

THE TOWN OF BLACKFALDS

Recreation, Culture, and Parks Needs Assessment and Master Plan



January 2016



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BLACKFALDS
ALBERTA

Executive Summary

This Recreation, Culture and Parks Needs Assessment and Master Plan has been developed to provide the Town of Blackfalds with a roadmap for the future delivery of recreation, culture, and parks facilities and services over the next 10 years and beyond. The Master Plan is built upon the Town's 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan and presents a renewed vision and desired outcomes for recreation, culture, and parks that reflect a growing and evolving community. The Master Plan has also been developed to align with the recently endorsed Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing; aligning with this nationally accepted document ideally positions the Town and Master Plan in the broader context of recreation best practices and policy development.

The Master Plan outlines 31 Strategic Directions which are organized into the key service areas of:

1. **Service Delivery:** How can the Town most effectively provide recreation, culture, and parks?
2. **Infrastructure:** How can the Town sustain existing facilities, amenities, and spaces and plan for future needs? and
3. **Programming, Opportunities, and Events:** How can the Town ensure that recreation, culture, and parks programs and events are relevant and meet community needs?

These Strategic Directions are intended to guide and assist in decision making and service provision, ultimately leading to enhanced service levels and associated community benefits throughout the Town and region.

The Master Plan identifies the need to enhance promotions and marketing efforts; The Town currently does a commendable job in delivering messages about recreation, culture and parks to residents and recommendations herein are meant to build upon the solid foundation already established. Broadening key messaging to include the overall benefits of participating in recreation and leisure activities is one example of how current efforts could be enhanced.

Another important focus area of the Master Plan is regional collaboration. A number of the Strategic Directions identify opportunities to enhance regional partnerships and cooperation in the areas of service delivery and infrastructure provision. Doing so will efficiently lever available resources and avoid duplication on a regional level; working with the City of Lacombe and Lacombe County to enhance the quality of life throughout the region.

Executive Summary

The community's rapid growth and evolving activity demands require that a focus continue to be placed on ensuring that community groups are supported and volunteerism is fostered. The Master Plan outlines strategies to sustain existing groups and increase overall capacity within the community that can help lay the foundation for emerging groups to prosper and ultimately meet new community needs for programming and events. The Master Plan furthermore identifies that a focus should be placed on enriching arts and cultural opportunities and special events in the Town. As the community continues to grow and become more diverse, demands are likely to increase for many of these activities. Ensuring that the capacity exists to accommodate these activities will be important.

The Master Plan focuses on putting in place structures and tools that can help with maximizing potential sponsorship opportunities. The successful fundraising campaign associated with the Abbey Master Builder Centre demonstrated that capacity exists in the region to lever sponsorship dollars for public infrastructure. The development of a Sponsorship Policy will help guide future fundraising campaigns and align them with Town values and needs.

Strategies to sustain existing facilities and plan for new infrastructure are also discussed in the Master Plan. The importance of implementing life cycle budgeting and reinvesting in existing facilities is reiterated in the Plan and specific strategies are provided for a number of indoor facility and park amenity types. The Master Plan also identifies specific projects, prioritized through a set of prudent criteria that should be further explored. These include the addition of amenities to All-Star Park (including the Wadey House and Skateboard Park), addition on a new indoor ice surface, performing arts facility, and indoor aquatics. While some of these facility and amenity types are likely to be mid to long term projects, the Master Plan provides guidance on how and when to proceed with these important projects.

This Master Plan is written for the Town of Blackfalds, one of the most progressive and innovative municipalities in the Province as it relates to the provision of recreation, culture and parks services and facilities. The intent of the Plan is to further enhance the value of these services in the Town and the region and further strengthen the Town's leadership role in the province in recreation, culture, and parks.

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Introduction

Project Context

The Town of Blackfalds is a “nice place to grow” and has evolved into the Central Alberta epicentre of residential and industrial growth and community wellbeing. The Town continues to outpace regional growth and provides a renowned resident quality of life in part because of the deliberate and effective choices that the Town decision makers have made to invest in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure and programs.

Much of the recent development of recreation, culture, and parks in the community has come in response to the Town’s 2008 Facility and Needs Assessment Master Plan. The 2008 Plan was developed with thorough research and community input and helped position the community for the **healthy growth** that has occurred since. The 2008 Plan complemented the passion and commitment that exists in Town Council, the Town’s Recreation, Parks, and Culture Board, Town administration, and the entire community to quality of life for residents.



A Refreshed Strategic Plan for Recreation, Culture, and Parks in Blackfalds

The community has changed since 2008; it has grown and further embraced a culture of community wellbeing. Since 2014, the Town has seen its largest capital investment ever, the Abbey Master Builder Centre flourish. The facility was visited by more than 200,000 within four months of it opening and continues to be a success story for the community. The Abbey Master Builder Centre was rooted in diligent planning and was also supported by the community at the grass roots level through the Blackfalds Field House Society and the Town’s Recreation, Parks, and Culture Board.

The time has now come to look ahead to the future once again; to update and redefine the 2008 Master Plan. The diligent processes by which major projects such as the Abbey Centre, and before it the Multiplex, originated has to be undertaken to see what major recreation, culture, facilities, and parks projects and initiatives are identified in the Town to handle a growing, healthy population.

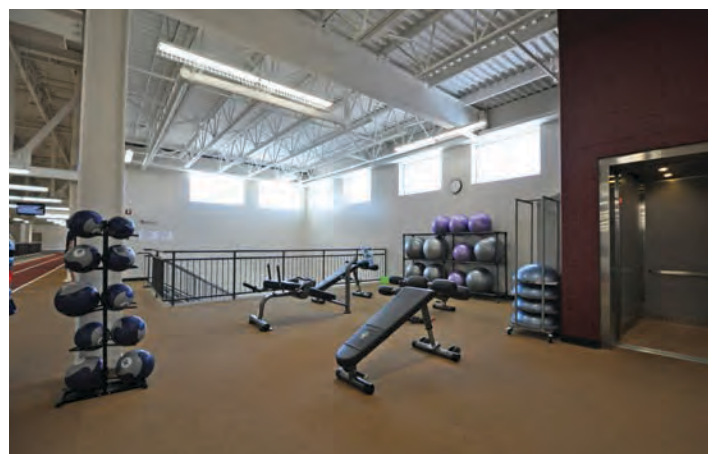
The development of a new Recreation, Culture, and Parks Master Plan in 2015 presents an opportunity to assess the current state of these important and valued recreation services in the Town and establish an updated and refreshed strategic plan for the future. An updated Master Plan is timely given the continued growth of the community and in the wake of significant investment that the Town has made in infrastructure in recent years through the development of the Abbey Master Builder Centre, parks and outdoor space development, and other facility-related projects.

Master Plan Process

Critical to the development of the Master Plan was extensive research and detailed public consultation. Recreation, culture, and parks services are subjective. Prudent planning for these types of services requires public and stakeholder engagement. Basing the Master Plan on sound and valid research ensures that the document accurately reflects community values and needs. The following graphic illustrates the process used to develop the Master Plan and the specific research mechanisms that were utilized and which ultimately informed the strategies and recommendations contained herein.



Research and engagement findings were analyzed and are encapsulated in the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report. These findings were also presented and discussed with the Blackfalds Recreation, Culture, and Parks Board, which served as the steering committee for the project. The Board assisted the project team with interpretation of the research and the identification of initial strategic directions upon which this Master Plan is built.



Community Profile

Blackfalds... A Vibrant, Growing Community!

The Town of Blackfalds is located in central Alberta, approximately 15 km north of Red Deer and 12 km south of the city of Lacombe. The Town's slogan "a nice place to grow!" reflects the community's strong growth over the past decade and reputation for a high quality of life.

Within Lacombe County, Blackfalds is located along a number of important highway transportation routes which include the QE II, Highway 2A, and Highway 597. Blackfalds' trading area is estimated at over 250,000 people with over 2.5 million people residing within a 2 hour drive. These factors have fuelled the community's residential, commercial, and industrial growth in recent years. Between 2003 and 2015 Blackfalds grew by 130% with the community experiencing 12% growth in 2015. As one of Alberta's youngest and fastest growing urban communities, Blackfalds is increasingly known for its high quality of life and community vibrancy.

The Town of Blackfalds has made a significant investment in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure in recent years. The Abbey Master Builder Centre opened in the spring of 2014 and includes a popular outdoor aquatics centre, field house gymnasium, fitness centre, indoor playground, program rooms, outdoor amphitheatre space, and indoor track. The facility is also home to the only indoor leg of the TransCanada Trail national trail network¹. Other popular community facilities in the community include the Blackfalds Multi-Plex (indoor arena, outdoor skatepark), Tayles Water Spray Park, Blackfalds Public Library, All-Star Park, Seniors Centre and the Blackfalds Community Hall and Library. In recent years a number of new trails, parks and playgrounds have also been developed or refurbished in neighbourhoods throughout Blackfalds.



Improving Lives through Recreation and Parks.

The Town of Blackfalds was awarded the 2014 A.V. Pettigrew Award, presented by the Alberta Recreation & Parks Association to Alberta communities that have made a significant impact on improving the quality of life of citizens through recreation and parks.

Primary and secondary education is offered to students in Blackfalds by the Wolf Creek School Division which operates two schools in the community; Iron Ridge Elementary Campus (K – 4) and Iron Ridge Junior High Campus (5 – 9). A new school (Iron Ridge Intermediate Campus) is currently under construction in the northeast section of Blackfalds and will provide education for students in Grades 4 – 6. Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools has approved the development of a new Kindergarten to Grade 9 school for Blackfalds. St. Gregory the Great Catholic School will begin construction in the Spring of 2016 and open in the Fall of 2017. The community does not currently have a High School. High School aged students in Blackfalds attend schools in Red Deer and Lacombe.

In 2005 the Blackfalds and Area Historical Society was officially formed to help preserve the town's heritage and unique past. The history of the community dates back to the late 19th century when settlers first arrived due to the construction of the railroad. Blackfalds was incorporated as a Village in 1904 and a Town in 1980. The original C & E Trail ran through the middle of Blackfalds along what is now called Broadway Avenue. An initiative is currently being undertaken to relocate and restore the historical Wadey House into a tourism/information, tea house, and heritage interpretation facility. The Town's history is important to showcase, especially in the context of new residents moving into town at a rapid pace.



What's in a Name?

The name "Blackfalds" is derived from the Scottish hometown of the Canadian Pacific Railway conductor that frequented the town. The community was originally called "Waghorn" after a prominent family of early settlers to the area.



SECTION THREE

The State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks

An extensive array of research and consultation was undertaken to assess the current situation and identify areas of focus for the Master Plan. The **State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report** encapsulates the research in detail, and can be found under separate cover.

Of particular importance to the research phases of the project was engagement with residents and stakeholders. The engagement undertaken included a number of opportunities for residents and community organizations to provide input as reflected in the following chart.

Engagement Mechanism	Responses
Resident Household Survey (Mail-out) ¹	462
Resident Survey (Web)	91
Stakeholder Group Survey	13
Stakeholder Interviews	14
Student Survey	431
Intercept Survey (Abbey Master Builder Centre)	381

A Wealth of Recreation, Parks, and Culture Information.

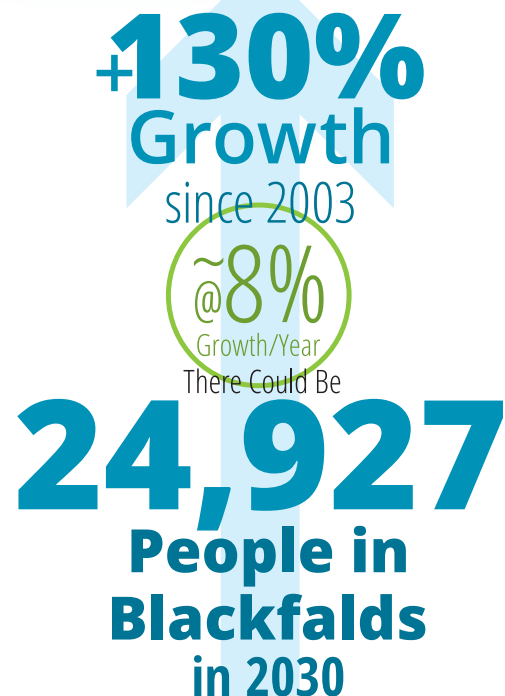
The State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report includes over 175 pages of research findings. The report analyzes data from the public and stakeholder engagement, population and demographics analysis, benchmarking research and provides information on current trends and best practices. Assessment data on existing infrastructure in Blackfalds is also outlined in the document.

Key Findings from the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report

Population and Demographics

Population and Growth

The Town of Blackfalds has grown by 130% since 2003, with 12% growth occurring in the last year alone. If the annual average growth rate from 2003 to 2015 (~8%) is extrapolated over the next fifteen years, the population of Blackfalds would be 24,927 in 2030.



¹ The results of the household survey are to be considered statistically reliable $\pm 4.3\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Population and Demographics

Population Proportions

Blackfalds has high proportions of children/ youth and young adults and lower proportions of middle aged adults and seniors when compared to overall provincial figures.



Previous Town Strategic Planning

Previous strategic planning conducted by the Town strongly reflects the importance of recreation, culture, and parks services to quality of life and community vibrancy. The Town has been successful at executing on a number of a recommendations and strategic focus areas outlined in the 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment (e.g. parks and open space enhancements, field house construction).



National Recreation Framework/ Active Alberta Policy

Aligning with provincial and national policies and frameworks such as the Active Alberta Policy and A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing is important and can help best position the Town for future success.



Infrastructure Assessments

Infrastructure Assessment

Re-investment in infrastructure is important to ensure that service levels are sustained. The Town's existing facilities are relatively new, as is much of the community. Indoor infrastructure assessments conducted suggest that the following levels of re-investment will be required in future years:

- Short Term (<5 Years): \$255,000
- Mid-Term (5 - 10 Years): \$395,000
- Long Term (10+ Years): \$460,000



Infrastructure Assessments

Outdoor Infrastructure Assessment

Assessments conducted on outdoor infrastructure in the community reflect the significant and valuable investment made in parks, trails, and outdoor spaces. Opportunities exist to enhance wayfinding and signage and to add features that can help further increase utilization and expand the diversity of offerings.



Trends in Volunteerism

The nature of volunteerism is evolving—the “new volunteer” is looking for defined roles/terms and opportunities to gain skills. Volunteers are key to the recreation, culture, and parks delivery system. Many municipalities are increasingly supporting organizations with volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives.



Infrastructure Trends and Leading Practices

Recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure is increasingly being designed with a focus on multi-use/multi-functionality. User convenience, amenities, and accessibility are also important considerations which can impact utilization and the overall quality of experience. Partnerships in the development of facilities and parks are becoming commonplace and are favored by external granting agencies.





18%
of Total Expenditures
are used on
Recreation and Culture Services

89%
of Residents
Believe **Recreation and Culture** are
Important to
Quality of Life

Infrastructure Benchmarking Research

Provided at a **stronger** provision ratio (# of residents per unit of provision) in Blackfalds are: indoor playgrounds, indoor walking/running tracks, major recreation facilities, spray parks, outdoor exercise equipment, and outdoor pools.

Provided at a **lesser** provision ratio (# of residents per unit of provision) in Blackfalds are: indoor ice sheets, dedicated youth centres, indoor pools, dog parks, sport fields, and ball diamonds.

* The majority of facility and amenity types were provided at similar levels to comparable communities.

** Detailed provision ration data can be found in the appendices.

Investment in Services Benchmarking Research

The Town of Blackfalds invests approximately 18% of its overall expenditures on recreation and culture services. This figure is slightly higher but generally consistent with similar sized (6,000 – 8,500) and slightly larger (11,000 – 15,000) urban municipalities.

Household Survey

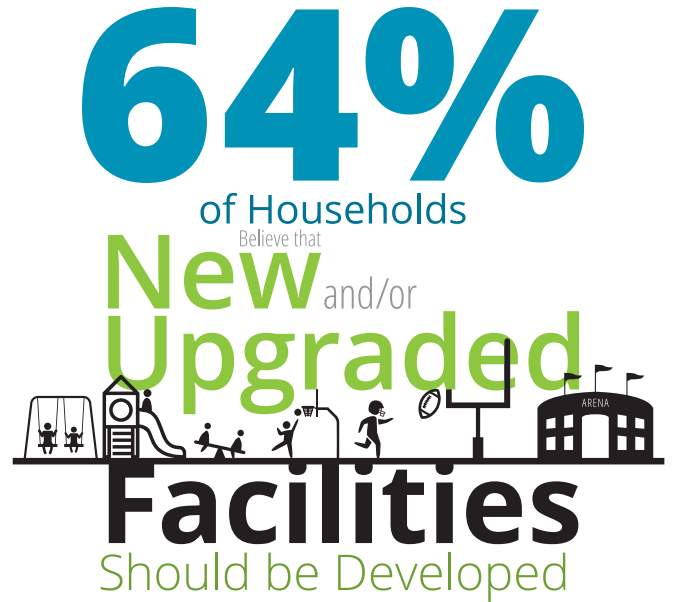
Eighty-nine percent (89%) of Blackfalds households believe that recreation and culture services are important to their quality of life. Residents also feel strongly about the impact that the Abbey Master Builder Centre has had on their household and the broader community. Seventy percent (70%) of residents believe the facility has had a positive impact on their household, with 88% indicating that the facility has benefited the community as a whole.

Household Survey

Residents use a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces—high levels of utilization exist for the Abbey Master Builder Centre and passive outdoor spaces in the community (e.g. trails, nature parks, playgrounds). However demand remains high for new infrastructure development. Sixty-four percent (64%) of households believe that new and/or upgraded facilities should be developed.

Stakeholder and Community Group Engagement

Community group representatives and stakeholders consistently identified the community's strong quality of life as a strength and the need to properly manage future growth and expectations as a challenge.



Strong
Quality of Life
STRENGTH
CHALLENGE
Properly
Managing
Growth & Expectations



Preliminary Infrastructure Priorities

The State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report also identified lists of preliminary infrastructure priorities based on the engagement findings. It is important to note that these priorities were identified to initiate further discussion and analysis and did not consider a number of important factors that are key to decision making (e.g. capital and operating costs,

municipal goals and strategic direction, regional collaboration opportunities, current provision, available partnerships). Following sections of the Master Plan identify tools that can be used to conduct further analysis and a more refined list of infrastructure priorities (using the tools identified).

Overall Indoor Facility Priorities

Facility	Household Survey	Student Survey	Group and Stakeholder Consultation	Rank
Indoor Climbing Wall	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Leisure Swimming Pools (indoor)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Ice Arena Facilities (additional ice sheet)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Teen Lounge	✓	✓	✓	2
Performing Arts/Show Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
Lane Swimming Tanks (indoor)	✓ ✓	✓		2
Community Gathering Spaces	✓		✓	3
Leisure Ice Surfaces	✓ ✓			3
Afterschool Care Facilities	✓		✓	3
Indoor Field Facilities	✓	✓		3
Ice Arena Facilities (upgrades to existing)	✓	✓		3
Curling Rinks	✓ ✓			3
Art Display Spaces		✓		4
Libraries			✓	4
Indoor Child Playgrounds			✓	4
Gymnasium Type Spaces		✓		4
Fitness/Wellness Facilities	✓			4
Community Meeting Rooms			✓	4
Museum/Interpretive Facilities			✓	4
Dance/Program Rooms		✓		4
Social/Banquet Facilities				
Preschool Facilities				

Household Survey: 2 checks (✓ ✓) if Top 3, 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Student Survey: 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Group and Stakeholder Consultation: 1 check (✓) if Top 5 group survey priority and/or prevalent theme in the stakeholder interviews

Overall Outdoor Facility Priorities

Facility	Household Survey	Student Survey	Group and Stakeholder Consultation	Rank
Picnic Areas	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Trails (non-motorized)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Off Leash Dog Areas	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Sport Fields (i.e. soccer, football, etc.)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Amphitheatres/Event Spaces	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Campgrounds	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Green Field Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
BMX Bicycle Parks (dirt and/or concrete jumps)	✓	✓	✓	2
Beach Volleyball Courts	✓	✓	✓	2
Track and Field Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
Skateboard Parks			✓	3
Child Playgrounds			✓	3
Water Spray Parks		✓		3
Outdoor Skating Rinks			✓	3
Ball Diamonds			✓	3
Tennis Courts/Pickleball				



Household Survey: 2 checks (✓ ✓) if Top 3, 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Student Survey: 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Group and Stakeholder Consultation: 1 check (✓) if Top 5 group survey priority and/or prevalent theme in the stakeholder interviews

SECTION FOUR

Master Plan Foundations

Recreation, Culture, and Parks services provide residents with an array of benefits and are critical to the development of a sustainable and healthy community. Residents place a high value on these services as reflected in the household survey with 88% of Blackfalds households indicating that recreation and culture services are important to their quality of life. Previous strategic planning conducted by the Town acknowledges the value of these services, which is strongly reflected in the following vision statement developed for the Town of Blackfalds Municipal Sustainability Plan:

“Blackfalds is an active family community full of pride, commitment and opportunities reflecting an economically sustainable, self-sufficient, and safe living environment, with a balanced range of municipal services provided through innovation and proactive community partnerships.”

The 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan has been used as a planning tool for a number of projects that have been undertaken in recent years, which demonstrates the Town’s commitment to growing in a well-planned and quality of life focused manner. The 2015 Master Plan intends to build on the momentum of Blackfalds and previous planning by outlining strategies to sustain, and where possible enhance, existing services (programs and facilities).

A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

It is also important for this Master Plan to consider recreation and culture related planning at a provincial and national level. The 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing is the result of a comprehensive process of a renewed vision for recreation developed by key stakeholders from within the sector as well as perspectives from other sectors such as (but not limited to) physical activity, parks, health, education, and justice. The Framework is built upon the 1987 Recreation Statement and is the

result of two years of consultations with key national stakeholders beginning with the National Recreation Summit in 2011.

Key themes that emerged throughout the consultations and that have driven the development of the Framework as it is presented include the following.

1. High quality, accessible recreation opportunities are integral to a well-functioning society.
2. The recreation sector can be a collaborative leader in addressing major issues of the day.
3. All people and communities deserve equitable access to recreational experiences. Recreation must be accessible and welcoming to all.

The Framework outlines a renewed definition of recreation as well as an overview the parties responsible for the provision of recreation opportunities. It also outlines challenges and opportunities of the current recreation marketplace.

The New 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.

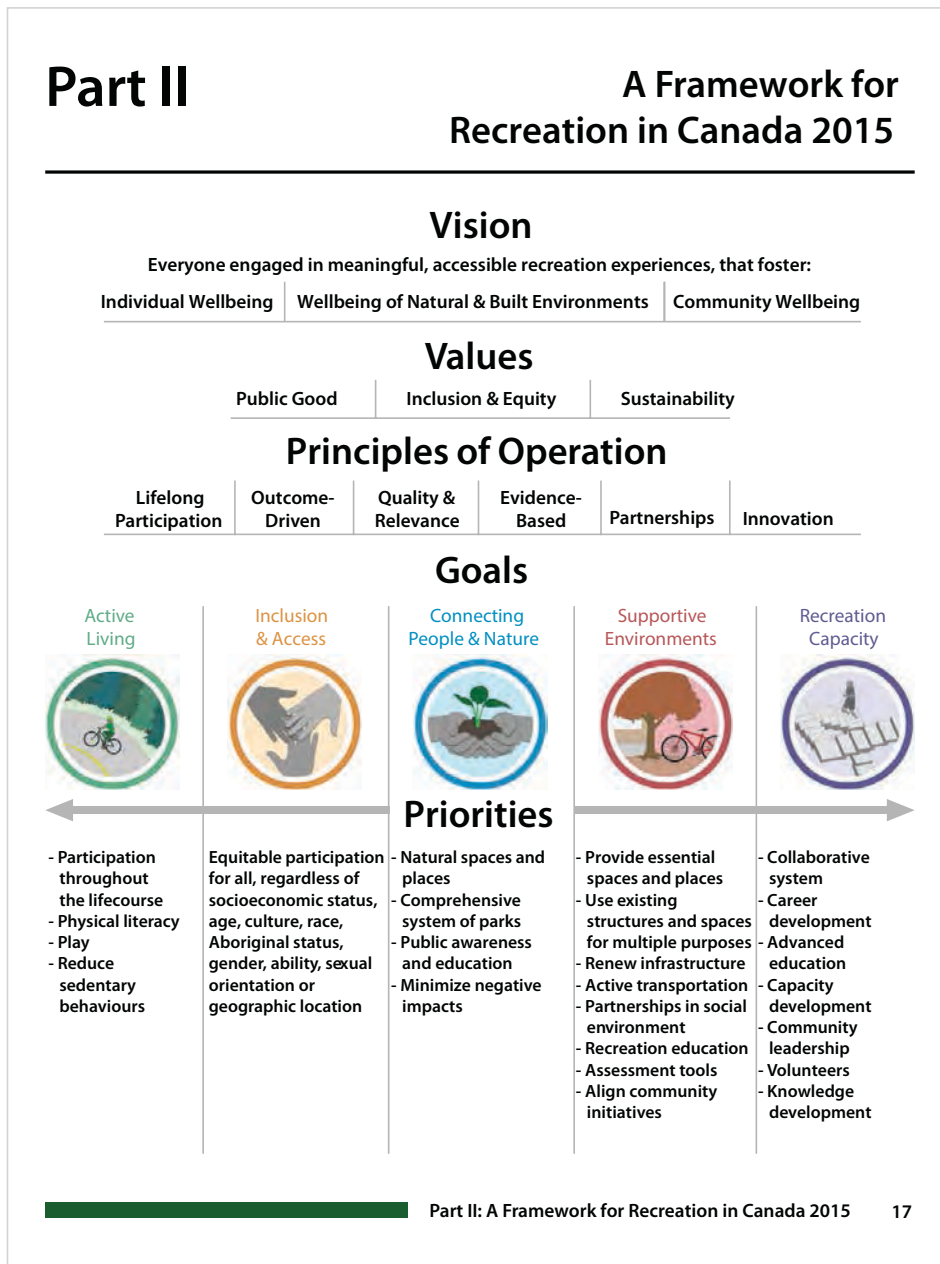
Challenges outlined in the document include: demographic shifts (aging, increasingly diverse and experiencing rapid urbanization); health challenges (sedentary living, chronic disease, and mental health); economic inequities (after tax income inequality); social challenges (lack of social connectedness and cohesion); new and emerging technologies (social media and the lure of sedentary, digital pursuits); the infrastructure deficit (the requirement of major investment to sustain

existing recreation infrastructure as well as build new for expanding populations), and threats to the natural environment (decreasing biodiversity, extreme weather, global warming).

The Framework positions Recreation as a key to addressing these challenges as participation in it leads to:

- Enhanced mental and physical wellbeing;
- Enhanced social wellbeing;
- Stronger families and communities; and
- Enhanced connection with nature.

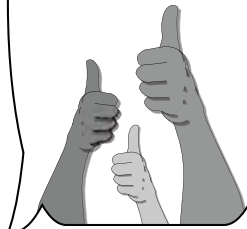
The following graphic summarizes the Framework in regards to its vision, values, principles, goals, and priorities. The framework is meant to guide a collaborative effort across Canada in enhancing the benefits of recreation in communities and positioning these services as essential to the quality of life of all Canadians. Although some of the strategies outlined do not pertain directly to municipal recreation, the framework will be referenced throughout the Master Plan where applicable. Where recommendations are made, the images corresponding to the goals found below are highlights to show alignment with the 2015 Framework.



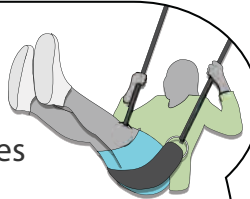
Research conducted and used to develop the aforementioned Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing further reflects the importance that citizens place on the ongoing investment in recreation. A number of the findings illustrated in the following graphic align strongly with prevalent themes identified through the research and consultation undertaken as part of the Master Plan process.

What Canadians Say About Parks and Recreation⁵

98% say it benefits the community and is an essential service



75% say it helps children and youth lead healthy lifestyles



93% say it improves health



77% say its a major factor in crime reduction



89% say it boosts social cohesion



The following vision statement has been identified for recreation, culture, and parks services in Blackfalds. The vision has been aligned with overarching Town planning, historical reference to the 2008 Master Plan, current resident and stakeholder values (as identified through the research and consultation) and the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing.

A Vision for Recreation, Culture, and Parks in Blackfalds:

Blackfalds recreation, culture, and parks services are a catalyst for community and individual wellbeing and bolster healthy growth in the community and region.

In order to further the vision for recreation, culture, and parks in the Town and region, the following **goals** provide guidance for Town decision makers and service delivery stakeholders:

1. **Get more residents, more active, more often.**
2. **Encourage outdoor activity** for residents of all ages.
3. **Balance provision** of physical activity, creative and educational opportunities.
4. Ensure that **all residents have access to quality of life services.**
5. **Strengthen the quality of life service delivery system.**

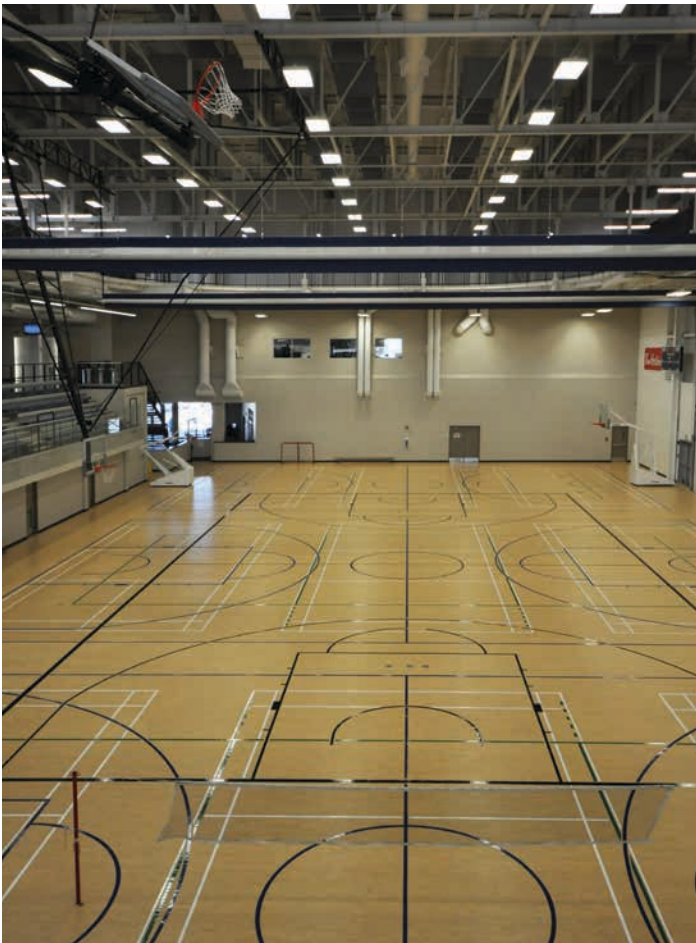
The vision and associated goals are underwritten by core **service delivery values** of the Town. These values include:

- Recreation, culture, and parks services deliver public good; they create benefit in the community that residents cannot escape.
- All residents and visitors serve to benefit from accessing recreation, culture and parks opportunities and as such, equitable access to services is paramount to generating maximum community impact.
- Recreation, culture and parks services must be provided as efficiently as possible, leveraging public investment and ensuring existing and new services are sustainable.
- The benefits of recreation, culture, and parks services are not confined to the municipal boundaries in which they are provided.

Master Plan Objectives

The aforementioned vision and associated goals outline a philosophic base and justification from which recreation, culture, and parks services in Blackfalds should be delivered. This philosophic approach will guide the strategic directions and planning tools presented in Section 5. These strategic directions and planning tools are intended to help guide the delivery of recreation, culture, and parks services and provide concise and clear areas of focus. The continued growth of the community and demand for quality of life infrastructure also makes it inevitable that important decisions will need to be made during the lifespan of this Master Plan on potential capital projects. As such, the Master Plan identifies decision making tools that can assist with, and inform, these decisions.

Seven (7) core objectives have been identified for the Recreation, Culture, and Parks Needs Assessment and Master Plan.



Core Master Plan Objectives:

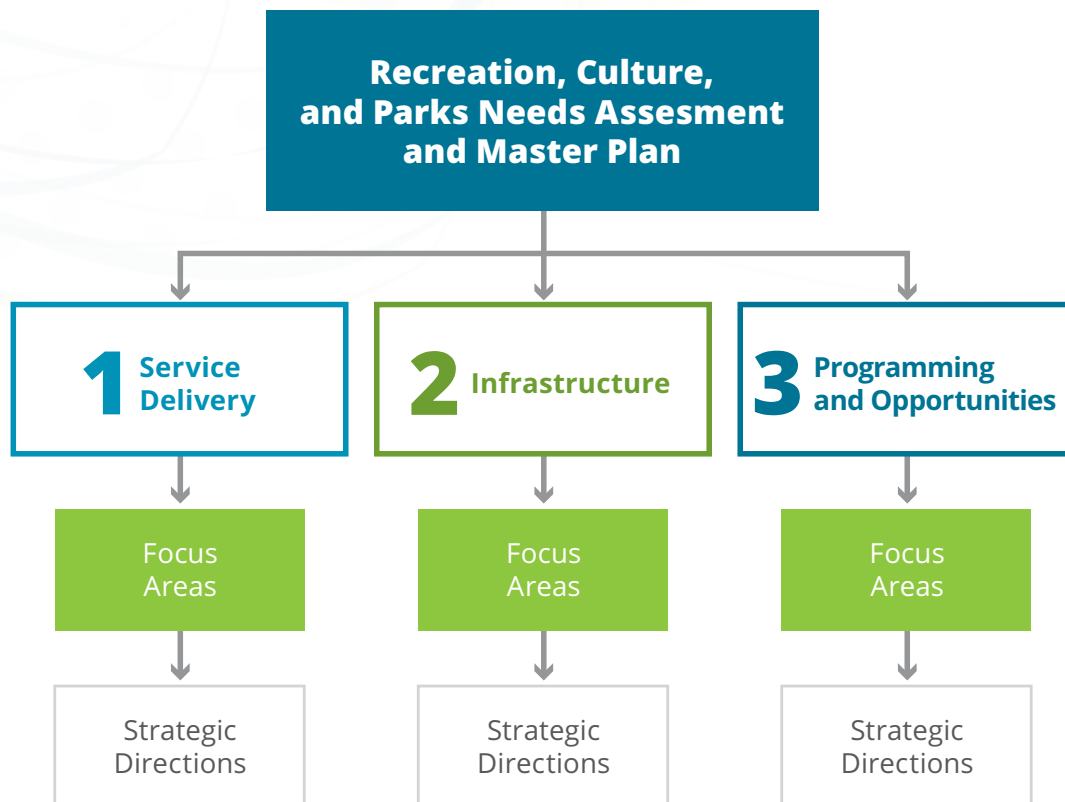
1. Identify and **sustain** current practices that are successful.
2. Identify opportunities to efficiently and effectively **address service delivery gaps**.
3. Identify opportunities for **collaborations at a local and regional level** that can increase efficiently and expand offerings.
4. Identify **clear and concise planning processes and protocols** that ensure decision making is informed and communicated to all stakeholders.
5. Outline **tools and systematic approaches for decision making**.
6. Identify **priorities and associated financial implications**.
7. Outline an **implementation strategy** which positions the Master Plan for success.

Strategic Directions and Planning Tools

The Strategic Directions and Planning Tools identified in this section have been organized into the following three sections.

- 1 Service Delivery**
How can the Town most effectively provide recreation, culture, and parks?
- 2 Infrastructure**
How can the Town sustain existing facilities, amenities, and spaces and plan for future needs?
- 3 Programming, Opportunities, and Events**
How can the Town ensure that recreation, culture, and parks programs and events are relevant and meet community needs?

For each of the three sections, Focus Areas have been identified with corresponding Strategic Directions (recommendations). Outcomes of undertaking the Strategic Direction are also outlined along with the alignment to the Goal areas of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing. Where applicable, key findings from the research are also identified. The format of this section is illustrated in the graphic below.



Service Delivery

Focus Area: Partnerships

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



Partnerships are important in the successful delivery of recreation, culture, and parks services by provide opportunities to leverage available resources and knowledge of multiple entities. The Town of Blackfalds currently engages in a variety of partnerships with a number of public and private sector entities. The Town successfully sought the financial support of Lacombe County for development and ongoing operations of the Abbey Master Builder Centre and continues to dialogue with the County and surrounding urban municipalities (City of Lacombe and City of Red Deer) on issues related to recreation, culture and trail development. Recent planning documents developed by these municipalities have outlined the need for further collaboration with the Town. Lacombe County's recent Recreation Master Plan identifies a framework for a more comprehensive cost sharing agreement.

The Town and Wolf Creek Public Schools are currently working together to formalized a joint use agreement and collaboration has occurred specific to a handful of recent initiatives. The Town has been involved as a stakeholder in the planning and development process for the Iron Ridge Intermediate Campus and long term planning for a potential high school at All-Star Park. Another important form of partnership involves those with community organizations who play a vital role in program and event provision. The Town currently supports many organizations through subsidized access to facilities, grants, and/or other in-kind forms of support.

Partnerships with private sector developers are also significant, especially considering the rapid growth and new residential development that continues to occur in Blackfalds. While some of these partnerships are regulated (i.e. Municipal Reserve dedication) the Town and many private developers have established open lines of communication and explored areas of shared interest. The title sponsorship of the Abbey Master Builder Centre reflects the success of these efforts.

Strategic Direction #1: Develop and enact a Partnership Policy which identifies partnership criteria, expected outcomes from partnerships, and performance measurement related to existing and potential new partnerships. The Policy should be applicable to public and private partnerships.

Outcomes:

- Ensures that partnerships are aligned with overarching Town goals and the vision for recreation, culture, and parks services.
- Establishes clear expectations and protocols for partnerships with the Town.
- Provides performance measurement tools which can be used to assess the success of partnerships.

From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Trends and best practices reflect the increasing role and level of importance that partnerships play in service provision. One recent study found that 76% of Canadian municipalities partner with schools and just under half have formalized partnerships with not for profit organizations.

Strategic Direction #2: Continue to engage the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities in discussions regarding potential areas of collaboration and partnership pertaining to recreation, culture, and outdoor space and program provision.

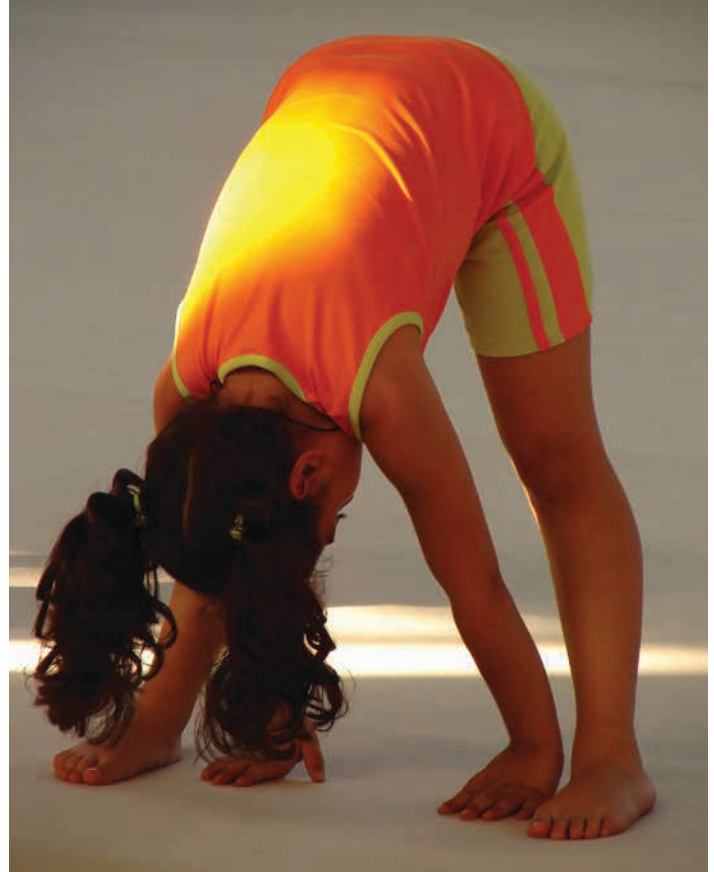
Outcomes:

- Provides opportunities to make the best use of Town and surrounding municipality infrastructure.
- Avoids duplications and creates resources efficiencies.
- Creates a collaborative environment and positive relationships among regional municipalities from which more structured partnerships may emerge in the future.

Strategic Direction #3: Continue to explore shared areas of interest and partnership opportunities with Wolf Creek Public Schools and the Catholic School Division. The finalization of a joint use agreement as well as jointly planning a future high school site and adjacent land planning are examples of joint planning initiatives which could provide mutual benefit.

Outcomes:

- Maximizes the use of school infrastructure for broader community benefit.
- May result in the identification of future infrastructure partnerships or joint initiatives which can provide school and community benefit (i.e. future All-Star Park planning).
- Information sharing can benefit the Town and schools with regards to program planning.



Service Delivery

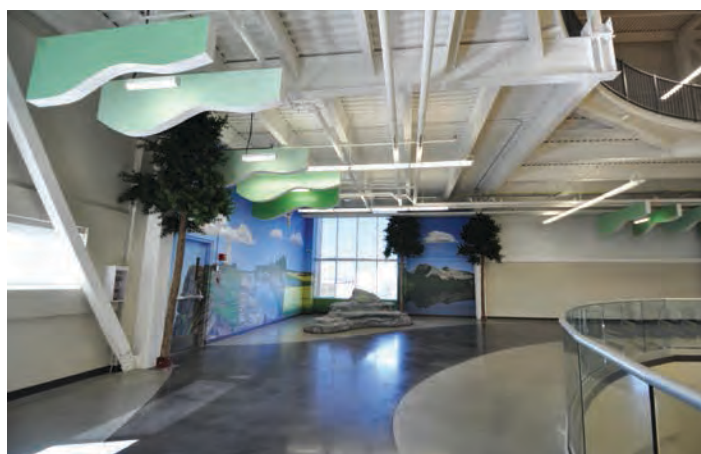
Focus Area: Sponsorship

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



The Town and its community partners have experienced recent success in sponsorship recruitment through the fundraising campaign for the Abbey Master Builder Centre. The Town supported the efforts of the Blackfalds Field House Society whose efforts raised over one million dollars towards the project. The growth of the community and surrounding region may present future opportunities to leverage sponsorship dollars and reduce the burden on public funds for capital projects and other initiatives. However the sponsorship landscape is highly competitive, with numerous municipalities, not for profit groups and private sector entities competing for the same sponsorship dollars. The creation of a structured approach to sponsorship is key to future success in this area.

A successful sponsorship approach also needs to consider community values and aesthetic appeal. In some instances, certain assets with cultural and heritage appeal may not be ideal or appropriate to include in the sponsorship inventory. The 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan identifies the need for, and advantages of, park theming. Sponsorship may provide opportunities to theme parks but should be pursued using well understood guidelines and design principles.



Strategic Direction #4: Formalize a Sponsorship Policy. The Policy should outline which assets (or categories of assets) are available for sponsorship and establish clear guidelines for future sponsorship campaigns and initiatives.

Outcomes:

- Creates clarity among internal and external stakeholders as to which assets are available for sponsorship and which are to be protected (i.e. for community heritage purposes).
- Establishes clear protocols and expectations which can help guide future capital fundraising initiatives.

Strategic Direction #5: Conduct a town-wide evaluation of potential recreation, culture, and parks assets. The evaluation should identify assets with potential saleability and establish values (or ranges of values) for each with consideration given to current market conditions.

Outcomes:

- Creates a clear inventory of community assets with sponsorship potential.
- Provides the necessary data from which future sponsorship planning can occur.
- Ensures that recreation, culture, and parks assets are appropriately valued.

Strategic Direction #6: Using the evaluation data and Sponsorship Policy, undertake a town-wide parks, trails, and outdoor amenity sponsorship campaign.

Outcomes:

- Potential to generate new sources of funding for parks, trails and outdoor space projects and initiatives.

Service Delivery

Focus Area: Group and Volunteer Support

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



The Town currently provides a number of supports to organizations operating in the Town and local region. Town operated facilities are utilized by a number of groups and are generally provided at a subsidized rate. This form of support is financially significant, especially as it pertains to major community facilities such as the Multi-Plex and Abbey Master Builder Centre. An investment in staffing resources over the last number of years has further allowed the Town to provide addition in-kind supports and resources to community organizations. Town Community Services staff liaisons with a number of groups and in many instances facilitates access to available resources. The Town has also invested in a Volunteer Programmer position which operates through Family and Community Support Services. This position helps coordinate volunteer awareness and recognition initiatives and links interested volunteers and organizations that require assistance.

Supporting groups and promoting volunteerism in the community is important for a number of reasons. Community groups are vital to the provision of recreation, culture and sport opportunities and ensuring that groups delivering programs and events are strong will in-turn ensure the continued existence of these opportunities. Should these groups weaken or ultimately cease to operate, the municipality is often looked to for the continued provision of the program or event. A proactive investment in group support can mitigate this situation. An evolving, growing community like Blackfalds will also be challenged to meet future resident demands for the diversity of program and event offerings. Proactively supporting emerging groups and developing volunteer capacity can help address some of these future demands and challenges by fostering an environment for which new activity offerings can take hold and have success.



Strategic Direction #7: Maintain current levels of

group and volunteer support and, where possible, identify new supports that can be provided.

Outcomes:

- Continues to reflect that the Town values and supports community organizations.
- Ensures the continued growth and capacity of community organizations.
- Ensures that the capacity exists to meet the needs of a growing community.
- Fosters an environment in which new and emerging groups can prosper (resulting in increased program and event offerings and diversity).



From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Stakeholder and community group consultation reflected a general sense of satisfaction with support provided by the Town. However the evolving nature of volunteerism and rapid growth of the community suggest that the Town will need to continue being proactive in this area.

Strategic Direction #8: Identify and explore opportunities to provide group and volunteer supports on a regional level.

Outcomes:

- Reflects the reality that many existing community groups operate regionally and across municipal boundaries.
- Best leverages and utilizes available resources, relationships, and knowledge.
- Demonstrates a spirit of collaboration and support.



Service Delivery

Focus Area: Marketing and Promotions

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



In recent years the Town has recognized the need to enhance efforts in the promotions and marketing of recreation, culture, and parks. The Town has had tremendous recent success in this area through the addition of a staff position dedicated to promotions and marketing and a number of new and ongoing initiatives. The Town publishes a Community Guide, utilizing internal staff resources, twice annually which provides information on programs and services offered both directly by the Town and community groups. The Town has also established a presence on social media platforms and capitalized on the traffic at the Abbey Master Builder Centre to promote various programs and events.

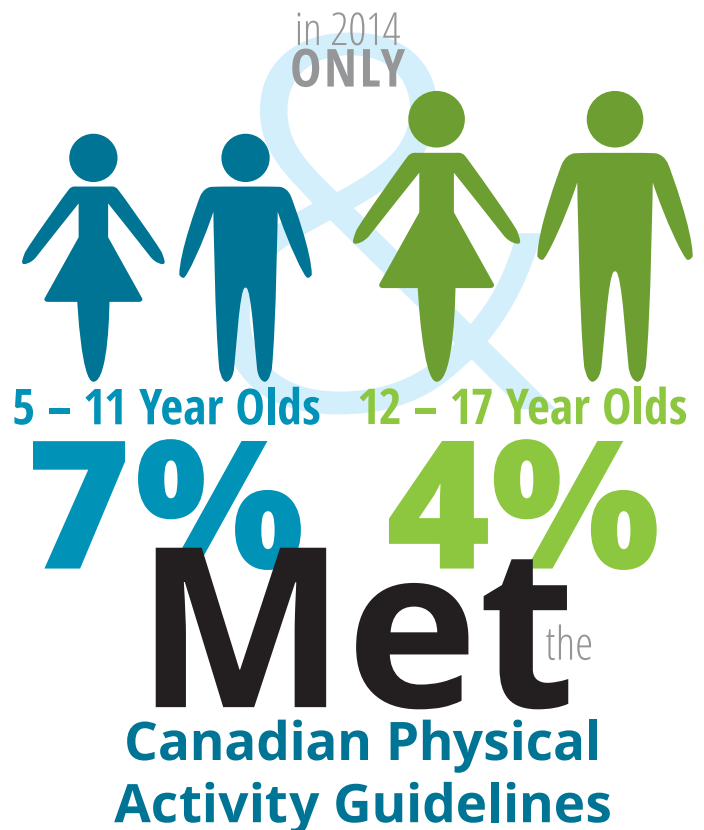
From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Overall societal physical activity levels are concerning. In fact, in 2014 only 7% of 5 to 11 year olds and 4% of 12 to 17 year olds met the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.

Strategic Direction #9: Continue to build on the momentum and successes of existing marketing and promotions initiatives.

Outcomes:

- Continued investment in recreation, culture, and parks participation and overall community wellness.
- Existing promotions and marketing initiatives create a baseline from which efforts could be expanded in the future.



Strategic Direction #10: Expand messaging to further promote the broad based benefits of participation in recreation, culture, and parks activities.

Current messaging focuses primarily on identifying and explaining specific opportunities; this strategic direction suggests that messaging should also look to motivate residents by promoting holistic benefits such as enhanced health and wellness, sense of community, and social opportunities. This added messaging will complement existing efforts and bolster the benefits of recreation, culture, and parks in the community.

Outcomes:

- Opportunity to further increase resident participation in recreation, culture, and parks activities.
- Messaging reflects community values and the benefits of the Town's ongoing investment in these services.
- Creates flexibility within marketing and promotions (broader messaging is adaptable and encompassing).

Strategic Direction #11: Cross-promote recreation, culture, and parks facilities and opportunities with the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities.

Outcomes:

- Reduces the need to duplicate infrastructure and programming in each community.
- Potential to increase utilization of facilities and participation in programs.
- Demonstrates regional collaboration and may potentially position both communities for future funding opportunities.
- Efficiently leverages available resources.



Service Delivery

Focus Area: Public Art

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



The 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan identified the need to enhance community beautification and aesthetics, particular in the downtown and other public spaces (such as parks). The Plan suggested that a downtown theme was needed and that the Town should develop architectural controls/guidelines. Park theming through enhanced signage, amenities, and finishes is also identified in the Plan as an opportunity to enhance the overall beautification of public spaces.

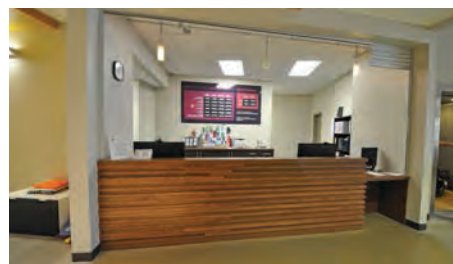
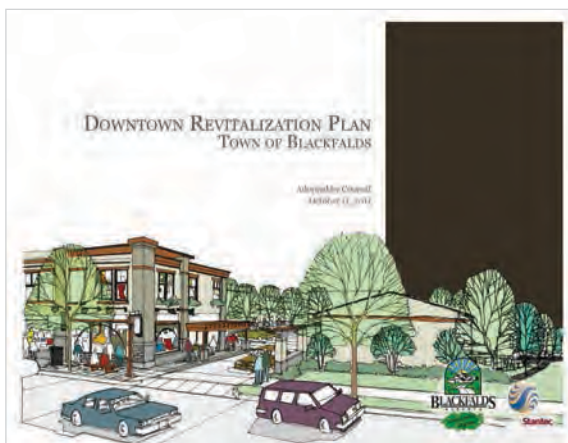
The Town has made progress in this area over the last number of years. Enhancements have been made to parks spaces and a Downtown Revitalization Plan was created in 2012 which outlines specific architectural and streetscape guidelines. The Downtown Revitalization Plan also identifies potential mechanisms that could be pursued to procure future funding for downtown and public space initiatives and the importance of engaging both the public and private sector in future discussions. The design and aesthetic appeal of the Abbey Master Builder Centre and surrounding outdoor spaces and amenities further reflects the priority that the Town has given in recent years to creating attractive and welcoming public spaces.

Strategic Direction #12: The Town should create a Public Art Policy to help guide the design and planning for future public recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure. The Policy should consider:

- Thresholds (capital costs) for which the Policy applies;
- Previous planning (Downtown Revitalization Plan, Municipal Development Plan); and
- Engagement and involvement of existing arts and heritage groups in the community and region.

Outcomes:

- Embeds the importance of quality public spaces in the planning and design process (for public infrastructure).
- Reflects the value that the Town places on arts, culture, and heritage.
- Enhances community character and aesthetics.



Service Delivery

Focus Area: Tourism

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



In contrast to other sectors of the tourism industry, sport and cultural tourism continues to thrive and grow at a national and provincial level. Blackfalds continues to experience successes as a regional destination for minor and recreational ball and hockey tournaments. All-Star Park and the Multi-Plex Arena provide valuable assets which facilitate these successes. The Abbey Master Builder Centre, while primarily a spontaneous use recreational facility, also enhances the Town's ability to host tournaments and events in the Field House Gymnasium. The community's location along the Queen Elizabeth Highway II and proximity to larger urban markets may also position Blackfalds for future success.

Strategic Direction #13: Continue to use recreation, culture, and parks as a vehicle for sport tourism efforts. This should be accomplished in the following ways:

- Work with community groups to identify event hosting and tourism opportunities, and where possible provide supports (e.g. formalized grant program).
- Consider event hosting and tourism opportunities in future infrastructure initiatives (e.g. All-Star Park concept design, future Multi-Plex expansion).
- Identify opportunities to create cultural and heritage attractions or features that can be integrated into functional facilities or spaces (i.e. tourism information centre, park feature signage, etc.).

Outcomes:

- Enhanced community vibrancy and pride.
- Potential to drive retail growth through increased visitor traffic.
- Revenue generation opportunities (e.g. camping at All-Star Park, increased use of the Abbey Master Builder Centre by non-residents during tournaments/events).
- May help support future recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure development.

From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Sport and cultural tourism spending continues to increase on a national and provincial level.



Service Delivery

Focus Area: Customer Interface

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



The opening of the Abbey Master Builder Centre in 2014 has dramatically changed the frequency of interaction between Town staff and the public. While the Town has operated or supported facilities and directly programs for a number of years, the volume of traffic that visits or uses the Abbey Master Builder Centre is significant and creates a new level of “interface” between the Town and both local and regional residents. Trends and the experiences of other facility providers clearly demonstrate the importance of user satisfaction and “quality of experience” to a facilities long term success.

The Town has recognized the importance of the user experience through the investment in a Guest Services Coordinator position at the Abbey Master Builder Centre. Through the Recreation, Culture, and Parks Needs Assessment and Master Plan research process, an intercept survey was fielded during July 2015 in order to gather facility patron’s feedback on the facility and overall experience. The collection of data through this exercise and others is important and can help ensure that staff interactions and facility protocols best meet user needs.

Strategic Direction #14: Continue to place a high priority on the user experience and invest in customer service training on an ongoing basis.

Outcomes:

- Ensures that user expectations are best met.
- Creates positive interactions between residents and Town staff.
- Helps ensure that facility utilization remains high.

From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Intercept surveying conducted with Abbey Master Builder Centre patrons revealed strong levels of satisfaction and the importance of the overall facility experience.

Strategic Direction #15: Collect user satisfaction data on a regular basis.

This data could be collected using intercept surveys such as the one conducted for this Master Plan and may be best completed during two separate seasons (e.g. July and January). Collecting this data on an ongoing, structured and annual basis presents the opportunity to benchmark satisfaction levels and track patron trends.

Outcomes:

- Provides data that can help inform facility operations (e.g. management policies, program offerings, promotions and marketing).
- Creates a performance measurement tool that can help assess success and required areas of improvement.
- Demonstrates to facility patron and visitors that efforts are being made to improve the quality of experience.

Infrastructure

Focus Area: Management Objectives

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



As previously described, the Town of Blackfalds has made a significant investment in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure in recent years. Much of this investment resulted from the 2008 Facilities and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan and other planning undertaken by the Town. Moving forward, it will be critical for the Town to balance sustaining its current infrastructure while meeting the needs and demands that will arise with continued growth. With growth will also come an increased demand for the diversity of facility offerings available and in some instances higher expectations for services. This will require the Town to manage expectations while looking at creative and resource conscience ways to meet these expanded infrastructure related desires.

Strategic Direction #16: Considering current and anticipate needs, it is suggested that the Town adopt and implement the following management objectives for recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure.

1. Ensure that existing infrastructure is sustained before major new capital development initiatives are undertaken.
2. Place a priority on expanding the diversity of recreation, culture, and parks offerings at both existing facilities and in the planning of new infrastructure.
3. Continue to undertake and utilize strategic feasibility and business planning documentation (and associated tools) when considering future infrastructure enhancement or new development.
4. View all potential investment in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure through a quality of life "lens". *E.g. What potential areas of investment provide the greatest 'quality of life' benefit for residents?*
5. Balance developing community recreation, culture, and parks "hubs" with the need to ensure the adequate geographic distribution of facilities and amenities.

Outcomes:

- Creates internal alignment regarding future direction and priorities.
- Best positions the Town to meet resident needs and expectations.
- Demonstrates a well thought-out and structured approach to the provision of recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure provision.

Infrastructure

Focus Area: Parks and Open Spaces (and Associated Amenities)

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



The Town oversees a wide range of parks and open spaces that provide residents and visitors to Blackfalds with numerous opportunities to be active in outdoor settings. The Town's asset base includes structured or dedicated spaces such as sport fields and ball diamonds as well as unstructured spaces such as playgrounds, parks and trails. Passive natural spaces also provide recreational benefit and are important to overall community beautification and wellness. The 2008 Recreation and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan placed an emphasis on parks and outdoor spaces. The Plan identified numerous tools and standards which were intended to provide additional structure and ensure consistency in the delivery. Improving overall community beautification and aesthetics was also a key theme of the previous Plan which provided a number of guidelines in this area and suggested future planning that should occur.

Since 2008, the Town has executed on a number of the themes and suggestions outlined in the Needs Assessment Master Plan. Significant investment has also been made in neighborhood playgrounds and community wide infrastructure, which has included the Abbey Master Builder Centre Site and installation of a playground at the Community Cultural Centre. The Town has also worked to establish partnerships in regional trail development (such as the Lacombe to Red Deer regional trail).

The intent of this Focus Area is to build on the momentum of the town in parks and outdoor space provision while identifying new priority areas. As the community continues to grow it will be important for the Town to continue undertaking a structured and well-thought out approach to parks and outdoor space planning and development. Critical to this will continued positive and mutually beneficial relationships with private sector developers as well as community and regional partnerships.

Strategic Direction #17: Continue to utilize the existing Parks and Open Space Classification System (as outlined in the 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessments and Master Plan). This classification system is intended to help manage existing assets and provide baseline standards to guide future parks and outdoor space planning. The minimum development standards outlined, as well as the municipal reserve dedication considerations, should be revisited and updated on a regular basis using accepted industry practices and standards and through internal dialogue with the Town's Planning and Development Department.

Outcomes:

- Structured approach to the management of existing assets.
- Ensures that future development occurs to an acceptable and agreed to level.
- Ensures that future parks and outdoor spaces are safe, useable, and meet resident needs.
- Communicates acceptable standards to internal and external stakeholders.

Parks and Open Spaces Classification System

Classification: Community Parks and Facilities

Description: Designated sites that provide for the active recreation, social and cultural needs of all residents of Blackfalds as well as for those living in the surrounding rural areas. Community parks are designed for recreation activities such as structured sport, unstructured sports, relaxation, and community events. These parks provide recreation facilities and amenities that complement those provided in Neighborhood Parks, but are generally developed to a higher standard.

Minimum Development Standards:

- Linked to trail network.
- Ideally multi-use sites and conjunction with indoor facilities.
- Should be integrated into natural areas.
- Provide at least one children's play structure (ages 2 – 14).
- Amenity provision to include sitting/gathering areas with benches, garbage receptacles, and picnic tables.

Existing Sites: All-Star Park, Multi-Plex site, Abbey Master Builder Centre site, Civic Cultural Centre site (Tales Water Spray Park, playground), Cemetery, school sites.

Classification: Neighborhood Parks

Description: Designed to support activities such as relaxation, socialization, active play and children's play. Should include a play structure that is designed to meet the activity requirements of preschool aged children. Should be located on local (neighborhood) streets for safety and security purposes. Public access should be fenced along all private property.

Minimum Development Standards:

- Located within neighborhoods
- Minimum size of 0.3 hectares (0.74 acres).
- Appropriate configuration (geometry) to maximize useable space.
- Consistent grade, level, and seed standards.

- Informal, level play area of a minimum 350m² (min width of 12 metres)
- Landscaped at 75 trees per hectare
- Landscaped berm of 1.2 metres in height with maximum slopes of 4:1
- Minimum two benches and one garbage receptacle.
- Play structure designed to meet the activity needs of pre-school aged children (minimum 250 sq. m, 20 metre set back from roadway).

Existing Sites: Cottonwood Meadows Park, Mickey Lang Park, Harvest Meadows park, Rolling Hills Park.

Classification: Linear Parks and Open Spaces

Description: Includes all developed trails, right-of-ways, buffers, boulevards and public utility lots (PUL). With the exception of trails, Linear Parks and Open Spaces lands serve primarily non-recreation related functions. This category is divided into three sub-categories each with specific minimum development standards: Trail Network, Boulevards & Buffers, and Utility Right-of-Ways.

Minimum Development Standards:

- Multi-use Trails
 - » Separated from streets and sidewalks
 - » Width of 3.0 metres, asphalt surface.
 - » Corridor width 6 – 10 metres.
 - » Intersect with street at 90 degrees, with curb and crosswalk stripping.
 - » Maximum grade of 8%.
 - » Safety and directional signage.
 - » Sufficient trail amenities (rest nodes, lighting, guard rails, garbage receptacles).
- Sidepath Trails
 - » Width of 2.5 metres, concrete or asphalt surface
 - » Intersect with street at 90 degrees, with curb and crosswalk stripping.
 - » Separated from streets by landscape boulevards.
 - » Safety and directional signage.
 - » Minimal amenity requirements.
 - » Street intersections to be unobstructed by cars, buildings, and vegetation.

- Connector Trails
 - » Width of 2.0 metres, concrete or asphalt surface.
 - » Intersect with street at 90 degrees, with curb and crosswalk stripping.
 - » Corridor width of less than 6 metres.
 - » Bollards or other type of physical deterrent to restrict access to vehicular traffic.
 - » Safety and directional signage.
 - » No trail amenities.
- Nature Trails
 - » Width of 1.5 – 2.5 metres.
 - » Compacted shale, gravel or wood chip surface.
 - » Sufficient trail amenities (rest nodes, lighting, guard rails, garbage receptacles).

Note: Updated Boulevards and Buffers and Utility Right-of-Ways standards are suggested in other planning documents.

Existing Sites: Located throughout the town.

Classification: Natural Areas

Description: Includes natural lowlands, sloughs, tree stands and preserved outdoor spaces.

Minimum Development Standards:

- As per previous planning conducted by the Town:
 - » All natural areas shall be dedicated as Environmental Reserve (ER).
 - » Development setback of 15 metres shall be applied to the top and bottom of slopes which exceed a 15% grade.
 - » Development setback of 15 metres from the high water mark of a Crown owned water body will be applied.
 - » Natural Areas disturbed by subdivision development shall be restored to the appropriate and defined standard.
 - » Parks and open space, which occur adjacent to Natural Areas, shall be designed to complement the natural areas.
 - » Trails through Natural Areas shall be developed to the “Natural Trails” standards described in this plan.

Existing Sites: Located throughout the town.

Classification: Special Purpose Areas

Description: Includes specified community nodes (e.g. downtown), highway corridors and crossing areas, stormwater management facilities, and specific park facilities and amenities (e.g. playground structures, sport fields, toboggan hills).

Minimum Development Standards:

- As per industry standards and to meet appropriate levels of play/use.

Existing Sites: Located at park sites and throughout the community.

The 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessment Master Plan also identified a number of suggested practices related to the management of Municipal Reserve. In order to provide the best value to the town and help plan for future parks, recreation and open space needs, it is suggested that the following be considered when allocating municipal reserve during land development.

- Storm water management facilities are not to be accepted for municipal reserve dedication.
- Trails are to be considered part of the transportation system and therefore no municipal reserve credit will be applied to trail development.
- Cash in lieu may be taken in the commercial and industrial context; cash in lieu should not be taken in residential areas.



Strategic Direction #18: Engage internal Town stakeholders (e.g. Planning and Development Department, Council, Senior Administration) and private sector developers in a conversation regarding future development standards. Resulting from this engagement should be the following:

1. Updated, and agreed to, development processes and design standards.
2. Strategies to encourage continued growth and new development while ensuring that quality and proper planning continues to be at the forefront.
3. Continue to ensure that municipal reserve (MR) dedications are accepted and used in the most appropriate and effective manner.

Outcomes:

- Foster continued growth and quality of life.
- Buy-in and collaboration among all stakeholders.
- Ensure quality in the planning, design and development phases.
- Ensure uniformity and consistency in the provision of parks and outdoor spaces (and associated amenities).

Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Picnic Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • Consultation revealed that opportunities exist to improve service levels (satisfaction and knowledge of opportunities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include picnic spaces in All-Star Park concept planning. • Identify opportunities to include picnic spaces in existing park spaces where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to include picnic spaces in future park and open space development.
Off Leash Dog Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • Not currently available in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential sites in the community that are suitable for a dog off-leash area. • Develop suitable dog off-leash park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate planning for a second park when the town’s population is nearing or exceeds 15,000.

Strategic Direction #19: Consider the following strategies to meet outdoor infrastructure priority areas.

Of note is that a Project Prioritization Model has been developed and is explained in the Infrastructure Planning Tools Focus Area on Page 47. While the following chart suggests timing for potential development or amenity upgrades, the Model is used to further prioritize more defined projects and help guide decision making under the realization that resource limitations exist. In an ideal world, all of the strategies outlined would be implemented—the prioritization process helps identify where priorities should lie if not all projects can be afforded by the town.



Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • High levels of utilization (82% of households). • Relatively high levels of satisfaction (second highest among all Town services). • Provision of these amenities is currently trending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the maintenance and upkeep of existing trail assets. • Implement the 2015 Trails Master Plan as outlined herein. • Include a major arterial trail in All-Star Park concept planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new residential areas have sufficient trail access. • Develop as an early phase component in All-Star Park.
Sport Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • 26% of households utilize sport fields. • Community demographics suggest that multi-use rectangular sport fields will be in high demand in future years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include sport fields in All-Star Park concept planning. • Work with user groups to maximize utilization of existing fields. • Amass land through the MR process and other opportunities and identify a location in east Blackfalds for a future multi-field site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, develop in partnership with Wolf Creek Public Schools as part of new school development at All-Star Park. • Initiate the planning of a second major multi-field site when the town's population is nearing or exceeds 20,000.
Amphitheatres/Event Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • Small outdoor amphitheatre space was developed as part of the Abbey Master Builder Centre site. • Community does not currently have a large outdoor performing/ event space. • Provision of these park amenities is currently trending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote increased utilization of the outdoor amphitheatre space at the Abbey Master Builder Centre. • Consider outdoor event and gathering spaces in All-Star Park concept planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the planning of a major outdoor gathering and performance space when the town's population is nearing or exceeds 20,000.

Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Campgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High community priority as per engagement findings. • Opportunities exist to improve service levels (satisfaction and knowledge of opportunities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify enhancement opportunities for the existing site as part of All-Star Park concept plan. • Explore regional partnerships and collaborations. • Identify potential sites for a waste sump station to accommodate expanded capacity and overall community needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand campground (capacity and service levels).
Green Field Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. • Satisfaction is relatively high (57% satisfaction for manicured parks, 50% satisfaction for passive park spaces) • Trends suggest these spaces are increasingly valued by residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent maintenance and standards. • Identify opportunities for these spaces in existing parks, neighborhoods and public areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate provision in new growth areas.
Beach Volleyball Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. • Provision does not currently exist in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider picnic spaces in All-Star Park concept planning. 	
Bike Skills Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. • Demand exists among youth population (top 5 outdoor priority for students). • Provision of these amenities is currently trending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in All-Star Park concept planning. • Explore community partnership and fundraising opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop at All-Star Park.

Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Skateboard Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. • Skateboard Park is currently located at the Multi-Plex. • Fundraising initiatives and concept planning are ongoing by a community group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in All-Star Park concept planning. • Continue to collaborate with and support community fundraising efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop at All-Star Park.
Child Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground provision has the highest level of satisfaction among all services. • Not identified as a significant overall community priority (for new development) at this time. • Town has made a significant investment in these spaces over the last 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop annual inspection programs to ensure user safety. • Develop life cycle replacement budgets for playground structures • Identify opportunities to include natural play features and spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with developers to ensure sufficient provision in all new and planned neighborhoods. • Initiate the planning of another major community level playground space when the town's population is nearing or exceeds 12,000 residents.
Track and Field Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. • Important amenity for high schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in All-Star Park concept planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnership opportunities with Wold Creek Public Schools in conjunction with new school development.
Water Spray Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identified as a significant overall community priority (for new development) at this time. • New spray park has been developed recently. • Amenity continues to be in-demand and trending regionally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that life cycle and amenity refreshment budgeting occurs for this asset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the planning of a second water spray park when the town's population is or exceeds 20,000 residents.

Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Outdoor Skating Rinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not identified as a significant overall community priority (for new development). Outdoor boarded rink is maintained on the Multi-Plex site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further explore opportunities for the Outdoor Skating Rink to meet community demand for structured/ program ice (e.g. covering and programming the surface). Consider opportunities for non-boarded outdoor skating areas at existing park spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate the planning and development of another boarded outdoor rink when the town's population is nearing or exceeds 12,000 residents. Integrate non-boarded skating areas into future storm retention ponds and water features in the community.
Ball Diamonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-Star Park is highly utilized and desired by adult recreational leagues and tournaments. Feedback from stakeholders suggests that minor ball is on the rise and that additional capacity may be needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor local ball trends and utilization data. Work with ball groups to maximize the use of existing diamonds and identify cost effective opportunities for enhancements/ adaptations (e.g. portable mounds). Develop a 5th diamond at All-Star Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate the planning of a second major multi-field site when the town's population is nearing or exceeds 20,000.
Tennis Courts/Pickleball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not identified as a significant overall community priority (for new development). Pickleball is a trending activity among older adult populations. Utilization of the current tennis courts is unknown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor utilization of the tennis courts (and when possible collect data using spot checks or other methods). Continue to maintain tennis courts to a safe and useable standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider developing multi-use tennis/ pickleball courts if community demographics shift.

Outdoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town public service responsibility include the provision of cemetery services. As demographics shift in the community, the market for cemetery facilities may evolve and increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a cemeteries master plan may be required to help guide specific decisions related to cemetery location, allocation of different types of areas to meet market needs, and amenities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide full service cemetery services in the community with sufficient capacity to serve current and future populations.
Tree Farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of a tree farm to stock Town operated parks and public areas would enable appropriate tree lifecycle process and provide the foundation for prudent urban canopy planning and implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look to acquire or repurpose existing public lands to support a planting program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically locate other tree planting areas on public lands to develop supply and generate aesthetic appeal.

A Trails Master Plan map has also been developed in order to identify future trails connections that should be developed in Blackfalds as funding resources become available.

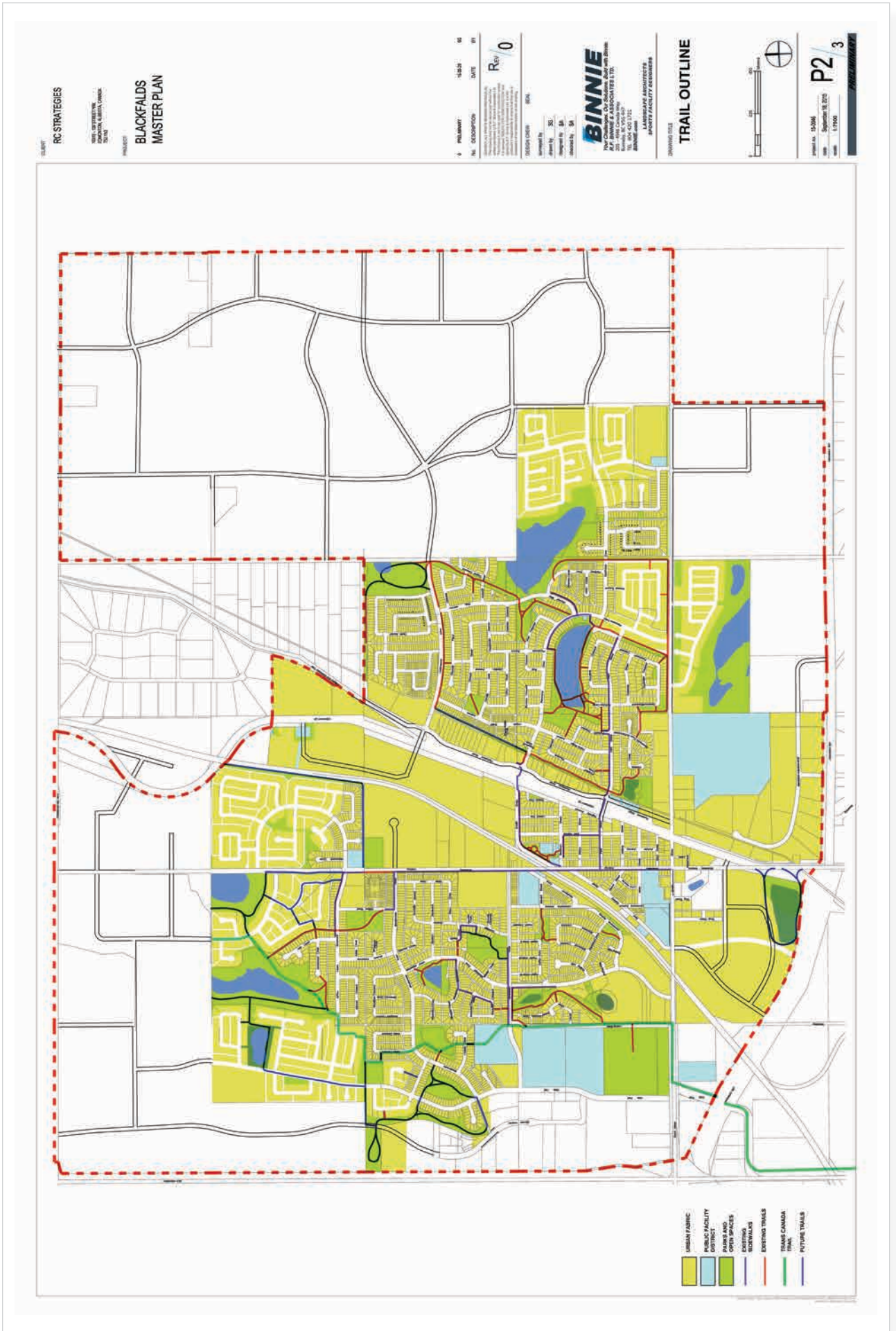


Potential Parks and Outdoor Space Projects

Based on the strategic directions outlined in the previous chart, the following parks and open space projects have been identified for further exploration and prioritization using the Infrastructure Planning Tools identified in the following Focus Area. These specific projects have been identified based on their potential demand and the opportunity to address some of needs or demands suggested in the chart.

- All-Star Park Expansion
- Development of dog off-leash area(s)
- Sport field and ball diamond development

Trail Master Plan



Infrastructure

Focus Area: Indoor Facilities

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



Strategic Direction #20: Invest in life cycle and amenity refreshment budgeting.

Outcomes:

- Ensures that future service levels will be sustained.
- Keeps facilities fresh and appealing to users (resulting in maximized utilization levels and cost recovery).
- Lessens the future burden on the Town to raise significant capital funds.

Life cycle budget is the practice of setting aside funds on an annual basis for the replacement (of major renovation) of a facility when it is near the end of its useable life span. Undertaking this practice will ensure that the facility and associated services offered at major recreation and cultural facilities are sustained. Annual life cycle allocations can be determined by using a percentage of the facilities capital cost or replacement value (2% is often used as an industry standard for life cycle budgeting). The related practice of amenity refreshment budgeting can help ensure that funds are available in the future for the replacement or addition of amenities (e.g. play features in pools). Doing so will help sustain utilization by keeping facilities up to date and attractive.



From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Assessments conducted of current indoor infrastructure revealed that these facilities are well maintained and in good condition. However maintaining current service levels will require an estimated reinvestment of \$255,000 over the next 5 years. Intercept surveying conducted with Abbey master Builder Centre patrons revealed strong levels of satisfaction and the importance of the overall facility experience.

Strategic Direction #21: Consider the following strategies to meet indoor infrastructure priority areas

A Project Prioritization Model has been developed and is explained in the Infrastructure Planning Tools Focus Area on Page 47. While the following chart suggests timing for potential development or amenity upgrades, the Model is used to further prioritize projects and help guide decision making under the realization that resource limitations exist. In an ideal world, all of the strategies outlined would be implemented—the prioritization process helps identify where priorities should lie if not all projects can be afforded by the town.

Indoor Facility/Amenity Strategies

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Indoor Aquatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High community priority as per engagement findings. Existing modern outdoor pool facility. Indoor aquatics facilities are available in the immediate region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain the existing outdoor pool. Work with the City of Lacombe to balance indoor and outdoor service provision for residents of both municipalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider development of an indoor aquatics facility when the town's population is nearing or at 15,000 – 20,000 residents. Develop a feasibility study for an indoor pool with regional partners (consider covering the outdoor pool, building an indoor pool elsewhere in town, and regional options).
Youth Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High community priority as per engagement findings. Identified as a need during recent and past stakeholder engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify programming opportunities at existing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of a dedicated youth centre facility when town population is nearing or exceeds 12,000 or if suitable partnership opportunities exist.
Performing Arts/ Show Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate community priority as per engagement findings. Provision exists in the market area. Other municipalities in the region are exploring development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market existing regional spaces to local residents as venue options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential to supplement school investment to include performing arts spaces in new schools. Explore feasibility of Town sponsored community theatre space once population reaches 15,000 – 20,000.
Indoor Child Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently provided at the Abbey Master Builder Centre. Engagement findings suggest that need is being met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain current space at the Abbey Master Builder Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in new facility development where feasible.

Indoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

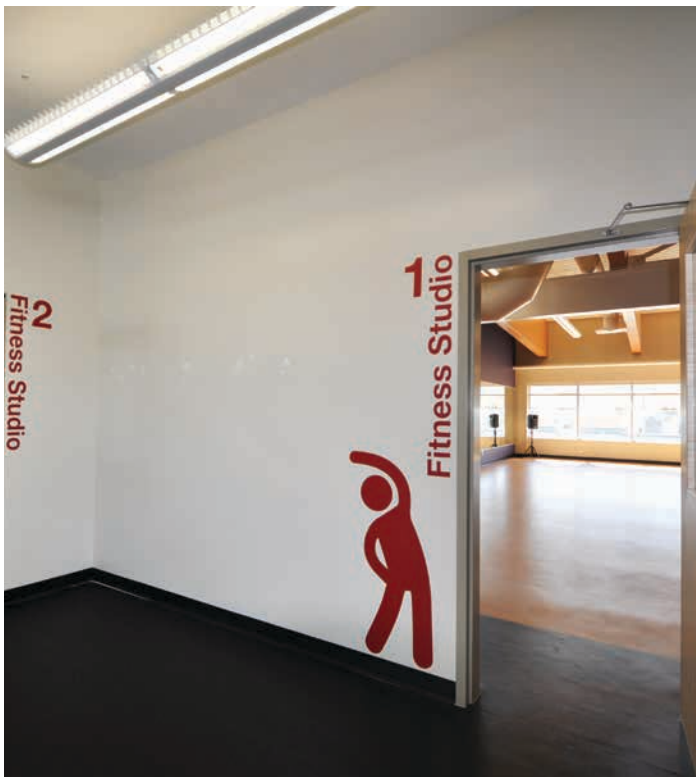
Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Indoor Ice Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization at existing Multi-Plex arena is high. High community priority as per engagement findings. Other municipalities in the region are exploring development and/or enhancement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain existing Multi-Plex through reinvestment and appropriate life cycle budgeting. Begin to program/rent the outdoor rink at the Multi-Plex to meet short term ice needs. Explore regional (Town of Blackfalds, City of Lacombe and arenas in nearby rural communities located throughout Lacombe County) ice scheduling and allocation to meet short term excess demand. Develop a feasibility study for a new indoor ice sheet that includes participation/ input from regional partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target provision ratio for indoor ice should range between 1 sheet per 6,000 – 7,500 residents. As incremental thresholds are approached, feasibility analysis will be required to confirm market demand prior to ultimate decision making.
Dryland Facilities (gymnasiums and field house types spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major component of the Abbey Master Builder Centre. New school development is likely to provide some level of community use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain existing field house reinvestment and appropriate life cycle budgeting. Work with school divisions to secure and enhance access to dry land spaces in schools (joint use agreement and joint programming) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential to supplement school investment to create larger dry land spaces in new schools with public funding supplement.
Fitness/Wellness Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement findings suggest that community needs are being met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain existing fitness facility through reinvestment and appropriate lifecycle budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in new facility development where feasible.

Indoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Curling Rinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low to moderate overall community priority. • Sport is sustained in some areas but experiencing overall decline. • Facilities are available in local region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market regional opportunities for residents to engage in the sport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore regional partnership options for new facility development if future demand exists (due to increase in curling participation).
Arts and Culture Program Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal opportunities currently exist in the community. • Importance of provision has been recognized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program existing multipurpose spaces throughout town facilities with creative arts and culture opportunities. • Market regional arts and culture facilities as venue options for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in all future facility development.
Public Arts and Heritage Interpretation and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal opportunities currently exist in the community. • Importance of provision has been recognized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate art display spaces in current and future facilities. • Develop Wadey House as interpretive venue at the All-Star Park site. • Develop public art collection via art policy and budgeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain Wadey House and explore other opportunities to showcase public art and heritage.
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation and program participation data reflects that Library is well utilized and valued. • Current facility has limited space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain in current space. • Consider opportunities to move Library into expanded/new space as new facilities are planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore second library (or satellite location) when the town's population nears or exceeds 25,000 residents.
Community Meeting and Program Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently available at all Town operated indoor facilities. • Engagement findings do not reveal that significant need exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote availability at existing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in new facility development where feasible.

Indoor Facility/Amenity Strategies (Continued)

Facility/Amenity Type	Demand Indicators	Short-Term Strategy (1 – 5 Years)	Long Term Strategy (6+ years)
Social/Banquet Facilities and Community Gathering Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement findings do not reveal that significant need exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain existing Community Hall. Market regional facilities such as the Memorial Centre in Lacombe as venue options for residents Explore potential private sector partnerships as available (hotel). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential to supplement school investment to up-size dry land spaces in new schools. Explore feasibility of expanded social banquet spaces (500+ seats) once population reaches 15,000.
Specialty Program Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High community priority as per engagement findings. Demand among children and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote climbing wall and other specialty program spaces in other regional communities. Incorporate into new facility development if feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further consider if community fundraising or partnerships options come forward, and if logistics and liability concerns can be addressed.



Potential Indoor Facility Projects

Based on the strategic directions identified in the previous chart, the following indoor projects have been identified for further exploration using the Infrastructure Planning Tools identified in the following Focus Area. These specific projects have been identified based on their potential demand and the opportunity to address some of needs or demands suggested in the chart.

- Additional indoor arena facilities.
- Indoor aquatics facility.
- Performing arts facility.
- Heritage interpretive and tourism information facility.

Infrastructure

Focus Area: Infrastructure Planning Tools

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



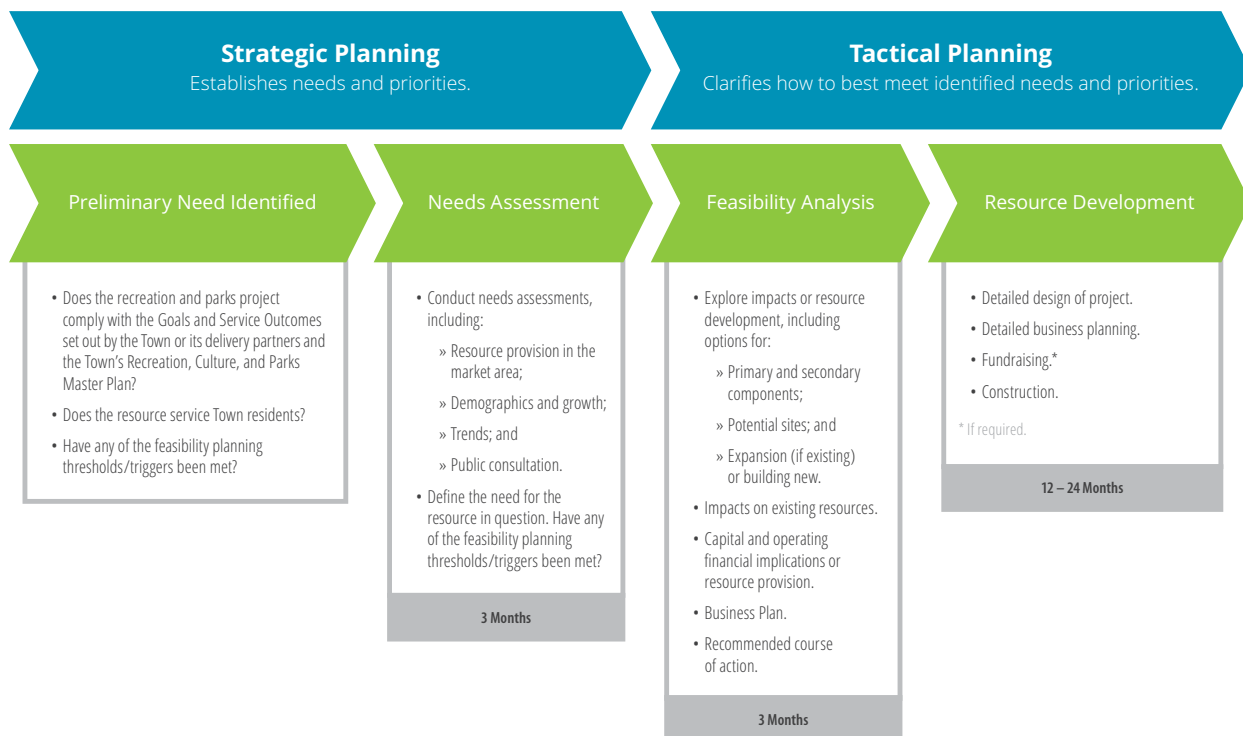
Strategic Direction #22: Utilize the Planning Process Framework when considering future major recreation, culture, and parks development (>\$500,000). Following this process will ensure that decisions are based off of sound research and that clarity exists within the planning and development process.

Outcomes:

- Establishes a standardized approach to infrastructure development.
- Ensures that decision making is informed.
- Creates clarity for internal and external stakeholders regarding processes and requirements for infrastructure development.

From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

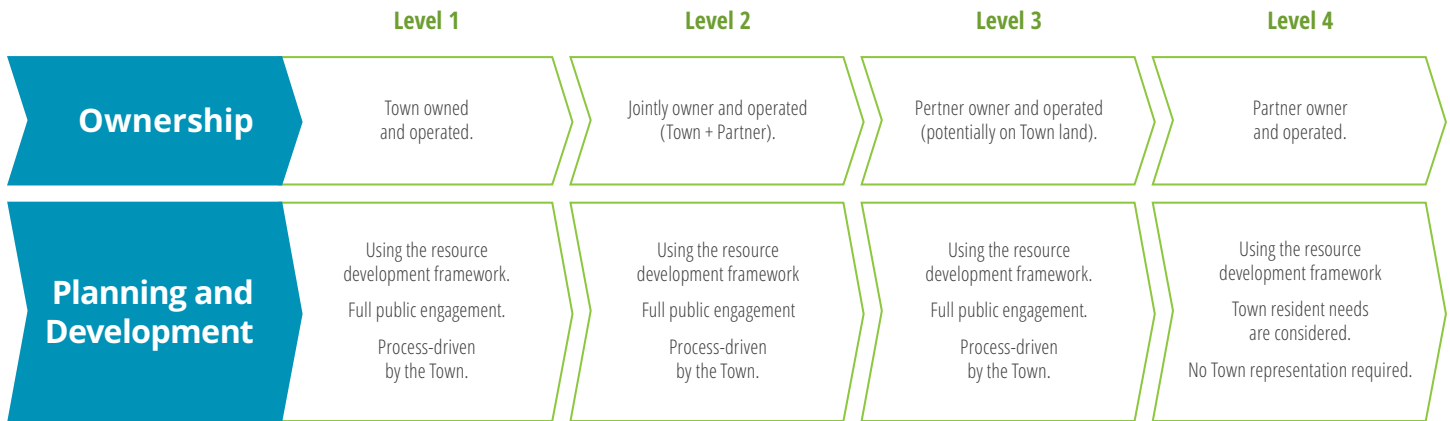
While the Town has made a significant investment in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure in recent years, 64% of households believe that upgraded or new facilities should be developed.



Strategic Direction #23: Utilize the Infrastructure Partnership Framework to explore and determine the suitability of potential community, private sector, and regional partnerships.

Outcomes:

- Ensures that partnerships are aligned with Town goals, strategic objectives and values.
- Establishes clear protocols and processes to evaluate potential partnerships.
- Ensures that public funds are maximized and appropriately used.



Strategic Direction #24: Utilize the Project Prioritization Model when considering or planning for future infrastructure projects. The Model identifies scoring criteria that can help rank potential projects.

Outcomes:

- Adds structure and process to decision making.
- Identifies and includes a number of important decision making criteria.
- Provides a flexible Model that can be adapted and utilized throughout the lifespan of the Master Plan.

Criteria	Metrics				Weight
Community Demand	3 Points: For identified priority "1" facility spaces.	2 Points: For identified priority "2" facility spaces.	1 Point: For identified priority "3 - 4" facility spaces.	0 Points: For identified priority "5" or higher facility spaces.	3
Current Provision	3 Points: Currently not provided and would enable new activities and opportunities.	2 Points: The facility space would significantly improve existing provision and/ or meet capacity issues in the town or immediate region.	1 Point: The facility or space would complement existing provision in the town or region.	0 Points: The activity is already adequately provided in the town.	3
Financial Implications (Capital and Operating)	3 Points: Low	2 Points: Moderate	1 Point: Significant	0 Points: Feasibility is Unlikely	2
Regional Partnership Appeal	3 Points: The facility space has high potential for inter-municipal partnerships or collaborations.	2 Points: The facility space has moderate potential for inter-municipal partnerships or collaborations.	1 Point: The facility space would serve regional markets.	0 Points: The facility space will have no or minimal regional impact (localized facility/amenity).	2
Cost Savings through Partnerships or Grants	3 Points: High likelihood for partnership and/or grant opportunities in development and/or operating.	2 Points: Moderate likelihood for partnership and/or grant opportunities in development and/ or operating.	1 Point: Low likelihood for partnership and/or grant opportunities in development and/or operating.	0 Points: No potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in time.	2
Economic Impact	3 Points: The facility will draw or facilitate significant non-local spending into the town and profile the community at a regional level.	2 Points: The facility will draw or facilitate moderate non-local spending into the town.	1 Point: The facility/space will draw or facilitate minimal non-local spending in the town.	0 Points: The facility space will not draw any significant non-local spending into the town.	2

Based on the current information that is available, these projects rank as follows (the scoring of each project can be found in the Appendix). It is important to note that this ranking will change as new information becomes available (e.g. potential partnerships, more defined cost estimates). The intent of this initial scoring is to demonstrate how the model works and provide a ranked list based on current information.

1. All-Star Park expansion: skate park and other site components and amenities.
2. Development of a dog off-leash park.
3. All-Star Park expansion: sport field and ball diamond development.
4. Additional indoor arena facilities.
5. Performing arts facility.
5. All-Star Park expansion: heritage interpretive and tourism information facility.
7. Indoor aquatics facility.



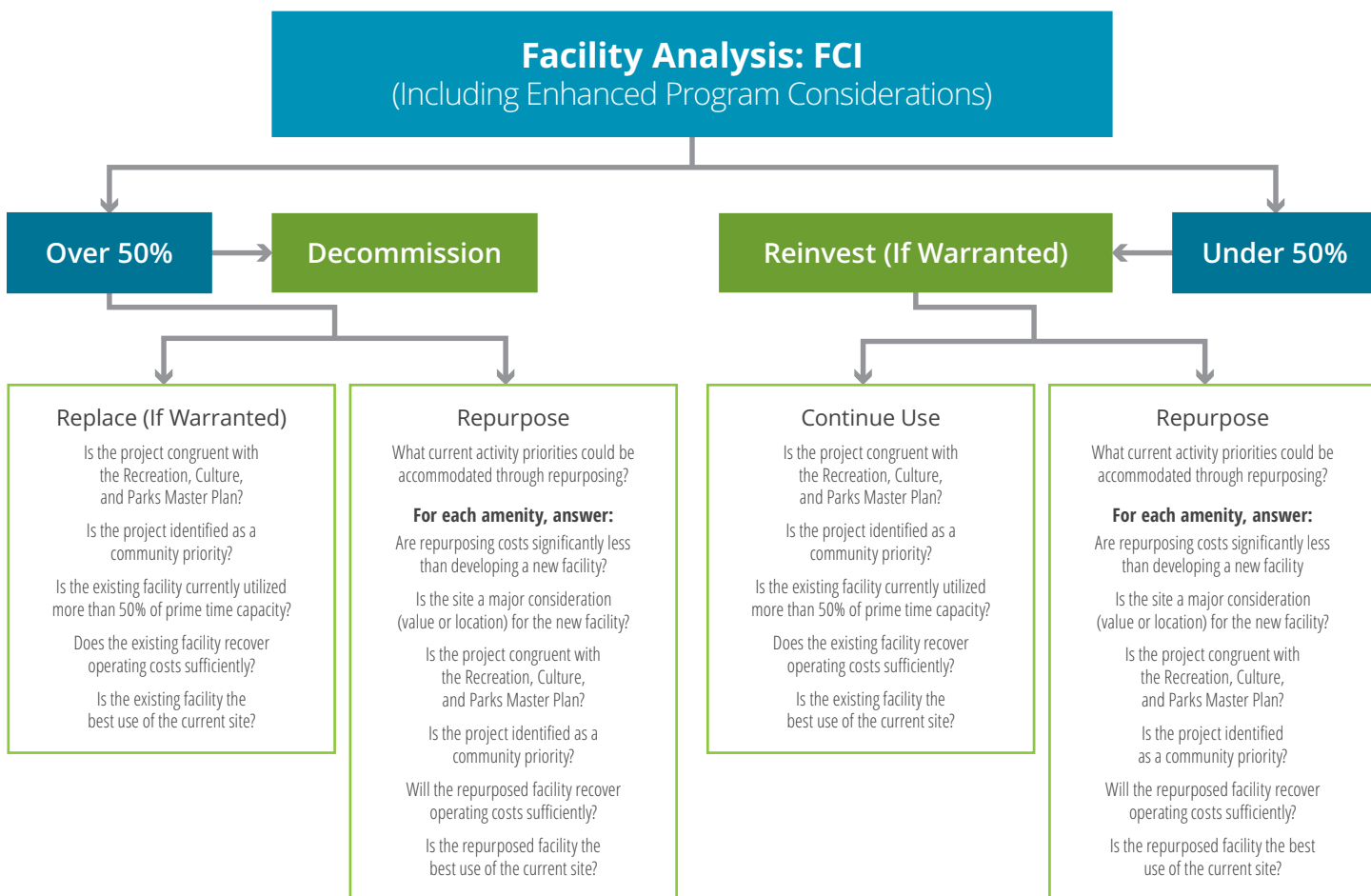
Strategic Direction #25: Consider the following planning triggers (FCI, provision targets, demographics and population growth) when making future decisions on infrastructure development and reinvestment.

Outcomes:

- Considering planning triggers can help identify the need to undertake planning and resource allocation.
- Identifies criteria and considerations which can inform planning and decision making.
- Establishes preferred service levels.

Facility Condition Index (FCI)

The Facility Condition Index suggests that replacement of a facility should occur when the cost of reinvestment is nearing or exceeds 50% of the facilities total replacement value. The following image illustrates how FCI can be calculated and used to make decisions on reinvestment vs replacement.



* 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, Culture, and Parks Master Plan against other potential projects.

Provision Targets

Strategic Directions # 19 and #21 identify population figures that when reached should initiate future planning and potential facility development. The Town may also wish to establish desired provision ratios for key facilities such as ice arenas, major park spaces, and sport fields. Doing so can help with future planning and infrastructure prioritization. However it is important to understand that the provision ratio is likely to expand (worsen) for some facility and amenity as the community grows. The following chart identifies potential service levels in Blackfalds for a number of major facility and amenity types.

Facility/Amenity Type	Target Service Level (Facility Type : Residents)	Future Needs Based on Current Provision
Indoor Ice Arenas	1 : 6,000 – 7,500	Development of a second sheet may need to occur when the population reaches 12,000 – 15,000 residents.
Major Sport Field Sites	1: 10,000	A second major sport field site may need to be developed when the population reaches 20,000.
Amphitheatres/Event Spaces (major dedicated space)	1 : 20,000	Development of a major amphitheatres/event space may need to occur when the population reaches 20,000.
Community Hall/Social Gathering Spaces	1 : 8,000 – 12,000	Development of a second community hall facility may need to occur when the population reaches 16,000 – 24,000 (depending on size and scale).
Dryland Facilities (e.g. field house/gymnasium type spaces)	1 : 7,500 – 15,000	Dependent upon size, type and availability of partnerships (e.g. school facility asses).
Fitness Facilities	1 : 15,000	Development of a second fitness facility may need to occur when the population reaches 30,000.
Indoor Aquatics	1 : 15,000 – 20,000	Development may need to occur when the population reaches 15,000 – 20,000 residents.
Performing Arts Venues	1 : 15,000 – 20,000	Development may need to occur when the population reaches 15,000 – 20,000 residents.
Youth Centres	1 : 15,000	Development may need to occur when the population reaches 15,000 residents.
Libraries	1 : 10,000 – 15,000	Development of a second major library facility may need to occur when the population reaches 20,000 – 30,000.

Community Demographics

Population characteristics should continue to be monitored in order to track demographics shifts. The Town currently conducts annual municipal census' which provide a wealth of valuable data. Significant shifts in population characteristics may trigger the need for new types of infrastructure and should be considered in future planning.

Programming, Opportunities, and Events

Focus Area: Program Priorities

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



Program demands and interests are continuously evolving which requires providers to have their hand on the pulse of local, regional and provincial trends. The opening of the Abbey Master Builder Centre and the Town's investment in promotions and marketing have expanded the quantity, diversity and awareness of programming opportunities. The Town also continues to support the efforts of numerous community organizations that play a key role in providing sport, recreation, cultural and leisure based programming to local and area residents. While the Town and its community partners have experienced success, opportunities exist to address other programming gaps that exist. This could potentially occur through direct provision or expanded partnerships and supports provided to community organizations.

Strategic Direction #26: Share findings and data from the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report with internal Town staff, community organizations and regional partners.

Outcomes:

- Makes the most effective use of research data collected.
- Helps inform programming decisions and offerings.
- Provides a mechanism for increased collaborations and discussions with local and regional partners regarding opportunities to address programs gaps and demands.

Strategic Direction #27: Conduct ongoing trends scanning.

Outcomes:

- Assists with the identification of emerging program and activity demands.
- Identifies best practices related to programming.

Current sources of information include (but are not limited to) the National Benefits HUB, Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, Alberta Culture and Tourism, National Recreation and Parks Association, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, and strategic planning and research conducted by other regional municipalities.



Strategic Direction #28: Ensure that unstructured opportunities exist for residents of all ages and ability levels. Executing on this strategic direction will require the Town to explore the following:

- Strategies for promoting the benefits of unstructured and spontaneous play and leisure participation.
- Balancing liability concerns with expanded healthy exploratory play opportunities for children and youth (through the creation of natural play spaces and programming).
- Identifying opportunities to further animate indoor and outdoor spaces in such a manner that encourages spontaneous leisure (e.g. park signage and furniture).

Outcomes:

- Increased resident wellness and quality of life.
- Increased diversity of opportunities.
- Alignment with trends in recreation, culture, and leisure participation.

Strategic Direction #29: Identify opportunities to expand arts and cultural programming in Blackfalds. Successful execution of this strategic direction will require the Town to:

- Take a long term and dedicated approach to the development and delivery of this programming area;
- Engage the arts and cultural community in Blackfalds and area to identify gaps and potential strategies; and
- Consider both direct and non-direct program delivery methods.

Outcomes:

- Expands the diversity of programming available to residents.
- Address a potential programming gap.
- Reflects the Town’s commitment to the arts and culture.

From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

While structured programs and activities remain important, participation trends support a strong desire for spontaneous recreation and culture opportunities.

Strategic Direction #30: Where possible, align Town programming with principles of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework and encourage community organizations to do the same.

Outcomes:

- Align program provision with accepted best practices in recreation service provision.
- Increase physical literacy among residents of all ages.
- Help facilitate an environment by which children, youth, and adults in Blackfalds are participating in appropriate physical activities.
- May help position the Town for future funding opportunities.

The LTAD framework is nationally accepted, science and research based, approach to delivering sport and recreation. The framework identifies seven stages of participation and has demonstrated that kids and adults will get active, stay active, and even reach the greatest heights of sport achievement if they do the right things at the right times.

LTAD Stages

Stages 1, 2 and 3 develop physical literacy before puberty so children have the basic skills to be active for life. Physical literacy also provides the foundation for those who choose to pursue elite training in one sport or activity after age 12.

Stages 4, 5 and 6 provide elite training for those who want to specialize in one sport and compete at the highest level, maximizing the physical, mental, and emotional development of each athlete.

Stage 7 is about staying Active for Life through life-long participation in competitive or recreational sport or physical activity.

Programming, Opportunities, and Events

Focus Area: Events and Community Spirit

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



Engagement conducted with stakeholders and residents strongly reflected the importance that community spirit has to quality of life in Blackfalds. Events such as Blackfalds Days, Winterfest, and Canada Day Celebrations are popular and valued. The Town has recognized the importance of these events and continues to invest in their success financially and through the provision of staff time and other resources. The young demographics and growth of Blackfalds have helped fuel the popularity of these family focused events and furthermore necessitate their continued existence.

Strategic Direction #31: Continue to invest in existing and new community events as a mechanism to build community.

Outcomes:

- Community spirit and pride.
- Increased volunteer capacity.
- Enhanced quality of life for residents.
- Enhanced ability to engage new residents and families in the community.



From the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report:

Stakeholder engagement revealed a strong sense of community and the importance that community spirit has to quality of life and wellness.

SECTION SIX

Master Plan Implementation

Financial Implications

Service Delivery and Programming, Opportunities, and Events Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions		Short Term (1 - 5 Years)			Long Term (6+ Years)		
		High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Service Delivery Strategic Directions							
1.	Develop and enact a Partnership Policy which identifies partnership criteria, expected outcomes from partnerships, and performance measurement related to existing and potential new partnerships.		✓				✓
2.	Continue to engage the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities in discussions regarding potential areas of collaboration and partnership pertaining to recreation, culture, and outdoor space and program provision.			✓		✓	
3.	Continue to explore shared areas of interest and partnership opportunities with Wolf Creek Public Schools.			✓		✓	
4.	Formalize a Sponsorship Policy.		✓				✓
5.	Conduct a town-wide evaluation of potential recreation, culture, and parks assets.		✓				✓
6.	Using the evaluation data and Sponsorship Policy, undertake a town-wide parks, trails, and outdoor amenity sponsorship campaign.		✓				✓
7.	Maintain current levels of group and volunteer support and, where possible, identify new supports that can be provided.		✓			✓	
8.	Identify and explore opportunities to provide group and volunteer supports on a regional level.			✓			✓
9.	Continue to build on the momentum and successes of existing marketing and promotions initiatives.		✓			✓	
10.	Expand messaging to further promote the broad based benefits of participation in recreation, culture, and parks activities.		✓			✓	
11.	Cross-promote recreation, culture, and parks facilities and opportunities with the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities.			✓			✓

Strategic Directions		Short Term (1 – 5 Years)			Long Term (6+ Years)		
		High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
12.	The Town should create a Public Art Policy to help guide the design and planning for future public recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure.		✓				✓
13.	Continue to use recreation, culture, and parks as a vehicle for sport tourism efforts.		✓			✓	
14.	Continue to place a high priority on the user experience and invest in customer service training on an ongoing basis.		✓			✓	
15.	Collect user satisfaction data on a regular basis.		✓			✓	

Programming, Opportunities, and Events Strategic Directions							
26.	Share findings and data from the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report with internal Town staff, community organizations and regional partners.			✓			✓
27.	Conduct ongoing trends scanning.			✓			✓
28.	Ensure that unstructured opportunities exist for residents of all ages and ability levels.		✓			✓	
29.	Identify opportunities to expand arts and cultural programming in Blackfalds.	✓				✓	
30.	Where possible, align Town programming with principles of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework and encourage community organizations to do the same.			✓			✓
31.	Continue to invest in existing and new community events as a mechanism to build community.		✓			✓	

High: Requires significant incremental human and/or financial resources

Medium: Requires moderate incremental human and/or financial resources

Low: Requires no or minimal incremental human and/or financial resources

Infrastructure Strategic Directions

Potential Project	Short Term (1 – 5 Years)		Long Term (6+ Years)	
	Planning 2015 dollars (±25%)	Capital 2015 dollars (±25%)	Planning 2015 dollars (±25%)	Capital 2015 dollars (±25%)
All-Star Park expansion: skate park and other site components and amenities	N/A	\$5 M	\$20,000	\$5 M
Development of a dog off-leash park	N/A	\$125,000 – 200,000	N/A	N/A
All-Star Park expansion: sport field and ball diamond development	N/A	\$500,000	\$20,000	\$1 M
Additional indoor arena facilities	\$25,000	\$10 – 15 M	N/A	N/A
Performing arts facility	N/A	N/A	\$25,000	\$15 – 20 M
All-Star Park expansion: heritage interpretive and tourism information facility	N/A	\$500,000	N/A	N/A
Indoor aquatics facility	N/A	N/A	\$25,000	\$20 – 25 M

Performance Measurement

Implementation of the Strategic Directions outlined in the Master Plan will require direct involvement by Town Council and Administration and the Blackfalds and District Recreation, Culture, and Parks Board. Stakeholders and community organizations should also be involved where possible and prudent. To assist with implementation, the following measures are suggested:

- ✓ Empower the Blackfalds and District Recreation, Culture, and Parks Board to oversee implementation with support from Town administration.
- ✓ Follow-up with the Master Plan consulting team at 1, 2, and 3 year intervals to assess progress and discuss challenges.
- ✓ Share the Master Plan research and key strategic themes with stakeholders and community organizations; encourage ongoing dialogue.



The following tool could be used to track implementation. There are also software packages that could be purchased to help track progress.

Strategic Direction	Implementation Strategy	Resource Requirements	Status (Including the Identification of Challenges)
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
...			

SECTION SEVEN

Summary

Recreation, Culture, and Parks Master Plan Process



A Vision for Recreation, Culture, and Parks in Blackfalds:

Blackfalds recreation, culture, and parks services are a catalyst for community and individual wellbeing and bolster healthy growth in the community and region.

Goals for Service Provision

1. Get more residents, more active, more often.
2. Encourage outdoor activity for residents of all ages.
3. **Balance provision** of physical activity, creative and educational opportunities.
4. Ensure that **all residents have access to quality of life services.**
5. **Strengthen the quality of life service delivery system.**

Town of Blackfalds Recreation, Culture, and Parks Service Delivery Values:

- Recreation, culture, and parks services deliver public good; they create benefit in the community that residents cannot escape.
- All residents and visitors serve to benefit from accessing recreation, culture and parks opportunities and as such, equitable access to services is paramount to generating maximum community impact.
- Recreation, culture and parks services must be provided as efficiently as possible, leveraging public investment and ensuring existing and new services are sustainable.
- The benefits of recreation, culture, and parks services are not confined to the municipal boundaries in which they are provided.

Core Master Plan Objectives:

1. Identify and **sustain** current practices that are successful.
2. Identify opportunities to efficiently and effectively **address service delivery gaps**.
3. Identify opportunities for **collaborations at a local and regional level** that can increase efficiently and expand offerings.
4. Identify **clear and concise planning processes and protocols** that ensure decision making is informed and communicated to all stakeholders.
5. Outline **tools and systematic approaches for decision making**.
6. Identify **priorities and associated financial implications**.
7. Outline an **implementation strategy** which positions the Master Plan for success.

Strategic Directions and Planning Tools

Service Delivery

Focus Area: Partnerships

Strategic Direction #1: Develop and enact a Partnership Policy which identifies partnership criteria, expected outcomes from partnerships, and performance measurement related to existing and potential new partnerships. The Policy should be applicable to public and private partnerships.

Strategic Direction #2: Continue to engage the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities in discussions regarding potential areas of collaboration and partnership pertaining to recreation, culture, and outdoor space and program provision.

Strategic Direction #3: Continue to explore shared areas of interest and partnership opportunities with Wolf Creek Public Schools and the Catholic School Division. The finalization of a joint use agreement as well as jointly planning a future high school site and adjacent land planning are examples of joint planning initiatives which could provide mutual benefit.

Focus Area: Sponsorship

Strategic Direction #4: Formalize a Sponsorship Policy. The Policy should outline which assets (or categories of assets) are available for sponsorship and establish clear guidelines for future sponsorship campaigns and initiatives.

Strategic Direction #5: Conduct a town-wide evaluation of potential recreation, culture, and parks assets. The evaluation should identify assets with potential saleability and establish values (or ranges of values) for each with consideration given to current market conditions.

Strategic Direction #6: Using the evaluation data and Sponsorship Policy, undertake a town-wide parks, trails, and outdoor amenity sponsorship campaign.

Focus Area: Group and Volunteer Support

Strategic Direction #7: Maintain current levels of group and volunteer support and, where possible, identify new supports that can be provided.

Strategic Direction #8: Identify and explore opportunities to provide group and volunteer supports on a regional level.

Focus Area: Marketing and Promotions

Strategic Direction #9: Continue to build on the momentum and successes of existing marketing and promotions initiatives.

Strategic Direction #10: Expand messaging to further promote the broad based benefits of participation in recreation, culture, and parks activities.

Strategic Direction #11: Cross-promote recreation, culture, and parks facilities and opportunities with the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and other regional municipalities.

Focus Area: Public Art

Strategic Direction #12: The Town should create a Public Art Policy to help guide the design and planning for future public recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure. The Policy should consider:

- Thresholds (capital costs) for which the Policy applies;
- Previous planning (Downtown Revitalization Plan, Municipal Development Plan); and
- Engagement and involvement of existing arts and heritage groups in the community and region.

Focus Area: Tourism

Strategic Direction #13: Continue to use recreation, culture, and parks as a vehicle for sport tourism efforts. This should be accomplished in the following ways:

- Work with community groups to identify event hosting and tourism opportunities, and where possible provide supports (e.g. formalized grant program).
- Consider event hosting and tourism opportunities in future infrastructure initiatives (e.g. All-Star Park concept design, future Multi-Plex expansion).
- Identify opportunities to create cultural and heritage attractions or features that can be integrated into functional facilities or spaces (i.e. tourism information centre, park feature signage, etc.).

Focus Area: Customer Interface

Strategic Direction #14: Continue to place a high priority on the user experience and invest in customer service training on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Direction #15: Collect user satisfaction data on a regular basis.

Infrastructure

Focus Area: Management Objectives

Strategic Direction #16: Considering current and anticipate needs, it is suggested that the Town adopt and implement the following management objectives for recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure.

1. Ensure that existing infrastructure is sustained before major new capital development initiatives are undertaken.
2. Place a priority on expanding the diversity of recreation, culture, and parks offerings at both existing facilities and in the planning of new infrastructure.
3. Continue to undertake and utilize strategic feasibility and business planning documentation (and associated tools) when considering future infrastructure enhancement or new development.
4. View all potential investment in recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure through a quality of life "lens". *E.g. What potential areas of investment provide the greatest 'quality of life' benefit for residents?*
5. Balance developing community recreation, culture, and parks "hubs" with the need to ensure the adequate geographic distribution of facilities and amenities.

Focus Area: Parks and Open Spaces (and Associated Amenities)

Strategic Direction #17: Continue to utilize the existing parks and open space classification system (as outlined in the 2008 Facility and Parks Needs Assessments and Master Plan). This classification system is intended to help manage existing assets and provide baseline standards to guide future parks and outdoor space planning. The minimum development standards outlined, as well as the municipal reserve dedication considerations, should be revisited and updated on a regular basis using accepted industry practices and standards and through internal dialogue with the Town's Planning and Development Department.

Strategic Direction #18: Engage internal Town stakeholders (e.g. Planning and Development Department, Council, Senior Administration) and private sector developers in a conversation regarding future development standards. Resulting from this engagement should be the following:

1. Updated, and agreed to, development processes and design standards.
2. Strategies to encourage continued growth and new development while ensuring that quality and proper planning continues to be at the forefront.
3. Continue to ensure that municipal reserve (MR) dedications are accepted and used in the most appropriate and effective manner.

Strategic Direction #19: Consider the following strategies to meet outdoor infrastructure priority areas.

Focus Area: Indoor Facilities

Strategic Direction #20: Invest in life cycle and amenity refreshment budgeting.

Strategic Direction #21: Consider the following strategies to meet indoor infrastructure priority areas.

Focus Area: Infrastructure Planning Tools

Strategic Direction #22: Utilize the Planning Process Framework when considering future major recreation, culture, and parks development (>\$500,000). Following this process will ensure that decisions are based off of sound research and that clarity exists within the planning and development process.

Strategic Direction #23: Utilize the Infrastructure Partnership Framework to explore and determine the suitability of potential community, private sector, and regional partnerships.

Strategic Direction #24: Utilize the Project Prioritization Model when considering or planning for future infrastructure projects. The Model identifies scoring criteria that can help rank potential projects.

Strategic Direction #25: Consider the following planning triggers (FCI, provision targets, demographics and population growth) when making future decisions on infrastructure development and reinvestment.

Programming, Opportunities, and Events

Focus Area: Program Priorities

Strategic Direction #26: Share findings and data from the State of Recreation, Culture, and Parks Research Report with internal Town staff, community organizations and regional partners.

Strategic Direction #27: Conduct ongoing trends scanning.

Strategic Direction #28: Ensure that unstructured opportunities exist for residents of all ages and ability levels. Executing on this strategic direction will require the Town to explore the following:

- Strategies for promoting the benefits of unstructured and spontaneous play and leisure participation.
- Balancing liability concerns with expanded healthy exploratory play opportunities for children and youth (through the creation of natural play spaces and programming).
- Identifying opportunities to further animate indoor and outdoor spaces in such a manner that encourages spontaneous leisure (e.g. park signage and furniture).

Strategic Direction #29: Identify opportunities to expand arts and cultural programming in Blackfalds. Successful execution of this strategic direction will require the Town to:

- Take a long term and dedicated approach to the development and delivery of this programming area;
- Engage the arts and cultural community in Blackfalds and area to identify gaps and potential strategies; and
- Consider both direct and non-direct program delivery methods.

Strategic Direction #30: Where possible, align Town programming with principles of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework and encourage community organizations to do the same.

Focus Area: Events and Community Spirit

Strategic Direction #31: Continue to invest in existing and new community events as a mechanism to build community.

Overall Indoor Facility Priorities

Facility	Household Survey	Student Survey	Group and Stakeholder Consultation	Rank
Indoor Climbing Wall	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Leisure Swimming Pools (indoor)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Ice Arena Facilities (additional ice sheet)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Teen Lounge	✓	✓	✓	2
Performing Arts/Show Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
Lane Swimming Tanks (indoor)	✓ ✓	✓		2
Community Gathering Spaces	✓		✓	3
Leisure Ice Surfaces	✓ ✓			3
Afterschool Care Facilities	✓		✓	3
Indoor Field Facilities	✓	✓		3
Ice Arena Facilities (upgrades to existing)	✓	✓		3
Curling Rinks	✓ ✓			3
Art Display Spaces		✓		4
Libraries			✓	4
Indoor Child Playgrounds			✓	4
Gymnasium Type Spaces		✓		4
Fitness/Wellness Facilities	✓			4
Community Meeting Rooms			✓	4
Museum/Interpretive Facilities			✓	4
Dance/Program Rooms		✓		4
Social/Banquet Facilities				
Preschool Facilities				

Household Survey: 2 checks (✓ ✓) if Top 3, 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Student Survey: 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Group and Stakeholder Consultation: 1 check (✓) if Top 5 group survey priority and/or prevalent theme in the stakeholder interviews

Overall Outdoor Facility Priorities

Facility	Household Survey	Student Survey	Group and Stakeholder Consultation	Rank
Picnic Areas	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Trails (non-motorized)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Off Leash Dog Areas	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Sport Fields (i.e. soccer, football, etc.)	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Amphitheatres/Event Spaces	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Campgrounds	✓ ✓	✓	✓	1
Green Field Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
BMX Bicycle Parks (dirt and/or concrete jumps)	✓	✓	✓	2
Beach Volleyball Courts	✓	✓	✓	2
Track and Field Spaces	✓	✓	✓	2
Skateboard Parks			✓	3
Child Playgrounds			✓	3
Water Spray Parks		✓		3
Outdoor Skating Rinks			✓	3
Ball Diamonds			✓	3
Tennis Courts/Pickleball				

Preliminary Ranking of Infrastructure Projects

1. All-Star Park expansion: skate park and other site components and amenities.
2. Development of a dog off-leash park.
3. All-Star Park expansion: sport field and ball diamond development.
4. Additional indoor arena facilities.
5. Performing arts facility.
5. All-Star Park expansion: heritage interpretive and tourism information facility.
7. Indoor aquatics facility.

Household Survey: 2 checks (✓ ✓) if Top 3, 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Student Survey: 1 check (✓) if Top 5

Group and Stakeholder Consultation: 1 check (✓) if Top 5 group survey priority and/or prevalent theme in the stakeholder interviews

Strategies to Assist with Implementation:

- ✓ Empower the Blackfalds and District Recreation, Culture, and Parks Board to oversee implementation with support from Town administration.
- ✓ Follow-up with the Master Plan consulting team at 1, 2, and 3 year intervals to assess progress and discuss challenges.
- ✓ Share the Master Plan research and key strategic themes with stakeholders and community organizations; encourage ongoing dialogue.



APPENDIX A

Detailed Potential Infrastructure Project Scoring

Project	Community Demand	Current Provision	Financial Implications	Regional Partnership Appeal	Cost Savings through Partnerships and Grants	Economic Impact	Score	Rank
All-Star Park Expansion	3	3	1	1	2	2	32	1
Development of a dog off-leash park	3	3	3	0	0	0	30	2
Sport field and ball diamond development	3	1	2	1	2	2	29	3
Additional indoor arena facilities	3	2	1	1	1	2	27	4
Indoor aquatics facility	3	1	1	1	1	2	24	7
Performing arts facility	2	3	1	1	1	2	26	5
Heritage interpretive and tourism information facility	1	3	3	0	1	2	26	5

A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 Pathways to Wellbeing

A Joint Initiative of the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council
and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association



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. Please see Appendix A for full acknowledgements.

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

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.

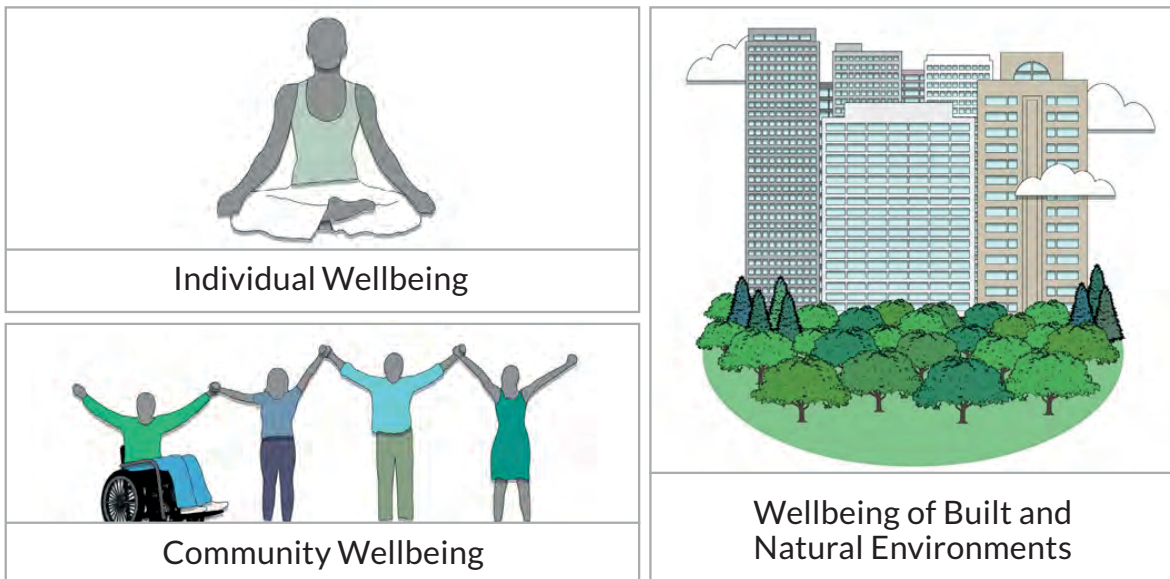
Part I

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.¹ 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.² 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)³ reflects the evolution of recreation in response to changes and challenges in Canadian society.

A Renewed Definition of Recreation

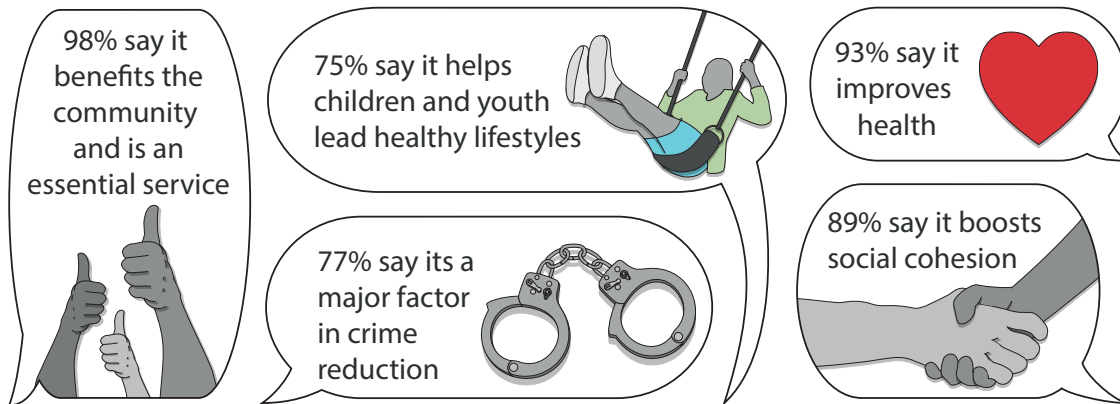
Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

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.⁴ 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 education⁶ (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).⁷

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.¹⁰ 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 vigorous-intensity 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 relationships—through 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.¹³ 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^{15, 16, 17, 18} 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

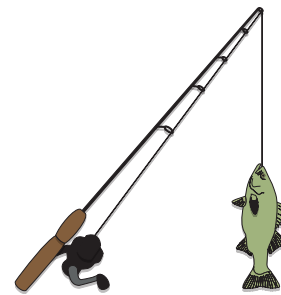
The Economic Case For Investing In Recreation



\$2.9 Billion
Labour income, jobs created by Canada’s parks (2009)²²



\$3,773
Amount spent on recreation by average Canadian household (2012)²⁰



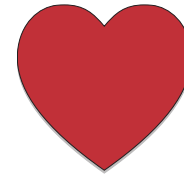
\$8.3 Billion
Total amount spent on recreational fishing contributed to local economies (2010)²⁴



\$134 Million
Amount spent by cyclists using Quebec’s Route Verte (2013)²¹



\$14.5 Billion
Amount Canadians spent on nature-based recreational activities (2012)²⁵



\$6.8 Billion
Total health care costs of physical inactivity in Canada²³

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.²⁶

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.²⁷

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.²⁸

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.²⁹

Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment³⁰ 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

IndigenACTION³² (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

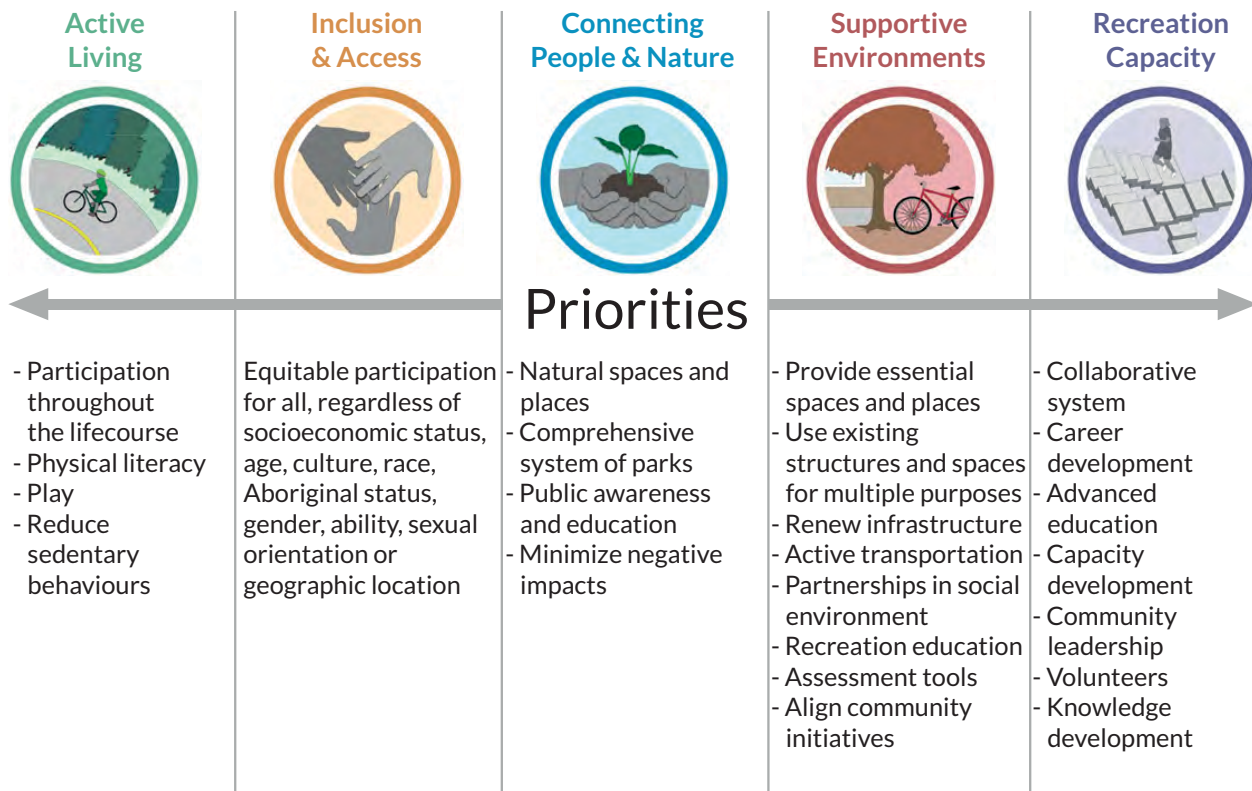
Values

Public Good | Inclusion & Equity | Sustainability

Principles of Operation

Lifelong Participation | Outcome-Driven | Quality & Relevance | Evidence-Based | Partnerships | Innovation

Goals



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

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 communities)
- 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



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.³³

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.^{34, 35, 36, 37} 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.³⁸

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.³⁹

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.

The Economic Impact of Increased Physical Activity and Reductions in Sedentary Living⁴⁰

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.⁴² 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

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 through parks and recreation (2014).

- 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.
- 2.4 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.⁴³

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).

Canadians Care About Nature




Percentage of Canadians in 2012

Who:

- 70% Spent time in nature
- 53% Participated in nature education
- 47% Travelled to experience nature
- 45% Reduced their ecological footprint
- 13% Volunteered in nature conservation

Most Popular Activities:

- 71% Picnics and relaxing in nature
- 64% Hiking, climbing, and horseback riding
- 41% Gardening and landscaping
- 21% Fishing
- 18% Birding



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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

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 not-for-profit sectors for the necessary development, renewal and rehabilitation of facilities and outdoor spaces
 - 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 targeted **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.

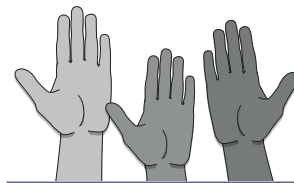
Leaders in recreation need to work within a connected, vibrant and comprehensive delivery system. This system requires ongoing nurturing and support to deliver a comprehensive mix of recreational experiences and sustain a viable system that Canadians can enjoy for generations to come.

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.⁴⁶ 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)⁴⁵



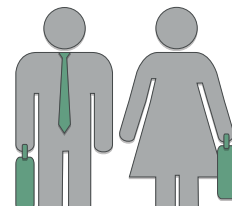
3.3 Million

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

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.

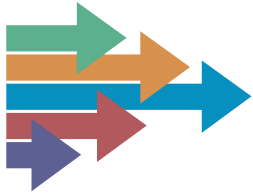
Priorities

- 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.





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-for-profit 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.

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 built environments. The time to take action is now. Together, we can build pathways to wellbeing for all Canadians.

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-cao-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)

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,

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

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.cfri.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.

National Recreation Framework Working Group

Norm Campbell (Writing Team)
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

Ian Reid (Writing Team)
University New Brunswick (retired)

Jaime Collins
*Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism,
Culture and Recreation*

Art Salmon
*Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
(retired)*

Damon Crossman
*Northwest Territories Department of Municipal and
Community Affairs*

Shelley Shea (Writing Team)
The City of Calgary-Recreation

Judith Down (Writing Team)
Alberta Centre for Active Living (retired)

Grant Sinclair
*New Brunswick Department of Healthy and Inclusive
Communities*

Rick Gilbert (Writing Team)
Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

Suzanne Allard Strutt (Writing Team)
BC Recreation and Parks Association

Anna Ilnyckyj (Writing Team)
Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Chris Szabo
Alberta Culture and Tourism

Larry Ketcheson
Parks and Recreation Ontario

Marc-André Lavigne
Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

Alexandra Leaverton (Writing Team)
Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Cathy Jo Noble
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

Jennifer Reynolds
Parks and Recreation Ontario



