# GRANDE PRAIRIE AREA

# Joint Recreation Master Plan

## **Final**

September 2016

















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# Acknowledgments

Great communities are built through active citizen involvement and engagement in planning and public service provision. Thank you to all of those who were engaged in the Recreation Master Plan process.

More specifically, thanks go out to:

- Residents of the Grande Prairie area for participating in the household surveys and public events.
- Members of City and County Council and administration who participated in interviews and meetings.
- Representatives (elected officials and administrators) from municipalities in the region who participated in interviews and meetings.
- Representatives of volunteer groups and recreation and parks stakeholders who answered questionnaires and attended meetings to discuss their needs.
- All other key stakeholders who provided information and attended meetings when asked.

Special thanks go to the Joint County-City Recreation Committee, the project Working Group and the project liaison who provided advice, information, support, and opinions; who recognized the importance of investing in long range planning; and who displayed the fortitude to make decisions in the best interest of the region.

#### **Joint County-City Recreation Committee**

- Reeve Leanne Beaupre (County)
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- Councillor Harold Bulford (County)
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- CAO Bill Rogan (County)
- Mayor Bill Given (City)
- Councillor Lorne Radbourne (City)
- Councillor Kevin McLean (City)
- Councillor Rory Tarant (City)
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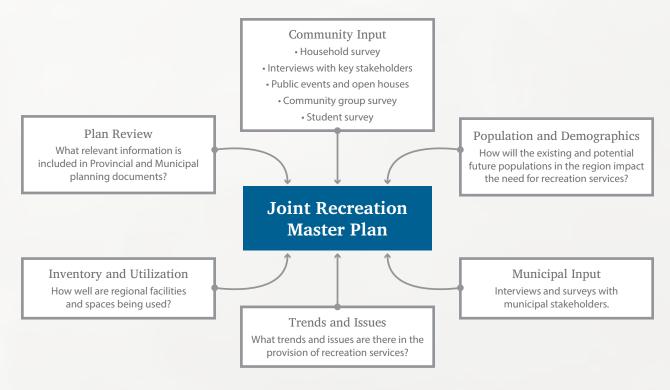
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# **Executive Summary**

The Grande Prairie Area Joint Recreation Master Plan has been developed through the efforts of a variety of stakeholders. Many residents and groups provided integral input during the planning process; a process that was guided by both elected officials and administrators from the County of Grande Prairie and the City of Grande Prairie. Aside from public and stakeholder input, a variety of other research was considered in the development of the Plan, including, but not limited to, review of trends and population, comparison to other jurisdictions, and analysis and assessment of existing facilities. The Plan has also been developed in alignment with the broader recreation planning of the Province of Alberta and of national recreation organizations to create stronger connections to other levels of government and create solidarity in service provision beyond area boundaries.

This Master Plan is written to help guide the City, County and other municipalities in the area in decision-making related to publicly supported recreation facilities and programs. It outlines key directions for independent municipalities to take with regard to recreation spending. More importantly, it suggests ways that all municipalities in the area can work together to optimize resources and enhance the value of recreation in the entire region.



When surveyed, 98% of households in Grande Prairie and area somewhat or strongly agreed that recreation is very important to residents' quality of life. Survey results also indicated residents understanding of recreation services and facilities as justifiable public expenses and worthy of future enhancement and focus.

The Plan establishes a common basis from which all stakeholders can work both independently and together. It outlines a vision, goals and service outcomes to guide collective efforts in recreation services and facilities, which the majority of residents regard as justifiable public expenses and worthy of future enhancement and focus.

With a well-articulated foundation for recreation services and facilities in place, the Plan then outlines recommendations for recreation service delivery, programming and opportunities for programming, and infrastructure, including how to plan, design and operate both indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces in which recreation can occur.

Key recommendations related to service delivery include the formation of a regional advisory group to steward the Master Plan and provide advice and guidance to local municipalities throughout the area. This group may consist of representatives from beyond the City and County but, at a minimum, should involve these two key public recreation providers. Guidelines are provided as to what resources should be considered regional, or that could become the purview of the regional advisory group, and which should remain local. It also explores ways in which responsibility for regional resources could be apportioned. That said, a key next step in the implementation of the Plan is to confirm and refine the ideas around regional resources and responsibilities with the appropriate representatives.

#### **Broader Municipal Planning** in the Grande Prairie Area Recreation Master Plan: Vision The local municipalities believe that public recreation services enable the development of communities in which everyone is engaged in meaningful and accessible recreation experiences that foster individual wellbeing, community wellbeing, and the wellbeing of our natural and built environments. Goal #1: Individual Health Goal #2: Community Health Goal #3: The Health and and Wellness Wellness of our Environments and Wellness Local municipalities will use recreation Local municipalities will use recreation Local municipalities will deliver healthy services to foster the health and wellbeing services as a vehicle to build community environments as a core public good of citizens. Local municipalities will focus health and wellness, spirit, and culture. to support active, healthy citizens on using recreation services as a vehicle Local municipalities will focus on using and communities within the for individual citizen growth. such services as a community Grande Prairie Area. development vehicle. Service Outcomes Service Outcomes Service Outcomes 1. All citizens have a basic level of fitness and wellbeing. 8. Special events and celebrations connect 16. All local citizens relate to and understand citizens of the Grande Prairie area. their relationship with the environment and 2. All pre-schoolers have basic skills in a range of pursuits. the implications of their impact on it. 9. Local community groups thrive in 3. All children and youth have basic skills in a range the Grande Prairie area. 17. Local natural resources are protected and nurtured. of pursuits. 10. Spectators celebrate their community during 18. Our communities are beautiful. 4. All adults have basic skills in a variety of pursuits. local sporting events. 19. Our facilities are of the highest quality 5. All seniors feel continued relevance and inclusion. 11. Social interaction connects citizens in the and are sustainable. 6. Advanced level skill development is available Grande Prairie area. for some pursuits. 12. All citizens of the Grande Prairie area 7. Healthy opportunities exist for teens feel included and welcome. to develop in a social setting. 13. A strong base of volunteers helps to build our communities. 14. Sport and cultural tourism brings people to the Grande Prairie area. 15. Families are supported to recreate as a unit. Service Delivery and Plan Recommendations

**Enhanced Benefit from Recreation Throughout the Area** 

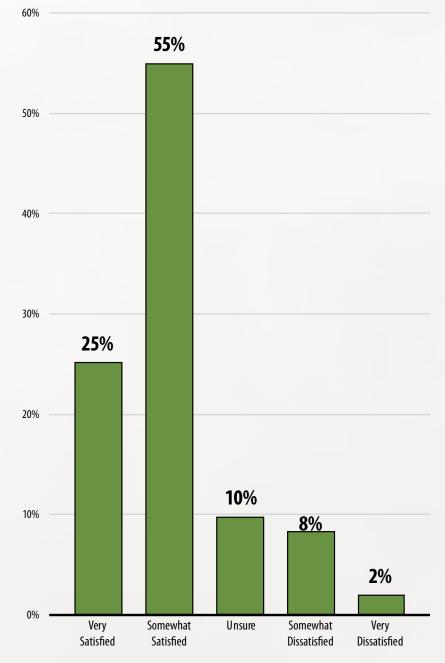
Other key service delivery recommendations include enhancing the support made available to valuable volunteers and non-profit groups that provide recreation opportunities for residents. As well, the Plan outlines ways to bolster promotions and marketing efforts, both independently and collectively, to ensure residents and visitors are aware of opportunities and of the benefits associated with participation in them.

Strategic directions related to programming and opportunities focus on developing an ongoing needs assessment/community dialogue process where resident preferences for different types of activities can be identified and local trends observed and documented. The current multifaceted approach to programming, including a combination of public, private and non-profit sector involvement, is garnering high levels of resident satisfaction while leveraging public funds; major changes to this structure are not recommended.

As it relates to recreation infrastructure, the Plan outlines a high-level strategic direction for a variety of indoor and outdoor amenities; this direction is pertinent to both regional and local resources and is valuable from an independent and collective municipal perspective. Realizing that resources are limited and that investment in each amenity is not realistic in the short and mid-terms, a criteria-based amenity prioritization framework is provided and, based on the current state of recreation in the Grande Prairie area, renders the following top priorities.

Rank	Outdoor Amenity	Regional?	Rank	Indoor Amenity	Regional?
1	Mountain Bike Trails	Yes	1	Gymnasium-type Spaces	No
2	Walking/Bicycling Trail System	Yes	2	Leisure Ice Surfaces	Yes
2	Dog Off Leash Areas	No	3	Fitness/Wellness Facilities	No
2	Nature/Interpretive Trails	Yes	4	Leisure Swimming Pools	Yes
5	Water Spray Parks	No	5	Indoor Child Playgrounds	No
6	Community Gardens	No	5	Youth Centre	No
7	Sledding Hills	No	7	Indoor Field Facilities	Yes
7	Picnic Areas	No	7	25 m Swimming Tank	Yes
7	Playgrounds	No	7	Ice Arena Facilities	Yes
10	Campgrounds	No	10	Walking/Running Track	No
10	Bike Parks (mountain bike and/or BMX)	No	10	Dance/Program/Martial Arts Rooms	No
10	Motorized Trails (e.g. ATV, snowmobile)	Yes			

# Overall, how satisfied are you with the availability of recreation opportunities and services currently offered in the Grande Prairie area?



Based on these infrastructure priorities and the service delivery and programming recommendations, the following next steps have been identified to show how the Plan can be implemented in the short  $(0-5\ years)$ , mid  $(5-10\ years)$ , and long-terms  $(10+\ years)$ .

# **Service Delivery Short-Term**

- Gather appropriate stakeholders to form a regional recreation advisory group for the Grande Prairie area. Refine, confirm, and adopt a definition of regional recreation facilities based on discussion included herein.
- Revisit existing regional recreation cost-sharing protocols based on discussion included herein.
- Develop standardized data collection to support a regional cost-sharing framework and understand facility and space utilization and the overall impact of recreation services in the area.

# **Service Delivery Mid and Long-Term**

- Coordinate marketing and promotion efforts including standard key messaging and pooled efforts/resources.
- Confirm an approach to ongoing community dialogue and needs assessment related to recreation, based on the engagement protocols suggested herein, to understand local trends and gather important feedback from residents and users.

## **Indoor Infrastructure Short-Term**

- Explore regional allocation strategies for pools, arenas, indoor fields, and gymnasium spaces, where possible, with the goal of maximizing the use of facilities throughout the area.
- Ensure appropriate lifecycle programs, including associated capital budgeting allotments, are in place for existing and new facilities.
- Conduct feasibility analysis for a new regional aquatics facility in the shortterm and to ensure in the long-term that a balance of leisure and program opportunities is achieved.

# **Indoor Infrastructure Mid and Long-Term**

- Conduct feasibility analysis for enhanced ice provision in the mid to long-term; include leisure ice amenities in exploration.
- Conduct feasibility analysis for enhanced indoor field provision in the mid to long-term; consider provision in the western portion of the Grande Prairie area to promote geographic balance.

## **Outdoor Infrastructure Short-Term**

- Explore regional allocation strategies for outdoor fields and ball diamonds, where possible, to maximize use of existing spaces throughout the area.
- Ensure appropriate lifecycle programs, including capital budget allotments, are in place for existing and new outdoor regional spaces.
- Explore the development of major ball diamond and/or field tournament sites as partnership opportunities are presented.
- Develop a Regional Trails Master Plan including all types of trails and securing regional trail connectivity options.
- Continue to support efforts related to the Wapiti Corridor Multi-Use Plan.

# Outdoor Infrastructure Mid and Long-Term

- Explore the development of major ball diamond and/or field tournament sites as partnership opportunities are presented.
- Implement Regional Trails Master Plan recommendations.
- Continue to support efforts related to the Wapiti Corridor Multi Use Plan.

Should municipalities throughout the Grande Prairie area agree to work more closely together in providing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, this Master Plan provides a philosophical foundation and course of action to help them do so. The Plan also provides direction related to recreation services and facilities on an independent basis for the City, County, Towns and Village within the area. Recreation is important to residents; the facilities and spaces that local municipalities invest in on an ongoing basis lead to healthier individuals and more connected communities. This Recreation Master Plan is meant to enhance the current state of recreation in the Grande Prairie area and create even more benefits from recreation throughout the region.

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# Introduction and Methodology

1

Recreation facilities and services are key contributors to quality of life in the Grande Prairie area. The City, County, Towns, Village, and M.D in the area have made it clear that they value these services. This is evident through their investment in and commitment to providing quality recreation opportunities for regional residents and visitors.

The Grande Prairie area is active and is growing. Recreation facilities and services make the area a place to call home, raise families, and enjoy leisure time. Due to the importance of these essential services, the City and County formed the Joint County-City Recreation Committee and, subsequently, have developed this Recreation Master Plan. This Plan will help guide decisions regarding recreation provision throughout the Grande Prairie area.

A collective approach has created a common understanding of the needs, roles, and responsibilities in the area regarding recreation provision. It has also enabled community input and leading practices to influence strategic direction.

This Recreation Master Plan is not only about what the future holds for new or improved recreation facilities. It has gathered and consolidated perspectives of all stakeholders as to how to improve the recreation delivery system and enable the region, its residents, and its communities to garner even more benefits from recreation.



The intent of this Plan is to ensure that area residents will have enhanced access to recreation, ultimately leading to more community and individual benefits.

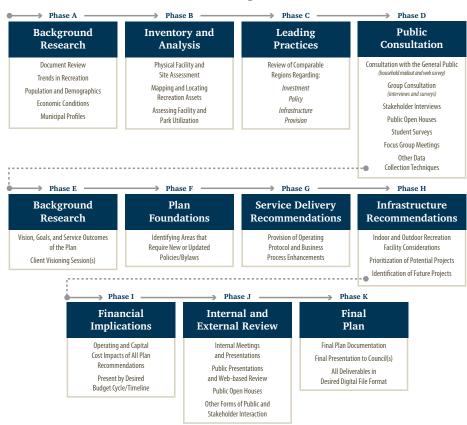
The Plan was developed under the guidance of a Project Steering Committee and an Administrative Working Group. The various methods of gathering research and collecting opinions are presented in a multi-step process depicted in the accompanying graphic. The perspective of over 1,200 households was captured during the development of the Plan.

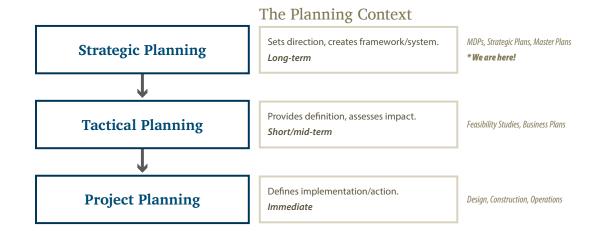
As can be seen in the chart, much research and data were collected. The State of Recreation in the Grande Prairie area report, found in the study appendix, outlines detailed findings of the research conducted and has been referred to herein (where applicable).

It is important to understand the strategic positioning of a Master Plan and how it relates to other types of planning and service provision. A Recreation Master Plan is strategic in nature; it sets long-term direction and provides frameworks and systems through which appropriate decisions can be made. It will lead to more tactical planning for certain types of facilities and programs (service area strategies, feasibility or business planning) and will influence day-to-day operational planning of recreation professionals throughout the region as well as community groups that provide recreation services.

The following Recreation Master Plan is meant to guide decision-making regarding recreation facilities and services. Although it is focused on the role of local municipalities within the Grande Prairie area in service delivery, programming, and infrastructure, the Plan provides insight and information for the benefit of all stakeholders, including regional partners, other levels of government, local non-profit volunteer groups, and the private sector. All of these bodies deliver valuable, essential opportunities for residents and visitors to be active, creative, and healthy.

## The Planning Process





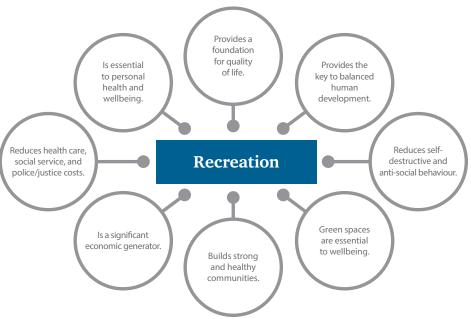
# The Benefits of Recreation

2

"Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing." When residents and visitors participate in recreational activities, they become healthier, happier and more connected to their community and the environment. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of residents suggest recreation is important to their quality of life, 92% agree that the Grande Prairie area benefits from recreation services. For this reason, recreation services are widely accepted as catalysts for social good. A social good is a service that is provided which creates benefit to both participants/users of services and those that do not directly use services. The majority of area residents (75%) either strongly or somewhat agree that residents benefit from recreation services even if they do not utilize them directly. These benefits, or aspects of the social good related to recreation, are commonly organized into eight main benefit areas (as shown). For more information on these benefits, please refer to the State of Recreation in the Grande Prairie area report in the appendix and the National Benefits Hub.<sup>2</sup>

- These benefits occur in communities throughout Alberta and Canada to a varying degree depending on the levels of service provided by the public, non-profit, and private sectors.

  More pertinent to local government, the benefits observed through individuals and communities are the reason why recreation services justify public investment.
- 1 A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing
- benefitshub.ca



# **Planning Foundations**

3

In order to understand the context for planning municipal recreation facilities and services, alignment with broader municipal strategic planning is necessary. Both the County and City have demonstrated a commitment to recreation services via the facilities and services in which each has invested. Recreation is a clear priority for local municipalities, which is apparent through many existing planning documents and efforts. For more information on the profile of recreation in the Grande Prairie area please refer the State of Recreation in the Grande Prairie Area Research Report.

With the strategic relevance of recreation services in the region understood, a more specific foundation for planning public recreation services in the Grande Prairie area has been developed and consists of a Vision statement, three Goals, and 19 intended Service Outcomes. Further to these goals and outcomes are three overarching principles and seven guidelines for prioritization. This approach is often referred to as the "Benefits-Based Approach" to planning and is explained in the following pages. It should be noted that this framework builds on and refines the framework outlined in the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing and is consistent with past planning efforts related to recreation throughout the Grande Prairie area.

# A Vision for Grande Prairie Area Recreation

The local municipalities believe that public recreation services enable the development of communities in which everyone is engaged in meaningful and accessible recreation experiences that foster individual wellbeing, community wellbeing, and the wellbeing of our natural and built environments.

Implicit in this vision statement is the notion that while a direct benefit to serviceusers is delivered, the real justification for recreation service delivery is the indirect benefit to all citizens (embodied in the three bullets above), which is the very definition of a social good.

# Goals for Grande Prairie Area Recreation

The following three goals add direction to and are consistent with the vision statement. They direct decision-making for the delivery of recreation services in the foreseeable future.

- Local municipalities will use recreation services
  to foster the health and wellbeing of their citizens.
  Recreation services will help individuals to realize their
  potential as productive citizens of the community.
  Recreation services in and around the Grande
  Prairie area can and do help individuals to grow
  physically, emotionally, morally and creatively and
  help them to be the best citizens they can be.
  Where municipal support is needed to ensure
  such success, it will be considered within a
  standard cost/benefit framework. Healthier, more
  responsible citizens will clearly benefit the entire area.
  Therefore, the local municipalities will focus on using
  such services as a vehicle for individual citizen growth.
- 2. Local municipalities will use recreation services as a vehicle to build community health and wellness, spirit, capacity, and culture. Recreation services in the Grande Prairie area can connect local citizens more positively to their communities of interest and geography and will enhance their sense of comfort and inclusion within those communities. Where such initiatives require municipal support, it will be considered in terms of the amount of public good created in relation to the cost to taxpayers. The success of such initiatives will clearly benefit all citizens. Therefore, local municipalities will focus on using such services as a community development vehicle.
- Local municipalities will deliver healthy environments as a core public good.
   Local municipalities will deliver healthy environments as a core public good to support active, healthy citizens and communities within the Grande Prairie area.

In essence, the various municipal recreation departments are in the citizen-building, community-building and healthy infrastructure business; using the delivery of publicly supported recreation services as vehicle in making the Grande Prairie area a better place to live, raise a family, work, and play in a way that is sustainable and delivers indirect benefits (i.e. public goods) to all citizens in a manner that cannot be avoided.

## **Service Outcomes**

The following 19 Service Outcomes are consistent with the three goals described previously. They may be considered as specific public goods under which the goals can be measured. All public recreation initiatives directed toward achieving the three goals can be categorized under one or more of these 19 Service Outcomes or ideal end states once the Service Outcomes have been reached.

### Individual Health and Wellness

All citizens have a basic level of fitness and wellbeing. Fitness, in this context, is used broadly as a synonym for wellness, and refers to mental and emotional, as well as physical fitness. Opportunities to increase the level of fitness to a pre-determined minimum level should be provided to every resident of the community with additional opportunities available for progress beyond this point. While this primarily means promoting physical literacy and physical activity, it is broader than that. Physical and emotional wellness can be considered within all programs and services, not just those that involve intense physical activity.

- All pre-schoolers have basic skills in a range of pursuits. An opportunity should exist for every pre-school-aged child to participate with other children in a variety of recreation experiences, in order to:
  - » Expose the child to social settings
  - » Foster gross motor development
  - » Foster physical literacy
  - » Provide a generally happy and satisfying atmosphere where growth can occur
  - » Teach basic safety skills and attitudes
  - » Celebrate their natural creative tendencies
  - » Foster school readiness
- 3. All children and youth have basic skills in a range of pursuits. A wide variety of pursuits in such areas as sport, performing arts, visual arts, outdoor nature-oriented skills, and hobbies should be identified, and basic skill level instruction in each should be provided for school-aged children and teens in order to:
  - » Provide exposure to skills which may form the basis for enjoying lifetime leisure activities
  - » Contribute to gross motor and fine motor physical development
  - » Provide social settings in which social, moral and emotional growth can be fostered
  - Provide the basis for leisure education (i.e. the teachings of the benefits and wise use of leisure time)

Other agencies (e.g. the school system and community organizations) may provide skill instruction in some areas, with local municipalities coordinating to ensure basic skills are developed.

- 4. All adults have basic skills in a variety of pursuits. Opportunities should be provided at a basic skill level in a variety of pursuits in such areas as sport, performing arts, visual arts, outdoor recreation, and hobbies. It is also important to maintain or improve existing skills.
- All seniors feel continued relevance and inclusion.
   Opportunities should be provided for senior citizens to participate in recreation experiences in order to:
  - » Provide opportunities to improve or maintain fitness levels including gross and fine motor skills;
  - Provide social settings that strengthen social connections and continued social involvement; and
  - » Provide a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to encourage a sense of worth and meaning of life through continued personal growth.
- 6. Advanced level skill development is available for some pursuits. Some opportunities should be provided for those citizens who wish to further develop their interest and skills beyond the basic level. While the municipalities' role and responsibility for more advanced skill development may be less than for basic skill development, there is still a role to play for the local recreation departments, working in partnership with others, including local sports organizations, provincial and national sport governing bodies, colleges and universities.

- 7. Healthy opportunities exist for teens to develop in a social setting. Because all teens are either school-aged children or adults, skills will be learned by teens under other Service Outcomes. However, the maturing from youth to adult that occurs during teenage years (and to some degree pre-teen years and for young adults) is often a critical time in the life of an individual. It is also a time in which individual difficulties may result in severe social problems. Appropriate social settings can contribute to the overall wellbeing of teens by providing a safe and stable venue to:
  - » Learn about themselves and how they will react to various social settings and pressures;
  - » Develop positive social/emotional/moral skills, principles and convictions; and
  - » Develop positive leisure lifestyle patterns which will remain with them through adulthood.

## Community Health and Wellness

8. Special events and celebrations connect citizens of the Grande Prairie area. Special events (e.g. carnivals, fairs) can and do contribute to a feeling of community identity, spirit, inclusion and cohesion. Therefore, the municipalities should be involved in supporting neighbourhood, community, and regional special events to the extent necessary to ensure promotion of this Service Outcome. Such events will not only encourage residents to connect and relate to their communities of geography and of special interest, but will assist them to relate to all communities in the Grande Prairie area.

- 9. Local community groups thrive in the Grande Prairie area. Local clubs, groups and agencies are and will be organizing and delivering recreation opportunities. The "people doing things for themselves" aspect of such groups is socially worthwhile and desirable; helping to develop the social fabric of local communities. The municipalities should support such groups in their efforts. Support may occur in a variety of ways, including subsidized access to facilities, community grants, provision of public land, assistance in problem solving or help with leadership training or promotion.
- 10. Spectators celebrate their community during local sporting events. Community identity, spirit, pride and culture can be fostered through the environment generated by spectators at athletic events. In such events, sport can be closely linked with community identity and pride. Because of this, opportunities should be provided for spectator experiences at athletic events. The municipalities have a role to play in ensuring such opportunities exist.
- 11. Social interaction connects citizens in the Grande Prairie area. Because formal and informal social functions are a valuable vehicle to use in developing community cohesion and identity and in reducing feelings of isolation, the municipalities should strive to ensure that such opportunities exist. This may include provision of formal and informal spaces for social interactions to occur, and may also overlap with supporting local community groups.

- 12. All citizens of the Grande Prairie area feel included and welcome. Community growth and development in the Grande Prairie area can be fostered through increased contact between people of varying age groups and backgrounds within the community. This contact between segments of the community can take many forms. For example, the more contact and interchange between seniors and younger adults and children, the greater the potential for community growth. Therefore, in the provision of recreation services, attempts should be made to provide such contact and interchange between seniors and younger residents with a view to transmitting cultural heritage across the generations.
  - Inclusion can further be fostered through an integrative mixing of various ethnic and cultural groups so that each better understands and appreciates the difference and strengths of the other. Multicultural recreation services can be used as a vehicle in making the local communities more cohesive and will be more important in the next 10 years as the communities increase multicultural immigration.
  - Inclusion can also be fostered by integrating various groups of people who face participation barriers into mainstream programming. Whether individuals have physical, emotional or mental disabilities, recreation can be used as a levelling and integrative force.
- 13. A strong base of volunteers helps to build our communities. Volunteerism can be seen as the highest form of recreation. It also is an important building block of community development. Recruiting, utilizing and supporting volunteers is essential to connecting people to their community. Therefore, the municipalities will support the use of volunteers in the recreation delivery systems in ways that enhance community identity, pride and spirit.

- 14. Sport and cultural tourism brings people to the Grande Prairie area. As part of the "brand" for the Grande Prairie area, the local municipalities want to be known as a destination for competition, special events and cultural events. These spectator-oriented events bring people to the area for a positive experience. This not only helps economically, but also positions the municipalities well for local citizens who have a positive impression of the community as an event host. While local municipalities may strive to achieve this objective, in part through means outside their recreation departments, the departments also have a role to play in achieving this objective.
- 15. Families are supported to recreate as a unit. The family unit is an integral building block of community growth. Opportunities should be provided for families to pursue experiences as a family unit. The municipalities can, through their recreation services, support and nurture family units, however broadly these are defined. This has implications for a fees and charges policy, facility design and planning, parks development, and marketing/communications efforts.

# The Health and Wellness of Our Environments

16. All local citizens relate to and understand their relationship with the environment and the implications of their impact on it.

Opportunities should be provided for every local resident to learn about, understand, relate to and experience all aspects of their built and natural environment and the impacts they have on it.

- 17. Local natural resources are protected and nurtured. The protection of natural features, vistas and natural phenomenon; the provision of public access to and interpretation of them; and the assurance of their long-term sustainability will contribute to a greater understanding of pride in the community and, therefore, contribute to an enhanced sense of community. The municipalities are ideally positioned to ensure that such natural features conserve and enhance the environment.
- 18. The communities are beautiful. The extent to which the Grande Prairie area and its communities are seen by their residents as being visually pleasing is directly related to the potential for creating neighbourhood, community and regional identity, spirit, pride and culture. Therefore, to make the area more beautiful is a social objective worthy of municipal support if and where necessary and feasible. This rests primarily with the beautification elements of the parks service, but also includes such services as art in public places, landscaping around civic structures and the design of high profile civic buildings.
- 19. Municipal facilities are of the highest quality and are sustainable. The indoor and outdoor spaces which local municipalities develop for the use of their citizens and visitors are world class and incorporate all the fundamentals of environmental, social and economic sustainability which ensures their long-term optimal functionality in delivering benefits to the communities.

## **Overarching Concepts**

It is important to note three overarching concepts which apply to the achievement of all 19 Service Outcomes. First, all the objectives are in jeopardy if local citizens do not know how to access existing recreation opportunities. Therefore, local municipalities should ensure that all local citizens are aware of all opportunities that are available to them and how to gain access to each opportunity.

Second, it is important to realize that the above outcomes apply to opportunities for all citizens regardless of ability or skill level, ability to pay or any other possible barriers to access. It is not good enough to simply provide opportunities and hope that people will take advantage of them. In the Grande Prairie area, it is important to proactively ensure that barriers to access are reduced as much as is reasonably possible.

Third, local municipalities have some responsibility to ensure that all residents are generally educated as to the best use of leisure time and the benefits (e.g. growth and fulfillment) that result. This "leisure counselling" function applies to all of the Service Outcomes.

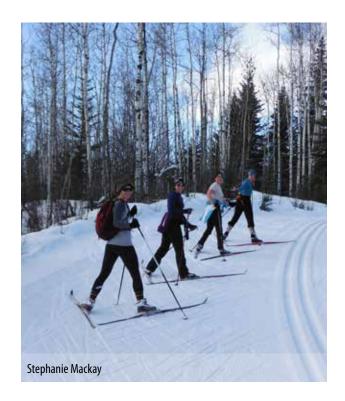
In order to achieve the 19 Service Outcomes described on the previous pages, the municipalities will provide leadership and coordination where necessary. They may also provide services directly where no other group or agency in the community is able or willing to provide the service and where the need is great. The municipalities will also monitor the infrastructure necessary for success in achieving the Service Outcomes. For example, a fees and charges system maybe needed to ensure that those with financial barriers to access are also able to take advantage of opportunities.

## **Guidelines**

The following six guidelines constitute overarching considerations that will influence how the decision-making framework will be implemented.

- 1. The municipalities should become involved in the delivery of recreation services only if and to the extent that a "social good" (i.e. as measured by the 19 Service Outcomes and the three Goals) can be demonstrated. In the process of becoming involved, the municipalities should work with and through other public, not-for-profit and private agencies wherever possible.
- 2. Services should be provided to people at all levels of ability from the most talented participants to people with special needs. However, cost benefit considerations may dictate providing more assistance to the large numbers of people at basic skill levels and below, at the possible expense of serving gifted, high-level athletes or participants.
- 3. All other things being equal, the municipalities should put more emphasis on the variety of recreation services rather than the quantity of recreation services when increasing or reducing service levels. Providing some service for those not receiving any will be more important than providing more service to those already receiving some. In fact, encouraging those that are inactive to become active will be much more important than providing more opportunities to those who are already quite active.
- 4. All other things being equal, the municipalities should put more emphasis on quality of service rather than on quantity of service when increasing or reducing service levels. Providing services at or above appropriate quality standards will be more effective than providing more services at a low-quality level.

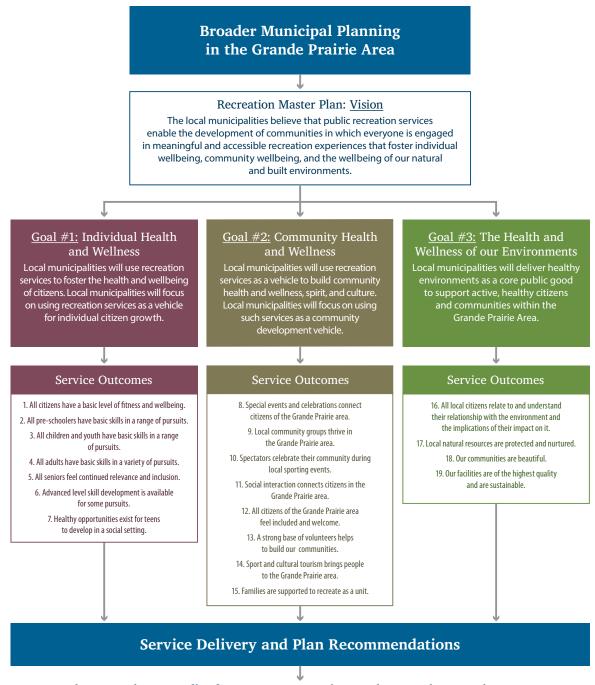
- 5. All other things being equal, the municipalities should facilitate and support others to provide the services rather than providing the services directly. The municipalities cannot do everything alone to achieve the 19 Service Outcomes. They must leverage what they are able to do by working with other public, private and not-for-profit agencies which share this mandate. Local municipalities may also opt out of providing some services which do result in public good but require too much public resource in relation to too little public good, in favour of investing in other initiatives which have a greater return on public investment.
- 6. The municipalities in the Grande Prairie area should attempt to reduce or remove any barriers to public participation in the provision of recreation services, including financial barriers.



## **Foundation Summary**

The accompanying graphic summarizes the planning foundations for future recreation services in the Grande Prairie area.

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities use the Vision, Goals, and desired Service Outcomes to define a rationale for recreation services and to guide future decision-making.



**Enhanced Benefit from Recreation Throughout the Area** 

The follow sections outline recommendations related to recreation service delivery, programming and opportunities, and infrastructure. These recommendations have been developed to further enhance the benefits of recreation in the Grande Prairie area and further the Vision, Goals, and Service Outcomes identified.



For each recommendation, alignment with both the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing and a More Active Alberta has been demonstrated through a graphic. The alignment guide explains.

## Alignment Guide

The strategic themes and associated recommendations contained in this Master Plan align in a variety of way with Active Alberta and the Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing. For each recommendation, an illustration has been provided to demonstrate how both of these two important initiatives are furthered. The following images will be highlighted if the recommendation aligns with it.

For more information on the two documents please refer to the "State of Recreation" report (under separate cover).

#### **Active Alberta**



**Active Albertans** 



**Active Communities** 



**Active Outdoors** 



**Active Engagement** 



**Active Coordinated System** 



Active Pursuit of Excellence

# A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing



Goal 1: Active Living



Goal 2: Inclusion and Access



Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature



Goal 4: Supportive Environments



Goal 5: Recreation Capacity

# Service Delivery

4

The delivery of recreation services and facilities in the Grande Prairie area is the product of the efforts of a variety of public, non-profit, and private sector organizations and individuals. Due to the diversity of opportunities provided, not all stakeholders are working in complete alignment and collaboration and nor should they be. There are many aspects of recreation service delivery that are only pertinent to specific providers or activities. The following strategic discussion is focused on the role that local municipalities have in providing recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.



In 2016, local municipalities in the area either directly operate or financially support over \$600 million worth of indoor recreation facilities and over \$100 million worth of outdoor recreation infrastructure to service over 82,000 residents. Within the boundaries of the Grande Prairie area (and surrounding portions of the M.D. of Greenview) the following can be found.

- 13 sheets of indoor ice at 11 facilities
- 28 sheets of curling ice at 8 facilities
- · 2 indoor pools
- 8 libraries
- 3 indoor fields
- 5 community gymnasiums
- 25 community halls
- 3 indoor agricultural facilities
- 56 rectangular fields (plus 1 artificial turf)

- 50 ball diamonds
- 139 playgrounds
- 80+ km of paved trails
- 18 campgrounds
- 24 tennis courts
- 15 outdoor boarded rinks
- 6 skateboard parks
- 1 outdoor track and field facility
- 2 outdoor pool
- 4 spray parks

An overview of how the recreation amenities are distributed throughout the area is presented below.

Indoor Facility	City of Grande Prairie	County of Grande Prairie	Sexsmith	Beaverlodge	Wembley	Hythe	M.D. of Greenview (DeBolt and Grovedale)	Total
Ice Arena Facilities	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	11
Ice Arena Sheets	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	13
Curling Rinks	1	3	1	1	0	1	1	8
Curling Sheets	8	6	4	3	0	3	4	28
Aquatics Facilities	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Fitness Centres	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Walking/Running Tracks	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Community Halls	1	20	2	1	0	1	0	25
Indoor Playgrounds	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gymnasium Facilities (community)	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
Indoor Fields	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Libraries	1	3	1	1	1	1	0	8
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3

Outdoor Facility	City of Grande Prairie	County of Grande Prairie	Sexsmith	Beaverlodge	Wembley	Hythe	Total
Ball Diamonds	19	9	4	5	2	2	50
Rectangular Fields	36	10	1	7	1	1	56
Campgrounds	3	11	1	1	1	1	18
Off Leash Dog Parks	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Outdoor Pools	1	0	0	0	0	1 2	2
Outdoor Rinks	10	0	4	1	0	0	15
Spray Parks	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Tennis Courts	16	2	2	2	2	0	24
Skateboard Parks	2	1	1	1	1	0	6
Track and Field Facility	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

It is important to note that there are trails and privately and publicly owned lands throughout the rural areas of the County that accommodate off highway vehicle and equine trail users as well as residents and visitors who participate in hunting and fishing activities. Beyond the levels of infrastructure currently provided, local municipalities staff and operate facilities, schedule and allocate time in facilities and spaces, and deliver programs and opportunities for residents. Local municipalities invest heavily in recreation and regional residents benefit from this investment both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, local municipalities invest resources (financial and human) in assisting non-profit recreation groups that provide programs and services for regional residents and visitors.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2011 StatsCan population data and 2013 Alberta Municipal Affairs spending data, in total, local municipalities in the Grande Prairie area spend over \$700 per capita on recreation services.

<sup>2</sup> The outdoor pool in Hythe was not operational in 2015.

# The Grande Prairie Area Working Together

The County of Grande Prairie, the City of Grande Prairie, the Towns of Sexsmith, Beaverlodge, and Wembley, and the Village of Hythe all invest in and offer recreation facilities and services. In some instances, more than one municipality is implicated in a certain facility or service, yet in most cases facilities and services are provided independently. The strategic planning contained in this Master Plan is focused on achieving enhanced recreation service levels for residents and visitors. The strategies and recommendations presented can be applicable to each independent municipality throughout the area as well as municipal partnerships that exist, or are developed, within the area.

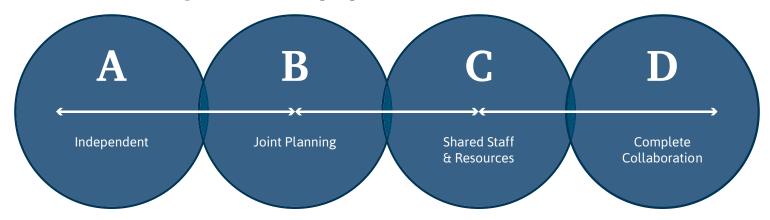
Within a regional recreation context, municipalities can work together in a variety of different ways. There are examples in Alberta of jointly owned (more than one municipality), funded and operated recreation facilities and services where a partnership (typically a Part Nine Company) consisting of more than one regional municipality accepts direct responsibility for service provision. There is also a variety of regional cost sharing agreements in place between municipalities where one has direct responsibility and another (or more) contribute financially to service provision based on an agreed set of criteria. Looking beyond the Alberta borders into other provinces, there are examples of regional service commissions which act as another level of local government responsible for certain types of municipal services like fire and protective services, water servicing, and recreation.

As there are many options for local municipalities to work together to deliver recreation facilities and services and ultimately achieve recreation-related service outcomes, this Master Plan attempts to define a level of local municipal interaction appropriate for specific recommendations; some involving local governments working together and some retaining complete municipal independence. Of note is that 76% of area residents strongly agreed that area municipalities should work together to provide recreation opportunities for residents; a further 18% somewhat agreed and only 2% disagreed.

## **Household Survey**

Ninety-four percent (94%) of area residents strongly or somewhat agreed that municipalities in the Grande Prairie area should work together to provide recreation opportunities for residents.

## A Spectrum of Working Together to Provide Recreation Services



In order to move forward and work together more in the Grande Prairie area, municipalities need to commit to partnerships and the idea that some recreation resources are regional while some are not (see the "A Path to Working Together" graphic).

The following sections further explore these steps and provide Strategic Directions and recommendations. It is important to note that a vital next step to the implementation of the Plan is to get acceptance and confirmation on these three steps.

# Recreation Governance and Decision-Making

Recreation services and facilities impact a variety of other municipal departments and functions. It is very important that the recreation agenda in the Grande Prairie area is considered in decision-making and operations to ensure that public investment and efforts are coordinated and optimized. For instance, if a municipal reserve land is invested in by recreation stakeholders as a park site and planning officials intend to repurpose the parcel to accommodate a school or affordable housing initiative, the recreation function needs to be considered (and potentially replaced) as part of the project. Furthermore, it is important for all recreation providers to be in constant communication to ensure that services are coordinated and duplication avoided.

Recreation impacts municipal planning, economic development, and transportation departments. Quality recreation experiences can be the pride of a community; alternatively, negative experiences can be the cause of political discomfort. Ensuring that recreation has a voice within local municipalities should continue to be a focus of recreation professionals especially when strategic planning and land development approvals are taking place.

## A Path to Working Together

# **Step One**

Determine which Grande Prarie Area municipalities should be involved and which are willing to commit.

# **Step Two**

Define what constitutes a regional recreation resource or source.

# **Step Three**

Determine the best approach to share responsibility for recreation resources.

The formation of the Joint County-City Recreation Committee is an excellent example of internal communication and liaison between Grande Prairie area municipalities. This type of interaction is integral in ensuring that investment in recreation throughout the area is optimized and resident needs are best met. The current Terms of Reference for the Committee defines representation from the City of Grande Prairie and the County of Grande Prairie.

The ongoing operation of the Joint County-City Recreation Committee is important and should be the catalyst for the recommendations of this Master Plan being achieved. Moving forward, it may be pertinent to also include responsibilities from other Grande Prairie area municipalities on the Committee (or under a new terms of reference and name). As well, the formation of an administrative body, similar to that created for the development of this Plan (involving representatives from the City, County, and Sport Council as well as other area municipalities if applicable) is recommended to support the ongoing work of the committee and the implementation of the Master Plan. It will also lead to higher levels of administrative interaction and coordination regarding recreation service delivery.

As this Master Plan is accepted by Grande Prairie area municipalities, it has the potential to align strategic vision and priorities regarding regionallevel recreation services. Careful thought should be put into how the Plan is formalized and how it implicates area municipalities.

Service Delivery

It is recommended that the Joint County-City Recreation Committee (or an expanded group) continue to provide guidance to recreation service delivery through the implementation of this Master Plan. Furthermore, an administrative body should be formed to support the ongoing work of the Committee

Level of Cooperation						
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.						
Provide guidance and decision- making regarding the provision of regional-level recreation services.	Participate in Committee work at the political and administrative level and ensure that local service delivery is aligned with regional initiatives.	Participate in Committee work at the political and administrative level and ensure that local service delivery is aligned with regional initiatives.	Utilize local recreation boards to oversee regional-level matters.			



### Alignment with the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing Goals



**Active Living** 



Inclusion and Access



**Connecting People and Nature** 





# **Regional Recreation Facilities**

A major expenditure for local government as it relates to recreation is in the provision of indoor recreation facilities. In developing a Recreation Master Plan for the Grande Prairie area, determining which types of existing and/or new facilities should be considered regional and which are more appropriate to be the responsibility of an independent municipality is a key issue to address. Before any cooperation between Grande Prairie area municipalities can be defined and standardized, it is necessary to dictate what constitutes a regional facility.

Defining the regional appeal of recreation facilities in the Grande Prairie area is should be based primarily upon the type and scope of facilities (including level of investment required); a secondary consideration is the market catchment area defined by benefit accrued to users and non-users of the facility in question. The following three-step process explains:

# Potential Regional Facilities Due to Scope and Cost Market Catchment Area Benefit Achieved

## **Household Survey**

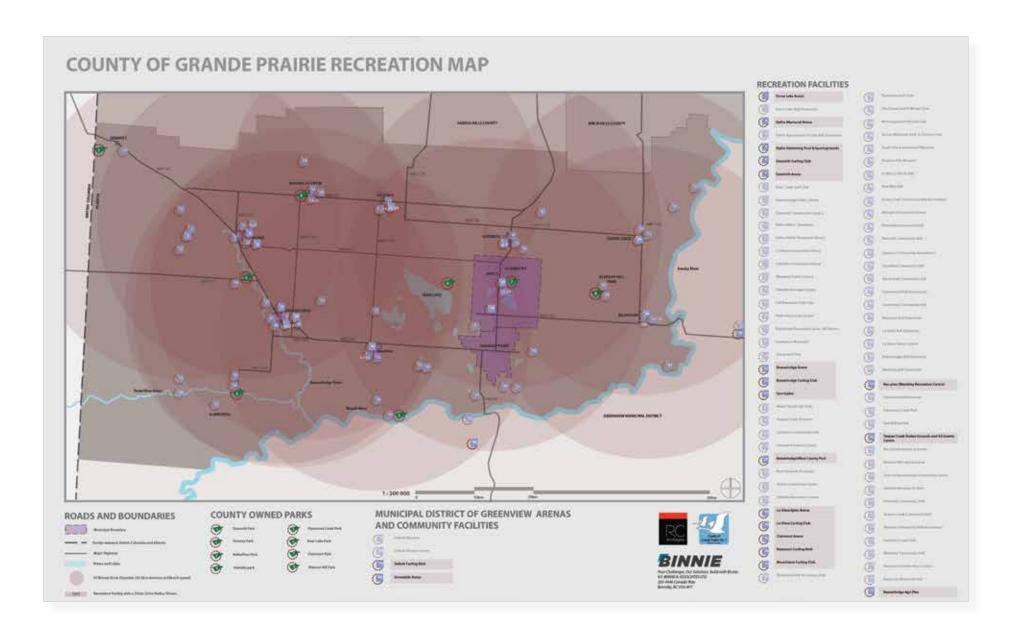
71% of respondents from the entire Grande Prairie area used the Eastlink Centre in the previous year.

Indoor aquatics facilities, ice arenas, curling rinks, indoor fields, and community halls with banquet capacity of over 500 are all classified as regional facilities. As such, the planning, development, operations, and maintenance of these facilities implicate more than one municipality in the Grande Prairie area. The size, scope, and investment required to operate each of these facilities is such that they require significant ongoing resources; in some cases investment beyond the capacity of the local municipality in which they are located. It is also important to note that there are a variety of spaces throughout the Grande Prairie Area that are utilized for activities such as off highway vehicles, equine trail riding, hunting, and fishing that should be considered regional amenities despite the lower operating costs associated with each.



Regional Facility Category	Current Inventory	Location
Indoor Aquatics Facilities	2	Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge
Outdoor Aquatics	2 1	Grande Prairie
Ice Arenas	11 facilities (13 sheets)	Grande Prairie (4), Wembley (1), Clairmont (3), La Glace (1), Beaverlodge (1), Sexsmith (1), Hythe (1), and Grovedale (1)
Indoor Fields	3	Clairmont (1) and Grande Prairie (2)
Curling Rinks	8 facilities (28 sheet)	Hythe (3), Sexsmith (4), Beaverlodge (3), Grande Prairie (8), Bezanson (2), La Glace (2), Mountain View (2), DeBolt (4)
Community Halls (500+ banquet capacity)	2	Grande Prairie and Evergreen Park
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	3	Evergreen Park, Beaverlodge, and Teepee Creek
Outdoor Track and Field Facilities	1	Grande Prairie
Artificial Turf, Performance Fields	1	Grande Prairie
<b>Major Outdoor Sport Tournament Venues</b>	4	Grande Prairie (1), Clairmont (2), Beaverlodge (1)
Specialty Areas (ski hills, natural areas)	3	M.D. Greenview (Nitehawk Adventure Park), County of Grande Prairie (Wapiti River Corridor), and Wapiti Nordic Ski Club

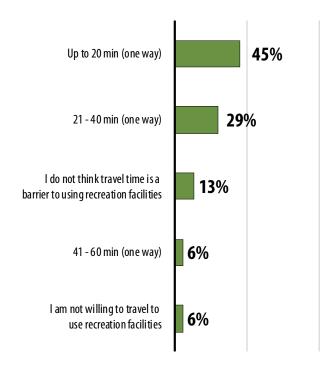
The outdoor pool in Hythe was not operational in 2015.



Further to the definition of regional facilities presented, other attributes can be applied to each type of facility to determine how many Grande Prairie area municipalities may have responsibility for regional facility operations. The majority of regional residents (94%) have stated that up to 20 minutes of travel time (one-way) is acceptable; of those, 48% indicated up to 40 minutes of travel time (one way) would not deter participation. Assuming that the market catchment area is defined by a 20 km and a 40 km radius around regional facilities, where catchment areas cross boundaries, local municipalities become implicated in their respective operations.

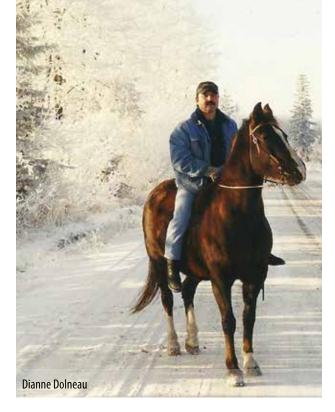
The maps on the following pages outline potential regional facilities and indicate a 20 minute and 40 minute driving radius.

Generally, what is the approximate amount of time you are willing to travel to recreation facilities before travel becomes a barrier?

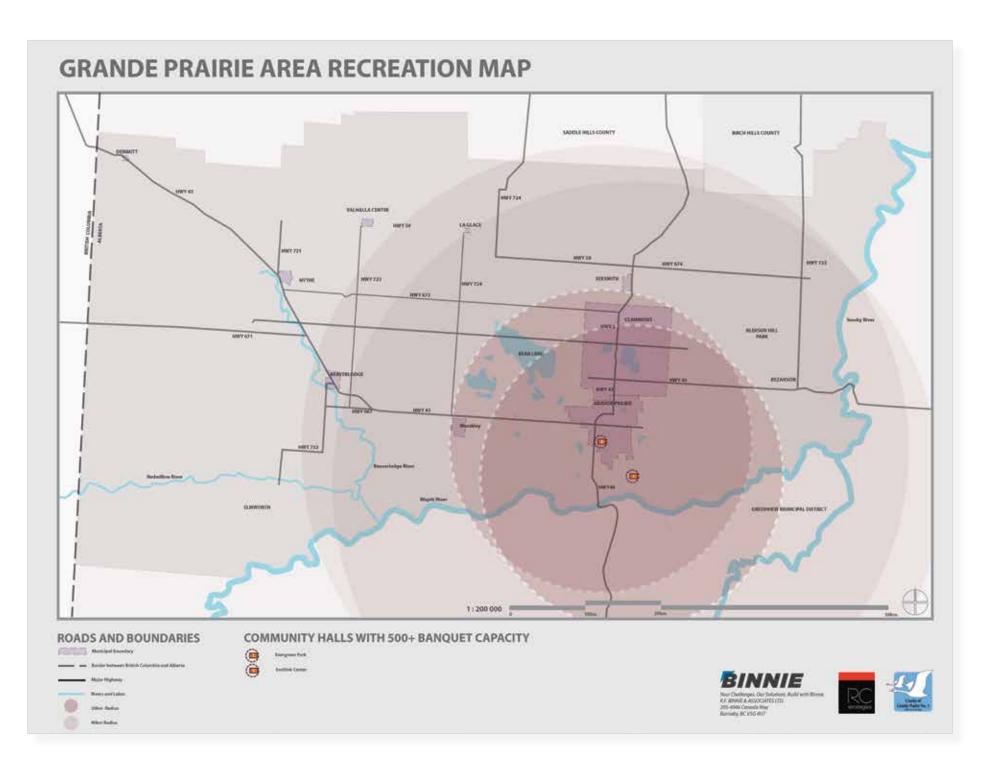


## **Household Survey**

94% of respondents are willing to travel at least 20 minutes to use recreation facilities.

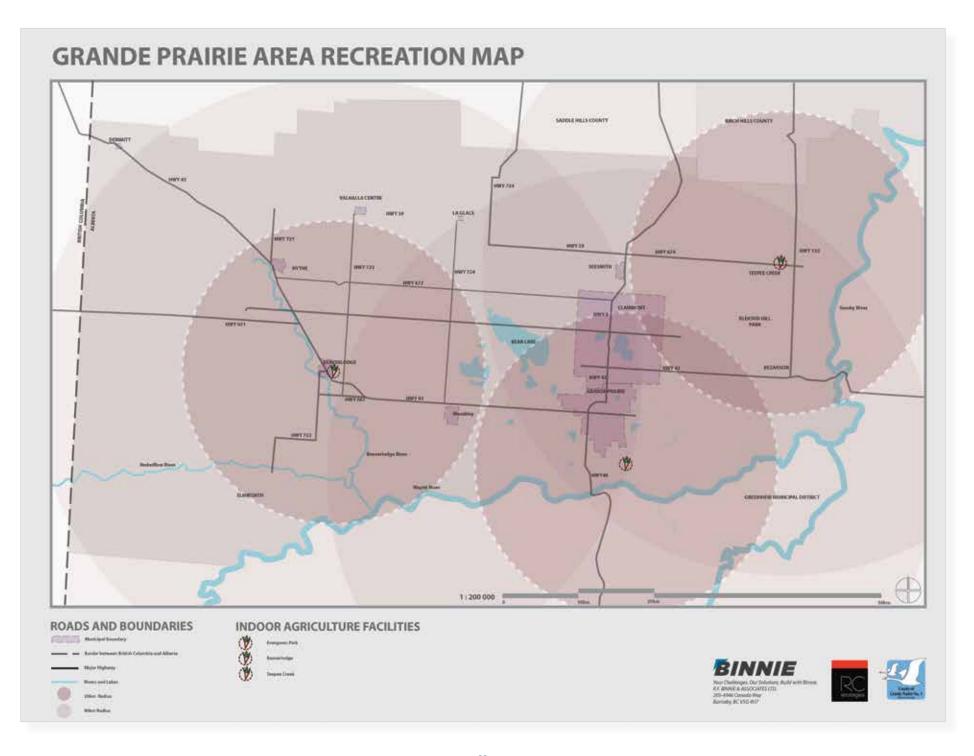


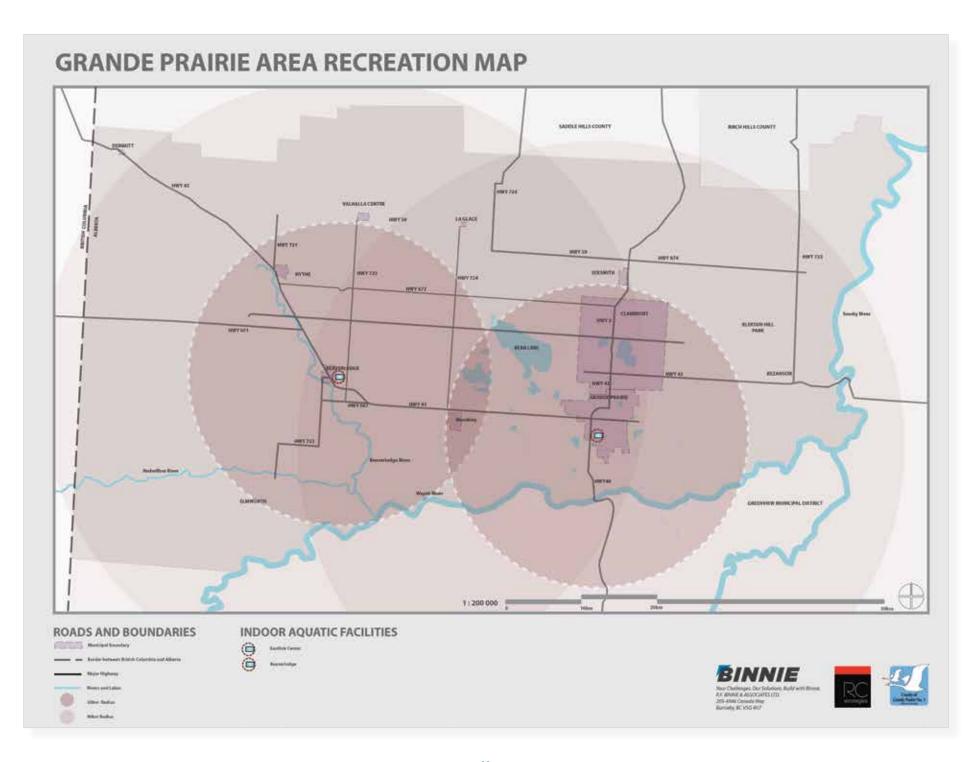




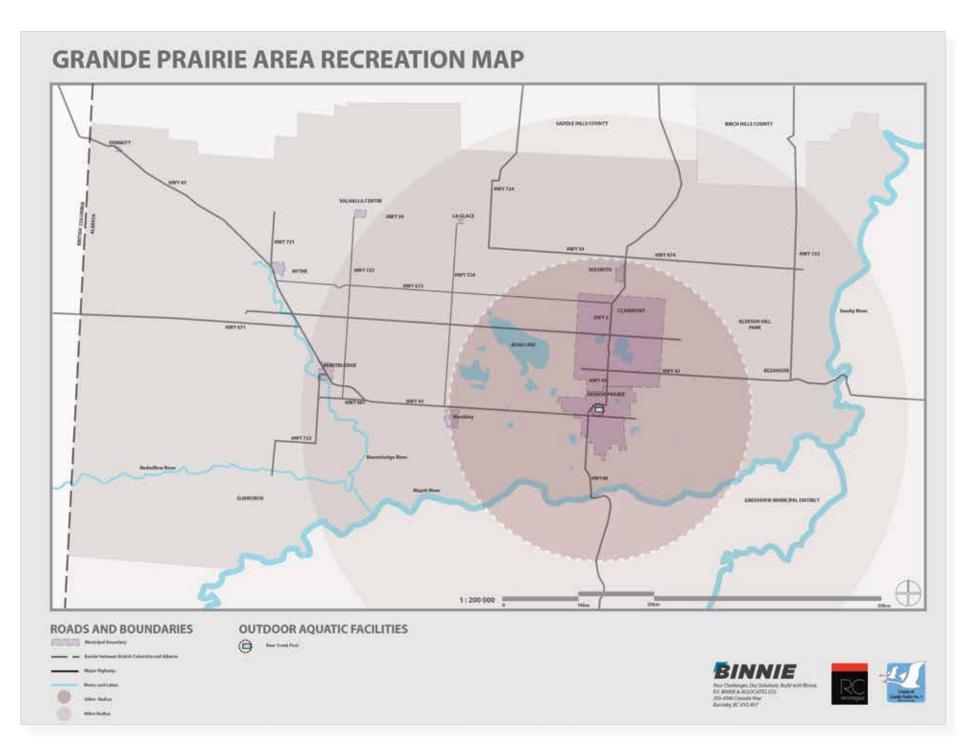
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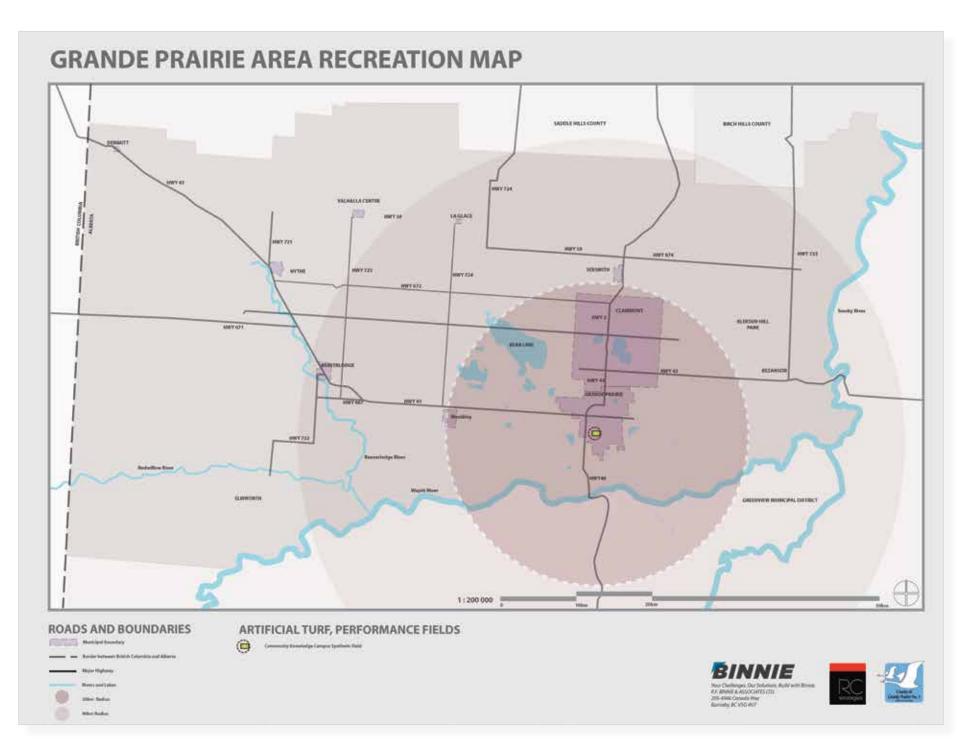




# **GRANDE PRAIRIE AREA RECREATION MAP** SADULE HELIS COUNTY BUICH HELE COUNTY WALHALLA CENTRE LAGLACE HWY 725 HWYELE HWY KIN WWY723 MYTHE. HWYATZ 1:200:000 INDOOR FIELDS **ROADS AND BOUNDARIES** (1) BINNE Nor Christopic Du Folizion, Buld with Blima 87 ARNIE A SOCIATES (TS) 205-684 Canado Ney Samulty SC VSG 687

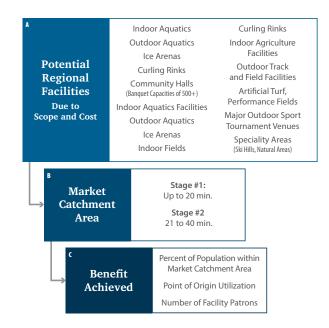


### **GRANDE PRAIRIE AREA RECREATION MAP** SADULE HELS COUNTY BURCH HELS COUNTY WALHALLA CENTRA BAGLACE HWYTEE STATEM. HWY 722 STYTHE HWY KEE 1:200:000 == MAJOR OUTDOOR SPORT TOURNAMENT VENUES **ROADS AND BOUNDARIES** BINNE Nov Christope, Dur Solution, Build with Blimas RX ARNIE A 650CHTSSTIT 205-684 Canado Ney Barnathy RC VSG 687



The degree to which more than one local municipality becomes responsible for regional facility provision is further defined by the benefit achieved. Benefits achieved can be defined in two ways: the overall population of each municipality in the market catchment area or the proportionate point of origin of actual facility users. For example, if total market area is utilized, the market catchment area for the Eastlink Centre at a 40 km radius includes 68,556 City residents, 10,000 County residents and 2.418 Sexsmith residents. This creates a total market area of 80,974 residents and the proportionate responsibility would be 85% City: 12% County: 3% Town. If actual utilization is used, the demographics of user data would define the proportionate responsibility. This approach would imply the following:

- Only certain types of facilities are regional (due to scope and cost);
- There are two stages of market catchment area (due to driving distance);
- Benefit, as defined by facility accessibility and/or actual use, will determine the allocation of responsibility between regional municipalities (defined by percentage of population, origin of users, or number of patrons [users and spectators; to be determined]).





It is recommended that an agreed process be utilized to define regional recreation facilities and services in the Grande Prairie area.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.	
Accept definition of regional facilities and				
associated responsibilities.	associated responsibilities.	associated responsibilities.	associated responsibilities.	



















Connecting People and Nature

**Supportive Environments** 

Recreation Capacity

#### **Cost Sharing**

The current practice for distributing the costs associated with recreation service provision throughout the Grande Prairie area is primarily achieved through the distribution of annual grants (typically City or Countysponsored), and via a revenue sharing agreement between the City and County that is earmarked to support facilities. Beyond the scope of recreation, regional municipalities are also engaged in joint operating agreements for certain municipal services (e.g. Regional Animal Pound). Under the current approach, there is little certainty as to yearover-year contributions made by any area municipality. There is also a lack of defined parameters around why and how the costs of providing recreation opportunities are shared among more than one regional municipality. Although there are no best or leading practices (nor legislated models) by which recreation costs are shared among regional municipalities, it is common to find structured cost sharing agreements between municipalities that are based on parameters such as:

- User point of origin (i.e. % of residents utilizing facilities);
- Proportion of population in defined catchment areas (i.e. % of overall population in a catchment area);
- Per facility or space contributions (i.e. \$5,000 per arena, etc.); or on
- A percentage of overall deficit (i.e. 50% of annual operating deficit).

All of these examples are demonstrated in situations where independent ownership and operational responsibility for facilities and spaces are observed. There are also examples of more than one regional municipality owning and operating a certain facility or space under a separate corporation under a joint responsibility and risk scenario.

As the region currently does not have a standardized approach to recreation cost sharing, nor consistent, defined, and reliable parameters for cost sharing to occur, revisiting cost sharing on a regional basis is recommended. Of note is that cost sharing can, and should, flow in multiple directions as each regional municipality has an independent role in providing recreation to residents. For this reason, final cost sharing transactions should be netted out each year.

Service Delivery

It is recommended that a new conversation around regional cost sharing be initiated with a focus on regional facilities and spaces as defined herein and with the realization that cost sharing will be guided in multiple directions.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.				
Engage in discussion around revised	Expect cost sharing to flow in	Expect cost sharing to flow in	Expect cost sharing to flow in	
approach to cost sharing.	multiple directions.	multiple directions.	multiple directions.	



#### Alignment with the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing Goals







**Inclusion and Access** 



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 

As regional facilities and spaces have been defined previously, any revision to current practice related to regional cost sharing is only applicable to agreed upon regional facilities and spaces. The terms of cost sharing need to be agreed upon and should focus on the following list of regional facilities and spaces:

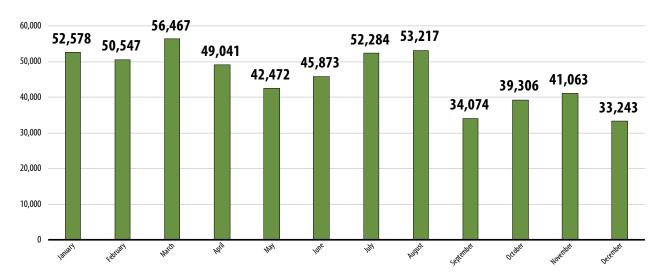
- Indoor aquatics facilities
- Outdoor aquatics
- · Ice arenas

- Indoor fields
- Curling rinks
- Community halls with 500+ banquet capacity
- Indoor agriculture facilities
- · Outdoor track and field facilities
- Artificial turf, performance fields
- Major outdoor sport tournament venues
- Specialty areas (ski hills, natural areas)

#### **Data Collection**

#### Pool Visits Monthly Averages (2013 – 2015)

The collection of data is important in determining and measuring benefits achieved from recreation investment and in understanding current and future success. Currently, data collection throughout the area is not standardized, although statistics do exist for some facilities with rental spaces. The current data does not allow progress reporting to be completed or allow regional facility definition (as explained earlier) to occur. Facility utilization data that should be collected includes, but is not limited to, total facility/space usage (by hour and by participant), user point of origin, percent capacity use (utilized hours divided by total available hours), user satisfaction, and facility/ space operating cost recovery. Collecting this data on a standardized basis throughout the area will be essential in assessing the overall impact of recreation, benchmarking future performance, and serving as a reference for the frameworks and systems outlined in this Master Plan.



The following charts provide example templates for collecting utilization data.

Arena Utilization: Crosslink County Sportsplex Chris McMillan Rink October 2014 – March 2015

Time Category	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	285.25	1,216	23%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	968.5	1,213.5	80%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	172.5	360	48%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	611.75	719	85%
Total	2,038	3,508.5	58%

Fitness Centre Utilization: Eastlink Centre 2013 – 2015

Time Category	2013	2014	2015
Fitness Registrations	18	158	73
Weight Room Physical Head Counts	32,059	195,850	178,811
Fitness Class Physical Head Counts	48,990	37,679	32,726
Fitness Drop-Ins	3,341	3,956	3,567
Weight Room Drop-Ins	18,233	18,975	18,811

Point of Origin: Facility Drop-In Users 2016

Point of Origin	Number of Drop Ins	Percentage
County of Grande Prairie	400	40%
City of Grande Prairie	200	20%
Sexsmith	100	10%
Wembley	100	10%
Beaverlodge	100	10%
Hythe	50	5%
M.D. of Greenview	30	3%
Other	20	2%
Total	1,000	100%

## 5 Service Delivery

## It is recommended that standardized facility usage and user data collection be undertaken across the Grande Prairie area.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.				
Develop protocol and templates	Collect data as per regional	Collect data as per regional	Collect data as per regional	
for data collection.	protocol and template.	protocol and template.	protocol and template.	

#### Alignment with Active Alberta













Active Communities

Active Out

**Active Engagement** 

Active Coordinated System

Active Excellen











**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 



#### **Community Dialogue**

Recreation perferences are subjective. Residents and stakeholders have varying opinions and choose to participate in a variety of different recreation activities. In order for local government to best understand community preferences for recreation and balance a variety of different interests, ongoing communications with the market is both valuable and necessary.

During the development of this Master Plan, a variety of tactics were utilized to collect information from residents, user groups, and community stakeholders. The results of the dialogue with residents throughout the area have been inclusive and are representative of both the entire region as well as the independent municipalities within it. Input received from residents and groups has been utilized to feed decision-making frameworks contained herein and can be referenced to understand current satisfaction with, and effectiveness of, publicly funded recreation opportunities. Judging by the level of engagement experienced, residents and groups value being engaged in recreation service planning.

In order to stay "in touch" with the recreation market in the Grande Prairie area, ongoing emphasis will have to be placed on gathering data periodically. Once multiple data sets are collected, local trend information will emerge and strategic action can be refined based on recent and reliable information.

The Alberta Recreation Survey is a survey of Alberta households conducted by the Government of Alberta approximately every four years. The survey has been facilitated since 1981. The survey allows for recreation participation trends and preferences in Alberta to be observed and measured.

Tactic	Description	Recommended Frequency	General Public	Stakeholder Groups	Special Interests	Student/ Youth
Surveys						
Resident	A statistically reliable survey conducted with residents. Utilizing a similar survey instrument will allow trends to be identified. Each household provides a single response.  • Methodologies: Mailout and online with unique access code.	4 –5 Years	•			
Public	Fielded on those years when the resident survey is not conducted. Provides an ongoing mechanism to gather the perspectives of the public. Responses are by individual person not household.	Annually	•			
Community Group	A survey of organized community groups delivering recreation services to residents. May be fielded online or through hard copy. One response is required per group regardless of size.	4 –5 Years		•		
Student/ Youth	A survey of youth in the community. Conducted online or through hard copy and promoted through schools. Fielded with youth in grade 6 and up.	4 –5 Years				•
Focus Group	s/Discussion Sessions					
User Groups	Convene discussion sessions with community groups. Typically grouped with similar interests (e.g. ice user groups). Provides the opportunity to understand the perspectives of users regarding a commonly used service.	4 –5 Years (Or As Needed)		•		
Interest Groups	A collective discussion with communities of interest that are not user groups. These groups could be other service providers (e.g. agricultural societies, developers).	4 –5 Years (Or As Needed)			•	
Interviews						
Stakeholders	Interviews/meetings with a small number of people representing a single interest. These enable a more in-depth understanding of the single interest. These interviews provide insight into recreation provision and issues (e.g. partners in service provision, key champions).	4 –5 Years (Or As Needed)			•	

Ongoing collection of market information already occurs in some municipalities, but there is no formal public engagement program for recreation in the area. If designed properly, a regional approach could feed local decision-making and complement independent consultation efforts while supporting regional-level decision-making. The approach taken in the development of this Plan should form the basis for future engagement efforts. The preceding table outlines the tactics used and recommends a future frequency for each. It is important to note that one, all, or a subset of these tactics could be utilized on an ongoing basis.

Local municipalities now own the survey instruments required to collect data from residents and stakeholders; the only investment required will be to facilitate ongoing data collection and report on findings.

Another important consideration in engaging with the market on an ongoing basis is through the communications and implementation of this Recreation Master Plan. It is important to share Plan successes as recommendations are implemented and success observed. Ensuring that all actions derived from the plan are branded is important. Creating a web-based presence for the Master Plan will enable residents and stakeholders to further understand and follow Plan recommendations.

#### **Active Alberta**

**Active Engagement:** Albertans are engaged in activity and in their communities.

Service Delivery

It is recommended that an ongoing regional recreation engagement process, including the development and maintenance of a webbased Master Plan interface, be agreed to and implemented.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.				
Develop formal engagement protocol and administer on an	Assist in implementation and use data gathered to guide local	Assist in implementation and use data gathered to guide local	Assist in implementation and use data gathered to guide local	
ongoing basis.	decision-making.	decision-making.	decision-making.	













nments Recreation Capacity

## Group and Stakeholder Support

Recreation service delivery is the product of the efforts of many stakeholders. This system of delivery includes volunteers, non-profit groups, senior levels of government, the private sector, and local municipalities. Building capacity in the recreation sector is important as it ensures the sustainability of current services and enables public investment to be leveraged. Recreation participation, either as a participant, organizer or volunteer, leads to community connectedness and wellbeing. Developing capacity in the delivery system creates community leaders and strengthens the fabric of the area and the communities within it.

Organized interest groups, such as minor sport groups or community associations, provide opportunities that are accessed by area residents. These interest groups represent different levels of sophistication and different types of activities. The supports offered to these interest groups include access to financial assistance (via grants offered by the County and the City) and subsidized access to facilities and spaces where programs occur (user fees at public recreation facilities and spaces do not garner 100% operational cost recovery and thus are tax-supported). The reality of the situation is that if these interest groups discontinued service, either the level of service in the area would be diminished or the local governments would be forced to offer the program or opportunity directly. These interest groups help further the important recreation service outcomes to different degrees.

**Local Context** 

City of Grande Prairie: Council Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018)

• Strategic Direction:
Partner with community groups.

In many cases, local municipalities understand the value of organized interest groups in the provision of recreation opportunities and have taken on a support role to help groups further achieve their program goals. The Grande Prairie Sport Council is an example of outreach, as it is supported by local municipalities and provides services that help build interest-group capacity. Through the work of the Sport Council, independent efforts, and the provision of facilities and spaces for activities to occur, local municipalities can fill the following roles as they relates to supporting interest groups.

- Being an enabler: through capacity-building tools and initiatives.
- Being a funder: through the provision of grants and helping to leverage other sources of funding and resources.
- Being a facilitator/community developer: through volunteer training, supports and resources.
- Being a convenor/facilitator: through community forums and bringing the community together on topic-specific agendas to enhance opportunities for collaboration, networking, and growth.
- Being a major provider of indoor facilities and open spaces used by interest groups.

Providing supports for groups that build capacity such as helping to recruit volunteers; helping groups develop business plans and strategic plans; and helping groups apply for assistance from external organizations (e.g. grants from other levels of government, attaining private sponsorship, etc.) can lead to strengthened group sustainability and better levels of service to residents. Providing training and knowledge development for groups can have many benefits, not only internally for the interest group but also personally (e.g. for those attaining training) and can increase the quality of the program ultimately being delivered to residents.



In partnership, the Grande Prairie Be Fit For Life Centre, the City of Grande Prairie, the County of Grande Prairie and the Grande Prairie Sport Council developed a support program for local groups that provides training in physical literacy, High Five, and other group development opportunities.



When providing support to partner groups, it is important to recognize that all groups are not the same (see image below). Support provided must be equitable and appropriate. The ultimate goal of local municipalities should be to enable partner groups to be successful and independent—the essence of community development.

#### **Group Evolution**



Some of the key challenges that groups in the Grande Prairie area face are enhancing promotions and marketing, and the lack of awareness of grants and their application processes. Volunteerism trends also influence the impact the interest groups can have in delivering quality programs to residents.



It is recommended that local municipalities continue to provide support to local interest groups through the Sport Council and other means.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.	
Pool resources to provide supports and guidance to all Grande Prairie area groups.	Continue to provide support to local groups and ensure they are aware of regional development opportunities offered.	Continue to provide support to local groups and ensure they are aware of regional development opportunities offered.	Continue to provide support to local groups and ensure they are aware of regional development opportunities offered.	













Connecting People and Nature

Supportive Environments

Recreation Capacity

#### **Bolstering Volunteerism**

The recreation delivery system depends on volunteers. Volunteerism is changing; younger generations are seeking different types of volunteer opportunities (episodic, developmental) and the recreation sector needs to adapt. A key challenge facing local recreation delivery groups is volunteer attraction, retention, and burnout.

The Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau (GPVSB) provides advisory and support services to GPVSB member agencies and volunteer-based organizations. GPVSB also collaborates and works collectively with other agencies and individuals on matters of common concern to the non-profit sector in the city of Grande Prairie and surrounding area. The GPVSB currently works with some recreation groups; however, only a few are included in their databases as members. The Grande Prairie Sport Council also provides volunteer development opportunities and works with the GPVSB in connecting volunteers to sport-related opportunities.

Volunteer reward and/or recognition programs, and efforts placed on connecting residents who want to volunteer with organizations who need volunteers, are two common ways that municipalities can help enhance volunteerism in Alberta communities. Volunteer training, for both those who volunteer (e.g. professional development opportunities, coaching certifications, High Five training for volunteers involved with children, etc.) is also an area where municipalities can help enhance volunteerism in a community and provide guidance and assistance to groups looking for volunteers. Finally, enabling organizations to strategically think about the "new volunteer," what kind of opportunities they seek, how to attract and retain them, and so on, can also improve the state of volunteerism in the area.

#### **Trends and Leading Practices**

Volunteers continue to be vitally important to the planning and delivery of numerous events and programs.

**HIGH FIVE**® is a quality assurance program for those involved in delivering recreation and sport programs for children aged 6 – 12. HIGH FIVE provides a range of training, assessment tools and resources to ensure that organizations can deliver the highest quality programs possible. HIGH FIVE ensures leaders, coaches, and instructors have the tools and knowledge to nurture a child's mental health and create positive experiences for children. (www.highfive.org)

#### It is recommended that local municipalities support efforts to bolster volunteerism.

Service Delivery

Level of Cooperation					
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.		
Provide volunteer professional development opportunities accessible to residents from all areas.	Maintain and manage volunteer and opportunity rosters in partnership with the GPVSB, Sport Council, or other like organizations;	Maintain and manage volunteer and opportunity rosters in partnership with the GPVSB, Sport Council, or other like organizations;	Maintain and manage volunteer and opportunity rosters in partnership with the GPVSB, Sport Council, or other like organizations;		
	continue to recognize and support local volunteers.	continue to recognize and support local volunteers.	continue to recognize and support local volunteers.		

#### **Alignment with Active Alberta**









Active Outdoors



**Active Engagement** 



**Active Coordinated System** 















**Supportive Environments** 

**Recreation Capacity** 

### Marketing and Promotions

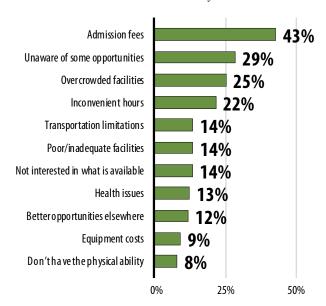
It is apparent that more residents need to be more active and engaged in the outdoors. To do so, they need to know where they can participate as well as why it is a good idea to do so. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of area residents indicated that a barrier to participation in recreation for their household was that they were "unaware of opportunities." Approximately one-third of households (35%) stated "marketing of programs" is a required improvement. From the utilization information received and the consultation results indicating facility and space visits, we know that facilities and spaces in the Grande Prairie area are not utilized to full capacity.

Moving forward, promotions and marketing of recreation opportunities should remain a focus area for municipalities in the Grande Prairie area. As the markets for recreation facilities and spaces do not align with municipal boundaries, coordinated and/or combined efforts in promoting and marketing regional recreation opportunities is warranted and should be facilitated either through the Joint County-City Recreation Committee or another organization such as the Grande Prairie Sport Council or the Grande Prairie Be Fit For Life Centre. Regardless of the organization, public awareness of both benefits and opportunities is vital to ensuring that recreation and parks are perceived as essential, valued services, and that public investment in these services continues to deliver the greatest social/public good.

#### **Student Survey**

30% indicated "unaware of some opportunities" as a barrier to recreation participation.

#### Barriers to Recreation Participation Household Survey



Educating the public about the opportunities available as well as reasons to participate will further the benefits achieved. Education is an important aspect of service delivery and one that local municipalities may need to take a lead role in delivering, potentially with other cross-sectoral partners in health, education, and justice.

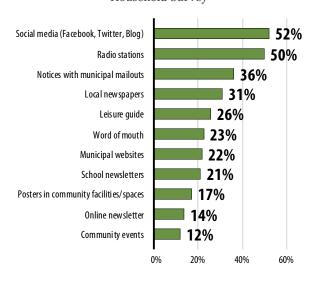
Deriving appropriate key messages and delivering them in effective ways contributes to "good" marketing. Currently, over 50% of regional households find out about recreation and parks opportunities through social media and local radio stations.

Of note is that community-based groups have also indicated a desire to have Grande Prairie area municipalities assist with promotions and awareness, thereby helping them achieve their program goals. Some assistance is currently provided to local groups by municipalities via various leisure guides.

Enhancing public messaging to include the benefits of recreation and parks and ensuring that as many opportunities as possible are shared with residents will help motivate participation, while also building community perception and political support for these essential public services.

The development and implementation of a promotions and marketing plan involves outlining key recreation and parks messages and providing a means for evaluating how effectively the messages are being delivered.

#### Best Communication Methods Household Survey



Key messages could include the following:

- The general public, community-based groups, and municipal staff telling success stories regarding the benefits (achievement of service outcomes) of participating in recreation and parks opportunities
- Statistically reliable public engagement activities (e.g. surveys on Master Plan process and other public consultations) showing overall public support of, and participation in, recreation and parks opportunities

- Using participation/usage statistics from recreation and parks programs and facility memberships to generate annual indicators (e.g. percentage of population participating) or special community participation challenges (e.g. Mayor and Reeve healthy lifestyle competitions)
- Current research on recreation and parks from external sources, such as ARPA, the National Benefits Hub, and the Leisure Information Network
- Estimates of the positive economic impact of recreation and parks in the community, including non-local spending estimates, impact of recreation and parks amenities on adjacent property values, and estimated reduction of health and crime prevention costs
- Supporting information/messaging from external but related sectors, such as health services, crime prevention, education, social services, business, and economic development
- Reminding the public that recommended Master Plan initiatives/projects are happening, and that they were developed with the involvement of the community.



Image taken from: thewildnetwork.com

It will be important to measure the effectiveness of various media in delivering the key messages. Data could potentially be collected through point-of-purchase sales, participation surveys, and facility exit surveys. Investigation into the most effective social media tools is important in reaching broad user and non-user markets.



It is recommended that recreation marketing and promotions are coordinated on a regional basis with active engagement from all Grande Prairie area municipalities.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.		
Develop promotions and marketing tools based on key messages that are continually updated and	Utilize tools in available media channels to enhance existing marketing and promotions efforts.	Utilize tools in available media channels to enhance existing marketing and promotions efforts.	Utilize tools in available media channels to enhance existing marketing and promotions efforts.		
distributed to area municipalities and regional media.					













Active Living

**Inclusion and Access** 

**Connecting People and Nature** 

**Supportive Environments** 

Recreation Capacity

#### Partnerships in the Delivery of Recreation Services

Partnerships are currently leveraged to achieve a variety of recreation goals and outcomes in the Grande Prairie area. The County of Grande Prairie has a partnership with Nustadia Inc. to operate its major recreation centre. The City of Grande Prairie partners with the County, the Be Fit For Life Centre, and the Grande Prairie Sport Council in providing services for local community groups and volunteers. Due to the broad nature of recreation services and the benefits they accrue, partnerships can materialize in a variety of ways for services and programs, as well as physical infrastructure.



#### **Service Partnerships**

The benefits of recreation and parks services are not confined to the recreation sector. The Service Outcomes that drive the actions of the municipal recreation efforts have clear and undeniable impacts on issues faced by other sectors such as justice, health, and education. They create broader public good beyond recreation and sport. For instance, playing sports can aid in the integration of newcomers into the fabric of society. Connected communities are safer and thus crime prevention efforts are reduced. Thus, a collaborative system for delivering recreation is ideal in optimizing investments and creating the greatest benefits. Collaboration includes continued partnerships with traditional organized interest groups and community associations (and enhanced supports as discussed earlier), as well as broadening partnerships beyond the recreation and sport spheres.

Today's recreation practitioners throughout the province are making cross-sectoral connections in the delivery of programs, marketing and promotions efforts, and through the development of policy and infrastructure. The Framework for Recreation in Canada discussion involved stakeholders from many quality-of-life sectors. These discussions helped define strategic directions for recreation across the country. Partnerships in the social environment have been identified as key to broadening the benefits of, and support for, recreation. Municipal staff in the Grande Prairie area have already expended efforts in connecting with other sectors and tackling community issues collectively, and have engaged other sectors in strategic planning (e.g. this Master Plan process) and program delivery.

Creating and nurturing cross-sector relationships is important to furthering the recreation agenda and enhancing the benefits and Service Outcomes intended from public investment in these services. These relationships can lead to optimizing the use of public funding through partnerships, leveraging different sources of program funding, generating key messages that explain the impacts and benefits of these essential services throughout the area, and enhancing community and political support for recreation. Aligning community initiatives will create synergies and greater benefits. Ninety-two percent (92%) of Grande Prairie residents believe that recreation brings the community together.

Partnerships in recreation programming and marketing and promotions enable common key messages to be developed and increase the impact of programming and marketing. Coordination of efforts across sectors in areas such as active living and healthy eating optimizes the use of public funding.

#### **Trends and Leading Practices**

While the provision of recreation services has historically relied on municipal levels of the government, many municipalities are increasingly looking to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and more efficiently leverage public funds.

10 Service Delivery It is recommended that service delivery partnerships be explored whenever new programs and marketing efforts are introduced.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.		
Develop a list of key stakeholders/ sectors that have aligned interests to the Grande Prairie area recreation agenda (Master Plan, etc.) and use alliances to help implement Master Plan recommendations where possible.	Explore opportunities to develop cross-sector arrangements in recreation programming and marketing where possible; share leading practices with other area municipalities.	Explore opportunities to develop cross-sector arrangements in recreation programming and marketing where possible; share leading practices with other area municipalities.	Explore opportunities to develop cross-sector arrangements in recreation programming and marketing where possible; share leading practices with other area municipalities.		

#### **Alignment with Active Alberta**



**Active Albertans** 



**Active Communities** 











**Active Outdoors** 

**Active Engagement** 

**Active Coordinated System** 

Active Excellence







**Inclusion and Access** 



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 



#### Infrastructure Partnerships

Just as the benefits of recreation and parks are not confined to the recreation sector, they also cross municipal boundaries. Residents from throughout the area use facilities outside their respective municipality. As the definition of regional facilities and a discussion on cost sharing have already been presented, it is expected that when new regional facilities are developed, potential partnerships between local governments, as well as non-profit and private sector groups, may emerge.

In order to address partnership opportunities as they come forward, it is important for local municipalities to answer the following questions:

- Will the relationship achieve socially worthwhile outcomes? If so, which identified Service Outcomes are achieved? How can the indirect benefit to the general public be articulated, clarified and measured? If indirect benefits cannot be clarified and measured, the municipality should opt out of the relationship.
- Are the outcomes achieved by the arrangement current areas of focus for the municipality? The municipality will not be involved in relationships which simply add to outcomes that are already adequately being realized.
- 3. Can the outcomes be achieved without municipal involvement or support? Is public involvement necessary to the achievement of the outcomes? Does it add significant value that cannot be added by any other agency?
- 4. Could the outcomes identified be achieved more cost-effectively through another approach? The municipality will invest its limited available public resources where it can get the best return on that investment. Does the partnership lead to cost savings or financial benefits to the municipality that allow public funds to be leveraged?

Realizing that these criteria are being met and will be met to varying levels, the municipality can get involved in the planning, development and operations of major recreation facilities and spaces in a variety of ways driven by the most efficient and effective use of public funds in service provision. The different levels that the municipality can get involved in recreation infrastructure provision (development and operations) are presented as follows:

#### Level 1

The municipality owns, operates and is directly responsible for recreation resources.

#### Level 2

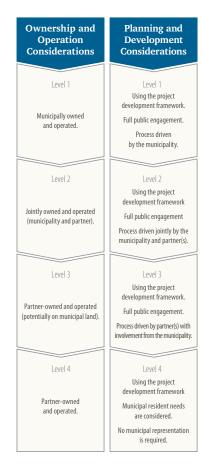
The municipality is a major owner and operating partner in resource development. The partnership model is based on the municipality having a significant and/or equal stake in ownership and operating responsibility with other partners (e.g. other municipal partners, non-profit and private sector stakeholders, etc.).

#### Level 3

Although the municipality does not directly control the resource, municipal administration representatives are involved in resource delivery during the needs assessment, feasibility, business planning, design, and operating stages. Level Three includes facilities and sites that are owned by the municipality and operated through lease agreements or fee-for-service arrangements by delivery agencies. This also assumes the inclusion of local residents in public consultation programs and engagement strategies.

#### Level 4

The municipality may provide funding for capital and/ or operations of resources with delivery agencies with no municipal administrative representation in resource delivery during the needs assessment, feasibility, business planning, design, or operating stages. Although there is no involvement by municipal administration representatives, a prerequisite to collaboration at this level is that regional residents are included in public consultation programs and engagement strategies (and associated need is demonstrated from a municipal resident perspective). These arrangements could include formal agreements with delivery agents but should consider the provision of opportunities to residents that the municipality would likely not provide if no partnership existed.



III
Service Delivery

It is recommended that infrastructure partnerships be explored whenever new recreation facilities are introduced using the framework presented.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.					
Explore partnerships for the development of regional facilities utilizing the framework presented.  Explore partnerships for the development of local facilities utilizing the framework presented.					

















Active Communities Active Outdoors

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Active Engagement Active Coordinated System

Active Excellence







Inclusion and Access



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Supportive Environments



Recreation Capacity





#### **Partnership Effectiveness**

Further to the organization of existing and potential new partnerships into the framework presented, consideration should be given to including performance measurement into agreements that meet the agreed partnership intent. This would entail each partner, including area municipalities, being accountable for the roles and responsibilities it has and would demonstrate accountability to area residents. Performance measurement criteria should be developed collaboratively by, and be applicable to, all parties in the arrangement. Performance measurement will help municipalities attain accountability for public investment by ensuring that Service Outcomes are achieved through partnerships, and will create a mechanism for quality control (e.g. ensuring partner groups embrace the Long Term Athlete Development Plan). These performance measurement tactics can be used for major infrastructure partnerships, but also through partnerships with organized interest groups that access public facilities at subsidized rates or community associations that access annual operating grants.

#### **Active Alberta**

**Active Coordinated System:** All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.

Service Delivery

It is recommended that performance measurement be included in all service and infrastructure partnership arrangements.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.I					
Ensure that all partnerships	rships Ensure that all partnerships Ensure that all partnerships		Ensure that all partnerships		
have defined performance have defined performance have defined performance		have defined performance			
measurement included.	measurement included.	measurement included.	measurement included.		



#### Alignment with the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing Goals







**Inclusion and Access** 



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 

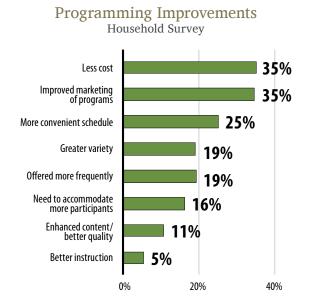


**Recreation Capacity** 

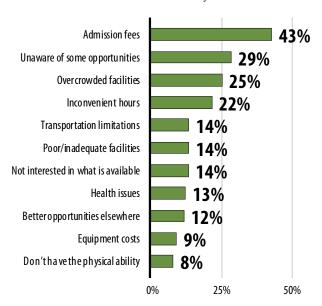
## **Removing Barriers** to Participation

It is clear that more residents need to be more active more often. In order for this to occur they need to be motivated and free of participation barriers. Other aspects of this Plan, primarily marketing and promotions, are meant to address motivation and create awareness of opportunities. Access fees and transportation limitations, among other barriers, are both areas where increased effort could be focused to reduce barriers to participation.

## Local Context City of Grande Prairie: Council Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018) • Strategic Direction: Explore issues around affordability.



#### Barriers to Recreation Participation Household Survey



#### **Financial Barriers**

Ensuring accessible recreation opportunities is important in achieving Service Outcomes and creating community benefit. Financial barriers to participation are currently addressed in a number of ways by local municipalities and groups.

These financial assistance programs are beneficial and have significant impact. These programs are effective in meeting the needs of those financially disadvantaged, but do not close the gap for families that may be above low-income cut-offs yet still unable to afford participation costs.

#### **Student Survey**

Barriers to Recreation Participation: The top barrier is "admission fees" (42%); equipment costs is a barrier to 22% of student respondents. It is incumbent upon Grande Prairie municipalities to ensure that all residents, especially those in need, are aware of the access programs available to them. This messaging should form part of promotions and marketing efforts and could also include other non-municipal programs such as Jumpstart and Kidsport. Creating knowledge in the region about free recreation opportunities, such as free public swim times in facilities and parks-related recreation opportunities, will also help reduce financial barriers to participation and extend community benefit.

#### **Current financial assistance programs** provided in the Grande Prairie area include:

- Grande Prairie Low Income Recreation Access Program;
- Jumpstart
- KidSport
- Pursuit of Excellence Athlete Development Fund
- Athlete Enhancement Program Grant
- Pursuit of Excellence Travelling Fund for Coaches and Athletes
- Pursuit of Excellence Perky McCullough International Scholarship Fund
- The Pursuit of Excellence Scholarship Fund

#### **Transportation Barriers**

The Grande Prairie area is large, with recreation amenities spread throughout. As such, transportation to and from opportunities can be a barrier to participation. This is especially apparent when contemplating supply and demand of regional facilities that are typically located in areas that are densely populated (urban). Many recreation amenities that are provided locally by area municipalities are accessible with short drive times or via active transportation. However, the potential to coordinate transportation from rural, sparsely populated areas to access regional recreation facilities should be a consideration for future decision-making. This accessibility issue needs to be included in business modelling and feasibility studies for new regional facilities.

The potential to locate new regional recreation amenities in more geographically balanced locations should also be reviewed during the facility feasibility process; however, cost benefit analysis will likely suggest that amenities should be built in close proximity to population density. At the same time, the coordination of transportation to existing regional facilities may indicate that regional facility transportation programs could be warranted.

#### **Household Survey**

14% indicated transportation as a barrier.

#### **Student Survey**

23% indicated transportation as a barrier.







#### **Social Barriers**

Recreation opportunities lead to enhanced community cohesion and social inclusion. Recreation opportunities provide healthy environments for people of all ages, abilities and ethnicities to participate and mingle. The concept of **social inclusion** through recreation is increasingly becoming one that communities are trying to facilitate. While always an important issue, its significance has risen as the Grande Prairie area has become increasingly more diversified through immigration and growth.

Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society. It involves the basic notions of belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrants, social inclusion would be manifested in full and equal participation in all facets of a community including economic, social, cultural, and political realms. It goes beyond newcomers or those typically not engaged/active. In fact, social inclusion is about the elimination of the boundaries or barriers between "us" and "them". There is a recognition that diversity has worth unto itself and is not something that must be overcome.

#### **Demographic Analysis**

**New Canadians:** Highest proportion of recent immigration (country of origin).

- County of Grande Prairie = Germany
- City of Grande Prairie = The Philippines

There are five dimensions of social inclusion:

- 1. **Valued Recognition:** Conferring recognition and respect on individuals and groups.
- Human Development: Nurturing the talents, skills, capacities and choices of children and adults to live a life they value and to make a contribution both they and others find worthwhile.
- 3. **Involvement and Engagement:** Having the right and the necessary support to make or be involved in decisions affecting oneself, one's family and community, and to be engaged in community.
- Proximity: Sharing physical and social spaces to provide opportunities for interactions, if desired, and to reduce social distances between people.
- 5. **Material Wellbeing:** Having the material resources to allow children and their parents to participate fully in community life.

While issues of social inclusion are pertinent for all members of a community, they can be particularly relevant for adolescents and seniors of immigrant or aboriginal families. Immigrant youth can feel pulled in opposite directions between their own cultural values and a desire to "fit in" to their new home. This tension can be exacerbated in those situations in which parents are experiencing stress due to settlement. Children living in families that are struggling are more likely to be excluded from some of the aspects of life essential to their healthy development. Children are less likely to have positive experiences at school, less likely to participate in recreation, and less likely to get along well with friends if they live in families struggling with parental depression, family dysfunction or violence.

Social inclusion is a broad issue that would be best addressed holistically. However, inclusion can partially be dealt with through a community's approach to recreation and parks. Obviously, access to recreation opportunities must be available. Beyond that there are a number of other means through which social inclusion can be fostered.

Program leaders and customer service staff should be socially aware, culturally sensitive, and have appropriate child development training. They then must play a central role in advocating for policies and programs that enhance accessibility and address principles of social inclusion.

One way that local municipalities could look to further engage these isolated groups would be to involve representatives in the actual planning of events and programs. This would show the groups that their presence and participation is valued and would ensure that all the dynamics associated with hosting events and offering programs for certain facets of the community are identified and accommodated. This event and/or program-planning group would best represent the community if it were organized under a task group structure where key community stakeholders would be brought in for certain initiatives. This list of stakeholders could be invited from a community volunteer roster (as discussed in latter sections) or through public RSVP. This approach would enable individual community members and their groups to voice their concerns and work together to overcome barriers. Community leaders would be able to hear and embrace these voices and commit to working with the individuals and groups. Ensuring that various perspectives and backgrounds are represented for different events or programs would eliminate hierarchies and promote widespread consultation, equal representation and community-based action.



#### A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

**Goal 2: Inclusion and Access** 

 Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation. Key characteristics of programs that promote and achieve social inclusion can be applied to existing or new programs and include the following:

- Programs should be affordable with accessible and inexpensive transportation.
- Activities must be designed appropriately to involve, accommodate and invite targeted populations. They must also respect cultural norms and, where possible, create "cross-cultural" interaction.
- Programs should be developed in a way such that participants are able to determine program type, timing, and purpose (within guidelines of safety and appropriate to their level). One way that this can happen is through a stakeholder task group as discussed in the previous section.
- Facilities should be welcoming with respect to physical aspects and with regard to atmosphere. For example, facilities and spaces could be decorated with art from a variety of cultures represented in the community or they could simply have welcome signs in different languages to make all residents feel welcome and increase awareness of the cultural diversity that exists in the community in a positive, constructive way.
- Scheduling and timing should take into account constraints and availability of targeted populations. For example, those facets of the community that are predominantly represented by shift workers may require programming or events hosted at non-traditional "prime time" hours throughout the day.

Due to the diverse nature of the community and region, social inclusion should be at the forefront of decision-making in regard to recreation facility access and programming to further strengthen overall community cohesiveness and quality of life.

Service Delivery

It is recommended that removing financial, transportation, and social barriers to participation should be an area of future focus.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective	Towns, Village, and M.D.				
Share best practices in fee assistance programs and support existing initiatives from a regional perspective; strive to provide a variety of transportation options to regional facilities.	Administer local fee assistance programs and share best practices with smaller municipalities; ensure residents are aware of fee assistance programs offered by the City and other agencies; include social inclusion considerations in program design and educate other providers to do the same.	Administer local fee assistance programs and share best practices with smaller municipalities; ensure residents are aware of fee assistance programs offered by the County and other agencies; include social inclusion considerations in program design and educate other providers to do the same.	Administer local fee assistance programs; ensure residents are aware of fee assistance programs available to them; include social inclusion considerations in program design and educate other providers to do the same.		

#### Alignment with Active Alberta















**Active Albertans** 

**Active Outdoors** 

**Active Engagement** 



**Active Living** 



**Inclusion and Access** 



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 

# Program and Opportunity Strategies

5

Providing opportunities for residents and visitors to recreate occurs in outdoor and indoor environments and in both structured and unstructured formats. Structured, or programmed, recreation opportunities are currently provided either directly by local municipalities, (i.e. with paid program staff or through contracted services), or indirectly through non-profit and private program delivery groups that access public facilities and spaces to operate programs. Unstructured, or spontaneous, recreation opportunities occur at some municipally owned indoor facilities and a variety of parks and open spaces throughout the Grande Prairie area.

The level to which municipalities get involved in direct programming is typically a function of political and administrative will and the level of engagement of the non-profit and private sectors in providing quality, relevant recreation programs. Assuming that the quality of the program or opportunity is held equal, the following graphic illustrates the public investment related to indirect and direct programming.



#### **Needs Assessment**

Due to the fact that each municipality and program or opportunity provider in the Grande Prairie area operates and is motivated differently when it comes to recreation services, a standard approach to delivery is not realistic or necessary. Understanding that each municipality has its own way of addressing recreation opportunity demand, the identification of market demand and the coordination of service delivery within market catchment areas is one way that Grande Prairie municipalities and recreation stakeholders can work together to optimize resource and effort investment in animating facilities and spaces.

Different than the approach to local delivery, identifying market preference and need for recreational programs and opportunities is something that can be accomplished on a more standardized basis. As a region, identifying program and opportunity needs and preferences and ensuring that program providers are aware of strategic focus areas for programs and opportunities is an important role. Common needs identification should lead to enhanced effectiveness and coordination in delivery. Economies of scale may also materialize through program coordination throughout the area (beyond specific catchment areas).



Program and Opportunity It is recommended that regional recreation needs assessment occur on an ongoing basis to increase understanding of recreation and program opportunity preferences and trends.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective City County Towns, Village, and				
Conduct recreation needs assessments on an ongoing basis to gather local trend data to help guide and coordinate program and opportunity delivery throughout the Grande Prairie area.	Participate in needs assessments and use findings to help guide direct and indirect programming efforts; share leading practices in program delivery with other municipalities.	Participate in needs assessments and use findings to help guide indirect programming efforts (community associations, other municipalities and contracted service providers) and share leading practices.	Participate in needs assessments and use findings to help guide direct and indirect programming efforts; share leading practices.	

#### Alignment with Active Alberta













Active Albertans

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Inclusion and Access



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**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 

#### **Activity Balance**

The provision of recreation opportunities that are both structured and unstructured is key to creating widespread benefit in the Grande Prairie area. For a number of reasons, residents cannot always participate in scheduled recreation activities. Team sports, fitness programs and other opportunities that require specific time commitments are not convenient enough to fit with work schedules or the activity calendars of family members. Traditionally much focus has been placed on structured activity provision; the operations of ice arenas and sport fields primarily require coordination and scheduling. It is clear to see, through trends research and the survey results gathered in developing this Master Plan, that providing unstructured opportunities, and the environments that accommodate them, is worthy of future strategic focus. This is not to say that effort placed in traditional recreation amenities that require coordination and structure should be reallocated; it does suggest a more balanced approach moving forward.

**Trends and Leading Practices** 

The highest proportion of Canadians prefer non-competitive sports or activities (2013 Canadian Community Health Survey). Program and Opportunity It is recommended that the provision of both structured and unstructured recreation opportunities be considered when delivering recreation services.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and					
Monitor market preference and desire for unstructured and structured recreation opportunities.	Focus future service delivery and infrastructure development decision-making on providing a balance of structured and unstructured recreation opportunities.	Focus future service delivery and infrastructure development decision-making on providing a balance of structured and unstructured recreation opportunities.	Focus future service delivery and infrastructure development decision-making on providing a balance of structured and unstructured recreation opportunities.		

















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**Recreation Capacity** 



## **Program and Opportunity Focus**

Recreation opportunities and programming should react to needs assessment results, as outlined in the research conducted during the development of this Master Plan, as well as meeting core Service Objectives.

The following identified **Service Outcomes** (in bold) pertain to recreation program delivery. One or more of these Service Outcomes should be furthered by any program offered by local municipalities or that receives any level of public support.

- All citizens have a basic level of fitness and wellbeing.
- 2. All pre-schoolers have basic skills in a range of pursuits.
- 3. All children and youth have basic skills in a range of pursuits.
- 4. All adults have basic skills in a variety of pursuits.
- 5. All seniors feel continued relevance and inclusion.
- 6. Advanced level skill development is available for some pursuits.
- 7. Healthy opportunities exist for teens to develop in a social setting.
- 8. Special events and celebrations connect citizens of the Grande Prairie area.
- 9. Local community groups thrive in the Grande Prairie area.
- 10. Spectators celebrate their community during local sporting events.

- 11. Social interaction connects citizens in the Grande Prairie area.
- 12. All citizens of the Grande Prairie area feel included and welcome.
- 13. A strong base of volunteers helps to build our communities.
- 14. Sport and cultural tourism brings people to the Grande Prairie area.
- 15. Families are supported to recreate as a unit.
- 16. All local citizens relate to and understand their relationship with the environment and the implications of their impact on it.
- 17. Local natural resources are protected and nurtured.
- 18. Our communities are beautiful.
- 19. Municipal facilities are of the highest quality and are sustainable.

The above Service Outcomes provide clarity on how public support for programming should be directed. For instance, municipally sponsored programs should focus more on basic skill development and physical literacy than on higher levels of competitive sport. Also, special events are important to local municipalities as is the hosting of spectator events for resident and visitor markets.

External influences can also provide guidance to program design. For instance, the Canadian Sport for Life movement and the Long Term Athlete Development Plan can help programs focus on different skill development for different age groups.

In terms of the program focus identified during this Master Plan process, the following have been identified and should also help focus new and incremental efforts. This is not to say that existing programs should be discontinued if they are successful, but does indicate that incremental efforts should be directed to these areas as well as to the reallocation of existing, poorly attended programs.

- Providing opportunities for all ages and abilities to participate in physical activity—getting more people more active more often.
- Providing opportunities that enable spontaneous, drop-in recreation activity.
- Providing opportunities for residents to embrace winter and participate in outdoor winter activities.
- Providing opportunities for children and youth to participation in unstructured play.
- Providing opportunities for residents of all ages to connect and build a relationship with nature.
- Enabling all community members to take part in nature interpretation (e.g. trails, birdwatching, etc.) and interaction (e.g. hunting, fishing, etc.).
- Programs that focus on utilizing recreation and parks pursuits to promote and facilitate social inclusion—a sense of connectedness and belonging (including, but not limited to new immigrants and Aboriginal peoples).
- Developing broader public programs focused on nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices.
- The integration into existing and new programs, where possible, of pertinent stages of the Canadian Sport for Life Strategy and the principle of physical literacy.
- Continued support for traditional, mainstream team sports that offer all age groups greater focus on skill development and less on competition.
- Programs that promote and ensure positive aging.
- Programs offered to school-aged children during the critical afterschool time period (3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.).

The aforementioned program focus areas are extensive and broad. They are meant to provide general guidance to program delivery agents (within the recreation sector and beyond), including but not limited to local municipalities, community associations, sport and physical activity providers, yet still enable creativity and partnership to occur.

#### **Household Survey**

92% of households agree to the following statement: Quality recreation programs and facilities can help attract and retain residents.

The hosting of region-wide events, such as major spectator sporting events, tournaments, celebrations, or performances, is an ideal way to facilitate camaraderie and pride throughout the Grande Prairie area. Events bring residents and visitors together; coordinating regional events necessitates regional municipalities and stakeholders working collaboratively.



Program and Opportunity It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area pursue enhanced opportunities for residents and visitors in the focus areas presented.

Level of Cooperation				
Collective	Towns, Village, and M.D.			
Strive to coordinate and host regional events where possible; help to coordinate program and opportunity efforts and share leading practices where able.	Utilize the focus areas presented to sustain and/or enhance current program efforts; share the areas of focus with other recreation service providers in the city; share best practices with smaller municipalities.	Utilize the focus areas presented to sustain and/or enhance current program efforts; share the areas of focus with other recreation service providers in the county.	Utilize the focus areas presented to sustain and/or enhance current program efforts; share the areas of focus with other local recreation service providers.	

#### Alignment with Active Alberta





















Active Excellence







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**Recreation Capacity** 

# Recreation Infrastructure Strategies

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Local municipalities are the primary providers of indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure in the Grande Prairie area. The breadth and depth of the types and quantities of indoor and outdoor facilities differs across the area; some have regional attributes (as discussed earlier) and others serve local markets.

The following table outlines the current inventory of indoor and outdoor infrastructure available to area residents and visitors—recreation programs and opportunities occur throughout the region in these spaces. Most of the spaces are owned and operated by local municipalities while some are operated by non-profit or private service providers.

In applying order-of-magnitude replacement cost estimates to existing recreation infrastructure inventories, there is an estimated \$500 – \$600M in indoor recreation infrastructure and between \$70 – \$90M in outdoor recreation infrastructure currently in place in the Grande Prairie area. Operating and protecting current investment and services require ongoing effort and investment.

#### Local Context

City of Grande Prairie: Council Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018)

• Strategic Direction:
Invest in infrastructure to meet burgeoning demand and future needs.



Although current efforts related to recreation infrastructure are successful, with 80% of regional residents currently satisfied with the availability of services (26% very; 54% somewhat), 64% said new or enhanced infrastructure is required. As well, 74% of groups surveyed indicated a need for new or enhanced recreation infrastructure. Furthermore, groups indicated that lack of suitable space for programs was impeding them from meeting program goals and that more facilities are needed. Two-thirds (65%) of youth surveyed also suggested that new recreation facilities were required.

The following discussion is focused on recreation infrastructure, both in terms of sustaining and optimizing existing investment as well as guiding future incremental investment to achieve most benefit.

Recreation Amenity	Quantity	Regional/ Local	Primary Responsibility
Indoor Ice Arenas	11 (13 ice sheets)	Regional	Municipal
Indoor Aquatic Centres	2	Regional	Municipal
Curling Rinks	8 (28 sheets)	Regional	Non-profit
Indoor Fields	3	Regional	Municipal
Outdoor Pools	2	Regional	Municipal
Fitness Centres	4	Local	Municipal
Walking/Running Tracks	2	Local	Municipal
Community Halls	25	Local	Non-Profit
Indoor Playgrounds	1	Local	Municipal
Gymnasium Facilities (community)	5	Local	Municipal
Gymnasium Facilities (school)	25	Local	School
Libraries	8	Local	Municipal
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	3	Regional	Non-profit
Ball Diamonds	50	Local	Municipal
Rectangular Fields	56	Local	Municipal
Artificial Turf Field	1	Regional	Municipal
Track and Field Facility	1	Regional	Municipal
Skateboard Parks	6	Local	Municipal
Tennis Courts	24	Local	Municipal
Spray Parks	4	Local	Municipal
Outdoor Rinks	15	Local	Municipal
Off Leash Dog Parks	4	Local	Municipal
Campgrounds	18	Local	Municipal/Non-profit



#### **Leading Practices**

The following recreation infrastructure considerations are provided to help inform and influence decisions regarding the planning, design and operations of both existing and new recreation infrastructure (where applicable). For the most part, they pertain to both indoor and outdoor environments and include strategic recommendations (if applicable). Many of these considerations are currently practiced by local municipalities throughout the area.

#### A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

**Goal 4: Supportive Environments** 

 Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities.

#### Spontaneous/Structured

The provision of spontaneous, unstructured recreation and parks opportunities should continually be considered by the local municipalities in the programming of existing and new spaces. Some existing facilities, such as leisure pools and trails, enable spontaneous participation, yet much of the investment lies with structured, rental-use facilities.

The supply/demand relationship for spontaneous use areas is not as straightforward as is the case with programmable/rentable spaces. This is primarily due to the fact that capacities cannot be clearly identified for spontaneous use areas, as the point at which a facility is "too busy" and thereby prohibitive to participant use is subjective and based on individual perception.

Spontaneous use of facilities occurs in two ways. A spontaneous user may visit a facility for the purpose of participating in a desired activity or a user may participate in an activity because it is convenient to do so, yet it wasn't the intended purpose for the facility visit. Recognizing that spontaneous users are comprised of both user types, planning for spontaneous use facilities should consider the following:

- Spontaneous use areas provide users the opportunity to participate at irregular times, thereby enabling users to partake in physical activity or creative/social endeavors even if they cannot commit to signing up for a scheduled team or program. Therefore, spontaneous use areas must provide optimal flexibility during hours of operation.
- Spontaneous use activities are best offered in clusters depending on the type of activity and the adjacent facility amenities. Therefore, spontaneous use opportunities must be provided in clusters that work well together, including change rooms for both wet and dry uses.
- Spontaneous use activity-clusters must consider cross-use and convenience of potential users.
   Clusters that seem to work well include:
  - » Fitness/wellness and child minding
  - » Leisure/ lap swimming and fitness/wellness
  - » Leisure/lap swimming and child minding
  - » Fitness/wellness and major scheduled use activity (i.e. arenas, field houses, etc)
  - » Fitness/wellness and therapeutic/ program aquatics
  - » Leisure skating and ice arenas

Considering these points, it is apparent that many future spontaneous use spaces should piggyback on major programmable/rentable spaces. Examples of spontaneous use recreation and parks infrastructure includes (but are not limited to) those shown in the chart below. It is important to note that rental spaces such as traditional ice arenas and gymnasiums can also be spontaneous if they are not rented out for exclusive use.

Spontaneous Use Recreation Amenities				
Indoor Outdoor				
Leisure Aquatics Spaces	Trails			
Leisure Skating Pads (Non-Boarded)	Playgrounds			
Indoor Child Playgrounds	nds Passive Green Spaces			
Gymnasiums for Youth/Adult Drop-in	Etc.			

#### **Trends and Leading Practices**

The development of multi-use spaces can also help ensure that municipalities have the flexibility to adapt to changing interests and activity preferences.

#### Stand-Alone vs. Multiplex

The development of large multi-purpose community recreation facilities warrants exploration whenever new facility development is considered. Combining multiple facilities under one roof or at one site can lead to operational cost economies of scale and can increase overall usage. Gathering more users at one site can also enhance the attractiveness of private sponsorship and retail sales and commercial lease spaces at facilities, hence improving revenue streams.

The development of multiple facilities at one site or in one building envelope can also be more cost-effective during the design and construction process. Cost savings can be achieved through professional services as well as other site costs such as parking and site servicing.

Facility clustering of specific facility components using the multiplex approach is appropriate due to both operational economies of scale and complementary uses. Some examples of appropriate clustering include the following:

- · Indoor ice arenas and leisure ice amenities
- Fitness and wellness spaces with scheduled use facility spaces (e.g. arenas, field houses, etc.)
- Fitness and wellness spaces with child-minding facilities
- Fitness and wellness spaces with indoor aquatics venues
- Fitness and wellness spaces and indoor walking track facilities
- Ice facilities with indoor aquatics venues (energy sharing)

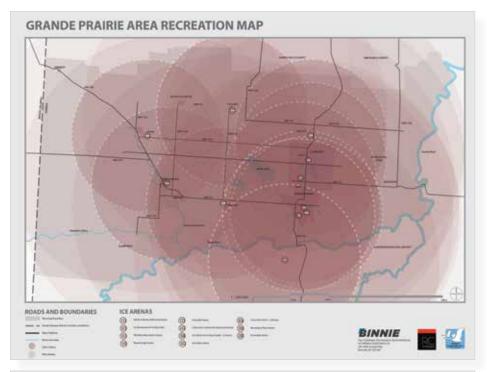
Furthermore, the clustering examples mentioned should be considered in the enhancement of existing facility or the development of new facilities. The Crosslink County Sportsplex and the Eastlink Centre are examples of multiplex venues that are able to achieve greater impact than if they were built as independent amenities located throughout the area.

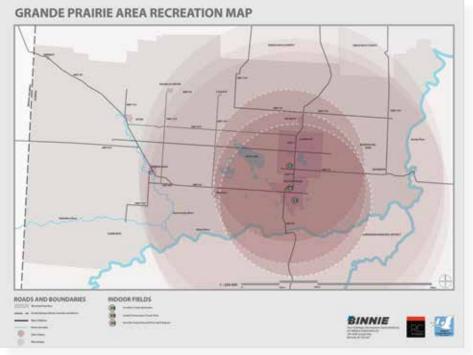
#### Geographic Balance

Geographic balance of facilities and sites is an important consideration for the Grande Prairie area as it continues to grow and as the interests of rural and urban residents are considered. Regional facilities are defined in earlier sections; these types of facilities serve both broad and local markets. That being said, the accessibility of regional facilities is an important siting consideration. Typically, major regional facilities are best located near high density areas (urban settings) as the travel requirements for users are minimized. There are areas in the Grande Prairie area that are not serviced within a 20 km or 40 km driving radius. The two adjacent maps illustrate how indoor ice facility provision is more geographically balanced than indoor field provision. The planning of new facilities should consider siting in these underserviced areas; however, other feasibility considerations such as available site servicing, access to user markets, and other factors may render these sites not feasible.

#### **Household Survey**

Infrastructure planning criteria: 86% believe that "geographic balance throughout the area" is an important criteria (52% very important; 34% somewhat important).





#### Infrastructure Design

The actual design of indoor recreation infrastructure is typically a reflection of the designer, intended community image, and the active involvement of community stakeholders. The design process and eventual programming of the infrastructure can be enhanced by considering a number of important leading practices. Most importantly, there must be a balance between designing for the specifically intended uses and multiple uses in the future. Spaces too focused on one intended type of use will not be sufficiently flexible to meet ongoing changing needs. However, spaces that are too focused on meeting any future use often meet no needs at all.

Other considerations related to regional, provincial, national, and/or international **event hosting capability** should also be reviewed to determine the cost/benefit related to infrastructure elements.

Physical accessibility is also a very important consideration. Universal design considerations for users with disabilities must be considered as well as concepts such as age-friendly, and designing spaces and program areas to promote physical literacy. Accessibility as it relates to geographic location and adjacency to transit options (including active transportation), is important in promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing barriers to participation.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles need to be considered in facility design and development. CPTED is a set of design considerations that are intended to deter criminal activity in facilities of all types and sizes. As community facilities are accessible to a variety of populations and generate public traffic, these considerations need to influence the design of new or enhanced infrastructure. CPTED principles may also be applied to parks design, but caution must be shown when the unneeded removal of forest undergrowth is considered.

Designing a facility or space to **create exposure and promote activity cross-marketing** (internal and external sight lines) should be considered as there is the potential to generate revenues for operations and increase overall facility utilization and community activity with different facility designs.

Indoor community facilities typically are found on larger park sites. The integration of the indoor and outdoor environments (in terms of design and program) is an opportunity. Designing facilities to reflect the topography of a site, to ensure that outdoor trails connect to indoor public corridors of facilities and, in some cases, using overhead doors, causeways and glazing (glass) to eliminate the boundaries between indoors and outdoors are all examples of how the indoor and outdoor environments can begin to be integrated.

Designing facilities in the most environmentally friendly way possible can lead to a significant reduction of the environmental impacts of construction and operations. It can be more costly in terms of capital; therefore, a detailed cost-benefit analysis may be required prior to ultimate decision-making on some mechanical and facility design decisions.

Other green design principles, such as ensuring facility patrons have transportation options (e.g. mass transit and active transportation), having associated support amenities (e.g. bike racks), and including design elements to promote physical activity (i.e. making stairwells more appealing alternatives to elevators) should also be considered in recreation infrastructure provision.

#### Spectator and User Perspectives

When designing and operating recreation facilities, it is important to consider both user and spectator perspectives. Especially apparent for children and youth, spectatorship is an important consideration. Children and youth are more likely to engage in meaningful activity when parents and guardians are involved in the activity or watching. The spectator experience (e.g. food and beverage, seating options and comfort, heat) can be as important as user considerations such as corridor width in ice facilities (for ease of movement with hockey bags) and dressing room size.

#### Synthetic Playing Surfaces

More and more municipalities are utilizing synthetic playing surfaces as an alternative to natural turf for the provision of rectangular fields, ball diamonds and in some cases, outdoor rink spaces. These surfaces allow for more intense use, continuous use regardless of weather, and extended playing seasons for scarce outdoor spaces. This trend is apparent in Grande Prairie as the City has recently developed an artificial turf rectangular field. Although synthetic surfaces have higher construction and replacement costs as compared to natural turf, the ability to utilize synthetic surfaces much more intensely also enables increased program and tournament hosting capacity. Other benefits of synthetic surfaces include:

- All weather use
- · Extended playing season
- · Ease of maintenance
- Reduced injuries/safer playing surface for athletes (subject to further research)

#### Lifecycle Budgeting

Recreation facilities are some of the most heavily utilized, costly (both operational and capital), and complex assets in a municipal asset inventory. Not only do they require high capital investments, they are also costly to maintain and require specialized, extensive human resources to program, operate, and repair. Lifecycle budgeting is the practice of including annual budget allotments for the reinvestment and ultimate replacement of existing facilities and spaces.

The concept of **lifecycle budgeting** is becoming more commonplace in Canada. Alberta municipalities plan for lifecycle replacement and repair of recreation infrastructure in a variety of ways. Although there is no standard approach to lifecycle budgeting, many of those municipalities who practice it do so by budgeting between 1% and 2% of facility or space replacement value annually, building capital reserves that can ultimately be used to offset the cost of major repair and replacement. In the case of current Grande Prairie indoor recreation facility inventories, this practice would add between \$5.0M to \$6.0M (at 1% of replacement value) to collective annual operating budgets of the local municipalities which own and operate facilities. For outdoor facilities, an additional \$700,000 to \$900,000 annually would need to be allocated.

As part of this planning process, an architectural team conducted facility assessments of 10 Grande Prairie area recreation facilities. The intent of the assessment was to identify required investment over the next 5, 5 to 10, and 10+ years to sustain existing services. The assessment found that approximately \$6.8M was required over the next 5 years; of note is that this does not include requirements at all facilities in the region and is only indicative of the 10 that were assessed (see the adjacent table).

A concept related to facility and site lifecycle replacement budgeting is facility amenity refreshment planning. Amenity refreshment suggests that the program elements, such as leisure amenities in a swimming pool have a functional shelf life shorter than the life spans of the facility envelope and mechanical systems. Some facilities require periodic reinvestment to ensure functional use and relevance, and to ensure that users receive the experience they would get in similar modern facilities. Amenity refreshment is a concept more commonly found in cultural facilities such as art galleries and museums, but is an important consideration for all new or existing recreation and parks facilities and spaces.

As the life span of recreation facilities and spaces is typically between 40 - 60 years, annual replacement planning would theoretically put smaller amounts away each year. When a facility is decommissioned and needs to be replaced, a substantial portion of the capital replacement value is already in reserves.

For recreation facilities and spaces, the local municipalities should consider increasing annual contributions to lifecycle reserves to better represent the true costs of lifecycle repair and maintenance, and to account for facility amenity refreshment.

Facility	< 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	10+ Years	Total
Hythe Arena	\$840,000	\$430,000	\$190,000	\$1,460,000
Beaverlodge Arena	\$700,000	\$1,005,000	\$10,000	\$1,715,000
Wembley Recreation Centre	\$430,000	\$670,000	\$240,000	\$1,340,000
Sexsmith Arena	\$2,705,000	\$1,135,000	\$10,000	\$3,850,000
Crosslink County Sportsplex	\$30,000	<b>\$</b> —	\$290,000	\$320,000
Lewis Hawkes Pavilion and Drysdale Centre (2 Facilities)	\$1,190,000	\$390,000	\$70,000	\$1,650,000
Dave Barr Community Centre	\$310,000	\$190,000	\$40,000	\$540,000
Coca-Cola Centre	\$555,000	\$90,000	\$140,000	\$785,000
Eastlink Centre	\$120,000	\$40,000	\$210,000	\$370,000
Total	\$6,880,000	\$3,950,000	\$1,200,000	\$12,030,000

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Infrastructure

It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area consider the infrastructure leading practices presented in planning, operating, and maintaining recreation infrastructure.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.					
Consider leading practices when providing regional infrastructure.	Consider leading practices when providing local infrastructure.	Consider leading practices when providing local infrastructure.	Consider leading practices when providing local infrastructure.		









Inclusion and Access



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Recreation Capacity



## Reinvestment and Repurposing

The concept of investing in and sustaining existing facilities can create opportunities to meet new demand through expansion, thereby leveraging past investment and allowing other priorities to be addressed. An important consideration in planning for future recreation infrastructure is the expense and appropriateness of maintaining existing facilities and service levels. If new facility components can be added to existing facilities (i.e. twinning of single sheet ice facilities), then significant costs savings in site acquisition, servicing and administration, and common-area development may be achieved. Adding to existing facilities can also promote a multiplex approach at these sites and lead to operational cost efficiencies. As it relates to regional facilities and spaces (as defined herein), there are a number of sites that could be considered for expansion as new facility amenities are explored. These existing sites have existing site traffic, have site amenities such as servicing and parking, represent significant existing public investment, and are already perceived as recreation hubs.

Even municipalities with sufficient lifecycle replacement budgets need to decide what is most appropriate in terms of reinvestment, repurposing, or replacing existing facilities or sites. Repurposing existing recreation facilities has great potential for meeting the needs of expanding programs as well as newly introduced activities.

Facilities considered for repurposing must be analyzed in terms of existing usage levels and the costs associated with any changes. Even underutilized spaces are valued by some residents, and repurposing will require some justification. Once a facility or space is identified for repurposing, local municipalities must engage the local community and facility users, along with the architectural and engineering expertise required to assess opportunities.

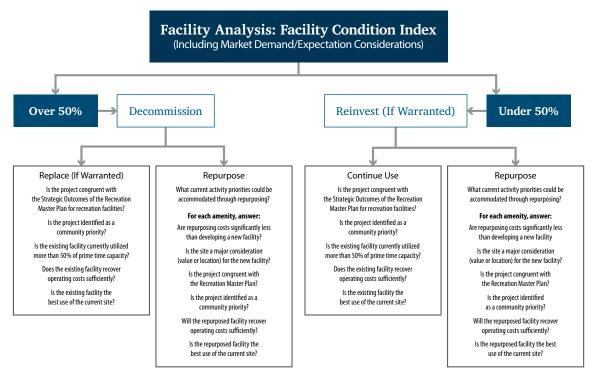
The Facility Condition Index (FCI) is used by many western Canadian municipalities to assess the potential of reinvestment in, or replacement of, publicly owned facilities and spaces. FCI measures required upgrade costs versus replacement value. Facilities or spaces with repair-to-replacement ratios over 50% (FCI) are candidates for repurposing or decommissioning; those with under 50% (FCI) are more likely to be candidates for reinvestment.

Although this approach is accepted, it does not account for the functionality of the facility in question. If a facility is structurally and mechanically sound, for example, the FCI may warrant reinvestment even though the facility does not meet the demands of potential users for functional programming.

This issue is accentuated in recreation facilities, as many facilities and spaces have unique uses. The addition of a "market demand/expectation" or "modernization" needs to be used when calculating FCI and assessing recreation facilities for reinvestment, repurposing, or decommissioning. The amenity refreshment premium would be the added costs of bringing a facility to a modern program standard beyond ensuring structural, mechanical, and electrical sustainability.

Once information is collected, decision-makers must consider the costs and benefits associated with repurposing versus new construction.

The following provides a suggested framework for the decision-making process around facility reinvestment, repurposing, or decommissioning; it can be used when contemplating the future of existing indoor ice facilities.



<sup>\*</sup> If two or more of these questions are answered "NO", then the facility should be decommissioned. If not, the reinvestment/repurpose should be ranked through the system presented in the Recreation Master Plan against other potential projects.

The questions asked in the framework need to be answered by local municipalities, by community members, or by a combination of both. One way of engaging the public and community partners in decision-making is to establish an ad hoc task force every time the decommissioning or repurposing of a major recreation resource (replacement value of \$1M or over) is contemplated.

The task force would use the framework and rely on municipal staff to provide the necessary information. It would offer a broad perspective of community need and, if it included members of the public, the perspectives of impacted residents or groups as well.



Infrastructure

It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area utilize the Facility Condition Index framework when contemplating the future of existing recreation infrastructure.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and					
Consider FCI when contemplating the future of regional infrastructure.	Consider FCI when contemplating the future of local infrastructure.	Consider FCI when contemplating the future of local infrastructure.	Consider FCI when contemplating the future of local infrastructure.		















## **Land Acquisition**

The Grande Prairie area has grown dramatically over the past number of years and is expected to grow even more in the future. With this growth comes the need for new lands to be developed. Current land development protocols (governed by provincial and local legislation) enable local municipalities to acquire 10% of developable lands for recreation and parks purposes. Municipal reserve dedication is the primary vehicle for municipalities to acquire new lands.

As municipalities grow, residential development tends to increase in density and thus greater demands are placed on traditional municipal services. This is true for infrastructure (water and sewer, roads, etc.), as well as land for recreation purposes. Many municipalities with higher density developments have found that the traditionally legislated 10% reserve dedications are not sufficient to meet recreational land demands. With this realization has come the need to supplement traditional reserve dedication with additional land purchase. When planning for new or expanded major regional recreation facilities, land acquisition is an important first step. As partners, local municipalities should look to acquire sites appropriate for recreation facilities regardless of municipal boundaries.

The following key site criteria for regional recreation facilities should be considered:

- Proximity to residential, urban areas (users and non-users)
- Availability of land for other amenities and future expansion
- Ability to generate adjacent growth and activity
- Access to major transportation routes and multiple forms of transportation
- Proximity to complementary community amenities (such as schools, accommodations, etc.)

Of note is that land value, whether it is acquired through resource dedication or another means of acquisition, should be included in project capital costs and resourced appropriately. 19
Infrastructure

It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area consider land acquisition outside of regular Municipal Reserve dedication to meet regional or local recreation needs.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.					
Consider land acquisition for regional infrastructure.	Consider land acquisition for local infrastructure.	Consider land acquisition for local infrastructure.	Consider land acquisition for local infrastructure.		















portive Environments

## A Framework for Planning

The planning and design of future recreation infrastructure need to balance a number of considerations including growth and utilization in the region, the life span of current facilities, desired service levels, and expected trends in recreation participation. As such, planning for public recreation facilities and spaces should include project-specific feasibility analysis whenever major project development is considered. The following chart outlines the steps associated with major regional recreation facility and space development. The same steps and framework can be applied to local recreation facility and space development as well.

## **Local Context**

City of Grande Prairie: Council Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018)

Strategic Direction:
 Increase the length and depth of our planning documents in order to better prepare for the future.

Since feasibility analysis is required to provide decision-makers with the information necessary to make informed judgements, it is recommended that no major (over \$1M) public investments in recreation facilities and spaces should occur without undertaking a market feasibility analysis and business planning. This applies not only to initiatives championed by local municipalities, but also to those projects led by not-for-profit groups and associations where public funds are required for the capital and/or ongoing operations of facilities. The entire process, including needs assessment, feasibility analysis, design and construction can take between 18 and 30 months (or longer), and requires the input of a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

## **Strategic Planning**

Establishes needs and priorities.

### **Tactical Planning**

Clarifies how to best meet identified needs and priorities.

#### Preliminary Need Identified

- Does the project comply with the Goals and Service Outcomes set out by the Recreation Master Plan?
- Does the resource service regional residents?
- Have any of the feasibility planning thresholds/triggers been met?

#### Needs Assessment

- Conduct needs
   assessments, including:
- » Resource provision in the market area
- » Demographics and growth
- » Trends
- » Public consultation
- Define the need for the resource in question. Have any of the feasibility planning thresholds/triggers been met?

3 Months

#### Feasibility Analysis

- Explore impacts or resource development, including options for:
- » Primary and secondary components
- » Potential sites
- » Expansion (if existing) or building new
- · Impacts on existing resources.
- Capital and operating financial implications or resource provision.
- Business Plan.
- Recommended course of action.

3 Months

## Developmen

- Detailed design of project.
- Detailed business planning.
- · Fundraising.\*
- · Construction.
- \* If required

12 - 24 Months

Further to this approach, the following planning triggers are proposed to help municipalities determine when and if feasibility analysis related to future facility and space development is warranted. Undertaking feasibility analysis requires investment and resources, and sets public expectations. Since this is the case, the following feasibility planning "triggers" outline when area municipalities could/should initiate (or facilitate, in the case of a non-profit-based project) feasibility analysis and business planning. Market feasibility analysis and business planning could occur when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- Facility spaces currently being offered approach 80% to 90% utilization levels on a sustained basis.
- Facility or facility spaces currently being used have less than 25% remaining lifecycle or require investment of over 50% of replacement costs (Facility Condition Index) as a functional and modern resource (as determined by ongoing lifecycle planning).

- 3. Current and future demands, as impacted through expression of needs, as a function of public input, trends and majority impact, and/or market growth, can be proven.
- 4. The facility in question and program services proposed provide **equitable access** for all residents as a public service.
- Facility type and function conform to the core recreation service functions of local municipalities or new functional areas as contained within the broader strategic planning.
- Facility type and function are not currently and/or adequately provided through other agencies or private sector services in the Grande Prairie area.
- Potential and/or confirmed operational or capital partners are committed and established as registered societies, institutions, or municipal governments, and collectively represent sufficient membership or market segments to sustain use of the development for the life of the development.

8. The external partner (institution, municipality, volunteer and/or non-profit group) leading a facility development initiative has, or has access to, significant capital and/or operating resources.

The above-noted process and associated planning triggers will help formalize and prioritize potential recreation and parks projects in the future. If a combination of these planning triggers criteria are met, further feasibility analysis may be warranted.

As feasibility analysis requires public investment, the following general guidelines for feasibility exploration should be achieved. General conditions for prudent feasibility analysis include the following:

- There must be public engagement in the planning process, preferably through the use of statistically reliable surveys.
- A market assessment for component service delivery functions must be completed.
- A thorough and transparent site/location analysis must be completed.
- There must be a biophysical/environmental impact statement.
- There must be a concept development plan including infrastructure planning, costs and impacts of ongoing operations.
- The project must demonstrate conformance to the municipal strategic planning.
- · Business planning outlining capital partners, operating partners, sources of capital, capital amortization and projection of operating costs must be completed.
- Opportunity cost analysis must be undertaken to demonstrate that the project represents the best way of achieving the intended goal.

Should feasibility analysis be warranted, these guidelines will ensure that decision-makers have undertaken the due diligence they need to make informed decisions in the best interest of the community and public good.

Infrastructure

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities follow the planning framework presented in contemplating future recreation infrastructure.

Level of Cooperation						
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.			
Utilize the planning framework	Utilize the planning framework	Utilize the planning framework	Utilize the planning framework			
for contemplating future regional infrastructure.	for contemplating future local infrastructure.	for contemplating future local infrastructure.	for contemplating future local infrastructure.			





Active Living



Inclusion and Access



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



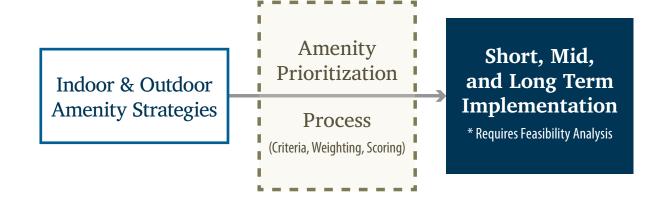
**Recreation Capacity** 

# **Recreation Amenity Prioritization**

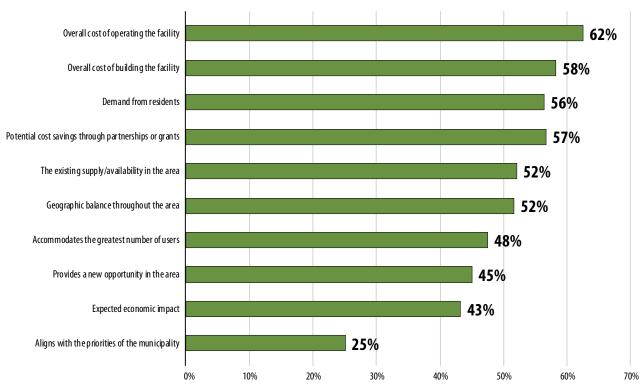
Ideally, future recreation infrastructure would respond to every resident and user demand throughout the Grande Prairie area. Recreation activity leads to many benefits and every resident has a right to participate in recreation to some degree. Due to limited resources, meeting all demands is not feasible and thus prioritization must occur.

Prioritization of future investment in different recreation amenities must consider criteria beyond the demonstrated demands of residents and organized interest groups. When asked, area residents indicated that operating and capital cost considerations and potential cost savings through partnerships were of equal importance to resident demand when prioritizing investment in existing or new recreation amenities.



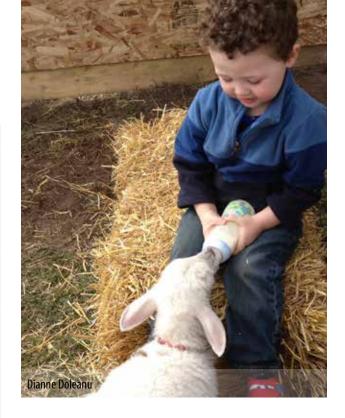


# "Very Important" Planning Criteria Household Survey



In order for municipalities in the Grande Prairie area to determine which recreation amenities to focus on, the following list of criteria is proposed. The list also includes scoring metrics and associated weighting providing a ranking system for potential future recreation amenities. This system can also be applied by local municipalities when contemplating local recreation infrastructure development.

Criteria	Metrics				
Current Provision in the Grande Prairie Area	3 Points: The facility space would add completely new activity to recreation in the area.	2 Points: The facility space would significantly improve provision of existing recreation activity in the area.	N/A	<b>0 Points:</b> The amenity is already adequately provided in the area.	4
Market Demand	3 Points: For "1 – 2" community amenity priorities.	2 Points: For "3 – 4" community amenity priorities.	1 Point: For "5 – 6" community amenity priorities.	<b>0 Points:</b> For "7" or higher community amenity priorities.	3
Cost Implications	3 Points: The amenity has a low overall cost impact.	2 Points: The amenity has a moderate overall cost impact.	<b>1 Point:</b> The amenity has a high overall cost impact.	<b>O Points:</b> The amenity is not likely to be feasible.	3
Service Outcomes	3 Points: The amenity achieves more than five service outcomes.	2 Points: The amenity achieves multiple service outcomes but does not achieve more than 5.	1 Point: The amenity achieves a specific service outcome.	<b>0 Points:</b> The amenity does not achieve any service outcomes.	3
Accessibility	3 Points: The amenity would be both financially and physically accessible to all area residents.	2 Points: The amenity would be accessible to all area residents via programmed/rental use.	N/A	O Points: The amenity would not be accessible to all area residents.	2
Economic Impact	3 Points: The amenity will draw significant non-local spending into the area and catalyze provincial, national and/or international exposure.	2 Points: The amenity will draw significant non-local spending into the area.	1 Point: The amenity will draw moderate non-local spending into the area.	O Points: The amenity will not draw any significant non-local spending into the area.	2
Cost Savings Through Partnerships or Grants	3 Points: Partnership and/ or grant opportunities exist in development and/ or operating that equate to 50% or more of the overall amenity cost.	2 Points: Partnership and/ or grant opportunities exist in development and/ or operating that equate to 25% – 49% or more of the overall amenity cost.	1 Point: Partnership and/ or grant opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 10% — 24% or more of the overall amenity cost.	O Points: No potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in time.	2





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Infrastructure

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities use the prioritization process presented in allocating future recreation resources.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.D.					
Utilize the prioritization process for contemplating future regional infrastructure.	Utilize the prioritization process for contemplating future local infrastructure.	Utilize the prioritization process for contemplating future local infrastructure.	Utilize the prioritization process for contemplating future local infrastructure.		









Inclusion and Access



Connecting People and Nature



Supportive Environments



Recreation Capacity



# **Indoor Recreation Facility Strategies**

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The following table outlines strategies for various indoor recreation amenities either currently found throughout the Grande Prairie area or that could be contemplated in the future. The strategies outlined provide general guidance for future effort; however, it should be noted that before any major public investment is secured, tactical feasibility planning needs to occur (as per the planning framework presented herein).

Indoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Leisure and Program Aquatics	Yes	<ul> <li>Leisure Pools         <ul> <li>Community priority #2</li> <li>Household survey 40% (#1)</li> <li>Group survey 24% (#5)</li> <li>Student survey 37% (#1)</li> <li>Trending</li> <li>Eastlink Centre recorded 518,894 visits in 2015</li> </ul> </li> <li>Compared to other urban centres, the City provides fewer indoor aquatics venues per capita (City—1 pool:68,556 residents; urban benchmarking—1 pool:35,726 residents)</li> <li>As a region, the Grande Prairie area provides 2 pools (1 pool:41,182 residents)</li> <li>25 m Lane Pools         <ul> <li>Community priority #4</li> <li>Household survey 15% (#9)</li> <li>Group survey 11% (#16)</li> <li>Student survey 10% (#19)</li> <li>Beaverlodge recorded 7,393 drop-in visits in 2015</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         » Encourage regional use of existing facilities in Grande Prairie and Beaverlodge         • For New Facilities:         » Feasibility analysis for a new regional aquatics facility should occur in the short term         » Ensure a balance of leisure and program opportunities is achieved

Indoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Ice Arenas	Yes	<ul> <li>Community priority #4</li> <li>Household survey 12% (#13)</li> <li>Group survey 20% (#7)</li> <li>Student survey 17% (#11)</li> <li>Current utilization¹: 70% (weekdays 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.); 75% (weekends 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.)</li> <li>Compared to other urban centres, the City provides fewer indoor ice areas per capita (City—1 sheet:17,139 residents; urban benchmarking—1 sheet:13,680 residents)</li> <li>As a region, 13 sheets are provided (1 sheet:6,336 residents)</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Expand definition of prime time ice allocations where possible         » Explore regional ice allocation strategies         » Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         • For New Facilities:
Curling Rinks	Yes	<ul> <li>Community priority #9</li> <li>Household survey 6% (#23)</li> <li>Group survey 4% (#24)</li> <li>Student survey 8% (#21)</li> <li>Current utilization: GPCC utilizes 1,500 hours per year (600 hours unused); Sexmith utilizes 600 hours</li> <li>Provision ratios: City—1 sheet:8,570 residents; urban benchmarking—1 sheet:8,307 residents; Grande Prairie area—1 sheet:2,942 residents</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         • For New Facilities:             » Consider future development should partnership opportunities materialize
Indoor Fields	Yes	<ul> <li>Community priority #3</li> <li>Household survey 11% (#15)</li> <li>Group survey 29% (#3)</li> <li>Student survey 20% (#7)</li> <li>Trending</li> <li>Current utilization: Leisure Centre utilized 618.25 booked hours in 2015</li> <li>Provision ratios: urban benchmarking—1 field:39,695 residents; Grande Prairie area—1 field:41,182 residents</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Expand definition of prime time field allocations where possible         » Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         • For New Facilities:             » Consider future development should partnership opportunities materialize
Gymnasium Spaces	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #1</li> <li>Household survey 14% (#11)</li> <li>Group survey 31% (#2)</li> <li>Student survey 27% (#3)</li> <li>Current utilization: Eastlink Centre Fieldhouse accommodated 2,500 students, 11,696 drop-ins, and 25,998 headcounts in 2015. 2% of booked hours at the GPRC gymnasium was for community use. 4,533 hours of community use were booked at City of Grande Prairie schools in 2014 – 2015</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:

<sup>1</sup> Coca-Cola Centre (North and South), Dave Barr, Revolution Place, Crosslink County Sportsplex (Chris and Pat).

Indoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Indoor Child Playgrounds	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #3</li> <li>Household survey 30% (#2)</li> <li>Group survey 24% (#4)</li> <li>Student survey 18% (#9)</li> <li>Trending</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         ** Reduce barriers to existing facilities         ** Engage in lifecycle budgeting         ** For New Facilities:         ** Consider including indoor child play spaces when new facility development is being contemplated         ** Explore options to include indoor child playgrounds in repurposing existing facilities
Walking/Running Tracks	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #4</li> <li>Household survey 26% (#3)</li> <li>Group survey 13% (#13)</li> <li>Student survey 22% (#6)</li> <li>Trending</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:  Reduce barriers to existing facilities  Engage in lifecycle budgeting  For New Facilities:  Strongly consider including walking track spaces when new ice arena, indoor field, and/or gymnasia development is explored
Fitness and Wellness Spaces	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #2</li> <li>Household survey 19% (#6)</li> <li>Group survey 16% (#10)</li> <li>Student survey 16% (#4)</li> <li>Trending</li> <li>Current utilization: Eastlink Centre recorded 3,567 fitness drop-ins and 18,811 weight room drop-ins in 2015.</li> <li>Compared to other urban centres, the City provides fewer indoor fitness centres per capita (1 versus an average of 2.4 for similar populations)</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         For New Facilities:             * Consider including fitness and wellness spaces when new facility development is being contemplated             * Explore options for fitness and wellness spaces in repurposing existing facilities
Social Banquet/Gathering Spaces	Yes (Capacity: 500+)	<ul> <li>Community priority #9</li> <li>Household survey 10% (#18)</li> <li>Group survey 13% (#11)</li> <li>Student survey 4% (#24)</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Explore regional scheduling and allocation options         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         • For New Facilities:             » Explore options to expand existing facilities to meet demand (if warranted) prior to building new             » Explore consolidation of existing facilities when facility replacement is required

Indoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	Yes	Community priority #8	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 7% (#20)	» Explore regional scheduling and allocation options
		• Group survey 7% (#22)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		Student survey 6% (#23)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		Grande Prairie area provision—1 facility:27,455 residents	For New Facilities:
			» Consider future development should partnership opportunities materialize
Racquet Court Spaces	No	Community priority #8	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 12% (#14)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 20% (#6)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		Student survey 11% (#18)	For New Facilities:
		·	<ul> <li>Consider including racquet court spaces when new facility development is being contemplated</li> </ul>
Meeting and Program Rooms	No	Community priority #8	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 5% (#24)	» Explore regional scheduling and allocation options
		• Group survey 11% (#14)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		Student survey 8% (#20)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		·	For New Facilities:
			<ul> <li>Consider including multipurpose meeting and program spaces when new facility development is being contemplated</li> </ul>
Gymnastics and Parkour Spaces	No	Community priority #8 and #9	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 19% (#6)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 16% (#10)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 16% (#4)	» Consider including gymnastics and parkour spaces only if viable partnership
		Trending	opportunities exist



Of note is that both seniors' centres and youth centres were identified as community priorities (#7 and #3 respectively), yet do not have specific strategies outlined above. This is due to these facilities being made up of the amenities listed as opposed to being an amenity unto themselves. It is suggested that as new facilities are being developed or enhanced, the inclusion of amenities specific to seniors and youth be explored without providing exclusive use to either age cohort. Both youth and seniors' spaces located within multi-purpose complexes have proven to be effective.



Infrastructure

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the indoor recreation facility strategies provided as resources permit.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective	City	County	Towns, Village, and M.D.		
Follow the indoor facility strategies outlined for regional facilities.	Consider the indoor facility strategies outlined when providing local facilities.	Consider the indoor facility strategies outlined when providing local facilities.	Consider the indoor facility strategies outlined when providing local facilities.		

















**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 

# Outdoor Recreation Facility Strategies

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The following table outlines strategies for various outdoor recreation amenities either currently found throughout the Grande Prairie area or that could be contemplated in the future. Like those provided for indoor amenities, the strategies outlined provide general guidance for future effort but would still require tactical feasibility planning prior to major project development.

Outdoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Leisure and Program Aquatics	Yes	Community priority #4	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 45% (#1)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 48% (#1)	» Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes
		Student survey 42% (#1)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		<ul> <li>Provision ratios: urban benchmarking—1 pool:56,805 residents;</li> <li>Grande Prairie area—1 pool:82,365 residents</li> </ul>	For New Facilities:
Campgrounds	No	Community priority #3	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 41% (#2)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 21% (#6)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 28% (#3)	» Expand existing facilities if warranted by demand
		The City provides more campgrounds than comparable urban municipalities (3 versus an average of 1) while the County provides more than comparable rural municipalities (11 versus an average of 7.6)	

Outdoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Water Spray Parks	No	Community priority #2	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 33% (#4)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		Group survey 24% (#4)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 28% (#2)	» Explore development of new water spray features as new
		Trending	community-level park spaces are acquired
			<ul> <li>Consider including complementary amenities such as washrooms,</li> <li>parking, and food services when contemplating new development</li> </ul>
Picnic Areas	No	Community priority #5	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 28% (#5)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 7% (#21)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 21% (#5)	» Consider inclusion in newly developed park spaces
Community Gardens	No	Community priority #4	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 25% (#7)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 21% (#5)	For New Facilities:
		• Student survey 11% (#20)	<ul> <li>Monitor use of existing community gardens and expand provision</li> </ul>
		Trending	as warranted by demand
Dog Off Leash Areas	No	Community priority #1	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 23% (#8)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 26% (#6)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 24% (#4)	» Monitor use of existing dog off leash areas and expand provision as
		Trending	warranted by demand
Sledding Hills	No	Community priority #4	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 22% (#9)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 12% (#11)	For New Facilities:
		• Student survey 20% (#7)	» Potentially include as park features where feasible
Playgrounds	No	Community priority #6	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 17% (#12)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 14% (#9)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 14% (#15	» Consider inclusion in newly developed park spaces
			» Partner with school authorities and community members to ensure
			that new schools have playground features (where appropriate)
Bike Parks (Mountain Bike and/or BMX)	No	Community priority #4	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 11% (#15)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 19% (#7)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 19% (#9)	» Monitor use of existing bike park areas and expand provision
		Trending	as warranted by demand

Outdoor Amenity	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Ball Diamonds	Yes (Major Tournament Sites)	<ul> <li>Community priority #7</li> <li>Household survey 7% (#19)</li> <li>Group survey 10% (#14)</li> <li>Student survey 11% (#21)</li> <li>Current utilization: In 2015, the SBC diamonds accounted for 83% of the booked hours for City ball diamonds (3,880 of the 4,648 hours)</li> <li>The City provides fewer ball diamonds than comparable urban municipalities (28 versus an average of 49.8); the County provides ball diamonds similar to rural comparatives</li> <li>Provision ratios: City—1 diamond:2,448 residents; urban benchmarking—1 diamond:1,712 residents; Grande Prairie area—1 diamond:1,647 residents</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:
Sports Fields	Yes (Major Tournament Sites)	<ul> <li>Community priority #6</li> <li>Household survey 4% (#26)</li> <li>Group survey 24% (#3)</li> <li>Student survey 16% (#12)</li> <li>Current utilization: 1,167 hours of community use were booked at City fields in 2015</li> <li>The City provides fewer fields than comparable urban municipalities (36 versus an average of 55.0); the County provides more fields than rural comparable municipalities (10 versus an average of 2.4)</li> <li>Provision ratios: City—1 field:1,904 residents; urban benchmarking—1 field:1,443 residents; Grande Prairie area—1 field:1,445 residents</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         Consider partnerships with users in operations         Explore regional scheduling and allocation options         Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes         Reduce barriers to existing facilities         Engage in lifecycle budgeting         For New Facilities:         Consider multi-field tournament sites, preferably in association with nearby accommodations
Boarded Rinks	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #6</li> <li>Household survey 7% (#18)</li> <li>Group survey 7% (#19)</li> <li>Student survey 7% (#26)</li> <li>The City provides fewer outdoor boarded rinks than comparable urban municipalities (10 versus an average of 25.2)</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:
Skateboard Parks	No	<ul> <li>Community priority #5</li> <li>Household survey 7% (#21)</li> <li>Group survey 7% (#17)</li> <li>Student survey 11% (#22)</li> <li>Trending</li> </ul>	For Existing Facilities:         » Reduce barriers to existing facilities         » Engage in lifecycle budgeting         • For New Facilities:             » Monitor use of existing skateboard park areas and expand provision as warranted by demand

<b>Outdoor Amenity</b>	Regional?	Research Indicators	Future Strategy
Tennis Courts	No	Community priority #6	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 5% (#25)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 14% (#10)	» Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes
		Student survey 8% (#23)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		The City provides fewer campgrounds than comparable urban	For New Facilities:
		municipalities (16 versus an average of 25.8) while the County provides more than comparable rural municipalities (2 versus an average of 1.4)	<ul> <li>Monitor use of existing tennis courts and expand provision as warranted by demand</li> </ul>
			» Develop as multi-use courts where able
Pickleball Courts	No	Community priority #7	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 3% (#27)	» Reduce barriers to existing facilities
		• Group survey 5% (#22)	» Align facility allocation and user fees to service outcomes
		Student survey 3% (#27)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		Trending (multi-use courts)	For New Facilities:
			<ul> <li>Monitor use of existing pickleball courts and expand provision as warranted by demand</li> </ul>
			» Develop as multi-use courts where able
Hard Court Areas (Basketball)	No	Community priority #8	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 6% (#24)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 10% (#15)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 14% (#14)	» Develop as multi-use courts where able
			» Site in association with schools
Beach Volleyball Courts	No	Community priority #8	For Existing Facilities:
		Household survey 7% (#20)	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		• Group survey 5% (#24)	For New Facilities:
		Student survey 21% (#6)	» Site in association with schools
Agricultural and/or Event Spaces	Yes	Agricultural Facilities	For Existing Facilities:
		» Community priority #7	» Engage in lifecycle budgeting
		» Household survey 6% (#23)	For New Facilities:
		» Group survey 2% (#26)	» Expand existing facilities as warranted by demand
		» Student survey 8% (#24)	
		» Trending	
		Event Spaces/Amphitheatre	
		» Community priority #8	
		» Household survey 8% (#17)	
		» Group survey 2% (#27)	
		» Student survey 7% (#25)	

# **Regional Trails**

Trails are one of the most popular recreation amenities in the Grande Prairie area. Walking/biking trails were the third highest outdoor community amenity priority. Trails were mentioned as a future outdoor priority of regional residents (36% indicating that they should be a future priority). Nature interpretive trails (28%), motorized trails (20%), and mountain bike trails (17%) were all in the top 15 outdoor priorities of regional households. Trails accommodate a variety of physical activities and are the most utilized recreation amenities in Alberta (Alberta Recreation Survey, 2013).



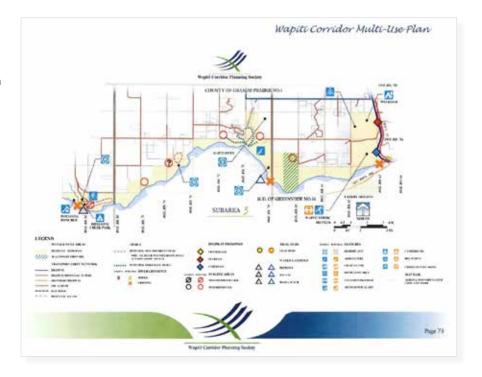
Trails are an integral part of the transportation networks within Grande Prairie municipalities as well as throughout the entire area. As such, enhanced efforts should be made in trail planning, maintenance, and operations. The importance of proper planning and management of trails is outlined in existing planning initiatives such as Moving Forward—A Strategy for Active Transportation in Grande Prairie and assessments such as Walkable Alberta—Grande Prairie Community Report (2012). The County of Grande Prairie 2007 Parks and Open Spaces Study suggests the County "explore possibilities to establish public trails at regional and neighborhood scales".

Both the County and the City have specific trail routing intentions (2012 City Parks Master Plan and the internal trails planning developed by the County). Although there is some regional dialogue regarding trails planning, the development of a Regional Trails Master Plan would add value and provide strategic direction for local municipalities from a collective and independent perspective. The development

of such a plan would need to recognize the various types of trails provided throughout the area (motorized, non-motorized, equine, etc.), pertinent settings for each to occur, and the creation of deliberate regional trail connections where applicable. Other trail-focused organizations, such as Alberta TrailNet, may be able to assist.

## **Specialty Areas**

There are a number of specialty areas throughout the Grande Prairie area that have recreation value. The Wapiti River is a natural feature used by residents and visitors for a variety of recreational activities. The Wapiti Corridor Multi-Use Plan (WCMUP) was developed by the Wapiti Corridor Planning Society and provides strategic direction for approximately 50 km of the Wapiti River bordering both the County of Grande Prairie and the M.D. of Greenview. The Society includes resident and municipal representation from the M.D. of Greenview, the County of Grande Prairie, and the City of Grande Prairie. The WCMUP specifically calls on the City and the County to "take a leadership role in sourcing funding for recreational facilities within the Wapiti corridor". The corridor should continue to be an area of focus for both the M.D. of Greenview and the County of Grande Prairie as a key element of recreation for all residents in the area (urban and rural).



Although recreation activities such as hunting and fishing do not normally occur on municipal lands, it is important to note that areas for these activities may be of regional interest as they are enjoyed by residents throughout the Grande Prairie Area.

The Nitehawk Recreation Area is a multipurpose recreational area and facility operated in the M.D. of Greenview by a non-profit organization. The facility was utilized by 32% of regional residents in 2015 and is a valuable recreation asset for the area. As the facility is operated by a non-profit, should future municipal support be requested, the facility planning framework outlined herein would apply.



Infrastructure

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the outdoor recreation facility strategies provided as resources permit.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.					
Follow the outdoor	Consider the outdoor	Consider the outdoor	Consider the outdoor		
facility strategies outlined for	facility strategies outlined when	facility strategies outlined when	facility strategies outlined when		
regional facilities.	providing local facilities.	providing local facilities.	providing local facilities.		





**Active Living** 



Inclusion and Access



**Connecting People and Nature** 



**Supportive Environments** 



**Recreation Capacity** 

# Future Recreation Amenity Prioritization

9

Utilizing the prioritization framework presented and scoring each potential amenity, the following list of ranked amenities has been developed to guide future regional recreation infrastructure investment and efforts. For the detailed scoring results, please refer to the appendix.



Rank	Outdoor Amenity	Regional?
1	Mountain Bike Trails	Yes
2	Walking/Bicycling Trail System	Yes
2	Dog Off Leash Areas	No
2	Nature/Interpretive Trails	Yes
5	Water Spray Parks	No
6	Community Gardens	No
7	Sledding Hills	No
7	Picnic Areas	No
7	Playgrounds	No
10	Campgrounds	No
10	Bike Parks (mountain bike and/or BMX)	No
10	Motorized Trails (e.g. ATV, snowmobile)	Yes

Rank	Indoor Amenity	Regional?
1	Gymnasium-Type Spaces	No
2	Leisure Ice Surfaces	Yes
3	Fitness/Wellness Facilities	No
4	Leisure Swimming Pools	Yes
5	Indoor Child Playgrounds	No
5	Youth Centre	No
7	Indoor Field Facilities	Yes
7	25 m Swimming Tank	Yes
7	Ice Arena Facilities	Yes
10	Walking/Running Track	No
10	Dance/Program/Martial Arts Rooms	No

24
Infrastructure

It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the prioritization presented for future regional recreation infrastructure.

Level of Cooperation					
Collective City County Towns, Village, and M.I					
Utilize the priorities outlined to guide future decision-making.	Consider the priorities outlined and participate in future regional facility initiatives where applicable.	Consider the priorities outlined and participate in future regional facility initiatives where applicable.	Consider the priorities outlined and participate in future regional facility initiatives where applicable.		

## **Alignment with Active Alberta**













Active Outdoors Active Engagement

Active Coordinated System

Active Excellence







**Inclusion and Access** 



Connecting People and Nature



Supportive Environments



Recreation Capacity



# **Financial Impacts**

# 10

The following table provides some insight into the expected financial impacts of implementing each recommendation. Although each is given a low, medium or high rating, actual cost implications to the area and the local municipalities within it will be dependent upon the level of implementation and the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Reco	ommendation	Low Cost Impact	Medium Cost Impact	High Cost Impact
Serv	ice Delivery			
1	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities use the Vision, Goals, and desired Service Outcomes to define a rationale for recreation services and to guide future decision-making.	•		
2	It is recommended that the Joint County-City Recreation Committee (or an expanded group) continue to provide guidance to recreation service delivery through the implementation of this Master Plan. Furthermore, an administrative body should be formed to support the ongoing work of the Committee.		•	
3	It is recommended that an agreed process be utilized to define regional recreation facilities and services in the Grande Prairie area.	•		
4	It is recommended that a new conversation around regional cost sharing be initiated with a focus on regional facilities and spaces as defined herein and with the realization that cost sharing will be guided in multiple directions.		•	
5	It is recommended that standardized facility usage and user data collection be undertaken across the Grande Prairie area.	•		
6	It is recommended that an ongoing regional recreation engagement process, including the development and maintenance of a web-based Master Plan interface, be agreed to and implemented.		•	

Reco	ommendation	Low Cost Impact	Medium Cost Impact	High Cost Impact
7	It is recommended that local municipalities continue to provide support to local interest groups through the Sport Council and other means.		•	
8	It is recommended that local municipalities support efforts to bolster volunteerism.		<b>✓</b>	
9	It is recommended that recreation marketing and promotions are coordinated on a regional basis with active engagement from all Grande Prairie area municipalities.	•		
10	It is recommended that service delivery partnerships be explored whenever new programs and marketing efforts are introduced.		•	
11	It is recommended that infrastructure partnerships be explored whenever new recreation facilities are introduced using the framework presented.		•	
12	It is recommended that performance measurement be included in all service and infrastructure partnership arrangements.	•		
Prog	rams and Opportunity			
13	It is recommended that removing financial, transportation, and social barriers to participation should be an area of future focus.		•	
14	It is recommended that regional recreation needs assessment occur on an ongoing basis to increase understanding of recreation and program opportunity preferences and trends.		•	
15	It is recommended that the provision of both structured and unstructured recreation opportunities be considered when delivering recreation services.	•		
16	It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area pursue enhanced opportunities for residents and visitors in the focus areas presented.	~		
Infra	structure			
17	It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area consider the infrastructure leading practices presented in planning, operating, and maintaining recreation infrastructure.	~		
18	It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area utilize the Facility Condition Index framework when contemplating the future of existing recreation infrastructure.	•		
19	It is recommended that recreation service providers in the Grande Prairie area consider land acquisition outside of regular Municipal Reserve dedication to meet regional or local recreation needs.		•	
20	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities follow the planning framework presented in contemplating future recreation infrastructure.	~		
21	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities use the prioritization process presented in allocating future recreation resources.	~		
22	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the indoor recreation facility strategies provided as resources permit.			•
23	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the outdoor recreation facility strategies provided as resources permit.			•
24	It is recommended that Grande Prairie area municipalities consider the prioritization presented for future regional recreation infrastructure.			<b>~</b>

# Implementation and Next Steps

# 11

In response to the ranked priorities presented and the recommendations contained herein, the following next steps are suggested related to regional level recreation in the Grande Prairie area. It is important to note that the following are to be considered incremental to existing efforts; they assume status quo as it relates to current City, County, and Town/Village efforts related to recreation service and facility provision.



# **Service Delivery Short-Term**

- Gather appropriate stakeholders to form a regional recreation advisory group for the Grande Prairie area. Refine, confirm, and adopt a definition of regional recreation facilities based on discussion included herein.
- Revisit existing regional recreation cost-sharing protocols based on discussion included herein.
- Develop standardized data collection to support a regional cost-sharing framework and understand facility and space utilization and the overall impact of recreation services in the area.

# **Service Delivery Mid and Long-Term**

- Coordinate marketing and promotion efforts including standard key messaging and pooled efforts/resources.
- Confirm an approach to ongoing community dialogue and needs assessment related to recreation, based on the engagement protocols suggested herein, to understand local trends and gather important feedback from residents and users.

# **Indoor Infrastructure Short-Term**

- Explore regional allocation strategies for pools, arenas, indoor fields, and gymnasium spaces, where possible, with the goal of maximizing the use of facilities throughout the area.
- Ensure appropriate lifecycle programs, including associated capital budgeting allotments, are in place for existing and new facilities.
- Conduct feasibility analysis for a new regional aquatics facility in the short-term and to ensure in the long-term that a balance of leisure and program opportunities is achieved.

# **Indoor Infrastructure Mid and Long-Term**

- Conduct feasibility analysis for enhanced ice provision in the mid to long-term; include leisure ice amenities in exploration.
- Conduct feasibility analysis for enhanced indoor field provision in the mid to long-term; consider provision in the western portion of the Grande Prairie area to promote geographic balance.

# **Outdoor Infrastructure Short-Term**

- Explore regional allocation strategies for outdoor fields and ball diamonds, where possible, to maximize use of existing spaces throughout the area.
- Ensure appropriate lifecycle programs, including capital budget allotments, are in place for existing and new outdoor regional spaces.
- Explore the development of major ball diamond and/or field tournament sites as partnership opportunities are presented.
- Develop a Regional Trails Master Plan including all types of trails and securing regional trail connectivity options.
- Continue to support efforts related to the Wapiti Corridor Multi-Use Plan.

# Outdoor Infrastructure Mid and Long-Term

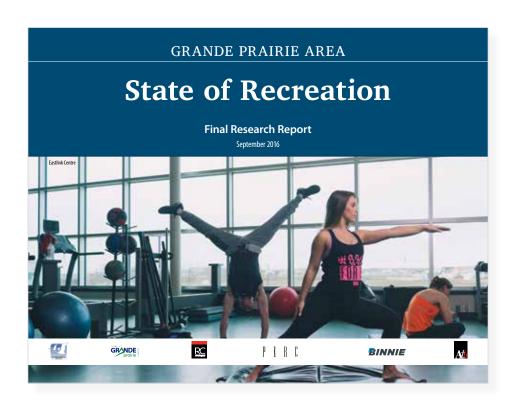
- Explore the development of major ball diamond and/or field tournament sites as partnership opportunities are presented.
- Implement Regional Trails Master Plan recommendations.
- Continue to support efforts related to the Wapiti Corridor Multi Use Plan.





# State of Recreation in the Grande Prairie Area

# A



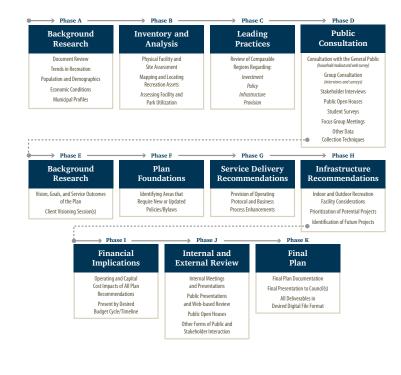
# Introduction

1

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 and the City of Grande Prairie have partnered to develop this Recreation Master Plan. The Master Plan will provide an overall framework to guide the development, delivery, and continuous improvement of recreation and parks programs, services, and facilities. Located within the area are the Towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, and Wembley, the Village of Hythe and the Hamlets of Bezanson, Clairmont, La Glace, Teepee Creek, and Valhalla Centre. As well, portions of the M.D. of Greenview (DeBolt and Grovedale) are included in the market area when considering recreation facilities that serve Grande Prairie area residents. The project further provides the opportunity to assess the state of recreation on a broader basis.

Engagement with area residents, community organizations and stakeholders was identified as being a critical component to the development of the Master Plan. The engagement complements other forms of research to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities to improve recreation services. The process and research mechanisms used to develop the Master Plan are illustrated by the adjacent graphic.

This "State of Recreation Research Report" provides a comprehensive overview of the research and engagement findings. The Report further identifies key themes, gaps and focus areas for the Master Plan to consider and address. While the primary objective of the "State of Recreation Report" is to inform Master Plan development, the findings presented in this document can also provide ongoing value to the project partners and community organizations by providing a wealth of information that can assist with the identification of programming needs, partnerships, and opportunities to align with trends and best practices.



# **Community Context**

2

The Grande Prairie area covers an expansive and diverse area in northwestern Alberta. Included in the area is a mix of urban and rural areas with distinct characteristics and backgrounds. Identified in this section is a profile of the City of Grande Prairie and the County of Grande Prairie No. 1. A population analysis and potential growth projections are also provided.

## **County of Grande Prairie No. 1**

The County of Grande Prairie has an estimated population of 21,157¹ residents and covers a geographic area of 5,570 square kilometres. Located within the County boundaries are the Towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, and Wembley, the Village of Hythe and the Hamlets of Bezanson, Clairmont, La Glace, Teepee Creek, and Valhalla Centre. The City of Grande Prairie is also located with the County boundaries.

The area is well served by transportation infrastructure which includes major highway routes 2, 40, 43, and 59. These highways along with available air and rail transportation routes are critical to servicing the area's oil and gas, agricultural, forestry and commerce industries.



<sup>1 2012</sup> County of Grande Prairie No. 1 Municipal Census

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 and the City of Grande Prairie remain a commercial hub for the broader Peace Region, serving an estimated trade area of 260,000 residents.<sup>2</sup>

Residents and visitors to the County have access to an abundance of outdoor and nature-related recreation and leisure pursuits which include unique opportunities and features such as dinosaur digs, badlands topography, heritage villages, windsurfing, bird watching and geocaching. The County operates five campgrounds and four dayuse parks. The Wapiti Dunes continue to be a popular attraction in the area for both motorized and non-motorized recreation enthusiasts. In 2013, the County completed the first phase of the Wapiti Dunes Multi-Use Trails. This 5.6 km leg includes a parking area and is utilized by a variety of non-motorized users.

The completion of the modern Crosslink County Sportsplex, located in Clairmont, opened in 2014 and includes a twin ice arena facility, soccer fieldhouse, indoor running track, fitness centre and other adjacent outdoor fields and spaces. The facility is owned by the County and is privately operated. Local municipalities and not-for-profit organizations located throughout the County also play a key role in providing residents with recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities. Located in communities throughout the County are a variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, halls, school gymnasiums and sports fields (see Section 5 for a complete listing).

# **City of Grande Prairie**

The City of Grande Prairie is located approximately 90 km east of the British Columbia border and 450 km northwest of Edmonton at the junction of highways 40 and 43. The city is the largest centre between Edmonton, Alberta and Fairbanks, Alaska. In 2011, Grande Prairie had recorded a population of 55,032 residents. Soon after its incorporation as a City in 1958, Grande Prairie was declared "Home of the Trumpeter Swan" due to the high number of the bird species nesting in the area.

Economic activity in the area is driven by the oil and gas sector while agriculture and forestry remain important contributors. Grande Prairie also continues to be an important service and educational hub for the broader area. Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC)provides an array of post-secondary classes, transfer programs, and career training for approximately 3,000 students. In addition to the main campus in Grande Prairie, five other satellite campus locations operate across northwestern Alberta.

The Grande Prairie Regional Airport, located immediately to the west of Grande Prairie, offers regular air service to a number of major hubs (Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver) and is served by major carriers WestJet and Air Canada. In 2012 the airport served 415,634 passengers.<sup>3</sup>

Public primary and secondary education in the community is provided by the Grande Prairie Public School District, which operates 15 schools with an enrollment of approximately 8,000 students. The Grande Prairie Catholic School Division operates 12 schools in the broader area for approximately 3,700 students.

- 3 http://albertacommunityprofiles.com/Profile/Grande\_Prairie/255
- 4 https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/schools/Pages/default.aspx
- 5 https://education.alberta.ca/media/6855052/grande%20prairie% 20roman%20catholic%20separate%20school%20district% 20no.%2028.pdf

Residents and visitors to Grande Prairie have access to a diverse array of recreation and leisure opportunities. Following Bear Creek, Muskoseepi Park provides a lush green space with a plethora of amenities which includes trails, tennis courts, a playground and water park, outdoor pool, lawn bowling, fishing pond, mini golf and an amphitheatre. The Grande Prairie Museum is also located within the boundaries of the park space.

Opened in 2011, the Eastlink Centre has become the communities "hub" of indoor recreation. Components and amenities at the Eastlink Centre include an aquatics centre (50 metre pool, leisure pools, FlowRider), fitness centre, indoor track, and fieldhouse. Other indoor community facilities include the Coca-Cola Centre (twin ice arena, meeting/program rooms), Dave Barr Community Centre (arena, The Kid's Place). Revolution Place (formerly the Crystal Centre) remains the community's main indoor event facility. The facility can accommodate events exceeding 3,200 people. In addition to being the home arena for the Alberta Junior Hockey League's Grande Prairie Storm, the facility also hosts numerous concerts and family events throughout the year.



<sup>2</sup> http://www.middleofeverywhere.ca/

## **Population Analysis**

Identified as follows are population characteristics of the area and its municipalities. Growth projections are also identified.

## **Population Characteristics**

The adjacent chart provides an overview of the population figures for the municipalities in the study area using data from the 2011 Statistics Canada Census of the Population. As reflected in the chart, the majority of municipalities in the area recorded growth from 2006 to 2011. Growth in the County of Grande Prairie No. 1, the City of Grande Prairie and the Town of Sexsmith outpaced the provincial growth rate of 10.8%. Reflecting the area's young population base, the median age of the majority of municipalities in the area is also considerably lower than the provincial average of 36.5 years.

Available data from the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey further provides insight into the population characteristics and demographics for the City of Grande Prairie and County of Grande Prairie No. 1. Specific points of interest from this data are identified as follows.

## City of Grande Prairie

- 6.6% of city residents are characterized as immigrants (provincial average: 18.1%).
  - » 44.7% of this immigration occurred between 2001 and 2011.
  - » The highest proportion of recent (2006 to 2011) immigrants is residents born in the Philippines.
- 6.2% of city residents are visible minorities (provincial average: 18.3%).
- 9.7% of city residents report as having an Aboriginal identity (provincial average: 6.2%).

Location	Population (2011)	Population (2006)	Change (%)	Avg. Annual Growth	Median Age (2011)
County of Grande Prairie No. 1*	20,347	17,929	13.5%	2.7%	36.8
City of Grande Prairie	55,032	47,107	16.8%	3.4%	30.3
Town of Beaverlodge	2,365	2,264	4.5%	0.9%	35.3
Town of Sexsmith	2,418	1,969	22.8%	4.6%	29.1
Town of Wembley	1,383	1,443	-4.2%	-0.8%	31.4
Village of Hythe	820	821	-0.1%	0.0%	42.3
Total	82,365	71,533	15.1%	3.0%	_

- \* Includes rural hamlets and other unincorporated settlement areas
  - Level of educational attainment (residents 25 64):
    - » No certificate, diploma or degree: 15.8% (provincial average: 11.9%).
    - » High school or equivalent: 27.8% (provincial average: 23.1%).
    - » Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma: 16.1% (provincial average: 12.2%).
    - » College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma: 23.1% (provincial average: 21.4%).
    - » University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level: 3.1% (provincial average: 4.7%).
    - » Bachelor's degree: 14.3% (provincial average: 17.7%).
    - » University education above the bachelor level:3.1% (provincial average: 7.9%).
- Sales and service occupations (22.2%) are the largest sector of employment in the city followed by trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (20.0%), and business, finance and administration occupations (14.0%).
- 85.1% of the labour force is employed full-time while 14.9% is employed part-time.
- 4.5% of city residents use active transportation methods (walk, bike) to travel to their place of work (provincial average: 6.0%).

- 77.4% of households spend less than 30% of total household income on shelter costs (provincial average: 76.3%).
  - » 77.6% of owner households have a mortgage (provincial average: 62.6%).
- The median household income in the city is \$90,151 (provincial average: \$78,632).

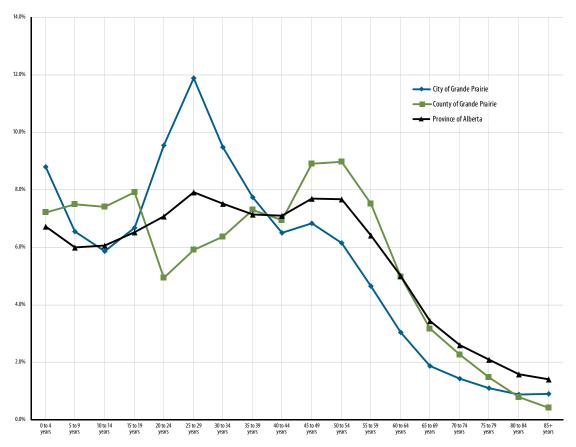
## County of Grande Prairie No. 1

- 5.0% of county residents are characterized as immigrants (provincial average: 18.1%).
  - » 23.5% of this immigration occurred between 2001 and 2011.
  - » The highest proportion of recent (2006 to 2011) immigrants was from residents born in Germany.
- 1.2% of county residents are visible minorities (provincial average: 18.3%).
- 7.6% of county residents report as having an Aboriginal identity (provincial average: 6.2%).

- Level of educational attainment (residents 25 64):
  - » No certificate, diploma or degree: 18.2% (provincial average: 11.9%).
  - » High school or equivalent: 27.8% (provincial average: 23.1%).
  - » Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma: 20.0% (provincial average: 12.2%).
  - » College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma: 21.7% (provincial average: 21.4%).
  - » University certificate or diploma below the bachelor level: 1.7% (provincial average: 4.7%).
  - » Bachelor's degree: 7.4% (provincial average: 17.7%).
  - » University education above the bachelor level:3.1% (provincial average: 7.9%).
- Trades, transport and equipment operators (and related occupations) are the largest sector of employment in the county (24.9%) followed by management occupations (16.2%) and business, finance and administration occupations (16.1%).
- 78.4% of the labour force is employed full-time while 21.6% is employed part-time.
- 2.7% of county residents use active transportation methods (walk, bike) to travel to their place of work (provincial average: 6.0%).
- 81.8% of households spend less than 30% of total household income on shelter costs (provincial average: 76.3%).
  - » 65.6% of owner households have a mortgage (provincial average: 62.6%).
- The median household income in the county is \$96,162 (provincial average: \$78,632).

The following graph illustrates overall age distributions of the county and city populations using Statistics Canada Census data. As reflected in the graph, there is a notable contrast with regard to the proportion of residents aged 20 to 34 years. Gender distribution data reflects a slightly higher proportion of males than females in both the county and city. Just over fifty-one percent (51.1%) of city residents are males while 51.4% of county residents are males.

Age Distribution
City of Grande Prairie vs. County of Grande Prairie No. 1 vs. Province of Alberta



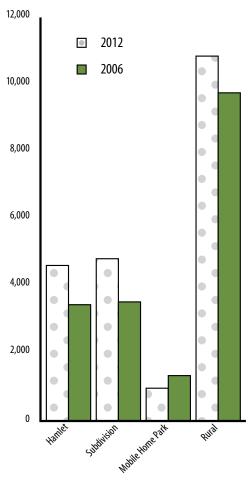
The 2012 County of Grande Prairie No. 1 Municipal Census provides additional data that can be used to assess population characteristics of the County. The following chart reflects the population distribution of residents in the County by Division. As reflected in the chart, the Municipal Census counted a population of 21,157 in the County which is a 3.8% increase over the Statistics Canada 2011 Census population count.

The following graphic illustrates the breakdown of the County's population by the location type. A comparison is also provided to previous data from 2006. As reflected in the graph, the highest proportions of residents (51.2%) live in rural areas.

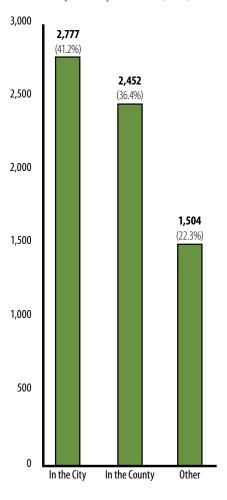
Employment and commuting data were also collected during the Municipal Census. As illustrated by the graph, the highest proportions of County residents (41.2%) commute to the City for work while 36.4% work in the County. Approximately 15% of County households identified as agricultural producers; however, only 6% indicated that they derive their primary source of income from agricultural production.

Location	Number of Residents	% of County Population
Bezanson/East Grande Prairie	1,882	8.9%
Clairmont/North Grande Prairie	3,922	18.8%
Grande Prairie	4,015	19.0%
Wembley/West Grande Prairie	3,297	15.6%
Beaverlodge/Huallen	1,970	9.3%
Elmworth/Halcourt	962	4.6%
Hythe/Demmitt	1,151	5.4%
Valhalla/LaGlace	1,596	7.5%
Sexsmith/Teepee	2,361	11.2%
<b>Total Population</b>	21,157	_





# Where is your place of employment? County Municipal Census (2012)



Other pertinent findings from the County's Municipal Census include:

- 71.2% of residences have internet service.
- Consistent with Statistics Canada data, the largest age segment of the population is residents aged 46 – 60 years old.
- 56.3% of households have two individuals that drive.

## **Growth Projections**

A number of population forecasts have been developed over the last number of years as part of previous planning studies to try and project future growth for the City, County and broader area. The City of Grande Prairie's **2008 Growth Study Update** (completed in November 2013) estimates that by 2061 the population of the City could be as high as 158,634 residents as reflected in the chart below. This high scenario projection assumes annual population growth of 2.17%.

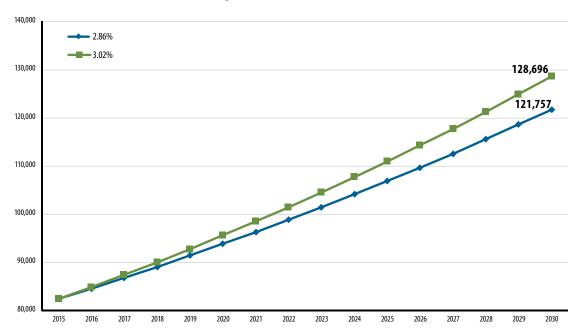
Year	Population	Jobs
2012	56,395	34,539
2042	109,155	66,698
2061	158,634	92,733

A Retail Market and Gap Analysis conducted in 2014 for the City of Grande Prairie also identifies area growth projections. These projections estimate that the "primary trading area" (including the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie No. 1, as well as Dawson Creek to the west, Valleyview to the East, Hotchkiss to the north and almost to Grande Cache in the south) could reach a population of 94,176 residents by 2018 and 96,658 residents by 2023.

Historical data from previous Statistics Canada Census counts (2006 and 2011) can also be extrapolated to help predict future growth for the combined population of the County of Grande Prairie, City of Grande Prairie, Towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, and Wembley and the Village of Hythe. The following graph illustrates two potential fifteen year growth scenarios. **Scenario** 1 (2.86% annual growth) reflects the annual growth rate recorded for combined municipalities between the 2001 and 2006 Census counts. If this scenario were to occur, the population of area would be 121,757 residents in 2030. Scenario 2 (3.02% annual growth) reflects the annual growth rate recorded for combined municipalities between the 2006 and 2011 Census counts. This scenario would result in a 2030 population of 128,696 residents in the area.



Growth Projections
Average Annual Growth (2015 to 2030)



# **Background Review**

3

A review of previous studies, planning documents and overarching strategies was undertaken in order to better understand previous projects that have been undertaken related to recreation, parks and other related community services. Presented in this section is a summary of this documentation. An overview is also provided of pertinent national and provincial policies and frameworks that are important to consider, and where possible align with, in the provision of recreation and related services.

## **Local Context**

Summarized as follows (in chronological order) are planning and strategy documents with direct pertinence to the local area.

## **County of Grande Prairie No. 1**

## Municipal Development Plan (Amended 2011)

The County's Municipal Development Plan was last amended in 2011. The Plan identifies a number of goals related both to the Plan itself and overall service delivery to residents in the County. One of the goals identified with pertinence to

community services is to "develop policies which contribute to the development of a healthy, safe and viable County".

The Plan provides a number of planning guidelines for Clairmont in order to ensure that the growth node is sustainably and properly developed. Policies and planning guidelines identified for Clairmont with relevance to parks and recreation are identified below:

- Ensure that the Clairmont Urban Area has sufficient land for urban parks and recreation facilities that can serve all County residents.
- Ensure that appropriate storm water management controls are completed for all future development in order to manage both quantity and quality of urban storm water runoff into Clairmont Lake and the Bear Creek watershed.
- All Area Structure Plans shall ensure that each new residential community
  has a clear community/neighbourhood focal point. This focal point may be
  open space or parks-related, a commercial core (i.e. Town Centre Concept), a
  combination of parks, commercial and medium or high density housing, or
  some other concept that achieves the objective of creating a community focus
  in each new neighbourhood.
- Municipal Reserve may be acquired adjacent to the railway in Clairmont as part
  of a public trail system for this community. This may be addressed in greater
  detail as part of a Recreation Study or Area Redevelopment Plan (or both) for
  Clairmont.

8

- ASP's for land adjacent to Clairmont Lake shall include policies that address the protection of public access to and along the Clairmont Lake shoreline.
- All ASP's should be consistent with the County's parks and recreation plans.

# Strategic Priorities (2014 – 2017)

In April 2014, the County of Grande Prairie held a series of priority setting sessions for Council and County staff. From these sessions, Council and administration identified the strategic priorities and developed a detailed work plan for implementing the priorities.

In total, 13 priorities were identified. Those with potential pertinence to recreation and related services were:

- Regional Relations (#5): Develop an intermunicipal protocol as a basis for cooperative initiatives.
- Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum (#8): Complete operating agreement with the Society.
- Campgrounds (#9): Develop terms of reference for a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that includes a campground business plan and finalizes a lease for Saskatoon Mountain Park with the Alberta Government.
- Community Viability (#11): Complete Dimsdale Area Structure Plan to determine requirements for social amenities, services and funding.
- Staffing (#12): Undertake service capacity review to align service levels and Council expectations with resources.
- County Role: Social Needs (#13): Complete a needs assessment under the FCSS department to identify gaps in service and potential strategies to address community social needs.

## Parks and Open Spaces Study (2007)

The Parks and Open Spaces Study was commissioned in order to plan for the future of County operated and managed outdoor spaces. Three core objectives were identified for the Study:

- Provide an overview and assessment of the existing County of Grande Prairie parks, municipal reserves and environmental reserves;
- Provide recommendations for future development of the County's parks, municipal reserves and environmental reserves; and
- Present options and provide recommendations for the creation of a full-time parks department.

While the Study identified a number of policy and land management practice recommendations, the overarching recommendations focused on three potential options for the creation of a Parks Department. These options include:

- Option 1: Year Round, Full-Time (four full-time positions and a seasonal contracted position)
- Option 2: Year Round, Full-Time (two full-time positions, two part-time positions)
- Option 3: No change

## Recreation and FCSS Needs Assessment Research Report (2014)

The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to determine the recreational and preventative social needs of the residents of the County of Grande Prairie, which are being served by the County of Grande Prairie Community Services Programs and other community programs, in addition to determining the level to which these needs are presently being met. Objectives of the Needs Assessment included:

- Identifying the present and future preventative social needs of the residents of the County of Grande Prairie.
- Accessing data that will measure the present participation of county residents in recreation and FCSS programs, as well as programs provided by partner municipalities.
- Determining the capacity of the recreation and FCSS programs provided in partner municipalities to continue to serve the needs of their own residents and those of the County of Grande Prairie.
- Providinge predictions of future demands on the County of Grande Prairie and partner municipalities' recreation and FCSS programs, taking into account demographics, trends in participation, and societal changes over the coming 10 to 20 years.
- Developing publicly presentable and easily understood maps, plans, and graphics to portray the information gathered on preventative social needs and possible ways to meet them.

A telephone survey was conducted as part of the Needs Assessment to gather statistically representative data from County residents. Key findings with pertinence to recreation and parks include:

- 97% of households believe that the County is a good place to raise a family.
- 77% of households believe that there are safe parks, playgrounds, and play spaces in the County.
- 60% of households indicated that outside of work or school, there are lots of things for young people to do.
- 19% of households indicated that they accessed County of Grande Prairie human services for youth recreation programs while 14% accessed recreation programs for parents and families.

## Multiplex Recreational Complex Feasibility Study (2011)

Following a Needs Assessment process in 2009, Nustadia Recreation was retained by the County to prepare a Feasibility Study to determine the need and financial impact of a proposed multiplex in the community. The Feasibility Study research process included consultation with local stakeholders and a trends analysis. A facility program and associated financial projections were then developed. The following recommendations were provided to the County:

- The Council for the County of Grande Prairie pass a recommendation for the development of a multiplex as presented in the Feasibility Study.
- The County reach an agreement with the City of Grande Prairie regarding the City not twinning the Dave Barr arena.
- The County secure financing for up to 80% of the total development cost estimate.

- The County establish a committee to raise up to 20% of the total development cost estimate through capital grants from various levels of government and a community fundraising initiative.
- The County consider development of exterior rugby and soccer fields and a second indoor soccer field to make this multiplex a regional sport and recreation centre destination.

Nustadia was commissioned as the development manager and long-term operator of the facility with the following responsibilities:

- 1. Develop and finalize the facility program
- 2. Develop specifications
- 3. Pre-qualify design builders
- 4. Oversee the design build RFP
- 5. Oversee construction

## Pipestone Creek Park Master Plan (2008)

The Master Plan was initiated and completed in order to sustain Pipestone Creek, located along the Wapiti River and one of the County's most popular and well-used park areas. The Plan was deemed necessary as the park infrastructure was assessed as nearing the end of its life expectancy. Key recommendations outlined in the Master Plan were to:

- Retain the natural ambiance and the range of family-oriented activities that make Pipestone Creek Park a popular destination, while expanding opportunities for trail-based activities such as walking and cycling;
- Plan for minor expansion of the family and group campgrounds, while focusing on upgrading existing park facilities and infrastructure to maintain the quality of visitor experience; and

 Enhance the park's interpretive value, building on the existing dinosaur theme as well as the history of the former Pipestone Creek community and Pipestone cable ferry.

The Master Plan also identified a number of specific amenity and infrastructure improvements, which include:

- Examine the potential of the uppermost terrace (upslope from the existing campground) for additional campsite expansion;
- Consider a secondary access road from the park to Range Road 82 to accommodate additional traffic and provide an emergency egress route;
- Consider additional investment in interpretive facilities and programming (e.g. conversion of the one-room Dinosaur Museum into an interpretive centre): and
- Expansion of the trail network alongside Pipestone Creek to connect with the proposed museum.

The Master Plan identified a number of additional planning exercises and assessments that would be required in order to implement the recommendations. Midterm actions were also outlined based on the potential planning and additional assessment requirements.

## Kleskun Hill Natural Area Management Plan (2001)

The project was jointly conducted by the public lands, sustainable resource development and parks and protected areas division, community development branches of the provincial government. The objective of the project was to establish a management plan to protect the Kleskun Hill Natural Area, located northeast of Grande Prairie. The site includes natural features, unique vegetation and historic buildings. Development of the Plan included consultation with stakeholders and the public. The Plan ultimately provides objectives and management guidelines related to natural protection, heritage appreciation, and outdoor recreation. It also identifies opportunities

for heritage tourism. Roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders (County, Province, not-for-profit groups) are also identified.

## City of Grande Prairie

## Council Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018

Developed throughout 2014, Council's Strategic Plan identifies the following 4 focus areas that are intended to help prioritize and guide the current term. Corresponding to each focus area are strategic directions.

### Focus Area: Optimizing Existing Services

- Strategic Directions:
  - » Explore opportunities to partner in municipal service delivery
  - » Partner with community groups
  - » Explore issues around affordability
  - » Enhance tourism

### Focus Area: Strengthening Our Core

- Strategic Directions:
  - » Develop a vision and plan for an energetic downtown
  - » Enhance community mobility
  - » Promote residential development
  - » Explore alternative models of land development

#### Focus Area: Exploring New Directions

- · Strategic Directions:
  - » Explore alternate governance models
  - » Explore best practices and models
  - » Balance residential and non-residential development
  - » Develop residential infill strategies

#### Focus Area: Capitalizing on Growth

- · Strategic Directions:
  - » Ensure planning considers full spectrum of services provided by the City
  - » Use best practice models to take advantage of industry trends
  - » Invest in infrastructure to meet burgeoning demand and future needs
  - » Increase the length and depth of our planning documents in order to better prepare for the future

## Municipal Sustainability Plan (2010)

The City's 2010 Municipal Sustainability Plan has a strong theme towards sustaining and, where possible, enhancing quality of life opportunities for residents in Grande Prairie. Identified below are action items and strategies with relevance to recreation and related services that were identified under the Social and Cultural areas of the Plan.

#### Social

- Engaging youth in community and social projects
- Promoting the social development of children and families
- Building community and leadership capacity in the non-profit sector
- Enhancing the quality of life for seniors

#### Cultural

- · Increasing cultural events
  - » More art festivals versus just annually
  - » Street performers
  - » Winter festivals
- Developing the Montrose Cultural site
- Completing, adopting, and implementing the Cultural Master Plan
- Completing the Aquatics and Wellness Multiplex
- Advocating for sustainable provincial/federal funding for community and voluntary sector organizations
- Facilitating voluntary sector organizations with their human infrastructure volunteer needs including governance and leadership training
- Completing and rebuilding the Grande Prairie Art Gallery

## Municipal Development Plan (2009)

The City's 2009 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) includes a section on parks, recreation, community services and heritage. The Plan identifies an overarching goal for these services:

To manage parks, public open spaces, recreation, community and heritage resources and facilities to enhance the quality of life of all City residents.

#### Four objectives are also identified:

- Ensure that all City residents enjoy the full benefits of the dedication and distribution of Municipal Reserve lands.
- 2. Encourage environmental management and stewardship of all public open spaces.
- 3. Improve the quality of life and range of amenities for City residents.
- 4. Respond to the long-term needs of a changing demographic community.

To achieve the aforementioned goals and objectives, a number of policy statements are outlined. Those with relevance to recreation, parks and related services (e.g. culture, heritage) are noted below.

- Council shall review and implement the key recommendations of the 2006 Recreation Master Plan that remain valid.
- Council shall require that the four levels of park facilities recognized by the 2006 Recreation Master Plan, which include neighbourhood, community, district and regional parks, be considered and rationalized by all ASP's. Where required, land assembly strategies will be considered.
- Council shall require that at the time of subdivision, ten (10) percent of the developable land be dedicated as Municipal Reserve. Portions of the subject site dedicated as Environmental Reserve are exempt from the calculation of developable land.
- Municipal Reserve dedication shall be taken as land for all types of ASP's including industrial plan areas. Cash in lieu of Municipal Reserve may be considered at the discretion of Council.
- Council shall amend the MDP to support the relevant policy recommendations of the Muskoseepi Park Master Plan.
- The City may consider Municipal Reserve credit for storm water management facilities for land above the 1:100 year flood line provided that the land has an active recreation capability and the following conditions are met:
  - » The school, neighbourhood park, tot-lot and pedestrian/bicycle network needs of the neighbourhood have already been met or adequate provision has been made to meet these needs in the future.
  - » The storm water management facility meets the design criteria and standards of both recreation areas and storm water management facilities and contributes to the above.

- Sufficient detail demonstrating that the use of the storm pond area for Municipal Reserve purposes is compatible with the storm water management function and high quality recreation space shall be included in the OP, the storm water design report and the detailed engineering drawings. The amount of Municipal Reserve credit to be assigned shall be determined at the time of OP approval.
- Council shall require a minimum of thirty (30)
  percent of continuous road frontage be applied
  to storm pond Public Utility Lots or a minimum
  of sixty (60) percent continuous trails and park
  furniture for a parkway that is integrated into the
  neighbourhood trail and open space system.
- Council shall prepare landscaping and improvement standards to be applied to Municipal Reserve lands that are consistent with the City's Design Manual.
- All Municipal Reserve dedicated shall be developed as useable park space in new neighbourhoods including sites designated for schools by an ASP.
- The City shall retain ownership of Municipal Reserve sites until such time as a site is required for the construction of a school.
- The City will partner with the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 in developing and implementing a regional park and recreational facilities strategy that benefits and improves the quality of life of both City and County residents.
- Council shall support the implementation
  of the Heritage Management Plan. All Area
  Redevelopment Plans (ARP's) shall be required
  to consider historic resources as determined by
  the heritage inventory and heritage survey, and
  shall preserve the integrity of these resources.
  Planning initiatives for protecting historic
  resources as suggested by the Heritage Master
  Plan shall be investigated. Suggested planning
  initiatives include Heritage Conservation Areas,
  transitional zoning, neighbourhood and infill
  design guidelines, and variances for preservation
  of historic resources.

### Parks and Open Space Master Plan (2012)

The 2012 Parks and Open Space Master Plan was developed to guide the City of Grande Prairie in the development and improvement of parks and open space facilities, and the delivery of services that will meet the needs of the community for a period of seven to ten years. The Plan provides guidance for retaining and enhancing the character and quality of existing landscape elements and open spaces, for capitalizing on the distinct four-season context, and for acknowledging the evolving demands and expectations of residents and visitors.

Development of the Plan included consultation with the public, user groups and stakeholders using a variety of mechanisms. Benchmarking, trends analysis and other forms of secondary research were also undertaken.

The Plan identified the importance of establishing a philosophical position for providing parks and open spaces. The following example declaration was developed:

The City of Grande Prairie will aspire to be known as a 'city of trees', emphasizing livability and green infrastructure, respecting watercourses and waterbodies and making them the core of the open space system.

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan identified numerous recommendations and strategies for the following areas and functions:

- Maintenance standards
- Classifications
- Coordination between departments (planning and operations)
- Monitoring of service levels and engagement with users
- · Protection and reclamation guidelines

- Expansion strategies for major park and natural sites (e.g. Bear Creek)
- Setbacks from wetland areas and natural spaces
- Tree maintenance and new planting standards (including the development of a urban forest strategy and regular inventory)
- Expansion of the neighborhood outdoor rinks programs
- Improved connectivity (including expansion of pedestrian bridges and crossings)
- Storm water management practices
- Snow clearing of selected, high traffic trails
- Development of toboggan hills in new neighborhoods to encourage winter activity
- Standards for tree planting and outdoor space provision at school sites, industrial areas and along roadways.

A number of recommended guidelines also provided for the provision of regional parks. It is suggested that Regional Parks should:

- Be centrally located to several neighbourhoods with access to arterial roads, public transit and trails (transit-oriented developments)
- Be located where several open space systems overlap, or where there are multiple public functions, or where several circulation routes converge
- Have integrated land uses, to avoid pedestrian barriers.

The Plan further suggests that Regional Parks should include the following components and amenities:

- Furniture and fixtures as per the Design Manual, and to include play structures (traditional and more innovative to provide interest and excitement for kids, and designed for all ages), skateboarding elements, benches, waste receptacles, dog waste bag dispenser(s), picnic tables, bike racks, signage
- Sports fields: two senior baseball/fastball diamonds, two senior soccer/football fields, one 400m running track, tennis courts, outdoor rink/ multipurpose pad
- Flat area for seasonal outdoor rink
- Trees and landscape to provide shade, shelter, creation of open usable areas, and visual appeal
- Connections to trail and/or sidewalks, with paved walkway/trails as per the Design Manual
- Non-recreational areas landscaped as per the Design Manual
- Parking as required

# Moving Forward: A Strategy for Active Transportation in Grande Prairie (2015)

The Strategy for Active Transportation in Grande Prairie identified the following mission statement:

To encourage residents of Grande Prairie to make active transportation and public transit the first choice, the easy choice in all aspects of their lives, commuting to work and school, for recreation and leisure and for their health.

The Strategy identified six key "areas of change" that are required to achieve the above mission:

- 1. Walking for recreation and leisure
- 2. Walking for the commute
- 3. Let's walk to school
- 4. Cycling
- 5. Transit
- 6. The built environment

Actions, measurement metrics/tools, and recommendations were then identified for each of the "areas of change". Financial implications where also identified for each strategy area.



#### Cultural Master Plan (2011)

The Cultural Master Plan identifies a vision for culture and heritage in Grande Prairie:

Residents of and visitors to Grande Prairie create, consume and appreciate expressive culture and heritage as an essential part of our everyday lives. The City of Grande Prairie invests in indoor and outdoor cultural facilities and in the vibrancy and sustainability of its cultural community that provides diverse accessible programs.

Eight key strategic directions form the basis of the Plan:

- Demonstrate leadership in developing a financially stable and sustainable environment for culture in the City of Grande Prairie.
- Integrate cultural considerations into municipal planning.
- Increase public awareness of the value of arts and culture and encourage participation in arts and cultural activities in the larger community
- 4. Develop programs to engage the City's growing and increasingly diverse population.
- Ensure equal access to cultural opportunities, with a particular focus on the Aboriginal population, new Canadians and youth.
- 6. Complete the development of state of the art flagship institutions.
- Enhance outdoor cultural programming in the Montrose site, downtown and Muskoseepi Park.
- Foster greater collaboration within the cultural community, in the City, County and Peace Region.

# Walkable Alberta: Grande Prairie Community Report (2012)

Commissioned by Alberta Health Services in 2012, Walkable Alberta was initiated to assess the state of walkability in a handful of Alberta communities and develop strategies to improve the situation. The project in Grande Prairie involved a diverse mix of community stakeholder groups and individuals. The project identified specific motivations, barriers and factors influencing walkability in Grande Prairie. The following principles were developed:

Principle One: Increased inclusive mobility

Principle Two: Well designed and managed spaces and places for people

Principle Three: Improved integration of networks

Principle Four: Supportive land use and spatial planning

Principle Five: Reduce road danger

Principle Six: Less crime and fear of crime

Principle Seven: More supportive authorities

Principle Eight: A culture of walking

Strategies and recommendations were developed for each of the above principles. Many of the principles and corresponding recommendations are also strongly reflected and further supported in the City's recent Strategy for Active Transportation.

# Crystal Centre: A Vision for the Future (2013)

In January 2013 the City engaged architectural and planning expertise to develop a Needs Assessment for the Crystal Centre (now Revolution Place) that included a market analysis, the identification of expansion opportunities, concepts, and cost estimates. Key opportunities for facility enhancement identified in the study document include:

- An expanded, and highly versatile Bowes Family Crystal Gardens
- Increase in the fixed seating capacity of the Canada Games Arena to over 5,000 in order; to enhance event hosting and entertainment capacity
- Re-design of the spectator entry to improve functionality and aesthetics
- Enhanced back of house areas to improve functionality and accommodate expanded uses





The estimated capital cost of completing the work was \$44 million dollars. The market analysis research conducted concluded that the market area could sustain an expanded venue and identified opportunities to attract new forms of entertainment and events.

Recommendations and next steps outlined in the study document are:

- 1. Re-invest in the Crystal Centre to suit the market.
- 2. Expand in a single, sequential phase.
- 3. Confirm the Operational Model.
- 4. Make immediate improvements to the roof structure.
- Continue to pursue Next Steps.

# Muskoseepi Park Master Plan (2009)

The Master Plan process included consultation with residents and park users through stakeholder meetings, surveys, and public input sessions. Ten high level goals were developed for the Park:

- 1. Provide diversity in trail types and routes within the park.
- 2. Establish standards for natural area preservation and restoration
- 3. Provide a balance of sports with nature
- 4. Improve the sense of security and safety
- 5. Improve park cleanliness
- 6. Improve access, parking, and legibility within park
- 7. Decrease encroachment on park boundaries and extend the park along the creek
- 8. Improve/add park facilities as necessary
- 9. Evaluate appropriate programs and activities within the park
- 10. Establish park operations and maintenance standards

These goals were then ranked based on a number of criteria. Improve access, parking, and legibility within park; provide a balance of sports with nature; and evaluate appropriate programs and activities within the park were identified as the top three goals that should be prioritized. Concept plans and capital costs were then identified for the potential Park improvements. Specific enhancements were also outlined for a number of spaces and water bodies that are located in or adjacent to the park. These include North Bear Creek, Centennial Park, Bear Creek, South Bear Creek and Crystal Lake. Improvements to trail systems and amenities were commonly cited as being required for these spaces.

### Recreation Master Plan (2006)

The 2006 Master Plan identified six guiding principles for the delivery of recreation services, which formed the basis of the Master Plan development process.

- The provision of leisure opportunities is critical to community and individual health and well-being.
- The provision of quality recreational facilities and services is an integral component of the community's profile, pride and quality of life.
- The City needs to continue to be involved in recreation programming as a means of ensuring opportunities remain affordable and accessible to all age groups.
- There is a need to maximize opportunities for partnerships with community, business and municipal partners, as a means of working towards increased cooperation in recreation service delivery and facility development.
- To ensure that municipal resources are utilized to their best potential through the elimination of duplication and the reduction of administrative barriers.
- To promote the continued development of facilities and programs to meet the needs of a growing population base.





The Plan identified infrastructure provision thresholds and immediate, mid-term, and future needs for facility upgrades and new development, as identified in the following charts.

Upgrading an Expansion of Existing Facilities (Chart 4.2.1)

Facility	Immediate Need	Medium Term Need (5 Years)
Muskoseepi Park	New maintenance shop; Spray park upgrade	Pavilion expansion
Leisure Centre	_	Retrofit of pool space
Dave Barr Community Centre	Expansion; Addition of second ice sheet	_
Trails	Ongoing Maintenance/ Extensions	Ongoing Maintenance/ Extensions
Toboggan Hill	Safety Upgrades	_
Canada Games Arena	_	Expansion
Leisure Centre Tennis	Replacement	_
Legion Field	Field Improvements	_
Bear Creek Pool	_	Retrofit

New Facility Development (Chart 4.2.2)

Facility Level and Type	Population Guideline	Current Inventory	Immediate Need	2010 (51,800)	2016 (72,000)
Indoor Facilities					
Community Gymnasium	1/15,000	0	3	0	2
Ice Surface	1 sheet/15,000	4	1	0	2
Curling Rink	1 sheet/8,000	8	0	0	0
Indoor Pool	1/20,000	1	1	0	1
Outdoor Facilities					
Athletic Park	1/20,000	1	1	0	1
Baseball Stadium	1/community	0	1	0	0
Ball Diamond	1/2,000	45	0	0	0
BMX Track	1/20,000	0	2	0	1
Football Field	1/20,000	3	0	0	0
Multi-Sport Court	1/10,000	0	4	1	2
Off-Leash Area	1/20,000	1	1	0	1
Outdoor Pool	1/20,000	1	1	0	1
Outdoor Rink (permanent)	1/5,000	5	4	1	4
Outdoor Rink (seasonal)	1/2,000	41	0	0	0
Rugby Field	1/20,000	2	0	0	1
Sand Volleyball	1/20,000	2	0	0	1
Skate Park	1/20,000	1	1	0	1
Soccer (all levels)	1/2,000	27	0	0	9
Tennis	1 court/5,000	9	0	1	4
Toboggan Hill	1/15,000	2	1	0	1
Running Track	1/20,000	2	0	0	1
Water Spray Park	1/20,000	2	0	0	1

# Twenty-one policy recommendations were also outlined as presented in the following chart.

#### Policy Recommendations (Chart 4.1)

Policy	Task	Responsibility	Time Frame
3.3.2(b)	Continue selective contracting of facility operation	Community Services, Financial Services, Facility Operators	Ongoing
3.4.2(a)	Identify future recreation sites in Area Structure Plans	Development Services	Ongoing
3.4.2(b)	Provision of eastside community facility site Provision of northside district facility site	Development Services	Short Term Medium Term
3.4.2(c)	Identify recreation sites in industrial areas	Development Services	Short Term
3.9.2(b)	Identify recreation sites outside city	Development Services	Short Term
3.5.2(a)	Update trail network provisions in Parks Master Plan	Parks Operations	Medium Term
3.5.2(b)	Implementation of trail provisions in Parks Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan	Parks Operations, Transportation Services	Ongoing
3.5.2(b)	Examine trail construction in utility lots	Parks Operations	Short Term
3.5.2(b)	Improve trail links to recreation facilities and Muskoseepi Park	Parks Operations, Muskoseepi Park	Ongoing
3.5.2(b)	Implementation of North Bear Creek Park Master Plan	Parks Operations	Short Term
3.5.2(b)	Review of South Bear Creek Park Development Plan	Muskoseepi Park	Medium Term
3.5.2(b)	Explore trail connections to County	Development Services	Medium Term
3.5.2(c)	Review improvements to existing trails, bridges	Parks Operations, Muskoseepi Park	Ongoing
3.5.2(c)	Improve trail user safety	Parks Operations, Muskoseepi Park, Protective Services	Ongoing
3.5.2(c)	Develop trail user etiquette program	Parks Operations, Muskoseepi Park, Protective Services	Short Term
3.5.2(c)	Enforcement of dog control provisions on trails	Protective Services	Ongoing
3.7.2(a)	Relocate College ball diamonds	Community Services, GPRC	_
3.7.2(b)	Involvement of disabled advocacy groups and wellness professionals in new facility design	FCSS, Recreation and Culture Community Organizations	Ongoing
3.7.2(c) 3.8.2(c)	Create partnerships to share facility construction and operating costs	City Manager, Community Services	Ongoing
3.7.2(c)	Establish recreation facility depreciation reserve	Financial Services	Short Term
3.7.2(c)	Increase corporate sponsorship of new facilities	Facility Operators	Ongoing
3.8.2(a)	Review SCORES Agreement to address issues of new partners, equitable accessibility, and site development	SCORES Committee	Short Term
3.7.2(c)	Explore opportunities for community investment in school buildings	Community Services	Short Term
3.8.2(c)	Create facility user advisory groups for new facilities	Facility Operators	Ongoing
3.7.2(c)	Create consistent facility user advisory groups for existing facilities	Facility Operators	Short Term
3.7.2(c)	Prepare intermunicipal engagement strategy for recreation projects	City Manager, Community Services	Short Term
3.8.2(a)	Establish general benefit formula for facility funding	Financial Services	Short Term
3.10.2(a)	Establish dry land sport and gymnasium user groups	Community Services	Short Term
3.10.2(a)	Investigate expanded City role in program registration	Community Services, Community Organizations	Short Term
3.10.2(a)	Explore establishment of neighbourhood associations	Community Services, Community Action on Crime Prevention	Short Term
3.10.2(b)	Preparation of protocols to facilitate new group development	Community Services	Short Term

The Regional Sustainability Plan was developed collaboratively and included representation on the steering committee from the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie No. 1, Town of Beaverlodge, Town of Sexsmith, Town of Wembley, and the Village of Hythe. The Plan sets forth a vision for social service delivery across the area:

Residents can access a range of programs and services which assist in achieving an enhanced quality of life.

A number of objectives and action items are identified to achieve this vision. One of these was to "create a sense of community spirit" through the enhanced promotion of volunteerism in the area and recognition of volunteers for their contributions and efforts.

The Plan also identifies a number of initiatives to preserve important natural areas and watersheds in the area. Specific policing and monitoring practices (cameras, enforcement, partnerships) were identified by the Plan to reduce harmful impact.

The Plan also identifies current factors and goals related to culture (including recreation). The Plan outlines that future success will require enhanced cultural events and the creation of sufficient facilities for sports and recreation. The Plan further outlines that there is a need to support and provide free/low cost options for residents.







# Provincial and National Policies and Frameworks

Key themes from the Active Alberta Policy and the Framework for Recreation in Canada are outlined as follows.

# **Active Alberta Policy**

The Province of Alberta's Active Alberta Policy (2011 – 2021) is the overarching policy document that is intended to guide the delivery of recreational, active living and sport opportunities in the province. The Policy identifies that:

"Recreation, active living and sport are vitally important to Albertans. The activities they choose for enjoyment, where they live and take vacations, what they teach their children, and who they select as their heroes all demonstrate how important the sector is to the lives of Albertans".

Core to the Policy document is the identification of six (6) core outcomes which reflect the intended objectives of the Policy:

**Active Albertans:** More Albertans are more active, more often.

**Active Communities:** Alberta communities are more active, creative, safe and inclusive.

**Active Outdoors:** Albertans are connected to nature and able to explore the outdoors.

**Active Engagement:** Albertans are engaged in activity and in their communities.

Active Coordinated System: All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.

**Active Pursuit of Excellence:** Albertans have opportunities to achieve athletic excellence.

# A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

The recently (2015) finalized Framework for Recreation in Canada provides a new vision and suggests clear goals, underlying values and principles for the provision and delivery of recreation in Canada. While it is understood that recreation is a broad term and that local interests, priorities and needs differ from region to region and in each individual community, aligning the recreation sector can help build a stronger case for investment in recreation. The Framework outlines both a renewed definition and vision for recreation in Canada:

#### Definition:

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

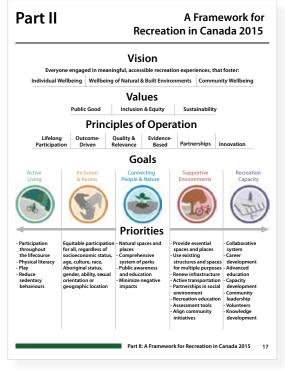
#### Vision:

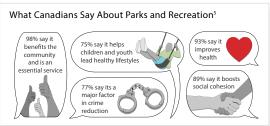
We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- · Individual wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments

The Framework was developed based on ongoing engagement with decision makers, academics, service providers, and citizens across the country. Research was also important to the development of the Framework in order to help further justify and portray the benefits of recreation.

The Framework for Recreation in Canada was formally adopted by the Alberta Parks and Recreation Association in April 2015. The following graphic illustrates the Vision, Values, Principles, Goals and Priorities of the Framework.





# **Canada Sport for Life**

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement that promotes quality sport and physical activity. It is led by the Sport for Life Society, a federal not-for-profit society that incorporated in September 2014, and comprises experts from sport, health, recreation and academia who are employed as independent contractors, yet work cooperatively to promote the movement's goals. The movement introduces two important concepts that influence how recreation and sport activity should be planned, promoted, organized, and delivered. Long-Term Athlete Development is a seven-stage training, competition and recovery pathway guiding an individual's experience in sport and physical activity from infancy through all phases of adulthood. Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. Sport for Life, with Long-Term Athlete Development and physical literacy, represents a paradigm shift in the way Canadians lead and deliver sport and physical activity. The movement calls on municipalities to help further these two important concepts in a variety of ways as outlined below. As it relates to the provision of indoor ice facilities, it is important to consider these roles and the fundamentals of the two concepts as they define a broader social good that is delivered through indoor ice facilities; ensuring that these concepts are catalyzed through the operations of indoor ice facilities, and through all municipal recreation services, will optimize the benefits and value for public investment in facilities and infrastructure.

Where municipalities can help further the CS4L movement:

- 1. Physical Literacy Program Development
- 2. Municipal Planning and Sport Strategy Development
- 3. Sport Councils
- 4. Facility Planning
- 5. Access and Allocation





# The Benefits of Recreation

4

The National Benefits HUB is a research database which provides access to numerous resources that identify the positive impacts of recreation, sport, fitness, arts/culture, heritage, parks and green spaces on a community. Identified below are the eight key messages from the National Benefits HUB, with corresponding evidence related to how recreation and culture can positively impact a community and its residents.



#### Recreation is essential to personal health and wellbeing.

- Increased leisure time and physical activity improve life expectancy.<sup>1</sup>
- Physical activity contributes to improved mental health and reduced rates of depression.<sup>2</sup>
- Participation in physical activity can reduce workplace-related stress.<sup>3</sup>
- The provision of green spaces has been linked with a number of health and wellbeing benefits including increased physical activity, reduced risk of obesity, minimized utilization of the healthcare system, and stress reduction.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 Moore SC, et al. (2012) Leisure Time Physical Activity of Moderate to Vigorous Intensity and Mortality: A Large Pooled Cohort Analysis. PLoS Medicine 9 (11): e1001335. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001335
- 2 Gallegos-Carillo, Katia et al. (2012). Physical Activity and Reduced Risk of Depression: Results of a Longitudinal Study of Mexican Adults. Health Psychology. In press. doi: 10.1037/a0029276
- 3 Burton, James P., Hoobler, Jenny M. and Scheuer, Melinda L. (2012) Supervisor Workplace Stress and Abusive Supervision: The Buffering Effect of Exercise. Journal of Business and Psychology
- 4 Heinze, John. (2011). Benefits of Green Space—Recent Research. Chantilly, Virginia: Environmental Health Research Foundation.

# Recreation provides the key to balanced human development.

- Regular physical activity is likely to provide children with the optimum physiological condition for maximizing learning.<sup>5</sup>
- Low income students who are involved in arts activities have higher academic achievement and are more likely to go to college.<sup>6</sup>
- The arts and other forms of creativity can have profound individual social outcomes and generate a deeper sense of place and local community.<sup>7</sup>
- Individuals that participate in physical activity in a social setting have improved psychological and social health, and often also benefit from increased self-awareness and personal growth.<sup>8</sup>

- Recreation provides a foundation for quality of life.
  - The arts are seen as an important contributor to quality of life in communities.<sup>9</sup>
  - High quality public spaces can enhance the sense of community in new neighbourhoods.<sup>10</sup>
  - Community sport facilities have positive benefits related to increased accessibility, exposure, participation, perceptions of success, and improved sport experiences.<sup>11</sup>

# Recreation reduces self-destructive and anti-social behaviour.

- Youth participation in recreational activities such as camps increases leadership and social capacities.<sup>12</sup>
- Participation in recreation and leisure-related activities by low income and other at risk children and youth populations can result in decreased behavioural/emotional problems, decreased use of emergency services, and enhanced physical and psycho-social health of families.<sup>13</sup>
- Teen athletes are less likely to use illicit drugs, smoke, or to be suicidal.<sup>14</sup>
- 9 Environics Research Group. (2010). The Arts and the Quality of Life. The attitudes of Ontarians. Toronto, Ontario: Ontario Arts Council.
- 10 Francis, Jacinta et al. (2012). Creating sense of community: The role of public space. Journal of Environmental Psychology. 32(4): 401-409. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2012.07.002
- 11 Henderson, K., Scanlin, M., Whitaker, L., et al. (2005) Intentionality and Youth Development Through Camp Experiences. Canadian Congress on Leisure Research. 11th. Nanaimo. British Columbia.
- 12 Henderson, K., Scanlin, M., Whitaker, L., et al. (2005) Intentionality and Youth Development Through Camp Experiences. Canadian Congress on Leisure Research. 11th, Nanaimo, British Columbia.
- 13 Totten, M. (2007). Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families in Ontario: The Health, Social and Economic Benefits of Increasing Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families; Research Summary Report. Toronto. Ontario: Ministry of Health Promotion.
- 14 Poway High School Library. (2001). Teens and sports: The perfect combination? Better Nutrition, 63(9), 16.

# Recreation builds strong families and healthy communities.

- People with an active interest in the arts contribute more to society than those with little or no such interest.<sup>15</sup>
- Evidence indicates that adults who attend art museums, art galleries, or live arts performances are far more likely than non-attendees to vote, volunteer, or take part in community events.<sup>16</sup>
- Structured sport and recreational activities can help foster a stronger sense of community among children and youth.<sup>17</sup>

- 5 Marten, Karen. (2010). Brain boost: Sport and physical activity enhance children's learning. Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia.
- 6 Catteral, James S. (2012). The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies. Washington, District of Columbia: National Endowment for the Arts
- 7 Mulligan, M. et al. (2006). Creating Community: Celebrations, Arts and Wellbeing Within and Across Local Communities. Melbourne, Australia: Globalism Institute, RMIT University
- 8 Eime, Rochelle M et al. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for adults: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 10(35).

- 15 LeRoux, Kelly. (2012). Interest in Arts Predicts Social Responsibility. Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago. Press Release.
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- 17 Hutchinson, Susan L. (2011). Physical Activity, Recreation, Leisure, and Sport: Essential Pieces of the Mental Health and Well-being Puzzle.

# Recreation reduces health care, social service, and police/justice costs.

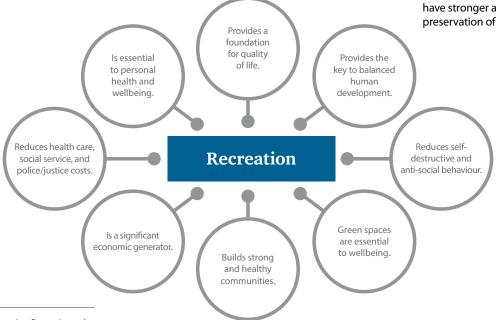
- Physical inactivity has a number of direct and indirect financial impacts on all levels of government.<sup>18</sup>
- Parks and recreation programming during nonschool hours can reduce costs associated with juvenile delinquency and obesity.<sup>19</sup>
- Increased fitness leads to lowered risk factors for substance abuse among youth populations.<sup>20</sup>

#### Recreation is a significant economic generator.

- Recent Canadian research indicates that cultural activities have the potential to be significant drivers of economic outputs and employment.<sup>21</sup>
- Evidence suggests that creative activity shapes the competitive character of a city by enhancing both its innovative capacity and the quality of place so crucial to attracting and retaining skilled workers.<sup>22</sup>

# Green spaces are essential to environmental and ecological wellbeing—even survival.

- Sustainable public green spaces provide crucial areas for residents of all demographics to be physically and socially active.<sup>23</sup>
- Increasing green spaces in urban centres has a number of positive environmental outcomes which can increase sustainability and lower longterm infrastructure costs.<sup>24</sup>
- When children and youth have positive experiences with parks and green spaces, they are more likely to have stronger attitudes towards conservation and preservation of the environment as adults.<sup>25</sup>



- 18 Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD). (2004) Physical Activity: Health benefits and costs to health care system. Ottawa, Ontario: Author.
- 19 Witt, Peter A and Cladwell, Linda L. (2010). The Scientific Evidence Relating to the Impact of Recreation on Youth Development, in The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach. Ashburn, Virginia: National Recreation and Parks Association.
- 20 Collingwood, Thomas R. et al. (2000). Physical Training as a Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention for Youth. Journal of Drug Education. 30 (4): 435-451.
- 21 Momer, Bernard. (2011) Our City, Ourselves: A Cultural Landscape Assessment of Kelowna, British Columbia. Kelowna, British Columbia: City of Kelowna Recreation and Cultural Services.
- 22 Gertler, M. (2004). Creative cities: What are they for, how do they work, and how do we build them? Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Policy Research Network.
- 23 Cohen, D. et al. (2007). Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity. American Journal of Public Health, 97(3), 509.
- 24 Groth, P. (2008). Quantifying the Greenhouse Gas Benefits of Urban Parks. San Francisco, California: The Trust for Public Land.
- 25 Place, G. (2004). Youth Recreation Leads to Adult Conservation. Chicago, Illinois: Chicago State University.

# Service Delivery and Current Practices Review

5

Grande Prairie area residents access recreation opportunities in a variety of ways. Local municipalities operate recreation facilities and outdoor facilities and spaces that can be rented or programmed. Non-profit groups organize sports leagues and other physical activities. Private sector organizations operate facilities and offer programs as well. In each of the area's municipalities, there is a variety of opportunities provided through a variety of agencies for different skill levels and affordability thresholds.

Although the recent formation of the Joint City County Recreation Committee and the Grande Prairie Sport Council are good examples of coordinated effort as it relates to recreation, the current delivery of facilities, spaces, programs, and opportunities by the public, non-profit and private sectors is not completely coordinated, and nor should it be. Each delivery agent responds to market demand for a combination of social and financial return on investment; and residents and visitors are afforded a broad spectrum of opportunities regardless of ability, socio-economic status, or geographic location.

There have been other examples of coordinated efforts in the recent past for specific special events or programs where agencies throughout the area collaborate to leverage resources and provide experiences for residents. The hosting of the Canadian Sport for Life/Physical Literacy Summit in 2015 is an example of a partnership between the City and County of Grande Prairie, the Be Fit For Life Centre, Royal Bank of Canada, and Canadian Sport for Life that led to lasting community benefit and leveraged the efforts of a variety of recreation stakeholders.

More specific to local municipalities, each owns and operates facilities and delivers programs and opportunities independently; there are no intermunicipal partnerships in place regarding ownership and operations of facilities or services. That being said, there are examples of grants provided by one municipality to another for operating or building recreation infrastructure and programs. These existing grant programs help facility owners and providers meet program goals; however, they are based on yearly application processes and are limited as to rationale and structure for amounts rendered. The area does not have a formal cost sharing protocol in place.

Each municipality owns and operates facilities, most of which are delivered via municipal staff; however, some are operated under contract with private or non-profit groups. Municipalities also provide various supports to non-profit groups to help them deliver opportunities for residents; supports include financial contributions, training for volunteers, and other resources, and vary depending on the municipality and the context.

In 2016, local municipalities in the area either directly operate or financially support over \$600 million worth of indoor recreation facilities and over \$100 million worth of outdoor recreation infrastructure to service over 82,000 residents. Within the boundaries of the Grande Prairie area (and surrounding portions of the M.D. of Greenview) the following can be found:

- 13 sheets of indoor ice at 11 facilities
- 28 sheets of curling ice at 8 facilities
- · 2 indoor pools
- 8 libraries
- 2 indoor fields
- 5 community gymnasiums
- 25 community halls
- 3 indoor agricultural facilities
- 56 rectangular fields (plus 1 artificial turf)
- 50 ball diamonds
- 139 playgrounds
- 80+ km of paved trails
- 18 campgrounds
- · 24 tennis courts
- 15 outdoor boarded rinks
- 6 skateboard parks
- 1 outdoor track and field facility

It is important to note that there are a variety of recreational activities provided in rural areas throughout the Grande Prairie region, such as hunting, fishing, and off highway and equine trail pursuits, that are enjoyed by both rural and urban residents.

Local municipalities value recreation and invest in it accordingly. The various opportunities residents and visitors have access to are provided by local municipalities as well as by the private and non-profit sectors and lead to an enhanced quality of life in the Grande Prairie area.







# **Inventory and Utilization**

6

# **Inventory**

The following charts display the current inventory of indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure in the Grande Prairie area.

#### Indoor

Indoor Facility	City of Grande Prairie	County of Grande Prairie	Sexsmith	Beaverlodge	Wembley	Hythe	M.D. of Greenview (DeBolt and Grovedale)	Total
Ice Arena Facilities	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	11
Ice Arena Sheets	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	13
Curling Rinks	1	3	1	1	0	1	1	8
Curling Sheets	8	6	4	3	0	3	4	28
Aquatics Facilities	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Fitness Centres	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Walking/Running Tracks	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Community Halls	1	20	2	1	0	1	0	25
Indoor Playgrounds	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gymnasium Facilities (Community)	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
Indoor Fields	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Libraries	1	3	1	1	1	1	0	8
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3

#### Outdoor

Outdoor Facility	City of Grande Prairie	County of Grande Prairie	Sexsmith	Beaverlodge	Wembley	Hythe	Total
Ball Diamonds	28	9	4	5	2	2	50
Rectangular Fields	36	10	1	7	1	1 <sup>A</sup>	56
Campgrounds	3	11	1	1	1	1	18
Off Leash Dog Parks	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Outdoor Pools	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Outdoor Rinks	10	0	4	1	0	0	15
Spray Parks	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Tennis Courts	16	2	2	2	2	0	24
Skateboard Parks	2	1	1	1	1	0	6
Track and Field Facility	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Artificial Turf Field	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

It is important to note that there are many recreation trails located throughout the rural areas of the County. These trails are utilized for equine and off highway vehicles as well as other non-motorized uses. In urban areas, there are trail systems that are predominantly used for non-motorized activities. Throughout the rural areas of the County there are also various publicly and privately owned lands that accommodate hunting and fishing; both of which are recreational pursuits of residents and visitors.

#### Multi-Component Recreation Facilities

The City and the County each have a major multi-use recreation facility. Their components are described as follows.

#### Eastlink Centre/Coca Cola Centre

- · Leisure pool and play amenities
- 50 m competition pool
- · 25 m program pool
- FM FlowRider (surfing simulator)
- Fieldhouse (multipurpose court surface)
- Fitness centre
- · Squash and racquetball courts
- Walking/running track
- Two NHL-sized ice arenas (Coca Cola Centre)
- · Gymnastics facility

#### Crosslink County Sportsplex

- · Two NHL-sized ice arenas
- · Indoor artificial turf field
- · Fitness centre
- Running track
- · Lounge and café
- Adjacent to eight outdoor rectangular fields



A The outdoor pool in Hythe was not operational in 2015.

# **Utilization**

Utilization data was gathered from a number of recreation facilities and spaces including arenas, dry floor spaces, aquatics, and fields. The information is summarized and presented as follows.

### **Indoor Ice Arenas**

The follow data from City and County arenas is from September 2014 through March 2015. Utilization has been categorized in four different timeslots (e.g. weekdays 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.). Chris McMillan Rink at the Crosslink County Sportsplex has the highest utilization percentage (80%) on weekdays from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. and on weekends from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (85%).

Coca-Cola Centre North	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	672	1,444	47%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	886	1,213	73%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m 12:00 p.m.	183	330	55%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	578	719	80%
Total	2,319	3,706	63%

Coca-Cola Centre South	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	576	1,444	40%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	900	1,213	74%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m 12:00 p.m.	168	330	51%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	532	719	74%
Total	2,176	3,706	59%

Dave Barr	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	771	1,444	53%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	771	1,213	64%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m 12:00 p.m.	190	360	53%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	548	719	76%
Total	2,280	3,736	61%

Revolution Place	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	425	1,311	32%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	599	1,102	54%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	112	328	34%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	355	654	54%
Total	1,491	3,395	44%

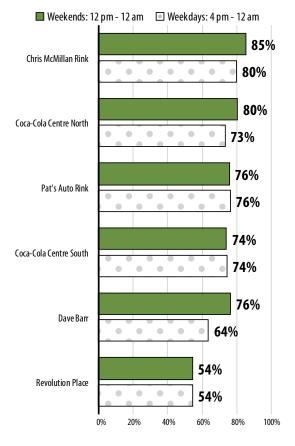
Crosslink County Sportsplex: Chris' Rink	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	285.25	1,216	23%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	968.5	1,213.5	80%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	172.5	360	48%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	611.75	719	85%
Total	2,038	3,508.5	58%

Crosslink County Sportsplex: Pat's Auto Rink	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	697.75	1,216	57%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	924	1,213.5	76%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m 12:00 p.m.	156.25	360	43%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	543	719	76%
Total	2,321	3,508.5	66%

All Arenas	Booked Hours	Available Hours	Utilization Percentage
Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	3,427	8,075	42%
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	5,048.5	7,168	70%
Weekends: 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	981.75	2,068	47%
Weekends: 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	3,167.75	4,249	75%
Total	12,625	21,560	59%

The accompanying graph compares utilization percentages from the arenas for weekends (12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.) and weekdays (4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.).

# Comparing Utilization Percentages Ice Arenas



The following utilization data is from arenas in Wembley, Sexsmith, Clairmont, and La Glace.

#### Wembley Arena

- "Prime" utilization breakdown
  - » Minor hockey: 37%
  - » Adult hockey: 14%
  - » Other: 10%
  - » Figure skating/Learn to Skate: 2%
  - » Unused: 37%
- "Non-Prime" utilization breakdown
  - » Schools: 5%» Other: 1%
  - » Unused: 94%

#### Sexmith Arena

- Top "Prime" ice users
  - » Minor hockey
  - » Adult hockey
- Top "Non-Prime" ice users
  - » Schools
  - » Figure skating/Learn to Skate

#### Clairmont Agricultural Society Arena

- Youth to adult utilization ratio: 67% youth; 33% adult.
- The following chart displays utilization data from the calendar year of 2015.

#### La Glace Arena

- · Ice season: October to mid-March
- · Typical utilization
  - » Monday to Thursday: 3:15 p.m. 10:30 p.m.
  - » Saturday: 8:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.
  - » Sunday: 12:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.
- Teams and Programs
  - » La Glace Minor Hockey: Initiation, Novice, Atom, Peewee
  - » Women's/Girls' team: Cougars
  - » Men's teams: Canucks, Mavericks, Men's drop-in
  - » Programs: Drop-in shinny (kids), public skating, private rentals

Time Category	Time Definition	Hours Used	Hours Available	Utilization Percentage
Prime	<b>Weekends:</b> 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. <b>Weekdays:</b> 3:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	1,232	1,403	88%
Non-Prime	<b>Weekends:</b> 6:00 a.m. – 9am; 10:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. <b>Weekdays:</b> 6:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; 10:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	177.5	1,495	12%
Total	All	1,409.5	2,898	49%

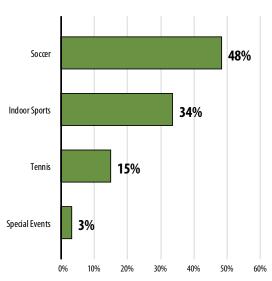
# **Dry Floor Spaces**

#### Leisure Centre Indoor Field

The indoor field at the Leisure Centre is available to rent. In 2015, over 600 hours were booked with a fairly even split between weekday and weekend booked hours. Soccer is the most common activity for booked hours (48% from 2013 to 2015).

Year	Weekday Booked Hours	Weekend Booked Hours	Total Booked Hours
2013	272.5	296.75	569.25
2014	227.25	228.25	455.5
2015	315	303.25	618.25

#### Leisure Centre Field: Type of Bookings 2013 – 2015



#### Eastlink Centre Fieldhouse

The fieldhouse at the Eastlink Centre accommodated 2,500 students in 2015 though the SCORES agreement (school usage). Drop-in numbers accounted for over 11,000 visits in each of the past three years.

Fieldhouse	2012	2013	2014	2015
Fieldhouse SCORES School Rentals (# of kids)	330	3,000	3,500	2,500
Fieldhouse Drop-Ins	6,033	11,143	13,602	11,696
Fieldhouse Program Registrations	_	492	521	_
Fieldhouse Head Count Totals:	_	9,459	102,672	25,998

#### **Eastlink Centre Fitness**

Over each of the past three years, weight room drop-in visits were over 18,000 while fitness drop-ins were over 3,000.

Fieldhouse	2012	2013	2014	2015
Fitness Registrations	_	18	158	73
Weight Room Physical Head Counts	_	32,059	195,850	178,811
Fitness Class Physical Head Counts	58,661	48,990	37,679	32,726
Fitness Drop-Ins	2,553	3,341	3,956	3,567
Weight Room Drop-Ins	10,201	18,233	18,975	18,811

#### Grande Prairie Regional College

Gymnasium data gathered from the Grande Prairie Regional College indicate that over one-third (35%) of the hours are used for spontaneous use (recreation/open time), 28% is used for academics, and 2% is booked for community rentals. The winter semester received the most usage with 2,247 hours.

Program Type	Fall (Sept. to Dec.)	Fall (Jan. to Apr.)	Fall (May to Aug.)	Total Hours Used	Percentage
Recreation/Open Time	540	558	992	2,090	35%
Academic	636	699	320	1,655	28%
Varsity	621	702	0	1,323	22%
Club/Camps	162	216	320	698	12%
Community Rentals	72	72	0	144	2%
Total	2,031	2,247	1,632	5,910	100%

#### School Gymnasium Bookings

The following chart displays hours of community use at schools within the City of Grande Prairie (September to June). Grande Prairie Christian School, Mother Theresa Community Gym and school gym, École Nouvelle Frontière, and Maude Clifford have totaled over 1,000 hours in the past three years.

School	2013 - 2013	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015
Alexander Forbes	52	63	66.5
Aspen Grove	188.75	70.5	62
Avondale School	82.25	64.5	58
Charles Spencer	0	0	24
Christian School	518.75	497	371.5
Composite Large Gym	291.5	232.5	187.5
Composite Small Gym	25	102.5	52.5
Crystal Park	228.5	268.75	207
Derek Taylor School	209	245.5	238
École Nouvelle Frontière	285.5	325	397
Hillside	31.5	2	0
Holy Cross	144.5	180	130.25
I.V. Macklin	383	277.75	221.5
Kateri Mission	251.5	318	191.5
Maude Clifford Comm. Gym	225.5	317.25	231
Maude Clifford PS	321.5	483	508.5
Montrose	143.25	188	166.5
Mother Teresa Comm. Gym	534.5	736.5	549
Mother Teresa PS	377	382.25	383
Parkside	55.5	25.5	0
St.Clement's	19.25	105.5	54
St.Gerard's	212.25	118.5	179.75
St.Joes	97	63.25	130
St.Pat's	131	105	42
Swanavon	13	18	82
Total Community Use	4,821.5	5,189.75	4,533

# **Sport Fields** and Ball Diamonds

#### Sports Fields

In terms of City bookings, the CKC West Fields were booked for over 500 hours in 2015 while Macklin Field was booked for 273 hours.

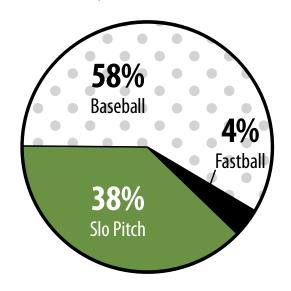
Field	2013	2014	2015
Leisure 1	26	35	26
Leisure 2	0	0	0
Leisure 4	56	51	26
Leisure 5	0	0	74
Leisure 6	103	94.5	34
Gateway 1	0	0	48
Gateway 2	0	0	36
Gateway 3	0	0	12
Macklin Field	18	139	273
Alex Forbes	92.75	83	0
Legion Field	61.5	158	93.5
CKC West Turf North	0	0	324.5
CKC West Turf South	0	0	209.5
St. Joseph's	0	94	10.5
Total	357.25	654.5	1,167

#### Ball Diamonds

In 2015, the South Bear Creek (SBC) diamonds accounted for 83% of the booked hours for City ball diamonds (3,880 of the 4,648 hours). Baseball was responsible for 58% of the booked hours while softball accounted for 38%.

Diamond	Slo Pitch	Baseball	Fastball	Total
Montrose Ball Diamonds	21	0	0	21
Parkside Diamond 1	133.5	46.5	0	180
Parkside Diamond 2	134	15	0	149
Leisure Centre Ball Diamond 1	115.5	13.5	0	129
Leisure Centre Ball Diamond 2	36	3	0	39
Dave Barr #1	33	0	0	33
Dave Barr #2	45	27	0	72
Dave Barr #3	33	0	0	33
Dave Barr #4	54	0	0	54
Dave Barr #5	58	0	0	58
SBC Diamond 1	0	623	59.5	682.5
SBC Diamond 2	191	425.5	73	689.5
SBC Diamond 3	129	339	40	508
SBC Diamond 4	150.5	276	0	426.5
SBC Diamond 5	118.5	272	0	390.5
SBC Diamond 6	111	225.5	0	336.5
SBC Diamond 7	121.5	131	0	252.5
SBC Diamond 8	141	153.5	0	294.5
SBC Diamond 9	137	162.5	0	299.5
Total	1,762.5	2,713	172.5	4,648
Percentage of Booked Hours	38%	58%	4%	100%

Percentage of Booked Hours by User Type City Ball Diamonds (2015)



# **Aquatics**

#### Eastlink Centre

From 2013 to 2015, the Eastlink Centre pool averaged 56,467 visitors in the month of March, making it the busiest month. Fall months, September through December, attracted the lowest number of visits. A total of 518,894 visits were recorded in 2015.

# » Ladies' afternoons

- » GPRC
- » Men's evenings
- » Social league
- » Junior curling
- » Bonspiels
- · Events from the past three years
  - » GP cash spiel
  - » Mixed Oilmen's
  - » Forestry Bonspiel
  - » Peace Challenge Cup (junior and novice)
  - » Ladies' Bonspiel
  - » Oilmen's Bonspiel
  - » Pomeroy Inn & Suites Prairie Showdown
  - » 2015 Junior Provincials
  - » 2015 ACAC Provincials
  - » 2015 Special Olympics
  - » 2016 ACT Bonspiel

  - » 2016 Rotary Worlds
  - » Team Koe Curling Clinic
  - » Rock Stars Curling Clinic

#### Sexsmith Curling Rink

600 hours utilized hours per year

**Pool Visits** 

Monthly Average (2013 - 2015)

45,873

42,472

52,284 53,217

- » 100 youth
- » 500 adult

#### Mountview Curling Rink

• Teams: 10

56,467

49,041

52,578 50,547

40.000

30,000

20.000 10.000

- Weekly participants: 40
- · Ice season: Mid-November to end-March
- · Number of bonspiels per year: 4

#### La Glace Curling Rink

- · Ice season: October to March
- Programs
  - » Men's league
  - » Ladies' league
  - » Mixed league
  - » Family league
  - » Juniors program
- Number of bonspiels per year: 7
- · Facility also rented for meetings, fundraisers, and private functions

#### Bezanson

34,074

• Ice season: January to March

33,243

Programs

39,306 41,063

- » Ladies' Drop-in League
- » Ladies' Curling Clinic
- » Square Draw
- » Ladies' Bonspiel
- » Men's Bonspiel
- » Legion Mixed Bonspiel
- » 2 on 2 Bonspiel
- » Kids' Bonspiel
- » Seniors' Stick Curling

# **Curling**

Curling usage information is presented from rinks such as the Grande Prairie Curling Centre, Elmworth's Mountview Curling Rink, Sexsmith, La Glace, and Bezanson.

#### Grande Prairie Curling Centre

- Ice season: October to mid-April (6.5 months)
- Annual club hours: 1,500 (1,200 league play; 300 bonspiel)
- · Annual available ice remaining: 600 hours
- Programs
  - » After-school programs
  - » Special Olympics
  - » Monday Night Ladies A
  - » Monday Night Ladies B
  - » Seniors' curling
  - » Open practice
  - » Super league » Mixed league

# **Memberships and Program Registration**

#### Eastlink Centre Memberships

In 2015, 3,597 memberships were sold, 2,767 punch cards were sold, and membership scans totaled 387,352.

Memberships and Punch Cards	2012	2013	2014	2015
Membership Units Sold	4,853	4,530	4,584	3,597
<b>Actual Number of Members</b>	9,887	9,172	9,229	7,521
Punch Cards Sold	2,044	1,660	1,961	2,767
Member Scans	455,270	443,737	435,856	387,352
Weight Room Drop-Ins	10,201	18,233	18,975	18,811



#### City Program Registrations

The following chart displays the number of registered participants for each City program over the past three years. An adult dodgeball league started in 2015 with 16 teams; 24 teams have registered for 2016.

Program	Season	2013	2014	2015
ABCs & 123s	Fall	_	_	9
Intro to Hockey Skills	Fall	_	_	23
Joyful Jammers	Fall	_	_	5
Looney Tunes for Toddlers	Fall	_	_	5
Multi-Sport Xmas Camp	Fall	_	_	8
Parent & Tot Drop-In Gym Time	Fall	_	_	30
Active Tots	Fall/Winter	_	_	12
Full Day Fridays	Fall/Winter	_	_	21
Kid-ding Around	Fall/Winter	20	_	_
Kids' Klub	Fall/Winter	318	432	300
PB&J Club	Fall/Winter	18	_	_
Tumbling Toddlers	Fall/Winter	72	37	-
Advanced Hockey Skills	Winter	_	_	19*
Fusion with Dee!	Winter	8	_	_
Teacher's Convention Camp	Winter	_	_	12*
Funstix Field Hockey	Spring	_	13	13
Active Zone	Summer	90	107	140
Adventure Zone	Summer	116	95	107
Freestyle BMX 101	Summer	_	_	45
Intro to Slacklining 18+	Summer			13
Intro to Slacklining 6 – 11	Summer	_	_	14
Play Zone	Summer	120	110	128
Sun Busters	Summer	86	93	102

<sup>\*</sup> Registration for 2016

# **Benchmarking Analysis**

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### **Infrastructure Provision**

Benchmarking research was conducted to gather the number of recreation amenities in similar sized municipalities to the City and County. First the inventory is presented which is then followed by the provision ratio (the number of residents per amenity type). As each municipality is different (e.g. varying recreation preferences, partnership opportunities, proximity to other municipalities), inventory benchmarking is not necessarily practical as it does not account for the amenities' quality, for example. However it does provide some comparison to indicate strengths and potential areas of improvement.

# **Inventory**

The following charts display the number of comparable indoor recreation facilities provided by the municipalities. Unless otherwise noted, the number of facilities presented are those owned and operated by the municipality.



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### Urban: Indoor

The City of Grande Prairie provides similar inventory numbers of indoor facilities relative to the comparable municipalities.

Municipality	<b>Population</b> (2015)	Ice Arenas	Ice Sheets	Curling Facilities	Curling Sheets	Aquatics Facilities	Fitness Centres	Walking/ Running Tracks	Community Halls	Indoor Playgrounds	Seniors Centres	Youth Centres	Gymnasium Facilities	Indoor Fields
Airdrie	58,690	3	5	1	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2
Lethbridge	94,804	6	7	1	10	3	2	0	5	0	2	0	1	2
Medicine Hat	63,018	5	6	1	8	2	4	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Red Deer	100,807	5	6	2	16	4	4	1	3	0	1	1	2	2
St. Albert	63,255	2	4	1	6	2	1	1	5	1	1	0	1	2
Average	76,115	4.2	5.6	1.2	9.6	2.4	2.4	0.8	3.0	0.4	1.2	0.4	1.2	1.6
City of Grande Prairie	68,556	3	4	1	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	2

### Urban: Outdoor

In regard to outdoor recreation amenities, the City of Grande Prairie provides fewer outdoor rinks and tennis courts and more campgrounds and off leash dog parks compared to the benchmarking communities.

Municipality	<b>Population</b> (2015)	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Campgrounds	Off Leash Dog Parks	Outdoor Pools	Outdoor Rinks	Spray Parks	Tennis Courts	Skateboard Parks
Airdrie	58,690	23	38	0	5	0	11	1	8	1
Lethbridge	94,804	65	70	1	3	2	3	2	24	2
Medicine Hat	63,018	44	38	2	0	4	13	4	21	1
Red Deer	100,807	84	84	1	2	1	72	4	52	2
St. Albert	63,255	33	45	1	2	1	27	1	24	1
Average	76,115	49.8	55.0	1.0	2.4	1.6	25.2	2.4	25.8	1.4
City of Grande Prairie	68,556	28 <sup>1</sup>	36	3	4	<b>1</b> <sup>2</sup>	10	2	16	2

#### Notes:

- 1. Nine of Grande Prairie's 28 ball diamonds are maintained by schools.
- 2. One outdoor pool (Bear Creek Outdoor Pool although it was not operational in 2015).

# Rural: Indoor

The County of Grande Prairie has more community halls, arenas, and curling rinks compared to the benchmarking communities.

Municipality	Population (In Most Recent Census)	Ice Arenas	Ice Sheets	Curling Facilities	Curling Sheets	Aquatics Facilities	Fitness Centres	Walking/ Running Tracks	Community Halls	Indoor Playgrounds	Seniors Centres	Youth Centres	Gymnasium Facilities	Indoor Fields
M.D. of Bonnyville	13,233	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	2	0	0	0
Brazeau County	7,201	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0
M.D. of Foothills	21,258	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	14	0	0	0	1	4
Lac La Biche County	12,220	2	3	1	4	1	1	1	6	1	1	0	1	0
Leduc County	13,524	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	15	0	0	0	0	0
Average	13,487	0.8	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.6	12.4	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.8
<b>County of Grande Prairie</b>	20,347	3	4	3	6	0	1	1	20	0	1	0	0	1

### Rural: Outdoor

The County has more fields and ball diamonds than the comparable rural municipalities.

Municipality	Population (In Most Recent Census)	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Campgrounds	Off Leash Dog Parks	Outdoor Pools	Outdoor Rinks	Spray Parks	Tennis Courts	Skateboard Parks
M.D. of Bonnyville	13,233	4	4	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brazeau County	7,201	6	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
M.D. of Foothills	21,258	6	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0
Lac La Biche County	12,220	5	2	18	1	0	2	1	3	1
Leduc County	13,524	8	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average	13,487	5.8	2.4	7.6	0.2	0.0	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.2
County of Grande Prairie	20,347	14	10	11	0	0	0	0	2	0

### Area: Indoor

The entire Grande Prairie area has more ice arena sheets and curling sheets than the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Strathcona County.

Municipality/Area	Population (2011)	Ice Arena Facilities	Ice Arena Sheets	Curling Rinks	Curling Sheets	Aquatics Facilities	Fitness Centres	Walking/Running Tracks	Indoor Playgrounds	Gymnasium Facilities (Community)	Indoor Fields
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	65,565	5	6	1	8	2	5	3	4	2	1
Strathcona County	92,490	6	9	3	16	2	3	2	2	1	2
Grande Prairie Area	82,365	11	13	8	28	2	4	2	1	4	3

### Area: Outdoor

The Grande Prairie area is comparable to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in regard to ball diamonds, rectangular fields and outdoor rinks, while Strathcona County has the same number of artificial turf fields.

Municipality/Area	<b>Population</b> (2011)	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Campgrounds	Off Leash Dog Parks	Outdoor Pools	Outdoor Rinks	Spray Parks	Tennis Courts	Skateboard Parks	Track and Field Facilities	Artificial Turf Fields
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	65,565	40	41	11	2	0	13	7	19	3	3	2
Strathcona County	92,490	102	108	8	1	0	22	6	19	1	1	1
Grande Prairie Area	82,365	50	56	18	4	2	15	3	24	5	1	1

# **Provision Ratios**

Using municipal census data, the population of each municipality is divided by its number of inventory to calculate provision ratios (the number of residents per amenity type).

### Urban: Indoor

The City provides one aquatics facility for every 68,556 residents while the comparable average is one per 35,726 residents.

Municipality	<b>Population</b> (2015)	Ice Arenas	Ice Sheets	Curling Facilities	Curling Sheets	Aquatics Facilities	Fitness Centres	Walking/ Running Tracks	Community Halls	Indoor Playgrounds	Seniors Centres	Youth Centres	Gymnasium Facilities	Indoor Fields
Airdrie	58,690	19,563	11,738	58,690	7,336	58,690	58,690	58,690	58,690	58,690	58,690	_	58,690	29,345
Lethbridge	94,804	15,801	13,543	94,804	9,480	31,601	47,402	_	18,961	_	47,402	_	94,804	47,402
Medicine Hat	63,018	12,604	10,503	63,018	7,877	31,509	15,755	63,018	63,018	_	63,018	63,018	63,018	_
Red Deer	100,807	20,161	16,801	50,404	6,300	25,202	25,202	100,807	33,602	_	100,807	100,807	50,404	50,404
St. Albert	63,255	31,628	15,814	63,255	10,543	31,628	63,255	63,255	12,651	63,255	63,255	_	63,255	31,628
Average	76,115	19,951	13,680	66,034	8,307	35,726	42,061	71,443	37,384	60,973	66,634	81,913	66,034	39,695
City of Grande Prairie	68,556	22,852	17,139	68,556	8,570	68,556	68,556	68,556	68,556	68,556	68,556	_	22,852	34,278

### Urban: Outdoor

The City's provision ratio for off leash dog parks is better than the comparable communities.

Municipality	<b>Population</b> (2015)	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Campgrounds	Off Leash Dog Parks	Outdoor Pools	Outdoor Rinks	Spray Parks	Tennis Courts	Skateboard Parks
Airdrie	58,690	2,552	1,544	_	11,738	_	5,335	58,690	7,336	58,690
Lethbridge	94,804	1,459	1,354	94,804	31,601	47,402	31,601	47,402	3,950	47,402
Medicine Hat	63,018	1,432	1,658	31,509	_	15,755	4,848	15,755	3,001	63,018
Red Deer	100,807	1,200	1,200	100,807	50,404	100,807	1,400	25,202	1,939	50,404
St. Albert	63,255	1,917	1,406	63,255	31,628	63,255	2,343	63,255	2,636	63,255
Average	76,115	1,712	1,433	72,594	31,343	56,805	9,105	42,061	3,772	56,554
City of Grande Prairie	68,556	2,448	1,904	22,852	17,139	68,556	6,856	34,278	4,285	34,278

### Rural: Indoor

The County has one sheet of arena ice for every 5,087 residents while the benchmarking municipalities provide one per 12,952 residents.

Municipality	Population (In Most Recent Census)	Ice Arenas	Ice Sheets	Curling Facilities	Curling Sheets	Aquatics Facilities	Fitness Centres	Walking/ Running Tracks	Community Halls	Indoor Playgrounds	Seniors Centres	Youth Centres	Gymnasium Facilities	Indoor Fields
M.D. of Bonnyville	13,233	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	882	_	6,617	_	_	_
Brazeau County	7,201	_	_	_	_	_	_		600				_	_
M.D. of Foothills	21,258	21,258	21,258	_	_	_	21,258	10,629	1,518	_	_	_	21,258	5,315
Lac La Biche County	12,220	6,110	4,073	12,220	3,055	12,220	12,220	12,220	2,037	12,220	12,220		12,220	_
Leduc County	13,524	13,524	13,524	_	_	_	13,524		902	_		Ė	_	
Average	13,487	13,631	12,952	12,220	3,055	12,220	15,667	11,425	1,188	12,220	9,418	-	16,739	5,315
<b>County of Grande Prairie</b>	20,347	6,782	5,087	6,782	3,391	_	20,347	20,347	1,017	_	20,347	<u> </u>	_	20,347

### Rural: Outdoor

The County has more ball diamonds, rectangular fields and campgrounds per capita than comparable municipalities.

Municipality	Population (In Most Recent Census)	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Campgrounds	Off Leash Dog Parks	Outdoor Pools	Outdoor Rinks	Spray Parks	Tennis Courts	Skateboard Parks
M.D. of Bonnyville	13,233	3,308	3,308	1,323	_	_	_	_	_	_
Brazeau County	7,201	1,200	1,800	1,440	_	_	7,201	_		_
M.D. of Foothills	21,258	3,543	21,258	21,258	_	_	10,629	_	21,258	_
Lac La Biche County	12,220	2,444	6,110	679	12,220	_	6,110	12,220	4,073	12,220
Leduc County	13,524	1,691	13,524	3,381	_	_	_	_		_
Average	13,487	2,437	9,200	5,616	12,220	_	7,980	12,220	12,666	12,220
<b>County of Grande Prairie</b>	20,347	1,453	2,035	1,850	_		_	_	10,174	_

### **Investment in Recreation**

Alberta Municipal Affairs collects data on the province's municipalities' expenditures on a variety of services including recreation. The following tables present the recreation spending of the Grande Prairie area municipalities and comparable rural and urban municipalities; the proportion of total municipal expenditures, and the per capita recreation spending are also displayed.<sup>1</sup>

In 2013, the area municipalities spent an average of \$627.85 per capita on recreation.

Regional Municipalities	Population (2011)	Spending on Recreation	Total Expenditures	% on Recreation	Per Capita on Recreation
City of Grande Prairie	55,032	\$45,599,640	\$153,358,495	29.7%	\$828.60
County of Grande Prairie	20,347	\$10,641,704	\$69,789,103	15.2%	\$523.01
M.D. of Greenview	5,299	\$9,552,836	\$50,741,647	18.8%	\$1,802.76
Town of Sexsmith	2,418	\$435,388	\$4,153,822	10.5%	\$180.06
Town of Beaverlodge	2,365	\$2,013,217	\$5,406,138	37.2%	\$851.25
Town of Wembley	1,383	\$140,531	\$1,993,155	7.1%	\$101.61
Village of Hythe	820	\$88,284	\$1,302,454	6.8%	\$107.66
Average	12,523	\$9,781,657	\$40,963,545	17.9%	\$627.85

The municipalities in the Grande Prairie area, when combined, spent \$781 per capita on recreation and culture while the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Strathcona County spent \$1,206 and \$513 respectively.

Regional Municipalities	Population (2011)	Spending on Recreation	Total Expenditures	% on Recreation	Per Capita on Recreation
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	65,565	\$79,093,496	\$561,428,365	14%	\$1,206
Strathcona County	92,490	\$47,428,359	\$303,479,291	16%	\$513
Grande Prairie Area Municipalities	87,664	\$68,471,600	\$286,744,814	24%	\$781

<sup>1</sup> Expenditure figures are those reported in 2013; the population figures are for 2011. The categories that are combined include Recreation Boards, Parks and Recreation, Culture: Libraries, Museums, Halls, and Other Recreation and Culture.

As illustrated below, the County's proportion of its budget allocated to recreation is comparable to that of the benchmarking municipalities, as is its per capita expenditure.

Rural Municipalities	Population (2011)	Spending on Recreation	Total Expenditures	% on Recreation	Per Capita on Recreation
M.D. of Foothills	21,258	\$2,023,914	\$42,040,012	4.8%	\$95.21
Leduc County	13,541	\$10,321,888	\$72,277,045	14.3%	\$762.27
M.D. of Bonnyville	10,101	\$5,060,924	\$42,638,421	11.9%	\$501.03
Lethbridge County	10,061	\$67,613	\$26,701,963	0.3%	\$6.72
Lac La Biche County	8,397	\$11,605,968	\$48,454,594	24.0%	\$1,382.16
Brazeau County	7,201	\$1,575,810	\$23,432,546	6.7%	\$218.83
Average	11,760	\$5,109,353	\$42,590,764	10.3%	\$494.37
<b>County of Grande Prairie</b>	20,347	\$10,641,704	\$69,789,103	15.2%	\$523.01

The City of Grande Prairie, in regard to the per capita amount, expended significantly more resources on recreation and culture than the urban benchmarking municipalities.

Rural Municipalities	<b>Population</b> (2011)	Spending on Recreation	Total Expenditures	% on Recreation	Per Capita on Recreation
City of Red Deer	90,564	\$44,328,775	\$300,861,947	14.7%	\$489.47
City of Lethbridge	83,517	\$42,496,000	\$291,867,000	14.6%	\$508.83
City of St. Albert	61,466	\$34,456,979	\$145,093,575	23.7%	\$560.59
City of Medicine Hat	60,005	\$24,749,000	\$425,515,000	5.8%	\$412.45
City of Airdrie	42,564	\$16,775,192	\$94,376,724	17.8%	\$394.12
Average	67,623	\$32,561,189	\$251,542,849	15.3%	\$473.09
City of Grande Prairie	55,032	\$45,599,640	\$153,358,495	29.7%	\$828.60

# **Municipal Partnerships**

Examples of recreation partnerships between municipalities have been reviewed to show the variety of ways in which Alberta municipalities work together to provide quality recreation opportunities for their residents.

# **Per Capita Cost Sharing Contributions**

A common practice for rural municipalities is to contribute a per capita sum annually to an urban municipality within its border. Depending on the size and intent of the rural municipality, the number of rural residents accounted for in the calculation is based on recreation districts, catchment radius, or in some cases the entire rural population. The per capita amount could differ between urban municipalities within the same rural municipality based on level of service (i.e. swimming pool versus no swimming pool). This partnership approach is common for rural municipalities that do not operate recreation facilities. Alberta examples include Mountain View County (Olds, Carstairs, Didsbury, Sundre, Cremona) and Lamont County (Town of Lamont).



# Facility Operating Cost Sharing

If a recreation facility caters to residents in a neighbouring municipality, the neighbouring municipality may contribute to the facility's operating costs. There are examples of annual contributions that are significant (up to 80% of costs) as well as lower amounts depending on the situation. Annual contributions are set amounts or are structured as a percentage of the observed operating cost. Examples include the M.D. of Greenview (Town of Valleyview), Wetaskiwin County (City of Wetaskiwin), and Clearwater County (Rocky Mountain House).

# Facility Capital Contributions

To fund new infrastructure development, more than one municipality may contribute to the capital costs of a project. This occurs for all types of recreation facilities from community halls to large multiplex facilities. Amounts vary greatly depending on the facility type and the degree of perceived benefit to the neighbouring municipality's residents. In some cases, preliminary steps towards a formal mediation process have been required to determine appropriate project cost sharing contributions. Examples of project capital cost sharing has occurred between the M.D. of Greenview and Valleyview, the M.D. of Bonnyville and the Town of Bonnyville, Leduc County and the City of Leduc, and Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt.

# **Facility Joint Ownership**

There are a couple of examples in Alberta in which more than one municipality jointly owns a recreation facility through a partnership agreement; the formal partnership agreement is most commonly manifested in a Part 9 Corporation. Parkland County, Spruce Grove, and Stony Plain jointly built, own, and operate the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre while the M.D. of Foothills and the Town of Okotoks have a similar arrangement for the ownership and operation of the Crescent Point Regional Fieldhouse. This practice more typically occurs with larger facilities in which a single municipality might not be able to afford the facility and when it is expected that residents from outside the municipal boundary will be regular users.



# Trends and Leading Practices

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A review of trends can help identify best practices in the delivery of recreation services as well as emerging or evolving interests that may be important to consider when developing programming and infrastructure. Summarized in the following section are selected trends related to participation, the provision of recreation opportunities (Service Delivery), volunteerism, and infrastructure.



# **Participation Trends**

# **Physical Activity and Wellness Levels**

The Canadian Health Measures Survey (Statistics Canada) concludes that the fitness levels of Canadian children and youth, as well as adults, have declined significantly between 1981 and 2009. Among youth aged 15 to 19, the percentage who were at an increased or high risk of health problems more than tripled; for adults aged 20 to 39 this percentage quadrupled.

In Alberta it appears that a number of demographic and socioeconomic factors contribute significantly to overall physical activity and wellness levels. Listed below are relevant findings from the 2013 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity:

- Although 94% of Albertans agree that physical activity will keep them healthy, only 59% are considered active enough to gain health benefits.
- Age appears to significantly impact activity levels:
  - » 87% of young adults aged 18 to 24 are considered physically active
  - » Only 37% of seniors aged 65 and older meet sufficient physical activity levels

- Household income has a direct impact on physical activity levels, with physical activity generally decreasing in relation to overall household income levels.
- 75% of Albertans believe that they have sufficient access to places where they can be physically active.
- Educational attainment relates to physical activity; 60.9% of Albertans who completed high school are considered physically active as compared to only 46.1% of Albertans who did not complete high school.
- Marital status appears to factor into activity levels:
  - » 66.8% of 'single' Albertans are active
  - » 64.1% of 'common-law/live-in partner' Albertans are active
  - » 63.2% of 'separated' Albertans are active
  - » 57.9% of 'married' Albertans are active
  - » 56.9% of 'divorced' Albertans are active
  - » 34.8% of 'widowed' Albertans are active

Physical activity trends remain especially concerning for children and youth cohorts. The 2015 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (formerly Active Healthy Kids Canada) found that only 9% of 5 to 17 year olds in Canada meet the recommended levels for moderate to vigorous physical activity. Contributing factors and other concerning findings from the Report Card include:

- Only 24% of 5 to 17 year olds use active transportation methods to or from school while the majority (62%) use inactive transportation methods.
- Only 26% of Canadian youth aged 8 to 12 meet or exceed the minimum level recommended for the physical competence domain of physical literacy.
- During waking hours, 5 to 17 year olds spend an average of 8.5 hours being sedentary.

However poor physical activity levels nationally do not appear to result from a lack of interest or awareness of the issues surrounding child and youth physical inactivity. The Report Card found that 90% of high school students (grades 9 – 12) in Ontario and Alberta report that their parents are very supportive or supportive of them being physically active and 79% of parents contribute financially to their kids' physical activities.

6 to 8 Year Olds		9 to 11 Year Olds		12	to 14 Year-Olds	15 to 17 Year Olds		
1. Wato	ching TV 6)	1.	Playing Video Games (40%)	1.	Playing Video Games (34%)	1.	Playing Video Games or Listening	
,	ing Video nes (34%)	2.	Watching TV (25%)	2.	Listening to Music (21%)	2.	to Music (25% each) Surfing the	
1	Watching Movies (18%)	3.	Listening to Music (12%)	3.	Watching TV (16%)	3.	Internet (14%) Texting (13%)	

# Physical Activity Preferences

The 2013 Canadian Community Health Survey reveals data that provides some insight into the recreation and leisure preferences of Canadians. The top 5 most popular adult activities identified were walking, gardening, home exercise, swimming and bicycling. The top 5 most popular youth activities were walking, bicycling, swimming, running/jogging and basketball.<sup>1</sup>

Participation levels and preferences for sporting activities continue to garner much attention given the impact on infrastructure development and overall service delivery in most municipalities. The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute's 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor report identifies a number of updated statistics and trends pertaining to sport participation in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

- The highest proportion of Canadians prefer non-competitive sports or activities. Nearly half (44%) of Canadians preferred non-competitive sports while 40% like both non-competitive and competitive sports. Only 8% of Canadians prefer competitive sports or activities and 8% prefer neither competitive nor non-competitive sports.
- Sport participation is directly related to age. Over three-quarters (70%) of Canadians aged 15 – 17 participate in sports, with participation rates decreasing in each subsequent age group. The largest fall-off in sport participation occurs between the age categories of 15 – 17 and 18 – 24 (~20%).
- In contrast to children and youth populations (in which gender participation rates are relatively equal), substantially more adult men (45%) than adult women (24%) participate in organized sport.

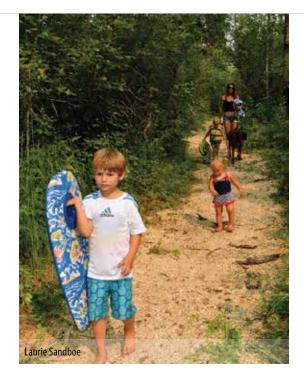
<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/ 140612/dq140612b-eng.htm

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute's 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor: http://www.cflri.ca/node/78

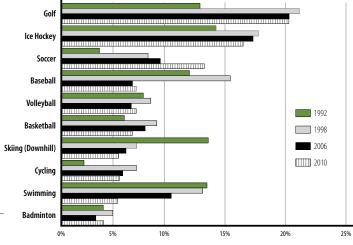
- Participation in sport is directly related to household income levels. Households with an annual income of greater than \$100,000 have the highest participation levels, nearly twice as high as households earning between \$20,000 – \$39,999 annually and over three times as high as households earning less than \$20,000 annually.
- The highest proportion of sport participants continue to do so in "structured environments".
   Just under half (48%) of sport participants indicated that their participation occurs primarily in organized environments, while 20% participate in unstructured or casual environments and 32% do so in both structured and unstructured environments.
- Community sport programs and venues remain important. The vast majority (82%) of Canadians that participate in sport do so in the community. Approximately one-fifth (21%) participate at school while 17% participate in sports at work. A significant proportion (43%) also indicated that they participate in sporting activities at home.

A research paper entitled "Sport Participation 2010" published by Canadian Heritage also identifies a number of trends pertaining to participation in specific sports. The adjacent graph illustrates national trends in active sport participation from 1992 – 2010. As reflected in the graph, swimming (as a sport) has experienced the most significant decrease while soccer has had the highest rate of growth; meanwhile golf and hockey remain the two most played sports in Canada.

**Note:** Data includes both youth, amateur, and adult sport participants.<sup>3</sup>



Active Participation Rate 1992 – 2010



3 Government of Canada: http://publications.gc.ca/ collections/collection\_2013/pc-ch/CH24-1-2012eng.pdf

- The paper further identifies a number of broad participation trends related specifically to sport-focused participation utilizing Statistics Canada data from the 2010 federal Census and the General Social Survey. Broader trends affecting overall sport participation noted by the paper include:
- National sport participation levels continue to decline. (In 2010, 7.2 million or 26% of Canadians age 15 and older participated regularly in sport. This represents a 17% decline over the past 18 years.)
- The gender gap in sport participation has increased.
- Sport participation decreases as Canadians age (the most significant drop off occurs after age 19).
- Education and income levels impact sport participation (Canadians with a university education and those making more than \$80,000 annually have the highest rates of sport participation).
- Established immigrants participate in sport less than recent immigrants and Canadian born.
- Students (15 years and older) participate in sport in greater numbers than any labour force group.
- Participation is highly concentrated in a few sports (participants in golf, ice hockey, and soccer tend to prefer these three sports and have less diversity in their overall sporting pursuits than participants in other sports).
- Women are more likely than men to have a coach (female sport participants tend to use the services of a coach more often than male sport participants and this difference appear to increase as people age).
- Most important benefit of sport participation is relaxation and fun (relaxation and fun were ranked as being important by 97% of sport participants).
- Lack of time and interest are the main reasons for not participating in sport.

The Alberta Recreation Survey, commissioned every 4 – 5 years by Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, provides additional data on the activity preferences of Albertans. The recent (2013) Survey found that Albertans continue to enjoy an array of physical activity, recreation and leisure pursuits. The following graphic depicts the top 5 activities for a variety of activity types.

of <u>respondents</u> have participated in a leisure or recreation activity (in the past 12 months)

2013 Alberta Recreation Survey

#### Participation in Activities by Respondents (Past 12 Months)

2013 Alberta Recreation Survey

Highest Lowest Participation **Participation** 

#### **Top 5 Activities** (By % of Respondents Participating)

Physical Activities		Outdoor Activities		Creative/Cultural Activities		Snow Activities		Water Activities		Group Activities	
Walking for Pleasure	80.5%	Gardening	61.0%	Attending Fair/ Festival/ Cultural Event	65.1%	Downhill Skiing	17.5%	Motor Boating	18.2%	Bowling/ Lawn Bowling	12.1%
Bicycling	42.3%	Day Hiking	37.8%	Visiting a Museum/ Art Gallery	48.2%	Tobogganing/ Sledding	16.0%	Canoeing	10.9%	Curling	7.7%
Aerobics/ Fitness	38.1%	Golf (other than driving range or mini golf)	32.8%	Doing a Craft or Creative Hobby	47.3%	Cross-country Skiing	12.4%	Kayaking	8.1%	Ice Hockey	5.9%
Swimming/ Aquafitness (in pools)	31.9%	Overnight Camping	30.8%	Attending Live Theatre (not movies)	46.5%	Snowshoeing	8.8%	Water Skiing	5.4%	Soccer	5.1%
Swimming (in lakes, rivers, ponds)	31.3%	Fishing	20.0%	Taking Part in the Arts	21.0%	Snowmobiling	3.9%	River Rafting	4.7%	Softball/ Baseball	4.4%

# **Balancing Structured** and Spontaneous Uses

While many structured or organized activities remain important, there is an increasing demand for more flexibility in timing and activity choice. People are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. This does not however eliminate the need for structured activities and the stakeholder groups that provide them. Instead, this trend suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for traditional structured use environments. Analyzing the issue further, if recreation and culture budgets do not increase to accommodate this expanded scope of spontaneous use planning, it may be necessary for municipalities to further partner with dedicated use organizations (e.g. sport teams) in the provision of programs and facilities to ensure the optimal use of public funds.

# Flexibility and Adaptability

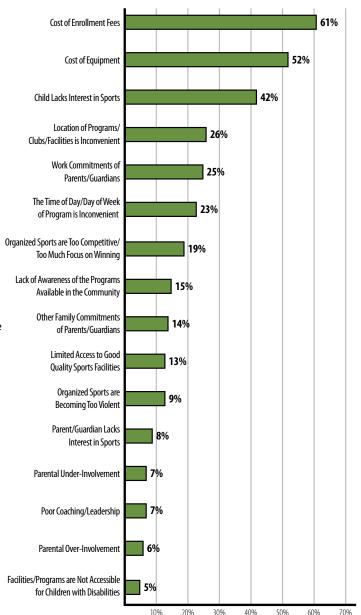
Recreation and cultural consumers have a greater choice of activity options than at any time in history. As a result, service providers are increasingly being required to ensure that their approach to delivery is fluid and able to quickly adapt to meet community demand. Many municipalities have also had to make hard decisions on which activities they are able to directly offer or support, and those which are more appropriate to leave to the private sector to provide.

Ensuring that programming staff and management are current on trends is important in the identification and planning of programming. Regular interaction with and data collection (e.g. customer surveys) from members are other methods which many service providers use to help identify programs that are popular and in demand. The development of multiuse spaces can also help ensure that municipalities have the flexibility to adapt to changing interests and activity preferences.

# **Barriers to Participation**

Research and available data support that many Canadians face barriers that impact their ability to reap the numerous physical, social, and mental benefits that are accrued from participation in recreation and leisure pursuits. Understanding these barriers can help service providers identify strategies to mitigate issues and encourage participation. The following graph adapted from the 2014 CIBC - KidSport Report reflects barriers to participation in sport for 3 to 17 year olds in Canada. As reflected in the graph, the cost of enrollment, equipment and a lack of interest were identified as the top 3 barriers.

The 2013 Alberta Recreation Survey also identified barriers that Albertans perceive as preventing them from participating in recreation and leisure pursuits. The top 3 barriers identified by respondents were too busy with other activities; too busy with family; and too busy with work.



## **Service Delivery Trends**

A number of organizations play a key role in providing recreation, leisure and wellness opportunities for residents. In a typical community municipalities, the school system, community organizations and the private sector all play a vital role in the provision of opportunities. Identified as follows are a number of key considerations and factors that continue to influence the delivery of recreation and related services in many communities and regions.

## **Partnerships**

Partnerships in the provision of recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities are becoming more prevalent. These partnerships can take a number of forms, and include government, not-for-profit organizations, schools and the private sector. While the provision of recreation and cultural services has historically relied on municipal levels of the government, many municipalities are increasingly looking to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and more efficiently leverage public funds.

Partnerships can be as simple as facility naming and sponsorship arrangements and as complex as lease and contract agreements to operate spaces, entire facilities or deliver programs. According to one study over three-quarters (76%) of Canadian municipalities work with schools in their communities to encourage the participation of municipal residents in physical activities. Just under half of municipalities work with local not-for-profits (46%), health settings (40%), or workplaces (25%) to encourage participation in physical activities amongst their residents.

Seventy-six percent (76%) of municipalities with a population of 1,000 to 9,999 to 80% of municipalities over 100,000 in population have formed agreements with school boards for shared use of facilities. In fact, since 2000, the proportion of municipalities that have reported working with schools, health settings, and local not-for-profit organizations has increased by 10% to 20%.

### **Community Development**

The combined factors of decreasing support from other levels of government, increasing demand for new and exciting recreation infrastructure and programs and the changing nature of the volunteer have led many municipalities to adopt a community development role in service delivery. This, in addition to the direct delivery of recreation and culture facilities and programs, includes the facilitation of empowering local non-profit groups to operate facilities and/ or offer programs to residents thereby leveraging public resources and providing more value for public investment.

Community development is the process of creating change through a model of greater public participation—the engagement of the entire community from the individual up. The concept of community development has a broader reach than just the delivery of recreation and cultural programs and facilities; it is commonly understood to be the broader involvement of the general public in decision-making and delivery. Community development in recreation delivery encompasses supporting and guiding volunteer groups to ultimately become self-sufficient while providing facilities and programs.

#### **Social Inclusion**

The concept of social inclusion is increasingly becoming an issue communities are addressing. While always an important issue, its significance has risen as communities have become more diversified through immigration.

Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society. It involves the basic notions of belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrants, social inclusion would be manifested in full and equal participation in all facets of a community including economic, social, cultural, and political realms. It goes beyond including "outsiders" or "newcomers". In fact social inclusion is about the elimination of the boundaries or barriers between "us" and "them". There is a recognition that diversity has worth unto itself and is not something that must be overcome.



- 2 Omidvar, Ratna, Ted Richmand (2003). Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada. The Laidlaw Foundation.
- 3 Harvey, Louise (2002). Social Inclusion Research in Canada: Children and Youth. The Canadian Council on Social Development's "Progress of Canada's Children".

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Municipal Opportunities for Physical Activity" Bulletin 6: Strategic partnerships. 2010, Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute.

While issues of social inclusion are pertinent for all members of a community, they can be particularly relevant for adolescents of immigrant families. Immigrant youth can feel pulled in opposite directions between their own cultural values and a desire to "fit in" to their new home. This tension can be exacerbated in those situations in which parents are experiencing stress due to settlement. Children living in families which are struggling are more likely to be excluded from some of the aspects of life essential to their healthy development. Children are less likely to have positive experiences at school, less likely to participate in recreation, and less likely to get along well with friends, if they live in families struggling with parental depression, family dysfunction or violence.<sup>4</sup>

Financial barriers to participation in recreation, sport, and cultural activities continue to exist for many Albertans. Understanding the potential benefits that can result from engaging citizens in a broad range of activities and programs, municipalities have undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at removing financial barriers. Current initiatives being led or supported by many municipalities include the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's 'Everybody Gets to Play' program, KidSport, and JumpStart.



### **Sport Tourism**

Sport Tourism is often a driver of partnerships and infrastructure development. Available 2014 Statistics Canada data indicates that the sports tourism industry in Canada is worth \$5.2 billion dollars. In contrast to other segments of the tourism industry, sport tourism in Canada continues to grow and is largely driven by the domestic, overnight market.

Sport Toursim	Volume: Person Visits					
Sport Toursini	2011	2012	Change			
Canada: Same Day	9,235,000	8,598,000	-6.9%			
Canada: Overnight	8,954,000	9,903,000	10.6%			
Canada: Total	18,189,000	18,501,000	1.7%			
U.S.A.	499,500	501,800	0.5%			
Overseas	366,300	371,800	1.5%			
Total	19,054,800	19,374,600	1.7%			

Chart adapted from the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance.

Many municipalities are reacting to the growth and opportunities associated with sport tourism by dedicating resources to the attraction and retention of events. The emergence of sport councils (or similar entities) is a trend that is continuing in many communities and regions. These organizations often receive public support and are tasked with building sport tourism capacity and working with community sport organizations and volunteers in the attraction and hosting of events. Some municipalities are also dedicating internal staff resources to sport tourism through the creation of new positions or re-allocation of roles.



While sport tourism can be highly beneficial to a community, it is important to consider a number of factors when allocating resources in order to ensure that investment provides positive and long lasting impacts. This is especially the case when considering the pursuit of larger scale events and competitions. Best practices that should be followed include:

- Infrastructure investment (enhancement or new development) needs to be sustainable and beneficial to a wide array of residents.
- Volunteer capacity needs to be accurately assessed and deemed appropriate.
- The pursuit of events needs to be strategically aligned with community values and goals.

<sup>4</sup> Harvey, Louise (2002). Social Inclusion Research in Canada: Children and Youth. The Canadian Council on Social Development's "Progress of Canada's Children".

#### **Volunteerism**

Volunteers continue to be vitally important to the planning and delivery of numerous events and programs. Identified as follows are a number of pertinent trends in volunteerism that may impact or have relevancy to the delivery of seniors' programming or facility operations.

Findings from the 2010 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating—Alberta data tables:<sup>5</sup>

- Albertans volunteer at a higher rate (54.7%) than the national average (47.0%).
- The highest volunteer rate in Alberta is among adults aged 35 to 44 (63.4%) followed by youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 (56.7%) and adults aged 55 to 64 (51.3%).
- Although seniors had the lowest volunteer rate (49.6%), they had the highest average of annual volunteer hours (206 hours on average per year).

Current trends in volunteerism as identified by Volunteer Canada:<sup>6</sup>

- Much comes from the few. 47% of Canadians volunteer. Over one-third (34%) of all volunteer hours were contributed by 5% of total volunteers.
- The new volunteer. Young people volunteer to gain work-related skills (Canadians aged 15 24 volunteer more than any other age group).
   New Canadians also volunteer to develop work experience and to practice language skills. Persons with disabilities may volunteer as a way to more fully participate in community life.

- Volunteer job design. Volunteer job design can be the best defense for changing demographics and fluctuations in funding.
- Mandatory volunteering. There are mandatory volunteer programs through Workfare, Community Service Order and school-mandated community work.
- Volunteering by contract. The changing volunteer environment is redefining volunteer commitment as a negotiated and mutually beneficial arrangement rather than a one-way sacrifice of time by the volunteer.
- Risk management. Considered part of the process of job design for volunteers, risk management ensures the organization can place the right volunteer in the appropriate activity.
- Borrowing best practices. The voluntary sector
  has responded to the changing environment
  by adopting corporate and public sector
  management practices including standards; codes
  of conduct; accountability and transparency
  measures around program administration;
  demand for evaluation; and outcome and import
  measurement.
- Professional volunteer management. Managers of volunteer resources are working toward establishing an equal footing with other professionals in the voluntary sector.
- Board governance. Volunteer boards must respond to the challenge of acting as both supervisors and strategic planners.

#### Infrastructure

### **Aging Infrastructure**

The recently released Canadian Infrastructure Report Card<sup>7</sup> includes an assessment and analysis of the state of sport and recreation facilities in Canada. The report reveals a number of concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure over the next number of years. Key findings from the report include:

- Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, is at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment.
  - » The average annual reinvestment rate in sport and recreation facilities is currently 1.3% (of capital value) while the recommended target rate of reinvestment is 1.7% – 2.5%.
- Almost 1 in 2 sport and recreation facilities are in 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' condition and need repair or replacement.
- In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, sport and recreation facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.
- The extrapolated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition is \$9B and \$14B for those in 'fair' condition.

<sup>5</sup> Data compiled by Statistics Canada. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/ 89-649-x/2011001/tbl/tbl210-eng.htm

<sup>6</sup> Alberta Heritage Community Foundation. http://www.abheritage.ca/ volunteer/index.html

<sup>7</sup> http://www.canadainfrastructure.ca/downloads/ Canadian\_Infrastructure\_Report\_2016.pdf

### **Multi-Use Spaces**

Increasingly, recreation and cultural facilities are being designed to accommodate multiple activities and to encompass a host of different components. The benefits of designing multi-use spaces include the opportunity to create operational efficiencies, attract a wide spectrum of users, and procure multiple sources of revenue. Providing the opportunity for all family members to take part in different opportunities simultaneously at the same location increases convenience and satisfaction for residents.

Creating spaces within a facility that are easily adaptable and re-configured is another growing trend observed in many newer and retrofitted facilities. Many performing arts venues are being designed such that staging, seating, and wall configurations can be easily changed and configured as required. Similarly, visual arts spaces such as studios and galleries are being designed in a manner that allows them to be used for a multitude of different art creation and display purposes. Similarly, gymnasium spaces and fieldhouse facilities are being designed with temporary barriers, walls, bleachers and other amenities that can be easily adjusted or removed depending on the type of activity or event.

# **Integrating Indoor and Outdoor Environments**

A new concept in recreation and culture infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor environment interacts seamlessly with the outdoor recreation environment. This can include such ideas as indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/outdoor child play areas and indoor/outdoor aquatics facilities. Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access, etc.), the concept of planning an indoor facility to complement the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader

community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Integrating indoor and outdoor environments can be as "simple" as ensuring interiors have good opportunities to view the outdoors. As such, some of the public art installations in the city have already bridged the gap between indoor and outdoor environments.

## **Ensuring Accessibility**

Many current recreation and cultural facilities are putting a significant focus on ensuring that user experiences are comfortable including meeting accessibility requirements and incorporating designs that can accommodate various body types. Programming is made as accessible as possible via "layering" to provide the broadest appeal possible to intellectual preferences.

Meeting the needs of various user groups is also an important aspect of accessibility. Incorporating mobile technologies, rest spaces, child-friendly spaces, crafts areas, and educational multi-purpose rooms for classes and performances is an emerging trend. Accessibility guidelines set by governments, as well as an increased understanding of the needs of different types of visitors is fuelling this trend. Technology is also being embraced as a modern communication tool useful for effectively sharing messages with younger, more technologically savvy audiences.

# **Revenue Generating Spaces**

Increasingly, facility operators of community facilities are being required to find creative and innovative ways to generate the revenues needed to both sustain current operations and fund future expansion or renovation projects.

By generating sustainable revenues outside of regular government contributions, many facilities are able to demonstrate increased financial sustainability and expand service levels.

Lease spaces provide one such opportunity. Many facilities are creating new spaces or redeveloping existing areas of their facility that can be leased to food and beverage providers and other retail businesses. Short-term rental spaces are another major source of revenue for many facilities. Lobby areas, program rooms, and event-hosting spaces have the potential to be rented to the corporate sector for meetings, team-building activities, Christmas parties and a host of other functions.

#### **Social Amenities**

The inclusion of social amenities provides the opportunity for multi-purpose community recreation and cultural facilities to maximize the overall experience for users as well as to potentially attract non-traditional patrons to a facility. Examples of social amenities include attractive lobby areas, common spaces, restaurants and cafeterias, spectator viewing areas, meeting facilities and adjacent outdoor parks or green space. It is also becoming increasingly uncommon for new public facilities, especially in urban areas, to not be equipped with public wireless Internet.

Another significant benefit of equipping facilities with social amenities is the opportunity to increase usage and visitation to the facility during non-peak hours. Including spaces such as public cafeterias and open lobby spaces can result in local residents visiting the facility during non-event or non-program hours to meet friends or simply as part of their daily routine. Many municipalities and not-for-profit organizations have encouraged this non-peak hours' use to ensure that the broader populace perceives that the facility is accessible and available to all members of the community.

# **Providing Quality Parks** and Outdoor Spaces

Research supports that individuals continue to place a high value on the availability and quality of parks, trails and outdoor spaces. A 2013 Canadian study commissioned by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation found that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that local parks were "very important" to them and their family. Additionally, 68% of Canadians are concerned about the loss of green space in their community. Another 2011 study of over 1,100 parents of 2 to 12 year olds in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom found that the more time a family spends together at a playground, the greater their overall sense of family well-being. Three-quarters also wished that their family had time to visit a playground more often.

Parks and outdoor spaces also play a key role in helping to combat "nature deficit disorder" amongst children and youth. This phrase, first coined by Richard Louv in his bestselling book *Last Child in the Woods*, suggests that children are becoming estranged from nature and natural play resulting in a number of cognitive, physical and developmental issues.

While all residents benefit from the availability of quality park spaces, a significant amount of research and attention has been given to the myriad of benefits that result from children and youth being able to play and interact in outdoor settings. Findings include:

- Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often.<sup>10</sup>
- Exposure to natural environments improves children's cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning and observational skills.<sup>11</sup>
- Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other.<sup>12</sup>
- Outdoor environments are important to children's development of independence and autonomy.<sup>13</sup>
- Children with views of and contact with nature score higher on tests of concentration and selfdiscipline. The greener, the better the scores (Wells 2000, Taylor et al. 2002).<sup>14</sup>
- 10 Grahn, P., Martensson, F., Llindblad, B., Nilsson, P., & Ekman, A., (1997). UTE pa DAGIS, Stad & Land nr. 93/1991 Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, Alnarp.
- 11 Pyle, Robert (1993). The thunder trees: Lessons from an urban wildland. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- 12 Moore, Robin (1996). Compact Nature: The Role of Playing and Learning Gardens on Children's Lives, Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture, 8, 72-82
- 13 Bartlett, Sheridan (1996). Access to Outdoor Play and Its Implications for Healthy Attachments. Unpublished article, Putney, VT
- 14 Taylor, A.F., Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan, W.C. (2002). Views of Nature and Self-Discipline: Evidence from Inner City Children, Journal of Environmental Psychology, 22, 49-63

Melanie Alde

<sup>8</sup> TD Friends of the Environment Foundation survey, Conducted by Ipsos Reid (2013).

<sup>9</sup> Harris Interactive (2011). Playgrounds Increase Sense Of Family Well-Being. Washington, District of Columbia. Foresters.

# **Engagement Findings**

9

Engagement with residents, community organizations and stakeholders formed a critical component of the project research. Gathering feedback on the current situation and future needs from the above noted individuals and groups helped identify areas of strength, as well as gaps and opportunities to enhance recreation across the area. A variety of engagement mechanisms were used to ensure that a wide array of perspectives were heard. The following chart summarizes the engagement mechanisms and participation in each.

Engagement Mechanism	Responses
Resident Household Survey (mailout)	1,284
Resident Survey (web)	268
Stakeholder Group Survey	58
Stakeholder Interviews	84
Student Survey	742

It is important to note that the findings of the engagement process in this section outline the consolidated results of the entire area. Under separate cover, community specific reports for each municipality have been developed for the household survey results.



# **Resident Household Survey**

A household survey was conducted to gather residents' perspectives about recreation and to assist in identifying current and future needs. The survey was conducted from November 2015 through to January 2016. The primary fielding methodology was through mailout. Households in the City and County of Grande Prairie were sent the questionnaire as were households in Sexsmith, Beaverlodge, Wembley, and Hythe. Households in the Municipal District of Greenview's DeBolt and Grovedale areas were also sent the questionnaire. Addresses were provided by each municipality and the questionnaires were sent along with a self-addressed postage-paid return envelope.

The mailout questionnaire was sent to 10,734 households in the Grande Prairie area and 1,284 were returned. This provides a margin of error of  $\pm 2.6\%$  19 times out of 20 and is considered statistically representative of the entire area. The following table illustrates the number of returns and the accompanying margin of error when examining the findings from each separately. In this report the aggregated findings are presented to represent the larger market area. Separate reports have been produced to present the separate findings of each individual municipality.

Municipality	Mailout Size	Questionnaires Returned	Margin of Error (19 times out of 20)
City of Grande Prairie	5,499	472	± 4.3%
County of Grande Prairie	2,500	461	± 4.1%
Beaverlodge	814	131	± 7.8%
Hythe	238	25	± 18.5%
Sexsmith	732	97	± 9.3%
Wembley	500	62	± 11.6%
M.D. of Greenview (DeBolt and Grovedale)	451	23	± 19.9%
Total	10,734	1,284	± 2.6%

Accompanying the mailout survey was an online version. The online version was available after the hard copy had been delivered and was intended to provide a means for people who may not have received the mailout version (or who misplaced it) to provide their input. In total, 268 full and partial responses were gathered online. These findings are reported separately alongside the findings from the mailout survey.



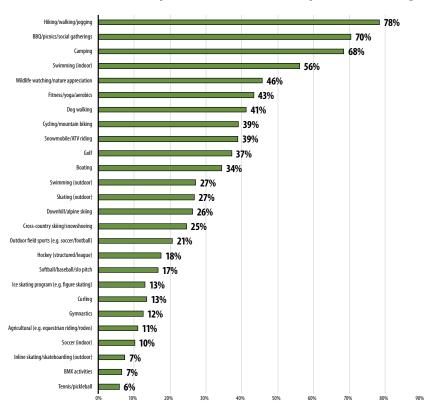




#### **Recreation Activities**

Respondents were asked to identify the recreational activities in which a household member participated. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, hiking/walking/jogging (78%), BBQ/picnics/social gatherings (70%), and camping (68%) were the three activities with the highest levels of participation.

In what recreational activities do you and/or members of your household participate?





Web Survey Results

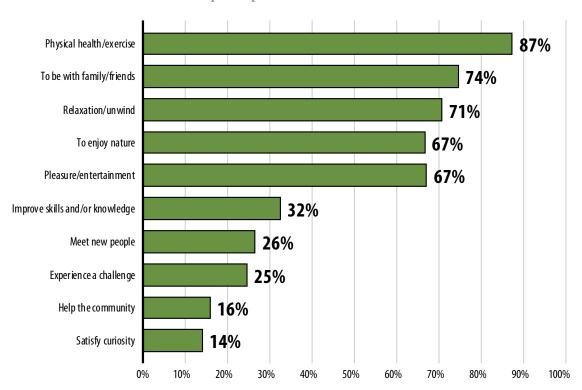
As illustrated in the chart, the top three household activities from web respondents are similar to those of the mailout survey.

Top 10 Activities	%	Top 10 Activities	%
1. Hiking/Walking/Jogging	83%	6. Fitness/Yoga/Aerobics	47%
2. Camping	65%	7. Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing	44%
3. BBQ/Picnics/Social Gatherings	59%	8. Dog Walking	44%
4. Swimming (indoor)	59%	9. Wildlife Watching/Nature Appreciation	38%
5. Cycling/Mountain Biking	51%	10. Golf	37%

#### Motivations

Respondents were next asked to identify the primary motivations for household members participating in recreational activities. As shown in the accompanying graph, physical health/exercise is the greatest motivator (87%). To be with family/friends (74%) and to relax/unwind (71%) were the next most commonly identified motivations.

# What are the main reasons you and/or members of your household participate in recreational activities?





#### **Recreation Considerations**

Respondents were presented with a number of statements about recreation and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each. As can be seen from the table, there is a high level of agreement with the statements. Approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly agreed that "Recreation is important to my quality of life," and that "The municipalities in the Grande Prairie area should work together to provide recreation opportunities for residents".

Statement	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Unsure	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Recreation is important to my quality of life.	77%	21%	1%	1%	1%
My local community as a whole benefits from recreation programs and services.	68%	23%	6%	2%	1%
The area as a whole benefits from recreation programs and services.	68%	23%	5%	2%	1%
Residents can benefit even if they do not use recreation services directly.	38%	37%	17%	5%	3%
Recreation brings the community together.	57%	34%	6%	2%	1%
Quality recreation programs and facilities can help attract and retain residents.	67%	25%	5%	2%	2%
The municipalities in the Grande Prairie area should work together to provide recreation opportunities for residents.	76%	17%	4%	1%	1%



Web respondents were more likely to strongly agree with the statements on recreation compared to respondents to the mailout survey. For example, 86% of web respondents strongly agreed that recreation is important to their quality of life versus 77% of respondents to the mailout survey. For both surveys the levels of disagreement was low.

Statement	Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Disagree
Recreation is important to my quality of life.	86%	12%	0%	1%	0%
My local community as a whole benefits from recreation programs and services.	75%	21%	2%	1%	1%
The area as a whole benefits from recreation programs and services.	77%	16%	3%	2%	1%
Residents can benefit even if they do not use recreation services directly.	47%	34%	13%	4%	2%
Recreation brings the community together.	66%	29%	3%	1%	1%
Quality recreation programs and facilities can help attract and retain residents.	79%	15%	1%	3%	2%
The municipalities in the Grande Prairie area should work together to provide	84%	11%	1%	2%	2%

**Web Survey Results** 

recreation opportunities for residents.

A selection of available recreation facilities in each of the participating municipalities were presented to respondents. For each facility, respondents were asked to identify the frequency with which a household member used/visited it in the previous year. It is important to note that the following utilization information relates to the entire Grande Prairie area population and thus utilization of local facilities by local residents will be different. Local utilization of facilities can be further understood via the utilization statistics presented herein and in the separate municipality household survey reports (under separate cover).

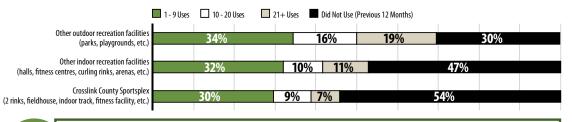
#### **County of Grande Prairie No. 1**

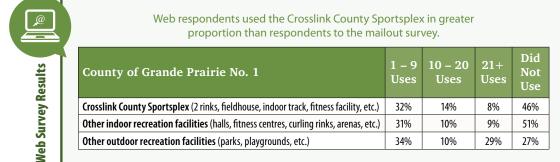
Almost half (46%) of respondent households used the Crosslink County Sportsplex in the last year.

#### **City of Grande Prairie**

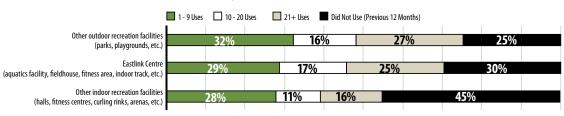
Over two-thirds (71%) of respondent households used the Eastlink Centre in the previous year

#### County of Grande Prairie No. 1





#### City of Grande Prairie



Web respondents used the Eastlink Centre in greater proportion than respondents to the mailout survey.					
City of Grande Prairie	1 – 9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Did Not Use	
Eastlink Centre (aquatics facility, fieldhouse, fitness area, indoor track, etc.)	32%	15%	34%	18%	
<b>Other indoor recreation facilities</b> (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.)	33%	16%	25%	26%	
Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.)	16%	17%	59%	9%	

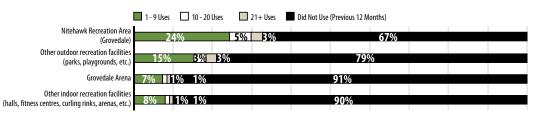
#### M.D. of Greenview No. 16

Approximately one-third (32%) of households visited the Nitehawk Recreation Area in the previous year.

#### **Town of Sexsmith**

Approximately one-quarter (23%) of households used the outdoor recreation facilities in Sexsmith in the previous year.

#### M.D. of Greenview No. 16



**Web Survey Results** 

A greater proportion of web respondents used the Nitehawk Recreation Area than respondents to the mailout survey.

1 – 9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Did Not Use
35%	7%	5%	53%
11%	1%	1%	87%
9%	1%	1%	90%
20%	8%	6%	66%
	35% 11% 9%	Uses         Uses           35%         7%           11%         1%           9%         1%	Uses         Uses         Uses           35%         7%         5%           11%         1%         1%           9%         1%         1%

#### Town of Sexsmith

1 - 9 Uses 10 - 20 Uses 21 + Uses Did Not Use (Previous 12 Months)

Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.)

Arena
14% 2% 2% 2%

Other indoor recreation facilities (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.)



**Web Survey Results** 

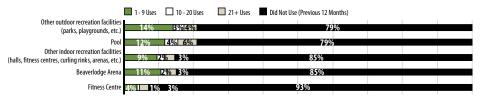
Similar proportions of respondents in both surveys utilized the Sexsmith facilities.

Town of Sexsmith	1 – 9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Not Use
Arena	16%	2%	0%	82%
Other indoor recreation facilities (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.)	11%	1%	3%	85%
Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.)	19%	3%	3%	75%

#### **Town of Beaverlodge**

Approximately one-quarter of respondents (22%) used the pool in the last year.

#### Town of Beaverlodge





The proportion of web respondents that used the recreation facilities in Beaverlodge was less than the mailout respondents.

**Web Survey Results** 

Did 10 – 20 21+ Town of Beaverlodge Not Uses Uses Pool 3% 89% 0% 2% 0% 97% Fitness Centre 1% Beaverlodge Arena 10% 0% 1% 89% Other indoor recreation facilities (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.) 4% 2% 0% 94% Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.) 13% 1% 1% 85%

#### **Town of Wembley**

Approximately one-quarter (21%) of respondents used the outdoor recreation facilities in Wembley in the previous year.

#### Town of Wembley





The proportion of respondents that used the recreation facilities in Wembley was similar for both surveys.

Town of Wembley	1 – 9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Did Not Use
Wembley Recreation Centre (event centre and arena)	12%	2%	1%	85%
Other indoor recreation facilities (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.)		1%	0%	92%
Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.)		2%	0%	82%

Web Survey Results

#### Village of Hythe

Approximately eight percent (8%) of respondents used/visited the Memorial Arena in the previous year.

#### Village of Hythe





The proportion of respondents using facilities in Hythe was very low for both survey methodologies.

Village of Hythe	1 – 9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Did Not Use
Swimming Pool	0%	0%	0%	100%
Memorial Arena	6%	0%	0%	94%
Other indoor recreation facilities (halls, fitness centres, curling rinks, arenas, etc.)	1%	0%	0%	99%
Other outdoor recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, etc.)	5%	0%	0%	94%

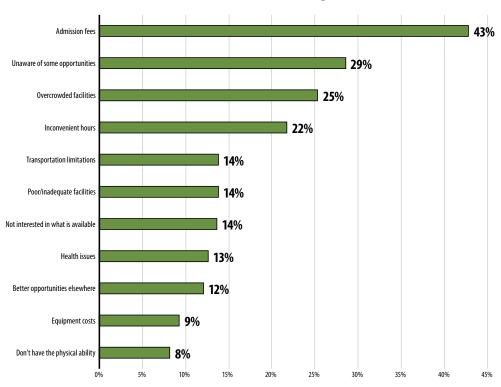
Web Survey Results



#### **Participation Barriers**

Admission fees were identified as a barrier to participation in recreation opportunities by forty-three percent (43%) of respondents. A lack of awareness (29%), overcrowded facilities (25%), and inconvenient hours (22%) were the next most commonly cited barriers. See the graph for other responses.

#### Barriers to Recreation Participation





Admission fees were the most commonly identified barrier to participation in both the mailout and online survey. Overcrowded facilities and a lack of awareness were also in the top three barriers for both cadres of survey respondents.

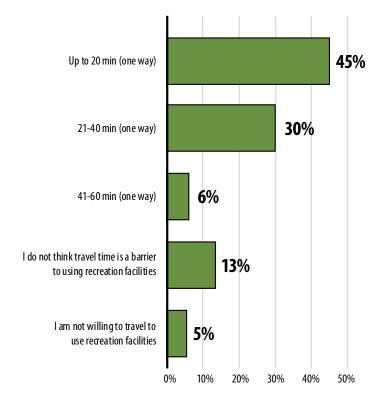
Barriers to Participation	%	Barriers to Participation	%
Admission fees	57%	Better opportunities elsewhere	18%
Overcrowded facilities	39%	Transportation limitations (cost/availability)	18%
Unaware of some opportunities	35%	Equipment costs	8%
Inconvenient hours (schedule of programs/facility)	30%	Health issues	7%
Poor/inadequate facilities	24%	Don't have the physical ability	3%
Not interested in what is available	20%		

Web Survey Results

#### **Participation Barriers**

When examining travel time as a barrier to participation in recreation, forty-five percent (45%) of respondents indicated that one-way travel of more than twenty minutes would generally inhibit their participation. See the graph for other responses.

Generally, what is the approximate amount of time you are willing to travel to recreation facilities before travel becomes a barrier?





Web Survey Results

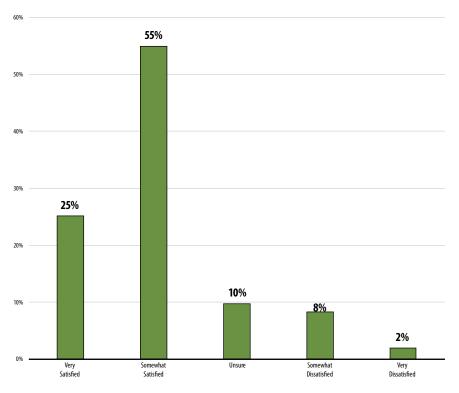
Similar perspectives on travel time as a barrier were observed in both the mailout and online survey responses.

Generally, what is the approximate amount of time you are willing to travel to recreation facilities before travel becomes a barrier?	%
Up to 20 min (one way)	52%
21 – 40 min (one way)	24%
I do not think travel time is a barrier to using recreation facilities	13%
41 – 60 min (one way)	6%
I am not willing to travel to use recreation facilities	4%

#### Overall Satisfaction

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents are very (25%) or somewhat (55%) satisfied with the availability of recreation opportunities and services currently offered in the Grande Prairie area. Ten percent (10%) are dissatisfied to some extent.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the availability of recreation opportunities and services currently offered in the Grande Prairie area?





As observed in the accompanying table, almost twice as many web respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of recreation opportunities and services compared with the mailout survey respondents (18% versus 10%).

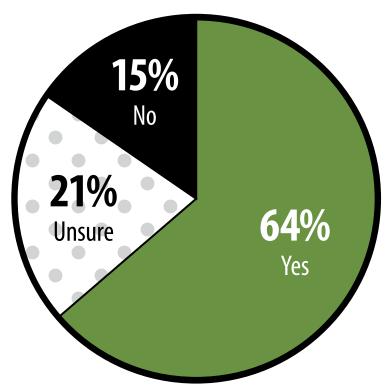
Level of Satisfaction	%
Very Satisfied	20%
Somewhat Satisfied	56%
Unsure	6%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	16%
Very Dissatisfied	2%

Web Survey Results

#### New/Upgraded Facilities and Spaces

Approximately two-thirds (64%) of respondents think there is a need for new/upgraded recreation facilities to be developed in the Grande Prairie area. See the accompanying graph.

Do you think that there is a need for new and/or upgraded recreation facilities (including parks and outdoor spaces) to be developed in the Grande Prairie area?





Web Survey Results

Over three-quarters (78%) of online survey respondents indicated a need for new or upgraded recreation facilities in the Grande Prairie area.

Need for New/Upgraded Facilities?	%
Yes	78%
Unsure	15%
No	7%

#### New/Upgraded Facilities and Spaces

Respondents who said "yes" or were unsure if new/ upgraded facilities should be developed were then asked to identify—from a list—the top five indoor and outdoor spaces that should be more readily available or enhanced. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, the five most identified indoor spaces were leisure swimming pools (40%); indoor child playgrounds (30%); walking/running track (26%); youth centre (21%); and seniors' centre (20%). See the graph for other responses.



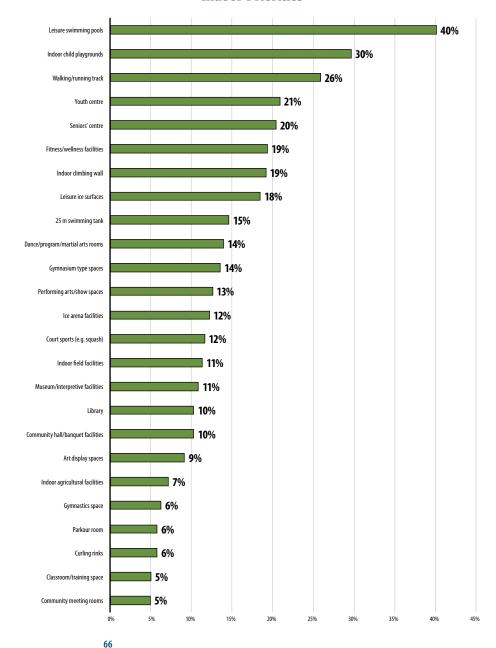
**Web Survey Results** 

Online survey responses were similar to the responses from the mailout survey with some exceptions.

A seniors' centre was not in the top 10 identified indoor priorities on the web survey while performing arts/show spaces and indoor field facilities were in the top ten priorities.

To	p 10 Indoor Priorities	%
1.	Leisure swimming pools (e.g. water slides, lazy river)	40%
2.	Indoor child playgrounds	29%
3.	Youth centre	24%
4.	Leisure ice surfaces (non-hockey)	24%
5.	25 m swimming tank (e.g. fitness class, lane swimming)	22%
6.	Indoor climbing wall	22%
7.	Walking/running track	20%
8.	Fitness/wellness facilities (e.g. exercise/weight room)	18%
9.	Performing arts/show spaces	16%
10.	Indoor field facilities (e.g. soccer, tennis)	16%

#### **Indoor Priorities**



#### New/Upgraded Facilities and Spaces

Considering outdoor spaces, the top five most identified facilities were pool (45%); campgrounds (41%); non-motorized trail system (36%); water spray parks (33%); and picnic areas (28%). See the graph for other responses.



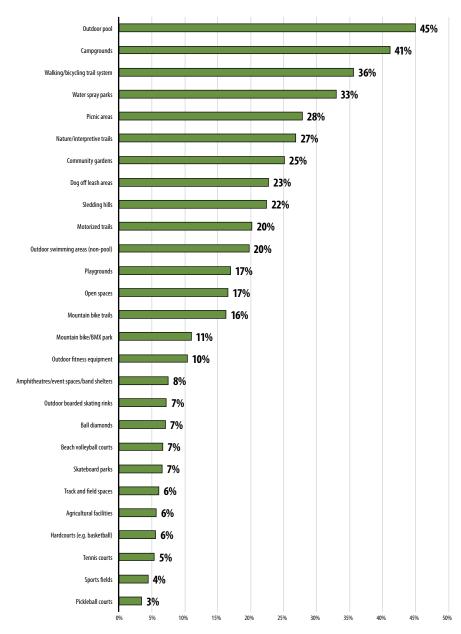
Web Survey Results

Online survey responses were similar to the responses from the mailout survey with some exceptions.

Motorized trails were not in the top 10 identified outdoor priorities on the web survey; outdoor swimming areas (non-pool) and open spaces were in the top ten priorities.

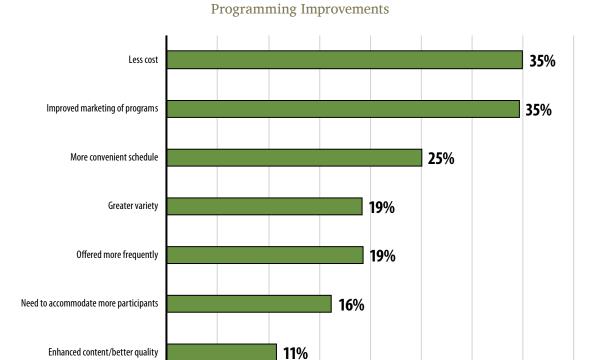
То	p 10 Outdoor Priorities	%
1.	Outdoor pool	42%
2.	Walking/bicycling trail system	37%
3.	Campgrounds	32%
4.	Water spray parks	27%
5.	Mountain bike trails	25%
6.	Dog off leash areas	24%
7.	Community gardens	22%
8.	Nature/interpretive trails	22%
9.	Outdoor swimming areas (non-pool)	21%
10.	<b>Open spaces</b> (e.g. parks, greenfields)	18%

#### **Outdoor Priorities**



#### **Recreation Programming**

Thinking about existing and new programs, respondents were asked to identify what improvements or changes are needed. As illustrated in the graph, over one-third of respondents suggested less cost (35%) and improved marketing (35%) were needed with recreational programming.





**Web Survey Results** 

Improved marketing and less cost were identified as the top two improvements or changes to recreation programming in both survey responses.

15%

20%

25%

35%

40%

30%

5%

10%

5%

Improvements to Programming	%	Improvements to Programming	%
Improved marketing of programs	46%	Greater variety	28%
Less cost	39%	Need to accommodate more participants	28%
More convenient schedule	31%	Enhanced content/better quality	21%
Offered more frequently	29%	Better instruction	10%

68

Better instruction

0%

#### **Recreation Programming**

Respondents were asked to identify the types of programming that need to be more readily available in the area for a number of age groups. Considering children (0 – 5 years), nature/outdoor education (26%) and general recreation (22%) were the most suggested program type. Nature/outdoor education was the most commonly identified program type for youth (39%) and teens (32%). Fitness and wellness programming was the most commonly cited program type for adults and seniors. See the chart for additional responses.

Program Type	Children (0 – 5 Years)	Youth (6 – 12 Years)	Teens (13 – 18Years)	Adults (19 – 39 Years)	Adults (40 – 64 Years)	Seniors (65+ Years)
Nature/outdoor education	26%	39%	32%	18%	19%	18%
Fitness and wellness	15%	26%	29%	29%	33%	32%
Performing arts	9%	18%	21%	19%	18%	15%
Visual arts	9%	15%	18%	16%	15%	13%
Recreation (general interest)	22%	27%	28%	27%	27%	24%
Sports	17%	27%	27%	24%	17%	13%



Generally online survey respondents suggested that all programming types need to be more readily available for all age groups than did respondents to the mailout survey. For teens, over half of all online respondents indicated all programming types need to be more readily available. See the table.

Program Type	Children (0 - 5 Years)	Youth (6 – 12 Years)	Teens (13 – 18Years)	Adults (19 – 39 Years)	Adults (40 – 64 Years)	Seniors (65+ Years)
Nature/outdoor education	52%	65%	57%	40%	34%	29%
Fitness and wellness	32%	51%	60%	58%	51%	45%
Performing arts	35%	61%	67%	50%	41%	38%
Visual arts	37%	64%	61%	46%	43%	34%
Recreation (general interest)	48%	55%	65%	64%	58%	46%
Sports	39%	62%	65%	67%	48%	32%

Web Survey Results

#### Planning Priorities

Municipalities and partner organizations cannot afford to undertake a large number of facility projects at one time; priorities must be set. Given a list of 10 criteria, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each when determining project priorities. Each criterion was deemed very or somewhat important by at least 70% of respondents (see the table). However, the overall costs of operating the facility was identified as the most important criterion to consider with sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents identifying it as very important and 91% identifying it as very and somewhat important. Capital costs and resident demand, and cost savings through partnerships or grants rounded out the top priorities.

Rank	Program Type	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unsure	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	Overall cost of operating the facility.	62%	29%	6%	2%	1%
2	Overall cost of building the facility.	58%	31%	6%	3%	1%
3	Demand from residents.	56%	32%	8%	3%	2%
4	Potential cost savings through partnerships or grants.	57%	30%	9%	2%	1%
5	The existing supply/availability in the area.	52%	34%	10%	2%	1%
6	Geographic balance throughout the area.	52%	34%	8%	4%	2%
7	Accommodates the greatest number of users.	48%	37%	9%	5%	1%
8	Provides a new opportunity in the area.	45%	39%	10%	5%	2%
9	Expected economic impact.	43%	37%	13%	5%	2%
10	Aligns with the priorities of the municipality.	25%	45%	21%	8%	2%



The overall operating cost was identified as the top priority when setting priorities for facility projects in both surveys. See the table for all responses.

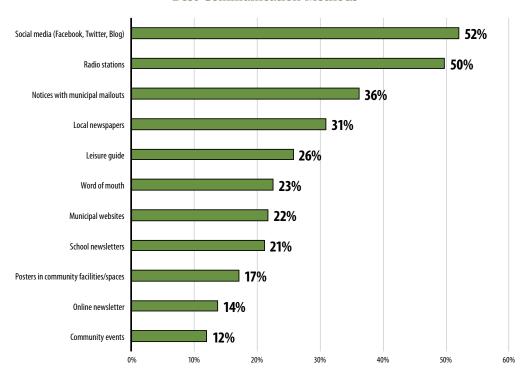
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Rank	Program Type	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unsure	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1	Overall cost of operating the facility.	59%	36%	3%	2%	0%
2	The existing supply/availability in the area.	58%	36%	6%	1%	0%
3	Overall cost of building the facility.	56%	37%	3%	4%	1%
4	Potential cost savings through partnerships or grants.	62%	29%	5%	2%	1%
5	Demand from residents.	56%	36%	3%	5%	1%
6	Provides a new opportunity in the area.	43%	39%	6%	9%	2%
7	Expected economic impact.	44%	38%	7%	8%	4%
8	Accommodates the greatest number of users.	39%	42%	9%	9%	2%
9	Geographic balance throughout the Grande Prairie area.	47%	32%	9%	10%	3%
10	Aligns with the priorities of the municipality.	21%	48%	19%	9%	5%

#### Communications

Given a list of communication mechanisms, approximately half of respondents identified social media (52%) and radio stations (50%) as the best methods to get information about recreation programs and events. See the graph for other responses.

#### Best Communication Methods





Social media was identified as the preferred method of communication about recreation programs and events in both surveys. A much larger proportion of respondents to the online survey preferred social media than did respondents to the mailout survey (71% compared with 52%).

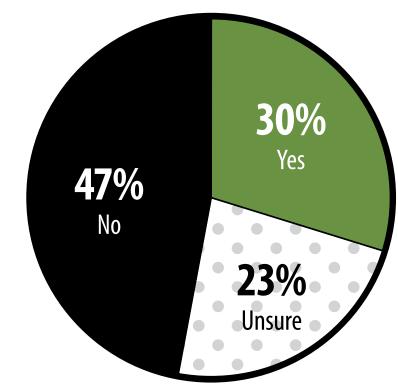
<b>Preferred Promoting Methods</b>	%	Preferred Promoting Methods	%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, blog)	71%	Word of mouth	19%
Radio stations	46%	School newsletters	16%
Leisure guide	30%	Posters in community facilities/spaces	15%
Municipal websites	28%	Online newsletter	11%
Local newspapers	22%	Community events	7%
Notices with municipal mailouts	21%		

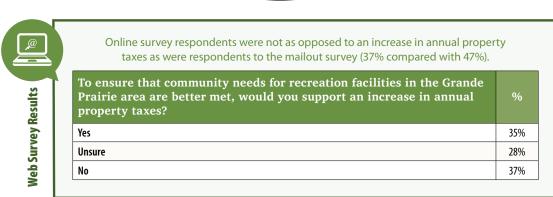
**Web Survey Results** 

#### Willingness to Pay

Approximately one-third (30%) of respondents would support an increase in annual property taxes to ensure that community needs for recreation facilities in the Grande Prairie area are better met. Almost half (47%) would not support a tax increase.

To ensure that community needs for recreation facilities in the Grande Prairie area are better met, would you support an increase in annual property taxes?

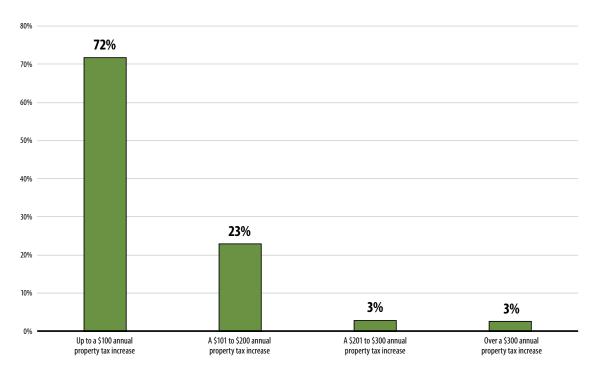




#### Willingness to Pay

Respondents who said they would support an increase in annual property taxes and those who were unsure were then asked to identify the scale of the tax increase they would support. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, approximately three-quarters of respondents would support up to \$100 increase. Three percent would support an increase over \$300.

# How much of an increase in annual property taxes would you support? Subset: Those who support an increase and those unsure.



<u>@</u>	Online survey responses were similar to other survey responses regarding the size of a property tax increase.	
S	How much of an increase in annual property taxes would you support?	%
Web Survey Results	Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase	68%
	A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase	23%
IVE	A \$201 to \$300 annual property tax increase	5%
Sc	Over a \$300 annual property tax increase	4%

#### **General Comments**

Respondents were able to provide general comments about recreation needs in the Grande Prairie area. 485 comments were provided and a number of topics were brought up including specific facilities to build, increasing programming options, and taxes (some respondents reiterated their unwillingness to increase taxes). Transportation to use facilities such as indoor pools was brought up, not only as a barrier to recreation participation, but as a barrier to developing skills such as swimming lessons. The following ideas were also presented: connecting neighbourhoods by trails and pathways; focus on young families; simple outdoor amenity enhancements would be nice; indoor opportunities are important in the winter; and to promote programs as there are already plenty of opportunities to choose from.

#### Respondent Profile

Characteristic	Household Survey	Online Survey				
Where do you live?						
County of Grande Prairie No. 1	36%	21%				
City of Grande Prairie	37%	72%				
M.D. of Greenview No. 16	2%	1%				
Town of Sexsmith	8%	3%				
Town of Beaverlodge	10%	0%				
Town of Wembley	5%	1%				
Village of Hythe	2%	0%				
How long have you lived in the Grande Prairie area?						
Less than 1 year	2%	3%				
1 – 5 years	14%	16%				
6 – 10 years	11%	11%				
10+ years	73%	71%				
Do you expect to be residing in the area for the next five years?						
Yes	87%	88%				
Unsure	11%	11%				
No	2%	1%				
Do you own or rent your home?						
Own	95%	88%				
Rent	5%	12%				

Characteristic	Household Survey	Online Survey				
Please describe your household by recording the number of members in each of the following age groups.						
0 – 9 years	18%	19%				
10 – 19 years	12%	12%				
20 – 29 years	11%	13%				
30 – 39 years	15%	27%				
40 – 49 years	13%	8%				
50 – 59 years	15%	13%				
60 – 69 years	11%	6%				
70 – 79 years	4%	1%				
80+ years	2%	1%				
What is your total household income (prior to taxes) in the previous year?						
Less than \$50,000	16%	5%				
\$50,000 – \$75,000	15%	13%				
\$75,001 – \$100,000	18%	17%				
\$100,001 – \$125,000	16%	21%				
\$125,001 – \$150,000	12%	16%				
\$150,001 and over	24%	28%				

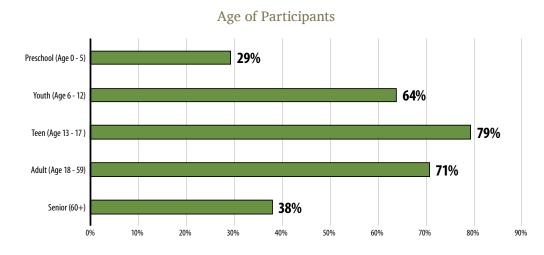
# **Stakeholder Group Survey**

A group survey was conducted to engage a variety of organizations in the area that provide recreation opportunities to residents. The questionnaire was available both by hardcopy and online. In total, 58 groups submitted a response. A variety of organizations were represented including recreation program providers, organized sports groups, arts and culture organizations, indoor and outdoor amenity users, agricultural societies, and schools. Only one response per group was permitted.

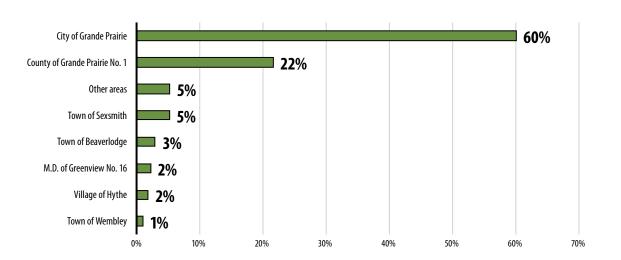
#### Age and Location of Participants

Of the organizations who participated in the group survey, seventy-nine percent (79%) have teen participants, seventy-one percent (71%) include adults, sixty-four percent (64%) program for youth, and thirty-eight percent (38%) cater to seniors. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the groups have activities for preschoolers.

Averaging all of the groups, sixty percent (60%) of their participants reside in the City of Grande Prairie, twenty-two percent (22%) in the County, and five percent (5%) in Sexsmith.



**Residency of Participants** 



#### Age and Location of Participants

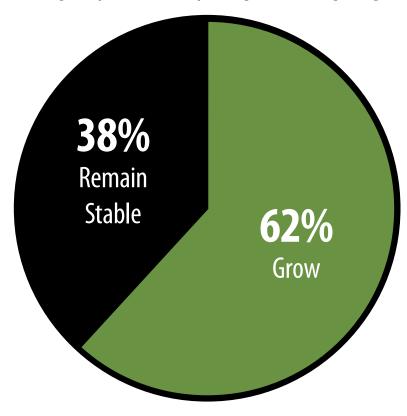
Sixty-two percent (62%) of the groups expect their participant numbers to grow over the next couple of years while the remaining thirty-eight percent (38%) expect their numbers to remain stable; none of the groups foresees a decline.

#### Use of Facilities and Outdoor Spaces

Fourteen groups indicated usage of the Eastlink Centre and eight groups utilize the Crosslink County Sportsplex. Muskoseepi Park was the most mentioned outdoor space with five mentions. Facilities and spaces with five or more mentions are displayed in the chart below.

Facility/Space	Groups
Eastlink Centre	14
Crosslink County Sportsplex	8
Coca Cola Centre	7
Leisure Centre	7
Mother Teresa Community Gym	5
Muskoseepi Park	5
Maude Clifford Community Gym	5

Over the next couple of years, what are your expectations for participant numbers?



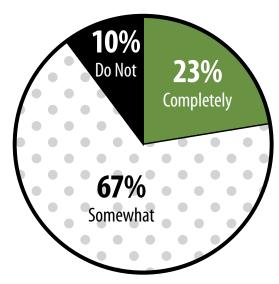
#### Use of Facilities and Outdoor Spaces

Just under one-quarter of the groups (23%) believe that the current recreation facilities and spaces in the Grande Prairie area completely meet the needs of their organization, two-thirds (67%) of the groups' needs are somewhat met, and ten percent (10%) indicated that the facilities/spaces do not meet their needs.

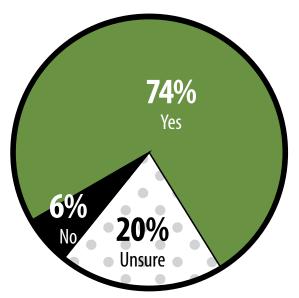
# Need for New/Upgraded Recreation Facilities and Spaces

When asked if there is a need for new and/or upgraded recreation facilities (including indoor and outdoor spaces) to be developed in the Grande Prairie area, three quarters (74%) stated "yes," twenty percent (20%) were unsure, and six percent (6%) indicated "no".

To what degree do the current recreation facilities and spaces in the Grande Prairie area meet the needs of your organization?



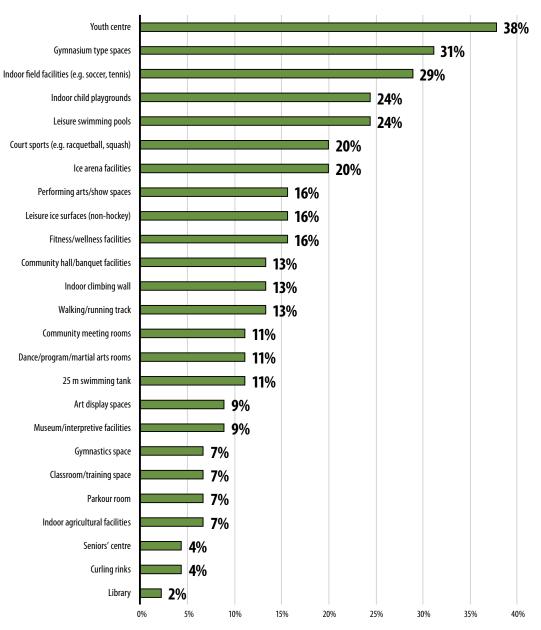
Is there a need for new/upgraded recreation facilities?



#### **Indoor Priorities**

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of groups believe a youth centre is needed in the area. Thirty-one percent (31%) would like increased access to gymnasium type spaces, twenty-nine percent (29%) would like an indoor field facility, and one-quarter (24%) indicated indoor child playgrounds and leisure swimming pools as indoor infrastructure needs.

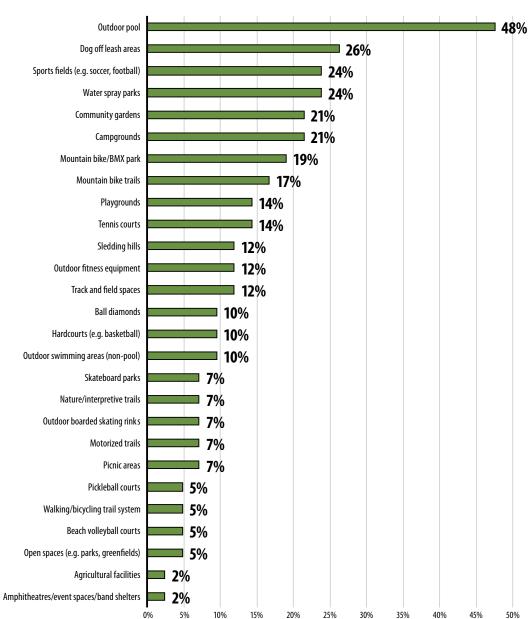




#### **Outdoor Priorities**

Nearly half (48%) of the groups indicated that an outdoor pool is needed. One-quarter (26%) mentioned dog off leash parks, and twenty-four percent (24%) selected sports fields and water spray parks as outdoor priorities.

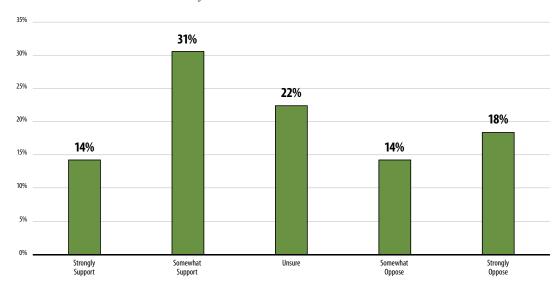
#### **Outdoor Priorities**



#### User Fees

When asked how supportive your group would be of an increase in user/rental fees to ensure community needs for recreation are better met, forty-five percent (45%) of the groups would support to some degree while thirty-two percent (32%) would oppose. Some of the recurring explanations to support an increase included better facilities would allow our group to grow; more access to facilities would allow our group to grow; and an increase in support amenities (e.g. washrooms, scoreboards) would be nice. The main argument against an increase in fees was that the costs are already a barrier and their participants would not be able to afford higher costs.

# How supportive would your group be of an increase in user/rental fees to ensure community needs for recreation are better met?



#### Partnership Opportunities

When asked what opportunities there are for community organizations to work together or with the municipalities to enhance the recreation programs and facilities in the Grande Prairie area, a number of response were provided including the following:

- · Partner to share facilities
- Partner to enhance/build new facilities and spaces
- Partner to offer better/joint programs
- Joint volunteer efforts (e.g. park cleanups, trail enhancements)
- · Joint fundraising events
- · Networking and leadership development

#### Challenges

Groups were asked to share their challenges. Lack of suitable space and struggles with volunteers were the top issues. Other challenges included lack of awareness (e.g. promotion of programs) and lack of funding.

- · Lack of suitable space
- · Volunteer attraction, retention, burnout
- Promoting programs, lack of awareness
- Funding

#### **Needed Supports**

After being asked to identifying challenges, groups were asked to identify the supports they require to overcome these issues. The top supports identified were to increase the number of facilities and to increase funding.

- · Increase number of facilities
- Additional funding
- · Assistance with marketing
- Assistance with grants

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

A series of interviews were conducted with stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of interests and perspectives in the Grande Prairie area. These meetings were conducted both as group discussions and with individuals and provided insight into the recreation landscape in the area. The meetings themselves were scheduled throughout the area to better accommodate the dispersed stakeholders. In total, over three dozen interviews/sessions were conducted with in excess of 80 different perspectives. For a list of the stakeholders/perspectives engaged in this process, please refer to the Appendix.

The findings from the interviews are presented in the following synopsis. No comments have been attributed to any single individual; rather themes that emanated from the discussions are presented.

#### **Joint Use Agreement (SCORES)**

Within the City of Grande Prairie there exists a joint use agreement between the City and the schools; however, not all the school jurisdictions are included in the agreement. From the groups' perspectives, that has presented a challenge as it has limited the availability of space—particularly gymnasium space. While grateful for the efforts that the City applies to providing access to the school facilities, there were some comments about the need for improved communication. The scheduling of facilities was identified as in need of re-examination as well.

# Geographic availability of recreation facilities needs to be considered.

While not every community or area can have every facility, consideration needs to be given to seeing that certain areas are highly served at the expense of others. This consideration can be applied to the City of Grande Prairie and expanded to the broader Grande Prairie area. It is important, however, to also consider the benefits to a smaller community of having its own recreation facility. For example, the existence of a community hall or arena in a hamlet can be integral to the success of the community in attracting and retaining residents.

#### Identified recreation infrastructure needs.

Through the interviews a number of specific recreation facility needs were identified. The need for trails was noted as well as a coordinated trail network. Trails provide a place for recreational activity but they also serve as a trail network to access other recreation facilities. A trail network can provide corridors for people who do not have access to or do not want to use motorized means of transportation. Other facilities identified as being needed include gymnasium-type space; fieldhouse space, additional ice; a dog park; and a skateboard park and/or BMX park.

# A collaborative approach to recreation planning around facilities and programming should be used.

Resources are limited; decisions should not be made solely on a municipal basis but more with consideration of the larger area. This collaborative approach could involve a number of rural municipalities or small urban municipalities. For example, several municipal neighbours could work together for future investment in an arena. The notion of a single recreation board that includes the City and County was suggested.

# Ensure youth interests in the community are addressed.

Aside from the fact that Grande Prairie is a young city, many in the interviews spoke about the need to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate opportunities for youth. The time after school is a time for programming that needs some particular focus. (The local taekwondo club was recognized as successfully addressing after school programming for youth.) It was noted that there is a broad variety of activities for youth, particularly around the larger urban centre—much of this, however, is structured and scheduled. It is important to provide opportunities for the community's youth to participate in unstructured, spontaneous opportunities. A skateboard park or BMX park were suggested as facilities to address youth recreation interests.

# It is important for the municipalities to work with and engage with community organizations.

Community organizations are an important part of the recreation delivery system in the Grande Prairie area. To most effectively provide residents with recreation opportunities (programs and facilities), there should be a collaborative relationship with community organizations. Ongoing and open dialogue regarding facility usage and booking, even facility design would be beneficial. A more collegial relationship between the municipalities and the community groups would further trust and understanding; it certainly would enable the identification of issues at an earlier point.

# Community organizations are experiencing challenges with volunteerism.

A common lament was that volunteers are getting more difficult to recruit and maintain and that it is the "same ten people" who volunteer. There was some suggestion that having the groups working together to address their recruitment challenges would be beneficial. This could occur even through the sharing of volunteer lists and opportunities. Volunteers are also responsible for tasks that often require specific knowledge and skills. Providing support to the community organizations with grant writing, promotion and marketing, facility and business planning, and even identifying funding sources would be beneficial to many.

# There is a need for more promotion and awareness of recreation opportunities.

Broadly it was felt that greater promotion of the existing recreation opportunities is needed. People may not be aware of the programs and services in their own communities. This enhanced promotion may lead to greater participation levels and support. This promotion could even include mapping and signage in the community. The "try it" event in Grande Prairie was viewed as a positive initiative.

# Concerns have been expressed about affordability and access to recreation opportunities.

The cost of accessing recreation facilities and programming for individuals and groups was cited as a real barrier for some in the community. While there are programs that are available to assist people with the costs (e.g. KidSport) not all people and families are aware of them. Those in the interviews advised service providers—particularly municipalities—to not lose sight that participation in recreation activities provides a lot of individual and community benefit. These benefits should not take a back seat to revenue generation.

# Interaction with community organizations by the municipalities needs to be seen as fair and transparent.

Some of those interviewed felt that more transparency is needed in the interaction municipalities have with community organizations. It was acknowledged that community organizations are at different levels in terms of professionalism, expertise, maturity, and participant levels. As such, interactions they have with a municipality may differ. However, it was felt that all interactions and agreements should be based on understood principles. The lack of transparency in these dealings has left some questioning the level of fairness. While not all decisions and agreements will be met with approval, a clearer understanding of the decision-making processes of municipalities will improve relationships and reduce friction.





# **Student Survey**

A student survey was fielded in October and November 2015 to capture perspectives from the student population on recreation and related activities. The survey was fielded with assistance from City and County staff, and school boards. In total, 742 surveys were completed by students ranging in age from 10 to 28, as students from Grande Prairie Regional College also participated.

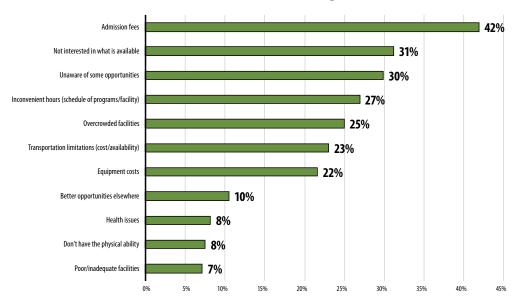
#### Barriers to Participation

First, students were provided with a list of potential barriers to participation in recreation activities and asked to identify any that they may face. As illustrated in the following graph, the top three barriers identified were admission fees (42%), not interested in what's available (31%), and unaware of some opportunities (30%).

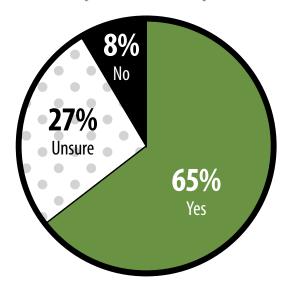
#### New/Upgraded Facilities and Recreation Areas

Students were asked if they think there is a need for new or upgraded recreation facilities and spaces to be developed in the Grande Prairie area. As reflected in the graph, one-third (65%) of students believe development is needed, one-quarter (27%) are unsure, and eight percent (8%) indicated that there is no need.

#### Barriers to Recreation Participation



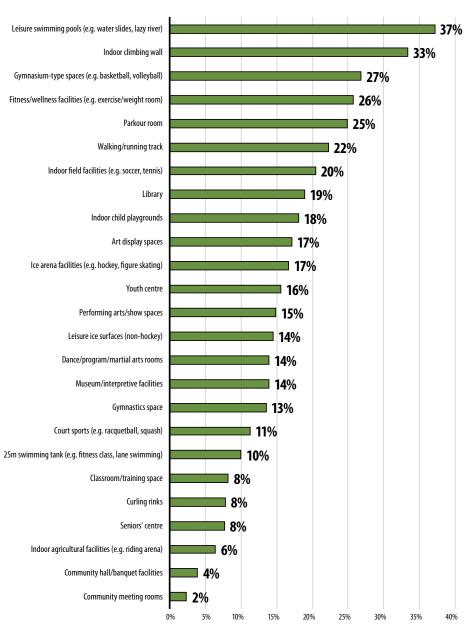
Do you think there is a need for new and/or upgraded recreation facilities (including parks and outdoor spaces) to be developed in the Grande Prairie area?



### **Indoor Priorities**

Students who answered "yes" or "unsure" to the previous question were then provided with lists of indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure amenities. For each list, students were asked to select up to five amenities that they think should be more readily available in the Grande Prairie area. For indoor facilities, thirty-seven percent (37%) indicated leisure swimming pool facilities more readily available, one-third (33%) selected climbing walls, and twenty-seven percent (27%) would like to see gymnasium type facilities more readily available.

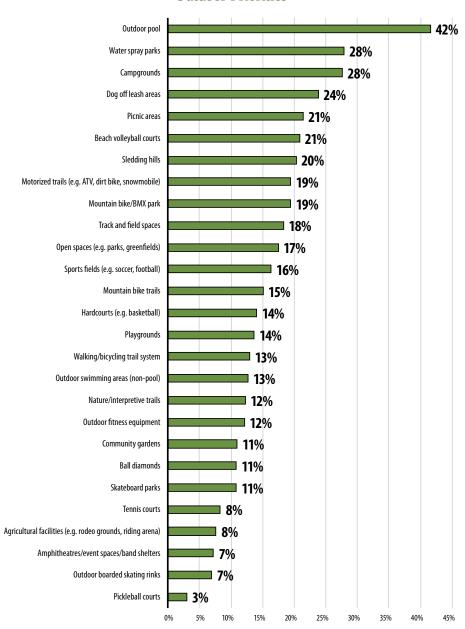
### **Indoor Priorities**



### **Outdoor Priorities**

For outdoor spaces and amenities, forty-two percent (42%) of students would like to see outdoor swimming pools. Over one-quarter indicated water spray parks (28%) and campgrounds (28%) as outdoor amenity priorities they would like more of.

### **Outdoor Priorities**



### Programs

Next, students were asked if are there any types of new programs that they would like to see made available before or after school. A wide range of programs were written in and categorized into themes. Fitness-specific programs were mentioned twenty (20) times, visual arts and crafts were mentioned eighteen (18) times, and thirteen (13) comments were provided for each basketball and swimming. The following chart presents program types with eight (8) or more mentions.

Program Type	Mentions
Fitness	20
Visual arts and crafts	18
Basketball	13
Swimming	13
Dance	12
Yoga	11
Parkour/trampoline	11
Volleyball	11
Music	10
Hockey	10
Agriculture-related programming	8
General afterschool programs	8

### General Comments

Lastly, students were asked to share any other comments about the future of recreation in the Grande Prairie area. Fifteen (15) comments were made on the need to fix/introduce an outdoor pool. Twelve (12) students expressed the need for more recreation opportunities in general and another twelve (12) respondents would like to see discounted rates for students.

Theme	Mentions
Outdoor pool	15
More opportunities are needed	12
Student discounts/lower costs	12
Another indoor pool	8
Ensure opportunities are available for all	6
More variety in teen/youth programs	6
Promote recreation and active living opportunities	5
Recreation should be fun and make people happy	5
More indoor opportunities are needed	4
Focus on less common things/ something unique	4
Safety concerns need to be addressed	4
Enhance trails	4
Clean Muskoseepi Lake	4
Indoor basketball courts are needed	4

### Respondent Profile

Where do you live?	%
City of Grande Prairie	78%
County of Grande Prairie No. 1	17%
M.D. of Greenview No. 16	2%
Town of Beaverlodge	1%
Other	2%

<sup>\*</sup> Others include: Sexsmith, Wembley, Hythe, Dawson Creek.

### Respondent Profile (Continued)

School	Respondents	%
Charles Spencer High School	348	47%
I.V. Macklin Public School	127	17%
Grande Prairie Regional College	110	15%
Peace Wapiti Academy	63	8%
Crystal Park School	24	3%
Maude Clifford Public School	20	3%
Mother Teresa Catholic School	18	2%
École Nouvelle Frontière	15	2%
École St. Gerard Catholic School	14	2%
Beaverlodge Regional High School	1	0%
Foothills Composite High School of Fine Arts	1	0%
St. Joseph Catholic High School	1	0%
Total	742	100%

Age	%	Age	%
10	1%	19	3%
11	9%	20	3%
12	7%	21	2%
13	12%	22	1%
14	14%	23	1%
15	17%	24	1%
16	13%	27	1%
17	9%	28	1%
18	5%		

# Other Engagement Opportunities

Representatives from the consulting team attended the Grande Prairie Fall Home and Leisure Show on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at the ENTREC Centre (Evergreen Park). Display panels with an overview of the Master Plan and information on opportunities to provide input were set up at the City of Grande Prairie's display area. Comments and perspectives provided by individuals attending the event were also noted by the consulting team representative. General themes included:

- Local municipalities working together is logical, especially pertaining to services like recreation.
- Grande Prairie area has great facilities.
- Culture is important to consider within the realm of recreation.
- Opportunities exist to further enhance and develop trails for mountain biking.



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# Summary

# 10

The State of Recreation Research Report encapsulates an array of research and consultation that was undertaken to assess the current situation and identify areas of focus for the Master Plan. Basing the Master Plan on sound research ensures that its recommendations accurately reflect community values and needs. This State of Recreation Report provides a valuable document that can inform future planning and service delivery. Outlined in this section are key findings from the research along with preliminary infrastructure priorities.

# **Findings Summary**

### **Infrastructure Provision**

- Area population of 82,365 (2011) with average annual growth of 3.0%.
  - » County of Grande Prairie 20,347; City of Grande Prairie 55,032; Town of Beaverlodge 2,365; Town of Sexsmith 2,418; Town of Wembley 1,383; Village of Hythe 820
- · Population proportions
  - » Population 20 to 34 years: City has a higher proportion than the provincial average; County has a lower proportion than the provincial average.
- Non-permanent residents comprise approximately 23%.
- 17% of the population is 17 years and younger.

### Planning Review

Existing municipal plans and studies were reviewed to identify any initiatives related to recreation provision and gain some insight into the municipal perspectives on recreation. Many plans were reviewed including the following:

- · County of Grande Prairie
  - » Municipal Development Plan (Amended 2011)
  - » Strategic Priorities (2014-2017)
  - » Parks and Open Spaces Study (2007)
  - » Recreation and FCSS Needs Assessment Research Report (2014)
  - » Multiplex Recreational Complex Feasibility Study (2011)
- City of Grande Prairie
  - » Council Strategic Plan (2015-2018)
  - » Municipal Sustainability Plan (2010)
  - » Municipal Development Plan (2009)
  - » Parks and Open Space Master Plan (2012)
  - » Moving Forward: A Strategy for Active Transportation in Grande Prairie (2015)

#### Trends and Issues

- Information is presented across three main themes: participation, service delivery, and infrastructure. A summary of some of the salient research is presented as follows:
- Participation
  - » The Canadian Health Measures Survey (Statistics Canada) concludes that the fitness levels of Canadian children and youth, as well as adults, have declined significantly between 1981 and 2009.
  - » The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute's 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor report identifies that the highest proportion of Canadians prefer non-competitive sports.
    - Participation in sport is directly related to household income levels.
    - Community sport programs and venues remain important.
  - » Sport Participation 2010 cites the most important benefit of sport participation is relaxation and fun.
- Service Delivery
  - » Partnerships in the provision of recreation opportunities are becoming more prevalent in an effort to leverage resources.
  - » Many municipalities are adopting a community development approach, looking to the community to offer services.
  - » Social inclusion can be achieved through participation in recreation activities.
  - » Sport tourism is becoming more prevalent in municipalities.

- Infrastructure
  - » Increasingly, recreation facilities are being designed to accommodate multiple activities by including a range of spaces and utilizing multi-purpose spaces.
  - » Accessibility is becoming more of a focus. This goes beyond addressing physical accessibility and considering a complete user experience.
  - » More and more community facilities are including revenue-generating spaces. This may include lease spaces, rental spaces, and sponsorship opportunities.

### **Inventory and Utilization**

- There is a plethora of indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure in the Grande Prairie area. This includes 13 sheets of arena ice, two facilities with aquatic amenities, and 25 community halls for indoor facilities. The Eastlink Centre/Coca Cola Centre and the Crosslink County Sportsplex are the two major multiplex facilities in the area. Considering outdoor facilities, there are 56 rectangular fields, 50 ball diamonds, and 18 campgrounds.
- It is important to note that there are a variety of recreation pursuits that take place in rural areas of the region as well. These activities include, but are not limited to, hunting, fishing, and off highway and equine trail pursuits.
- Aside from the municipalities, the not-for-profit sector (including agricultural societies and community associations), the private sector, and even other levels of government also provide recreation facilities and services.
- Considering the arena facilities of the City and County, utilization ranges from 54% (Revolution Place) to 85% Chri McMillan Rink (Crosslink County Sportsplex) on weekends. The Clairmont Agricultural Society Arena has an 88% prime time utilization.

### **Municipal Benchmarking**

- Airdrie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and St. Albert were the communities with which the City of Grande Prairie was compared.
  - » The City provides fitness centres and community halls at a lower provision (# people served per amenity) than does the average of the comparable municipalities. It does, however, provide gymnasium facilities at a higher provision.
  - » Considering outdoor facilities, the City of Grande Prairie provides campgrounds, skateboard parks, and spray parks at a better rate of provision than do the other municipalities.
- The County of Grande Prairie was compared with the M.D. of Bonnyville, Brazeau County, M.D. of Foothills, and Lac La Biche County.
  - » The County of Grande Prairie provides ice arenas and curling facilities at a higher provision (# people served per amenity) than does the average of the comparable municipalities. It provides a lower rate of walking/running tracks, fitness centres, senior centres, and indoor fields compared to the average of those studied.
  - » Considering outdoor facilities, the County has a "better" provision ratio for campgrounds, rectangular fields, and ball diamonds.
- The County of Grande Prairie spends more per capita on recreation and culture than all but two of the six "comparable" municipalities.
- The City of Grande Prairie spends more per capita on recreation than any of the five "comparable" municipalities.
- Compared to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Strathcona County, Grande Prairie area municipalities combined have more ice arenas, curling rinks, and tennis courts, and fewer ball diamonds and rectangular fields.

#### Consultation

 Several consultative mechanisms were utilized: resident household mailout survey, resident online survey, community group survey, stakeholder interviews/meetings, and a student survey.

<b>Engagement Mechanism</b>	Responses
Resident Household Survey (mailout)	1,284
Resident Survey (web)	268
Stakeholder Group Survey	58
Stakeholder Interviews	84
Student Survey	742

- Recreation is important to residents' quality of life.
- Residents are generally satisfied with the availability of recreation opportunities and servies currently offered in the Grande Prairie area.
- Approximately two-thirds (64%) of respondents to the mailout household survey stated there is a need for new/upgraded recreation facilities in the Grande Prairie area. Approximately threequarters (74%) of respondents to the community group survey indicated a need for new/upgraded amenities.
- Almost half of respondents to the mailout household survey (47%) would not support an increase in property taxes to ensure community needs for recreation facilities are better met.
   Approximately one-third (30%) would support an increase. Less than half (44%) of respondents to the community group survey would support an increase in user/rental fees.

# **Preliminary Infrastructure Priorities**

The following charts identify **preliminary** indoor and outdoor infrastructure priorities based on an analysis of the research and consultation findings. While these rankings provide initial direction for the infrastructure recommendations of the Master Plan, it is important to note that they do not take into account a number of important planning considerations (i.e. capital and operating costs, potential partnerships, municipal priorities, economic benefits, existing provision, etc.). The Master Plan will further explore these preliminary priorities in the context of the aforementioned factors.

Outdoor Amenity	Rank
·	
Dog off leash areas	1
Water spray parks	2
Walking/bicycling trail system	3
Campgrounds	3
Community gardens	4
Outdoor pool	4
Sledding hills	5
Mountain bike trails	5
Mountain bike/BMX park	5
Nature/interpretive trails	5

Indoor Amenity	Rank
Gymnasium-type spaces	1
Fitness/wellness facilities	2
Leisure swimming pools	2
Indoor child playgrounds	3
Indoor field facilities	3
Youth centre	3
Walking/running track	4
Leisure ice surfaces	4
25 m swimming tank	4
Ice arena facilities	4

# **Outdoor Priorities**

- Dog off leash areas
- Water spray parks
- Walking/bicycling trail system
- Campgrounds
- Community gardens
- Outdoor pool
- Sledding hills
- Mountain bike trails
- Mountain bike/BMX park
- Nature/interpretive trails

Rank	Outdoor Amenity	Household Survey	Online Survey	Group Survey	Stakeholder Interviews	Student Survey	Provision/ Utilization	Studies/ Planning	Trends/ Issues
1	Dog off leash areas	~ ~	~	~	~	~		~	•
2	Water spray parks	~ ~	~	•		~		~	<b>&gt;</b>
3	Walking/bicycling trail system	<b>* *</b>	•		~			~	<b>~</b>
3	Campgrounds	~ ~	•	•		~		~	
4	Community gardens	<b>,</b> ,	~	~					<b>&gt;</b>
4	Outdoor pool	<b>,</b>	~	~		~			
5	Sledding hills	~ ~				~		~	
5	Mountain bike trails		~	~	~				<b>&gt;</b>
5	Mountain bike/BMX park			~	~	~			~
5	Nature/interpretive trails	~ ~	~						<b>&gt;</b>
6	Picnic areas	~ ~				~			
6	Motorized trails (e.g. ATV, snowmobile)	~ ~				~			
6	Outdoor swimming areas (non-pool)	<b>,</b> ,	~						
6	Skateboard parks				~			~	~
7	Tennis courts			~				~	
7	Sports fields (e.g. soccer, football)			~				~	
7	Track and field spaces					~		~	
7	Outdoor boarded skating rinks						~	~	
7	Playgrounds			~					<b>&gt;</b>
8	Ball diamonds						~		
8	Open spaces (e.g. parks, greenfields)		~						
8	Pickleball courts								~
8	Agricultural facilities (e.g. rodeo grounds, riding arena)								<b>&gt;</b>
9	Outdoor fitness equipment								
9	Beach volleyball courts								
9	Amphitheatres/event spaces/band shelters								
9	Hardcourts (e.g. basketball)								

# **Indoor Priorities**

- Gymnasium-type spaces
- Fitness/wellness facilities
- Leisure swimming pools
- Indoor child playgrounds
- Indoor field facilities
- Youth centre
- Walking/running track
- Leisure ice surfaces
- 25 m swimming tank
- Ice arena facilities

Rank	Indoor Amenity	Household Survey	Online Survey	Group Survey	Stakeholder Interviews	Student Survey	Provision/ Utilization	Studies/ Planning	Trends/ Issues
1	Gymnasium-type spaces	~ ~		~	~	~	~	~	~
2	Fitness/wellness facilities	~ ~	~	~		~	~		~
2	Leisure swimming pools	~ ~	~	~		~	~	~	
3	Indoor child playgrounds	~ ~	~	~		~			~
3	Indoor field facilities		~	~	~	~		~	~
3	Youth centre	~ ~	~	•			~		~
4	Walking/running track	~ ~	•			<b>~</b>			~
4	Leisure ice surfaces	~ ~	~	~					~
4	25 m swimming tank	~ ~	~				~	~	
4	Ice arena facilities			~	~	~		~	~
5	Indoor climbing wall	~ ~	•			~			
6	Dance/program/martial arts rooms	~ ~							~
7	Performing arts/show spaces		~	~					
7	Seniors' centre	~ ~							
7	Art display spaces					~		~	
8	Court sports (e.g. squash)			~					
8	Community meeting rooms								~
8	Parkour room					~			
8	Library					~			
8	Museum/interpretive facilities								~
8	Indoor agricultural facilities								~
9	Community hall/banquet facilities								
9	Curling rinks								
9	Classroom/training space								
9	Gymnastics space								

# **Household Survey Tool**

# A



#### GRANDE PRAIRIE AREA

### Recreation Needs Assessment

Household Survey















#### Dear Resident:

The County of Grande Prairie No.1 and the City of Grande Prairie are partnering to develop a Recreation Master Plan that will guide the provision of recreation services in the City and County. Gathering feedback from area residents is an important component to understand the needs of area residents. Residents in the County and the City are being surveyed, along with residents in the M.D. of Greenview No.16, the Towns of Sexsmith, Beaverlodge, and Wembley, and the Village of Hythe. All residents are part of the City's and County's market area. As well, the information collected can be used by the Towns, the Villages, and the M.D. in their own recreation planning.

Please have an adult in the household answer this questionnaire by considering the needs of all members of your household. Please seal your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope (no postage necessary) and mail it by October 30th, 2015. Alternatively you can drop it off at the administration offices of any of the partner municipalities.

As a token of thanks for completing this questionnaire, one draw will be made for a \$100 grocery gift certificate. To be included in the draw, complete the entry form below. This information will be utilized solely for the purposes of the draw and will not be reported in connection with the responses you have provided.

For additional information about the project please contact Stephen Slawuta (RC Strategies) at (780) 441 - 4267.

Draw Entry Form

Name (First Name Only):

Phone Number:

The personal information requested on this form will be used for the sole purpose of contacting you should you be the draw winner.

Your personal information will not be shared with anyone for any other purposes.



1.		<ul> <li>Activities</li> <li>ast recreational activities do you and/or members o</li> </ul>	of unior hos	sobold participate?	Charle ( a 1)	Il responses that	annly		
	and the second		A Comment				appy.		
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	H	Boating	Н	Cycling/mountain b	nikina				
	H	BBQ/picnics/social gatherings	П	Wildlife watching/r	000000	clation			
	П	Outdoor field sports in a some flootball)	П	Tennis/pickleball	and the same of th				
	n	Soccer (indoor)	П	Gymnastics					
	П	Dog walking		Agricultural (equestri	an riding/rodeo	10			
	П	BMX activities		Fitness/yoga/aerob	233				
		Hockey (structured/league)		Ice skating program		pTeam to skate)			
		Golf	Skating (outdoor)						
		Swimming (outdoor)		Inline skating/skate	boarding (o	rtifoor)			
		Swimming (indoor)		Softball/baseball/sl	lo pitch				
		Curling		Downhill/alpine ski	ling				
		Other (please specify):							
Sec	tion	II: Motivations							
2		are the main reasons you and/or members of y	nur house	shold narticinate in r	acreational	activities?			
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		Physical health/exercise		Experience a challe	nge				
		To be with family/friends		Meet new people					
	1	Relaxation/unwind							
		Help the community		Improve skills and/	or knowledg	le .			
	Н	To enjoy nature Other (please specify):		Satisfy curiosity					
		Outer (prease special):							
	tion	III: Recreation Considerations							
Sec	To in	hat extent do you agree with the following state	ments?						
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Re My pro The pro Re see	creatio local o ograms e area a ograms sidents rvices o creatio	is important to my quality of life. community as a whole benefits from recreation and services. is a whole benefits from recreation and services. can benefit even if they do not use recreation lirectly. In brings the community together.	Agree	Agree	0	0	0		
Re My pro Thy pro Re Sen Qu att	creation local of ograms sidents released correction ality recreation areas and correction areas	n is important to my quality of life. community as a whole benefits from recreation and services. is a whole benefits from recreation and services. is can benefit even if they do not use recreation lirectly.	Agree	Agree	0	0	0		

1-9 Uses	10 – 20 Uses	21+ Uses	Did Not Use in the Previous Twelve Months
8		-	
		F2	
-			
			10 UNUS
			0
100000	incara 1		

0.0.	Generally, what is the approximate amount of time you are willing to travel to recreation facilities before travel becomes a barrier?  Please select one of the following.										
	Up to 20 min (one way) 21 - 40 min (one way)										
	41 – 60 min (one way)  I do not think travel time is a barrier to using recreation facilities.										
	i am not willing to travel to use recreation facilities.										
6b.	Does	s the amount o	f time y	ou are willing to	travel d	fiffer for spe	cific types	of recreation fa	cilities?	Please explain.	
Sec	tion	V: Recreation	on & P	arks Services	Asses	ssment					
7a.		all, how satisfi de Prairie area		ou with the avai	lability	of recreation	n opportur	nities and servic	es curre	ently offered in the	
		Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Unsure		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
Sec	tion	VI: New/Up	gradeo	d Community	Servi	ices					
8.				need for new a rairie area? Pleas				ilities (includinç	parks a	and outdoor spaces) to be	
		Yes		Unsure		No (If "No	, please p	roceed to Ques	tion #1	1)	
9.	Please check ( > ) up to five (5) INDOOR recreation facilities or spaces that should be more readily available or enhanced in the Grande Prairie area.										
	П	Fitness/welln	ess facil	lities (e.g. exercise/s	wiight roo	m) []	Gymnasia	um type spaces	(e.g. baske	thall, volleyball, badminton)	
	П	Leisure swim	ming po	ooks (e.g. water slide	s, laty me	m []					
		Walking/runn	ning trac	ck	72250		Art displa	ay spaces		520.000	
		Indoor field f	acilities	(e.g. socor, tennis)			Dance/pr	rogram/martial	arts roo	ms	
		Indoor child;	playgro	unds			Indoor cl	imbing wall			
		Leisure ice su	rfaces (r	non-hockey)			Commun	nity meeting roo	oms		
		Curling rinks					Performi	ng arts/show sp	aces		
		Library					Court sp	orts (e.g. racquette	il, squastij		
		Youth centre					Classroom	m/training spac	e		
		Museum/inte	erpretive	e facilities			Commun	nity hall/banque	t faciliti	es	
		Indoor agricu	dtural fa	cilities (e.g. nding	arresu)		Seniors c	entre			
		25m swimmi	ng tank	(e.g. fitness days, lan	e swimmi	ogi 🔲	Gymnast	ics space			
		Parkour room	1								
		Other (please	specify	/):							

000000000000000	Track and field spaces Water spray parks . Campgrounds Outdoor pool Outdoor swimming an Mountain bike/BMX pa Picnic areas Outdoor fitness equipr Hardcourts (e.g. basketbal Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields in.g. scott, f Motorized trails in.g. AFK Beach volleyball courts Other (please specify):	ek ment () reenfields) sostull) det bler, snowmobiel	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	Dog off leash Sledding hilb Nature/interp Tennis courts Amphitheath Skateboard p Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball cou	orded skating rink n areas s pretive trails s res/event spaces/t parks vcling trail system is	band shelters	
	Campgrounds Outdoor pool Outdoor swimming are Mountain bike/BMX pa Picnic areas Outdoor fitness equipr Handcourts (e.g. buskels) Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. score, fi Motorized trails (e.g. ATX Beach voilleyball courts	ek ment () reenfields) sostull) det bler, snowmobiel	)0000000000	Dog off leash Sledding hilb Nature/interp Tennis courts Amphitheath Skateboard p Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball cou	n areas s pretive trails s es/event spaces/l oarks ycling trail system ls	band shelters	
0000000000000	Outdoor pool Outdoor swimming are Mountain bike/BMX pa Picnic areas Outdoor fitness equipr Hardcourts (e.g. basettal Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. score, f Motorized trails (e.g. AFX Beach volleyball courts	ek ment () reenfields) sostull) det bler, snowmobiel	100000000	Sledding hilb Nature/interp Tennis courts Amphitheath Skateboard p Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball cou	s prective trails s res/event spaces/l parks vcling trail system ls		
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0000000000	Picnic areas Outdoor fitness equipr Hardcourts (e.g. basletbal Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. score, f Motorized trails (e.g. ATV Beach volleyball courts	ment () reenfields) sostwill) diet bike, snowmobile)	00000	Amphitheatr Skateboard p Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball coo	es/event spaces/t parks voling trail system is		
00000000	Outdoor fitness equipr Hardcourts (e.g. baskethal Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. score, fi Motorized trails (e.g. 41% Beach volleyball courts	i) preenfields) cottball) diet bike, snowmobile)	00000	Skateboard p Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball cod	oarks voling trail system ds		
0000000	Hardcourts (e.g. baskettal Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. score, fi Motorized trails (e.g. ATX Beach volleyball courts	i) preenfields) cottball) diet bike, snowmobile)	000	Walking/bicy Ball diamond Pickleball cod	cling trail system Is	)	
1000000	Open spaces (e.g. parks, g Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. socort fi Motorized trails (e.g. AFX Beach volleyball courts	reerfields) ootball) diet bike, snowmobile!	0000	Ball diamond Pickleball cod	is		
	Community gardens Sports fields (e.g. socor, fi Motorized trails (e.g. AFX Beach volleyball courts	oothall) , dirt bike, snowmobile)		Pickleball co			
	Sports fields (r.g. socor, fi Motorized trails (r.g. ATX Beach volleyball courts	det bike, snowmobile)			urts:		
	Motorized trails (e.g. ATX Beach volleyball courts	det bike, snowmobile)	=	Playgrounds			
	Beach volleyball courts		0.0		facilities (e.g. rodeo g	grounds, riding arenal	
			-				
	many delines about 181.						
Grand	the chart below, please de Prairie area for each a						
Program	Туре		(6 - 12 years)	(13 - 18 years)	(19 – 39 years)		165+ years
Name of Street or other Designation	ntdoor education						
	d wellness						
Performin	The state of the s						
Visual arts	Marie Control of the						
	n (general interest)				<u> </u>		
Sports							
Recreation Sports	n (general interest)	o identify specific					믐

Criteria	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unsure	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Demand from residents.					
Aligns with the priorities of the municipality.					
Overall cost of operating the facility.					
Overall cost of building the facility.					
The existing supply/availability in the area.					
Potential cost savings through partnerships or grants.					
Expected economic impact.					
Geographic balance throughout the Grande Prairie area (i.e. making sure lacilities are available across the area).					
Accommodates the greatest number of users.					
Provides a new opportunity in the area.					
Other (please specify):  Section X: Willingness to Pay  16a, To ensure that community needs for recreation fi	acilities in the	Grande Prairie a	rea are bett	er met, would vo	u support
an increase in annual property taxes? Please che				8	
☐ Yes ☐ Unsure ☐	No (If "No"	, please proceed	d to Questi	on #17)	
	es would you s	upport? Please o	theck( • )	the appropriate t	oox.
i6b. How much of an increase in annual property tax					
How much of an increase in annual property tax     Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.					
☐ Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.	e,				
Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.  A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase.	e,				
Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.  A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase.  A \$201 to \$300 annual property tax increase.	e,				
Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.  A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase.  A \$201 to \$300 annual property tax increase.	e,				
Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.  A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase.  A \$201 to \$300 annual property tax increase.	e,				
Up to a \$100 annual property tax increase.  A \$101 to \$200 annual property tax increase.  A \$201 to \$300 annual property tax increase.	e,				

17.	Please use the space below to provide any other	comments you many have about recreation needs	in the Grande Prairie area.						
Sec	ction XII: Respondent Profile								
18.	Where do you live?								
		y of Grande Prairie M.D. of Greenview No.							
	☐ Town of Sexsmith ☐ To ☐ Other (please specify):	wn of Beaverlodge	] Village of Hythe						
19.	How long have you lived in the Grande Prairie	rea?							
	Less than 1 year 1 – 5 years	☐ 6 – 10 years ☐ 10+ years							
20.	Do you expect to be residing in the area for the	next five years?							
	☐ Yes ☐ Unsure	□ No							
21:	Do you own or rent your home?								
	Own Bent								
22.	Please describe your household by recording to (Please do not forget yourself!)	e number of members in each of the following ag	e groups.						
	Age 0 – 9 years	10 - 19 years	20 - 29 years						
	30 = 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 59 years						
	60 - 69 years	70 – 79 years	80+ years						
23.	What is your total household income (prior to t	exes) in the previous year?							
	Less than \$50,000								
	\$50,000 - \$75,000 \$75,001 - \$100,000								
	S100,001 - \$125,000								
	S125,001 - \$150,000								
	S150,001 and over								
T	hank you for taking the	time to complete this qu	estionnaire!						
		being collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information							

# **Group Survey Participants**

# B

#	Group
1	Alternative Physical Education (APE) Inc.
2	Beaverlodge Minor Hockey
3	Broadway Live Broadway LTD.
4	Camp Tamarack
5	Celtic Sport Academy
6	Champion Gym
7	City of Grande Prairie Recreation Programs
8	Clairmont and District Ag. Society
9	CNG Sports
10	Cool Aid Society
11	Cultural Integration Academy
12	Demmitt Cultural Society
13	GP Racquetball
14	Grande Prairie Pee Wee Football League (GPPWFL)

#	Group
15	Grande Prairie & Area Safe Communities
16	Grande Prairie Army Cadets
17	Grande Prairie Broncos
18	Grande Prairie Curling Centre
19	Grande Prairie Disc Golf Club
20	Grande Prairie Filipino Basketball League
21	Grande Prairie Gymnastics
22	Grande Prairie High School Rodeo
23	Grande Prairie Ladies Basketball League
24	Grande Prairie Minor Hockey
25	Grande Prairie Labatt Mixed Slo-Pitch League
26	Grande Prairie Pub League/Grande Prairie Singles Dart League
27	Grande Prairie Skatepark Association
28	Grande Prairie Skating Club

#	Group
29	Grande Prairie Soccer
30	Grande Prairie Ultimate Association
31	Grande Prairie Wheelers Cycling Club
32	Hythe Agriculture Society
33	Morningview Park Golf Course
34	Northern Lights Pony Club
35	Nustadia Recreation/Crosslink County Sportsplex
36	Peace Country Female Athletic Club
37	Peace Country Thunder Girls Club Basketball Team
38	Peace Region Alberta Dressage Association
39	Peace River Chapter Federation of Canadian Artists
40	People's White Crane Kung Fu
41	Sexsmith Curling Club
42	Sexsmith Gymnastics Club
43	Sexsmith Junior Curling
44	South Peace Ball Association
45	South Peace Regional Archives
46	South Peace Volleyball Club
47	Squash League
48	Taoist Tai Chi Society
49	The Academy
50	The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie
51	The Grande Prairie Tennis Club
52	Troyanda Society of Ukrainian Culture & Heritage
53	Velocity Volleyball Club
54	Wapiti Nordic Ski Club
55	Wapiti Whitewater Kayakers
56	Wolverines Wheelchair Sports Association
57	Peace County Wolves Athletics Club
58	GPRC Wolves Volleyball Club

# Stakeholder Interviews/ Sessions Participants

# C

#	Participant
1	Grande Prairie Area Physical Education Teachers
2	Sexsmith Seniors
3	Sexsmith Skating
4	Clairmont Seniors
5	Grande Prairie Golf Club
6	Morningview Golf Club
7	Beaverlodge Minor Soccer
8	Barracudas Swim Club
9	Demmitt Culture
10	Beaverlodge Culture Centre
11	Beaverlodge Agricultural Society
12	Valhalla Playground Committee
13	Borderline Culture Series
14	Hythe Recreation Board

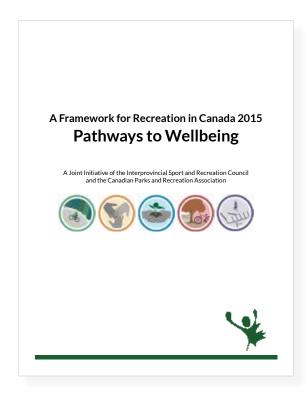
#	Participant
15	South Peace Museum
16	Beaverlodge Minor Ball
17	Hythe Agricultural Society
18	Hythe Athletic Association
19	Mountview Curling
20	Wembley and District Arts, Culture, and Historical Society
21	Valhalla Heritage Society
22	Valhalla Archery
23	Saskatchewan Lake Agricultural Society
24	Wembley Agricultural Society
25	Mountainside Horse Club
26	Wembley Recreation Board
27	West Country Lightning Football
28	Wembley Minor Hockey

#	Participant
29	Clairmont Seniors
30	Sexsmith Agricultural Society
31	Elks Legion
32	Sexsmith Citizens on Patrol
33	Grande Prairie County Recreation Board
34	Webster Community Hall
35	Clairmont Agricultural Society
36	La Glace Agricultural Society
37	Five Mile Community Agricultural Society
38	Bezanson Seniors
39	DeBolt Seniors
40	Bezanson Agricultural Society
41	Kleskun Hill Museum Society
42	Teepee Creek Stampede
43	Bezanson Recreation Board
44	West Smoky Legion
45	Grovedale Agricultural Society
46	Beaverlodge Recreation
47	Horse Lake First Nations
48	Crosslink Sportsplex
49	Village of Hythe
50	City of Grande Prairie
51	County of Grande Prairie
52	Grande Prairie Soccer Association
53	Get Active Network
54	Grande Prairie Wheelers
55	Alberta Health Services
56	Nitehawk Recreation Area
57	Aboriginal Sport – School District Coordinator
58	Wembley Parks & Recreation
59	Grande Prairie Minor Hockey
60	Wapiti Shooters and Fencing

#	Participant
61	Town of Sexsmith
62	Sexsmith Coalition
63	Labatt Slo-Pitch
64	Wapiti Corridor Planning Society
65	Centre for Newcomers
66	Wolverine Wheelchair Sports Association
67	Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
68	Inclusive Post Secondary Coordinator
69	Eastlink Centre
70	Grande Prairie Curling Club
71	Peace Wapiti Speed Skating Club
72	Ernie's Sports Experts
73	Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association
74	Piranhas Swim Club
75	Wapiti Whitewater Kayakers
76	Revolution Place
77	Gymkhana Club
78	South Peace Horse Club
79	Grande Prairie Agricultural Society
80	Beach Volleyball in Grande Prairie
81	Grande Prairie Regional College Volleyball & club volleyball
82	Dave Barr Community Centre
83	Grande Prairie Ball Hockey
84	Muskoseepi Park

# A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

B



A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

January 2015

Également disponible en français sous le titre: Cadre stratégique pour les loisirs au Canada 2015 : Sur la voie, du bien-être

Available online at lin.ca/national-recreation-framework and www.cpra.ca

For more information, contact the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

Phone: (613) 523-5315 Email: info@cpra.ca

This paper is a collaborative effort of the provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec), the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Provincial/Territorial Parks and Recreation Associations (including l'Association québécoise du loisir municipal).

The authors of this paper would like to acknowledge and thank the many participants in the engagement process for their insights and contributions leading up to the development of this document.

On February 13, 2015 in Prince George, British Columbia, a meeting of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation took place. At this meeting, the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 was endorsed by Provincial and Territorial Ministers (excluding Quebec) and supported by the Government of Canada.

# **Executive Summary**

Recreation provides multiple pathways to wellbeing for individuals, communities, and for our built and natural environments. This paper and the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 which it describes allows for a timely re-visioning of recreation's capacity for achieving wellbeing.

Recreation has the potential to address challenges and troubling issues such as increases in sedentary living and obesity, decreased contact with nature, and inequities that limit recreation opportunities for some population groups.

Doing this requires a clear understanding and commitment to a shared vision, values and goals, as well as the development and implementation of action plans. The Framework provides a foundation for reflection, discussion and the development of such action plans.

The first part of the paper presents a renewed definition of recreation and explores the challenges and benefits of recreation today. It provides the rationale for investing in an evolved recreation strategy, and describes the need for collaboration with other initiatives in a variety of sectors.

### A Renewed Definition of Recreation

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

The second part of this paper describes a Framework for Recreation in Canada. The Framework provides a new vision, and suggests some common ways of thinking about the renewal of recreation, based on clear goals and underlying values and principles.

### A Vision for Recreation in Canada

We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- Individual wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments

### 4 Executive Summary

The Framework describes five goals and priorities for action under each goal. The goals are:



Goal 1: **Active Living** Foster active living through physical recreation.



Goal 4: Supportive Environments
Ensure the provision of supportive
physical and social environments
that encourage participation in
recreation and build strong, caring
communities.



Goal 2: Inclusion and Access Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.



Goal 5: **Recreation Capacity**Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.



Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature
Help people connect to nature through recreation.

Although this paper and the Framework it contains is primarily written for and by the recreation and parks field, its implementation requires discussion and collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders. Key partners for recreation include departments and not-for-profit organizations at all levels, and the private sector. These include stakeholders in sport, physical activity, health, urban planning, Aboriginal affairs, infrastructure development, rural development, natural resources and conservation, arts and culture, social development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development and active aging.

Our opportunity is to identify concrete ways to work together that enable all people in Canada to enjoy recreation and outdoor experiences in supportive physical and social environments.

The development of the Framework is a co-led initiative by the provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec), the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Provincial/Territorial Parks and Recreation Associations (including l'Association québécoise du loisir municipal). It is the result of a comprehensive consultation process that began at the 2011 National Recreation Summit.

This document and the Framework it describes is a call to action that invites leaders, practitioners and stakeholders in a variety of sectors to collaborate in the pursuit of common priorities, while respecting the uniqueness of individuals and communities across Canada. All provinces and territories (except Quebec) intend to implement the measures and recommendations outlined in the framework as they deem appropriate to their recreation system. The Framework presents an opportunity to return to traditional paths and to forge new ones that will ensure recreation's continued relevance and leadership in the journey to wellbeing. The time to move forward is now.

**Executive Summary** 

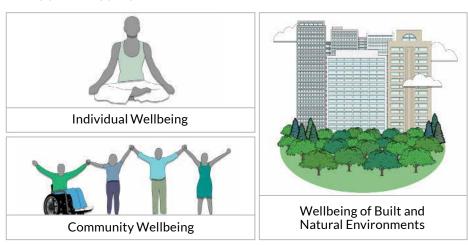
# Part I

# **Setting the Context**

### Introduction

Recreation fosters the wellbeing of individuals and communities, and of our built and natural environments. This paper and the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 that it describes allows for a timely re-visioning of recreation's capacity to foster wellbeing.

### **Recreation Fosters**



### **Purpose of this Paper**

This paper is designed to guide and stimulate coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related jurisdictions in Canada that aim to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and natural environments.

### Structure of this Paper

The paper is divided into three parts:

Part I Setting the Context provides a renewed definition of recreation, and explores the challenges and benefits of recreation today. It provides the rationale for investing in an evolved recreation strategy, and describes the need for collaboration and alignment with other sectors.

- Part II A Framework for Recreation in Canada provides a new vision for recreation and suggests some common ways of thinking about this renewal, based on underlying values and principles. The Framework is a call to action, which invites leaders and stakeholders in a variety of sectors to collaborate in the pursuit of five goals and priorities for action.
- Part III *Moving Forward* provides some ideas for next steps in implementing the Framework for Recreation in Canada.

Throughout this document, "recreation" is an umbrella term for recreation and parks, as well as recreational activities in physical activity, sport, arts, culture and heritage. When recreation in nature is discussed, the term "parks" may be specifically added to acknowledge the lead role of parks services.

While the Framework provides recommendations for all sectors (public, private and not-for-profit), it respects and does not override the jurisdiction of each governmental and non-governmental collaborator.

Infographics and Sidebars are used to provide additional evidence or to illustrate promising practices in policies and programs. These serve as examples only; the paper does not provide a scan of the many excellent initiatives across the country that address the key issues and priorities described in the paper.

A Glossary at the end of this paper helps clarify the meaning of key terms used in the text. Words highlighted in red are hyperlinked to the Glossary. The Endnotes section provides document sources, references and links to websites that provide additional information.

# **Revitalizing Recreation**

Over the past 50 years, recreation and society have changed. Historically, recreation was considered a public good, which focused on outreach to vulnerable people, families and communities. In recent times, this has often shifted toward an individual-based, facility-focused, user-pay model. At the same time, we are witnessing rapid technological, economic, environmental, demographic and social changes. This creates an urgent need for recreation to reaffirm historic values, while simultaneously adopting new ways of working that meet emerging needs. Underscoring this revitalization is a community development approach that empowers people and communities to work together to enhance wellbeing.

Recreation has the potential to address socio-demographic challenges and troubling issues such as increases in sedentary behaviour and obesity, decreased contact with nature, threats to the environment, and inequities that limit participation. These challenges can become opportunities but addressing them requires a commitment to a shared vision, values and goals, as well as the development and implementation of effective action plans. The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 provides a foundation for reflection, discussion and the development of such action plans.

The recreation field has developed capacities that help address needs and achieve positive outcomes in a broad range of areas. Working with partners in sectors such as community design, physical activity, public health, crime prevention and natural resources, the recreation field has gained experience and skills in helping to create inclusive opportunities; develop healthy, engaged citizens; build healthy, active communities; enhance leadership; and build and protect spaces that are essential for participation in recreational experiences. The benefits of recreation are discussed later in this section of the paper and are fully captured in the National Benefits Hub.

The Framework is the result of a comprehensive process of renewal that began at the 2011 National Recreation Summit.<sup>2</sup> It draws on reflections and recommendations from two years of consultations, discussions and debate at provincial, territorial and national levels. Throughout these conversations, three key messages emerged:

- High quality, accessible recreation opportunities are integral to a well-functioning society.
- The recreation sector can be a collaborative leader in addressing major issues of the day.
- All people and communities deserve equitable access to recreational experiences. Recreation must be
  accessible and welcoming to all.

# **Understanding Recreation**

### A Renewed Definition of Recreation

The evolution of the following definition from the one in the National Recreation Statement (1987)<sup>3</sup> reflects the evolution of recreation in response to changes and challenges in Canadian society.

#### A Renewed Definition of Recreation

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Recreational experiences include participation in physical activity and sport, and in artistic, cultural, social and intellectual activities. Spiritual wellbeing may be enhanced through connecting with nature, helping others through volunteering, engaging in artistic expression and other forms of recreational experiences. Recreational activities can be structured and unstructured. Many are done with other people while others are done alone.

Recreation remains a fundamental human need in all ages and stages of life. People participate in recreational activities for fun, enjoyment, fitness and health, social interaction, creative expression, a desire to connect with nature, relaxation, and to enhance their quality of life. Most people also understand and support the beneficial role that recreation plays in community development.

The recreation field contains players from the public, not-for-profit and private sectors. Public recreation is the provision of recreation services by governments and non-governmental organizations for the benefit of individuals and communities.

### What Canadians Say About Parks and Recreation 5



### Who is Involved in Recreation?

The recreation field includes volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations and governments that work collectively to enhance individual and community wellbeing through recreation. This includes stakeholders and service providers from the not-for-profit, private and public sectors.

Key partners for recreation include government departments and not-for-profit organizations at all levels, including those dealing in sport, physical activity, health, urban planning, infrastructure development, rural development, Aboriginal affairs, natural resources and conservation, arts and culture, social development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development and active aging. Educational institutions and educators are important partners in recreation, developing leaders through advanced recreation studies, providing spaces and programs in the community, teaching students about recreation, and developing and sharing knowledge.

Implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 will respect the existing roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments that are described in the National Recreation Statement (1987) and other existing governmental agreements addressing specific jurisdictional circumstances.

- The provinces and territories have primacy of jurisdiction for recreation, as they do for health and education<sup>6</sup> (except on First Nations reserves as defined in federal legislation).
- Local government is the primary supplier of direct recreation services.
- The federal government plays a role in matters of national and international concern, and in collaboratively developing and supporting policies and funding mechanisms that enable all Canadians to participate in recreation.

The Framework recognizes that governing bodies and organizations in Aboriginal communities are concerned with the management of matters that directly affect Aboriginal Peoples and their communities. These governing bodies may oversee services, policies, programs and infrastructure development in health, education, natural resources and conservation, cultural identity and community recreation. It also recognizes that spending on public recreation by local governments is significant. For example, in 2008 local governments in Canada spent \$9.189 billion on recreation (12.4% of total expenditures).<sup>7</sup>

Collaboration between and among all orders and levels of government is essential. According to the National Recreation Statement, there is an "expectation that independent provincial and territorial actions will be complemented by a commitment to work together on an interprovincial basis to meet mutual needs.".8

The Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation provide a key platform for collective discussion of this Framework, and for considering action on the goals and priorities it describes. Outreach and inclusion of governing bodies and leaders in Aboriginal communities is also required.

The large and vibrant not-for-profit/voluntary sector in sport, recreation and nature conservation serves the general public, members, and specific population groups in all areas of the country. It has a rich history of reaching out to diverse groups who face constraints to participation. The sector employs recreation specialists and volunteers play a major role in their operations.

The private sector employs recreation specialists and provides opportunities for recreation and physical activity. Increasingly, innovative public-private partnerships in recreation have been shown to support park renewal efforts, sponsorship, product and service innovation, cooperative access to facilities, and the delivery of tourism products and services.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Recreation has a rich history of enabling wellbeing. The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 builds on the National Recreation Statement (1987) and other existing federal, provincial/ territorial/ and local government agreements that respond to the realities of the day and to emerging trends and challenges in recreation. To address the critical challenges that lie ahead, the Framework recognizes the existing alignment of governmental responsibilities, as defined in the National Recreation Statement and other agreements, and is intended to increase intergovernmental collaboration. Drawing on the experiences of the past, the Framework looks to the future to find new ways to integrate previous agreements.

The challenge today is to build pathways to wellbeing in the midst of change and emerging issues, and to turn challenges into opportunities. Challenges and current trends are often interrelated and include:

**Demographic changes.** Four key trends provide both challenges and opportunities for recreation.

• The aging of the population means that many communities have a declining proportion of children and an increasing proportion of older adults. This is particularly evident in rural areas due to the migration of young people to urban centres to pursue education and work, and the desire of older people to "age in place" if possible.

- Canada's population is increasingly rich in diversity. Two demographic trends are particularly relevant:
  1) since changes in immigration policies in the 1970s, newcomers to Canada come from all areas of the world; and 2) the Aboriginal community is younger and growing faster than the general population. These populations and other ethnocultural/racial groups enrich our recreational experiences with multiple languages, historical context and diverse cultural identities, while challenging recreation to respond to their unique needs and strengths.
- Rapid urbanization (80% of Canadians now live in cities) 9 means that people have less exposure to the
  healing power of nature. They have increased exposure to the human and environmental stresses that
  accompany urban development, such as high levels of traffic and high-rise housing. Urbanization holds
  many opportunities but also challenges recreation to develop and nurture programs and places and spaces,
  which contribute to a high quality of life, both socially and environmentally.
- At the same time, Canada's rural and remote areas face particular challenges in recreation due to small
  and decreasing population levels (in most but not all communities), a lack of funds and infrastructure,
  threats to the natural environment and traditional ways of life, increasing pressure on small numbers of
  volunteers to lead in many areas, and challenges related to transportation and distance.

*Challenges to health.* Modern lifestyles combined with changes in the social and physical environments have precipitated some negative trends in health. These include increases in:

- risk behaviours such as sedentary living, and risk factors for disease such as obesity
- · chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease
- mental health concerns such as depression and youth suicide.

Economic inequities. While visible minority populations face some of the worst effects of Canada's growing economic inequality, this trend affects all Canadians. For example, family after-tax income inequality rose by 40.9 % between 1995 and 2011, with economic gains going primarily to higher-income families. <sup>10</sup> Individuals and families with lower incomes typically have fewer opportunities for recreational experiences due to costs associated with transportation, equipment, some activities and facility rental.

Social challenges. Rapid changes associated with increasing inequities, persistent unemployment, rapid development, the use of social media instead of face-to-face interaction, and the loss of traditional supports have compounded feelings of isolation for many people, and negatively affected civic involvement, social connectedness, community engagement and social cohesion.

### Addressing Sedentary Behaviour

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines have been developed to encourage children and youth to accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorousintensity physical activity daily. Now, these guidelines are complemented by evidence-based Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for children and youth. These guidelines recommend that for health benefits, children and youth limit sedentary behaviour (i.e., screen time, sedentary transport, prolonged sitting and time spent indoors) during their free time each day. Guidelines are also provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers at www.csep.ca.

New and emerging technologies. The recreation field is challenged to access and keep up with rapidly changing technologies, which offer opportunities for innovation, communication, improved efficiency and enhanced connections, especially with young people. At the same time, parents and leaders in public health and recreation are concerned about the increasing amounts of time people (especially children and youth) spend in sedentary and solitary digital pursuits, instead of active recreation and unstructured play. New technologies that encourage 24/7 connections have led to reductions in time available to pursue recreational experiences, and to challenges in achieving a balanced lifestyle.

Infrastructure deficit. Most communities in Canada have significant infrastructure deficits. 11 These deficits include the need to develop walking and cycling routes, facilities, and green spaces in order to meet the recreation requirements of growing communities, and to upgrade existing facilities to make them more functional and energy efficient. The opportunity for recreation is to contribute to an integrated community design and infrastructure planning process that considers what is built, and where it is located in relation to where people live and how they move through the community to get there.

At the same time, some communities on reserves and in remote areas still lack basic recreation facilities. Communities in the North that have recreation facilities face unique challenges in maintaining them. Strengthening the infrastructure for recreation, sport and physical activity is critical to strengthening the health, vitality and economies of local communities.

Threats to the natural environment. Failing fish stocks, extreme weather, decreasing biodiversity, new destructive species such as the spruce budworm and mountain pine beetle, the loss of green spaces to urban sprawl, and the warming of northern regions are all indicators of environmental stresses that directly affect the spaces and places where people enjoy recreational experiences. Growing threats to the natural environment have made the role of environmental stewardship increasingly important to the recreation field.

### Benefits of Recreation

The evidence on the benefits of recreation and exposure to nature suggest that recreation and parks can address existing challenges with policies and practices that:

Enhance mental and physical wellbeing. 13 Public recreation and parks services have an important role in enhancing physical activity, which in turn, is a critical factor in improved physical and mental health. Increased physical activity levels are associated with the presence of trails for walking, hiking and cycling, and organized events, including sport competitions and other attractions. For children, the presence of a playground within a nearby park is significantly associated with enhanced levels of physical activity. Among all ages, recreational experiences involving physical activity facilitate the maintenance of healthy weights, and thus a reduction in health care costs.

Participants in recreation report improvements in mental wellbeing, including increased self-esteem and life satisfaction. Recreation provides opportunities for personal growth and development for people of all abilities and can be especially helpful to people living with disabilities.

Enhance social wellbeing. 14 Participation in recreational experiences is shown to enhance social wellbeing. For example, participation in after-school recreation programs provides many developmental opportunities for children and youth. For both children and adults, recreation can facilitate and support social relationshipsthrough clubs, social organizations, participating on a team or making a new friend. Among youth, recreation can help decrease anti-social behaviours.

Help build strong families and communities. <sup>13</sup> Recreation can be an important vehicle for promoting family cohesion, adaptability and resilience. Culture and recreation help build social capital in the form of arts, recreation and parks programs, and community celebrations, such as festivals, parades and block parties. Community events help keep neighbours in touch with each other and reinforce relationships that make neighbourhoods strong. Participation in cultural and artistic programs has been shown to promote social connectedness and social cohesion, and positively influence civic behaviour, mutual caring and voluntarism. Recreational activities can help build welcoming communities for people and families from diverse cultures.

Help people connect with nature<sup>15, 16, 17,18</sup> Enhancing opportunities to connect people with nature can result in both environmental and human benefits. Natural playgrounds (which incorporate natural elements like logs, flowers and trees) stimulate physically active and imaginative play and help children connect with nature. Studies have shown that exposure to the natural environment and green spaces have an independent, positive effect on health and health-related behaviours. From lowering blood pressure, to reducing stress levels, to supporting children's cognitive development, nature has a profound ability to support both physical and mental health. Nature-based recreation fosters a better understanding and appreciation for all aspects of nature. This may be especially important in Aboriginal communities, where fishing, hunting and nature conservation are traditional activities.

Recreation and parks has a key role as a steward of natural environments: protecting and interpreting parks, trails, waterways and wilderness areas, managing and balancing the needs of natural ecosystems with the needs of users, and minimizing any negative impacts resulting from services and programs.

Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation. Though economic benefit is not the primary driver for recreation service decisions, recreation is an important contributor to community economic development and cost reductions in other areas. Spending on recreation creates jobs, fosters tourism, and makes communities more attractive places in which to live, learn, work, play and visit. "Upstream" investments in recreation can lead to improvements in individual and community wellbeing, which helps to reduce costs in health care, social services and justice.19

### The Economic Case For Investing In Recreation



\$2.9 Billion Labour income, jobs created by Canada's parks (2009)<sup>22</sup>



\$3,773 Amount spent on recreation by average Canadian household  $(2012)^{20}$ 



\$8.3 Billion Total amount spent on recreational fishing contributed to local economies (2010)<sup>24</sup>



\$134 Million Amount spent by cyclists using Quebec's Route Verte (2013)21



\$14.5 Billion Amount Canadians spent on naturebased recreational activities (2012)<sup>25</sup> physical inactivity in Canada<sup>23</sup>



\$6.8 Billion Total health care costs of

### Convergence and Collaboration

In recent years, a number of complementary strategies and frameworks have been developed, which address interrelated public policy at national, provincial and local levels. These include:

Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada (2012) provides a vision and a change agenda to describe steps that will increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour, thereby reducing health risks and achieving the many benefits of a society that is active and healthy. Recreation is identified as an important player in pursuing this agenda.<sup>26</sup>

The Canadian Sport Policy (CSP, 2012) sets a direction for the period 2012-2022 for all governments, institutions and organizations committed to realizing the positive impacts of sport on individuals, communities and society. F/P/T Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation endorsed the policy in June 2012. CSP sets out 5 broad objectives, including "Recreational Sport: Canadians have the opportunity to participate in sport for fun, health, social interaction and relaxation". Participants are introduced to the fundamentals of sport through programs delivered primarily by clubs, schools and local recreation departments. Participants develop sport-specific skills with an emphasis on fun, a positive attitude, healthy human development and remaining active for life.<sup>27</sup>

Connecting Canadians with Nature. An Investment in the Well-Being of our Citizens was developed by the Canadian Parks Council on behalf of the F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Parks. The report synthesizes the growing body of evidence demonstrating the benefits of connecting with the natural world. Canada's park leaders endorsed the paper in March 2014 and committed to working with various sectors to support experiences in nature that enhance Canadians' collective health, prosperity, growth and productivity. This initiative positions park agencies to adapt to changing societal circumstances and enable increased opportunities for recreational experiences in nature.<sup>28</sup>

The Declaration on Prevention and Promotion, which was adopted by Canada's F/P/T Ministers of Health and of Health Promotion/Healthy Living in 2010, confirms that health and wellbeing is determined by "the physical and social conditions that people experience daily in the places where they live, learn, work and play". The declaration calls upon a wide range of people and organizations in communities and across society to help create the conditions that reduce risks for poor health and support individuals in adopting healthy lifestyles.<sup>29</sup>

Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment<sup>30</sup> a policy brief adopted by the F/P/T Committee of Officials Responsible for Seniors in 2006, specifically identifies recreation as critical to addressing priority areas in healthy aging such as social connectedness, physical activity and age-friendly communities. Canada has been a leader in developing Age-Friendly Communities in communities and cities of all sizes, and particularly in rural areas.31

IndigenACTION<sup>32</sup> (2010) aims to foster partnerships that will help ensure Indigenous peoples in Canada have every opportunity to enhance their lives and their communities through recreation, sport, community fitness, and wellness. IndigenACTION, which was adopted by the Chief's Assembly, is complementary to the Framework for Recreation in Canada described in this paper. There is clear alignment in terms of vision and direction; therefore, collaboration and convergence with this strategy is in order.

While recreation is unique, the Framework described in this document aligns well with all of these strategies. The fields of physical activity, sport, recreation, parks, the environment and health all share a common mandate to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment. Thus, there is a clear need to coordinate these strategies and frameworks, and to collaborate on specific actions and initiatives.

Strategies proposed by the parks, physical activity, sport and health sectors have historically involved the recreation sector. For example, recreation is a key delivery agent for sport and provides a variety of supports to local sports organizations. These include access to facilities, early skill development and exposure programs, ongoing sport play, coordination and communication, enhanced coaching capacity, allocation policies and subsidies, joint use agreements, sport hosting and sport tourism.

Similarly, the promotion of physical activity is a key priority for recreation. This includes the provision of physical activity programs for all age groups, ranging from active play for preschool children, to teen and adult fitness classes, to engaging older adults in ongoing activity. Many communities have worked with partners in public health, physical activity, sport and education to develop comprehensive community plans for active living. These plans include awareness campaigns, program opportunities and events, initiatives aimed specifically at inactive and vulnerable populations, and the development of supportive indoor and outdoor environments.

Our challenge and opportunity is to link these unique yet complementary efforts in ways that strengthen each sector while leveraging resources, and facilitating outcomes that meet common mandates and goals. This requires collaborative action and implementation, ongoing communication, knowledge sharing, common measurements, the sharing of resources, and joint efforts in service improvement.

### Part II

### A Framework for **Recreation in Canada 2015**

#### Vision

Everyone engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences, that foster:

Individual Wellbeing Wellbeing of Natural & Built Environments | Community Wellbeing

#### **Values**

Public Good Inclusion & Equity Sustainability Lifelong Participation

### **Principles of Operation**

Outcome-Driven | Quality & Relevance | Evidence-Based **Partnerships** Innovation

#### Goals

#### Active Living



Inclusion & Access



Connecting People & Nature



#### **Priorities**

- Participation throughout the lifecourse
- Physical literacy
- Play
- Reduce sedentary behaviours

for all, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, culture, race, Aboriginal status, gender, ability, sexual orientation or geographic location

- Equitable participation - Natural spaces and places Comprehensive
  - system of parks Public awareness
  - and education Minimize negative impacts

#### Supportive **Environments**



Recreation Capacity



- Provide essential spaces and places
- Use existing structures and spaces development for multiple purposes - Advanced
- Renew infrastructure education Active transportation - Capacity Partnerships in social development environment
- Recreation education Assessment tools
- Align community initiatives

- Collaborative system Career
- Community leadership
- Volunteers Knowledge development

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#### Vision

We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

• Individual wellbeing • Community wellbeing • The wellbeing of our natural and built environments

### Values and Principles of Operation

#### **Values**

Values are deeply held beliefs that guide the decision-making, management and delivery of policies and practices.

#### **Public Good**

Through much of the 20th century, public recreation was regarded as a "public good." The emphasis was on accessibility for all, outreach to disadvantaged groups and a belief in the universal benefits to the whole community, not just to users. In the 1990s, recreation departments and organizations came under increasing pressures for cost recovery and revenue generation, including increases in user fees. The community development and outreach functions that were historically part of the mandate of public recreation were often quietly marginalized, as the field shifted its focus to meet the demand from that portion of the population who could pay. Leaders in recreation have continued to stress the need for equitable recreational experiences for all, with a call for the renewed importance of public recreation's historic mandate of addressing the inclusion of vulnerable populations. Quality recreation needs to be available to all, paid for by a combination of taxes and flexible user fees, which take into account economic circumstances. This does not mean denying services to people who have resources, but that they should not be served to the exclusion of those who face constraints to participation.

#### **Inclusion and Equity**

Inclusion is an organizational practice and goal in which all groups and individuals are welcomed and valued. Equity speaks to fairness in access to resources, opportunities and experiences.

#### Sustainability

To deliver quality recreational experiences, recreation requires a system that is sustainable, in terms of human resources, economics and the environment. Recreation values and stewards indoor and outdoor places and spaces in the built and natural environments. This requires balancing the needs of natural ecosystems with those of users, and providing sustainable facilities and services that minimize negative effects on the social and natural environments.

#### **Lifelong Participation**

Individuals and communities benefit from lifelong participation in recreational experiences, from early childhood to old age.

#### Active for a Lifetime

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. It links sport, education, recreation and health, and aligns community, provincial and national programming. CS4L's mission is to improve the health, wellness, and sporting experiences of all Canadians by advancing physical literacy, improving performance and increasing life-long participation in physical activity. Source: Canadian Sport for Life: canadiansportforlife.ca

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#### **Principles of Operation**

Principles of operation provide some "rules of the road" in how the field carries out its business.

#### **Outcome Driven**

Recreation is outcome-driven. It strives to help individuals and communities attain the outcomes they are seeking, such as improved health and wellbeing. It also focuses on indirect benefits to all, such as enhanced community cohesion and green environments that will serve generations to come.

#### Quality and Relevance

Recreation is committed to offering safe recreation experiences of the highest possible quality, while addressing the unique needs and capacities of each community, and the economic situation of individuals, families and communities.

#### Evidence-based

Recreation is committed to "fact based" decision-making—getting the best evidence and using it to guide policy and practice. Recreation integrates the best available research evidence with practitioner expertise and the characteristics, needs, capacities, values and preferences of those who are affected. This requires support for the systematic collection and analysis of data, the sharing of information, and the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, evaluation, and social and economic modeling.

#### Partnerships and Collaboration

Recreation relies on and nurtures partnerships and collaboration among:

- Public, not-for-profit and private providers of recreation and parks experiences
- Public and private planners and developers (urban and rural)
- All orders and levels of government (local, regional, provincial/territorial, federal and in Aboriginal
- · Multiple sectors and disciplines that influence wellbeing and share common goals, e.g. health, tourism, education, arts and culture, nature conservation, etc.
- People who care about and influence the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and our natural and built environments, e.g. parents and other family members, elected officials, recreation staff, early childhood educators, caregivers, teachers, school boards, coaches and volunteer leaders in community programs.

**Innovation.** Recreation practitioners value innovation and recognize the benefits of ingenuity, the co-creation of new policies or services with people, and the creation and implementation of new ideas in design, program concepts, research and learning.

#### **Quality Assurance Programming**

HIGH FIVE® is an example of best practice in quality assurance programming for recreation and sport programs for children aged 6-12. HIGH FIVE provides a range of training, assessment tools and resources to ensure that organizations can deliver the highest quality programs possible. HIGH FIVE ensures leaders, coaches, and instructors have the tools and knowledge to nurture a child's mental health and create positive experiences for children. www.highfive.org



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#### Goals and Priorities for Action

**NOTE:** The goals and priorities are numbered for ease of discussion and use; however, the ordering does not indicate levels of importance or priority. This will be determined by the organizations, communities and individuals who are using the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 to guide the development of their own action plans.

### Goal 1

### **Active Living**



## Foster active living through physical recreation.

Participation in physical recreation is essential to building healthy, active individuals from infancy to older adulthood.

A solid evidence base supports the positive relationship between regular physical activity and healthy aging. For older people, participation in active recreation adds vitality and quality to life. It positively affects functional capacity, mental health, fitness levels, the prevention and management of chronic diseases and disability, and overall wellbeing. Engaging in physical activity with others can help older adults build social networks that promote overall health.<sup>33</sup>

While unstructured play is important for all ages, the evidence suggests it is particularly critical for children in today's society. Over the last few decades, children's lives have become increasingly structured and media oriented, reducing their time in active unstructured play. This shift has contributed to increasing levels of physical inactivity, sedentary behaviour and excess weight in children and youth. <sup>34, 35, 36, 37</sup> There is a particular concern for the missed opportunity of outdoor play, which has been shown to increase a child's capacity for creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development. <sup>38</sup>

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines provide recommendations about the amount of physical activity required for health benefits for older adults, adults, and youth and children, including preschoolers, toddlers and infants. These are complemented by the Canadian Guidelines for Sedentary Behaviour, which encourage children and youth to enjoy incidental movement, active play, active transportation and time outdoors, and discourage prolonged periods of sitting. For health benefits, this is good advice for all ages.<sup>39</sup>

Individuals and families choose active living over sedentary behaviours when the "active choices are the easy choices." This requires the creation and maintenance of supportive environments for physically active recreation in the everyday settings where people live, work, play and learn. See Goal 4 for more discussion and priorities related to this.

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#### The Economic Impact of Increased Physical Activity and Reductions in Sedentary Living<sup>40</sup>

According to an analysis by the Conference Board of Canada (October 2014), small changes in physical activity and sedentary living can have substantial benefits. By getting 10% of Canadians with suboptimal levels of physical activity to be more active and less sedentary, the incidence of chronic conditions would be substantially reduced. With Canadians living healthier, more productive lives, GDP could increase by a cumulative \$7.5 billion between 2015 and 2040. In addition, health care spending on hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and cancer would potentially be reduced by \$2.6 billion within this same timeframe.

Source: Conference Board of Canada, 2014

#### **Priorities**

- 1.1 Enable participation in physically active recreational experiences throughout the lifecourse, continuing to focus on children and youth but expanding to meet the needs and foster the participation of the growing number of older people in Canada.
- 1.2 Incorporate physical literacy in active recreation programs for people of all ages and abilities. Physical literacy is recognized as a precondition for lifelong participation in and enjoyment of sport in the Canadian Sport Policy 2012.41
- 1.3 Support the child's right to play, and to participate freely and fully in "age-appropriate recreational experiences, cultural life, and artistic and leisure activities", as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>42</sup> Enhance opportunities for children and youth to play outdoors and interact in nature in school, community and neighbourhood settings. Engage parents and provide safe, welcoming, low- or no-cost opportunities for families and multiple generations to experience the joy of spontaneous active play together.
- 1.4 Inform recreation leaders about the importance of reducing sedentary behaviours, and enable them to explore and implement strategies and interventions that address this important public health issue.

#### After-School Recreation Programs

Ontario's After School Program is an example of how recreation and community partners are working to enhance wellbeing among young people at risk. It provides programming for 21,000 children and youth, at low or no cost, who participate in fun, safe, supervised activities that focus on physical activity (including both recreation and sport), healthy eating/nutrition, personal health and wellness, and activities that address cultural identity and local needs. More than 130 not-for-profit recreational organizations, local governments and First Nations groups deliver programming in over 400 sites to at-risk children and youth (grades 1-12) during the hours of 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. throughout the school year. (2014).

For more information, visit www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/sport/afterschool/after\_school.shtml

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### Goal 2 Inclusion and Access



# Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.

More than any other service, recreation has the ability to reach all citizens, and to bring people together in a non-threatening, pleasurable atmosphere. However, a rebalancing of recreation is necessary if it is to strategically address the barriers and constraints to participation faced by some people, and to celebrate the rich diversity of Canada's population.

At its most basic, "diversity" refers to any and all differences between and among people. Acknowledging and valuing cultural, ethnic and racial diversity is vital to the prevention of prejudice and discrimination. At the same time, recreation needs to take into account other differences. Some of these are visible, such as variations in sex and gender, age, and ability. Others may be invisible, such as sexual orientation, education, hearing, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status and mental health concerns that affect wellbeing.

Inclusiveness celebrates diversity as a gift, rather than a deviation from the norm. Inclusive organizations value the perspectives and contributions of ALL people, and strive to incorporate the needs and viewpoints of diverse communities into all aspects of the organization and their services and programs.

#### **Priorities**

- 2.1 Develop and implement strategies and policies, which ensure that no families or individuals in Canada are denied access to public recreation opportunities as a result of economic disadvantage.
- 2.2 Enable people of all ages to participate in recreation. Address constraints to participation faced by children and youth from disadvantaged families and older adults who are frail and/or isolated.

#### **Acting on Equity and Social Inclusion**

In Moncton, New Brunswick, the Parks and Recreation Services Department addresses poverty and homelessness within their portfolio of services. A Community Development Officer of Social Inclusion facilitates programs and services for disadvantaged citizens in the city. He/she liaises with other local programs and community development staff. These efforts encourage a coordinated approach to reducing poverty and encouraging social inclusion in the community though parks and recreation (2014).

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- 2.3 Build trust and participation through the provision of recreational opportunities and experiences that are respectful and appropriate for various ethnocultural groups. Actively engage persons of diverse and racialized backgrounds in developing, leading and evaluating recreation and park activities.
- Recognize and enable the experience of Aboriginal peoples in recreation with a holistic approach drawn from traditional values and culture. Work with Aboriginal communities in pursuit of all five goals outlined in the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015.
- 2.5 Enable and encourage women and girls of all backgrounds and circumstances to achieve their potential and participate fully in all types of recreation. Address the historical, cultural and social barriers to participation experienced by girls and women, and apply a gender equity lens when developing and monitoring policies, programs and practices.
- 2.6 Enact policies of nondiscrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. Provide a welcoming and safe environment for people with all sexual orientations and sexual identities.
- 2.7 Provide leadership, support, encouragement, information, policies and programs that facilitate full participation in recreation by people of all abilities across all settings. Work with persons with disabilities and special needs to create inclusive opportunities and build leadership capacity. Ensure that recreation environments are accessible, and remove physical and emotional barriers to participation.
- 2.8 Address the unique challenges and capacities in rural and remote communities. Seek community leadership in decision-making regarding the provision of and access to appropriate spaces and places, opportunities and experiences in recreation.

### Goal 3 Connecting People and Nature



## Help people connect to nature through recreation.

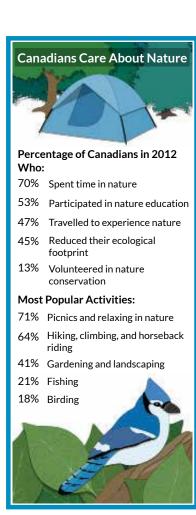
People have an inherent need to connect with the natural world and the recreation field plays a vital role in meeting that need. Connecting with nature is associated with improved cognitive, mental, and physical health, enhanced creativity and positive social behaviours. Communities also see economic benefits associated with ecotourism.<sup>43</sup>

Traditionally, recreation has contributed to this goal through the provision and

stewardship of outdoor places and spaces, and the development of enabling policies, programs and services related to natural environments. These activities continue to be essential components of recreation's role.

More recently, the need to increase appreciation of and exposure to nature through participation in the community design process has become increasingly important. Recreation contributes to creating walkable, safe, livable communities through the provision of parks, trails, waterways, community gardens and landscaped areas. Recreation supports policies, which ensure that neighbourhoods are designed to maximize opportunities for healthy, active living and exposure to nature.

For many people, urban parks may be one of the few connections that they experience with the natural world. Because of this, urban parks play an essential role in public health and wellbeing. Urban parks can serve as restorative environments in which individuals have the ability to view nature, to be active in nature, to observe plants and gardens, and to observe and encounter animals (both pets and wildlife).



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#### **Priorities**

- 3.1 Work in partnership with community and provincial/territorial planners and Aboriginal communities to provide natural spaces and places in neighborhoods, communities and regions through the retention and addition of natural areas, forests, parks, trails and recreational waters (rivers, lakes, canals and beaches).
- 3.2 Work collaboratively at all orders and levels of government (local, regional, provincial/territorial, federal and with Aboriginal governing bodies) to create and maintain a coordinated, comprehensive system of parks and protected areas across Canada that allows year-round access to nature. Share best practices and findings in planning, design, management, ecosystem monitoring and public information.
- Develop public awareness and education initiatives to increase understanding of the importance of nature to wellbeing and child development, the role of recreation in helping people connect to nature and the importance of sustainability in parks and recreation.
- Ensure that operational policies and practices in parks and recreation limit the use of non-renewable resources and minimize negative impacts on the natural environment.

### Goal 4 Supportive Environments



Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities.

Supportive physical and social environments help people explore their creativity and adopt healthy, active lifestyles by making "the healthy choices the easy choices". They also facilitate community and family connectedness, which foster reciprocal caring—taking care of each other, our communities and our natural environment.

Some people (especially those who have had limited experiences with quality recreation) are unaware of the benefits of recreation and how to get involved. A lack of knowledge about available options and/or fears related to safety and entering new environments may limit their decisions about the use of their time outside of work or school.

Environments for recreation encompass many settings, including homes, schools, neighbourhoods, community spaces and places, rural places and the natural and built environments. Recreation has a leadership role to play in community building in all of these settings. Aligning with other community initiatives avoids duplication of efforts and helps to build social networks and voluntarism, as well as community norms of trust and cooperation.

Creating supportive environments for recreation has many dimensions including the implementation of policies and guidelines, innovative programming, social action, education and funding. All of these mechanisms are needed to ensure access to safe and effective spaces and places that are required to deliver a comprehensive mix of high quality recreational experiences.

Creating supportive physical environments includes the provision of essential facilities, the effective use of existing spaces and places, and addressing the decline of Canada's recreation and sport infrastructure. It also includes the creation and maintenance of built environments that enable people to actively recreate as part of their daily activity and as a form of transportation.

Walking, biking, wheeling and skating are modes of active transportation and active recreation. Good walking environments and well-designed multipurpose trails encourage walking, cycling and wheeling and enable recreational experiences during daily commutes to work, school or other places in the community. Ideally, all parts of a well-maintained walking environment are integrated and connected to make it easy for pedestrians to move through the community to a variety of destinations.

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#### **Priorities**

- 4.1 Provide recreation facilities and outdoor spaces in under-resourced communities (including on-reserve and in remote and rural areas), based on community and/or regional needs and resources.
- 4.2 Work with partners to increase the use of existing structures and spaces for multiple purposes, including recreation (e.g. use of schools, churches, vacant land and lots).
- 4.3 Enable communities to renew recreational infrastructure as required and to meet the need for green spaces by:
  - · securing dedicated government funding at all levels, as well as partnerships with the private and notfor-profit sectors for the necessary development, renewal and rehabilitation of facilities and outdoor
  - · developing assessment tools and evidence-based guidelines for investing and reinvesting in aging recreation infrastructure
  - developing and adopting innovative renewal strategies that will endure over time, use less energy and provide affordable access for all.
- 4.4 Lead and support community efforts and planning processes for active transportation and public transit. Participate in the planning and design of communities to encourage the placement of workplaces, schools, shops libraries, parks, and sport and recreation facilities in close proximity so that active modes of transportation are easier to use. Encourage development and maintenance of active transportation routes that connect people to the places they want to go.
- 4.5 Enhance mental and social wellbeing by creating supportive social environments in the settings where people live, learn, work and play. This requires strengthened partnerships with schools, social service groups, the arts community, law enforcement, transportation and urban planners, community organizations and the private sector.
- 4.6 Develop and implement targetted recreation education campaigns that increase knowledge about how recreation contributes to enjoyment and quality of life, and help people acquire the skills and attitudes they need to plan for making recreation a part of their lives.
- 4.7 Develop a common understanding of community wellbeing through the development and use of standardized assessment tools and indices that will help communities assess and measure their status on community wellbeing.
- 4.8 Adopt a strategic approach to community building that features alignment and collaboration with other community initiatives (e.g. Age-Friendly Communities, Healthy Cities/Communities, Community Food Centres).

### Goal 5

### **Recreation Capacity**



## Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

Leaders in recreation include professional staff and volunteers. Both need the skills, knowledge and resources required to plan and deliver high-quality recreation services, based on specific community needs and strengths.

Volunteers in recreation make an impressive contribution to community cohesiveness, Canadian society and the economy. Volunteers need to be valued, trained and supported as an essential part of the delivery of recreational experiences in every community in Canada.

Leaders in recreation need to work within a connected, vibrant and comprehensive delivery system. This system requires ongoing nurturing and support to deliver a comprehensive mix of recreational experiences and sustain a viable system that Canadians can enjoy for generations to come.

The recreation field needs to recruit and inspire new leaders (of all ages) who can address emerging trends and have knowledge in a variety of areas, such as cultural diversity, emerging technologies, urban planning, active transportation and nature conservation. All who work in recreation need to acquire and attain the core competencies for recreation and the capacity to address changes in the physical and social environments that impact recreation.

Recreation provides many young people with opportunities for employment and for leadership and career development. For example, in 2013, 8.4% of youth (age 15-24) were employed in the Arts, Culture and Recreation sector in Canada. These young leaders are critically important to the recreation workforce both today and in the future.

To be relevant and outcome-driven, leaders in recreation need timely access to emerging technologies as well as current evidence and information. A comprehensive knowledge development strategy including research, knowledge transfer, and monitoring and evaluation would address this need.

Canadians Volunteer in Recreation and Sport (2010)<sup>45</sup>



**3.3 Million**Number of volunteers in recreation and sport



**400 Million**Number of hours per year given by these volunteers



Over 208, 000 Equivalent number of full-time jobs

Part II: A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015

Academics and governments at all orders and levels undertake research and data collection to analyze recreation trends and issues in order to keep recreation policies and programs current and effective. In addition to theoretical and conceptual research, applied research projects, which identify promising approaches at the community level, are particularly important. The findings of research need to be shared broadly (knowledge transfer), with provincial/territorial recreation associations, communities, and other stakeholders and partners.

#### **Priorities**

- 5.1 Increase collaborative efforts among provincial/territorial governments, local governments, voluntary organizations, Aboriginal communities, the private sector and recreation associations to support and nurture a vibrant recreation system that serves as the primary means for achieving the vision and goals in this Framework.
- 5.2 Implement career awareness, preparation and development strategies to attract and educate new leaders.
- 5.3 Support advanced education in recreation. Use long-term market studies to inform curricula development and capture supply and demand needs in the industry.
- 5.4 Develop and implement high-quality training and competency-based capacity development programs for organizations and individuals (professionals and volunteers) working in recreation, particularly in under-resourced rural and remote areas.
- 5.5 Develop a strategy to enhance community-based leadership in recreation.
- 5.6 Rejuvenate and update volunteer strategies to reflect societal changes and take advantage of community and individual capacities. Engage volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life. Make a special effort to recruit and support volunteers from a variety of ethnocultural and racialized populations and other groups that face constraints to participation. Recognize and support the role of the not-for-profit sector in developing and engaging volunteers.
- 5.7 Support a pan-Canadian, comprehensive knowledge development strategy that increases support for:
  - · recreation research and data collection carried out by universities and colleges, the not-for-profit sector, provincial/territorial, local and Aboriginal governments, with special attention to applied research at the community level
  - the national recreation information system so that all those planning and delivering recreation services have access to the latest evidence
  - collaborative efforts among governments, recreation associations and colleges and universities to develop new recreation programs and services that meet the evolving and expanding needs within communities.

#### **Developing and Sharing Knowledge**

The Leisure information Network (LIN) at www.lin.ca is a national knowledge- based digital forum for sharing information on individual and community wellbeing through recreation, parks, and active living. The Northern Links web site at www.northernlinks.org is an initiative of LIN that

supports recreation and sport practitioners and volunteers in Canada's Aboriginal communities (both rural and urban) in creating more culturally relevant and engaging programming. The National Benefits HUB at http://benefitshub.ca is a living resource, which summarizes evidence on the value of recreation and parks services. Validation is provided for 49 outcome statements. LIN and the Benefits HUB are invaluable resources for policy development, planning, marketing, program/service development and evaluation.



LEISURE INFORMATION NETWORK

### Part III

### **Moving Forward**



The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 invites the field to think of its place in Canadian society in different ways. With a refreshed definition and vision, and a renewed sense of what is important, the Framework presents a rare opportunity to take a new path. This path will ensure recreation's continued relevance as an essential contributor to the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and natural environments.

#### Embrace the Framework - Share it, Use It, Own It

The reader is encouraged to share this document widely and to talk about the Framework with colleagues, partners, policy-makers, community leaders, and others who are interested and involved in recreation. All stakeholders can use the Framework to guide decision-making, planning, resource allocation and the development of strategies, policies, programs and performance metrics.

#### **Next Steps**

Some actions going forward require strategic thinking, development and coordination at the national level. These will require the leadership of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), intergovernmental Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) mechanisms and Aboriginal communities. Not-forprofit organizations, provincial/territorial associations, local/regional governments, the private sector and stakeholders in education, health, sport, physical activity and the environment may take on initiatives that advance the Framework goals, either alone or in partnership.

Follow-up activities are both short- and long-term, and include action in the following areas:

#### Endorsement

The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 has been endorsed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. In early 2015, it will be presented for endorsement by the Provincial/Territorial (P/T) Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation, and the P/T Recreation and Parks Associations. In the longer term, it is hoped that Aboriginal communities and many other stakeholders will support the ideas and directions outlined in the Framework. Community leaders, parents, caregivers, and the public will support and advocate for full inclusion in recreation as described in this document.

#### Communication

A first step in implementing the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 is to ensure it is top of mind within the recreation system. There are many ways to achieve this, which could include using the Framework as a topic for discussion and analysis at staff meetings, conferences and workshops. Building cross-Canada awareness and use of the Framework requires an effective national communications plan. Enhanced mechanisms for sharing best practices across Canada will inform leaders about concrete ways to address the challenges, opportunities and directions provided by the Framework.

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#### Implementation

It is suggested that the partnership of F/P/T governments, CPRA and the P/T Recreation and Parks Associations continue to work on the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 and that these organizations take on leadership and coordination roles at the national level. Governments at local, regional and provincial/territorial levels may use the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 to develop implementation action plans in areas of their jurisdiction. Non-governmental agencies and organizations working in recreation may develop action plans to address the goals and priorities identified in the Framework that are relevant and important in their communities. Other sectors and stakeholders (e.g. education, physical activity, sport, nature conservation, health) are encouraged to consider the relevance of the Framework in their area, how it may influence the work of their organizations, and how they might address the goals and priorities identified in the Framework. Employers and private sector providers of recreation may consider ways to support the ideas and goals described in this document.

It is recommended that an implementation group be formed. This group would be responsible for collating and sharing the action plans of governments and non-governmental organizations and for reporting on progress, in collaboration with evaluation efforts underway in sport and physical activity. This group would facilitate the development of indicators and metrics, as appropriate, and analyze longer-term pan-Canadian impacts. Recognizing that they are accountable to their own constituents, individual governments and organizations will be responsible for evaluating their own programs and activities and assessing their contributions.

#### **Knowledge Development**

The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 can become an integral part of post-secondary curricula, and used to identify research topics and inspire choices for professional development. The Leisure Information Network and Northern Links will continue to publish items related to the Framework, and the creation of a community-of-practice network could be explored.

#### Collaboration

Leaders in recreation will invite conversation about alignment and plans for partnership action with other sectors and stakeholders who share a mandate to enhance wellbeing among individuals, communities and in our built and natural environments. It is important to identify concrete ways to collaborate with other pan-Canadian initiatives in areas where visions overlap, strategies converge and resources can be shared (e.g. The Canadian Sport Policy 2012, Active Canada 20/20, Connecting Canadians with Nature). Work that is already underway will continue (e.g. the collaboration among F/P/T governments, Sport Canada, P/T associations, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and CPRA to inventory and assess the state of sport and recreation facilities across the country).

While there are many steps along the path to an integrated, effective strategy for recreation in Canada, the Framework provides a roadmap and a bridge for how to get there. The vision is compelling—a future Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster the wellbeing of individuals and communities and of our natural and build environments. The time to take action is now. Together, we can build pathways to wellbeing for all Canadians.

Part III: Moving Forward

### Glossary\*

\*Thank you to The Leisure Information Network (LIN) for their help in preparing this Glossary.

Aboriginal Peoples refers to the indigenous inhabitants of Canada when describing the Inuit, First Nations (Indians) and Métis people, without regard to their separate origins and identities.

Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, https://www.itk.ca (accessed September 2014)

Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation, such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating or skateboarding.

 $Source: Public Health \ Agency \ Canada, \ www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php \ (accessed \ September \ 2014)$ 

Age-Friendly Communities. In an age-friendly community, the policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to help older people "age actively". In 2014, over 400 cities and communities in Canada were involved in this global movement.

Sources: 1) ) www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/afc-caa-eng.php and 2) afc-hub.ca (accessed September 2014)

#### Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines.

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (2011) describe the amount and types of physical activity that offer substantial health benefits to children (from infancy to age 12), youth, adults and older adults. The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines provide recommendations to Canadian children and youth on limiting sedentary behaviour during discretionary time in order to reduce health risks.

Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, www.csep.ca (accessed September 2014)

Community/communities: a group of individuals who share common interests or characteristics, such as demography, geographic location, culture, etc., and who are perceived or who perceive themselves as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists.

Source: Adapted from Dictionary.com

Community Food Centres provide places where people come together to garden and grow, cook, share and advocate for good food.

Source: cfccanada.ca (accessed September 2014)

Health is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "a state of complete physical, social and mental wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion goes on to say, "Health is a resource for everyday life, not the object of living. It is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities."

Source: WHO: Constitution 1948 at www.who.int/governance/eb/who\_constitution\_en.pdf; WHO: Ottawa Charter Health Promotion, 1986 at www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en (accessed September 2014)

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Healthy Cities/Communities create and improve the physical and social environments and community resources, which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential. Several cities and communities in Canada have adopted Healthy City strategies.

Source: WHO Healthy Settings. www.who.int/healthy\_settings/types/cities/en (accessed September 2014)

Knowledge development in recreation is the creation, synthesis, exchange, and application of knowledge to strengthen recreation and improve wellbeing. It includes research of all types, monitoring and evaluation, the sharing of knowledge (sometimes called knowledge transfer) and program development.

Natural playgrounds are play environments that blend natural materials and vegetation (e.g. logs, sand, boulders, hills, trees and stumps) with varied landforms to provide unique, creative play areas for children. They are designed with the intent of helping children connect with nature. Source: adapted from various sources

National Benefits Hub provides updated evidence for 50 outcomes statements about the benefits of recreation, the trends impacting benefits, and emerging promising practices.

Source: http://benefitshub.ca (accessed September 2014)

Physical literacy is the ability of an individual to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person. Source: Canadian Sport policy 2012 and Physical and Health Education Canada, 2010 http://canadiansporttourism.com/sites/default/files/docs/csp2012\_en\_lr.pdf (accessed March 2014)

Play is freely chosen and self-directed mental or physical activity that is undertaken for enjoyment and that is separate in some way from "real" life.

Source: Adapted from 1) The Value of Play I: The Definition of Play Gives Insights, by Peter Gray, published on Nov 8, 2008 in Freedom to Play, accessed March 2014 at www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200811/the-value-play-i-the-definition-play-gives-insights; and 2) Discover Leisure Education, accessed March 2014 at www.indiana.edu/~nca/leisureed/play.html

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

The recreation field and system includes stakeholders and providers from the not-for-profit, private and public sectors; including volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations and governments that work collectively to enhance individual and community wellbeing through recreation.

Public recreation is the provision of recreation services by governments and non-governmental groups and organizations for the benefit of individuals and communities.

Recreation and sport infrastructure includes the construction, maintenance, repair, operation, and the supervision of facilities and outdoor areas. Indoor spaces and places include arenas, community centres and halls, indoor pools, cultural centres, senior and youth centres. Outdoor spaces and places include parks, playing fields, play-structures, trails, forested areas, outdoor pools, splash pads, pavilions, gardens,

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waterfronts, marinas, outdoor courts (e.g., tennis, basketball), outdoor rinks and golf courses.

Recreation education is the process of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for positive experiences in recreation. Recreation education helps individuals and communities understand opportunities, potentials and challenges in recreation; understand the impact of recreation on wellbeing; and gain knowledge, skills, and appreciation enabling full participation in recreation experiences.

Source: Adapted from Leisure education and physical literacy by Brenda Robertson, NRA 2011 National Summit, Accessed March 2014 at lin.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Robertson%20summit%20talk.pdf

Social environment includes the formal and informal groups and networks to which people belong, the neighborhoods in which we live, the organization of the places where we work, worship, learn and play, and the policies we create to order our lives. The degree of social cohesion that exists in communities results from everyday interactions between people. It is embodied in such structures as civic, cultural and religious groups, family membership and informal community networks, and in norms of voluntarism, altruism and trust. The stronger these networks and bonds, the more likely it is that members of a community will co-operate for mutual benefit.

Source: Adapted from 1) Yen IH, Syme S. The social environment and health: A discussion of the epidemiologic literature. Annual Review of Public Health 1999; 20: 287-308, accessed March 2014 at www. annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.20.1.287 and 2) WHO Glossary Health Promotion, 1998, accessed September 2014 at www.who.int/healthpromotion/about/HPG/en

Social capital: The features of social organization such as social networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Source: Putnam, R. Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences. Isuma, Canadian Journal of Policy Research 2001;2(1):41–51, and Putnam, R. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. Journal of Democracy, 1995; 6(1):65-78.

Social cohesion is an ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity.

Source: Adapted from Government of Canada's Policy Research Sub-Committee on Social Cohesion. Accessed March 2014 at www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0756-e.htm

Social connectedness: A person's number of close friends, frequency of interactions with family and friends, trust in neighbors, and level of participation in volunteer activities or community events all play a role in supporting well-being and can also influence health, both directly and indirectly. Together, these examples begin to describe social connectedness - the extent to which people interact with one another, either individually or through groups.

Source: Social Connectedness and Health, Wilder Research 2012. Accessed September 2014 at www. bcbsmnfoundation.org/system/asset/resource/pdf\_file/5/Social\_Connectedness\_and\_Health.pdf

Spaces and Places. Spaces are areas or expanses deliberately designed for specific processes or purposes, such as an urban park or a community garden. Spaces integrate people with nature and with each other, increase socialization within and between neighbourhoods and invite increased physical activity. Places are portions of those spaces, such as a specific building, structure, or location, e.g., splash pad or skate park within a larger park.

Source: Adapted from various sources

Glossary

Supportive environments for recreation offer safe, enjoyable experiences, and empower people to expand their self-reliance, confidence and abilities to participate. They occur where people live (their homes and communities) and where they learn, work, worship and play. Supportive physical and social environments are structured to support a desired activity, action or outcome. Individuals are provided with encouragement, opportunities, access, and resources that enable this activity, action or outcome.

Source: Adapted from 1) WHO Glossary Health Promotion, 1998 accessed March 2014 at www.who.int/healthpromotion/about/HPR%20Glossary%201998.pdf?ua=1; and 2) Halton Active Living Bulletin, accessed March 2014 at lin.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Bulletin%203%20-%20Supportive%20Environments.pdf and 3) Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute Survey 2008, accessed March 2014 at www.cflri.ca/media/node/256/files/Bulletin\_3.pdf

Wellbeing. The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in recreation and culture.

Source: Adapted from Canadian Index of Wellbeing, accessed March 2014 at uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing

The Framework vision incorporates:

- Individual wellbeing: Individuals with optimal mental and physical wellbeing, who are engaged and contributing members of their families and communities
- Community wellbeing: Communities that are healthy, inclusive, welcoming, resilient and sustainable
- The wellbeing of places and spaces: Natural and built environments that are appreciated, nurtured and sustained.

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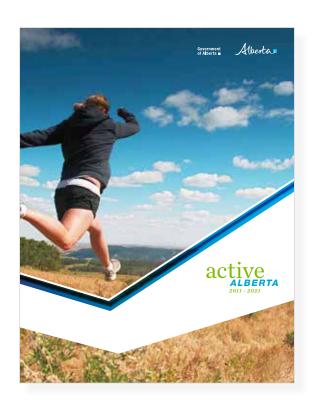
### Appendix A Acknowledgements

This paper is a collaborative effort of the provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec), the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Provincial/Territorial Parks and Recreation Associations. It was prepared by the National Recreation Framework Working Group.

Thanks and acknowledgement is given to all those who contributed to the process of developing the Framework.

## A More Active Alberta

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Recreation, active living and sport are vitally important to Albertans. The activities they choose for enjoyment, where they live and take vacations, what they teach their children, and who they select as their heroes all demonstrate how important the sector is to the lives of Albertans.

The Government of Alberta has long recognized the importance of the sector, and has been deeply involved through the development of policies, the passage of legislation, the design of programs, through working with partners, and through the provision of funding.

Research clearly points to the importance of active lifestyles to the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of Albertans and their communities. The Government of Alberta recognizes this research and has drawn on this evidence to reflect its direction related to recreation, active living and sport. The following pages outline a ten year policy to refocus government initiatives, challenge partners, and encourage Albertans to become more active.

This new policy, Active Alberta, sets out a vision for recreation, active living and sport:

Albertans enjoy a high quality of life, improved health and wellness, strong communities, economic benefits and personal fulfillment, through recreation, active living and sport.

Active Alberta will inspire Albertans to become more active every day, through sustainable, province-wide activities that generate awareness and motivate action through collaboration.



This policy will ensure the Government of Alberta is maximizing the effectiveness of the funding of this sector because it links funding to achievement of outcomes. The following outcomes will guide the Government of Alberta and its partners as they design programs, deliver services and make investments related to recreation, active living, and sport:

Active Albertans: More Albertans are more active, more often.

Active Communities: Alberta communities are more active, creative, safe and inclusive.

Active Outdoors: Albertans are connected to nature and able to explore the outdoors.

Active Engagement: Albertans are engaged in activity and in their communities.

Active Coordinated System: All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.

Active Pursuit of Excellence: Albertans have opportunities to achieve athletic excellence.

Under each of these outcomes, a set of strategic priorities are identified and some of the differences that are expected over the next 10 years are also described.

Implementation of this strategy will require coordination and collaboration among all government ministries involved in the sector, and with partners including other governments, educational institutions, non-profit agencies and the private sector.

Successful implementation will mean Albertans know what they are receiving from the significant investments made in the sector. More importantly, successful implementation of the Active Alberta policy should lead to improved health and well-being for Albertans and their communities.



#### INTRODUCTION

## Recreation, active living and sport are central to Alberta's culture:



From its earliest days, the people of what is now Alberta have engaged in recreation and sport as a central part of our culture. For example, the First Nations people had many traditional sports and games such as the bone game, the ring and pin game, and the rattler game. Today, these sports and games continue to play an important role in the cultural identity of the First Nations people of Alberta.

Furthermore, the traders and settlers who came to the province brought their own games and sports with them, and established recreational facilities and clubs. With the diversity of the population, a wide variety of sports became popular in Alberta: from polo, cricket and tennis to golf, hockey and football.

Often Alberta's heroes are drawn from the recreation and sport sector. While we cheer on the athletes of today, earlier Albertans celebrated the successes of competitors like Alex Decoteau, Canada's first Aboriginal police officer, who competed at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912, and the Edmonton Grads women's basketball team who won every game they played in four Olympic Games from 1924 to 1936.

Recreation, active living and sport are integral to the culture of Alberta. As The Spirit of Alberta: Alberta's Cultural Policy states, recreation and sport are included in our definition of Alberta's culture and: "...culture is the glue that connects us as individuals to our communities, fostering unity, civility and a sense of belonging, pride and caring for our fellow citizens."





"Being active isn't just essential for a high quality of life, it is essential to life itself."

### ALBERTANS VALUE RECREATION, ACTIVE LIVING AND SPORT:

Albertans are passionate about their recreational and sport activities. They tell us they participate in recreation, active living and sport because of how it makes them feel, because of the energy they get from it, and because it is fun. Albertans say that being active improves their health and reduces stress. They tell us that recreation, active living and sport provide social and economic benefits to their communities and to the province. They say it also brings diverse cultural groups together, and provides a catalyst for pride in ourselves, in our communities, and in our environment. In fact, as the Chair of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities told us, being active isn't just essential for a high quality of life, it is essential to life itself.

Recreation, active living and sport are also key components of the wellness of Albertans, their families and communities. The Government of Alberta defines wellness as more than the absence of disease: it is the ability of people and communities to reach their best potential, in the broadest sense. The outcomes and strategies in this policy support a coordinated Government of Alberta approach to increase the wellness of Albertans.

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA COMMITMENT:**

Given the importance of recreation, active living and sports to Albertans, the Government of Alberta has devoted considerable resources to this sector over many decades.

The province's commitment has been demonstrated in a number of ways. Alberta was one of the first provinces in Canada to pass an act related to recreation when it passed the Recreation Development Act in 1980. The Government of Alberta was the first province to mandate the creation of evidence-based standards for exercise professionals and the training of qualified professionals to provide counseling to support recreation, active living and sport. As well, Alberta continues to support the 1987 National Recreation Statement which established a national framework for action and set out the responsibilities of different levels of government for recreation.

The Government of Alberta has also been a strong supporter of hosting major provincial, national and international sporting events. Albertans proudly showcased the province in 1978 when they welcomed athletes and visitors to the Commonwealth Games, and subsequently to other games including the 1983









Albertans continue to enjoy the benefits of hosting these events through the legacy of significant sporting venues such as the Canmore Nordic Centre, Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, and Commonwealth stadium in Edmonton.

The human legacy includes the development of large numbers of international and nationally qualified officials and volunteers. The expertise of this army of volunteers has enabled the staging of many other events and activities at a community, regional, national and international level.

While Tourism, Parks and Recreation has the lead responsibility for recreation, active living and sport, many other ministries throughout the Government of Alberta support the sector through programs, service delivery and funding. For example: Health and Wellness promotes healthy lifestyles, including physical activity, through its many programs and services; Education plays a key role in encouraging young Albertans to be active by mandating physical education for students in Kindergarten to Grade 10, and the requirement for 30 minutes of daily physical activity for all students in Grades 1-9. Physical education is optional for Grade 11 and 12. The policies of the ministries of Transportation, Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs influence the development of communities in ways that encourage active living. These are only a few examples of how the Government of Alberta is involved with the sector. There are many more.





#### OTHER PARTNERS ARE INVOLVED:

Indeed, the Government of Alberta is only one player in the system. Many other governments (federal, municipal, First Nations and Métis) deliver programs and services related to recreation, active living and sport. In addition, educational institutions, non-profit groups, community organizations and the private sector invest resources and provide opportunities for Albertans to be active and engage in activities they enjoy.

This policy acknowledges the important role that all these agencies, organizations and governments play and sets a strategic direction that will maximize the contribution and impact of them all.

support for recreation, active living and sport initiatives is effective through collaborations with stakeholders, other levels of government, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector.



### 1. PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVE ALBERTA POLICY

"Active Alberta" represents a call to action.

#### The intent of this new policy is to:

Acknowledge that recreation, active living and sport are essential to the health, well-being and social needs of all Albertans throughout their lives, whether they are toddlers or teenagers, parents or grandparents, full time workers or full time retirees. Regardless of their skills, interests and abilities, Albertans value recreational and sport activities and benefit from an active lifestyle.

**Reaffirm** the Government of Alberta's commitment to the sector. The Government of Alberta is committed to continuing to support and promote recreation, active living and sport.

Replace the Active Living Strategy and, over the next ten years, coordinate other provincial policies and strategies that encourage healthy active lifestyle choices to improve Albertans' quality of life, sense of security, and overall community health and well-being.

**Describe** the government's priorities related to recreation, active living and sport.





**Confirm** the partnership the Government of Alberta enjoys with other governments, the non-profit sector, educational institutions and the private sector in delivering services and programs to Albertans, and clarify the role of all partners.

**Establish** common outcomes for the sector and invite partners to work with government, and with each other, to achieve those outcomes.

**Guide** Government of Alberta funding decisions and resource allocations related to recreation, active living and sport to help achieve the outcomes of this policy.

**Support** the Government of Alberta's wellness initiatives.



### 2. WHY CALL IT ACTIVE ALBERTA?

### 3. WHAT DOES "BEING ACTIVE" MEAN?

Throughout the development of the policy there was debate over what to call it. Is it a recreation policy, or a recreation and sport policy, an active living policy, or all three?

Confusion arises because some people say that recreation is part of sport. Others say that sport is part of recreation. To others, active living encompasses recreation and sport. We chose Active Alberta because it speaks to the character and dynamic we need to create to be successful in improving individual and community health and well-being. We all benefit from being active – whether being physically active or active in the community.

We also chose this title because it signifies action. It indicates that the Government of Alberta is committed to moving on the issues identified in this policy. Furthermore, "Active Alberta" represents a call to action to other people and organizations that have an interest in these issues.

"We all benefit from being active whether being physically active or active in the community." When the policy talks about encouraging activity, some may wonder what kinds of activities are meant. The activities that are important to Active Alberta will have some, or most of the following characteristics:

- inclusive of all Albertans, no matter their skill level, abilities, age, health, and interests;
- emphasize active living as an integrated part of Albertans' lives part of our culture;
- include a wide range of physical activity involving moderate to strenuous levels of exertion such as walking, biking, taking the stairs at work and gardening;
- include participation in activities ranging from unstructured play through to athletic excellence;
- can be achieved in any setting, at any time of day, whether at work, home, school, in the neighbourhood, or elsewhere; and/or
- contribute to a sense of pride and belonging in the community.





### 4. BENEFITS OF RECREATION, ACTIVE LIVING AND SPORT

Research demonstrates that recreation, active living and sport contribute to the physical and mental well-being of individuals, families and communities.

#### HEALTH:

Research shows that participation in recreation, active living and sport contribute not only to the physical health of individuals, but also to their mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual health.

Research shows that active living can help people live longer and enjoy a better quality of life (including more prolonged independent living, better vitality, cognitive and functional capacity) as they age.

The positive association between physical activity and chronic disease prevention may lead to a reduction in obesity and a decreased risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, various types of cancer, osteoporosis and stroke.

Chronic diseases and injuries are leading causes of death, illness and disability in Alberta, and contribute to significant health care system costs.

The Active Alberta policy will contribute to improved health and well-being for all Albertans, so that they enjoy the benefits of being active.









Community design and transportation systems have a notable impact on how readily families can be active outdoors in natural environments.



#### **EDUCATION:**

Research shows that children who are more physically active, and demonstrate strong physical literacy, show greater perceptual skills and achieve higher grades in school. Other benefits of increasing physical activity during school hours include higher self-esteem, self-confidence, team and leadership skills, all of which help to develop resilience.

There is evidence that health and educational benefits can be achieved by school communities through proven approaches such as comprehensive school health, active transportation, daily physical activity and quality daily physical education. In health-promoting schools, a whole school approach is adopted where students, teachers, parents and community groups work together to create a healthy school environment.

Students who participate in sports at school are less likely to smoke or use illegal drugs, and are more likely to stay in school. They tend to have higher grades, higher educational aspirations and fewer discipline problems at school. Students who participate in extracurricular sports during high school are more likely to have a job at the age of 24.

Sports programs have also been seen to benefit youth at risk: by helping them to develop skills such as time management, the ability to accept criticism, and cooperation with others. Participation in recreation and sports has been shown to lead to improved behaviour and higher achievement at school, and improved self esteem.

#### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITY:**

Research suggests that being outdoors has a positive environmental influence on physical, mental and emotional health for people of all ages. Outdoor activity reduces the amount of sedentary time people spend indoors in front of screens, or riding in vehicles. Observational studies of children show a positive association between time outdoors, and physical activity. Community design and transportation planning influence the use of active transportation (e.g. walking and cycling) to get to school and work.

There is a growing body of research supporting the idea that access to nature is essential for the physical and emotional health of children and adults. Research suggests that living closer to natural environments encourages physical activity and strengthens community by connecting families and neighbours. Providing opportunities for people to be active in unstructured natural environments enhances their physical and emotional health.

Community design and transportation systems have a notable impact on how readily families can be active outdoors in natural environments.



### 4. BENEFITS OF RECREATION, ACTIVE LIVING AND SPORT

It is estimated that sport results in billions in tourism revenue across Canada annually.



Spectators and participants at sport and recreation events generate economic activity both locally and throughout the province. In 1997, a Government of Canada Study of Sport in Canada estimated that sport accounted for \$4 billion in tourism expenditures. In addition to these direct and indirect economic benefits, these events broadcast to the world that Alberta is a world-class tourism destination.

The combined budgets of national and provincial sport organization offices based in Alberta exceeds \$100 million annually, which generates economic benefits throughout the economy, and also brings extensive high quality sport development and sport-science expertise into the province.

In 2006, an Alberta Recreation and Parks Association study estimated the sport and recreation expenditures by households, governments and private industry to be approximately \$2.8 billion in 2001. The same study found that the sector supports an estimated employment impact of 34,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Alberta and generates more than \$1 billion in labour income.





#### **CRIME PREVENTION & REDUCTION:**

Research shows that increased access to community recreation, active living and sport opportunities contributes positively toward creating communities that are safer, more socially cohesive and engaged. For example, research suggests that participation in after-school programs by youth at risk can lead to reduced crime and violence. Increasing recreation, active living and sport choices for youth provides a constructive alternative for their spare time, and fosters improved self-esteem, leadership and team skills, and improved academic performance.

According to many criminology experts, the most effective approach to reducing youth crime is to steer young people away from negative social activities before they become involved in criminal activities.



#### recreation programs are an excellent way to bring diverse population groups together

#### **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES:**

Albertans live, work and learn in various types of communities: neighbourhood communities, workplace communities and school communities.

Adults spend the majority of their waking hours in workplaces. Workers have been shown to benefit from healthy workplace policies through fewer disability days, reduced accidents, and lower worker compensation costs.

Research shows that outdoor spaces and the opportunities for active living that they provide help to strengthen communities and neighbourhoods. Studies show that social interaction is more likely to take place in a green space such as a park rather than in a barren space.

A study of women suffering from social isolation has shown that involvement in recreation is an effective way of reducing that isolation. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that recreation programs are an excellent





way to bring diverse population groups together in a shared activity, thus increasing understanding and building bridges between different communities.

Research shows that school communities can contribute to health and well-being of students, teachers, parents, and to leadership development in the broader community through before and after-school programs.

Furthermore, community leaders are developed through recreation, active living, and sport. Community involvement in after-school recreation programs has been identified as a promising practice for stimulating youth engagement, team building and leadership development.





#### 5. HOW WAS THE POLICY DEVELOPED?

Active Alberta was a collaborative effort of numerous government ministries, provincial associations and stakeholders.





Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation gathered information on promising practices from other jurisdictions and reviewed findings from previous consultations and research. It also reviewed other Government of Alberta policies and priorities to ensure that Active Alberta will be linked to the overall government direction. These policies are summarized under "Links to Government of Alberta Priorities."

Other Government of Alberta ministries were consulted to determine their level of engagement in recreation, active living and sport, and to obtain their input:

- Aboriginal Relations
- Advanced Education and Technology
- · Children and Youth Services
- Culture and Community Spirit
- Education
- Health and Wellness
- $\bullet$  Justice and Attorney General
- Municipal Affairs
- · Seniors and Community Supports
- · Tourism, Parks and Recreation
- Transportation

Tourism, Parks and Recreation hosted a series of consultations and a discussion document containing preliminary concepts was shared with a wide variety of stakeholders in fall 2009. Stakeholders involved included 48 leaders from the sport, recreation and active living sector, and 180 presidents and staff from approximately 110 provincial sport, recreation and active living agencies across Alberta.

In June of 2010 the draft **Active Alberta** policy was released for public and stakeholder consultation: 435 online responses and 8 discussion papers were submitted by stakeholder groups.

The draft policy was updated to reflect the input received, and a further round of consultations was held with stakeholders in September 2010. This policy reflects the input received throughout the entire consultation process.



#### 6. ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS



The Government of Alberta adopts an integrated approach to wellness, through collaboration among all ministries whose programs and services have an impact on wellness.

Implementing the policy and achieving the vision of Active Alberta will require focus, collaboration and commitment from the public sector, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector. Following is a description of the roles currently played by governments and partners. All partners will need to work together, and with Albertans, to explore what roles are appropriate, what should change, and what opportunities exist for innovative new roles.

#### **INDIVIDUAL ALBERTANS**

- Make choices about what recreation, active living and sport activities to pursue
- · Take responsibility for own health and well-being
- · Support healthy choices for their families
- Choose their level of engagement in community

The government of Alberta will provide leadership, set direction and build an integrated delivery system.

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA**

- Provide leadership by setting direction through policy development and establish priorities through legislation, regulation, standards, grant funding, and communicating with Albertans
- Provide programs and services that build an integrated delivery system
- Plan and support recreation research
- Encourage and support provincial recreation, sport and active living organizations
- · Regional land use planning
- Enable and support recreational opportunities on public lands
- Manage provincial parks
- Build, operate and maintain facilities and infrastructure
- Encourage and facilitate intersectoral collaboration and community engagement.
- Recognize and celebrate community leaders and their accomplishments
- Work with the federal and municipal governments and other governments through intergovernmental cooperation



#### 6. ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS



#### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

- Work with the Alberta Government through the Federal-Provincial/Territorial policy development mechanism to establish collaborative priorities, standards, grant funding and communication opportunities
- At the national level, encourage and facilitate intersectoral collaboration and community engagement with the recreation, active living and sport sectors, as well as in the health, education and infrastructure areas
- Set national physical activity guidelines
- Provide evidence-based national physical activity guidelines for Canadians of all ages



#### **MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS**

- Ensure availability, affordability and accessibility of a broad range of recreation, active living and sport opportunities
- Undertake regular assessment to determine community needs or interests
- Facilitate local development through municipal policy, bylaws, as well as program design and delivery
- Provide incentives and services to programs
- Coordinate the best use of community resources
- Build, operate, and maintain infrastructure and facilities
- · Make best efforts to the recreation needs of community
- Advise and consult with other levels of government regarding sector development initiatives
- Advocate on behalf of community-based recreation, active living and sport initiatives to other levels of government, and within other service sectors
- Support the volunteer and not-for-profit sector in the provision of recreation, active living and sport opportunities
- Optimize access and use of public recreation facilities









**K - 12 EDUCATION** 

- Establish policies that support recreation, active living
- Deliver Physical Education, Physical Activity and Wellness oriented curriculum
- Operate and maintain facilities
- Support delivery of extracurricular recreation, active living and sport opportunities (e.g. inter-school athletics)

#### **POST SECONDARY EDUCATION**

- Research
- · Develop policies that support recreation, active living and sport
- Program design and delivery
- · Degree, Diploma and Certificate program delivery
- Teach and train future professionals
- Build, operate, and maintain infrastructure and facilities

#### **PRIVATE SECTOR**

- Sponsor sport and recreation events, programs and
- Profit-based design and delivery of recreation, active living and sport programs
- · Workplace activity and volunteer programs

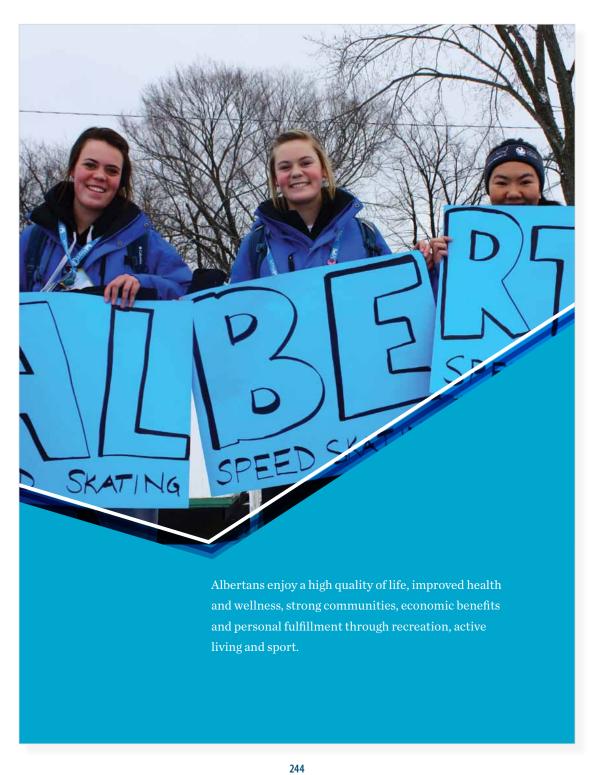


#### FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS SETTLEMENT **GOVERNMENTS**

- Facilitate affordable and accessible opportunities for recreation, active living and sport
- Plan, build and operate infrastructure to support recreation, active living, and sport
- Develop supportive policies and bylaws
- · Develop and deliver programming
- · Provide leadership and coordination to local community events

#### **VOLUNTEER & NON-PROFIT SECTOR**

- · Design and deliver recreation, active living sport programs.
- Develop of community leadership capacity
- Provide leadership and coordination to local community events and festivals
- Operate recreational facilities
- $\bullet$  Design and monitor industry standards



This policy invites partners to work with the Government of Alberta to achieve specific outcomes.



#### A. VISION

Albertans enjoy a high quality of life, improved health and wellness, strong communities, economic benefits and personal fulfillment through recreation, active living and sport.

#### **B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

A number of key principles inform this policy and guide the Government of Alberta in identifying outcomes and priority actions. They are:

Accessibility and inclusion: Recreation, active living and sport opportunities should respect and respond to the diverse needs and abilities of individuals, families, and communities

Citizenship: Leadership and engaged citizenship are greatly enhanced through participation in recreation, active living and sport opportunities

Holistic benefits: Recreation, active living and sport contribute to the physical, mental, social and spiritual health and well-being of Albertans, contribute to personal growth, self discovery and life long learning

Knowledge-based decision-making: Government of Alberta decisions will be informed by evidence, experience and the examination of promising practices

Partnership and collaboration: Recreation, active living and sport depend on solid partnerships and a sharing of responsibility among the Government of Alberta, the non-profit sector, the private sector, other governments and Albertans

Pursuit of excellence: Albertans have the opportunity to pursue athletic excellence

**Quality of Life:** Recreation, active living and sport are vital components of Albertans' quality of life

#### C. OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Alberta Government contributes to recreation, active living and sport directly, and through partnerships with the federal government, Alberta's municipalities, First Nation and Métis communities, post-secondary institutions, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. This policy invites partners to work with the Government of Alberta to achieve the following six outcomes.



## Outcome One: Active Albertans More Albertans are more active, more often.

#### **Strategic Priorities for Outcome One:**

Working with partners, encourage and improve opportunities for children and families to engage in high quality, unstructured, and creative play.

Working with partners, increase levels of physical activity of Albertans of all ages and abilities across their lifespan and in diverse settings (e.g. homes, schools, workplaces) by sharing knowledge, supporting physical literacy and encouraging participation opportunities.

Through effective communication, including social marketing, increase awareness among all Albertans about how and where they can be active.

Support the integration of the Canadian Sport for Life model into the education, recreation, active living and sport development systems.

Work with partners to develop innovative, accessible after school programs that link community recreation programs and services to schools and community facilities.

Encourage school communities to adopt a comprehensive school health approach to promote healthy, active living.

#### What will success look like in ten years?

More Albertans are physically active in a wide variety of ways, and in many different settings.

More Albertans experience improved physical and mental health through integrating physical activity into their daily lives.

Affordable, accessible opportunities for physical activity are available to all Albertans.

Increased participation in recreation, active living and sport leads to social benefits, healthy weights and improved resiliency.







# Outcome Two: Active Communities Alberta communities are more active, creative, safe and inclusive.

#### **Strategic Priorities for Outcome Two:**

Encourage collaborative planning for facilities and services.

Work with partners to identify and share approaches in communities that capitalize on ethnic diversity, urban and rural distinctiveness, and mobilize industry to develop active communities.

Encourage local governments to create opportunities, and remove barriers to physical activity.

Work with partners to identify and implement best practices in land use and transportation planning to facilitate active transportation (walking, cycling).

Explore opportunities for tourism development around sport event hosting (e.g. games, tournaments)



#### What will success look like in ten years?

Communities are designed and developed to support recreation, active living and sport where people live, learn, work and play.

Communities benefit from the economic impacts of recreation, active living and sport, including job creation and visitor attraction.

More Albertans are using active transportation in their daily lives.

Albertans report that their communities are safe and inclusive.







# Outcome Three: Active Outdoors Albertans are connected to nature and able to explore the outdoors.

#### **Strategic Priorities for Outcome Three:**

Encourage partners to develop programs and services to connect adults and children with nature by providing opportunities for activities in a natural environment.

Encourage the development of education and stewardship programs that improve environmental and physical literacy, and that facilitate unstructured play in the outdoors.

Implement Alberta's Plan for Parks to guide long term planning and ensure our parks are protected yet accessible for Albertans' recreation, active living and sport activities.

Develop a provincial recreation trails strategy to accommodate diverse abilities, and link communities to the province's parks, outdoor spaces and recreation facilities through sustainable land and water based trails.

Encourage local governments to develop local parks and outdoor spaces that are connected to other parks, outdoor spaces and trails in the region.

Develop an online tool for Albertans and visitors to easily find and learn about recreation, active living and sport opportunities in Alberta's parks and outdoor spaces.

#### What will success look like in ten years?

More Albertans enjoy recreational opportunities outdoors.

Parks stewardship programs and services include integration of the principles of physical literacy and unstructured play.

The regional plans developed under the Land-use Framework identify strategies to ensure recreation, active living and sport needs are met in environmentally sustainable ways.







## Outcome Four: Active Engagement Albertans are engaged in activity and in their communities.

#### Strategic Priorities for Outcome Four:

Working with voluntary sector agencies, identify, recruit, nurture and recognize volunteers in the recreation, active living and sport sectors.

Support leadership training programs for community recreation, active living and sport leaders. Programs should be evidence-based, standardized, and designed to ensure leaders have the core competencies they need to deal with changing demands in recreation, active living and sport.

Work with partners to reduce barriers to participation for populations that are often less active, including families living in poverty, girls and women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and older citizens.

Working with partners, explore the feasibility of establishing a Centre of Excellence for Recreation, Community and Quality of Life that will influence and provide benefits to community recreation.



#### What will success look like in ten years?

The recreation, active living and sport sector continues to have the highest rate of volunteerism.

Community leaders are developed through their participation in recreation, active living and sport.

The benefits of recreation, active living and sport are enjoyed by more Albertans, including those from previously less active populations.







#### Outcome Five: Active Coordinated System

All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.

#### **Strategic Priorities for Outcome Five:**

Government of Alberta funding and resource allocation related to recreation, active living and sport are guided by an assessment of how well the outcomes of this policy are being achieved.

Support and share current research on recreation, active living and sport, as well as best practices for program design and delivery.

Establish a mechanism to support interdepartmental and cross-sectoral network and consultations, and report on progress in achieving policy outcomes

Undertake a workforce strategy for the recreation, active living and sport sector to ensure an adequate supply of appropriately trained people.

In alignment with Land-use Framework Regional Plans, work with partners to identify and respond to regional recreation demands and trends, with consideration given to land use planning, design standards and its influence on active transportation.

Develop and promote tourism based recreation, active living and sport opportunities (e.g. ecotourism, adventure tourism).

#### What will success look like in ten years?

Governments and their partners in recreation, active living and sport work together towards shared outcomes, in a coordinated and sustainable system.

The Government of Alberta adopts an integrated approach to wellness, through collaboration among all ministries whose programs and services have an impact on wellness.

Research and best practices are shared among governments and their partners.

Measures to report progress are developed collaboratively.

The sector has an adequate supply of appropriately trained people.

Recreational demands are assessed on a regional basis within Land-use Framework Regional Plans, and regional approaches to meeting those demands are developed.

More tourists come to Alberta to enjoy recreation, active living and sport activities such as ecotourism or adventure tourism.





#### Outcome Six: Pursuit of Excellence Albertans have opportunities to achieve athletic excellence.

#### Strategic Priorities for Outcome Six:

Update the Alberta Sport Plan using the Canadian Sport for Life model.

Support coaching, volunteer and sport science systems in alignment with the Canadian Sport for Life model.

Support a coordinated, collaborative, and accountable approach to hosting of sporting events in Alberta which will provide Alberta athletes and coaches with a home field advantage, and the opportunity for youth to be inspired by their heroes.

Consistent with the Olympic Legacy MOU signed between the Alberta Government and the British Columbia Government, continue to develop Olympic Legacy Utilization Strategies.







#### What will success look like in ten years?

Alberta is consistently ranked in the top 4 in Canada Games performance/medal points, and in the number of nationally carded athletes.

Alberta communities regularly host regional, national and international events in Canada.

Alberta's community-level facility designs are aligned with long term athlete development principles.

Organized sport works together to achieve shared outcomes, so that Albertans understand the value and benefits of sport.

Sport organizations at all levels collaborate to create athletic and volunteer opportunities. For example, the system encourages athletes and volunteers to transfer their skills across sports.

Community sport, school sport, and club sport systems collaboratively support athlete development opportunities for Alberta's youth.

Alberta's educational institutions and municipalities have integrated the principles of the Canadian Sport for Life model into their facility designs, programs, services, and educational standards.



Working with partners, encourage and improve opportunities for children and families to engage in high quality, unstructured and creative play.

#### D. ACCOUNTABILITY

The successful achievement of the policy outcomes is dependent on effective collaboration across government, as well as among Alberta's municipalities, Aboriginal communities, post-secondary institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. The Alberta Government will work with its partners to develop measures so Albertans can track the progress of the Active Alberta Policy and its implementation.

#### E. IMPLEMENTATION

Active Alberta is a policy that will require a high degree of collaborative effort to achieve its Vision and Outcomes. The implementation approach for Active Alberta will begin with the establishment of mechanisms to support interdepartmental and cross-sectoral networks and consultations. These mechanisms will take the form of cross-ministry processes within the Alberta Government, as well as a cross-sectoral collaborative process that will represent the interests and roles of all partners involved in Active Alberta.

Being mindful of Active Alberta's Purpose, Guiding Principles, Vision and Outcomes, these mechanisms will be initially used to:

- Further refine the roles and shared responsibilities of all partners;
- Collectively develop, and establish evidence-based and practical outcome measures;
- · Monitor progress towards outcomes; and
- Activate and align partner resources to implement the strategic priorities of Active Alberta.



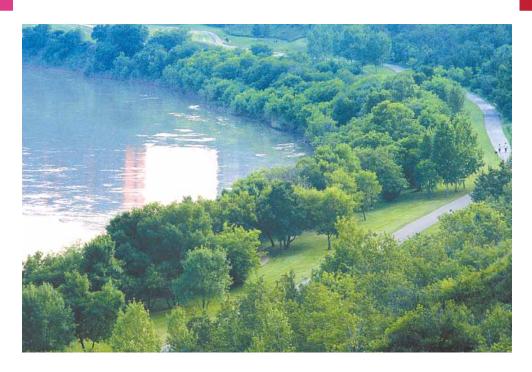
#### 8. LINKS TO GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA PRIORITIES

#### LAND-USE FRAMEWORK

The Land-use Framework will guide the development of the province's private and public lands and natural resources to achieve Alberta's long term economic, social, and environmental goals. One of the outcomes of the Framework is "People-friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural opportunities". Active Alberta will identify Alberta's recreation priorities and inform the definition of "ample recreational opportunities". The regional plans being developed under the Land-use Framework will identify strategies to achieve the outcomes identified in Active Alberta.

#### **PLAN FOR PARKS**

Released in April 2009, Alberta's Plan for Parks sets out a ten year planning framework to guide decisions regarding management of Alberta's parks. It sets out a vision, outcomes, and action strategies to ensure that Alberta's provincial parks are properly managed to balance conservation and recreation goals. Given the importance of parks and natural areas to the health, well-being and recreational opportunities of Albertans, Active Alberta aligns closely with the Plan for Parks to ensure that shared objectives are met.





#### 8. LINKS TO GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA PRIORITIES

Active Alberta will form the definition of "ample recreational opportunities."

#### SAFE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Through a partnership of nine ministries of the Government of Alberta working with police, community groups, municipalities, businesses and social agencies, Alberta's Safe Communities Initiative aims to find long term solutions to crime to improve the safety of Alberta communities. Since barriers to active living include a fear of crime and a concern about safety, the work of the Safe Communities Initiative will inform the strategies and actions of Active Alberta.

#### **VISION 2020**

One of the goals of Vision 2020, the strategy to set a new direction for Alberta's health system is: "Building a strong foundation for public health." The vision calls for "initiatives that support government and communities in encouraging healthy behaviours through the development of supportive and safe physical and social environments". Active Alberta contains specific strategies and actions to help achieve this goal.

#### **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Government of Alberta is currently developing a Tourism Development Strategy that will establish priorities for development of the tourism sector in Alberta. It will identify ways in which the province can capitalize on its strengths to attract more people to visit the province. One





of the most important and appealing features of Alberta is its abundance of natural areas, and the opportunities they present for a wide range of recreational activities. Active Alberta notes the importance of recreation as an economic driver in the province. Encouraging recreational tourism is one way for Alberta to promote healthy living, and benefit from the economic opportunities it represents.

#### THE SPIRIT OF ALBERTA: ALBERTA'S CULTURAL POLICY

The Spirit of Alberta defines culture broadly, including the arts, heritage, sport and recreation, and the natural environment. It also notes the important role that culture plays in the health and wellness of Albertans. Active Alberta elaborates on the ways in which active living and participation in recreational activities give meaning to the lives of our citizens, strengthen social ties in our communities, and help to express Alberta's unique culture.





Wellness Education nurtures the whole child, and enhances students' capacity for achieving their full potential – intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and emotionally.

#### **HEALTHY KIDS ALBERTA! STRATEGY**

Healthy Kids Alberta! is a ten year (2007-2017) government strategy involving 16 ministries identifying ways to work together to promote the wellness of all Alberta children and youth aged 0-18 years. Healthy Kids Alberta! focuses on the following four areas of wellness:

- Achieving healthy weights by encouraging healthy eating and promoting active living
- · Supporting healthy birth outcomes
- · Enhancing early childhood development; and
- Building resiliency (the ability to manage risks and respond positively to adversity)
- The strategies and actions in Active Alberta support all of these areas of focus.

#### **HEALTHY ALBERTA SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

Healthy Alberta School Communities is a partnership strategy between Alberta Education and Alberta Health and Wellness. It is a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that supports the development and implementation of health promotion strategies to enhance the wellness of school-aged children and youth. The priority areas of this strategy include physical activity, healthy eating, positive social environments and school connectedness.

#### FRAMEWORK FOR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 WELLNESS EDUCATION

Wellness Education nurtures the whole child, and enhances students' capacity for achieving their full potential – intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and emotionally. Released in 2009, this new framework outlines the fundamental concepts and inherent values of wellness education, and provides guidance for the future development and implementation of K–12 wellness education programs to meet the needs of Alberta students living and learning in the 21st century.

#### AGING POPULATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Aging Population Policy Framework is designed to foster a coordinated and aligned approach across the Government of Alberta in developing policies, programs and services that meet the changing needs of an aging population, so that Albertans have the information and support they require to plan for their senior years. One of the policy directions is to facilitate community and individual efforts to engage in healthy living practices that will help to achieve healthy aging. The Active Alberta policy will provide leadership and support for improved health and personal fulfillment through Albertans' participation in recreation, active living and sport.



#### 9. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessibility: Albertans, regardless of ability or income, have the opportunity to experience a wide range of recreation, active living and sport opportunities.

Active living: The integration into daily life of the physical activity needed to optimize health. (Tremblay, Shephard and Brawley, 2007)

Active transportation: Modes of travel that require physical activity, such as walking or cycling, in contrast to other modes that require little physical effort.

Canada Sport for Life Model: In 2005, Federal,
Provincial and Territorial Ministers agreed to proceed
with the implementation of a new approach to sport and
physical activity development which now falls under the
label, "Canadian Sport for Life" (or CS4L). Through the
development of physical literacy (see definition below),
this model will help to encourage Canadians' lifelong
involvement and participation in physical activity and
sport, as well as developing future athletes. (Adapted from
Canadian Sport for Life website, and 2005 F-P/T Ministers
Conference Notes)

Exercise: A form of leisure-time physical activity that is usually performed on a repeated basis over an extended period of time, with a specific objective such as improvement of fitness, physical performance or health. (Bouchard and Shepherd, 1994)

**Health:** Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. (WHO, in the Ottawa Charter for health Promotion, 1986)

Physical activity: Any body movement produced by the skeletal muscles that result in a substantial increase over resting energy expenditure. (Bouchard and Shephard, 1994)



"Wellness is more than the absence of disease; it is the ability of people and communities to reach their best potential in the broadest sense."

Physical Fitness: A physiological state of well-being that enables the individual to meet the demands of daily living and/or provides the basis for sport performance.

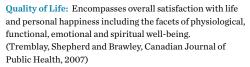
Physical Literacy: A sound foundation of fundamental movement and sports skills. Physical literacy means developing proficiency in agility, balance, coordination



and speed; being able to move comfortably in different environments such as on the ground or in the water; and mastering specific skills such as throwing and catching a ball, riding a bike, or skating.







Recreation: As agreed by Recreation Ministers in 1974, and affirmed in the National Recreation Statement (1987) and Canada's Sport Plan (2002), recreation is "all those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying so as to enhance social functioning, assist in individual and community development, and improve quality of life."

Resiliency: The ability to bounce back from setbacks and cope with adversity. (Resiliency Canada, 2008)

**Sedentary:** Not participating in a regular exercise program or not meeting the minimal physical activity recommendations.

(American College of Sports Medicine, 2006)

Sport: A regulated form of physical activity organized as a contest between two or more participants for the purpose of determining a winner by fair and ethical means. (Sport Canada)





System: The recreation, active living and sport system refers to the activities and initiatives of the governments and agencies involved in the sector, including federal,

provincial, municipal, First Nations and Métis governments, as well as educational institutions, the non-profit sector and the private sector. All of these organizations have policies,



programs and services that support the sector and the activities of each organization have an impact on the others.

Wellness: A measure of physical, mental and social health. It is the process of achieving optimum health and well-being through the active pursuit of good health and the removal of barriers, both personal and societal, to healthy living. Wellness is more than the absence of disease; it is the ability of people and communities to reach their best potential in the broadest sense. (Alberta Health and Wellness)



# Detailed Amenity Prioritization Scoring

### D

Outdoor Amenity	Score	Rank
Mountain Bike Trails	41	1
Walking/Bicycling Trail System	38	2
Dog Off Leash Areas	38	2
Nature/Interpretive Trails	38	2
Water Spray Parks	37	5
Community Gardens	36	6
Sledding Hills	35	7
Picnic Areas	35	7
Playgrounds	35	7
Campgrounds	34	10
Mountain Bike/BMX Park	34	10
Motorized Trails (e.g. ATV, snowmobile)	34	10
Outdoor Swimming Areas (non-pool)	32	13
Open Spaces (e.g. parks, greenfields)	32	13
Outdoor Pool	29	15
Skateboard Parks	29	15
Tennis Courts	29	15

Outdoor Amenity	Score	Rank
Sports Fields (e.g. soccer, football)	29	15
Track and Field Spaces	29	15
Outdoor Boarded Skating Rinks	29	15
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	29	15
Beach Volleyball Courts	29	15
Hardcourts (e.g. basketball)	29	15
Agricultural Facilities (e.g. rodeo grounds, riding arena)	28	22
Amphitheatres/ Event Spaces/Band Shelters	28	22
Ball Diamonds	26	23
Pickleball Courts	26	23

Indoor Amenity	Score	Rank
Gymnasium-Type Spaces	40	1
Leisure Ice Surfaces	39	2
Fitness/Wellness Facilities	38	3
Leisure Swimming Pools	37	4
Indoor Child Playgrounds	35	5
Youth Centre	35	5
Indoor Field Facilities	34	7
25 m Swimming Tank	34	7
Ice Arena Facilities	34	7
Walking/Running Track	32	10
Dance/Program/Martial Arts Rooms	32	10
Indoor Climbing Wall	30	12
Community Meeting Rooms	30	12
Classroom/Training Space	30	12
Gymnastics Space	30	12
Performing Arts/Show Spaces	29	15
Community Hall/Banquet Facilities	29	15

Indoor Amenity	Score	Rank
Art Display Spaces	28	17
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	28	17
Parkour Room	27	19
Library	26	20
Curling Rinks	26	20
Museum/Interpretive Facilities	25	22
Seniors' Centre	24	23
Court Sports (e.g. squash)	24	23

Outdoor Amenity	Current Provision in the Grande Prairie Area	Market Demand	Cost Implications	Service Outcomes	Accessibility	Economic Impact	Cost Savings Through Partnerships or Grants	Score	Rank
Water Spray Parks	2	3	2	2	3	1	0	37	5
Walking/Bicycling Trail System	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	38	2
Dog Off Leash Areas	2	3	3	2	3	0	0	38	2
Campgrounds	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	34	10
Community Gardens	2	2	3	3	2	0	0	36	6
Outdoor Pool	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	29	15
Sledding Hills	2	2	3	2	3	0	0	35	7
Mountain Bike Trails	3	2	3	2	3	1	0	41	1
Mountain Bike/BMX Park	2	2	2	2	3	1	0	34	10
Nature/Interpretive Trails	2	2	3	3	3	0	0	38	2
Picnic Areas	2	1	3	3	3	0	0	35	7
Motorized Trails (e.g. ATV, snowmobile)	2	1	3	2	3	1	0	34	10
Outdoor Swimming Areas (non-pool)	3	1	1	2	3	1	0	32	13
Skateboard Parks	2	1	2	2	3	0	0	29	15
Tennis Courts	2	1	2	2	2	1	0	29	15
Sports Fields (e.g. soccer, football)	2	1	2	2	2	1	0	29	15
Track and Field Spaces	2	1	2	2	2	1	0	29	15
Outdoor Boarded Skating Rinks	2	1	2	2	3	0	0	29	15
Playgrounds	2	1	3	3	3	0	0	35	7
Ball Diamonds	2	0	2	2	2	1	0	26	23
Open Spaces (e.g. parks, greenfields)	2	0	3	3	3	0	0	32	13
Pickleball Courts	2	0	2	2	2	1	0	26	23
Agricultural Facilities (e.g. rodeo grounds, riding arena)	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	28	22
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	2	0	3	2	3	0	0	29	15
Beach Volleyball Courts	2	0	3	2	3	0	0	29	15
Amphitheatres/Event Spaces/Band Shelters	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	28	22
Hardcourts (e.g. basketball)	2	0	3	2	3	0	0	29	15

Indoor Amenity	Current Provision in the Grande Prairie Area	Market Demand	Cost Implications	Service Outcomes	Accessibility	Economic Impact	Cost Savings Through Partnerships or Grants	Score	Rank
Gymnasium-Type Spaces	2	3	2	3	2	2	0	40	1
Fitness/Wellness Facilities	2	3	3	2	2	1	0	38	3
Leisure Swimming Pools	2	3	1	3	2	2	0	37	4
Indoor Child Playgrounds	2	2	2	3	2	1	0	35	5
Indoor Field Facilities	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	34	7
Walking/Running Track	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	32	10
Youth Centre	2	2	2	3	3	0	0	35	5
Leisure Ice Surfaces	3	2	2	3	2	1	0	39	2
25 m Swimming Tank	2	2	1	3	2	2	0	34	7
Ice Arena Facilities	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	34	7
Indoor Climbing Wall	3	1	1	2	2	1	0	30	12
Dance/Program/Martial Arts Rooms	2	1	3	2	2	1	0	32	10
Performing Arts/Show Spaces	3	0	1	2	2	2	0	29	15
Seniors' Centre	2	0	1	3	2	0	0	24	23
Art Display Spaces	2	0	2	2	3	1	0	28	17
Court Sports (e.g. squash)	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	24	23
Community Meeting Rooms	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	30	12
Parkour Room	3	0	1	2	2	1	0	27	19
Library	2	0	2	2	3	0	0	26	20
Museum/Interpretive Facilities	2	0	1	2	2	2	0	25	22
Indoor Agricultural Facilities	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	28	17
Community Hall/Banquet Facilities	2	0	2	3	2	1	0	29	15
Curling Rinks	2	0	2	2	2	1	0	26	20
Classroom/Training Space	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	30	12
Gymnastics Space	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	30	12















