

## Priority: Individuals and Community Wellness and Health

**What commitment will you make to the long-term delivery of public policies and community-level programs that directly influence public behaviour and the adoption of healthy lifestyles?**

### CURRENT REALITY ▶

Physical inactivity costs BC as much as \$573 million/year:

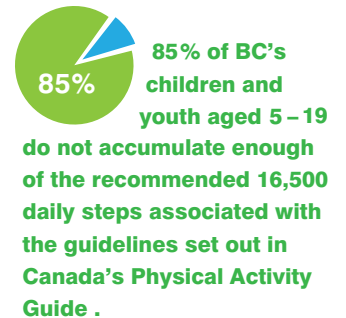
\$211 million/year is attributable to direct costs such as hospitals, physicians, drugs, and institutions

\$362 million/year to the real indirect costs of lost productivity due to premature death and disability<sup>1</sup>



Approximately 1 in 4 Canadians are overweight<sup>2</sup>.

Approximately 1 out of every 4 Canadian children is overweight. Obesity in Canadian children and youth has more than doubled in the last 10 years<sup>3</sup>.



Public health researchers and expert commenters on the current health care funding crisis are urging the health care system to move the focus away from traditional reactive measures of treatments and cures to a strengthened commitment to proactive initiatives such as health promotion and disease prevention.

**Community-based recreation** is a key stakeholder in health promotion, disease prevention, and intervention and is available within virtually every community throughout BC. This unique attribute makes Recreation an effective and judicious delivery agent.

### THE NEED ▶

It is vital that government ensures equitable, reasonable, sustainable access to indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, services, and programs to create healthy individuals, families, and communities.

### PUBLIC OPINION SAYS

74% of British Columbians feel it is important that recreation and activity are part of the provincial government's plans to improve the health of British Columbians and to remove financial and other barriers that prevent people from accessing community recreation programs<sup>5</sup>.



### OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT ▶ Address inactivity in youth

#### ACTIONS ▶ Sustainable After-School Recreation

- ▶ A multi-faceted provincial framework should be developed to support children aged 6 to 12 in BC during the after-school hours
- ▶ Policy created to make public spaces available to the community during non-school hours to help supplement the full range of community based programming already being offered
- ▶ An after-school strategy and programming should be targeted to all children, with support available for specific target populations across the entire province
- ▶ Long term committed funding needs to be made available to cover operational costs of utilizing shared facilities used for after-school programming

▶ Quality assurance mechanisms need to be implemented as part of any after-school strategy, i.e., HIGH FIVE<sup>®</sup>

#### ACTIONS ▶ Healthy by Nature

- ▶ The Healthy by Nature movement area is gaining much momentum and attention from the recreation, health and scientific community and will be a strong component of the new National Recreation Agenda. Numerous Healthy by Nature initiatives are in existence and being created. This is a perfect time for government to step forward to show support and endorsement for the pioneering work being done in this area, illustrating its proactive and innovative approach to supporting childhood development and healthy families.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2004/inactivity.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada. 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005

<sup>3</sup><http://www.childhoodobesityfoundation.ca>

<sup>4</sup><http://72.10.49.94/media/node/105/files/CANPLAY%202009%20BC.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>Vision Critical (formerly Angus-Reid Strategies) public opinion poll. October 2012.



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## Issue Background

# Individuals and Community Wellness and Health

As a major contributor and delivery agent to good health, Recreation plays a significant role in the achievement of many of the province's public health goals.

Activity is known to: reduce risk of heart disease and stroke, help prevent certain types of cancers, help combat type 2 diabetes, reduce occurrence of obesity and help reduce incidence of fall-related injuries and chronic conditions in older adults. It can also foster social opportunities and contribute to mental health by reducing stress, combating depression and building emotional well-being.

Recreation helps build stronger individuals and families by reducing negative, self-destructive behaviours such as smoking, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. It engages people and builds social cohesion, generating healthy, inclusive communities. People feel an emotional connection to the places that bring them enjoyment, making our recreation nodes truly a heart within our communities.

In addition to sustaining healthy individuals, families, and communities, recreation significantly reduces health care costs.

Public health researchers and expert commenters on the current health care funding crisis are urging

the health care system to move the focus away from traditional reactive measures of treatments and cures to a strengthened commitment to proactive initiatives such as health promotion and disease prevention.

Community-based recreation is a key stakeholder in health promotion, disease prevention, and intervention and is available within virtually every community throughout BC. This unique attribute makes Recreation an effective and judicious delivery agent.

It is vital that government ensures equitable, reasonable, sustainable access to indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, services, and programs to create healthy individuals, families, and communities. This need for government involvement is supported within the general public as illustrated through a Vision Critical (formerly Angus-Reid Strategies) public opinion poll conducted in October 2012. Results from the poll reported that 74% of respondents said it was important that recreation and activity are part of the provincial government's plans to improve the health of British Columbians and to remove financial and other barriers that prevent people from accessing community recreation programs.



### OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT ► Address inactivity in youth

After-school recreation and Healthy in Nature are two prominent areas within which the provincial government can affect positive change through policy support.

### SUSTAINABLE AFTER-SCHOOL RECREATION

The after-school time period is an opportunity for government policy and program efforts to target children and youth physical activity in partnership with non-government stakeholders. The BCRPA conducted an environmental scan in 2010 on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) which revealed:

- The absence of dedicated funding at the provincial level to specifically support after-school programming
- No overarching strategy to the after-school hours that distinguishes after-school from other recreational programming
- Lack of developmentally appropriate programming for children aged 10 to 12

- The need for greater accessibility to facilities
- The need for professional development courses for service providers and standards of quality for programs (HIGH FIVE® is a recommended best practice in accreditation)

Priority needs to be given to sustainable after-school recreation programming for children at risk that includes a strong physical activity component with fundamental movement skills and physical literacy, as well as healthy eating and community connections.

## Issue Background: Individuals and Community Wellness and Health

### ACTIONS ►

The BCRPA recommends future action in the area of after-school hours:

- A multi-faceted provincial framework should be developed to support children aged 6 to 12 in BC during the after-school hours
- Long term committed funding needs to be made available
- An after-school strategy and after-school programming should be targeted to all children, with support available for specific target populations across the entire province
- Quality assurance mechanisms need to be implemented as part of any after-school strategy, i.e., HIGH FIVE®

### HEALTHY BY NATURE

Research shows that nature and natural surroundings have a positive impact on physical, psychological and social well-being, leading to better cognitive functioning, greater mental health overall and greater resilience in response to stressful life events. One of the more intuitive areas that physical activity and green spaces help Canadians is through their direct benefit of promoting holistic development in children. A number of different studies highlight the benefits that children gain from exercise that is based in a natural world.

Children's outdoor play in a natural world provides more exercise than indoor activities and therefore promotes a healthier child.<sup>1</sup> This is due not only to the nature of the activities being more difficult, thereby providing a greater development of strength, flexibility and coordination, but because there is significant evidence that outdoor play promotes a healthier lifestyle due to the nature of active travel – the exercise that is gained by traveling to and from outdoor recreational areas such as parks, schools or natural environments.

Children's interaction with nature improves their cognitive and emotional resources, their creativity in playtime, their interpersonal relationships, and helps foster a more positive attitude to school.<sup>2</sup>

The Healthy by Nature movement is not limited to children. It has now grown to include people of all ages and the need for natural re-connection across the lifespan.

Greener environments have been shown to enhance recovery from surgery, enable and support higher levels of physical activity, improve immune system functioning, help diabetics achieve healthier blood glucose levels, and improve functional health status and independent living skills among older adults. What may be one of the most important findings in the research is that people of the *same socio-economic status* who have greater access to nature have better physical health outcomes<sup>3</sup>. In other words, access to nature has a positive impact no matter what socio-economic bracket you are from.

### ACTIONS ►

- The Healthy by Nature movement area is gaining much momentum and attention from the recreation, health and scientific community and will be a strong component of the new National Recreation Agenda. Numerous Healthy by Nature initiatives are in existence and being created. This is a perfect time for government to step forward to show support and endorsement for the pioneering work being done in this area, illustrating its proactive and innovative approach to supporting childhood development and healthy families.

<sup>1</sup> Muñoz S. *Children in the outdoors: a literature review*. 2009. Sustainable Development Research Centre.

<sup>2</sup> Maller C, Townsend M, St Leger L et al. *Healthy parks, healthy people: the health benefits of contact with nature in a park context*. 2008. Available at <http://www.georgewright.org/262maller.pdf>. Accessed November 2012.

<sup>3</sup> [www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore\\_Parks\\_and\\_Recreation/Research/Ming%20\(Kuo\)%20Reserach%20Paper-Final-150dpi.pdf](http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore_Parks_and_Recreation/Research/Ming%20(Kuo)%20Reserach%20Paper-Final-150dpi.pdf) and <http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/C&NNHealthBenefits.pdf>



## Priority: Investing in Sustainable Environments

### How would you financially support the long-term development and sustainability of active healthy communities?

#### CURRENT REALITY ►



Of the average Canadian household's environmental impact, **transportation accounts for:** almost half of toxic air pollution, more than a third of greenhouse gas emissions, and almost 20% of toxic water pollution<sup>1</sup>.

In BC, **30%** of green house gas emissions are from cars and light-duty trucks, with the average trip distance less than 5KM. For these short trips, cycling and walking can play a significant role in combating climate change<sup>2</sup>.



Aging recreation infrastructure is energy inefficient. Retrofits to energy systems and physical structures can drastically reduce the energy consumption of our public recreation resources. British Columbia's recreation infrastructure must support our environmental commitment by providing energy-efficient, green places for people to pursue an active healthy lifestyle.

Urban form and greenway elements of recreation address climate change by supporting active transportation. By incorporating exercise and recreation into their daily lives, as well as nearby access to quality, multi-use community facilities, people can reduce their personal carbon footprints.

#### THE NEED ►

Government financial investment in active transportation community infrastructure and the renewal and replacement of BC's aging recreation facilities.

#### PUBLIC OPINION SAYS

70% of British Columbians feel it is important for the province to provide funding for ageing recreation facilities – seniors more so at 75%<sup>4</sup>.

- 65% of British Columbians feel it is important that there be increased investment in trails, lanes and other amenities to make it easier for people to walk and cycle<sup>4</sup>.
- In a nation-wide survey, 84% of respondents agreed that they would like to walk more often and 64% agreed they would like to cycle more often<sup>5</sup>.



#### OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT ► Address Active Transportation and Aging Community Recreation Infrastructure

##### ACTIONS ► Community Recreation Infrastructure Renewal

► Adopt the BCRPA's approach for partnership programs for recreation infrastructure funding – one that supports life-cycle management. Three components are:

- *Recreation Renewal Program* – an on-going capital fund for indoor and outdoor recreation projects
- *Recreation Partnership Planning Program* – a component to encourage co-operative and efficient program delivery
- *Recreation Life-cycle Program* – a new program to promote life-cycle information sharing and preventative action

##### ACTIONS ► Active Transportation

► Provide program funding to support Active Community initiatives, programs that encourage built environments and facilitate physical activity and active transportation. One proven and effective area of focus for provincial support is a reinvestment in the BCRPA's Active Communities Initiative (ACI).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/programs/atge.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://physicalactivitystrategy.ca/pdfs/BEAT/BEAT\\_Publication.pdf](http://physicalactivitystrategy.ca/pdfs/BEAT/BEAT_Publication.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation\\_parks/facilities/sports\\_recreation/documents/Full\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation_parks/facilities/sports_recreation/documents/Full_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Vision Critical (formerly Angus-Reid Strategies) public opinion poll, October 2012.

<sup>5</sup> York University, Institute for Social Research, National Survey on Active Transportation, 2004.



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## Issue Background

### Sustainable Environments

Recreation goes hand in hand with environmental protection. As the parks, recreation and culture sector, we are stewards of significant natural environments at the community and regional levels. Parks and natural areas protect habitat, improve air quality and clean water resources. As concern for the environment grows, people are supporting protection of green space through parks, open spaces and trails.

Initiatives that encourage people to participate in reducing their carbon footprint are rising. In addition to the preservation and enhancement of habitat and natural areas through parks provision, urban form and greenway elements of recreation can assist in addressing climate change by supporting active transportation.



#### OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT ►

#### Address Active Transportation and Aging Community Recreation Infrastructure

#### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active people seek opportunities to incorporate exercise and recreation into their daily lives, often choosing to walk and cycle rather than drive. Those who choose to walk or cycle for daily transportation reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and air pollution. Transport Canada has reported that urban passenger vehicles produced almost half of Canada's transportation greenhouse gas emissions. By incorporating exercise and recreation into their daily lives, as well as nearby access to quality, multi-use facilities, people can reduce their personal carbon footprints while increasing their health and overall quality of life. Recreation infrastructure must play its part in BC's campaign for the environment by encouraging active recreation choices.

#### ACTIONS ►

► The government needs to increase program funding to support Active Community initiatives, programs that encourage built environments and facilitate physical activity and active transportation. One proven and effective area of focus for provincial support is a reinvestment in the Active Communities Initiative (ACI).

The concept of an Active Communities Initiative was originally developed by BC Recreation and Parks Association in 2002, as part of the work being done by the provincial government to take the provincial Sport and Physical Activity Policy literally from policy to action. The Active Communities Initiative (ACI) became a key component of the provincial government's health goals at the time.

The ACI was developed as a 7-year commitment to improving physical activity levels of British Columbians by mobilizing and supporting local governments, First Nations and partner organizations to undertake actions that promote healthy lifestyles and build healthy communities while increasing physical activity levels.

Independent evaluations of the initiative confirmed that the ACI was meeting community needs, was fostering the engagement of many communities and community stakeholders such as health authorities and school boards, and laid the foundation for continuing community involvement.

The Active Communities Initiative is appreciated because it is community-driven, non-prescriptive and voluntary. It was formed on the basis of strong partnerships and collaborative action. It provided needed resources (such as community grants) and gave recognition to all involved. It provided a framework for action and enabled a great deal of flexibility to facilitate a locally-driven response to community needs. This is seen as a strength, enabling communities to mobilize according to their needs, assets and capacities.

Active Communities Initiative is a known and valued initiative throughout BC, and one that can easily be reinstated with government support.

## Issue Background: Sustainable Environments

### **COMMUNITY RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL**

Public stewardship is gaining momentum and new technologies allow development of public infrastructure with a much smaller carbon footprint, increasing the viability of and need for green decision-making. Facilities are now being designed, constructed and operated in a manner that minimizes their environmental impact and demonstrate leadership in best practices.

The problem with BC's infrastructure is that at present, upwards of 70% of BC's recreation, parks and sports facilities are 25 years of age and older and in urgent need of renewal or replacement.

This abundance of aging infrastructure is undermining the ability of communities to attract, accommodate and sustain the range of healthy activities that are being highlighted as integral to the fulfillment of BC's health goals. More than replacement, it is imperative that we ensure a sufficient and appropriate stock of recreation facilities exist to support healthy living, adapting our facilities so that the demographic, cultural, and health needs of the population are met.

Our older buildings are becoming obsolete - not matching the changing demands of our growing population and being environmentally wasteful and polluting. Their functionality fails to reflect the changing needs of the population and the strong environmental leadership shown by British Columbia.

In recent years less funding has been available for recreation infrastructure and today we are experiencing a rapidly accumulating backlog of buildings and facilities in dire need of renewal.

This fact has not escaped the attention and concern of the general public. The October 2012 Vision Critical (formerly Angus-Reid Strategies) public opinion poll revealed 70% of respondents feel it is important for the province to provide funding for ageing recreation facilities – seniors more so at 75%.

### **ACTIONS ►**

The BCRPA has laid out the ground work for a new partnership program for recreation infrastructure funding – one that supports life-cycle management – and developed a set of funding principles to ensure investments are strategic and based on priorities. Funding and support for the development and implementation of this program will provide a framework from which recreation infrastructure investments can be allocated to reduce the recreation deficit and ensure ongoing life cycle renewal and increased capacity in step with population change and provincial health goals.

The BCRPA is suggesting a new approach to partnership programs for recreation infrastructure funding – one that supports life-cycle management. Three components are envisioned and may include funding from local, provincial and federal government:

- Recreation Renewal Program – an on-going capital fund for indoor and outdoor recreation projects
- Recreation Partnership Planning Program – a component to encourage co-operative and efficient program delivery
- Recreation Life-cycle Program – a new program to promote life-cycle information sharing and preventative action

With sustainable maintenance and funding for renewal, recreation facilities will continue to be one of the most cost-effective prescriptions for our good health and wellness.



# The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association

## **WE ARE** | The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)

is a not for profit organization dedicated to enhancing quality of life in our province. The BCRPA and its extensive network of members, in the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector support the development of healthy individuals and communities and sustainable environments and economies.

Since 1958, the Association has provided leadership, training and support, fostering the principles of accessibility and inclusiveness, to help its members meet provincial and local health and physical activity priorities.

The sector has evolved from its early days as a service provider - offering recreational activities, cultural programs and access to facilities, parks and other services. Today, with its many stakeholders including local governments, senior governments, non-profit and community organizations, industry associations, the private sector, the fitness industry, volunteers and academia, the sector addresses increasing physical activity (especially among children and youth); improving physical literacy, health and wellbeing; increasing access to nature; enhancing participation in community sport; promoting active aging; and much more.

***Inactivity and its related health and socioeconomic consequences contribute to the national escalation of healthcare costs and the deterioration of quality of life.***

***The recreation, parks and culture sector has taken on an essential role in combatting this trend, supporting physical activity at the community level which leads to healthier lifestyles, stronger community connections, increased productivity and economic growth.***

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**BCRPA – Core Competencies** | Core competencies are the unique capabilities of the organization that enable it to achieve its vision with a sustained competitive advantage.

For the BCRPA, these include:

- ✦ Provincial reach across all communities in BC and with agencies, governments and organizations in the province
- ✦ Unique position within the sector, providing services that are generally unavailable from any other organization
- ✦ Proven ability to develop and deliver high-quality programs and services
- ✦ Trust and respect of government and other agencies with similar values
- ✦ Proven capability to build partnerships within and outside the parks and recreation sector (locally, provincially and nationally)
- ✦ Proven ability to support community development
- ✦ Credible advocate for the benefits of healthy living and the importance of the parks and recreation sector to the general public and key stakeholders
- ✦ Industry leadership as the “go to” resource for information in the parks and recreation sector
- ✦ Strong understanding of the community development process and the supports required by communities to become active, healthy communities.
- ✦ Standard setting organization in the fitness industry and recreation and parks sector.

## BCRPA – Areas of involvement with Provincial Government

- Chronic Disease / Injury Prevention and Built Environment
- Seniors Healthy Living
- Health Promotion and Protection
- Sport and Cultural Development Active/ Healthy Communities

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## BCRPA – Commitments

- ✦ Participation in the development of a renewed National Recreation Agenda
- ✦ Advocacy for recreation infrastructure renewal
- ✦ Promotion of Healthy in Nature initiative, aimed at increasing active participation in the outdoors
- ✦ Founding chair and fiscal agent for BC Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA)
- ✦ Manage and administer the National Fitness Leadership Alliance (NFLA) standard throughout BC through the BCRPA Fitness Program, including Osteofit
- ✦ Developer, delivery agent and manager of Active Communities Initiative
- ✦ Member of Seniors Healthy Living Advisory Network
- ✦ WHO Age Friendly Rural and Remote Community Project
- ✦ WHO Age Friendly Urban Community Project
- ✦ Provincial delivery agent of the national HIGH FIVE® program - the only quality assurance system in North America designed to specifically support the safety, well-being and healthy development of children in sport and recreation settings
- ✦ Participation in the After-School Sport Initiative, aimed at increasing physical activity of children
- ✦ BC Canadian Sport for Life Advisory Committee – with representatives from Coaches Association of BC, BC Games, Sport BC, ASRA and BC School Sports
- ✦ Healthy Food and Beverage Sales, encouraging local governments to provide healthy food and beverage options in recreation facilities
- ✦ Built Environment and Active Transportation (One of the founding members of the Healthy Built Environment Alliance)
- ✦ Swimming Pool, Spray Pool and Wading Pool Regulations
- ✦ Community Care and Assisted Living Act – Child Care Licensing Regulation (participated in Child Care Regulatory review)
- ✦ Building a vision for recreation in the after-school hours
- ✦ Development of performance measures for the recreation sector
- ✦ Delivery agent of provincial childhood obesity intervention program
- ✦ Community partner with ParticipACTION and the provincial promotion of physical activity

[www.bcrpa.bc.ca](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca)

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