

Framework for Recreation in Canada

Framework Update: March 2024



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Structure of the Framework Update.....	2
Part I: Setting the Context	3
1.1 Introduction.....	3-4
Background.....	3-4
1.2 Challenges and Opportunities.....	4
Climate Change.....	5
COVID-19 Pandemic.....	6
Data, Knowledge, Surveillance and Monitoring.....	6-7
Demographic Changes.....	8
Equity Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging (EDIAB).....	9-10
Economy.....	10
Essential Service.....	11
Homelessness.....	11
Infrastructure and Urban Design.....	12
Mental, Physical, and Social Health.....	12-13
Nature, Trails and Parks.....	13-14
Placemaking.....	15
Safe Sport.....	15-16
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).....	16
Social Isolation and Loneliness.....	17
Technology.....	18
Tourism.....	19
Truth and Reconciliation Commission.....	20
Volunteers.....	20
Work Transformation:	
The Four-Day Work Week and Remote and Hybrid Work.....	21
Workforce Shortages.....	21

Part 2: Goals, Priorities, and Applying the Framework.....	22
2.1 Ways the Framework has been Used.....	22
2.2 Goals and Priorities.....	23-24
Vision.....	23
Values.....	23
Principles of Operation.....	23
Goals and Priorities.....	23-24
2.3 Applying the Framework.....	25
Goal 1: Active Living	25-27
Goal 2: Inclusion and Access	27-30
Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature	30-32
Goal 4: Supportive Environments	33-36
Goal 5: Recreation Capacity	37-39
2.4 Key Documents.....	39-42
Part 3: Benefits of Recreation.....	52-43
Part 4: Glossary.....	44-50

Executive Summary

The recreation and parks sector (the sector) plays an important role in fostering the health, wellbeing, and resilience of Canadians and the communities in which they live. Volunteers and practitioners within this sector make critical contributions by providing accessible recreation activities, conserving natural environments, and creating spaces that encourage physical activity, social interactions, and connectivity with nature. Increasingly, the sector is also being asked to play a critical role in crisis preparedness and response.

These efforts significantly enhance the quality of life for Canadians, underscoring the value of recreation and parks in building stronger, healthier, more resilient communities. The sector requires an updated policy framework to address evolving challenges and opportunities to ensure the continued delivery of these essential services and the sector's ability to adapt to meet the evolving needs of Canadian society. This Framework for Recreation in Canada Update: Reflecting the Current Context (Framework Update) aims to provide volunteers and recreation practitioners working in the sector with guidelines, tools, and activities that will help them navigate the complexities of the contemporary landscape while promoting growth, inclusivity, and sustainability within the sector.

The key themes of the Framework Update include foundational pillars essential for guiding the sector's growth and resilience. First, the document discusses the importance of fostering health and wellbeing through accessible and inclusive recreation facilities and services, emphasizing the role that recreation and parks play in enhancing community strength and individual health. It also delves into the challenges posed by the global pandemic, climate change, and rapid technological shifts, highlighting the need for the sector to adapt through innovative practices.

Community engagement and the power of partnerships also emerge as crucial themes, with a call for collaborative efforts to achieve lasting and impactful outcomes. The Framework Update suggests a forward-thinking approach, urging the sector to embrace change and leverage new opportunities for service delivery and engagement. The importance of a new, contemporary policy framework that reflects the current social, environmental, and technological landscape is emphasized, guiding the sector towards a future where recreation and parks continue to be a cornerstone of wellbeing and happiness in Canadian society.

These themes collectively sketch a vision of a dynamic and responsive sector, capable of addressing the evolving needs of communities while ensuring that recreation and parks remain integral to the fabric of Canadian life.

The *Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing 2015* (Framework) resulted from a collaborative effort between the provincial and territorial governments^[1], the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), and the provincial/territorial recreation and parks associations (including l'Association québécoise du loisir municipal). The Framework was endorsed by provincial and territorial ministers and supported by the Government of Canada in February 2015 to provide guidance and galvanize the recreation and parks sector.

[1] With the exception of Quebec.

Significant change has occurred since the Framework was first published in 2015. To reflect and address these changes, and after consultation with sector representatives across the country, this Framework Update was developed **by the recreation and parks sector for the sector** in partnership with CPRA and under the guidance of the Framework Leadership Team.

In 2025, the Framework for Recreation in Canada will have been in place for a decade. This Framework Update addresses challenges and identifies opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. It further highlights ways the sector can adapt to meet those challenges and continue to play an essential role in promoting individual wellbeing and building healthy, vibrant, and resilient communities. While the Framework Update endeavours to propose solutions to challenges that emerged during, or were exacerbated by the pandemic, it is not a substitute for a refreshed, current policy framework to guide the sector over the next decade.

Structure of the Framework Update

The Framework Update has four sections:

1. **Setting the Context.** This section provides a brief history of the Framework, outlines the process followed to produce the Framework Update, and identifies issues that contribute to the current context.
2. **Goals, Priorities, and Applying the Framework.** This section presents the Framework's five goals. It also provides practical strategies at both operational and strategic levels to support recreation and parks professionals in implementing the Framework Priorities. Finally, it lists key documents that have been released since 2015.
3. **The Benefits of Recreation.** This section updates the 2015 Framework using important new research from Measuring the Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada, a report produced by Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) in 2023.
4. **Glossary.** This section supplements the list of terms from the original Framework by featuring new terms in a text box the first time it is referenced in the Framework Update.

Part 1: Setting the Context

1.1 Introduction

If you are reading this, chances are you are one of the thousands of dedicated volunteers or professionals within Canada's recreation and parks sectors, or in a role capable of shaping the sector for the betterment of Canadians and their local communities.

As the sector continues on its journey, it's essential to recognize the profound impact that those in the sector have on enhancing the wellbeing of our communities and natural environments. Your dedication to fostering accessible recreation activities, conserving our beautiful natural environments, creating spaces that promote physical and social wellbeing, and helping during times of crisis, does not go unnoticed. Your work not only enriches the lives of individuals but also strengthens the fabric of our society, making our communities more vibrant, healthier, and resilient. As we navigate the complexities of today's world, your role has never been more crucial. This document provides you with updated guidelines and information, and, most importantly, practical tips, tools, and actions you can undertake that will support you in continuing to offer these invaluable services. Together, let's champion growth, inclusivity, and sustainability within our sector, ensuring a brighter future for all Canadians.

Background

The development of the Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing 2015 was a collaborative effort of the provincial and territorial governments (except Quebec), the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), and the provincial/territorial recreation and parks associations (including l'Association québécoise du loisir municipal). Participants from across the country contributed to the Framework through a comprehensive consultation process that began at the 2011 National Recreation Summit. In February 2015, the Framework was endorsed by provincial and territorial ministers (excluding Quebec) and supported by the Government of Canada to provide guidance and to galvanize the parks and recreation sector.

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

The original Framework included: a renewed definition of recreation (above); information about recreation providers and partners that contribute to recreation services; an outline of the challenges and opportunities facing the sector; the benefits of recreation; the economic case for investing in recreation; and a list of complementary strategies that address interrelated public policy at the national, provincial, and local levels.

It also included a vision statement, description of values, principles of operation, and priorities for each of the goals. These elements remain relevant.

You can download the original Framework for Recreation in Canada [here](#).

Framework for Recreation in Canada Update: Reflecting the Current Context (The Framework Update)

Significant change has occurred since the release of the Framework in 2015. To address these changes, this *Framework for Recreation in Canada Update: Reflecting the Current Context* was developed **by the sector, for the sector** through a consultation process that engaged dozens of constituents across Canada. Overwhelmingly, the sector agreed that a more robust consultation process should be employed to develop the next iteration of the Framework.

This Framework Update is not meant to replace the original document, but to highlight current context and provide new information that impacts the sector and the development of recreation and parks strategies and action plans.

1.2 Challenges and Opportunities

The following section provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing the sector based on the current Canadian context (2023–24), and the role the sector plays in addressing them. They are organized alphabetically.

Climate Change

The sector can contribute significantly to creating a healthy planet and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Parks play an important role by removing air pollution, cooling urban environments, and providing respite to vulnerable individuals during heat waves. Research that was conducted in 86 cities across Canada concluded that urban trees removed approximately 16,500 tonnes of air pollution, annually. This was estimated to have a health value of \$227.2 M (approximately \$295M today when adjusted for inflation). Moreover, trees also provide other important benefits. They significantly reduce temperatures in urban areas, provide opportunities for people to connect with their natural environment, and make our communities more beautiful, vibrant, and liveable.

Recreation facilities are also routinely and increasingly used across Canada during times of crisis, serving as cooling centres, emergency shelters, vaccination centres, evacuation centres, and meeting points for individuals fleeing natural disasters such as wildfires. It is increasingly clear that recreation facilities, and the professionals who operate them, are critical aspects of crisis preparedness and response.

Conversely, while recreation facilities serve to mitigate the effects of climate change, they also have a significant climate footprint during both construction and operation. Adopting best practices during construction and renovation and upgrading these facilities so they adhere to current climate standards present an opportunity to reduce the impact they have on our environment. According to the Measuring Impact report, the replacement value of aging SPAR infrastructure is estimated at \$42.5 billion. A significant and strategic investment in these facilities would return significant climate benefit while also ensuring these core community facilities remain fit for purpose.

Careful consideration must also be given to how the facilities are used. The impact of hosting events and tournaments – including energy and water consumption, food waste, and emissions related to travel – also presents an opportunity to reduce the impact on our environment.

Climate events, including extreme temperatures; drought and flooding; violent storms that result in damage to buildings, playing surfaces, and trails; warmer winters with reduced snowfall impacting winter activities; and extreme heat, will significantly impact program delivery. The sector is well positioned to contribute to the solutions to these challenges and must continue to adopt and advocate for policies and practices that reduce climate change.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created or exacerbated many challenges for the sector. Reimagine RREC, through an extensive literature review and consultation process, was among the first reports to document the impacts, outcomes, and opportunities for the sector that resulted from COVID-19.

There are three particularly noteworthy opportunities for the sector resulting from the pandemic. First, the public went outside! They enjoyed parks, trails, lakes, streams, streets, and sidewalks. We would be well served to capitalize on that momentum and develop policies, practices, and programs that keep people outdoors and active. Second, it is important to continue providing information and inspiration which was evident and robust during the pandemic. The public should be routinely reminded of the mental and physical benefits of connecting to nature, increasing physical activity, and pursuing a range of indoor and outdoor recreational activities. The third opportunity was the increased profile of recreation and community services departments, which adapted quickly to the crisis. These departments played a vital role in crisis response, pivoting to deliver a much-expanded range of community services (e.g., vaccination centres). The pandemic highlighted the significant role the sector plays and can continue to play in crisis preparedness and response.

There were and continue to be significant human resource implications for the sector. While not limited to aquatics, this challenge was particularly evident with lifeguards and swim instructors. Pools were not able to offer training, which created a shortage of aquatics professionals resulting in a range of challenges including reduced operating capacity, fewer staff to deliver programming, and increased risk to the public because vulnerable groups, including children and new Canadians, were not able to participate in Swim to Survive programs. The shortage across the sector meant that once programming resumed, there was a lack of staff for a range of activities and programs.

Data, Knowledge, Surveillance and Monitoring

Though not new in the recreation and parks sector, the use of data – gathering it, applying it, and creating knowledge with it – has become a priority. Given increasing demands on budgets at all levels of government, it is more important than ever to make persuasive, evidence-based arguments for developing public policy that reflects the important and expanding role that recreation and parks play in our communities.

Data, Knowledge, Surveillance and Monitoring Continued

Surveillance refers to the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and information for use in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices. Surveillance is necessary for detecting population engagement in physical activity and sport and recreation, and in identifying trends, gaps, challenges, and promising practices. Monitoring is a specific aspect of surveillance that involves tracking progress of programs or policies (e.g., Framework for Recreation in Canada) in relation to pre-set objectives.[2] In the sport, physical activity, and recreation sector, especially at the local level, there is an opportunity to significantly increase resources allocated to surveillance and monitoring to increase data literacy, data gathering, data management, and analytics. Data from effective and comprehensive surveillance systems are important for obtaining resources and evaluating programs.

For the sector to effectively understand trends, inform progress, and identify new approaches, it is critical to establish a comprehensive system of surveillance and monitoring that includes the application of relevant research. This should be done at the local level. At the national level, recreation organizations can benefit from the work of the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI), a national research organization dedicated to monitoring physical activity levels and sport participation among Canadians and sharing knowledge about the importance of leading a healthy, active lifestyle.

While the original Framework did not include an evaluation strategy, valuable data from CFLRI can provide insights into the progress made since 2015. CFLRI has developed:

- indicators to gauge the contributions of recreation, physical activity, and sport towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals; and,
- an evaluation plan to assess the implementation of the Framework Update.[3]

It remains crucial for recreation and parks organizations at all levels to prioritize accountability. Implementing systems for evaluating programs and monitoring progress towards desired outcomes is essential to gauge the true impact of our efforts in the sector. This approach will not only ensure continuous improvement but also demonstrate the tangible benefits of the sector to governments at all levels and to the communities they serve.

Finally, and just as importantly, the sector must participate in knowledge mobilization, a term that refers to a wide range of activities that include producing and using research through dissemination, transfer and exchange, and co-creation by researchers and knowledge users.[4]

Demographic Changes

The most significant change in the Canadian demographic profile is the aging population. According to the National Seniors Strategy for Canada, by 2035, 1 in 4 Canadians will be older than 65. By 2046, the number of people aged 85 years and older could triple to almost 2.5 million, making that the fastest-growing age demographic in Canada.

Canada's aging population presents significant challenges to our society and opportunities for the sector to help address those challenges. Keeping older adults active and engaged enhances their physical, mental, and social health, which lowers rates of hospitalization and increases their ability to age-in-place in the community with dignity. This can significantly reduce the burden on our faltering health care system.

Another shift across Canada in the last decade is the significant rise in immigration. The trend is expected to continue in the coming decade. The Immigration Levels Plan developed by the Government of Canada for 2024-2026 estimates that we will see an increase of 485,000 new permanent residents. This will be followed by an increase of 500,000 in each of 2025 and 2026.

The sector is well positioned to further assist with the integration of new Canadians and refugees by helping them settle in Canada, learn English and/or French, secure employment, reduce stress and anxiety, and connect them to Canadian communities. To deliver on this potential, the sector must evolve to cater to evolving needs, including cultural, of new Canadians.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging (EDIAB)

The words “Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging” have appeared much more frequently in the past few years. To enhance the client experience in recreation settings, including parks, community centres, and faith-based centres, attempts to make all people feel welcome and comfortable are critically important. In Canada, most Canadians (72%) have reported that they find physical activity and sport opportunities welcoming and inclusive to a moderate or great extent, and 62% find the opportunities accessible to a moderate or great extent (CFLRI, 2019–2021 Physical Activity Monitor, custom tabulation). Although these overall findings are positive, there are some differences in these perceptions with age and household income, which suggests room for improvement. We can further advance EDIAB by thinking carefully about hiring practices, retention strategies, physical and social surroundings, and organizational culture.

For 40 years, the Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation (SPAR) sector has been addressing issues related to equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and belonging. Organizations like Canadian Women and Sport (CWS)[5], the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD), and Active Aging Canada[6], along with initiatives such as the Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians Policy Framework by Parks and Recreation Ontario, and Sport for Life’s All Newcomers to Canada: Creating Inclusion of Newcomers in Sport and Physical Activity, have prioritized boosting participation in SPAR among equity-denied groups to address equity issues. However, the pandemic made evident that our efforts have not resulted in full inclusivity. Initiatives that make opportunities for sport, physical activity, and recreation more equitable are still needed. We must also continue to develop an understanding of how intersectionality (the overlay of social identities – e.g., race, gender, age, ability) can impact how people differently experience discrimination.

Of note:

- A report from the Centre for Sport Policy Studies, The Implications of COVID -19 for Community Sport and Sport for Development, emphasizes that socio-economic status is the strongest determinant of health and the strongest determinant of participation in recreational sport and physical activity. It is critical, therefore, for the sector and its allied partners to work together to address program funding and policies that address socio-economic status, which often also relate to other equity-denied groups.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging (EDIAB) Continued

- Racism in our community remains a significant issue in Canada. Providers in the sector have an opportunity to address racism through programs, policies, and workforce recruitment and retention strategies. These strategies should include education of recreation professionals about the cause and effects of racism in the sector and their role in preventing it. The sector must respect the expertise of people with lived/living experience.
 - During the pandemic, a significant number of Canadians moved from large cities to smaller population centres, and many moved to different provinces. The sector should seek additional information about these migration patterns to understand both the challenges and opportunities to recreation delivery, particularly in rural areas.
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Economy

The pandemic created or exacerbated significant economic challenges for Canadians, including recession, supply chain disruption, global unrest, and inflation. Since 2015, inflationary pressures have significantly increased construction costs. These economic challenges impact the cost of food, housing, and other necessities.

Rising costs of materials and supplies (including adaptive equipment) required to deliver programs and services result in higher costs which are either absorbed by the provider (resulting in increased taxes or reduction in other programs and services) or are passed on to community members. These economic challenges may impact their ability to pay for program fees, transportation, equipment, shoes, and other items, potentially resulting in lower rates of participation. For example, recent research indicates that 74% of adults either find sport, physical activity, and recreation opportunities not affordable at all or somewhat affordable, whereas only 15% find opportunities very affordable.

Essential Service (System/Sector Complexity, Emergency Management)

Beyond the delivery of recreation programs and services, the sector plays a variety of important roles in our communities. The staff, volunteers, facilities, and other resources within local recreation departments have proven to be versatile, flexible, resourceful, and essential.

Often placed within Community Service departments with varied and distinct mandates, recreation and parks departments deliver vital services in the community. Facilities are routinely used as food distribution centres, vaccination clinics, and emergency shelters for citizens experiencing homelessness resulting from a range of circumstances including poverty, mental illness, or having been displaced due to wildfires and other natural disasters. Recreation professionals are often redeployed to manage other tasks and services, often without the necessary training. The need for recreation and parks professionals to serve different needs in the community often contributes to staff stress and an inability to manage a work-life balance. It is worth noting that some recreation departments are evolving and expanding into community services departments. Recognizing the key role the sector plays in crisis preparedness, response, and the delivery of community services is critical to addressing emerging community needs.

Homeslessness

It is estimated that every year approximately 235,000 people experience some form of homelessness. On any given night, 35,000 people are thought to experience homelessness. The number of people who lack stable housing, are under-housed, or are experiencing homelessness has challenged community-based organizations and all levels of governments.

At the same time, the public demand to access clean and safe parks is increasing. Parks are also becoming refuges for people who are unhoused and who may also be struggling with mental illness and addiction. Recreation and parks departments are trying to balance the need to compassionately manage encampments and support those unstably housed with maintaining parks as places for all citizens. Recreation and parks as well as community service departments play an important role supporting underserved populations. This includes the critical role that recreation facilities play during times of crisis (e.g., being used as warming and cooling centres).

Infrastructure and Urban Design

Recreation infrastructure significantly contributes to an improved quality of life. Often, this is not considered in the rush to build new housing. The movement towards 15-minute cities (a planning concept focused on providing amenities within a 15-minute walk or cycle of where people live) is a promising approach that would increase accessibility to recreation opportunities. The ageing stock of existing recreation infrastructure and the need for new recreation and parks infrastructure across the country remains a significant concern, particularly as we build new housing to accommodate the increasing population.

The pandemic and housing crisis provided the impetus for governments to reconsider urban design to allow for more outdoor spaces and to consider how to incorporate active modes of commuting. Many models have been proposed to promote higher density, reduce travel, or promote alternative modes of transportation designed to increase land use, reduce health impact, reduce noise and air pollution, and increase social connections and physical activity. Environmental considerations are important, particularly as the population grows. Urban development must keep pace. This includes significant investments in renovating and retrofitting facilities and developing innovative approaches to transportation including public transit and active transportation routes (see www.measuring-impact.ca).

The infrastructure discussion must include parks, trails, community green spaces, and walking and cycling routes. According to the US National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), “Because of the pandemic, public parks have become more important to people and more essential to our health and wellbeing than perhaps at any time before this pernicious disease threatened our health and freedoms. This pandemic ... has shown us how important parks are to everyone. Parks are not just ‘nice to have,’ they are ‘must have.’ They are critical infrastructure and vital to the public.”

Mental, Physical, and Social Health

Engaging in sport, physical activity and recreation is proven to promote good physical, mental, and social health. Moreover, physical inactivity accounts for \$3.9 billion of annual health care expenditures.[7]

Health-enhancing physical activity helps to decrease the risk of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and certain cancers. Further, participating in these activities improves immune response, thereby decreasing the risk of contracting communicable diseases such as COVID-19. As we prepare for a future that will include other crises, like another pandemic, increasing physical activity may help reduce infection rates and slow the spread of disease.[8]

Mental, Physical, and Social Health Continued

There is a growing mental health crisis in Canada that includes a troubling rise in substance abuse, people experiencing homelessness, and all the associated challenges. Some reasons for this include public health restrictions during the pandemic that led to social isolation, economic hardship, and climate anxiety, among others. During the pandemic, Canadians sought solace by participating in recreational pursuits and rediscovering and reconnecting with nature. It is important now, more than ever, to create opportunities, environments, and circumstances that support Canadians so they can continue to pursue recreational activities that contribute to improving mental and physical wellbeing. Reducing levels of social isolation and loneliness that became even more pronounced during the pandemic must be a priority.

The sector delivers real, quantifiable value in promoting and improving mental and physical health and social connectedness. It must be more intentional about promoting the impact of its significant contribution to society. In a recent survey, most Canadians (70%–76%) said that sport, physical activity, and recreation contributes to: feeling welcomed or included; feeling networked or connected to the community; feeling a sense of community cohesion or community pride; and feeling a sense of trust and reliance in the community. It would be hard to overstate the role the sector can play, and at a relatively low cost, in reducing risk factors and contributing to solutions that improve overall health and quality of life, while reducing the burden on our faltering health care system, saving lives and billions of dollars.

Nature, Trails, and Parks

The pandemic sparked a significant surge in outdoor activities, as Canadians increasingly turned to local parks and trails.

A study conducted during the pandemic showed that 24% of Canadians used outdoor venues beyond their neighbourhood more than they did pre-pandemic. However, we also know from this research that certain population groups were less likely to increase their activity in this type of venue (for example, older adults, those living in lower income households, and those who were less active were less likely to say that they used these venues more frequently during the pandemic).

This shift was driven largely by the closure of indoor facilities and the suspension of community sports and recreation programs. Activities such as cycling, kayaking, cross-country skiing, hiking, and walking – often accompanied by a new family pet – gained popularity.

Nature, Trails, and Parks Continued

Outdoor sports, such as golf, tennis, and pickleball, that allowed for physical distancing, also saw increased participation. Although traditional indoor community sports have resumed, Canadians continue to engage in outdoor and unstructured activities at levels higher than they did pre-pandemic.

This trend presents an opportunity for the sector to both capitalize on and nurture the growing enthusiasm for outdoor activities. By maintaining and enhancing programs, services, and spaces that encourage outdoor engagement, the sector can ensure sustained interest. However, it is also crucial to address the related challenges including environmental impact. The rising number of people using trails and parks not only bolsters conservation efforts but also heightens public appreciation for the impacts of climate change.

A second opportunity relates to who is using the green spaces. In the 2021 Canadian City Parks Report, Canadians who identified as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour (BIPOC), reported that they visited parks less often than white Canadians during the early pandemic. Overall, 22% of BIPOC respondents indicated that harassment or discrimination prevented them from accessing or enjoying park space, compared to only 8% of white respondents. Equally as important is to understand why certain populations were less likely to report an increased use of outdoor venues, as per earlier study results.

According to a 2022 national report by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health about Canadian green spaces during COVID-19:

- Park use did not increase uniformly across communities. Regional differences in park access and public health communication may have affected park use, even in places without local restrictions. In addition, marginalized or racialized communities may have experienced barriers to park use, whether due to a lack of local parks, concerns regarding safety, or discriminatory enforcement of public health orders.
- Parks, and green spaces more broadly, should be viewed as public health assets, increasing resilience during the current pandemic and during future climate-related disruptions. Accordingly, environmental public health should take opportunities to participate in park planning and design to ensure best health outcomes.

Placemaking

Placemaking is a well-established concept that involves shaping public spaces to bolster the connection between people and their environments.

This practice transcends all community sizes and types, with a notable emphasis on neighbourhoods as hubs for increased physical activity and social interaction. One of the most compelling aspects of placemaking is its inclusivity; anyone can be a neighbourhood "placemaker" and initiate impactful changes. This empowers individuals and groups to effect transformations on both personal properties and public spaces at a neighbourhood level.

For the sector, this represents an opportunity to evolve from being solely providers of facilities and programs to becoming active supporters of public initiatives aimed at fostering healthier communities. A significant portion of the spaces created or adapted through placemaking aligns well with recreation and parks, offering versatile venues for various activities. Embracing this shift not only complements the sector's existing roles but also enhances its contribution to community wellbeing. One important example of placemaking is the availability of parks and outdoor spaces, and the animation of those spaces. According to the [Measuring Impact](#) report, "strategic integration of parks and green spaces into urban landscapes reduces air pollution, facilitates urban cooling, and enhances overall wellbeing of citizens."

Safe Sport

In recent years, the term "Safe Sport" has come to refer to a sport environment that is free from all forms of maltreatment, which involves acts that cause physical and/or emotional harm to participants, such as hazing and sexual violence by team members, uttering racial slurs on the field of play, verbal abuse of officials by coaches and spectators, coaches isolating athletes as a form of punishment and coaches weight-shaming athletes for poor performance. "Safety in sport" is the broader term and has, for years, encompassed practices (such as concussion guidelines) that minimize injuries.

Safe Sport Continued

The challenge of ensuring safe sport is not new, but it has reached a critical juncture due an increase of reports of maltreatment with the Canadian sport system. For example, 75% of current and retired Canadian national team athletes reported experiencing at least one harmful behaviour in the sport context.[9] Further, of 1,000 athletes aged 14–17 years, 79% reported at least one experience of psychological violence, 40% reported physical violence, 28% reported sexual violence, and 6% reported neglect.[10] While the spotlight is primarily on the response of the sports community, especially the federally funded National Sport Organizations (NSO), the sector must also recognize and define its role. It is essential for the sector to take proactive steps to ensure community sports at the local level are safe, welcoming, and free of harassment, abuse, and discrimination. This responsibility involves not just addressing traditional safety concerns but also implementing innovative strategies to engage and retain participants who may be hesitant due to worries about physical and psychological safety. Moreover, safety extends beyond policies and practices to include the thoughtful design and utilization of facilities. By taking a comprehensive approach to safety, the recreation and parks sector can play a pivotal role in ensuring sports remain a positive and secure experience for all community members. The recreation sector should follow closely the review and recommendations stemming from the Future of Sport in Canada Commission.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations created 17 world development goals in 2016 with the overall aim of increasing peace and prosperity globally. Physical activity is related to several of the SDGs but is most closely related to SDG3 (good health and wellbeing).

According to the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018–2030), “Physical activity has multiplicative health, social and economic benefits, and investment in policy actions to increase physical activity can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are multiple direct and indirect pathways by which policies to promote physical activity through walking, cycling, sport, active recreation and play support 13 SDGs.”

Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation is defined as a state where an individual may have fewer social contacts, a smaller social network, and less engagement in social activity^[11]. While social isolation is an objective absence of informal supportive relationships, loneliness is the subjective absence of informal supportive relationships.^[12] In an era where everyone is digitally connected, we are still grappling with widespread social isolation.

Social connectedness, on the other hand, is the “sense of belonging and subjective psychological bond that people feel in relation to individuals and groups of others.”^[10] It should be noted that, based on these definitions, one can be socially isolated but not feel a sense of loneliness or can feel lonely despite being socially connected. People across all age groups and abilities are increasingly reporting feelings of loneliness and isolation. According to the 2017 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario, people who experience social isolation have a 50 percent greater risk of dying early. Social isolation can be twice as deadly as obesity and as dangerous as diabetes. It also increases the risk of dementia. Social connectedness is associated with people having more emotional support and practical supports to help them succeed. Indeed, based on a recent national study in 2023, 61% of Canadians agreed to a moderate or great extent that sport, physical activity, and recreation can contribute to a reduction in feeling alone or loneliness and a further 19% agreed to some extent.

Just as physical infrastructure is important to the health of our communities (e.g., trails, parks), so is social infrastructure. Social infrastructure is the “relationship between (1) physical buildings and gathering spaces; (2) social activities, services or programs offered within these places, and (3) the interconnected networks within and across physical and social locations where people come together and enhance overall well-being.”^[13] The sector already supports social infrastructure in communities and is, therefore, in a position to play an even greater role addressing the social isolation epidemic. Seventy-six percent of Canadians feel welcome and included through SPAR activities.^[14]

Technology

Technology presents a range of opportunities for innovation, enhanced communication, increased efficiency, and stronger connectedness. Yet, it is crucial to also acknowledge and address the challenges and limitations inherent to technology.

Hybrid models, which blend in-person and digital program delivery, have the potential to engage a broader audience, catering to diverse recreation preferences. For instance, those working from home might appreciate the convenience of participating in online programs during brief breaks. The pandemic underscored the necessity of digital inclusivity, as efforts were made to bridge the digital divide, especially for those with limited internet access or experiencing digital poverty. Unfortunately, individuals with constrained financial resources often found themselves marginalized. While temporary measures provided some access to digital resources, many of these supports have been phased out.

Conversely, technology, particularly social media, can have serious drawbacks and negative consequences. Increased screen time can divert attention from active recreation and unstructured play. The omnipresence of technology, which results in constant connectivity to low-value content, contributes to decreased physical activity, increased sedentary lifestyles, and challenges in achieving social cohesion. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) brings its own set of positives and negatives, necessitating an informed understanding of its impacts. The sector must evaluate and navigate these dual facets of technology in shaping the future of recreation.

Tourism

Two terms describe the growing trend that combines physical activity with environmental exploration and stewardship: sport tourism and ecotourism. Both are growing industries across Canada. Sport tourism refers to travel which involves either observing or participating in a sporting event while staying apart from the tourists' usual environment. Sport tourism is a fast-growing sector of the global travel industry and equates to a significant economic impact. Ecotourism is a type of nature-based tourism that emphasizes reducing or eliminating your environmental impact.

Sport tourism events play a vital role in enhancing the overall tourism infrastructure of a destination and can benefit the economy. According to Sport Tourism Canada, in 2019, tourism related to sport and recreation contributed \$7.4 billion (\$4.1 billion from domestic visitors and \$3.3 billion from international visitors) to the Canadian economy. Sporting events attract visitors willing to spend, generate media coverage, and promote the destination's image domestically and globally.

Ecotourism seeks to protect natural areas by incentivizing their preservation. It can include hiking, camping, birdwatching, going on safari, surfing, or even simple nature walks. There are two types of ecotourism:

- Soft ecotourism is typically more accessible. It requires less physical exertion, less disconnection from civilization, and is typically accessed through an ecotourism-based business or a government agency. Soft ecotourism provides a relatively effortless way to experience nature. Soft ecotourism can be as simple as going for a stroll in your nearest park and watching the birds and plants.
- Hard ecotourism involves immersing oneself in nature, often without the amenities and services we typically depend on in society. This form of ecotourism demands greater self-sufficiency and physical conditioning, akin to primitive camping in remote, unsupervised wilderness areas.

Ecotourism does not always lead to positive outcomes; it can sometimes result in environmental harm and interfere with local or Indigenous customs.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The 2015 Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC Calls to Action) identified 94 calls to action, many of which the sector can actively support, particularly in education, health, and sport. It is particularly important that the sector ensure their facilities and programs are welcoming and accessible to all, including the Indigenous community.

It is crucial for the sector to understand how it can assist Indigenous Peoples in accessing recreation. This includes creating opportunities for the long-term development of Indigenous athletes, implementing policies and programs that overcome barriers to participation, supporting traditional sports and games, and facilitating environmental stewardship and connections with the land.

Additionally, it is vital for non-Indigenous recreation and parks staff, including coaches and volunteers, to receive training that enables them to support and encourage Indigenous participants and communities in culturally appropriate ways. By actively engaging in these initiatives, the sector can play a significant role in advancing the objectives outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Volunteers

The Sector places significant value on its volunteers who play a vital role in the ongoing implementation of programs, services, administration, emergency response, technology support, training, public relations, and maintenance. According to the [Measuring Impact report](#), sport, physical activity, and recreation are powerful agents of social transformation, contributing an estimated \$13.6 billion annually through volunteerism alone.

As Canadians participate in programs – whether in-person or online, indoor or outdoor – and crises continue to arise, the need for volunteers remains high, but comes at a time of unprecedented shortages. Not only does this shortage affect recreation and parks, but also partners in allied sectors such as sport and culture. It will be important for the recreation and parks sector to continue to promote its opportunities as rewarding, challenging, fun, and essential to the fabric, culture, and health of the communities in which volunteers themselves live, work, and play.

Work Transformation: The Four-Day Work Week and Remote and Hybrid Work

The landscape of work has undergone significant transformations, including the adoption of four-day work weeks by some organizations, the continuation of work-from-home arrangements, and a shift towards hybrid work models. These changes at work are relevant to sector employees and users of sector programs and services. These changes have a direct impact on how the sector should determine how to provide recreation services.

Canadians are increasingly seeking recreational opportunities at varied times throughout the day, benefiting from activities in facilities, placemaking efforts in communities, technology-driven options like virtual yoga classes at home, and recreation in outdoor spaces.

Moreover, the transition back to traditional work settings, after a period of adaptation to working from home, has had notable effects on work-life balance and the mental wellbeing of community residents. For many, readjusting to an office environment has presented challenges, reshaping not only their professional lives but also their leisure activities and overall lifestyle. This evolving work culture underscores the need for flexible and diverse recreational opportunities to cater to the changing needs and schedules of Canadians.

Workforce Shortages

The recreation and parks sector, like other sectors, is facing a critical shortage of workers, particularly on the front line. For a variety of reasons, the result is a reduced capacity to offer programs and services. They include recreation graduates not taking positions in the sector, an inability to retain qualified staff, a lack of access to trained practitioners and instructors, and a lack of facility and trail operators, particularly in rural and northern communities.

As noted above, one of the most critical shortages is in aquatics which impacts swimming programs for learning, leisure, and fitness, as well as lifeguard and instructor training impacting safety around the water for Canadians of all ages. Applying effective workforce strategies will be an important focus for the sector over the next several years. Workforce shortages and the connection to hybrid work also negatively impacts the sector and its ability to serve Canadians, as not all employees want jobs that require them to be there in person.

Part 2: Goals, Priorities, and Applying the Framework

The five goals presented in the Framework Update remain consistent with those established in the 2015 Framework. However, their descriptions have been revised to reflect current perspectives and insights. The Priorities for each goal have been updated based on what was heard through the consultation process involved in the Framework Update. The original priorities can be found in the 2015 Framework.

Part 2 of the Framework Update contains four sections:

Section 2.1: Application – Ways the Framework has been used.

Section 2.2: Infographic – Depicting the original elements of the Framework with newly defined goals and the updated priorities.

Section 2.3: Applying the Framework – Strategic and operational ideas for the Framework priorities.

Section 2.4: Key Documents – Significant policies, documents, and resources that have been released since 2015 that can help with the implementation of the goals and priorities.

2.1 Ways the Framework has been used

The following section outlines some of the ways the 2015 Framework has been used by the sector.

- For **planning** (e.g., developing strategies, determining areas for investment, as a decision-making tool, advancing specific priorities, to inform evaluation plans)
- To inform **policy development** (e.g., funding allocations, developing budgets)
- For **training or orientation** of staff or volunteers (e.g., part of onboarding, conference sessions, curriculum for students, for professional development)
- As a **reference** (e.g., for briefing notes, in presentations to senior leaders, in funding applications)
- As an **organizing framework** (e.g., for consultants to use, for research agendas, for staff meeting agendas, to evaluate applications)
- As a communications tool (e.g., to promote programs and services, to educate internal and external partners)

2.2 Goals and Priorities

The elements of this Framework Update remain the same as those in the 2015 document except for the actions (updated here), which were previously called priorities.

Vision

Everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster individual wellbeing, the wellbeing of natural and built environments, and community wellbeing.

Values

- Public Good
 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access
 - Sustainability
 - Lifelong Participation
-

Principles of Operation

- Outcome Driven
 - Quality and Relevance
 - Evidence Based
 - Partnerships
 - Innovation
-

Goals and Priorities

Active Living

- Utilize 24-hr movement guidelines
- Non-competitive and unstructured play
- Programs adapt to changing work/school formats
- Physical literacy
- Active transportation

Inclusion and Access

- Work with equity-denied groups to implement policies and programs to ensure all community members have equitable access
 - Sense of belonging
 - Work with Indigenous communities
-

Connecting People with Nature

- Access to natural spaces and places
 - Collect and share best practices for planning and maintaining comprehensive parks system
 - Public awareness and education
 - Environmental stewardship
-

Supportive Environments

- Provide accessible, inclusive, and welcoming spaces and places
 - Infrastructure revitalization and renewal
 - Placemaking
 - Recreation education
 - Healthy food environments
 - Social connectedness
-

Recreation Capacity

- Address workforce gaps
- Diversity and equity
- Develop volunteer strategies
- Practitioner-academic collaboration
- Knowledge development and training

2.3 Applying the Framework

This section outlines actionable strategies for recreation and parks professionals to advance the Framework priorities, covering both operational and strategic dimensions.

Operational ideas are applied at the municipal/local level, while strategic initiatives may include collaborations with both internal and external partners across local, provincial/territorial, and federal/national levels, actions taken by decision-makers, or inform the role of CPRA to advance the sector.

The operational ideas offer a wide range of options that may not be suitable in all communities but can provide a starting place to help achieve the goals and strategies of the Framework Update.

Goal 1: Active Living

Foster active living through physical recreation. Focus on getting the inactive, active, rather than the active, more active.

1.1 Utilize the 24-hour Movement Guidelines (all ages) to help community members of all ages and abilities increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living and improve sleep habits.

Operational Ideas:

- Post all guidelines online, on bulletin boards in recreation facilities, and in published recreation program guides.
- Note in program guides how much each program will contribute to meeting the guidelines.
- Promote the benefits of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living to all communities. Ensure the means and content of the promotion are appropriate for all equity-seeking groups.
- Work with community partners in different sectors (e.g., health care, education) to promote the guidelines to persons with disabilities and those who offer services to them.
- Check out the [Resources to support the guidelines](#).

Strategic Ideas:

- Coordinate efforts with community and provincial/territorial partners to develop a comprehensive plan to address and promote the guidelines.
- Collaborate with the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) and the Canadian Disability Participation Project (CDPP) related to the promotion / dissemination and messaging about the guidelines.

1.2 Focus on non-competitive and unstructured play for people of all ages and abilities, in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Operational Ideas:

- Offer more times for drop-in activities where people of all ages can try different equipment and play with friends and family members.
- Offer indoor and outdoor nature-based playgrounds, including in day care areas.
- Offer individual-focused and recreation-based programs such as dance, inline skating, cycling, skateboarding, and hiking in addition to team sports.
- Increase the number of outdoor opportunities to encourage people of all ages to participate.

Strategic Ideas:

- Seek out and nurture partnerships with organizations that focus on unstructured and risky play.
- Advocate for more opportunities for programs and places that support unstructured play as well as times and facilities that can be dedicated to non-competitive play.

1.3 Provide and promote programming that reflects and accommodates different work / volunteer / school life circumstances of participants and staff. (i.e., hybrid or work from home).

Operational Ideas:

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the work patterns of community members.
- Start or continue to offer online programs for people working at home or those unable to travel to a facility.
- Start a noon-hour walking/hiking or other program for people working from home to decrease sedentary time during the workday.

Strategic Ideas:

- Develop and implement a policy that accommodates/supports staff to work (part or full time) at home where jobs allow.

1.4 Create and promote active transportation opportunities to the public as well as staff.

Operational Ideas:

- Advocate for safe (separated) infrastructure for bike lanes.
- Provide bike racks in safe, visible areas at all municipal buildings to promote cycling.
- Indicate walking and cycling times between different parts of the community.
- Create a community bicycle-sharing program with several locations or a bicycle-lending program with libraries.

Strategic Ideas:

- Work in partnership with government and NGO partners to increase active transportation opportunities (e.g., infrastructure funding separated bike lanes, sidewalks, free public transportation)

1.5 Incorporate physical literacy in active recreation programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Operational Ideas:

- Offer skills-based programming that focuses on physical literacy for all ages and abilities and that are inclusive to all equity-seeking groups including newcomers, different cultures, and the LGBTQ2+ community.

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with the Ministry of Education in each province and territory to ensure physical education curriculum is centred around physical literacy (based on the components of Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement).

Goal 2: Inclusion and Access

Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints or barriers to participation.

2.1 Co-develop (with equity denied groups and relevant partners) and implement strategies (including engagement approaches), policies, and programs that ensure all community members across the lifespan – taking into consideration race, culture, gender identity, girls and women, sexual orientation, income, rural/urban location, and ability, etc. – have equitable access to parks and recreation opportunities and services, including access to inclusive eating spaces.

Operational Ideas:

- Continue and/or enhance virtual programming developed during the pandemic which may make it easier for some people to participate.
- Develop age-friendly policies, practices, and spaces to address the diversity of the adult and older adult populations based on ability rather than age.
- Have meaningful conversations with Indigenous Peoples to understand their experience in recreation based on traditional values and culture.
- Work with Indigenous communities to provide practical ways that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action can be honoured and implemented in each of the five goals of the Framework Update.
- Refer to the Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth and Adults with a Disability to help ensure a quality recreation participation experience for people with disabilities.
- Create facility allocation policies that ensure girls/women have equitable access to the best facilities and appropriate times to participate.
- Consider the interests of tourists/visitors as well as permanent and seasonal residents.

Resources:

- Creating Inclusive Playgrounds: A Playbook of Considerations and Strategies
Re-Creation Collective

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with expert partners who support equity-denied groups to offer education to the recreation and parks sector to ensure all members of our communities are engaged and welcomed to recreation and parks programs and services.
- Work with Indigenous communities to provide an overall strategy to address the TRC Calls to Action.
- When undertaking annual or longer-term planning for the recreation department (or equivalent), consider setting a goal related to increasing a sense of belonging for participants.

2.2 Learn about and implement actions that create a sense of belonging for all members of the community in both indoor and outdoor spaces and places. Consider the implications of intersectionality. Identify, evaluate, and eliminate systemic racism.

Operational Ideas:

- Examine how welcoming your facilities are for all and plan for changes to the physical and/or social environment to ensure all feel they belong.
- Post a video tour of your facility on your website so people know what to expect and where to go. Remember to explain what to bring/wear.
- Ensure indoor and outdoor facilities are well-lit including active spaces, change rooms, parking lots, and hallways.
- Provide clear signage in various locations throughout the facility, so when people walk in and around the facility, they always know where they are and can find where they want to go. Be sure signage is in commonly spoken/understood languages.
- Greet all facility users warmly and learn their names and something about them for future interactions.
- Offer inter-generational programs and family programs.
- Offer activities of interest to newcomers.
- Offer training to those who would like to volunteer to teach others.
- Offer affordable and culturally sensitive childcare.
- Ensure all accessibility features are listed on the facility website so people with a disability know, prior to arriving, that they are welcome and can access the facility.

Strategic Ideas:

- Increase awareness about the role that intersectionality plays in addressing inequities in recreation and parks through awareness and educational opportunities.
- Identify and share resources related to systemic racism. One excellent example is the Nova Scotia [Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation](#).
- When undertaking annual or longer-term planning for the recreation department (or equivalent), consider setting a goal related to increasing a sense of belonging for participants.

2.3 Proactively collaborate with Indigenous communities to develop policies, strategies, and activities that reflect their context and preferences for engagement.

Operational Ideas:

- Acknowledge that we need each other and must engage in a co-learning journey.
- Develop an advisory council of willing, knowledgeable partners to address recreation needs.

- In partnership with Indigenous communities, use “Two-Eyed Seeing”: learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to use both of these eyes together.[15]
- Consult with Indigenous Peoples when acquiring, developing, or naming park spaces.

Strategic Ideas:

- Establish relationships with Indigenous partners who will ensure work at all levels is applying an Indigenous lens.
 - Consider Indigenous-led conservation and land management.
-

Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature

Help people connect to nature through recreation.

3.1 Provide accessible natural spaces, wetlands, and places in new and existing neighborhoods, communities, and regions through the retention and addition of natural areas, forests, parks, trails, and recreational waters (rivers, lakes, canals, and beaches).

Operational Ideas:

- Promote natural spaces to community members. This may differ for Indigenous people living on reserve where they live in a natural space that is not thought of as a recreation space.
- Ensure natural spaces include accessible signage.
- Learn about and implement ways to ensure that all members of the community feel welcome in these spaces.

Resources:

- <https://naturecanada.ca>
- [Parks for All](#)
- [Park People](#)
- [National urban parks policy](#)
- [Outdoor PLAYbook](#)
- [The Nature Playbook](#)

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with other departments and service areas (e.g., planning, public works, heritage) to enhance and maintain parkland.
- Work with developers to create green roofs and other green features to improve air quality, reduce heat islands and reduce noise pollution.
- Consider how parks are connected in communities, from small parkettes to larger urban areas, working across jurisdictions to promote effective land use planning.
- Plan for shaded areas in outdoor recreation settings and access to washroom facilities.
- Collaborate with other municipal sectors and Conservation Authorities/Associations/Foundations. This will require language that works in a cross-sectoral application.

3.2 Gather and share best practices about planning, creating, maintaining, and monitoring a comprehensive system of parks and protected areas that allows year-round (if appropriate) access to nature for people of all ages and abilities.

Operational Ideas:

- Develop a winter parks activity guide to help people access outdoor spaces safely in winter.

Strategic Ideas:

- Develop a collaborative or advisory group (municipality, NGOs, grassroots) that meets regularly to share best practices.
- Maximize accessibility to spaces with a year-round maintenance plan. Work with other municipal departments to ensure this includes snow removal to facilities from public transit locations and parking lots.
- Develop accessibility standards for outdoor spaces that remove barriers to participation (e.g., trail loops with hard, even surfaces; sensory parks/gardens, etc.).
- In developing a plan, consider including an initial needs assessment and integrating risk management elements throughout.

3.3 Increase the public's understanding of the importance of nature and outdoor spaces to health and wellbeing in a respectful approach to parks, trails, and other natural environments.

Operational Ideas:

- Develop public awareness messages, education initiatives, and programs about nature, outdoor spaces, and stewardship.
- Provide signage and information in natural areas as well as on regularly travelled areas with trees and other natural elements to educate the public. Provide signs in different languages.
- Develop specific low- or no-cost programs that connect people to nature (e.g., cemetery tours, nature/park walks, clean up days, community gardens/farms, etc.).
- Develop opportunities for self-guided interactions with nature.
- Train volunteers as nature interpreters in parks and on trails. Deliver information in a variety of languages.

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with municipal communications staff (where available) to develop key messages as part of a comprehensive public communication campaign.

3.4 Develop operational policies and practices that show leadership in environmental stewardship, in conjunction with others involved in the community (e.g., Conservation Authorities/Associations/Foundations) with expertise in climate change. Minimize negative impacts on the natural environment and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Operational Ideas:

- Learn from Indigenous land-based perspectives.[16]
- Use methods such as integrated pest management to help control the proliferation of disease-bearing insects and noxious plants.
- Create pollinator parks, urban gardens, and hedgerows (a strip of densely planted trees or shrubs).
- Organize regular clean up days at local beaches, parks, or school grounds.
- Encourage community members and facility visitors to take active or public transportation. Ensure bike racks are available at facilities, parks, and trails.
- Reuse and recycle at facilities as much as possible.
- Implement practices/policies/guidelines to help citizens minimize the negative impact on the natural environment (e.g., trash carry out policy; use of water bottle filling stations, etc.).

Strategic Ideas:

- Advocate for or incorporate urban canopies to reduce the effects of heat islands.
- Minimize the negative effect on the environment in recreation facilities and other community buildings (e.g., Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification, permeable surfaces, low-impact development standards).

Goal 4: Supportive Environments

Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities.

Supportive environments include:

- the social infrastructure that puts community members in contact with one another to promote improved critical social connectedness (e.g., social recreation that includes such things as arts and crafts);
- the physical environments within the recreation sector through connected systems of trails, and the natural and built environments; and,
- the food environment in recreation settings.

4.1 Ensure the provision of accessible, inclusive, and welcoming recreation and parks facilities and outdoor spaces in all neighbourhoods, communities, and regions.

Operational Ideas:

- Consult community members to find out how to make spaces and places accessible and inclusive.
- Incorporate safety into facilities including drug- and smoke-free environments.
- Create “quiet space” and “ethical spaces” in recreation and parks spaces.

Strategic Ideas:

- Identify and work with other organizations that are involved in community-building initiatives (e.g., age-friendly communities, healthy cities/communities, community food centres, community safety and wellbeing initiatives).
- Increase the use of existing spaces for recreation purposes such as schools, religious venues, vacant lots, and alleys.

4.2 Monitor and advocate for the revitalization, restoration, and/or renewal of recreation and parks physical and social infrastructure.

Operational Ideas:

- Create spaces in neighbourhoods and larger spaces that put community members in contact with one another to promote greater social connectedness. Add benches, tables and chairs, picnic benches, large games (e.g., cornhole) to public spaces.

Resources:

- [Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit](#)

Strategic Ideas:

- Learn about and consider adopting the [3-30-300 Rule](#) for promoting health and wellbeing: 3 trees from every home, 30% tree canopy cover in every neighbourhood, 300 metres from the nearest public park or green space.
- Advocate for infrastructure funding that supports both indoor and outdoor spaces

Resources:

- [Best Practice in Delivering the 30x30 Target. Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures](#)

4.3 Support [placemaking](#) strategies that encourage community residents to actively engage in activating communities to increase physical activity and social connectedness.

Operational Ideas:

- Connect with healthcare professionals to ensure recreation and parks is a critical component of [social prescribing](#) efforts and supports.
- Support community artists to create mural art in alleys, on the side of buildings, and anywhere that needs beautifying.
- Create adult playgrounds that feature swings, playground equipment, lawn games, food, and entertainment.

Resources:

- <https://placemakingcommunity.ca/>
- [Tactical Urbanism](#)

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with municipal leaders and social services to define and expand the role of parks and recreation as a solution to help people experiencing homelessness. Develop a policy that describes the role of parks and recreation in dealing with encampments in parks, public spaces, and facilities.
- Determine ways to decentralize facilities, such as using natural ice rather than just “man-made” ice; use spaces traditionally used for sport for other pursuits such as kite flying.
- Instill in community members that they need not “come to us” but, rather, that they can initiate change in their communities and neighbourhoods.

4.4 Develop and/or implement education strategies that increase knowledge about how recreation and parks contribute to enjoyment and quality of life, including both physical and mental health.

Operational Ideas:

- Work with municipal leaders and social services to define and expand the role of recreation and parks as a solution to help people experiencing homelessness. Develop a policy that describes the role of recreation and parks in dealing with encampments in parks, public spaces, and facilities.
- Determine ways to decentralize facilities, such as using natural ice rather than refrigerated ice; use spaces traditionally used for sport for other pursuits such as kite flying.
- Instill in community members that they need not “come to us” but, rather, that they can initiate change in their communities and neighbourhoods.

Strategic Ideas:

- Advocate for the role that recreation and parks play in delivering essential services such as emergency preparedness, emergency services and relief, community supports (e.g., immunization clinics, food banks)
- Influence public policy by working with other government departments to consider how their policy decisions may affect the community’s health and the role of recreation and parks in contributing to health.

See [Health in All Policies](#).

4.5 Create food environments in recreation settings that support health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Food environments include the foods and beverages available, food and beverage marketing, and spaces to eat.

Operational Ideas:

- Provide healthy food options at recreation venues and parks as per policies created.
- Promote healthy food choices in recreation venues and parks with rationale for this approach.

Strategic Ideas:

- Create policies that require and support the increase of variety of healthy food and beverages at recreation and parks facilities.
- Create supporting resources that summarize healthy food and beverage options that should be offered and/or provided most of the time at recreation and parks facilities.
- Ensure that the cost of healthy food and beverage options are equivalent to, or lower than, that of less healthy alternatives.
- Create and implement healthy food policies for meetings and events.

4.6 Purposefully address the role that recreation plays in combating social isolation and facilitating social connectedness.

Operational Ideas:

- Work with community organizations, local media, and health care professionals to reach all members of the community to encourage them to participate.
- Work with health care professionals to establish social prescribing practices.
- Offer programs that include social time, such as partner-based activities, coffee time after the program, and walking clubs.
- Work with neighbourhoods to lead or support placemaking initiatives.

Strategic Ideas:

- Establish a relationship with organizations dedicated to addressing social connectedness (e.g., Genwell, Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing)

Goal 5: Recreation Capacity

Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

5.1 Co-develop strategies that address workforce gaps in the recreation and parks sector. This could include career awareness, preparation, and the development of strategies to attract and educate new recreation and parks leaders.

Operational Ideas:

- Provide training to youth participating in programs (e.g., lifeguard certification), or working in part-time positions such as camp councillors and grounds staff.
- Offer volunteer training and mentorship to youth.
- Work with secondary schools and post-secondary institutions to promote recreation as a career, including offering practicum opportunities.
- Participate in post-secondary education fairs to provide practical knowledge about the sector.
- Participate in local job fairs.

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with municipal decision-makers on the issue of fair compensation for employees delivering recreation and parks services.
- Work with municipal decision-makers to address the issue of hybrid and four-day work weeks.
- Develop a campaign to reach retired individuals or those who have been out of the workforce to consider the pursuit of recreation and parks as a part-time job or full-time career.
- Work within the sector to ensure part-time staff are aware of recreation and parks as a full-time career and provide information about educational and other pathways to achieve a career in the sector.

5.2 Implement policies to achieve diversity in the workforce, including among volunteers and staff, for all roles. Support at P/T and national levels will be useful in shaping these policies.

Operational Ideas:

- Increase participation of equity-denied groups in recreation and parks programs and services with the intention of increasing exposure to the sector as a career.
- Recruit and support professionals and volunteers from populations and groups that face constraints to participation.

Strategic Ideas:

- Develop policy that provides guidance about achieving workforce diversity.
- At the municipal level, work with settlement and social service agencies to implement recruitment strategies.

5.3 Develop volunteer and student management strategies that include recruitment, management, and recognition components.

Operational Ideas:

- Recognize the contribution of volunteers and create policies that make it easier to volunteer.
- Create tools that describe post-secondary opportunities for recreation education and information about recreation and parks as a life-long career.

Strategic Ideas:

- Work with large and small businesses to increase their awareness of recreation and parks as a sector to support through corporate volunteer programs

5.4 Collaborate with secondary school co-op programs, and post-secondary institutions (colleges and universities) to support the recreation sector. This should include the area of leisure recreation.

Operational Ideas:

- Identify areas of research and evaluation needed, then work with post-secondary institutions to achieve these projects.

Strategic Ideas:

- Influence new and utilize existing curriculum support materials.
- Engage students in placements within the recreation and parks sector.
- Identify joint opportunities for students between universities, other community organizations (e.g., public health), and recreation and parks departments.
- Work with post-secondary education and government partners to identify existing or create new funding opportunities (e.g., bursaries, scholarships, and grants) that could be accessed through the Framework Goals lenses.

5.5 Develop, enhance, and implement high-quality and accessible training and competency-based capacity development programs for organizations and individuals

(pre-professionals, professionals, and volunteers) working in recreation.

Operational Ideas:

- Offer training and education to rural and remote communities that is affordable and can be done on a part-time basis.
- Provide incentives to volunteers and staff to participate in training programs.

Strategic Ideas:

- Create/update a professional development certificate program for recreation and parks professionals. Consider linking this to staff compensation and/or recognition strategies.
-

2.4 Key Documents

Since the release of the 2015 Framework, several significant policies, documents, and resources have been released that can help with the implementation of the Framework Priorities (from 2015) and the new Priorities outlined in this Framework Update. This is not a definitive list, and we acknowledge that many other resources have been created at a national, provincial/territorial, and local level. Those listed here represent national and international documents that align with and influence the sector and have informed the Framework Update.

2015

- Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement
- 2015 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth Card – The Biggest Risk is Keeping Kids Indoors
- Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play, and the advent of Outdoor Play Canada
- Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).

2016

- Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth
- 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth – Are Canadian Kids too Tired to Move?
- Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (January 1, 2016 – adopted by world leaders in Sept. 2015 at UN summit)

2017

- Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport
- Parks for All
- The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2017 – Designing Healthy Living

2018

- A Common Vision for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada: Let's Get Moving
- Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030
- Federal Announcement for Women and Sport 2018 Federal Budget includes \$30M for women and sport, and a goal of gender equality by 2035. Several initiatives, organizations and resources have been developed since this announcement including CPRA's Gender Equity and Recreational Sport Toolkit and the establishment of The Government of Canada's Working Group on Gender Equity in Sport and the call for gender equity in sport by 2035
- 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth – Canadian kids need to move more to boost their brain health.

2019

- Accessible Canada Act to make Canada barrier free by 2040
- Indigenous Sport for Life. Long-Term Participant Development Pathway
- Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0 (Sport for Life)
- 2019 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults – Better with Age. Move more today for a healthier tomorrow
- The Red Deer Declaration for the Prevention of Harassment, Abuse and Discrimination in Sport

2020

- A Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth, and Adults with a Disability (CDPP)
- Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Adults (18-64 years and 65 years or older)
- Climate Action Statement (CPRA)
- Eight Investments that Work for Physical Activity (ISPAH)

2021

- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2021. A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System
- Fit to be Canadian? The Recreation Industrial Complex in Canada
- National Active Transportation Strategy
- 2021 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults – Moving Toward a Better Normal
- Reimagine RREC (Renew, Retool, Engage and Contribute) (CPRA)
- Toward a Quality of Life Strategy for Canada (Department of Finance Canada)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

2022

- Canadian Physical Activity Report Card for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities
- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2022. Mobilizing Public Health Action on Climate Change in Canada. Geneva Charter for Wellbeing
- 2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth – Lost and Found. Pandemic-related Challenges and Opportunities for Physical Activity
- Sport for Life for Every New to Canada Participant 2.0
- Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport

2023

- [2023 National Vital Signs Report, Reconnecting Communities, Belonging, Engagement and Well-being](#)
- [Activate Your Neighbourhood](#)
- [Canadian Parks, Recreation and Sport Infrastructure Database](#)^[17]
- [Canadian Sport Policy \(CSP\) renewal process/papers; What we Heard Report](#). It should be noted that the CSP is currently in the renewal phase and is anticipated to be released in 2024.
- [Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health Approach for Emergencies](#).
- [The Price of Inactivity. Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada](#).
- [National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: a guide](#)

Due in 2024

- The National Indigenous Sports Strategy

Provincial and territorial recreation associations also have several resources and documents that provide insight, advice, and knowledge that align with and support the 2015 Framework and Update 2024.

Part 3: Benefits of Recreation

In 2023, the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) released [Measuring the Impact of Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation in Canada](#), a report that updates the benefits of recreation as cited in the 2015 Framework. The following infographic summarizes the highlights.

More information about this significant research initiative can be found at www.measuring-impact.ca



Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation

Advocates in the field of sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) have long claimed that being active is crucial not only for health and wellbeing, but also provides important societal, environmental and economic impacts. Many of these are quantifiable and can illustrate the impact for our communities and our country. A new cutting-edge study by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) uses trusted data sources to measure the

The total impacts generated by sport, physical activity and recreation on our society are significant and extensive.

economic, social, health and environmental impacts of sport, physical activity, and recreation.

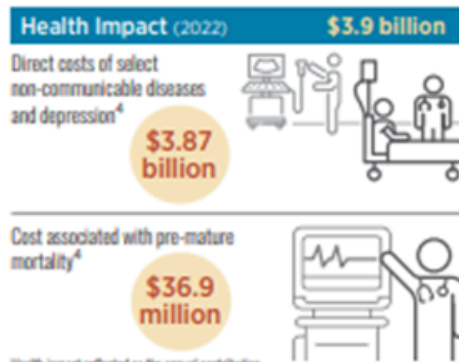
The numbers prove that investing in sport, physical activity, and recreation can pay substantial dividends and can help combat some of today's most complex problems.

BREAKING DOWN THE VALUES

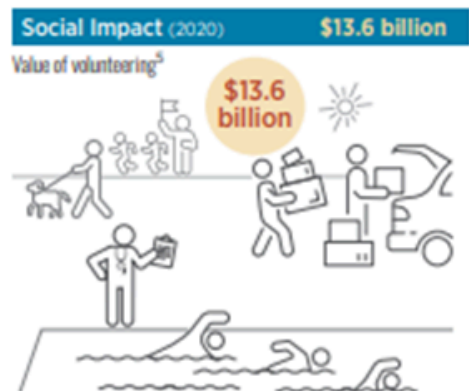
Given these numbers represent different constructs or concepts, these amounts cannot be added together.



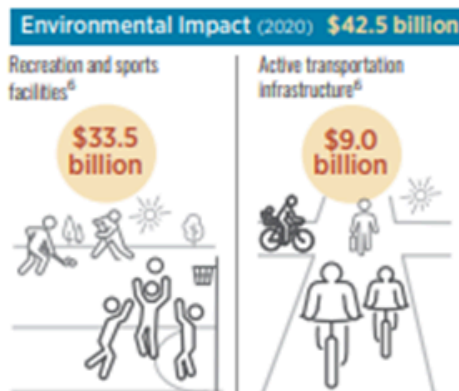
Economic impact reflected as the annual contribution to Canada's economy from SPAR and retail sales.



Health impact reflected as the annual contribution to health care costs for select health conditions related to physical inactivity.



Social impact reflected as the value of volunteering for SPAR based activities.



Environmental impact reflected as the replacement value of SPAR facilities and active transportation infrastructure.

¹ Value as it relates to the gross domestic product.

² Recreation and amusement sector comprised of golf and country clubs, skiing facilities, fitness and recreational sports, and all other amusement and recreation facilities.

³ Retail sales comprised of athletic footwear, sporting equipment and recreation vehicles.

⁴ Based on non-communicable diseases which include coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, colon cancer, hypertension, osteoporosis, depression.

⁵ Calculated using percentage of volunteers in sport, physical activity and recreation and hours spent.

⁶ Based on estimated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities, and active transportation infrastructure in "very poor", "poor" or "fair" condition.

The Price of Inactivity: Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada research and report, and the production of this infographic were made possible through a financial contribution from Parks Canada, the Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (SPARC), and the Canadian Training Network for Parks and Recreation (CTNPR). Thanks also to Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton for assistance with the project. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.



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Part 4: Glossary

This section includes only the new terms that appear in the Framework Update.

Ageism refers to two concepts: a socially constructed way of thinking about older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about aging and a tendency to structure society based on an assumption that everyone is young, thereby failing to respond appropriately to the real needs of older persons.

Source: Ontario Human Rights Commission Factsheet

www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ageism-and-age-discrimination-fact-sheet#:~:text=The%20term%20%22ageism%22%20refers%20to,real%20needs%20of%20older%20persons.

Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines. The guidelines and supporting scientific evidence for the integration of physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and sleep for all ages were developed in 2016 (5–17 years), 2017 (0–4 years), and 2020 (18 years and over). Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. <https://csepguidelines.ca/> Retrieved May 16, 2023.

Climate anxiety, also known as eco-anxiety, is because the natural environment is changing, and people are worried about what it means for the future. That worry, which is increasingly becoming severe enough to cause distress and dysfunction, is called eco anxiety. The American Psychological Association and ecoAmerica have defined eco-anxiety (aka climate anxiety) as “a chronic fear of environmental doom.” This fear can stem from direct experience of extreme weather events and environmental change (e.g., floods, forest fires, hurricanes, drought) or exposure to climate change information through news media and other sources.

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/resource/understanding-and-coping-with-eco-anxiety/>

A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let’s Get Moving. This 2018 federal, provincial, and territorial policy document focuses on physical activity and its relationship to sport, recreation, health, and other relevant policy areas. The Common Vision is a collective way forward to guide the country towards ways of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. Five interdependent principles (Physical Literacy, Life Course, Population Approach, Evidence-based and Emergent-focused, and Motivations) as well as a comprehensive set of six Areas of Focus for collaborative action (Cultural Norms, Spaces and Places, Public Engagement, Partnerships, Leadership and Learning and Progress) form the basis of the recommended direction. Retrieved on May 16, 2023:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/lets-get-moving.html>

Digital Poverty. As outlined by the Digital Poverty Alliance, digital poverty is “the inability to interact with the online world fully, when, where, and how an individual needs to.” Three of the biggest factors contributing to digital poverty and enabling the digital divide are:

- Financial poverty causing digital poverty (exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis)
- Access, which can be the result of geography
- Skills, including lack of education.

Source: NCFE (formerly known as Northern Council for Further Education).
www.ncfe.org.uk/all-articles/digital-poverty-3-factors-and-how-society-can-tackle-it/ Accessed on May 16, 2023.

Disability results from the interaction between individuals with a health condition, such as cerebral palsy, down syndrome, or depression, with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support.

A person’s environment has a huge effect on the experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments create barriers that often hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Progress on improving social participation can be made by addressing these barriers and facilitating persons with disabilities in their day to day lives.

https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1

Environmental Stewardship is the responsible use and protection of the environment. Examples of responsible use include limiting the harvest of natural resources. Examples of protection include conservation the creation of national and provincial parks. Source :
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/environmental-stewardship-in-canada. Accessed May 16, 2023.

Equity-denied Groups. A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

Note: In Canada, groups generally considered to be equity-denied groups include women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people who are part of LGBTQ2+ communities, religious minority groups and racialized people. The types of equity-denied groups may vary based on factors such as geography, sociocultural context, or the presence of specific subpopulations.

Some people may prefer the term "equity-deserving group" because it highlights the fact that equity should be achieved from a systemic, cultural, or societal change and the burden of seeking equity should not be placed on the group. Others argue that this term could be seen to imply that not all people are deserving of equity.

Some people may prefer the term "equity-seeking group" because it highlights the actions of the communities that fight for equal access to resources and opportunities by actively seeking social justice and reparation.

The term "equity-seeking group" is defined in the context of public service staffing in the Public Service Employment Act. Not to be confused with "designated groups" as defined in the Employment Equity Act, which are women, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/publications/equite-diversite-inclusion-equity-diversity-inclusion-eng#lettre-letter-E

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, Belonging. The following diagram defines each element and depicts the relationships between them. Adapted from: <https://executivesupportmagazine.com/advocating-for-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-belonging/>

ACCESS ASKS	DIVERSITY ASKS	EQUITY ASKS	INCLUSION ASKS	BELONGING ASKS
Can everyone get into the room?	Who is in the room?	Who is trying to get in the room but can't – and what are the structural and systemic barriers?	Have everyone's ideas been heard, respected and understood?	Is everyone feeling valued through positive connections with others and able to bring the authentic self to work ?

Ethical spaces. Principles for understanding ethical space are as follows:

The focus of ethical space is on **creating a place for knowledge systems to interact with mutual respect, kindness, generosity** and other basic values and principles. All knowledge systems are equal; no single system has more weight or legitimacy than another.

Ethical Space Stream – CRP Website (conservation-reconciliation.ca)

What is Ethical Space? – YouTube

Homelessness. According to the [Canadian Definition of Homelessness](#), homelessness is “the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it.”

It is important to note that this definition does not fully encompass every experience of homelessness. There are different groups of people who are affected differently, and every individual’s experience is unique. Homelessness is not strictly an issue of housing instability. These differences are important when considering methods of addressing homelessness, as one strategy does not apply to every community.

The Indigenous definition of homelessness considers the traumas imposed on Indigenous Peoples through colonialism. According to the [Definition of Indigenous Homelessness](#) in Canada, it is “a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing... Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews.”

Additionally, youth experience homelessness in fundamentally different ways than adults, due to their age. [The Canadian Definition of Youth Homelessness](#) outlines that it is a “situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13–24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire stable, safe, or consistent residence.”

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/what-homelessness>

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition-lpger.pdf>

Indigenous Peoples are the descendants of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement, or other means. In Canada, this includes the Inuit, First Nations (Indians), and Métis people, without regard to their separate origins and identities. Adapted from a variety of sources, including https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf, accessed 2023.

Intersectionality is a framework that describes how overlapping social identities relate to social structures of racism and oppression, growing from the work of Black feminist scholars and activists. Intersectionality merges many identity markers, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, and more, to create a more truthful and complex identity. For example, a queer black woman may experience the world based on her sexuality, gender, and race – a unique experience based on how those identities intersect in her life. Source: The University of British Columbia. <https://vpfo.ubc.ca/2021/03/intersectionality-what-is-it-and-why-it-matters/> Accessed May 16, 2023.

Placemaking uses recreation, arts, and culture as tools to animate public and private spaces, and to rejuvenate structures and streetscapes. It brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired. The approach leverages a place's existing creative potential and connects arts and culture to larger community revitalization or development initiatives. Creative placemaking advances a shared community vision that honors community distinctiveness through interdisciplinary and cross-sector activities that engage an array of people who call the place home. Source: Adapted from Canadian Urban Institute's "Rapid Placemaking to Bring Back Main Street" Toolkit at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ea1b48c001020e903b2589/t/5f7c742b60b8b025f17ea89e/1601991725937/BBMS+MODULE+01+%E2%80%93%20A0WHY+T+HIS+MATTERS+%E2%80%93%20A0WEB.pdf> . Accessed May 16, 2023.

Risky Play is defined as thrilling and exciting play where your child is uncertain of the outcome and can include the possibility of physical injury. Risky play promotes physical activity, social health, and risk-management skills. Types of risky play include:

- Play at height, speed, near dangerous elements, such as water or fire.
- Play with potentially dangerous tools.
- Rough-and-tumble play (e.g., play fighting).
- Play where there's the potential for disappearing or getting lost.

Risk changes over time as your child moves through developmental milestones and gains more experience with the world. What is risky at one age becomes no risk or minimal risk when your child is older. Risky play can look different for different children, depending on their abilities and interests: getting “lost” for a toddler could be a hidey hole in some bushes, where an older child could wander the neighbourhood with friends. Source: Parachute Canada. parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/playgrounds-and-play-spaces/unstructured-outdoor-play-and-risky-play/ Accessed May 16, 2023.

Social prescribing is a holistic approach to healthcare that brings together the social and medical models of health and wellness. It provides a formal pathway for health providers to address the diverse determinants of health, using the familiar and trusted process of writing a prescription. Social prescribing bridges the gap between clinical and social care by referring patients to local, non-clinical services that are chosen according to the client’s interests, goals, and gifts. It allows doctors, nurse practitioners, and interprofessional health providers to formally refer patients to community-based programs. It empowers clients to improve their health by developing new skills participating in meaningful activities and becoming more connected to their communities. What does a social prescription look like? It could be participating in an exercise group, receiving a Good Food Box to support food security, taking an art or dance class, joining a bereavement network, getting one’s hands dirty in a community garden, exploring a local hiking trail with a group of peers, volunteering to visit older adults in the communities and much more. Health equity is a cornerstone of effective social prescribing. It is not enough to simply refer a client to a recreational program or encourage them to visit an art gallery. Successfully implementing a social prescribing program means removing the barriers clients experience to doing these things. These barriers may be economic, geographical, interpersonal, or psychological. Social prescribing is about listening deeply, providing necessary support, and empowering people to be co-creators in improving their own health and wellbeing. Source: Alliance for Healthier Communities. www.allianceon.org/Social-Prescribing

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who’re furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. Source: United Nations. www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals Accessed May 16, 2023.

Systemic Racism – According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, systemic racism (also known as institutional racism) is a concept whereby the social structures produce inequalities based on racial discrimination. Racialized people thus face challenges due to racism from both individuals and institutions (health, education, penal system, etc.). Systemic racism is a concept different from that of individual racism.

Urban Heat Island – According to the National Geographic, an urban heat island, or UHI, is a metropolitan area that's a lot warmer than the rural areas surrounding it. The Climate Atlas of Canada says that "the urban heat island effect happens because the closely packed buildings and paved surfaces that make up our cities amplify and trap heat far more effectively than natural ecosystems and rural areas, which are often shaded by trees and vegetation and cooled by evaporating moisture. In addition, cities also generate their own heat, which is released from sources such as furnaces, air conditioners, and vehicles."