



To: Debra Gassewit, President and CEO of SIRC

From: Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

Date: August 19th, 2011

Re: Renewal of Canadian Sport Policy

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and its allied P/T member organizations welcomed the opportunity to participate in the national and regional consultations for the renewal of the Canadian Sport Policy.

As the Policy moves to the next step of development, CPRA would like to highlight the need for the Policy to reflect both the perspectives of recreation and sport.

CPRA is pleased to provide this written submission to further present our position.

Thanking you in advance for your careful consideration of our position as you continue this policy development process.

Breadth of the Municipal Recreation Role

- The municipal recreation system plays a vital role in contributing to the quality of life enjoyed by residents.
- While a significant part of the municipal recreation role involves the direct provision of opportunities within indoor and outdoor environments, it also includes supporting community groups involved in arts, sports, heritage, youth, environment and a myriad of other interests.
- In most communities, however, the greatest single benefactor of support has been the sport delivery system – especially in terms of the use of municipally owned indoor facilities and outdoor sport fields.

Municipal Roles in Sport

- Municipal recreation provides a variety of supports to local sports organizations in a number of areas including;

Facility Provision: Collectively, municipalities are one of the largest investors in sports infrastructure, which serves as the primary home for many community sports groups for both training and competition.

Early Skill Development and Exposure Programs: Many children learn basic movement, physical literacy and specific skills such as swimming and skating through municipal programs. A number of municipalities also have partnered directly with sport organizations to offer exposure clinics or camps within their offerings.

Ongoing Sport Play: Municipalities offer opportunities for those who wish to enjoy a sport outside of the sports system, or who have been excluded. Examples of this are drop-in basketball for youth, after-school programs that include team sport, and programs aimed at skill development and play for young females who feel uncomfortable in a competitive environment. Many municipalities make it a policy priority to focus on introductory and skill based sport offerings within their facilities.

Coordination and Communication: Municipalities commonly assign staff to act in a liaison role with all types of sport groups in order set seasonal schedules and resolve issues and opportunities throughout the year. Many municipalities encourage the development of sports councils to enhance coordination and joint advocacy among sport groups. This role can also identify gaps in service delivery and ensure access to, and fairness in, the allocation of resources.

Enhanced Coaching Capability: A number of municipalities have supported the provision of National Coaching Certification Programs (NCCP) offered by the Coaching Association of Canada for local coaches. Some P/T coordinate the delivery of HIGH FIVE (a quality standard for children's sport and recreation) within the sport community to enhance quality assurance program delivery.

Allocation Policies and Subsidies: Municipalities commonly have allocation policies and fee schedules that favour community volunteer organizations over other commercial organizations in terms of booking priority and rates. This means that community sport use is subsidized by the local tax payers as a matter of policy.

Joint-use Agreements with School Districts: Municipalities commonly develop joint-use agreements with school districts that allow mutual uses of facilities, and create opportunities for sport group use of schools. Joint facility planning to maximize access to shared indoor and outdoor sport facilities is also common in many jurisdictions.

Sport Hosting / Sport Tourism: Municipal governments are a key member of community sport hosting / sport tourism committees, and in some cases were instrumental in initiating them.

Other Supports: Municipal seasonal leisure guides that can be used to list sport group contacts and registration dates. Some municipalities will support sport group meetings or registrations with free or reduced rental rates.

Municipal Roles in Physical Activity

- While sport is an important form of physical activity for many people, the majority of active lifestyle choices, especially for adults, are not sport-centered. Activities tend to be more individual and informal and involve walking, jogging, cycling, strength and cardio equipment use, aerobics, yoga, and other activities.
- Municipalities provide significant indoor and outdoor venues that support an active lifestyle both sport and non-sport centered including fitness centres, pools, trails, playgrounds and bikeway systems.

Canadian Sport for Life

- Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) sees sport participants going through a seven stage process of involvement, based on developmental age, and culminating for some in the development of excellence.
- CS4L focuses on lifelong involvement in sport, irrespective of the stages that individuals progress to.
- CS4L is based on a number of key principles including: developmental age rather than chronological age cut-offs, an emphasis on physical literacy, exposure to multiple sports rather than early specialization, training based on research, continuing participation rather than progressive elimination with age, and integrated approaches by organizations.
- CS4L has not penetrated to all levels of sport, however, and certain sports still use practices that are progressively exclusionary with reduced opportunities as athlete's age.

Partnership Principles

- There is little question that the key elements of CS4L are highly compatible with community recreation. As a movement to improve the sport development process, CS4L is influencing individual sport governing bodies to change their approach and improve their outcomes in terms of both participation and excellence.
- Both recreation and sport need to respect the focus of each sector and look at areas of greater integration.
- It would be an error to say either that sport is part of recreation, or that recreation is part of sport. Neither is a sub-set of the other. Rather than seeing the partnership as a lock-step “marriage”, it should be seen as an opportunity for enhanced collaboration in a number of areas. The key is that they are clearly interrelated.

Tri-partnerships with Recreation, Sport and Education

- A partnership between municipal recreation and sport must also involve education. School districts are a major facility provider especially in terms of gymnasiums and playing fields, and this opportunity is enhanced where joint use agreements exist with municipalities.
- They will also play a key role in the development of physical literacy within physical education programs, and as a venue partner for after-school programs.

Potential Strategies for Enhanced Collaboration

There are a number of areas where recreation and sport can work more closely together, and where the CS4L model serves as a valuable construct. These areas are:

1. Supporting Physical Literacy Program Development: Stages 1-3

The development of physical literacy in children, especially in stages 1 and 2 of the CS4L process, is considered to be extremely important. There are a number of areas where enhanced collaboration between recreation and sport can support the development of physical literacy, an early start to an active lifestyle, and the successful entry into sport programs. These include:

- Integrate physical literacy elements and active play within pre-school programs;
- Provide focused physical literacy development programs for younger children;
- Ensure that HIGH FIVE[®] training is provided to all staff working with children;
- Include basic skill learning and play within after-school programs;
- Expose participants in physical literacy and introductory skill classes to related sport programs available in the facility or community;
- Distribute information about physical literacy principles, parental roles, and CS4L;
- Provide introductory skill exposure opportunities in a variety of sports in partnership with sport in summer camps and other program settings;
- Enhance local coaches' understanding of physical literacy through CS4L;
- Train elementary school teachers on inclusion of physical literacy elements within their programs.

2. Municipal Planning and Sport Strategy Development

Municipal recreation and parks departments commonly carry out annual strategic planning processes, as well as more comprehensive master plan processes every 5-10 years. A few cities, such as Vancouver, have also developed complementary Sport Strategies which more specifically identify the roles of partners and strategies to be undertaken.

- Annual strategic plans should consider the inclusion of strategies related to sport development and the advancement of CS4L principles;
- Master planning processes should fully engage sport groups, and go beyond their space and facility needs to identify opportunities for greater collaboration and joint program development;
- A community Sport Strategy, involving key partners, should be developed and included in municipal policy (Vancouver can be used as a model).

3. Sport Councils

The development of sport councils has been encouraged by municipal councils, appointed recreation advisory committees, or staff to provide a collective voice for sport in a community. They are intended to break down barriers between sports and serve as a liaison on sport issues.

Another form of collaborative sport action is the development of sport hosting committees. These have a more focused mandate of obtaining sport events and supporting the actual hosting. They include broad representation from sport as well as the business community, tourism, and municipal government.

4. Facility Planning and Provision

There are a number of key areas where sport groups can be more fully engaged in facility planning, as well as to make meaningful contributions toward their development and operation.

- Sport groups need to be fully included within the master planning and facility feasibility study processes;
- Engagement at the onset of facility development will ensure the facilities meet multi-sport needs and are designed to provide sport with an opportunity to meet all levels and stages of play;
- Many sports groups also make significant capital contributions to projects, either in terms of construction or equipment purchase;
- Community level facilities need to consider overall citizen needs as well as those of sport groups;
- In the case of major facilities used for major games and/or elite athlete training and competition at the national and international levels, the fiscal burden of capital costs, and in some cases ongoing operating costs, need to be shared by senior governments as well as the participating municipalities;
- Legacy funds from senior governments for ongoing operation also need to be included for major facilities designed for elite use.

5. Access and Allocation Policies for Sport Groups

Some principles and practices of fair allocation of facilities to sport groups include:

- Allocation practices are based on “standards of play” principles;
- Allocation policies are transparent and reviewed with the groups;
- Allocation is not done by tradition, but rather on actual requirements of all groups, including the needs of emerging sports;
- Seasonal allocation meetings are held with common users groups to review their requests and try to achieve consensus on sharing available spaces and times;
- As seasons progress, groups are encouraged to be flexible in the reallocation of spaces with other groups;
- User fees and subsidies need to reflect community taxpayer support.

6. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)

There needs to be recognition of the important role that recreation plays in supporting sport for life and physical activity for life, through the same principles and mechanisms that are identified through the physical literacy stages; the role of recreation to support ongoing participation in sport and physical activity is evidenced through the proliferation of active living strategies across the country, connection to Public Health departments



for promotion of active living and injury prevention and the development of facilities that provide access for lifelong participation. Municipalities play a significant role in ensuring parks and recreation facilities and programs are available to allow athletes to remain active and healthy for life.