

Investing in

Healthy and Active Ontarians through
Recreation and Parks Infrastructure



A Summary of Trends
and Recommendations

Report Highlights

Infrastructure is more than just bricks and mortar, it is about...

- ▶ *Protecting the Natural Environment*
- ▶ *Building healthy, caring, interactive and creative communities*
- ▶ *Strengthening the economy through increased tourism and job creation*
- ▶ *Building healthy minds and healthy bodies*



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The Issues:

- ▶ Ontarians need to become more physically active in order to counteract the “obesity epidemic.”
- ▶ Ontarians need access to quality recreation facilities in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- ▶ Ontario’s sport and recreation infrastructure is in a state of physical decline. The vast majority of publicly owned recreation facilities were built between 1956 and 1980, and are nearing the end of their useful life.

The Price Tag:

- ▶ The estimated infrastructure deficit in Ontario is **\$5 billion**.

The Recommendations:

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive, long-term, sport and recreation infrastructure provision framework for Ontario that includes:
 - A sport and recreation infrastructure database to assess needs and priorities.
 - A sustainable, province-wide, dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure funding program supported at all three orders of government.
 - A strategy to promote increased physical activity and social engagement for all Ontarians.

To address the infrastructure crisis in Ontario, we must work together to encourage all orders of government to provide dedicated funding for the development, renewal and rehabilitation of sport, recreation and physical activity facilities and outdoor spaces in the province.

What you can do – 3 important actions:

- ▶ Individuals and groups can invest in a high quality of life in Ontario by encouraging all orders of government, Federal, Provincial and Municipal, to provide dedicated funding for the development, renewal and rehabilitation of physical activity facilities and outdoor spaces in the province.
- ▶ Municipal councils and non-profit board of directors can adopt formal motions supporting dedicated sport, recreation and physical activity infrastructure funding, in order to send a message to the Provincial and Federal Governments that recreation infrastructure funding is a priority in our communities. Copies of motions should be sent to: 1) your local MP and MPP; 2) Provincial and Federal Ministers for Finance, Infrastructure Renewal, Health Promotion, and/or Sport and Recreation.
- ▶ Municipal councils should encourage Provincial and Federal governments to recognize in-kind contributions in any infrastructure funding formulas.

This summary was prepared by **Parks and Recreation Ontario** as part of the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy for Recreation in Ontario. The first phase of this strategy, an inventory and assessment of sport and recreation in Ontario was implemented by an alliance of the **Ontario Parks Association**, the **Ontario Recreation Facilities Association** and **Parks and Recreation Ontario**, with support from the **Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion**.

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Forward



Gordon Alcott

Georgetown, Ontario – “Home of the Little NHL”

Gordon Alcott may not be a familiar name to most people in Ontario, but in Georgetown, Alcott’s name is legendary.

In 1936 Mr. Gordon Alcott founded the “Little NHL”, giving birth to what many believe to be the foundation of minor hockey associations in Canada. With an initial registration of 60 boys, Alcott organized them into teams representing the “original six” of the National Hockey League...giving rise to “The Little NHL.” To this day, the community of Georgetown, and more specifically the Georgetown Memorial Arena, proudly displays its legacy in hometown hockey as “The Home of the Little NHL.”

The Georgetown Memorial Arena opened its doors in 1922. While the arena has undergone several modifications and repairs over the years, it is 84 years old and nearing the end of its functional life.

The real problem for the Georgetown Memorial Arena is that there is no money to bring it back to life or replace it. A new arena is estimated to cost between \$6 to 7 million, and with other capital budget pressures taking priority, this municipality of 55,000 is facing a real dilemma... and time is literally running out.

This is a true story. Unfortunately, it is a common story to many municipalities throughout Ontario facing the same sport and recreation infrastructure crisis. In a recent study conducted by Parks and Recreation Ontario, Ontario’s recreation infrastructure deficit – concerning arenas, swimming pools, and community centres alone – is \$4,959,195,000 and it’s getting worse.



Georgetown Memorial Arena

Connecting the Dots on Infrastructure, Health Promotion, and Obesity

“Houston, We Have a Problem...”

What may seem as an obvious connection to some, has yet to be fully realized by others. There is rarely a week that goes by that we are not reminded of the growing problems associated with obesity among Canadians: increased demands on our burgeoning health care system; links to other health related problems such as type 2 diabetes and certain cancers; as well as a series of mental health, workplace, and quality of life issues.

Ontarians are further reminded that adopting improved eating habits, and increasing their levels of physical activity will go a long way to combating the “obesity epidemic.”

While efforts by both the Federal and Provincial Governments with respect to promoting better health through increased physical activity have not gone unnoticed, Canadians and subsequently Ontarians are falling short of committing themselves to regular physical activity. The actual message seems to be getting through, as surveys indicate that 80% of Canadians realize the importance of regular physical activity, but far less actually do it.

This leads us to a more troubling question...

- ▶ if Ontarians understand the importance of good health...
- ▶ and they know that regular physical activity is a significant contributor to good health...

a) Why are more than 1 in 4 of Ontario's children aged 2-17 overweight or obese?

b) Why are “more than half of children between the ages of 15 to 19 not active enough for optimal growth and development?”

c) Why are close to half of Ontario's adults overweight or obese?

Perhaps combating obesity in Ontario is more than just messaging and understanding. Despite the plethora of compelling information about healthy eating and physical activity, Ontarians are still not incorporating sufficient levels of physical activity to achieve optimum health benefits. Could it be that a lack of suitable and accessible facilities is preventing them from becoming more physically active?

According to a recent report released by the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, one of the key ingredients to creating healthy active communities is “well designed, safe, functional, inviting (recreation and sport) facilities, parks and trails.”⁽¹⁾

It would also appear that the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation agree. At their Ministers Conference in August 2005, they stated: “improved infrastructure will advance sport and physical activity in communities across the country while addressing critical health challenges and strengthening Canadian communities.” Which is why the Ministers’ number one priority is...

“A Healthy Sustainable Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure System.”



“...between 1981 and 1996, the number of obese children in Canada between the ages of 7 and 13 tripled. This is contributing to a dramatic rise in illness such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and some cancers”⁽²⁾

*Dr. Sheela Basrur
Ontario's Chief
Medical Officer of Health*

The Cost of Inactivity

“In 2004, 28% of Ontario children and youth aged 2-17 were overweight or obese. In 2002, more than half of Canadian children and youth aged 15 to 19 were not active enough for optimal growth and development.”⁽⁸⁾

Ontario's Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living, Ministry of Health Promotion

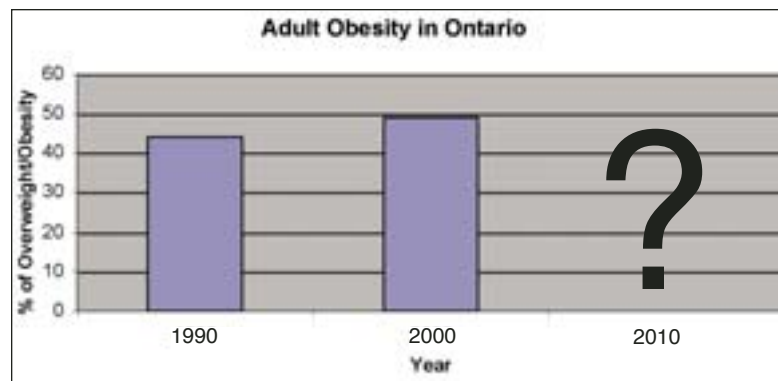


When asked about the number one thing they could do to improve their health, 80% of Canadians say they should be more physically active.”⁽⁹⁾

Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Physical Activity, Recreation, and Sport

According to a recent report released by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion “obesity costs Ontario approximately \$1.6 billion annually, including \$647 million in direct costs and \$905 million in indirect costs.”⁽³⁾

While staggering numbers in and of themselves, these figures don't appear to be getting any better. According to Dr. Sheila Basrur, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, “between 1981 and 1996, the number of obese children in Canada between the ages of 7 – 13 tripled. This is contributing to a dramatic rise in illness such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and some cancers”.⁽⁴⁾



The trend is really no different for adults.

“In 2003, almost half of Ontario's adults were overweight or obese”.⁽⁵⁾

To make matters worse, “estimates show that the number of Canadians in their 60s

will increase by 50% over the next 10 years, while “a recent study indicates that 52% of Canadian baby boomers are inactive, with rates of obesity among this generation increasing by nearly 60% in the last decade.”⁽⁶⁾ Other vulnerable groups include low income families, aboriginal peoples, and new immigrant populations.

The bottom line is that more of us are becoming increasingly inactive. Combined with unhealthy food choices, the result is record statistics of obesity and corresponding health issues. Loosely translated, we're getting fatter by the day, and it's costing us a fortune in health care costs.

All levels of governments need to explore real solutions to some of the real problems associated with physical inactivity and obesity. These solutions represent sound investments in Ontario communities that not only serve to combat obesity, they also have social, economical, public safety, and environmental benefits associated with their implementation.

A growing body of knowledge, including the Provincial Ministry of Health Promotion's recently released Healthy Eating and Active Living (H.E.A.L.) strategy, suggests that “Healthy Eating and Active Living”⁽⁷⁾ is the right prescription to Ontario's obesity crisis. This should not be a great surprise to most, because our mother's warned us: “if you don't eat properly and get some exercise – you'll get fat!”

This report speaks to the ‘active living’ portion of the obesity prescription. It further illustrates that in order to achieve tangible results, provincial and federal governments must work with municipalities to invest in the environments that enable Ontarians to engage in regular physical activity...

Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure!

The State of Ontario's Sport and Recreation Infrastructure

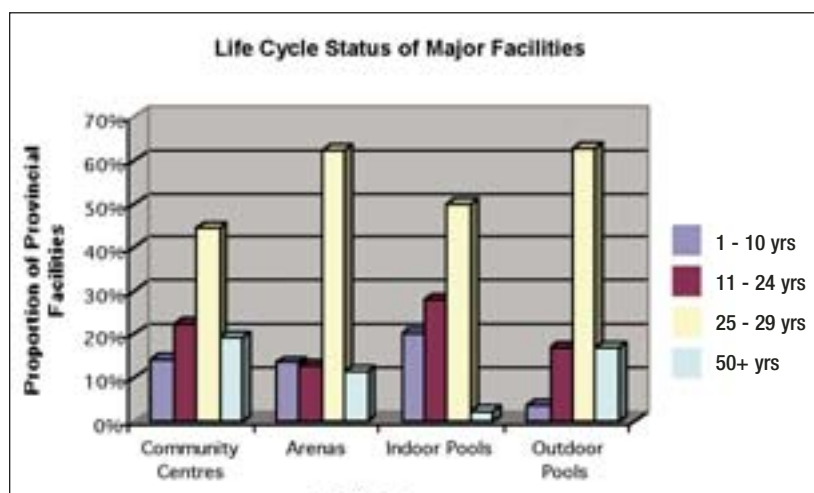
It was thought to be bad...and it is.

Recreation infrastructure in Ontario is in a state of physical decline. The vast majority of publicly owned recreation facilities were built between 1956 and 1980. This was a time when the Government of Ontario had dedicated capital funding programs to assist municipalities with the construction of much needed sport and recreation facilities. Today, facilities of this vintage not only require capital renovations or replacement, but they are more expensive to operate. It is time to revisit the infrastructure of our past, if we are to sustain the infrastructure of our future.

"The estimated order-of-magnitude capital repair and replacement cost of existing municipally-owned community centers, arenas, indoor pools and outdoor pools is approximately \$5 billion (\$4,959,195,000)."⁽¹⁰⁾

These findings are the result of a recent study commissioned by Parks and Recreation Ontario, the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, and the Ontario Parks Association, with support of the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion. The report, entitled *Major Municipal Sport and Recreation Facility Inventory*, takes stock of what has been a growing concern among municipalities regarding their ability to manage the burden of infrastructure replacement and renewal.

"The inventory of municipally-owned facilities is aging, with between 30% and 50% of the stock in each facility type at, or approaching, its useful life. Smaller municipalities with more aged facilities – especially arenas – face an immediate capital crisis in terms of funding requirements to either retrofit or replace deteriorating stock."⁽¹¹⁾



Aging sport and recreation infrastructure is not an isolated problem. "All communities in Ontario will be required to significantly retrofit or replace up to 55% of their community centers in the near future. At least half of the

(community centers) facilities in municipalities of all sizes are 50 years of age or older. Although larger communities have slightly fewer old community centers, facilities in these jurisdictions are generally larger and more complex, which would suggest that a renovation may be several times more expensive than a retrofit or replacement of a facility in a less populated area."⁽¹²⁾

"Right now, Ontario spends almost half its provincial budget on the health – or illness-care system. A healthier population could save us billions every year in health care costs."⁽¹³⁾

Ministry of Health Promotion



"All communities in Ontario will be required to significantly retrofit or replace up to 55% of their community centers in the near future."⁽¹⁴⁾ Major Municipal Sport and Recreation Facility Inventory.

Parks and Recreation Ontario



The scope of the study included arenas, pools, and community centers. While representative of important elements of Ontario's sport and recreation infrastructure, this is really just the tip of the iceberg. It did not include other important, intricately linked, and publicly funded asset categories, such as;

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Walking Trails | Senior Centres | Arts & Cultural Centres |
| Bike Paths | Youth Centres | YMCA's and YWCA's |
| Playgrounds | Fitness Centres | Boys & Girls Clubs |
| Sports Fields | Curling Rinks | New & Emerging Sports |
| School Gymnasiums | Golf Courses | |

Future facility inventories are planned to capture the broader sport and recreation infrastructure crisis. This first report however, uncovers a variety of important findings. These findings can be used as a foundation to serve us well, as we begin to address the need for Ontario's new infrastructure funding program.



Maintaining the Status Quo – A Bad Choice!

In addition to its inability to effectively accommodate and promote increased physical activity, the aging sport and recreation infrastructure in Ontario comes with additional costs. These are the direct and indirect social, public safety, environmental, and economic development liabilities associated with aging infrastructure.

Deteriorating and aged physical plants

- ▶ Costs more to operate and in turn cause further financial pressures on municipalities and users.
- ▶ Imposes additional demands on Ontario's over-burdened utility resources (hydro, gas, and water), which not only costs more, but conflicts with provincial energy conservation objectives.
- ▶ Compounds Ontario's contribution to green house gas emissions, and associated environmental impacts.
- ▶ Diverts potential facility upgrade and program dollars to operating costs or emergency repairs.
- ▶ Increases costs to users and thereby reduces accessibility to families facing financial constraints.
- ▶ Restricts affordable access to important public facilities, particularly by vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Increases risk to participant health and safety.
- ▶ Increases costs or liability associated with health and safety retrofit requirements for staff and/or users.

“Overall foot traffic increased from 500,000 to 1,000,000 per year.”

*Darrell Curry,
Manager of the recently
renovated Malton
Community Centre,
Mississauga, Ontario*

Antiquated and Traditional Facilities

- ▶ Reduces user satisfaction and subsequent use of older amenities.
- ▶ Limits ability to appeal to, and accommodate growing family needs and diversity of use.
- ▶ Restricts ability to capitalize on new technologies, and innovations that would reduce operating expenditures.
- ▶ Reduces ability to offer existing residents enhanced quality of life amenities
- ▶ Inhibits ability to attract and accommodate new growth.
- ▶ Reduces ability to attract corporate interest in sponsoring activities and events.
- ▶ Causes discrepancies between new facilities and older facilities, and the corresponding social and public safety dynamics around use.



Defining Sport and Recreation Infrastructure

It's More Than Just Bricks and Mortar

Sport and Recreation in Ontario is not all fun and games. Nor is the infrastructure that serves the function of providing Ontarians with millions of hours of physical activity each day.

On the one hand, Ontario's sport and recreation infrastructure is indeed about "bricks and mortar." It includes the construction, maintenance, repair, operation, and the responsible supervision of facilities and outdoor areas.

It's also more than just arenas, gyms, and playfields. Sport and recreation infrastructure includes a host of buildings, facilities, and environments whose total inventory may not be entirely familiar to all people. It includes all those indoor and outdoor places and facilities that offer specific health, social, environmental, and economic benefits to the individuals and the communities in which they live.

Sport and recreation infrastructure has less to do with facilities and parks, and more to do with what happens in, around, and as a result of having them. It's also about achieving certain outcomes that are seen as critical to the life of a community.

Why do you think they call them community centres?



Indoor

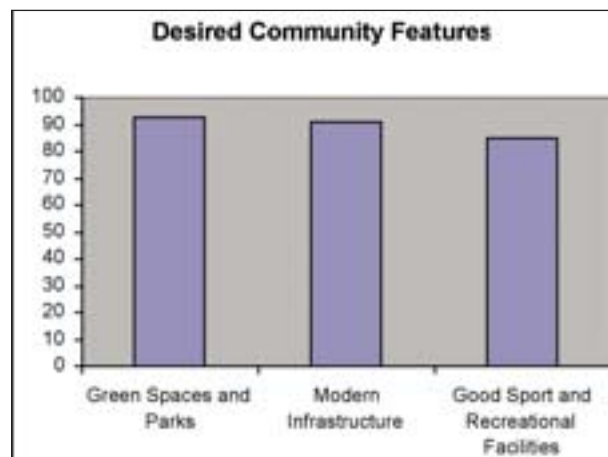
- Arenas
- Community Centres
- Indoor Pools
- Community Halls
- Cultural Centres
- Senior Centres
- Youth Centres



Outdoor

- Parks
- Playfields
- Play-structures
- Trails
- Outdoor Pools
- Splash Pads
- Pavillions
- Gardens
- Waterfronts
- Marinas
- Golf Courses

People are looking for more than just a place to live and work. "A global, mobile class of entrepreneurs is feeding the emergence of creative cities. Where they choose to live and work is the key to determining which cities will thrive and which will merely survive."⁽¹⁵⁾ The percentage of Canadians who view sport and recreation infrastructure as desirable community features is certainly worth noting.



Excerpt from "The Changing Mindset of Canadians"

Allan R. Gregg – Chair, The Strategic Counsel⁽¹⁶⁾

Sport and Recreation Infrastructure is about...



Protecting the Natural Environment

By securing and managing open spaces, woodlots, waterfronts, and environmentally sensitive areas for citizens to explore and enjoy.



Building Interactive Communities

By developing parks, trail networks, gardens, and facilities of common interest where people have the opportunity to meet.



Celebrating Culture

By providing indoor and outdoor spaces for people to host special events, and activities that promote arts and culture.



Developing Caring Communities

By supporting volunteer groups, and encouraging service clubs to ensure that a continuum of programs are available to all.



Business Retention and Attraction

By facilitating tournaments and events, as well as services of interest to residents, visitors, and potential employers.



Building Healthy Minds and Healthy Bodies

By offering countless opportunities for physical activity to quiet enjoyment for self, friends, family, and community.

"While cities must have well maintained, safe streets, that is no longer enough. Cities must offer extraordinary cultural experiences, high quality public spaces, and authentic, unique neighbourhoods and amenities."

*Glen Murray
Toronto Star
May 21, 2006*

Investing in Sport and Recreation Infrastructure is Investing in the Quality of Life for Ontarians!

Ontario Municipalities: Closest to the People, and Feeling the Squeeze!

“Municipalities have had and will continue to have the primary responsibility for the provision of recreation services.”⁽¹⁸⁾

*A Community Recreation Policy Statement,
Ontario Ministry of Tourism
and Recreation*



“Over the next 30 years, the number of people living in Ontario is expected to grow by approximately 4 million.”⁽¹⁹⁾

*Places To Grow Act,
Ministry of Public
Infrastructure & Renewal*

When the Provincial Policy Statement on Recreation was established in 1987, municipalities agreed that the responsibility for the provision of services should happen at the local level. Municipalities are closest to the people of Ontario, and simply understand the characteristics that make their communities unique.

In assuming the lead for recreation service delivery, most municipalities did not envision that they would do it alone. In fact many municipalities have, and continue to work cooperatively, with other service providers, service clubs, volunteer groups, and the private sector to ensure that the residents of their community are served to the best of their collective ability.

When reports of a \$5 billion infrastructure deficit are tabled, it is important to understand that this is over and above the various cooperative ventures that have occurred in Ontario municipalities.

As outlined previously, “All communities in Ontario will be required to significantly retrofit or replace up to 55% of their community centers in the near future.”⁽¹⁷⁾ While this represents its own set of social, health, public safety, environmental, and fiscal challenges, growing municipalities have the added problem of renewing the old, while trying to build the new.

The Province of Ontario has two important pieces of legislation that go a long way to addressing growth related pressures on community sport and recreation infrastructure. These being the authority granted to municipalities for “parkland dedication,” and “development charges.” Not only are these pieces of legislation important to maintain, they need to be enhanced.

Growth municipalities report fundamental shortcomings with the current development charges legislation for sport and recreation infrastructure. First, that only 90% of the cost of new recreation infrastructure is recoverable, and principally that development charges are based on historic levels of service. In simple terms, growth municipalities in Ontario are being asked to provide for the future, based on funding from the past. This is a recipe for disaster, as it severely constrains the capacity of municipalities to meet new resident expectations, new immigrant needs, and new or emerging sport and recreation interests.

Based on 2004 Municipal Performance Measurement Program (MPMP) data, of the 377 municipalities who reported on their results, Ontario municipalities spend \$47.65 per person on the operation of sport and recreation facilities and \$30.06 per person on parks operations and maintenance. This does not include the cost of land, capital cost of construction, or subsequent capital infusions to older facilities.

In addition, Ontario municipalities spent an additional \$31.49 per person on providing sport and recreation programs and services. Combined, the total monies reported by municipalities on sport and recreation in 2004 was \$109.20 per person.

Assuming a total population of 11.6 million people, Ontario municipalities report spending over \$910 million annually on the operation of sport and recreation facilities and programs. This does not include the cost of renewing or building new sport and recreation infrastructure.

Municipalities have assumed a far greater share of the funding burden for public recreation in the past 30 years. Government debates reveal that “from 1977-78 to 1985-86, tax-based revenues spent on Recreation Centres Act grants dwindled from \$19.4 million to \$2.8 million.”⁽²⁰⁾ In 2006, Recreation Centres Act grants were non-existent. In an overall strategy to address the infrastructure deficit in Ontario, the current and subsequent on-going investment from municipalities, users, and other community service providers must be acknowledged.

“One of the most frustrating things that our league presidents report on, is the number of children they have to turn away due to a lack of playfields!”

*Guy Bradbury
Executive Director
Ontario Soccer Association*



Ontario municipalities reported having over 107 million square feet of recreation facility space.

Municipalities in Ontario reported having over 275,000 acres of parks and open space for recreation and sport purposes.

Towards a Sustainable Infrastructure Investment Model

“Improved Infrastructure will advance sport and physical activity in communities across the country while addressing critical health challenges and strengthening Canadian communities.” ⁽²²⁾

Conference of Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation, August 2005



“Endorsed the recent decision of the Conference of Federal/Provincial/ Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation identifying sport and recreation infrastructure as their number one priority.” ⁽²³⁾

Big Cities Mayors Caucus

The message is becoming clear. At least it is for the federal/provincial/territorial ministers of health, who made a commitment to improving the overall health of Canadians by addressing common preventable risk factors – including physical activity and healthy eating (September 2002). In addition, federal/provincial/territorial ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation, established targets for reducing the number of inactive Canadians by 10% by 2010.

More importantly, during their annual conference in August 2005, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation, recognized the important link between appropriate provision of community recreation facilities, parks, trails, and active transportation corridors – and enhanced physical activity. As a result, these Ministers identified sport and recreation infrastructure as their number one priority.

Big Cities Mayors Caucus

In support of the Ministers’ priority setting exercise, in November 2005, the Big Cities Mayors Caucus adopted two motions pertaining to active cities;

Motion (1) – Endorsed the recent decision of the Conference of Federal/ Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation identifying sport and recreation infrastructure as their number one priority.

Motion (2) – Direct selected municipal staff and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to draft a comprehensive civic sport, recreation and physical activity policy, in close collaboration with key representatives of sport, recreation, physical activity and healthy living organizations, for consideration at a future meeting of the Big City Mayors Caucus. ⁽²¹⁾

As sport and recreation infrastructure plays various roles in Ontario communities (physical, social, environmental, and economical), it should come as no surprise that building a sustainable funding model will not only involve both provincial and federal governments, it will involve various ministries therein.

While it is largely accepted that the Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation will assume a lead role, it is incumbent that a more collective and comprehensive inter-ministerial approach be activated.

Notwithstanding that there may be different roles for different ministries, there are some fundamental principles that must be adopted in developing a strategy for a more healthy and active Ontario.

Criteria For Developing a Province-wide Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Funding Program

- ▶ The program should balance its focus on facilities that accommodate both sport and recreation activities.
- ▶ The program should be a multi-year initiative to facilitate effective facility planning.
- ▶ Initially, the program's design should take into account input from the sport and recreation communities as well as key industry stakeholders. And, as the program evolves, its elements, criteria and parameters should be adjusted and refined in accordance with consultation with the sector.
- ▶ The program should recognize the important role played by municipalities and local governments in the provision and operation of sport and recreation facilities. Consequently, the program should be sensitive to several issues including:
 1. that municipalities are coping with competing capital priorities and are constrained by limited capital funds,
 2. that ultimately, the cost of facility operations will be absorbed by the local government which could be considered as part of its contribution to the program,
 3. that most communities require assistance with both the development of new and the rehabilitation of existing sport and recreation facilities, and
 4. that a locally initiated life cycle maintenance system is required to ensure that new or renovated facilities are adequately maintained.
- ▶ The program should be inclusive, encompassing every environment that accommodates leisure, recreation, physical activity and sport endeavours. As such, the program should cover built form in which traditional sports and physical activities occur (arenas, community centres, pools, etc.), outdoor environments that are increasingly popular with most target populations (trails, parks, etc.), and non-physical recreation venues such as youth centres and facilities that provide recreation opportunities for older adults.
- ▶ The program should complement existing federal, provincial/territorial and local sport, physical activity and recreation initiatives. Where possible, the program should connect with related initiatives (e.g. active transportation).



Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Think Tank

In June 2006, the Ministry of Health Promotion hosted a "Sport and Recreation Infrastructure" Think Tank. The Ministry invited a variety of stakeholders involved in the provision of community sport and recreation, as well as competitive sport in Ontario. The resulting criteria for a provincial and national infrastructure funding program was consistent with the criteria identified in the Major Municipal Sport and Recreation Inventory, as outline above. In addition, the "Think Tank" findings also revealed the following criteria in support of competitive sport:

- ▶ Projects that encourage collaboration.
- ▶ Projects that support long-term athlete development.
- ▶ Projects that are environmentally friendly.
- ▶ Projects that are adaptable and can be altered to address changing needs.
- ▶ Projects that have been carefully planned vis-à-vis identified in a master plan inclusive of a financial sustainability plan.
- ▶ Projects that meet international design standards.

In summary, a comprehensive infrastructure program would support the goals and objectives of *ACTIVE2010* and other local initiatives that focus on improving the health status of Ontarians by increasing levels of physical activity and sport participation.

Intra-Governmental Convergence

Everyone has a stake in sport and infrastructure renewal. It improves the quality of all our lives, everyday. It also touches on the mandates of several key Ministries in the Provincial Government. In order to achieve our goals, a comprehensive, wide-reaching plan is needed that is supported not just with real dollars, but with policies and planning that reinforce active living.

Infrastructure Renewal

- ▶ That the Minister of Infrastructure and Renewal work with the Big Cities Mayors Caucus and the Minister of Agricultural, Food, and Rural Affairs to re-examine the COMRIF program's ability to: a) adequately address sport and recreation infrastructure outside of competing interest with roads and bridges; and b) provide an enhanced program framework for cities whose population exceeds the 250,000 COMRIF benchmark.

Finance

- ▶ That the Minister of Finance review and revise the current development charges legislation with a view to: a) allowing 100% of the costs associated with new sport and recreation infrastructure to be recovered from development; and b) that specific provisions be added to allow for the current and/or future facility provision requirements that new Ontario residents expect.
- ▶ That the Minister of Education, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Health Promotion examine the financial impact of changes to the curriculum-based funding formula and new school planning practices with a view to:
 - a) maintain and/or enhance the current allocation of \$20 million in order to promote affordable access to schools for community recreation and sport purposes
 - b) understand the critical role that previous school construction standards played in the overall provision of community sport and recreation infrastructure.
- ▶ That the Minister of Finance commission a study that examines and identifies the impact of sport and recreation infrastructure funding programs on: a) increased physical activity levels among Ontarians; and b) fiscal benefits to Ontario's health care system.

Transportation

- ▶ That the Minister of Transportation adopt policies and incentives to ensure that all appropriate future road-works include bike lane provisions for the purpose of promoting active transportation for Ontarians and reducing vehicle emissions.



Education

- ▶ That the Minister of Education develop policies that promote schools as community facilities and encourage community use beyond the core curriculum, in order to maximize the use of tax supported facilities to all members of the community.

Environment

- ▶ That the Minister of Environment re-examine policies that may otherwise constrain development of trails and/or active transportation corridors.

Citizenship and Immigration

- ▶ That the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration advise the Minister of Health Promotion and the Minister of Finance on the type and scope of new sport and recreation infrastructure needs of new immigrant populations entering the Province, and provide for appropriate funding and incentives to meet the needs of new Ontarians.



Seniors

- ▶ That the Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Health Promotion work together to provide incentives for retrofitting or converting traditional Seniors Centres, for the purpose of addressing the activity needs of “new seniors.”

The Parks and Recreation Sector's Commitment

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) and its allied partners are eager to participate in planning and implementing a provincial and federal sport and recreation infrastructure program.

Parks and Recreation Ontario represents the many voices of municipal parks and recreation professionals, as well as the greater parks and recreation sector. PRO's unique relationship with its membership allows for the mobilization and consolidation of expertise to work with the Ontario Government. We are ready and prepared to deliver on our respective efforts.

In preparing this document, Parks and Recreation Ontario has provided the Province with important insight into the challenges facing communities, and subsequently the Province, in addressing the obesity epidemic.

We have more to do, and more to share. The following initiatives will be implemented as part of the next phases of the Parks and Recreation Ontario Infrastructure Strategy:

- ▶ Conduct research with private, not-for-profit, education, and charitable sectors to ensure that the facility database resulting from this inventory project is as comprehensive as possible.
- ▶ Complete the future phases of the project including a detailed assessment of facility use patterns, operating profiles, etc.
- ▶ Engage in consultation and planning activities that could result in the following:
 1. A mechanism to frequently update the provincial recreation and sport facility inventory.
 2. A mechanism to continually monitor facility and operating trends important to the sector(s).
 3. Funding models that would assist municipalities and other public sector agencies deal with the funding gaps revealed by this study.
 4. Consensus regarding an approach to determining appropriate facility provision levels that can be consistently applied across the province.
 5. A province wide approach to life cycle management that considers the aging nuances of major facility types.
- ▶ Share best practices with other provinces facing the same infrastructure challenges as Ontario.



Investing in Healthy and Active Ontarians through Recreation and Parks Infrastructure

This report was prepared by **Parks and Recreation Ontario** as part of the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy for Recreation in Ontario. The first phase of this strategy, an inventory and assessment of sport and recreation in Ontario was implemented by an alliance of the **Ontario Parks Association**, the **Ontario Recreation Facilities Association** and **Parks and Recreation Ontario**, with support from the **Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion**. © 2007



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