

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE



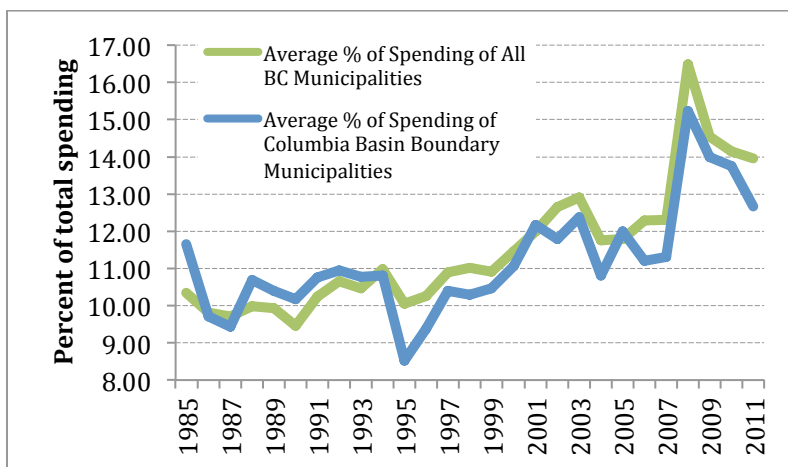
### *What does this measure and why is it important?*

This indicator measures the percentage of total municipal spending dedicated to parks, recreation and culture. Data were gathered from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development's [Local Government Statistics](#).

Spending is important because it provides an indication of the financial resources that are dedicated to supporting the cultural amenities in a community or region. With adequate resourcing, cultural initiatives are more likely to succeed. The cultural sector has been identified as a driver of economic prosperity, including the creation of new jobs, as well as a means to attract new residents, tourists, and investors. Research also suggests that investments in culture contribute to the development of a healthy 'creative economy', and can increase the chances of success of an economic development strategy.

### *What are the trends and current conditions?*

The trend over the past 27 years is similar in our region as compared to all municipalities in BC (Figure 1). The average of total spending for Basin Boundary local governments from 1985 to 2011 was 11.2% while the average for all BC municipalities was 11.5%. Municipal spending on parks, recreation and culture has increased over time, peaking in 2008 (16.5% for all BC and 15.3% for Basin Boundary municipalities). This may be related to a greater interest in spending on cultural amenities or possibly increasing costs to maintain assets and activities. Increased spending at the municipal level may also be related to a decrease in federal and/or provincial funding.



**Figure 1: Municipal spending on parks, recreation and culture, 1985-2011**

Source: BC Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development, 2013

Several communities in our region show above average spending on parks, recreation and culture, including the communities of Elkford, Kimberley, Midway, Nakusp, Sparwood, Trail, and Valemount, but this trend is not consistent over time. Some communities with consistently higher spending may have more parks, recreational or cultural facilities, which require more funding to maintain. In some years, communities may spend more because of capital projects or cultural developments, while in other years there may be different needs and priorities. It is important to note that each community is unique and different variables influence municipal spending on parks, recreation, and culture.



The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, at Selkirk College, is a regional centre of excellence in applied research and information provision focused on strengthening rural communities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. Visit [www.cbrdi.ca](http://www.cbrdi.ca) for more information.