

Horses and the City of Summerland

Summary

It is important to note that, at first glance, it may seem that horses and the need for a permanent home for a variety of horse related activities is minimal however, on closer examination this is not the case.

Economic factors in any business sector affect everyone in the community. For example, when a horseman buys a sack of feed, the store owner might roll that money to pay a utility company that, in turn, uses the money to hire a lineman, who then spends that money at the local grocery, where a checker has just purchased a new car. And so the cycle goes.

The horse industry directly produces 192 million dollar into the Thompson Okanagan with 771 million dollars in economic activity in the Province of BC.

A 2001 Stats Can Census reported that the majority of the horse industry was located in the Thompson Okanagan (25%).

The horse population has steadily increased since 1991 and is expected to increase by 45% over the next five years.

There are 280,00 people employed on farms, ranches, orchards and greenhouse nurseries as well as in veterinary offices, feed stores and as farriers, horse trainers, horse breeders, riding coaches and judges. Individuals involved in showing, clinics and other horse related activities in a community also generate a significant amount of revenue in the host community through purchases of accommodation, food, fuel and other supplies.

Horses, unlike boats or bicycles when not in use, require ongoing feed and health-care expenditures, which means the owner's money cycles back through the community on a regular basis.

Most of the regions horses are used recreationally primarily for pleasure and trail riding with some shown on a limited basis and everyone one of those horse requires stabling of some sort. Land used for stables and pastures benefits the local economy when money is spent for real estate taxes, barn construction, fencing, liability insurance, farm equipment, feed, bedding, veterinary and farrier services, riding equipment and more.

Each horse requires the support of three or more professionals, including veterinarian and farrier, and all pay taxes, maintain businesses, buy homes, support schools in the community and so on.

Although hikers and bikers generally use trails close to home, horsemen tend to travel farther a field, which means they also invest in trucks, trailers, fuel, maintenance and repairs, camping gear and more.

Competitive riders, whatever their sports or disciplines, spend even more money for horse training, show clothing and gear, and most prefer to deal with local vendors whenever possible.

A competitive horse activity in the community often requires a leased facility, food vendors, lodging for show officials and out-of-town competitors, stabling for horses, printed programs and schedules and other items that are purchased locally.

There are a growing number of communities south of the border that are looking at or taking an active leadership role in the promotion of horse friendly communities. (appendix "A"), Additionally Langley, B.C. and Blaineville, Quebec have successful models that were developed in concert with Municipal councils.

In a 1981 provincial survey of the horse owners in the province it was clear that for each horse the owner contributed approximately \$7,000 dollars annually. With even a conservative 10% annual increase in expenses the annual direct dollars spent in a community is over \$9,000 dollars per horse per year.

It is equally important to note that the South Okanagan has one of the more active horse communities in the valley. This along with the development of an equestrian center that has a variety of multi use buildings only increases the ability of Summerland to attract more events to the area. This also encourages people who want to live in a community that is clearly a pro-active horse community which can only be seen as having a positive economic impact on the city.

Summerland Equestrian & Agriplex Centre Proposal

Purpose

1. To develop a multi-purpose Equestrian /Agriplex Centre at the existing Summerland Rodeo Grounds owned and maintained by the Corporation of Summerland.
2. To implement an Advisory Committee with interested representatives from various horse organizations, agricultural and other interested stakeholders who would oversee and suggest direction for the development, organization, on-going maintenance and promote a broad and fair usage plan for the site.

Stakeholders

The site would be utilized by various equine organizations such as:

1. South Okanagan Horse Association
2. Pony Club
3. 4-H Club
4. B.C. Interior Arabian Association
5. B.C. Barrel Racing Association
6. B.C. Reining Association
7. B.C. Penning Association
8. Back Country Horseman
9. Rodeos
10. Canadian Clyde Ryde Team of America
11. Horse shows from any surrounding areas.
12. Clinics and seminars

Additionally the site could also be utilized from non-equine organizations such as:

1. Summerland Fall Fair
2. Folkfest
3. Bluegrass Festival
4. Therapeutic Riding
5. Special Event rentals
6. Concerts
7. Dog shows / Agility shows
8. Archery Clubs
9. Surplus Camping
10. Camping for events at grounds (i.e. Rodeo, TCT, KVR events)
11. Singers and Players

Requirements

1. The indoor arena should be large enough for all equestrian functions, (100 x 200 is suggested) and with permanent bleachers for spectators. The site could be used year round.
2. We would need to improve on existing features and upgrade the clubhouse, (possible expansion) washrooms, bleachers, paddocks, etc.
3. Office
4. Stabling for horses
5. Shelters for escape from rain and sun.
6. Cross Country course
7. Camping hooks ups (electricity, etc.) Satellite campsites would be developed in various areas, allowing for camping, parking, and one site with small paddocks for equestrian riders to camp alongside their horses (This would not be close to river). Some sites would accommodate RV/Motor homes, etc. while others might be more suited to tenting.

Water

Water will need to be pumped to a few different locations on site. i.e. pumps at arenas, camping stations, etc. Provision for water pumps for horses drinking

Environmental issues

All decisions made for this site will be environmentally sensitive to the best of our abilities and there will be ongoing discussion to ensure so. Disposal of manure - Develop safe and efficient storage, removal and disposal. Bedding would be stored in safe and efficient storage. No stabling near creek or river to avoid contamination.

Leave as many trees as possible and build camping site around existing trees and/or plant more trees.

Revenue

Initial building of site would be supported by donations, fundraising (raffles), Accessing funding through Provincial and Federal governments etc.

Maintenance revenue would be generated from rental of facility, camping sites.

The grounds would be the responsibility of Corp of Summerland and usage and upkeep could be monitored by an Advisory Committee composed of various interested parties.

Development

The development of the site would be in several stages.

Short Term Objectives

- Refurbishing/ improvement of existing grounds
- Development of campsite at existing grounds (electrical sites, leveling, water upgrade)
- Building of some stalls (to be later expanded)
- Shade covers
- Improve footing in existing arena

Long Term

- Indoor covered arena
- Office space
- Cross country courses; 3 day eventing
- Parking areas (possibly paved)
- Satellite campsite (different areas/themes)

Appendix “A”

HORSE-FRIENDLY HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP

“THE HIGHLAND MODEL”

We are losing our farms and open space to development and subdivisions. Fortunately, we are not losing our number of horses. In fact, the interest in horse related activities is on the rise. Michigan has a 3.5 billion dollar horse industry. Oakland County has the highest concentration of horses in Michigan with 7,000 equine. [Highland Township](#), in a recent study, showed over 775 horses. Each horse generates approximately 500 dollars monthly to our economy. Highland is home to Milford High School, where 34 years ago the first high school varsity equestrian team in the United States was started. In 2002 Sharon Greene piloted the first Junior Division equestrian team with 12 kids in a test program with MIHA ([Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association](#)) at Highland Middle School. Today, there are 25 plus juniors signed up for Huron Valley School’s spring practices. There are about 800 middle school riders across Michigan signed up for spring, 2005. The incredible growth in a short period of time reflects the incredible horse-interests in our state.

In 2002 the Highland Equestrian (Land) Conservancy, the first of its kind in Michigan, started as a small grassroots group of concerned area residents with a mission to *conserve and protect natural resources while preserving the rural character and equestrian heritage of Highland Township*. Merle Richmond, Coordinator of the [Oakland Equestrian Coalition](#), Paula Weaver from Highland Trail Riders, Sharon Greene, a [4H](#), [US Pony Club](#) and Equestrian Team mom, (all Michigan Horse Council members), and Dr. Fay Hansen of [Oakland University](#) and the [Oakland Land Conservancy](#), spearheaded an effort to create a partnership with horse facilities, trail clubs, equestrian groups ([4H](#), [Pony Club](#), Equestrian Teams), [Highland Business Association](#) and the township [DDA](#), Planning Commission and Highland Township Board. The “Highland Model” was established to promote conservancy space, interconnecting greenways and wildlife corridors that include (multi-use and) equestrian trails around new developments.

The Highland Township officials voted in December of 2002 to support Michigan’s first equestrian conservancy mission. The goal is for Highland Township to create a unique identity and to become a unique destination in Michigan. An economic impact survey has been completed with noteworthy results. One quarter of the township is made up of state land, Highland Recreation Area. Highland’s downtown area sits immediately adjoining the 6,000 acre park with 12 miles of horse trails and an overnight camping facility for horses. This offers some exceptional opportunities because Livingston Road leads directly from the heart of the park to the saddlery and feed store in the new-to-be-restored downtown. Plans are currently underway to include hitching posts and a stabling facility that will allow riders to literally ride into the horse-friendly town where plans are underway for new restaurants and shopping.

The Highland Equestrian Conservancy has already been successful in establishing two new greenways in Highland with equestrian trails around new subdivision developments. The HEC is currently working on two more locations with a hope that multi-use and equestrian trails will create a linking network, allowing safe passage for equestrians and pedestrians and lead to the revitalized DDA (downtown development authority) district. The “Highland Model” is now a recognized plan, a strategy for preserving the rural character of developing townships.

With planning, we can leave a legacy of horses and greenways for future generations to enjoy what we take for granted today! For information, contact Sharon Greene of the Highland Equestrian Conservancy at 248.887.3970 or visit our website at www.highlandequestrians.org.