



SUBMISSION TO THE PROVINCIAL- MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION REVIEW

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Submitted by: Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Directors

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador, founded in 1971, is the provincial voice promoting and fostering the spirit and practice of recreation for all. We provide a full range of services to enhance members' ability to deliver recreation throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador envisions a province of engaged communities where all people embrace the benefits of recreation to enhance their quality of life.

In addressing its mandate, Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador focuses on the three core services of: communication, advocacy and education & training.

DEFINITION OF RECREATION

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

BENEFITS OF RECREATION

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing
- Enhance social wellbeing
- Help build strong families and communities
- Help people connect with nature
- Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation

Recreation has an almost unlimited potential to develop life skills, to enhance communities and to promote and maintain healthy, independent lifestyles, which contribute significantly to the quality of life in Newfoundland and Labrador.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY RECREATION IN HEALTHY LIVING

- Provides programs, parks, trails and facilities that promote, foster and support healthy, active lifestyle choices
- Supports promotion and awareness aimed at encouraging active lifestyles and recreation participation
- Largest base of volunteers. Providing quality leadership in delivering programs and services within the grassroots community
- Schools, community health providers and recreation providers are natural partners in the creation of "active school communities"

A FRAME WORK FOR RECREATION IN CANADA

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

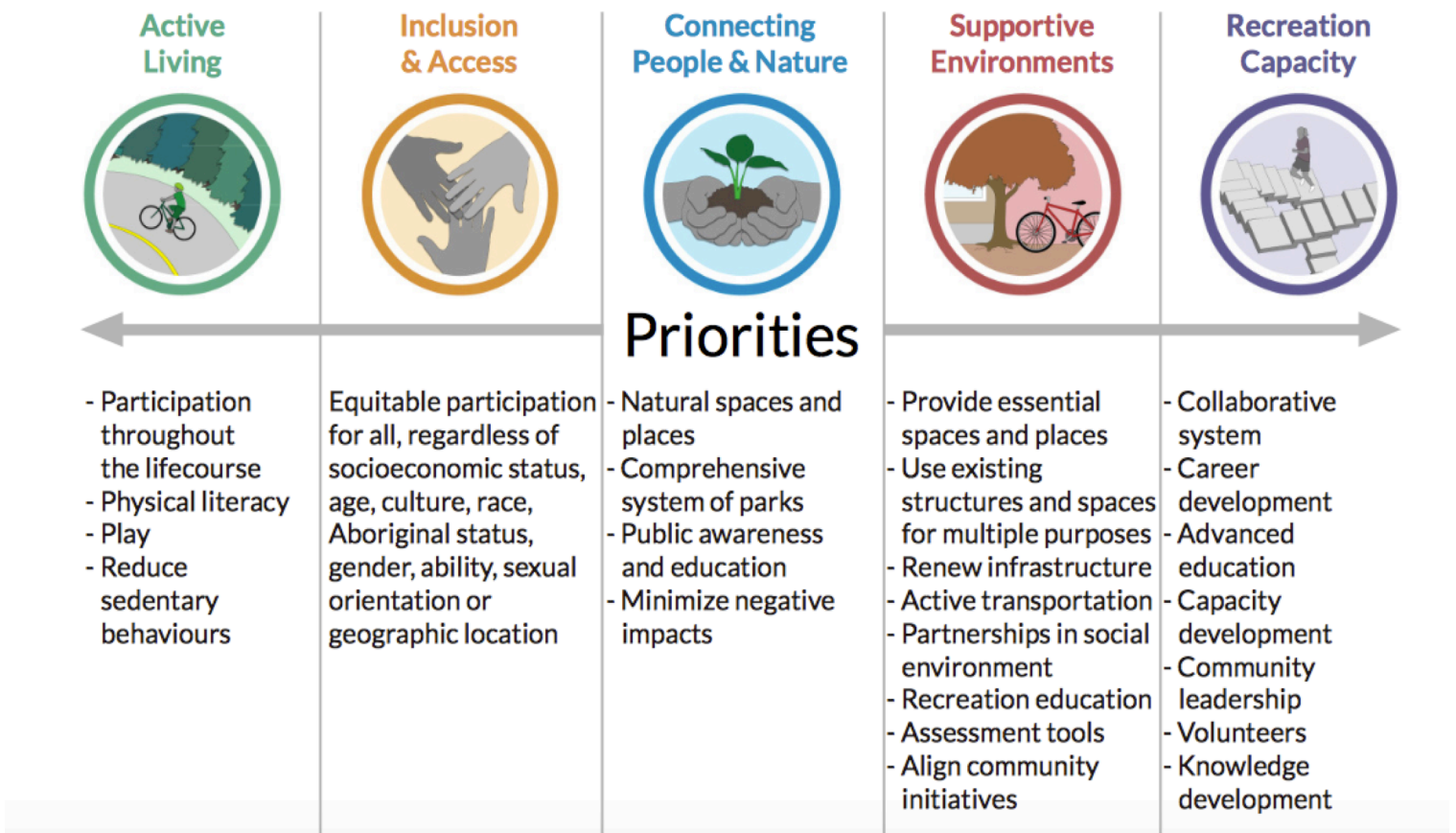
- Individual wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments

REVITALIZING RECREATION

Over the past 50 years, recreation and society have changed. Historically, recreation was considered a public good, which focused on outreach to vulnerable people, families and communities. In recent times, this has often shifted toward an individual-based, facility-focused, user-pay model. At the same time, we are witnessing rapid technological, economic, environmental, demographic and social changes. This creates an urgent need for recreation to reaffirm historic values, while simultaneously adopting new ways of working that meet emerging needs. Underscoring this revitalization is a community development approach that empowers people and communities to work together to enhance wellbeing.

Recreation has the potential to address socio-demographic challenges and troubling issues such as increases in sedentary behavior and obesity, decreased contact with nature, threats to the environment, and inequities that limit participation. These challenges can become opportunities but addressing them requires a commitment to a shared vision, values and goals, as well as the development and implementation of effective action plans. The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 provides a foundation for reflection, discussion and the development of such action plans.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR ACTION



COMMUNITY –THE CORE CONCEPT

Despite the fact that people are more mobile than in the past and have established communities of interest beyond their neighborhoods, the geographic community remains the focal point for recreation activity.

“...That the sphere in which people must find meaning and purpose is the family, the neighborhood and the community; with its schools, churches, libraries and cultural institutions, sports groups and recreation clubs and social organizations. Programs of community activities are essential elements of life if people are to keep their sense of purpose and achieve happiness in a complex society. In their own communities ordinary citizens and their families can share with others the work of planning and carrying out projects for which they have recognized needs and set the goals. Here they can use their own methods and their own leaders for effective development”.

THE MUNICIPALITY- THE PRIME AGENCY

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.

The basic role of the municipality is to ensure the availability of the broader range of recreation opportunities for every individual and group consistent with available community resources.

ACTIVE, HEALTHY NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: A RECREATION AND SPORT STRATEGY

Active Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador provides the framework for navigating the way forward toward a province in which all citizens are able, within a safe, equitable, ethical and accountable framework, to access and participate in recreation and sport activities.

The Strategy identifies the significant relationship between recreation and municipalities and articulates six (6) key directions that are essential for the long-term success and building a framework for action in the short to mid-term. These key directions are:

- Increase Involvement and Participation in Recreation, Sport and Physical Activity
- Improving Access for All
- Strengthening Public Sector Support of Recreation and Sport
- Reaching our Potential through Enhanced Excellence
- Building Human Resource Capacity
- Building Capacity through Infrastructure

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador, as the provincial voice for recreation, has engaged the provincial government in support of the development, implementation and monitoring of the Recreation and Sport Strategy. While we have experienced considerable success through the strategy process there are additional challenges and opportunities that will present themselves in coming years.

CONSIDERATIONS FROM RECREATION NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ON THE PROVINCIAL – MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION REVIEW Members of Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RNL) have provided input into the community recreation delivery system at the community, regional, provincial and national level for more than 47 years. They organize and run recreation programs, support and plan special events, operate and manage recreation infrastructure and provide social and physical environments for the citizens of their respective communities to engage in and enhance their quality of life. Recreation provides significant benefits to municipalities in the areas of community and regional recreation programs, recreation infrastructure, parks, playgrounds, trails and open space, community use of schools, physical activity, healthy living and community special events and festivals.

Community Recreation Programs: RNL members (both paid and volunteer) provide numerous recreation programs that support the need for individuals, families and community groups to express their personal social and cultural needs, thereby strengthening the social fabric of our communities. There is also a tremendous economic impact as goods and services are required for participation in many of these recreational activities.

Recreation Infrastructure: Recreation infrastructure represents significant financial investments from all levels of government in the initial design and build phase but constitutes considerable additional investments by the municipality for maintenance and operations. Recreation facilities have been identified in some urban communities as the single most expensive capital investment. Many of our existing recreation facilities serve as regional facilities, are utilized for large community gatherings, festivals and special events and warming stations during emergencies. Based on changing demographics we are seeing efforts to focus more on multi-purpose facilities.

Parks, Playgrounds, Trails and Open Space: Recreation leaders are responsible for the design, development, maintenance and operation of most community parks, playgrounds, trails and open spaces. They attract a wide range of community users and support citizen participation and appreciation of our environment. They also provide an important social environment for children, families and the community at large to undertake health and wellness activities in an interactive, safe outdoor space.

Community Use of Schools: RNL members have experienced both opportunities and challenges when it comes to the community use of schools. In some areas, both formal and informal agreements are in place between the local municipality's recreation department and the school, whereas in others there is no access. There is also a need to examine opportunities for school age children to access community recreation facilities more during the school day.

Physical Activity and Healthy Living: RNL has been involved with the promotion of physical activity since the first Canadian Guidelines on Physical Activity came out in 1997. We continue to support our members with the recent launch of our "FIND YOUR FIT" physical activity promotional campaign. We also partner with the sport, education and health promotion sectors.

Community Special Events and Festivals: RNL members are engaged at varying stages in either the delivery of or support for literally thousands of events large and small held in communities every year throughout the province. From community and regional sporting competitions to annual community festivals our members are front and center. In many instances these events could not take place if there was not a supporting recreation mechanism. As the foundation to many of these events and festivals, recreation doesn't usually receive the recognition it deserves for the tremendous social and economic value it provides to municipalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognize the municipality as the primary provider of public recreation.
- Recognize the significant investment of recreation infrastructure by municipalities and the supports required to build, maintain and operate this infrastructure.
- Identify the role that recreation plays in the development, design, planning and operation of community parks, playfields, trails and open spaces.
- Identify an enhanced framework for the community use of schools (including school use of recreation facilities).
- Identify the role that recreation plays in supporting participation in physical recreation as essential to building healthy, active individuals, families and community.
- Recognize that recreation has the ability to reach all citizens and bring people together in a cooperative, engaging and supportive environment.
- Recognize the significant role recreation plays in support of community special events and festivals (resulting in numerous community, tourism and economic development benefits)