ACTIVE COMMUNITIES FRAMEWORK

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Active Communities: Background

Introduction

The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) has articulated a vision of Alberta as a “re-creating society” – a society where individual citizens, corporate citizens, and communities are engaged in “active living” that includes the co-stewardship of all resources (human, social, natural capital) and public goods (infrastructure) for sustained economic “development” and enhanced quality of life.

The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) recognizes the vital role municipalities have to play in the delivery of a provincial “active living” system. Our members have a 50-year history in providing programs, services and facilities to Albertans. While the ARPA recognizes and supports the important focus of the Alberta Active Living Strategy as it pertains to schools, workplace, and regional fitness centers, we see a significant gap and opportunity for municipal governments and local community organizations to play a critical role as a key delivery agent of active living strategies and practices, namely: increasing the quality and longevity of healthy living and building social capital.

The Federal-Provincial Ministers Responsible for Sport and Recreation recently re-endorsed the important role of municipalities through the National Recreation Statement, which declares:

“Municipal governments are closest to the people; they are likely to respond more flexibly, more quickly and more effectively to the needs of the community in matters of recreation. For this reason, the municipality is the primary public supplier of direct recreation services. In claiming primacy of jurisdiction for recreation, the provinces and territories have accepted a far-reaching responsibility.

This responsibility will require that each province and territory should provide resources to the municipal government, which is acknowledged as the primary agency in the delivery of equitable public recreation services, so that the quality of life, at the community level, may be enhanced…”

This proposed Active Communities framework for Alberta addresses primarily the important role Alberta municipalities...
can play in realizing the benefits of active living and the development of social capital at the community level, empowering them with the tools and resources to realize these quality of life dividends.

**Value Proposition**

The primary value proposition or mission of *Active Communities* is to promote and enhance personal health and wellness, creative and social capital and quality of life in municipalities and communities through 1) a sustained increase in the number of Albertans who are regularly physically active and 2) encouraging creativity, citizen engagement and social connection. This goal will be achieved through enhancing opportunities and building capacity for recreation activities, programs, infrastructure, and parks. More active citizens engaged in physical and community activities helps build vibrant and sustainable communities with inherent social capital advantages for Alberta.

There is increasing evidence that communities rich in creative and social capital are endowed with the capacity and opportunities for re-creation and social interactions that builds social cohesion (the glue that holds communities together). Social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Opportunities for re-creating together as social networks of individuals and families, facilitates cooperation, increases productivity, reduces the cost of doing business, and leads to enhanced quality of life.

**Definition of Terms**

For start-up purposes, the following are acknowledged working definitions of terms that would be germane to the conceptual development of an *Active Communities* program framework:

**Active living** is a “way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living. Active living recognizes the benefits of many different activities. It involves a range of activities from walking and simple tasks to more vigorous activities such as running. In this context, the nature, form, frequency and intensity of physical activity is relative to each person’s ability, needs, aspirations and environment.” *(Active Living Canada)*

**Active living community** fosters healthy and active lifestyles. Although the central focus is on self-empowerment, active living communities ensure that a supportive base of opportunities and
resources are available within sustainable environments. An active living community is characterized by its efforts to cultivate:

- an increase in the number of residents who adopt healthy lifestyle patterns
- positive health practices
- a supportive base of opportunities
- a strong sense of community identity
- an integrated community network that supports collaborative actions, and
- a strong commitment to the environment (Bouchard & Shepard, 1996)

**Physical activity** comprises any body movement produced by the skeletal muscles that results in a substantial increase over the resting energy expenditure (Bouchard, 1994).

**Quality of life** could be defined as the overall enjoyment of one’s life. It is a healthy balance between work with family life, vocation with recreation, and accumulation of wealth with maintenance of health. In addition, the wellness paradigm and absence of disease is closely linked to quality of life.

**Recreation** (literally, to re-create) is a process of restoring, refreshing or creating anew the body, mind and spirit by some form of play, amusement, social interaction or relaxation. At the first Federal-Provincial Ministers Conference, in Edmonton, in 1974, Ministers defined recreation as “all those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying and is not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs but includes artistic, creative, cultural, social and intellectual activities”. The traditional view of recreation as leisure and discretionary must shift to view recreation as wellness and necessary for quality of life. Recreation can play a vital role in promoting social inclusion and thus building social capital in a community.

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1 National Recreation Statement (http://www.lin.ca/resource/html/statemen.htm#Recreation%20Grows), Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, September, 1987. At this meeting, the Ministers declared “Whereas recreation includes all of those activities in which an individual chooses to participate in his leisure time and is not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs but includes artistic, creative, cultural, social and intellectual activities; and whereas recreation is a fundamental human need for citizens of all ages and interests and for both sexes and is essential to the psychological, social and physical well-being of man; and whereas society is rapidly changing and leisure time is increasing; be it therefore resolved that this Conference recognizes the fact that recreation is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered as social services and that recreation’s purpose should be: (a) to assist individual and community development; (b) to improve the quality of life; (c) to enhance social functioning.
Social capital can be defined as the relationship (social cohesion or social inclusion) that communities build and renew when they interact with each other in families, workplaces, neighborhoods, local associations and a range of informal and formal meeting places and situations. Social capital is built when there is a sense of collective social inclusion: a sense of belonging to a place or community; and active volunteerism.

Active Communities is based on a collaborative approach with the provincial government, municipal governments, the recreation and parks sector, businesses, and health promotion and wellness agencies. Active Communities represents a key foundation stone for the Alberta Active Living Strategy by empowering municipalities and community organizations to play a direct role in achieving active living benefits.

The ARPA and the Alberta recreation and parks community would play a key role as: 1) leader, coach and advocate for active living and social inclusion practices at the municipal and community level; 2) facilitate the building of sustainable communities through growth and sustainable development of the recreation and parks industry, and; 3) facilitate collaborative relationships and working partnerships between municipal governments, the Alberta Government, the recreation and parks sector, allied stakeholders and the corporate sector. The ARPA sees the importance of enhanced positioning for the recreation and parks sector in contributing to personal health and wellness, building social capital, and sustainable communities, stewardship of environmental resources and cultural assets, and enhanced quality of life.

The social capital outcomes that are expected to result from recreation and active living at the municipal level will include improved physical health and wellness, building stronger families and enhancing social cohesion or improved relationships amongst citizens in communities.

Social capital will be built and sustained through the relationships that individuals and communities form that result from regular recreation participation and interactions with each other through such participation. Some of the expected social capital outcomes for Alberta communities would include:

- More vibrant, sustainable communities with enhanced quality of life including increased sense of trust, neighbourliness, caring, sharing and stewardship;
• Increased social cohesion and social responsibility with reduced levels of crime, self-destructive behaviour and regrettable health costs.

• Communities in which people are able to be fully active members in community life and where volunteerism flourishes;

• Ancillary economic development and increased employment opportunities;

• Community leadership development and capacity building;

• Collaborative partnerships and more efficient use of resources;

• Healthier lifestyles and a reduced burden on the public health care system; and

• Enhanced sense of the importance of the natural environment and sustainable stewardship practices.

Background - Definition of Need

Alberta and Canada faces some disturbing trends that have an impact on the level of quality of life. These trends include an increase in diseases related to inactivity including soaring rates of obesity, higher than average incidence of low birth weights (in high-need neighbourhoods), and a substantial increase in chronic conditions (among low-income families).

The Federal Government of Canada recently recognized obesity as a significant problem when Health Minister Anne McLellan announced $15 million dollars would be spent on obesity research. Obesity can lead to a variety of diseases including diabetes and hypertension. The health care and lost wages cost of these illnesses is approximately $1.8 billion per year. This research will look at a number of factors, in particular, why people eat too much and why adolescent girls become more sedentary in their teens.

According to the World Health Organization, the four most prominent chronic diseases are cardiovascular disease; cancer, chronic pulmonary disease, and Diabetes type II.
Health Canada estimates that over 2 million Canadians have some form of diabetes and asserts that diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death by disease in Canada.

In Alberta, increasing physical inactivity, evolving leisure and lifestyle habits and, public sector reform, have a significant impact on our quality of living. The following are some key trends in physical activity, leisure and public sector reform:

### Physical Inactivity and Obesity

- Increased demands on adults (parents) time due to longer working hours, dual income families, and increased commuting times has reduced the amount of time available for involvement in physical activity for adults and their children. Additionally, manual labour-saving devices and technologies contribute to a decline in physically active work and household chores.

- A substantial number of Canadians in every province are insufficiently active, with the highest rates of inactivity occurring in Newfoundland (61%), Prince Edward Island (62%), New Brunswick (63%), and Manitoba (61%) and the lowest in British Columbia (47%). As many as 50% of Albertans are insufficiently active for optimal health benefits. (National Population Health Survey, 1998/99)

- Slightly more women (59%) than men (52%) are physically inactive.

- The proportion of those physically inactive increases with age. Sex-related differences are most apparent among older adults, where 67% of women are inactive compared with 55% of men.

- The level of physical inactivity decreases as education level increases (64% among those with less than secondary graduation versus 51% among university and college graduates). Moreover, as income level increases, the proportion that is physically inactive decreases (62% versus 44%).

- Scientific evidence shows that physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of developing type II diabetes by half.

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<tr>
<th>Top 10 most popular physical activities for adults over 20 (% of respondents):</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking for exercise</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardening, yard work</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home exercise</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social dancing</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
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<td>Golf</td>
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<td>Weight training</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jogging, running</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>13</td>
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(NPHS, 1998/99)
• Obesity rates have more than doubled since 1985 in both Alberta adults and youth. Over 32% of adults (aged 15 years and older) have a Body Mass Index (BMI) in excess of 27, which means they are overweight. Over one quarter of Canadian children are overweight with the rate of obesity having tripled between 1981 and 1996.

• The health of Canada’s children is at risk due to unacceptable levels of physical inactivity and rising rates of obesity. Roughly 57% of Alberta’s children and youth are not active enough to develop a solid foundation for health and well-being for future years.

• The cost of obesity includes increased risk of gallstones, hypertension, heart disease and colon cancer and increases the risk of diabetes. Close to one million Canadians have diabetes with the rate increasing, particularly among Aboriginal people. The estimated cost of diabetes to the Alberta health system is $9 million annually (based on Canadian health system estimated annual cost of $9 billion).

• The cost of inactivity is at least $2.1 billion annually in direct health care costs (Canadian Medical Association Journal 2000). This equates to $325 per Canadian in health cost savings. We estimate that based on conservative inactivity levels of 45.8% (Statistics Canada) that Alberta could save roughly $142 million annually in health care costs if the 15 year and older adult population were to increase their level of physical activity to levels for optimal health.

• 10% of all Canadians aged 12 years and older suffer from hypertension (high blood pressure) climbing to over 30% for those aged 65 years and over.

• Over the past two decades, sedentary living, including watching television, use of the Internet, and video games, has increased dramatically.

• The Whistler 2001 Summit identified five critical reasons for a focus on increased physical activity. They are:
  1. the rise of chronic diseases
  2. obesity epidemic
  3. increased sedentary lifestyles

“We have a good system at treating illness. We now need to focus on wellness. In the long run, our healthcare system cannot be sustained unless we encourage Albertans to take better care of themselves.”
Hon. Gary Mar/2000
4. growth in the aged population
5. increasing cost of health care

Key Leisure Shifts

- From many with discretionary time and money to many with time/no money or money/no time
- From small bits woven through the week to discretionary time in fewer, larger blocks
- From formal, highly structured activity to informal, self-scheduled participation
- From team/sports/activities to increased focus on individual activities
- From directed program/teaching to self-directed/learning
- From traditional activities/equipment/facilities to new and innovative equipment, blended sports
- From physical fitness focus to holistic wellness/balanced development
- From consumptive/expensive activities to economical/environmentally friendly activities
- From indoor, facility focus to outdoor and home focus
- From “doing something” to “experiencing” – the adventure quest
- From safe, secure activities to managed risk and excitement
- From activity as ends, to activity as means - to broader benefits/outcomes

Public Sector Reform

- Overall impacts of this shift of responsibility have affected the voluntary sector in the following ways:
  - Self-reliant voluntary organizations and communities are embracing social
entrepreneurship, especially within the voluntary sector.

- Funding cutbacks have resulted in a loss of infrastructure and knowledge capital and both are viewed as essential to maintain volunteer based organizations. Many organizations have been forced to merge and consolidate operations.

- A preoccupation with the bottom line financial results has, largely, overridden “public good outcomes”.

- The government of Alberta has reduced the role of the public sector in governance of the province – the government has undertaken a wide variety of initiatives toward “shared governance” impacting all sectors.

- Where possible, government now acts not so much on its own, but to facilitate the accomplishments of others.

- The delivery of service by others has commonly replaced delivery of services by government. In other cases, facilitation of non-government organizations to achieve public policy outcomes has replaced direct action by government.

- Recreation and parks development has experienced a devolution of responsibility from senior levels of government to local governments and the voluntary sector, and this has been done with minimal supportive resource transfers.

- Community recreation facilities and infrastructure in Alberta are aging and being stressed by increasing demands from a growing population and limited funding for infrastructure upgrading and refurbishment.

- Real per capita Alberta Government expenditures (Alberta Community Development) on recreation and culture has declined 59% from 1991 to 1999. At the same time, municipal government expenditures have risen sharply and are more than double the provincial outlay. (Nichols Applied Management 2001)
Public Participation – Social Cohesion

Voluntary organizations in the recreation sector are under pressure to deliver a greater number of services and are increasingly expected to raise larger amounts of money to support their activities. As a consequence, it is critical for governments at all levels to monitor and facilitate “capacity building” in this sector. Resources such as financial, human, and accountability tools will improve the effectiveness of voluntary organizations and strengthen their support networks.

Robert Putnam is considered to be an expert on the subject of social capital. He is a Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, author of “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community (2000)”. In an article entitled “Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences”, Putnam asserts “networks and the associated norms of reciprocity have value.” In summary, he offers statistical support for the following points:

- the welfare of children is higher where social capital is higher
- schools work better in high social capital states
- children watch less TV in high social capital states
- violent crime is rarer in high social capital states
- people in high social capital states are less pugnacious
- health is better in high social capital states
- tax evasion is low where social capital is high
- social capital and tolerance go together
- social capital and economic equity go together
- social capital and civic equality go together

Developing Communities Through Recreation Services

If recreation and parks services are to realize their potential for healthy living and social inclusion, new and innovative ways of working are needed – both to attract and meet the broader needs of under-participating groups. There is a need for a broad shift from product-led approaches to needs-driven services – those that begin with the identification of the nature and needs of communities – in order to develop communities through recreation and parks services. Such a shift may require a re-thinking of current professional education and training and the allocation of resources.
Recreation and parks services contributions must also be maximized by situating them at the heart of strategic planning and development. At the local authority level this means developing recreation and parks inputs into community strategies, renewal strategies, local strategic partnerships – including engaging effectively with partners in health, education, crime and disorder, economic development, transportation and the environment.

Clearly the Alberta Government’s Active Living Strategy will help build a better Alberta. Schools, regional fitness centres and the workplace are three essential supporting pillars, but there is a need to balance these with a fourth pillar - community. Alberta’s community recreation and parks infrastructure is in need of attention as evidenced by the proposals for the Community Recreation Infrastructure Report and a re-established Urban Parks Program and Countryside Parks and Recreation Areas Program.

**What is an Active Community?**

Active communities are reflected in networks of individuals and families (e.g. municipalities, neighbourhoods, social groups) who practice “active living.” ‘Active’ can be defined as participation in any form of recreation, including physical and social activities. ‘Community’ relates to everyone, either within a geographical community or a community with shared interests.

Active communities are ones that have high levels of active involvement, creativity, social capital and social cohesion. Social capital has to do with relationships that individuals and communities build and renew through the regular interaction with each other in families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, local associations and other meeting places and events. Developing and enhancing the physical and mental capacities of people through strong networks between people and all sectors in a community influences creativity and builds social capital.

The amount of social capital in a community is a measure of the common well-being of the people who live in the community. This includes quality of life, vitality and livability of that community. Social capital is positively related to better health, reduced crime, reduced inequality, lifelong learning, volunteering, and even election turnout.

Social capital is also built through the interactions of people in the community who participate in physical activities in “common” spaces (e.g. parks, greenspaces, playgrounds, and
Physical activity can be undertaken in a range of structured and unstructured, planned or incidental forms. Activities can range from structured sport and fitness classes to informal moderate physical activity such as walking, gardening and golfing. Even moderate physical activity of 30 minutes per day can deliver substantial health and wellness benefits.

Poor health is closely associated with social exclusion. A variety of recreation and parks services makes a unique contribution to psychological health and well-being, to physical fitness and health, and to the dissemination of health-related information.

*Active Communities* is an opportunity for Alberta to recommit to a model of prevention versus prescription. We have seen and heard that a healthy individual, community, province and country is:

- Happier and more productive
- Less costly in terms of health care
- Less costly in terms of social services
- Less costly in terms of anti-social behaviors such as vandalism and theft.

Evidence exists internationally, in Canada, and provincially that making a commitment to an *Active Communities* program works. An *Active Communities* program addresses the chronic issues facing Alberta and provides a cost effective alternative to current practices.

**Provincial Planning and Policy Context**

A new policy paradigm is emerging in Canada and in Alberta where human and social capital are increasingly being recognized as key assets or endowments to a flourishing and dynamic economy and to improved quality of life for citizens. A knowledge-based economy is dependent on the skills, knowledge and creativity of its human capital. Quality of life of a society is increasingly dependent on the conditions of its social capital, including social cohesion. The development of 21st century communities, economies and societies will be increasingly measured in terms of their “state of social capital” or “conditions of well-being”, that is, their real wealth – human, social, and natural capital. This stewardship of a community’s so-called “living capital” must be balanced with conventional economic growth goals to achieve genuine quality of life developments.

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"...people with good social networks live longer, are at reduced risk of coronary heart disease, are less likely to report being depressed or suffer a recurrence of cancer, and are less susceptible to infectious illness than those with poor networks.”

Acheson, 1998
The development of 21\textsuperscript{st} century communities, economies and societies will be increasingly measured in terms of their “state of social capital” or “conditions of well-being”, that is, their real wealth – human, social, and natural capital.

The importance of recreation and active living in health and wellness promotion has been recognized by several important initiatives.

The Alberta Active Living Strategy included 23 recommendations to promote active living in Alberta communities, schools (Ever Active Schools) and the workplace, but it was mostly silent on the crucial role municipal governments can play in the delivery of recreation and active living programs. The proposed \textit{Active Communities} framework would become a key delivery mechanism for the Alberta Active Living Strategy (the outcome of a 1997 Active Living Task Force established by the Minister of Community Development) by explicitly providing the recreation and active living capacity building tools and resources to municipalities and community groups to implement recreation and active living strategies and practices within their communities.

The recently released Alberta Premier’s Advisory Committee on Health, chaired by the Right Honourable Don Mazankowski, endorsed the need for recreation and active living noting: “the best long-term strategy for sustaining the health system is to encourage people to stay healthy.”

The Interim Report of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, prepared by Roy Romanow, stated, “We need to strike a better balance between treating people when they are sick or injured and focusing on broader health determinants that address underlying causes of poor health and have the best potential for improving the overall health of Canadians…. More needs to be done to invest in prevention and promotion activities, including ways of encouraging individuals to take more responsibility for their own health.”

Delegates at the Alberta Future Summit 2002 also supported the need to “create, support and maintain healthy lifestyle choices for all Albertans” and proposed the following initiatives that relate specifically to recreation and active living:

- Update, implement and promote active living strategies, including:
  - encourage active living through recreation;
o every rural area should have access to a fitness facility;
o develop a new “ParticipACTION” program model. Promote outdoor activity as a way of improving health;
o companies could pay a portion of fitness facility membership for their employees, and;
o provide financial support for sport and fitness activities.

• Market and promote the benefits of recreation and wellness.
• Reintroduce daily physical or recreational activities into the school curriculum.
• Maintain and upgrade aging recreational infrastructure. Support new recreational infrastructure in growing communities.
• Invest in an Alberta sport plan.
• The growing importance of “community” within the evolving policy and planning context.

The final report from the Alberta Future Summit also stated:

“(i) provide adequate funding for local initiatives that enhance quality of life

• increase infrastructure facility grants
• increase provincial funding for the arts, libraries, sports and recreation, heritage and culture,
• reinstate the urban and rural parks programs. Build more community parks.

(ii) Expand programs that offer high school credit for volunteerism.”

National and International “Active Communities” Initiatives

A number of benchmark examples of active community initiatives are under development internationally that can serve as models for an Alberta Active Communities framework targeted at municipalities (see Appendix A). These benchmark active community initiatives could serve as important models for the development and implementation of an Alberta Active Communities program framework. Some of these international benchmarks and their key attributes include:
1. **New South Wales (Australia) “Creating Active Communities”** - An excellent example of an active living program that is focused on building active communities by providing active living development and implementation guidelines to municipal/local governing councils (as part of the national *Active Australia* initiative).

2. **Scotland’s Active Communities strategy** - A program that promotes the value of community involvement and encourages more people to become involved as volunteers and in community action. It also aims to support public, private and voluntary agencies so that they recognize the important contribution that active communities make towards planning, policy making and service delivery.

3. **Sport-England’s Active Communities** - A ‘framework’ comprising services, products and sources of funding provided by Sport England, often in partnership with other organizations and agencies, to assist individuals and organizations to create their own Active Communities. The framework is organized under five core headings, which reflect the most important issues leading to the development of an Active Community:
   - promoting social justice
   - increasing participation in sport
   - developing community sport leaders
   - developing community sport programs and facilities
   - planning for sport and recreation

Sport England also funds a range of programs under Active Communities including:
   - Active Communities Development Fund
   - Addressing the Health Agenda
   - Awards for All
   - Positive Futures
   - Sport Action Zone

4. **North Carolina’s Be Active program** - a good example of a program that encourages citizens and communities to create the policies, opportunities, facilities, and motivation to promote physical activity -- and good health.

“We need nothing less than a step change in how we empower citizens to reclaim the power of community… their heart-felt sense of neighborliness that will come through more active living”.

(Prime Minister Tony Blair, U.K.)
5. **Beacon Councils Awards Program, U.K.** - a good example of a program that recognizes and rewards best practices in community development. The program approach and conceptual intent has much to offer towards the development of an Alberta *Active Communities* Awards Program.

6. **British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association’s Active Communities Framework** - provides a current evolutionary benchmark for Alberta using an innovative measurement (indicators) evaluation and community asset inventory process to measure the extent to which municipal programs, facilities and best practices yield physical activity and health outcomes. Also includes supports to communities to conduct life-cycle facility/infrastructure analysis that would facilitate sustained maintenance and replacement of facilities.

7. **Healthy Communities Coalition/Ontario** - Ontario has established a provincial body whose mission it is “to work with diverse communities of Ontario to strengthen their social, environmental, and economic well-being”. A healthy community:

   - provides a clean, safe environment
   - meets the basic needs of its residents
   - residents respect and support each other
   - involves the community in local government
   - promotes/celebrates historical and cultural heritage
   - provides accessible health services
   - has diverse, innovative economic
   - stewards a sustainable eco-system

8. **Sport and Recreation Victoria, Australia: “Active for Life” Physical Activity Framework** - The Victoria State Government recognizes that action needs to occur at all levels of the community if the full range of benefits available through increased levels of physical activity are to be actualized. The framework recognizes health, economic, social and environmental benefits and promotes the following objectives:
• building partnerships
• educating and engaging the public and professionals
• improving physical activity services and removing barriers to participation
• improving places in which physical activity occurs

Sport and Recreation Victoria manages a range of programs under Active Communities targeting specific community sectors with the aim of enhancing their sport and recreation opportunities. Programs include:

• access for all abilities
• indigenous sport and recreation
• masters sport
• physical activity initiatives
• women’s participation
• junior sport conference
• community organization development
• member protection

Each of these programs is funded through Sport and Recreation Victoria.

9. Sport and Recreation New Zealand: Investing in Active Communities - a recognition that local councils play an integral role in the provision of recreation and sport facilities and programs. Also, an acknowledgment of the important strategic leadership of Local Councils within their communities. As such, the National Government has introduced “strategic partnering” with local councils which will encourage communities to promote and adopt physically active lifestyles. Strategic partnership would include:

• sharing information and best practice
• guidelines and priorities
• national/community awareness campaigns
• strategic investment

10. Active Edmonton: It’s About Feeling Good - Active Edmonton is a five year interagency physical activity promotional strategy encouraging all
Edmontonians to value physical activity and be involved in physical activity as part of their daily lives. Active Edmonton’s vision is for “Edmonton to be a leader in physical activity and the ‘Most Active City’ in Canada”.

The program framework involves:

- key marketing and communications activities
- program initiatives (educational, contests, Mayor’s Awards and events)
- networking (interagency/sector)
- research and evaluation

**An Alberta “Active Communities: Conceptual Program Framework”**

The purpose of the *Active Communities* conceptual program framework is to empower communities with the strategies, programs and tools to invest their time and resources to build and sustain vibrant, strong and high quality of life communities. By using the *Active Communities* framework, communities will be equipped to realize the quality of life outcome benefits that can be realized through recreation and active living.

Communities that are rich in human and social capital also exhibit high levels of quality of life. Communities, however, need the tools and resources to leverage their human and social capital capacity, to realize quality of life dividends which include healthier, more active and more socially vibrant communities. This progressive and evidenced-based program takes a systems-based, life-cycle approach to governance and management of people and communities, seeing active living as an integral part of every aspect of community life.

The *Active Communities* Program would be a key strategic tool for building and sustaining vibrant and high quality of life communities. The program would provide guidance on fostering, encouraging and enhancing opportunities for social interaction, physical activities and other active living lifestyle choices. The program would be used to encourage, identify, and recognize communities that value and promote positive healthy behaviours and lifestyle practices, as well as leisure, social inclusion, and physical activity opportunities.

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“Cities need a “people climate” even more than they need a “business climate” – the key to success lies in developing a world-class “people climate” …invest in lifestyle options and amenities people really want.”

*(Richard Florida 2002)*
The fundamental question for a community in defining quality of life is to identify the criteria or values “that makes life worthwhile” for that community. These values will undoubtedly vary. Each active community will have a range of similar but not identical characteristics. These characteristics, which include both outcomes and outputs, might include:

- High levels of community awareness regarding benefits of active lifestyles, lifelong learning, and available recreation opportunities;
- Active and sustained participation in recreational activities;
- Active living public policy and an endorsed charter “putting people first”;
- Social inclusion (sense of belonging);
- Civic mindedness and sustained citizen engagement;
- Sense of neighbourliness;
- Strong voluntary sector;
- Local community involvement and partnerships;
- Availability, access and variety of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities;
- Inclusive recreation opportunities that respect diversity;
- Corporate and community attitudes that encourage healthy living involvement;
- Active schools, and active workplaces;
- Tangible, effective linkages with the health community;
- Community planning that embraces activity living and social inclusion as core elements;
- Community recreation and parks master plan;
- Strong sense of family and interrelationships between families;
- Good standard, availability and range of parks, greenspaces or greenways;
- Number of active clubs, associations and community leagues;
- High level of inter-agency collaboration;
- High level of community spirit and pride;
- “Fit and creative” communities;
- Promotes, celebrates historical and cultural heritage;
- Economically sustainable, resilient and flourishing communities.

In his book “The Rise of the Creative Class”, Richard Florida describes the following as hallmarks of creative communities:
- freedom of choice
- diversity
- authenticity
- openness and tolerance
- creativity
- inclusivity
- fluidity
- “Anonymous lifestyles”
- “street life”

“We need to shift both public and private funds away from investments in physical capital, toward investing in creative capital…”

(Richard Florida, 2002)
The Government of Alberta along with other partners, including the ARPA and the Alberta recreation/active living community, would play a key role as:

1) Leader, coach and advocate for active living practices at the municipal and community level;
2) Facilitate the building of sustainable communities through growth and sustainable development of the recreation and parks industry, and;
3) Facilitate collaborative relationships and working partnerships between municipal governments, the Alberta Government, and the recreation and parks sector including corporate and not-profit organizations.

The social capital outcomes that are expected to result from active living and recreation at the municipal level will be in the areas of:

- More vibrant, sustainable Albertan communities with enhanced quality of life including increased sense of neighbourliness, caring, sharing and stewardship;
- Increased social cohesion and social responsibility with reduced levels of crime, self-destructive behaviour and regrettable health costs.
- Communities in which people are able to be fully active members in community life;
- Local economic development and increased employment opportunities;
- Community leadership development and capacity building;
- Collaborative partnerships and more efficient use of resources;
- Healthier lifestyles and a reduced burden on the public health care system; and
- Enhanced sense of the importance of the natural environment and sustainable stewardship practices.

**Operating Structure**

*Active Communities* operating model would use a design-build-operate system of planning and maintenance, including a continuous improvement, life-cycle assessment process (see Figure 1). The model is in essence a strategic-business planning process (see Figure 2). This structure would provide a kind of “blueprint” for building active communities or a road map and resource guide for municipalities to achieve the improved quality of life outcomes their citizens desire. The *Active Communities* framework outlines some of the key
practical strategies, actions and best-practices municipalities can take to achieve the tangible and intangible quality of life benefits of active living – physical activity, re-creation and social engagement. One of the keys to success of the Active Communities initiative is the extent to which municipalities and community governing councils begin to integrate the key attributes of active living and recreation into all aspects of their municipal strategic-business planning, economic development planning and community planning – life-cycle business planning.

The premise is that investing in people and community through recreation and active living programs, parks, open space and facilities leads to enhanced quality of life and improved health.

To implement this operating model would require the following key steps:

1. Develop a prototype active community model (design) then test-drive the model in a few select communities.
2. Develop Genuine Progress Accounts (well-being assessment) to inventory and assess the human, social and produced capital comparative advantages (current state of well-being) of Alberta communities.
3. Identify and inventory the key tools and resources that are currently being practiced in Alberta (and nationally) that are effective in building active communities and enhancing quality of life.

4. Develop tools for communities to measure and monitor quality of life (e.g. measurement handbook (surveys, data sources).

5. Improve public administrative services and removing barriers to participation in active communities.

6. Program implementation

**Vision**

The vision for *Active Communities* is:

We envision, a society built around communities of place and interest, in which more citizens are freely engaged in shared action and sustained recreation and physical activity to increase their quality of life and years of healthy living.

**Mission**

The mission for *Active Communities* is:

To empower Alberta citizens and communities to invest their time and resources to build stronger, vibrant and active communities in line with their vision of improved quality of life.

**Core Values**

The following core values underlie the *Active Communities* framework:

- **Enhanced personal health and wellness of Albertans** – Enhanced personal health and wellness of individuals is core value of a re-creating community.
- **Personal responsibility and a civic culture** – Individual responsibility for health and wellness along, the collective sense of social cohesion, and the practice of civic participation are at the core of an active community. Voluntarism and civic participation are central to these duties and responsibilities.
Active Communities Strategy

Mission: To empower Alberta citizens and communities to invest their time and resources to build stronger, vibrant and active communities in line with their vision of improved quality of life.

Partners
- Alberta Recreation and Parks Association/allied stakeholders
- Private Business and Voluntary Organizations
- Municipalities and Communities
- Alberta Government

Desired Outcomes

| Albertans live physically active lifestyles | Albertans value and participate in a full range of leisure activities | Qualified practitioners deliver programs and services | Albertans become involved in life-long activity learning | High quality learning/training opportunities | Mass recreation/grass roots development | Health promotion and fitness | Benefits research & development |

Goals

1. Alberta municipalities and communities are empowered with the tools and resources to build active communities and social capital.

2. The Alberta Government provides support and guidance to local councils in implementing Active Communities

3. Recreation and physical activity Services are improved and opportunities for participation in community active living programs are enhanced.

Strategies, Actions, Programs

Quality of Life Outcomes

| Individual Benefits | Community Benefits | Economic Benefits | Environmental Benefits |

Quality of Life Indicators

- Recreation and Physical Activity
- Volunteerism
- Leisure time
- Personal Health
- Community Cohesion
- Economic Financial
- Infrastructure
- Parks & Green Space
- Environmental Quality
• **Sustaining nature’s capital and cultural assets** – Ensuring the sustained well-being of nature’s capital endowments and cultural assets, through responsible stewardship practices is critical to sustaining a “re-creating community.”

• **Sustainable and flourishing economy** – A dynamic, flourishing, and value-added economy (the network of households and businesses in community), that includes a flourishing recreation sector and natural endowments (e.g. parks, greenspaces), is critical to quality of life in a re-creating community.

**Fundamental Beliefs**

The four core values are supported by the following fundamental beliefs:

• **Physical activity, recreation and parks have unlimited potential** to develop life skills, to enhance communities and to promote and maintain healthy lifestyles that contribute significantly to the quality of life in Alberta communities.

• **Enhancement of the personal health and wellness of Albertans is dependent on the capacity of individuals to take responsibility for their own personal development and well-being.** Albertans and local municipal governments must become active agents in their health and wellness through “re-creating” activities.

• **A prosperous and sustainable economy is dependent upon communities that offer a high quality of life.** Such communities welcome diversity and offer a wide range of recreational opportunities.

• **Preservation of Alberta’s civic culture and social cohesion is dependent upon maintenance of equity.** More egalitarian communities with lesser inequalities of wealth exhibit higher degrees of social trust and social cohesion.

• **Sustaining the integrity of nature and maintaining cultural assets is dependent upon development and maintenance of a culture of total asset stewardship.** Individuals, communities, companies, and government agencies all have their respective role to play in the stewardship of total assets or resources of a community – natural, social/cultural, human, and public goods.
• **There are lifetime benefits of recreation and active living** including:
  
  o Enhanced population health (e.g. increased life expectancy), individual wellness, healthy lifestyles, and lifelong learning;
  
  o Building communities, social capital and foundations;
  
  o The conservation and preservation of parks and natural environments;
  
  o Enhanced economic conditions in the province and communities.

• **Working in partnerships** with individuals, communities, recreation, sports, arts and culture, play and parks industries, businesses, and governments is essential to building and sustaining quality of life and social capital in Alberta;

• **Using a community development approach** yields benefits both through the interrelationships developed in a collaborative approach to program and service development and delivery;

• **Volunteering is fundamental** in the delivery of recreation and active living programs and services and the development of social capital in Alberta.

**Goals**

The following goals and supporting strategies or actions are proposed for implementing the *Active Communities* framework.

1. **Alberta municipalities and communities are empowered with the tools and resources to build active communities and social capital.**

Support for “active communities” requires:

a. Guidelines for implementing recreation and active living strategies;

b. Assessing social capital and quality of life outcomes;

c. A commitment to life-cycle infrastructure management; and,

d. Strategic investments in high quality programs with trained leaders and quality assurance.

Strategies and actions to implement this goal would include:

1.1 **Active Communities Guidelines** (Recreation, Physical Activity and Active Living Guidelines for Local Councils)
would be a set of guidelines and a Local Council’s resources kit by which local Councils could build their own vision of an “active community”, establish a local Council’s network to share experiences and best-practices and develop a local action plan for recreation and active living.

These guidelines would include the following key operating strategies:

a. “Whole of Council” approach: Municipal councils take into consideration recreation, physical activity, and social inclusion in all aspects of community governance and decision making, including strategic-business planning, programming, operations and maintenance.

b. Integrated planning: An integrated approach to municipal or community planning for recreation, physical activity and building social capital through citizen engagement that involves using recreation initiatives to address community quality of life objectives, incorporating physical activity within a range of local municipal council projects and consideration of the regional impacts (beyond local municipal councils) of active living. That active living through physical activity and community engagement become integrated into all provincial and municipal business, program and resource planning.

c. Safe and supportive environments: Providing facilities and areas that are safe, accessible and pleasant, with the aim of supporting a range of physical and social activities within local communities and achieving goals of ‘sustainable physical activity.’ Safe and supportive recreation activity environments also contribute to improved economic viability of commercial areas, risk management and injury prevention, and crime prevention objectives.

d. Activities, events and programs: Providing a range of activity opportunities, facilities, supportive environments, motivation, or guidance for specific activities, events, festivals and other community participation opportunities that create a stronger sense of community pride.

e. Special needs and groups: Providing and facilitating the environments, resources and activities
for special activity population groups with special and varying recreation and physical activity needs.

f. **Community involvement**: Ensuring a diversity of community stakeholders are consulted and involved in the process of physical and social activity planning and implementation of strategies and actions.

g. **Partnerships**: Partnerships with other municipal councils, the provincial and federal governments, local businesses and community groups to enable local municipal councils to place a greater emphasis on physical and social activity within their communities.

h. **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation**: Continually review the goals, directions, and actions (plans, programs, services, activities) to ensure that the initiatives relating to recreation, physical activity and active living are appropriate in relation to community needs and the achievement of each municipal council’s objectives. A clear process of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the goals of community’s physical activity plans against invested resources is required. This must include assessing the changing needs of the community, assessing the appropriateness of facilities and initiatives and calibrating strategic directions and facility/activity plans in accordance.

1.2 **Community Well-being Assessment**: A critical component of building active communities is the need to conduct and maintain an inventory and assessment of the current conditions of well-being (human, social, economic, environmental) of the community. The community well-being assessment would include the following steps:

- Using the Genuine Progress Accounting (GPA) ® system assess the current conditions of the community’s five capital endowments: human, social, natural produced (infrastructure), and financial.
- Identify needs or gaps in the conditions of a community’s well-being; also examining the capacity and capabilities of the community.

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2 Genuine Progress Accounting® is a new system of total capital accounting developed by Mark Anielski of Anielski Management Inc. to account for the physical conditions and full monetary costs/benefits of a community’s human, social, natural and produced (infrastructure) capital that contributes to quality of life.
o Develop a community “capital” and well-being accounting system that identifies the strengths weaknesses of the human, social, natural and infrastructure capital assets and liabilities.

o These well-being “accounts” would include well-being indicators that reveal trends in the overall quality of life of the community. Thus, the establishment of measurement criterion/indicators for assessing future returns to quality of life and social capital outcomes from Active Communities programs and projects.

o Identify specific populations and their needs and develop strategies to address these needs.

o Identify resources (funding, partners, volunteerism, government infrastructure/capital, publications, internet sites, networks and other resources) required to implement the guidelines.

The social-human capital assessment will provide each community with an inventory to assess its strengths and weaknesses and thus identify gaps and areas for improving social capital and quality of life.

The next step is to measure and assess the extent to which municipal or community programs and facilities support active living lifestyles and identifying gaps against the social capital audit. This will also involve an evaluation of best practices that support the development of healthy individuals and active communities.

To assess the success of promoting active living strategies requires tracking the changes over time (trends) in current health, physical activity, facility usage and self-rated measures of social cohesion and quality of life. The trends in the indicators of an active community become critical for making mid-course adjustments, business planning and infrastructure capital budgeting for each community. Linking indicators such as facility usage to related health and well-being outcomes is also a critical issue, that is, demonstrating and accounting for the “returns to social capital” from investments of time, budgets and resources to active community programs.

1.3 Local Councils would be encouraged to share, compare, and demonstrate active living “best practices” examples and report on quality of life outcomes at workshops. Local councils demonstrate or assess:

o Benefits of recreation, physical activity and active living
1.4 **Full life-cycle infrastructure management** requiring a process of total capital accounting and budgeting that ensures sustained parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities. A concerted effort is needed to engage all responsible authorities, organizations and businesses in improving facilities and localities for recreation and physical activity and to integrate the issue into urban (e.g. subdivision planning), environmental, transportation and social planning processes.

1.5 **Strategic investment in quality programs** with trained leaders is essential to building active communities. Benchmark programs, could as an example, include Parks and Recreation Ontario’s High Five program, a quality assurance program targeted at children’s recreation and sport.

1.6 **New and stronger partnerships** between the provincial government, local governments, recreation, parks and sports industries and associations, citizens and other corporate and public groups are needed to generate the commitment and resources to support increased levels of recreation and physical activity.

2. **The Alberta Government provides support and guidance to local councils in implementing Active Communities.**

The Alberta Government, in partnership with local municipal councils and recreation and parks practitioners and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, would play a critical role in supporting local councils in implementing the Active Communities framework through:

2.1 **Providing financial support and guidance** on developing safe and supportive community infrastructure through:

- Parks and Green Spaces – Urban/Countryside Parks Programs
- Facility Assessment and Life-Cycle Infrastructure Management
- Major Facilities Upgrading Grant Program
- Provincial Recreation Infrastructure Inventory
2.2 **Guidance on leadership, safety and ethics:**

- Leisure education
- Integrity of recreation and community leadership
- Quality assurance
- Fair Play/Smart Play
- Benefits of recreation
- Risk management
- Emerging leaders

2.3 **Targeted "Communities/Initiatives":**

- The ‘Out-of-School’ Agenda
- Children's Play – the creative/formative years
- Positive Futures - Youth at Risk (10 to 14 years of age)
- Go Girl!
- Active Seniors
- Rural Recreation and Outreach
- Recreation – “No Exceptions: Access for All Abilities”
- Creative Communities: Flourishing Arts and Heritage
- Corporate Social Entrepreneurship

2.4 **Provincial Awards and Best Practices**

An annual awards program and promotional event that recognizes and rewards Alberta community leaders and best-practices in enhancing quality of life and social capital through recreational and citizen engagement programs, activities, and events. More specifically:

- The creation of a Lieutenant Governor’s “Active Communities” Awards Program: Encouraging sustained active communities requires an awards and recognition program to recognize local best-practices and stories of success. These awards would recognize best-practices in implementing *Active Communities* strategies, in building social capital, and improving physical activity through community recreation and parks.

Awards honoring a municipality, community group or corporate entity, which has positively impacted the active living and wellness agenda in their community, province and at a national level through collaborative initiatives and leadership.
2.5 Research, Development and Analysis

- Provincial market segmentation study: recreation values, attitudes and behaviour
- Monitor trends in recreation, social inclusion and neighborliness
- Assess trends in recreation volunteering and community activity
- Develop, benchmark and monitor a suite of local quality of life/recreation and parks indicators
- Assess the recreation and sporting capital in rural Alberta: its contribution to rural development and quality of life.

2.6 Strategic Social Marketing and Communications:

- "Recreation for Life" Campaign
- Recreation Gateway – active communities website/links

Promoting and encouraging active communities through recreation, physical activity and the creation of social capital is critical in realizing the desired quality of life outcomes. Getting the “recreation and physical activity and citizen engagement” message out to the whole community with a focus on a collective “active community” is critical. It must be clear that the means to active living includes enhanced recreation activities and greater social interactions amongst citizens in community. This involves clearly, concisely and regularly communicating active lifestyle benefits and active lifestyle opportunities that are key to happier, healthier, and longer lives and a higher quality of community life.

2.7 Special Events/Conferences

Promote, encourage and celebrate recreation and active living in the community through special events and symposiums such as:

- Recreation and family events
- Children and youth friendly recreation community activities
- Mayors’ “Recreation For Life” Walk/Runs

3. Recreation and physical activity services are improved and opportunities for full participation in community active living programs are enhanced.

A more comprehensive and systematic effort to identify and promote an extended range of recreation, physical activity and other active community opportunities is required. This process
must respond to social, cultural and economic barriers to physical activity and ensure access, equity and safety.

The following are possible actions local municipal councils and community recreation and parks practitioners can take or improve upon to achieve this objective include:

- Encourage and develop more flexible “drop in” activities that are partly physical activity, partly social interactions.
- Greater emphasis on the quality and outcomes of organized sport and recreation for all children.
- Improve the capacity of sport and recreation organizations to provide inclusive and accessible sport and recreation environments.
- Promote the development of new sport and recreation clubs and associations that can provide more convenient and flexible programs and offer childcare.
- Greater focus on outdoor recreation.
- Encourage and develop adventure and active living tourism programs and regions; and,
- Promote a broad range of sporting activities that celebrate multicultural heritage.

### Quality of Life Outcomes and Indicators

A number of potential individual, community, economic and environmental quality of life outcomes (benefits) could be realized through an *Active Communities* program, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Benefits</th>
<th>Community Benefits</th>
<th>Economic Benefits</th>
<th>Environmental Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual well-being, including improved health and wellness;</td>
<td>Family well-being; Neighbourliness, civility, sense of caring and social responsibility;</td>
<td>Sustainable communities;</td>
<td>Protecting natural resources and greenspaces;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building self-esteem;</td>
<td>Enhanced social capital and citizenship;</td>
<td>Optimization of resources;</td>
<td>Enhancing air and water quality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing alternatives to self-destructive behaviour;</td>
<td>Reducing loneliness and alienation;</td>
<td>Reduced healthcare and social service costs;</td>
<td>Providing and protecting wildlife habitat;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing stress;</td>
<td>Enhancing community spirit and vitality;</td>
<td>Attracting business relocation and expansion;</td>
<td>Overall community beautification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living a more balanced life.</td>
<td>Reducing crime and promoting ethnic and cultural harmony;</td>
<td>Attracting tourists;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative partnerships;</td>
<td>Enhancing real estate values;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community organization development, empowerment, synergism and leadership.</td>
<td>Contributing jobs from recreation industry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, a number of quality of life indicators\(^3\) could be used to
measure the impacts of *Active Communities* Program by each
local council or municipal government. These indicators would be
used to assess and monitor the success of desired quality of life
outcomes of *Active Communities* programs and activities. With a
common set of quality of life indicators being used by Alberta
communities, a quality of life outcome benchmarking system
might emerge to compare communities and assess (and
potentially reward) best practices.

The indicators should include a combination of objective
(quantitative) measures as well as subjective (qualitative)
measures of quality of life. Subjective measures would include
self-rated feelings towards quality of life and well-being.

These indicators could be used to construct a community “social
capital” balance sheet accounting for the physical and qualitative
state or condition of the community’s human, social and
infrastructure capital as it pertains to quality of life and active
living.

**Table 1: Recreation and Physical Activity Quality of Life
Indicators to Assess Community Well-being**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of life Indicator</th>
<th>Examples of Indicators/Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Physical activity levels (including self-reporting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• % of children who participate in regular physical activity or % of children who are inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• % of adults who participate in regular physical activity or % of adults who are inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New recreation activity started within the last 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure activities</td>
<td>Attendance and participation rates at arts and cultural events (e.g. festivals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance at sports and recreation events (e.g. attendance per hour of operation; number of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bookings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in the number of adults taking part in recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Park use (visitation rates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits to historic sites and museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in locally sponsored recreation activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of people using facilities compared to an optimal number of users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in the current level of sporting drop-out as people grow older.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^3\) This list was developed by Anielski Management Inc. for the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association in a report titled “A Framework for Measuring Community Quality of Life Related to Recreation and Parks” (May 2002).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership in community</td>
<td>Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
<td>Number of citizens who volunteer in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours of voluntary time given per citizen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic value of voluntary time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time</td>
<td>Leisure time available for recreation and leisure activities (leisure or free time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leisure time-use by type of activity (including Internet, TV viewing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal time stress (self-ratings).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Health</td>
<td>Life-expectancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disease rates (e.g. diabetes II, cancer, cardiovascular, osteoporosis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obesity rates (Body Mass Index).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress levels and emotional health (e.g. suicide rates).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-rated health ratings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More positive attitudes to sport and recreation among young people – especially girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Cohesion/ Social</td>
<td>Sense of community or neighbourliness (e.g. the number of neighbours you know on a first-name basis; number of close friends).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Number of people who feel they can rely on other members of their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time spent “re-creating” (leisure time) with family (children, grandparents), friends and neighbours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family well-being (e.g. time spent together with immediate and extended family).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of loneliness and alienation (e.g. citizens who feel lonely and alienated from family and community).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crime rates (personal and property).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of personal safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust levels (of neighbours and family).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of community pride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic-Financial</td>
<td>Per capita annual expenditures (personal, household and public) on parks, recreation and cultural activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourist expenditures in communities related to recreation, parks and cultural activities/facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal government parks, recreation, leisure and culture/arts capital and operating expenditures per capita.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports (financial and in-kind volunteerism) for the arts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affordability of family outings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of jobs/employment in the recreation, parks, arts and culture sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real estate values by community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health care and social service expenditures (gross and per capita).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction in the number of barriers to recreation participation throughout our communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Condition of recreation and parks facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public satisfaction (ratings) with community facilities (e.g. parks, zoos).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public satisfaction (ratings) with recreation, sports and leisure facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Green space</td>
<td>Preservation of historical and cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community centers per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parks and facility space per person by district or neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks and Green space</th>
<th>Attractive parks and citizen rating of quality of parks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to greenspace, parkland and open space per capita:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Total area of parks per 1000 people; number of parks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public satisfaction with parks and green space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail systems (km. of walking and bike trails per capita).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban forest (e.g. area of urban/community forest; per capita tree maintenance expenditures).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and area of community gardens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Quality</th>
<th>Air quality and emissions to air.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water quality (surface and ground water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife habitat (area protected for wildlife)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next Steps**

A number of “next steps” are required to move from a conceptual framework to implementation of an *Active Communities* program, namely:

1. Seek input and reaction to the *Active Communities* conceptual program framework from *Active Communities* Advisory Committee and key stakeholder groups including local municipalities, recreation and parks practitioners, allied public health and active living stakeholders.

2. Identify resource and budget requirements to further examine concepts and applied strategies related to: the provision of community recreation and parks services; investing in human capital and active living; the building of social capital and stemming from this, develop a provincial *Active Communities* strategy and specific action plans/programs within the *Active Communities* framework.

3. Develop a provincial community well-being assessment using quality of life and active community criterion and indicators, identifying comparative advantages, needs and opportunities for building sustainable active communities.

4. Identify and recruit a select number of local council/municipal partners to serve as benchmark communities for testing and implementing the *Active Communities* framework and guidelines.

5. Seek provincial and other support to further advance the *Active Communities* program concept.
Appendix A:

Active Communities
Best Practices Benchmark Analysis
The following is a literature review of best practices in active communities programs, strategies and frameworks that have been implemented or are under development both internationally and in Canada. They serve as useful benchmarks for establishing an Active Communities framework for Alberta.

1. New South Wales (Australia) Active Communities

The New South Wales (Australia) Active Communities initiatives is one of the best examples of an active living program that is focused on building active communities by providing active living development and implementation guidelines to municipal/local governing councils (as part of the national Active Australia initiative).

Using Physical Activity Guidelines for Local Councils New South Wales (NSW) has established a practical set of tools (guidelines) to empower community’s/local councils to develop their own physical activity strategic plan, as part of NSW’s Simply Active Everyday, overall physical activity strategic plan.

The Guidelines:

- Are designed to provide local councils with a framework for improving the way in which they encourage physical activity amongst people living, working and visiting in their local communities.
- Recognize that councils already do a lot to encourage participation in physical activity so they aim to build on what councils are already doing.
- Have been developed so that they can largely be implemented within existing resources and through changing day-to-day work practices rather than requiring the allocation of significant new resources.
- Are not bound by legislative requirements but rather encourage councils to use them voluntarily.

The Guidelines represent a strategic plan for implementing physical activity programs and practices at the community level. Like a strategic planning process, they help local councils review existing strategic planning documents, identify gaps and opportunities for increasing participation in physical activity, and review initiatives to identify improvements. In other words, the Guidelines provide an overall framework to guide local councils in incorporating physical activity issues into their business planning and decision making processes.

The process of engaging local councils involves workshops and coaching on how to use the Guidelines. The benefits of physical activity, the relevance of physical activity to local council activity and the potential within local council and between council and other organizations is stressed during these workshops. They also educate local councils as to the obstacles (barriers) to participation in physical activity by citizens, identify supportive environments and practical things local council can do to support enhanced physical activity. The Guidelines are useful to assess specific target population needs (those most in need of enhanced physical activity) and provide a resource and support guide (e.g. potential partners, funding programs, award schemes, internet sites, publications and networks).

The NSW Active Communities initiative adopts the following key principles:

- A ‘whole of council’ approach

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Tangible examples of what councils are now doing, in implementing these Guidelines include:

- Making existing sport and recreation facilities and programs more accessible and appropriate for groups which have been identified as being less likely to participate in physical activity (e.g. providing child care so that parents with young children can participate).
- Organizing events and activities (e.g. triathlons, walk to work days, sports festivals; as part of regular events such as Seniors Week; during school holidays so that children can participate in fun, positive activities.
- Constructing walk and cycle ways
- Working with other councils and organizations in the regions to develop regional plans for the provision of facilities and to carry out projects.
- Providing information to communities about opportunities for participating in physical activity in the local area (e.g. walking maps, calendar of events, seminars and conferences)
- Conducting research (e.g. use of parks; auditing walking routes to schools; needs of women in relation to sport).

2. Scotland Active Communities Strategy

Scotland’s Active Communities strategy is a program that promotes the value of community involvement and encourages more people to become involved as volunteers and in community action. It also aims to support public, private and voluntary agencies so that they recognize the important contribution that active communities make towards planning, policy making and service delivery.

Scotland’s Active Communities initiative was launched Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1999 with the following rallying cry:

"We need nothing less than a step change in public involvement in the community. Let those of us who believe in the power of community reclaim the idea of doing good and wear it as a badge of pride."

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, January 1999

Scotland Active Communities:

- Sets out to promote the value of community involvement and to encourage more people to become involved as volunteers and in community action.

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc11/acco-00.asp
Aims to support public, private and voluntary agencies so that they recognise the important contribution that active communities make towards planning, policy making and service delivery.

The draft strategy is designed to take forward the Active Community initiative in Scotland in the medium to long term.

Vision and Mission

The vision for Active Communities is:

A society built around communities of place and of interest, in which it is known and accepted that people can and do freely engage in shared action leading to improved quality of life for themselves and others.

The mission:

To create a long-term strategic framework that will make it easier for all those who wish to engage in volunteering and community action to do so. This involves promoting and protecting engagement as a basic right of all citizens in a free and democratic society; developing the means of making it effective; reducing the barriers to involvement, especially barriers of discrimination; and sufficient resources to ensure that implementation happens.

Objectives

The following are the key objectives (which are supported by a number of strategic action plans):

1. To bring about more positive attitudes at all levels towards volunteering and community action
2. To bring about a change of attitudes amongst policy makers
3. To bring about a change of attitudes in the voluntary, volunteering and community sectors
4. To bring about a change of attitudes in the public sector
5. To bring about a change of attitudes in the private sector
6. To bring about a change in attitudes amongst the professions
7. A sustained media campaign, together with back up information/education packs

Policy Context

A Working Group, established to steward the initiative, is concerned with ensuring links between this strategy and others that are being developed in Scotland to strengthen community capacity. They sought to relate Active Communities to other initiatives concerned with social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

The Active Communities Initiative forms part of a wider concern not only to build a more open society and to extend opportunities for participative democracy, but also to strengthen the social economy and to build a more caring, socially just and inclusive society.

Volunteering and community action is a critical component of Active Communities and can take many forms from philanthropy to self-help, to campaigning and active engagement with public authorities in policy and decision-making. They are an expression of what might be termed active citizenship, whereby people become more active within their communities and society generally, a notion that entails both rights and responsibilities.
3. Sport England: Active Communities

Sport-England's Active Communities is a 'framework' comprising services, products and sources of funding provided by Sport England, often in partnership with other organizations and agencies, to assist individuals and organizations to create their own Active Communities.

Active Communities Framework

Sport-England’s Active Communities defines 'active' as “participation in any form of sport, recreation or physical; 'Community' as “everyone, either within a geographical community - for example a borough, neighborhood or ward, or a community with a shared interest or identity - for example women and girls or a particular ethnic minority group.”

Each Active Community has a range of similar but not identical characteristics.

The Active Communities Framework is organised under five core headings, which reflect the most important issues leading to the development of an Active Community:

1. Promoting Social Justice

These include products, services and funding aim to increase participation in sport, in areas of social and economic deprivation and among user groups traditionally excluded from sport, and encourage the use of sport as a contributor to wider social and economic objectives. They include: Active Community Projects; Active Communities Development Fund; Equity Work; and, Sport Action Zone.

2. Increasing Participation in Sport

These services, products and funding sources aim to increase sports opportunities in local communities and encourage more people to participate in sport. They include: Awards for All; Community TOPS; Girlsport; and Lottery Community Capital Fund.

3. Developing Community Sport Leaders

For sport to be efficient and to make better use of the human effort available, everyone must have the opportunity to receive the training they need and be up to date with new developments and new sporting techniques.

4. Developing Community Sports Programmes & Facilities

These services and products aim to encourage the development of sport through setting standards in the design and management of community sports programmes and facilities. They include: Best Value Toolkit; Facility Management Guidelines; Facility Research; Lottery Community Capital Fund; and, Quest Facilities and Sports Development.

http://www.sportengland.org/active_communities/default.htm
5. Planning for Sport and Recreation

These services and products aim to develop active communities through a long term planned approach to sport and recreation and the creation of positive partnerships. They include: Facility Planning Model Service; Government Body Facility Strategies; Planning

Sport England also funds a range of programs under Active Communities including:

- Active Communities Development Fund
- Addressing the Health Agenda
- Awards for All
- Positive Futures
- Sport Action Zone

4. North Carolina Be Active Program

North Carolina’s Be Active program is a good example of a program that encourages citizens and communities to create the policies, opportunities, facilities, and motivation to promote physical activity -- and good health.

The N.C. program envisions an active community facilitated by bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, sidewalks and green ways, accessible parks and trails, community-wide games and physical activities; leading to a healthier and more active population.

Be Active North Carolina encourages North Carolinians to create the policies, opportunities, facilities, and motivation to promote physical activity -- and good health.

There are special areas/programs for kids, parents, and educators.

Be Active North Carolina, has also identified a number of model communities that others might benchmark or replicate. For example:

Jackson County Healthy Carolinians Task Force

Jackson County was the 1998 Healthy Carolinian’s Thad B. Wester Community of Excellence Award winner. Task force partners have appeared on local radio talk shows to discuss the benefits of physical activity. They are also developing a speaker's bureau, advocating to increase the number of facilities available for physical activity, increasing the number of walking and biking trails, developing a community walking club, beginning a summer camp for overweight youth, and initiating a senior fitness program.

Planners and developers in Chapel Hill created a unique "new urban" community of traditional neighborhoods to establish a sense of community, protect the environment, and promote quality of life.

The streets provide a network that connects the neighborhood and distributes slower traffic throughout the community. Sidewalks connect homes with the village center, local school, open space, parks.

7 http://www.beactivenc.org/
playgrounds, and a community church. The neighborhood has a corner store where people can shop and gather to socialize. Even the homes were designed with garages hidden in the back and porches facing the street to foster a greater sense of community. Opportunities for exercise and physical activity are built into the design of this community.

The six-mile-long Roanoke Island Bike Path runs through the historic town of Manteo from the Manns Harbor Bridge crossing the Croatan Sound through the Washington Baum Bridge over Roanoke Sound. The path includes five resting spots with benches, bike racks, and water fountains. The path accommodates both pedestrians and cyclists.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation funded the project and worked cooperatively with the National Park Service and the Roanoke Island Commission to secure land permits. Project construction, completed in 1994, widened existing Manteo sidewalks to accommodate the bike path. Additional landscaping complemented the natural profusion of crepe myrtle and live oak trees. The path is very popular throughout the year, but particularly during the summer when tourists use it as a convenient and scenic way to tour Manteo and Roanoke Island.

5. Beacon Councils, U.K.: Quality of Life Awards and Recognition Program

The Beacon Council Scheme (based in the U.K.) was launched in 1999 as a means of identifying excellence and innovation in local government that pertains to improving the overall quality of life of the community. Managed through an agency called the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), communities who are recognized for their leadership are given “beacon” status and awards. The scheme exists to share best-practices so that councils can learn from each other and deliver high quality services to all.

The beacon council scheme makes a major contribution to the improvement of local government services. Local councils in the U.K. who hold beacon status share their learning and experience with others through a series of learning events that take place throughout the year. The award also provides national recognition for front line staff who have delivered high quality public services in their specific theme.

Beacon status is granted to those councils who can demonstrate a clear vision, high satisfaction with services and a willingness to innovate amongst other attributes within a specific theme. To obtain beacon status applicants must demonstrate that they have good overall performance, and not just in the service area for which beacon status is awarded.

All councils can apply to become a beacon council with the final decision made by government ministers based on recommendations made by an independent advisory panel. Councils hold the status for a year; during this period they share their good practice through a series of showcase events, open days and other learning activities.

The government selects themes for the beacon scheme. The themes are chosen because of their importance in the day to day lives of the public and they are key to improving the quality of life in all our communities. A number of quality of life themes are used as the bases of awards granted which vary from year to year. In 2003 the eleven themes include:

[^8]: http://www.idea.gov.uk/beacons/
1) Promoting racial equality
2) Adoption
3) Better access and mobility
4) Transition in education
5) Crime reduction in rural areas
6) Fostering business growth
7) Neighbourhood renewal
8) Improving urban green spaces
9) Libraries as a community resource
10) Community legal services
11) Tackling fuel poverty

6. British Columbia: Active Communities Framework

British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association’s Active Communities framework provides an excellent benchmark for Alberta active communities using an innovative measurement (indicators), evaluation and community asset inventory process to measure the extent to which municipal programs, facilities and best practices yield physical activity and health outcomes. Also includes supports to communities to conduct life-cycle facility/infrastructure analysis that would facilitate sustained maintenance and replacement of facilities.

B.C’s active communities strategy is just emerging tied to the province’s vision of a “healthier, more active province.” The B.C. government has made a commitment to increasing physical activity levels throughout in the province.

The BC Recreation and Parks Associations (BCRPA) put forward an approach to foster the development of active communities (see Don Hunter, General Manager of Surrey Parks June 24, 2002 speech. The BCRPA is a provincial organization for recreation and parks practitioners in B.C. and advocate increased physical activity as a means to improve the physical and emotional health and well-being of people throughout the province.

The framework is a collaborative approach with government and partners in the education, health and sports sectors.

The framework’s primary aims or goals are:

- Prevent chronic disease risk factors associated with inactivity and obesity;
- Reduce environmental barriers in communities throughout the province, and
- Enhance access and opportunities for increased physical activity through quality programs that are focused on healthy development.

There are four components to the framework:

1. Creating Active Communities: This is the development of an evaluation process to measure the extent to which municipal programs and facilities support physical activity, as well as the extent to which such best practices support the development of healthy individuals.

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9 http://www/bcrpa.bc.ca/PDF/Active%20Communities%20Script%20-%20FINAL.pdf.
The first component involves an inventory of the characteristics of an active community, which is facilitated by a Working Group on Active Communities. Examples of characteristics of active communities include:

- Availability and number of greenspaces or greenways;
- Community partnerships;
- Workplace amenities;
- Active schools; and
- Tangible linkages with the health community.

BCRPA also intends to develop a checklist for communities to self-evaluated against these characteristics or standards.

2. Encouraging Active People: This is a process of using current health, physical activity and facility usage indicators as a means of tracking changes over time. This approach measures facility usage as well as its related outcomes. For example, a municipality that opens a new pool, would, in addition to measuring the use of its facility, would take a measurement of the community’s health and physical activity before and after the opening of the pool.

3. Supporting Active Communities: There are two parts to this component. First, the planning and support for life-cycle maintenance and replacement of facilities is required to ensure the ongoing availability of the facilities needed to sustain the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural services. This implies sustained and long-term infrastructure investment in both capital and maintenance to sustain their services to the community. Second, strategic investment in quality programs with trained leaders is required. Funding for programs such as High Five, a quality assurance program for children’s recreation and sport along with partnership with allied organizations like the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA and YWCA to develop outreach programs.

4. Strategic Social Marketing: A communication strategy to get a clear, concise and regular message out to communities and citizens that active lifestyles are not only fun but are key to happier, healthier and longer lives. BCRPA is developing a plan for a 3-year co-operative marketing program that will delivery the tools for an effective long term social awareness campaign centered on the benefits of recreation and active living. BCRPA will be reaching out to organizations in the health sector as partners in this initiative.

7. Healthy Communities Coalition (Ontario)\(^\text{10}\)

Ontario has established an Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC) body whose mission is to: “work with the diverse communities of Ontario to strengthen their social, environmental, and economic well-being.”

Ontario Health communities' local Community Animators are currently working with a number of communities across Ontario. There are wide variety of initiatives and projects being put into action, including breakfast programs, community gardening, environmental events, economic development projects, strategic planning seminars, special events (e.g. Winterfest or the Lake Superior Cleanup), training centre development, youth programs and park management.

\(^{10}\) http://www.opc.on.ca/ohcc/
The Healthy Communities vision goes far beyond a traditional view of medical health. For the OHCC, a healthy community:

- provides a clean, safe physical environment
- meets the basic needs of all its residents
- has residents that respect and support each other
- involves the community in local government
- promotes and celebrates its historical and cultural heritage
- provides easily accessible health services
- has a diverse, innovative economy
- rests on a sustainable ecosystem

The Healthy Communities Model

The Healthy Communities model is one by which a community determines its own issues, needs and action plans in building a healthier community. The model includes four characteristics:

- Wide community participation: People from all walks of life working together towards the goal of a healthier community.

- Broad intersectoral involvement: Business, labour, religious organizations, social services, planners, and environmental groups come together with residents to form a common vision of a healthy community. They each find ways in their day-to-day activities to contribute towards this goal.

- Local government commitment: The mayor and local councilors should be committed to building a healthier community. Each department (i.e. parks and recreation, public works, planning) works toward the shared vision of a healthy community.

- Healthy public policy: Healthy public policies are decisions or actions intended to have a positive effect on the health of people. Governments should take into consideration the broad range of factors that affect the health and quality of life of a community and allocate resources and funds accordingly.

8. Victoria, Australia: Active Communities and Active for Life Physical Activity Framework

Sport and Recreation Victoria (Australia) manages a range of programs targeting specific community sectors with the aim of enhancing their sport and recreation opportunities, and thus building active communities.

These programs include:

- Access for All Abilities - increased accessibility and participation in a diverse range of recreation and sport activities by people with disabilities

• **Indigenous Sport and Recreation** - enhancing access by the Victorian Indigenous community to sport and recreation opportunities

• **Masters Sport** - increased opportunities for older people to participate in sport

• **Physical Activity Initiative** - demonstrates the Victorian Government's commitment to promoting and extending the social, health and economic benefits of physical activity

• **Women's Participation** - enhancing the self-esteem and health of women through physical activity

• **Community Organisation Development**
  
  o the Older Adult Recreation Network Program aims to achieve sport and recreation environments that are inclusive of and accessible to older people
  
  o the Regional Sports Assembly Program aims to assist local communities to provide quality and inclusive opportunities for involvement through sport and recreation environments

**Physical Activity Initiative**

Of particular relevance to Alberta as a benchmark for an active community framework (related to physical activity), is Victoria’s following programs:

• **Active for Life Physical Activity Framework**: Community participation in physical activity provides social, health, economic and environmental benefits for the whole State. This Framework describes the Government's collaborative approach to achieving an increase in the number of Victorians who are regularly physically active.

  The framework is a government collaborative approach with the aim of increasing the number of Victorians who are regularly physically active. By encouraging increased physical activity the Victorian Government who realized many economic and social capital benefits including: 1) communities where people are able to participate more regularly in physical activity; 2) local economic development; 3) enhanced natural environment; and 4) healthier lifestyles and reduced burden on public health care.

  The framework is founded on four primary objectives:

  - building partnerships
  - educating and engaging the public and professionals
  - improving physical activity services and removing barriers to participation
  - improving places in which physical activity occurs.

• **Victoria Physical Activity Grants Guide**: This Guide provides information regarding State Government grants that seek to promote the benefits of physical activity, support inclusive environments for participation, develop accessible physical infrastructure and encourage individuals to access opportunities.
The Minister for Sport and Recreation and the Minister for Health, are leading the development of a Whole of Government approach to increasing physical activity in Victoria. This activity will provide a sound basis and set of collaborative planning structures for taking this important effort forward, setting common priorities, identifying partnership opportunities and reviewing progress.

9. Sport and Recreation New Zealand: Investing in Active Communities

Sport and Recreation New Zealand have recently developed a discussion paper entitled “Investing in Active Communities”.

The discussion paper positions a “strategic partnership” between the national government and local councils. Such a strategic partnership is intended to recognize the important role local councils play in providing community leadership and, more specifically, to encourage communities to promote physical active lifestyles. Such strategic partnership would focus initially on:

- Sharing information and best practice
- Guidelines and priorities
- National/community awareness campaign
- Strategic investment

Policies and principles advanced under the strategic partnership concept include:

- The more a strategy contributes to “more people, more active, more often”, the more support it would receive – the National government will support local communities towards this goal.
- Local Councils are recognized as the elected representatives of their communities and as leaders in the provision of sport and recreation facilities and programs.
- Individual formal partnering agreements between the National Government and Local Councils.
- Recognition that different communities face different barriers to participation.
- Not all proposals (from Local Councils) will be able to be accepted for investment, nor will all successful proposals receive all the funding sought.
- The term of the investment will depend upon the nature of the strategy, timeframe for expected outcomes, potential for sustainability and other factors.

10. Active Edmonton”: It’s About Feeling Good

The City of Edmonton in partnership with a variety of public, private and voluntary sector organizations have recently initiated a five year interagency physical activity promotional strategy which encourages all Edmontonians to value physical activity and be involved in physical activity as part of their daily lives.

The Active Edmonton program vision is to have Edmonton be a leader in physical activity and be the “most active city” in Canada. The project goals are:

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Edmontonians:
• Understand the importance of being physically active.
• Know how to be physically active and are aware of available services and resources.
• Are being encouraged to be physically active.
• Are involved in regular physical activity participation, as outlined in the Health Canada Physical Activity Guides.

Edmonton:
• Is recognized as a leader in physical activity.
• Has a wide range of quality physical activity opportunities for all ages throughout the City.
• Has the highest physical activity participation of any city in Canada.
• Is a desirable city to live in because of the physical activity opportunities.

The project outcomes are anticipated to be:

For Edmontonians:
• Increased awareness of the importance of being physically active.
• Increased overall physical activity participation of all Edmontonians and targeted groups.
• Increased awareness about the project.

Within Community/Project:
• Increased community usage of program logo and promotional materials.
• Increased understanding and strategies to reduce participation barriers.
• Increased physical activity participation and programs within the workplace.
• Increased employers that support Active Edmonton for their employees.
• Increased number of doctors prescribing physical activity for health benefits.
• Increased number of physical activity community events and programs.
• Increased overall physical activity participation compared to other cities.
• Increased partnerships in Edmonton.
• Increased national, provincial and corporate support.

Specific projects and initiatives that will be undertaken to accomplish the goals and outcomes include:

• Marketing and communications – targeted at people not currently active; children/youth; older adults; workplace; and diversity groups.
• Programs – including educational publications, contests, Mayor’s awards and events.
• Networking – interagency and inter-sectoral engagements and technological linkages.
• Research and evaluation – including baseline data, annual evaluation and best practices information.