2
	\$20 000 to \$39 999	45	33.3	36.0	55.2
	\$40 000 to \$69 999	37	27.4	29.6	84.8
	\$70 000 to \$89 999	12	8.9	9.6	94.4
	\$80 000 to \$99 000	4	3.0	3.2	97.6
	over \$100 000	3	2.2	2.4	100.0
	Total	125	92.6	100.0	
Missing	0	10	7.4		
Total		135	100.0		

38) Please indicate the Calgary community in which you live.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ward 1	6	4.4	4.7	4.7
	ward 2	1	.7	.8	5.4
	ward 3	8	5.9	6.2	11.6
	ward 4	9	6.7	7.0	18.6
	ward 5	3	2.2	2.3	20.9
	ward 6	4	3.0	3.1	24.0
	ward 7	21	15.6	16.3	40.3
	ward 8	28	20.7	21.7	62.0
	ward 9	12	8.9	9.3	71.3
	ward 10	11	8.1	8.5	79.8
	ward 11	8	5.9	6.2	86.0
	ward 12	3	2.2	2.3	88.4

	ward 13	5	3.7	3.9	92.2
	ward 14	5	3.7	3.9	96.1
	live in Canmore	1	.7	.8	96.9
	live in Banff	4	3.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	129	95.6	100.0	
Missing	.00	6	4.4		
Total		135	100.0		

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

2001 Disc Sports Phone Survey

Introduction

The data from the following survey were collected between September 12 and 19th, 2001. The objective of the survey was to gather data on the level of knowledge of the recreational activity of disc golf amongst the population of Calgary. As well, citizen attitudes about the game were gathered to provide information that could be used when considering further integration of disc golf facilities into city parks. The rationale for the survey was that currently there is no information that has been collected from a city wide perspective dealing with this emerging recreational activity. Therefore, it is hoped that the data gathered can contribute to future city wide strategic recreation planning. The main performance criteria of the survey was that the sample be representative of the city within an acceptable margin of error; for this survey the error was +/- 5%.

Methodology

The telephone survey was conducted using a randomized selection of phone numbers from all quadrants of the city. Telus Advertising Services conducted the process of random telephone number selection for the researcher. The selected numbers were drawn equally from all quadrants of the city. The 2001 City of Calgary Census was then used to give the proportion of residential population in each quadrant of the city so the survey could be better designed to give a representative sample of the entire city. This information was then used to set targets for the number of survey responses that were needed from each quadrant of the city.

The survey also has certain limitations that must be mentioned. First, the telephone number selection instrument was not able to select telephone numbers which are unlisted, and thus a portion of the population was not eligible to participate. Second, the times of day that were selected to contact people would have excluded people who work night shift employment to participate in the survey.

The Telephone Survey was conducted primarily between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on weekday nights. These hours were selected upon the recommendation of the

market researcher for the City of Calgary Parks and Recreation Department¹. During the course of the survey a total of 1072 numbers were called from which 399 responses were collected. Only 157 refusals to participate in the survey were recorded. The low level of refusal to participate in the questionnaire should be attributed in part to the fact that the researcher introduced himself as a student and mentioned that the survey would take between 30 seconds and two minutes of the respondent's time. The sample size of 399 people was selected to achieve data values that were considered to be representative of the city of Calgary within 5%.

Data and Analysis

Are you familiar with games or sports that are played using a Frisbee or flying disc?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	320	80.2	80.2	80.2
No	79	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

This table reflects the percentage of the Calgary population that had knowledge of Frisbee games or sports. The value of 80.2% is remarkably high and demonstrates both a significant level of knowledge of the Frisbee as a piece of recreational equipment, and that there is a broad understanding of the context and methods for its use. The high level of knowledge and recognition of the activity in its various forms should provide an opportunity for further recreational planning and development that respond to this broad social understanding.

¹ Jennifer Arthur, interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 26 April 2001.

Which Frisbee or disc sports have you heard about?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ultimate	89	22.3	27.7	27.7
	Ultimate and Disc/Frisbee golf	28	7.0	8.7	36.4
	Disc/Frisbee golf	36	9.0	11.2	47.7
	Unstructured play in the park/beach	161	40.4	50.2	97.8
	Distance, tricks and dog competitions	3	.8	.9	98.8
	Ultimate, distance tricks and dog competitions	2	.5	.6	99.4
	Disc golf, distance, tricks and dog competitions	2	.5	.6	100.0
	Total	321	80.5	100.0	
Missing	System	78	19.5		
Total		399	100.0		

The table above shows the breakdown of the various Frisbee or disc activities of which Calgarians have knowledge. It shows that 16.5% of the surveyed population has a knowledge of disc golf. The level of recognition of the sport of Ultimate, which is also played using a flying disc, is much higher and is quite significant to this study because it represents a way in which people are introduced to disc golf, and can thus be credited with further growth of disc golf.

It is also significant that the activity with the highest value was “unstructured play in the park/beach,” which indicates that there is possibly an opportunity for further pedagogy in the instruction of disc sports and games.

Have you ever heard of the game of disc or Frisbee golf that is played in city parks?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	131	32.8	42.0	42.0
	No	181	45.4	58.0	100.0
	Total	312	78.2	100.0	
Missing	System	87	21.8		
Total		399	100.0		

The question that asks if people have a knowledge of Frisbee or Disc golf is significant because it shows that disc golf is not immediately apparent to all respondents, but often is remembered after there has been an initial question that deals with disc sports. It is believed that the people who did not respond with knowledge of disc golf in the second question do not have quite the same familiarity with the activity. Nevertheless, these respondents still had some understanding of disc golf since they answered in the affirmative when they were prompted with the name of the activity in the third question. 32.8% (+/- 5%) of the Calgary population is indicated by this table to have some recognition of the activity; this value translates to almost 300 000 people.

Have you ever played disc or Frisbee golf?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	32	8.0	24.2	24.2
	No	100	25.1	75.8	100.0
	Total	132	33.1	100.0	
Missing	System	267	66.9		
Total		399	100.0		

The results of the above table show that there is roughly a quarter of the sample population with a knowledge of the sport that has actually played. Also, the results show that 8% (+/- 5%) of the total city population has played disc or Frisbee golf; this works out to a value of more than 70 000 people.

Do you continue to play?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	2.8	34.4	34.4
	No	21	5.3	65.6	100.0
	Total	32	8.0	100.0	
Missing	System	367	92.0		
Total		399	100.0		

While the previous table shows that the number of people that have played disc golf is high, the number of people who continue to play is much lower. The table above shows us that the number of people that actually engage in the activity is quite low compared to the number of people that have a knowledge of the activity and also those that have

played at one time in their lives. Many of the respondents said that they had played when they had lived in other parts of the country, while others said that it was an activity that they had learned in school or at summer camp and not played since. Given that there is 2.8% (+/- 5%) of the population that continues to play, this reflects an estimated number of 24 500 people that continue to engage in the activity from time to time.

How did you hear about disc or Frisbee golf?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Saw it being played in a park.	26	6.5	19.7	19.7
Through friends and family.	40	10.0	30.3	50.0
Through the media (newspaper, radio and television).	35	8.8	26.5	76.5
At a special event or school program.	18	4.5	13.6	90.2
Don't remember.	12	3.0	9.1	99.2
Through community discussion.	1	.3	.8	100.0
Total	132	33.1	100.0	
Missing				
System	267	66.9		
Total	399	100.0		

One of the important features of the development process of emerging sports is the method and manner in which they gain notoriety. The table above shows the various methods in which people have learned about disc golf. Certainly most respondents who knew of the activity learned through family and friends, though the exposure through print and electronic media lags only 3.8% behind as a method of consciousness raising. The media coverage of the activity has been generally focused on the closure of several courses in Calgary in the last few years. It should be noted that these events and associated activities were contentious with both proponents and detractors, who took their positions to City Council, community meetings and the op-ed pages of the local newspapers.

Along with the more contentious coverage in the media, there have been examples of positive consciousness raising associated with disc golf. On several occasions there have

been rather spirited morning television segments that have introduced people to the activity of disc golf as examples of new and interesting forms of recreation. The most recent television program featuring disc golf had an estimated 40 000 to 50 000 viewers when it aired in the spring 2001.²

How would you feel about more disc or Frisbee golf courses as part of city parks in your community?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very positive	39	9.8	30.5	30.5
	Postive	44	11.0	34.4	64.8
	Indifferent	37	9.3	28.9	93.8
	Negative	4	1.0	3.1	96.9
	Very negative	4	1.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	128	32.1	100.0	
Missing	Don't have enough information to answer	4	1.0		
	System	267	66.9		
	Total	271	67.9		
Total		399	100.0		

Much of the controversy over the past few years in Calgary has come because there have been several well publicized course closures. Two of these course closures were due to redevelopment of the parks where the facilities existed. In these cases it was determined by parks planning staff that the activity was incompatible with other uses of the parks. The other course closure was due to citizen opposition to its installation. What is interesting about the table is that it shows a combined 64.9% of respondents would feel positively about the integration of disc golf into parks in their area. This value also represents 20.8% of the city population.

² Frank Albi, Global Television , telephone interview by author, Calgary, Alberta, 5 October 2001.

If there were a course located in your area, would you use it?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	83	20.8	62.9	62.9
	No	32	8.0	24.2	87.1
	Unsure	17	4.3	12.9	100.0
	Total	132	33.1	100.0	
Missing	System	267	66.9		
Total		399	100.0		

Many of the respondents to any questions about recreational attitudes might reply with a positive position, but an important follow-up question was also asked: if the respondents would use a facility if it were installed in their area. This provides an important piece of information for planners that might be making decisions regarding community desire for a disc golf facility and an indication about the patronage that it would receive from citizens.

Which Calgary community (ward) do you live in?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ward 1	13	3.3	9.8	9.8
	Ward 2	9	2.3	6.8	16.5
	Ward 3	8	2.0	6.0	22.6
	Ward 4	9	2.3	6.8	29.3
	Ward 5	9	2.3	6.8	36.1
	Ward 6	14	3.5	10.5	46.6
	Ward 7	9	2.3	6.8	53.4
	Ward 8	7	1.8	5.3	58.6
	Ward 9	13	3.3	9.8	68.4
	Ward 10	7	1.8	5.3	73.7
	Ward 11	9	2.3	6.8	80.5
	Ward 12	8	2.0	6.0	86.5
	Ward 13	9	2.3	6.8	93.2
	Ward 14	9	2.3	6.8	100.0
Total		133	33.3	100.0	
Missing	System	266	66.7		
Total		399	100.0		

The above table shows the areas of the city where the respondents live. While it is easy to consider certain explanations for the higher percentages in certain locations, others are

more difficult. Ward 6 registered the highest percentage of respondents within its boundaries, however, it is difficult to explain why this was the case since there have been no existing or proposed disc golf courses located in this ward. In contrast, the high level of activity recognition in Ward 9 is explained by the former location of the course at Pearce Estate Park, which falls within the boundaries of the Ward. The equally high level (9.8%) of respondents living in Ward 1 can be explained in part by familiarity with the former course at Baker Park, located across from Bowness Park on the north side of the Bow River. As well, the recent initiatives on behalf of disc golf proponents to have the course reactivated in Baker Park and a new facility introduced to Shouldice Park have seen the community association becoming more aware of the development of the activity.

Quadrant of respondent residence.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NE	102	25.6	25.6	25.6
	NW	101	25.3	25.3	50.9
	SW	114	28.6	28.6	79.4
	SE	82	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	100.0	

The above values are significant because they confirm the sample selection was a correct representation of the residential population distribution in the city of Calgary.

Sex of respondent.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	191	47.9	47.9	47.9
	Female	208	52.1	52.1	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	100.0	

Similar to the preceding table, this table is important to demonstrate that the distribution of the male and female respondents in the sample is representative of the gender distribution in the Calgary population within the acceptable range of error.

Conclusion

The telephone survey instrument is an effective technique to provide information regarding a recreational activity beyond the scope of the small set of regular participants. For the purposes of this research, the telephone survey instrument provided a valuable method to gain understanding of the level of familiarity that was evident in the larger population. The survey has shown that the knowledge of the activity of disc sports and games is quite broad. The game of disc golf is not the best known of the disc activities, but it is significant that it has gained such notoriety given that there has been a course in the city for only the past 12 years. Much of this notoriety can be attributed to the media coverage of the activity in recent years. Also, given the recent history of citizen opposition to the activity in Calgary, it is of primary significance that the level of positive feeling for the activity is quite high and that a high percentage of the respondents are not immediately opposed to having the activity integrated into city parks in their neighbourhoods.

2.4 VISION STATEMENT PRINCIPLES

The 1984 Calgary River Valleys Plan, and the following principles will guide the development of Calgary's River Valley Park System.

IN PRINCIPLE:

- 1. The overall structure of the River Valley Park System will be based upon protection, rehabilitation and/or reestablishment of naturally sustainable landscapes, waterways, and ecosystems.*
- 2. All significant sources of contamination or degradation of river and related waters will be eliminated, recognizing that watershed management coordination with upstream and downstream municipalities and governing agencies will be essential.*
- 3. The primary use of the River Valley Park System will be passive, low intensity, informal, unstructured activities.*
- 4. Intensively used facilities will be designated to appropriate sites which are not environmentally sensitive and which are carefully designed as "special use areas".*
- 5. The River Valley Park System will include a continuous river valley pathway, not always adjacent to the river's edge.*
- 6. The River Valley Park System will be accessible, usable and safe for all persons where practical and environmentally appropriate, bearing in mind the needs of persons with disabilities.*
- 7. Year-round enjoyment of the River Valley Park System will be encouraged, but with regard to environmental impact.*
- 8. Appropriately designed park linkages will extend into adjacent communities, connecting school sites, community centres, recreational facilities, and urban open spaces.*

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- 8. Appropriately designed park linkages will extend into adjacent communities, connecting school sites, community centres, recreational facilities, and urban open spaces.*

9. *Adjacent development will respect and reflect the character of the River Valley Park System, and provide for reasonable public access to the park system.*

10. *The River Valley Park System will complement and reflect the unique character and the qualities of the individual park areas and adjacent communities.*

11. *The River Valley Park System will be designed to accommodate the planned intensity of use in each specific area to ensure the integrity of the landscape and waterways, and over-use may be accommodated by creative alternatives outside of the river valley.*

12. *Landscape features contributing to the visual continuity and aesthetic quality of the River Valley Park System will be protected, maintained and enhanced where appropriate.*

13. *Through protection, sensitive planning and design, education and interpretation, the River Valley Park System will promote a sense of stewardship in all Calgarians.*

14. *Calgarians will be urged to accept responsibility and liability for their use of the River Valley Park System.*

15. *To assure long term benefits for all Calgarians, the success of the plan will depend on fiscal responsibility in planning, management and maintenance.*

16. *When human use versus wildlife use comes into serious conflict in those areas designated as major natural areas in the 1984 Calgary River Valleys Plan and the Urban Park Master Plan, wildlife and habitat will take priority.*

17. *The River Valley Park System will be a park resource for all Calgarians and will be in addition to the neighborhood parkland entitlement within adjacent communities.*

18. *All bridges will accommodate pedestrian and bicycle use and all new road and bridge construction required, will comply with the Vision Statement.*

Appendix 4

PEARCE ESTATE PARK INTERPRETIVE WETLAND
ALBERTA DISC SPORT ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH
ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND
THE CITY OF CALGARY FOR PEARCE ESTATE PARK

The City of Calgary, Alberta Environment (AENV) and Alberta Disc Sport Association (ADSA) agree to the following requirements of disc golf as it relates to the development of the Pearce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland:

1. A contract or lease agreement between the City of Calgary and ADSA for the use of the Park by the Association will be signed. It is acknowledged that the Government of Alberta is third party to the contract/lease, as there is a long-term lease of the Park lands to the Government. The contract and/or lease agreement must have provision for annual review and termination, if required, by the City for non-performance on the part of the ADSA.
2. The Disc Golf Course shall be limited to the number of holes, specific area of play, times of play and acceptable environmental impact, to be mutually determined by ADSA, the City of Calgary and AENV. This activity is to be monitored and regulated by the City of Calgary as part of the contract/lease.
3. Measures for item #2 must be specifically identified in an effort to ensure that no unacceptable environmental impact of the Park occurs, ie. major compaction.
4. Design, development, construction, operation and maintenance costs for Pearce Estate Park disc golf course must be identified and covered by the City and/or ADSA.
5. Acceptable alternate sites for disc golf will be found before April 2000 by the City and ADSA to ensure reduction of play at Pearce Estate Park.
6. Any conflicts between active use recreation and nature oriented passive recreation of the Wetland will be resolved to the benefit of the latter as reflected by the Urban Parks Master Plan.

May 25, 2000

Penny Remmer
Parks Development Coordinator
City of Calgary

Re: Disc Golf in West Confederation Park and the Community Meeting May 29, 2000 at Triwood

Thank you for your letter of apology for failing to have adequately consulted with residents of adjacent communities before recommending a pilot project of up to six months and the introduction of **Disc Golf** to West Confederation Park. The residents of these communities are not just upset; they are enraged at this imposition and intrusion. To even suggest such a pilot project seems ludicrous to local residents and other park users. Golf is golf is golf - a rose by any other name. For that reason alone, it is banned in the Parks.

The residents of the communities directly affected feel they have been blindsided by Parks&Recreation and City Council. They believe that the Alberta Disc Sports Association misrepresented themselves to the Boards of Triwood and Banff Trail communities (portraying themselves as innocent victims of bureaucratic bungling; presenting themselves as a squeaky clean community sports organization and disc golf as a friendly, neighborly activity compatible with traditional park usage's). Where was your research? Surely you were aware of problems of drugs and alcohol at Pearce Estates. One wonders at the real reasons for their expulsion from the site.

If you really want to get a reasonable impression of what this organization is all about, check out the latest edition of "**Huck**" (Spring 2000). They start out the edition with the "**Pre-Season, Pre-Piss-Up & Pre-Registration Night**." Read the articles carefully. Pay special attentions to the commentary on page three. This is a real fun-loving group of individuals. Look up the minutes of their latest meeting on their web site - a warning you may find some comments quite shocking. Are these the types of individuals you wish to introduce into our Communities and into City Parks?

According to the Triwood Trumpet, this Association has indicated that their course has been designed carefully "so as not to interfere with existing park trails and not to disturb the natural areas, or surrounding residents" ... " The rule of disc golf is to respect the park and all other users have the right-of-way." High ideals, but in the two to three weeks they have been around West Confederation Park we have experienced evidence of drugs, alcohol, using groves of trees as latrines, intimidation of seniors and children and near cases of assault. There have been numerous near misses as discs are thrown over the heads of walkers or trend off target. Some are thrown across the cycle path, others into thickets used by birds for refuge and nesting, into trees (deliberately) and near walking paths and into natural zones. Some seniors are now afraid to walk in the Park. One clip of a weighted, high-density disc could throw them of balance and cause serious injury. I personally have reservations of showing children some of the Flora and Fauna in the natural, ecological zones of the Park (I am the Community Representative at Ecole Banff Trail School). Should I as a responsible individual advise them against using the Park to supplement their school science projects?

So what we have experienced in the last few weeks is a litany of personal offences, intimidation and a thrashing of one of the most unique Parks in Calgary. The Disc Association has promised one thing and delivered just the opposite. They interfere with park trails; they disturb and trample natural areas (some allow large dogs to run loose and crash through the natural areas), and some thuggish types have intimidated residents and actually ordered them out of this golf course (strange, I always thought of it as a park). This group is employing a Trojan Horse technique in which they sweet talk volunteer Board members, misrepresenting their organization and weadling their way into a Community Park. In their newsletter they advise members to be on their best behaviour until the trial period is over and they cement in permanent basket targets. Once they are in, it would be messy and difficult to dislodge them. If what we as local residents and park users have experienced in the last few weeks is their best behaviour, I would hate to experience their normal and extreme behaviour - the good! the bad! and the ugly!!!

Please don't suggest a residents' committee to monitor the project. This proposal would be insulting to those already offended individuals and possibly put them in some sort of personal danger. It would make more sense to ask for a mounted patrol from District Police Services.

There is only one issue to discuss at this meeting Monday night and that is:

"Is Disc Golf Compatible With The Traditional Uses Of West Confederation Park?"

The answer is **unequivocally, No!**

Somewhere, somehow there has been a terrible, collective error of judgement. We are not interested in apportioning blame or singling out individuals or organizations for this situation. What we want is to have all the hazardous objects removed from the Park - which includes the disc golf player's - immediately. As you are no doubt aware, Banff Trail Community Association has withdrawn its support for the project - the notion is that we have had enough of a trial period.

I could give you other areas of concern but will save them for the meeting if necessary.

Having said this, I want say that the game itself may have some recreational value. However, it must be divorced from this Disc Association; placed under strict control of Parks and Recreation; carefully monitored and treated in the same fashion as regular golf. This means finding appropriate venues; charging fees and establishing enforceable rules that will protect the public at large.

Sincerely,

Dale Jacobson
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Calgary, AB
T2M 4J1

Ph/Fax (403) 289-8865

Appendix 6

River Valleys Committee

CPS99
Attachm

Suite 1725, 645 - 7th Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T2P 4G8
(403) 974-0751 Fax (403) 974-0758

July 20, 1999

Executive
Committee

Bernard Amell
Chairman

Garth Balls

Bob Cook

Jerry Demchuk

Dianne Draper

Robert Everett

Jan Garzau

Menno Homan

Penny Hume

Weather McRae

Bill Morrison

Don Peterkin

John Simonot

Bev Wahl

Roger Woodgate

Alderman Joanne Kerr, Chairman
Standing Policy Committee on
Community and Protective Services
City of Calgary
PO Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2M5

Dear Alderman Kerr:

RE: Pearce Estate Park Design Development Plan

The Calgary River Valleys Committee has been advised that a proposal for changes to Pearce Estates Park is scheduled to come before the S.P.C on Community and Protective Services on July 21st, 1999. Members of our committee have reviewed the Commissioners' report and have requested that we clarify the following matters.

While it has been noted in the commissioner's report that The River Valleys Committee has raised concern that disc golf is not compatible with the long term plan for this park, we wish to more fully reiterate the major concerns we have regarding this recreational activity in one of the City's major regional river parks, so that all sides of the issue can be properly recognized and understood.

In 1994, City Council approved The Urban Park Master Plan, which was the result of extensive discussion between the citizens of Calgary, over 2000 special interest groups and City Administration, on the future protection, use and enjoyment of our river valley park system. Subsequently, in 1998, Council incorporated the Vision and Vision Statement Principles of the UPMP into the revised Calgary Plan.

Eighteen Principles were developed in the UPMP which were the result of extensive debate and much compromise by all those involved. Three of these principles will be significantly compromised if the above proposed Design Development Plan for Pearce Estates allows disc golf to continue in this park.

Principle 3 of the UPMP requires that the primary use of the River Valleys System will be passive, low intensity, informal, unstructured activities. We do not consider disc golf to be a passive activity. Neither is it low intensity, with over 30,000 rounds of disc golf played in 1998 at Pearce Estates, as confirmed by the disc golf organizers. Further, with this amount of activity, it cannot be considered "unstructured."



Principle 4 requires that intensively used facilities will be designated to appropriate sites which are not environmentally sensitive and which are carefully designed as special use areas.

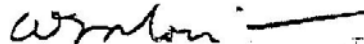
Principle 11 requires that the River Valley Park System will be designed to accommodate the planned intensity of use in each specified area to ensure the integrity of the landscape and waterways, and over-use may be accommodated by creative alternatives outside of the river valley.

Alternative sites were offered by Parks & Recreation to disc golf which were refused as not suitable due, in part, to lack of trees and shade. Allowing disc golf, an active recreational activity, to be included in the Development Plan for Pearce Estates, (which will be a recognized environmentally sensitive site) would be a direct conflict with all three of the above principles. In addition to impact on this site, such activity would set a precedent which could be harmful to the integrity of the long-term vision approved by council in the Urban Park Master Plan.

Pearce Estates is a Regional Park for all Calgarians. It will also be a new wet lands environmental area compatible with the vision embraced by Calgarians in contributing their views regarding the future protection, use and enjoyment of this part of the river valley.

While we empathize with the disc sport enthusiasts and we commend and encourage Calgary Parks and Recreation for continuing to endeavor to find alternative sites for this sport, it is our position that disc golf does not belong in this setting. We urge you to consider and uphold the Vision and Principles of the UPMP, now an integral part of The Calgary Plan, and approve the Design Development Plan without any such active recreational activity component.

Yours truly,



Bill Morrison
Chair, Land Use and Development Sub-Committee
Calgary River Valleys Committee

cc. Micheal Kenny, Superintendent, Parks Department
City of Calgary

CRVC Executive / Advisory