

September 28, 2018



Dear,

I am writing to you further to our recent conversation about the 2019 provincial election and on behalf of the Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel (AARFP) and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA). We would like to encourage the xxxxxx Party to include several concepts (see attached) in your party's platform in the upcoming provincial election.

Together, our organizations' memberships exceed 3,000 professionals, practitioners, academics and businesses in all corners of Alberta, and they can be found in urban, rural and northern municipalities, indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions and other Not-For-Profit organizations.

We believe that these concepts are critical to improving the lives of all Albertans. We are available to elaborate further on any or all of these recommendations in person or electronically.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission.

Yours sincerely,

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Enclosures (5)

Recreation and Parks in Alberta

In Alberta's municipalities Recreation and Parks are typically one of the top 3 or 4 expenditures and that typically residents rank recreation and parks as the first or second most valued of municipal services.

Recreation and parks are critical contributors to the quality of life of Albertans. People want to live in communities that provide quality recreation programs and facilities and parks and trails. This of course also means that business can attract a labour force and managers. It is accepted that the value of a home increases the closer it is to a park.

Canadians say Recreation and Parks:

"benefit the community and is an essential service"

98% "helps children and youth lead healthy lifestyles" **75%** "is a major factor in crime reduction"

77%

"improves health" **93%**

"boosts social cohesion" **89%**

Page 9 *Framework for Recreation in Canada*

2015

Prior to 2015 there was no common strategy, goals and outcomes with respect to what constituted success in recreation and parks.

In 2010, APRA with the support of the Government of Alberta began a process that created a national discussion on the role of recreation and parks in Canada. In 2015 the ***Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing*** was published and subsequently endorsed and supported by the federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

In 2015, APRA with the support of the Government of Alberta began a process to create a national discussion on the role of parks in Canada. The intent was to develop a strategy that is aligned with Goal #3 of the 2015 Framework. In 2018 the ***Parks For All - An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community*** was published and subsequently endorsed by federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada.

In 2018, ***A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving*** was published and endorsed by federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada. ARPA was represented by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association in the development of this strategy. It is aligned with Goal #1 of the 2015 Framework.

These documents represent the national standard and agenda for Canada.

Platform Recommendation

That the xxxxxx Party include in its 2019 election platform a commitment to collaboration with the ARPA/AARFP to actively pursue the implementation of:

***Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing;
and Parks For All - An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community;
and
A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary
Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving***

and

That the xxxxxxxxx Party support utilizing a multi-year funding arrangement to achieve appropriate outcomes and outputs.

Recreation and Parks Infrastructure in Alberta

The ***Canadian Infrastructure Report Card*** that was published by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) in 2016 identifies that the recreation and park infrastructure in Canada is in the worst condition of all municipal infrastructure (46 - 47% in very poor, poor and fair condition). The replacement cost of these facilities nationally is estimated to be \$16 billion dollars.

Earlier this year we saw the roof fall in three different recreation facilities in Alberta and we are aware of the tragedy in Fernie, British Columbia. These incidents have drawn attention to the condition of recreation and parks infrastructures, not just in terms of the age, but also structural deterioration, changing program demands and deferred maintenance, but also in terms of insufficient or antiquated technology.

Collectively Albertans spend significant amounts of time in community recreation and parks facilities and the universal goal is to increase the current level of physical activity.

Research has shown that the health of urban Alberta youth, while not desirable, is better than rural Alberta youth. Compounding this evidence in many cases is that the state of rural Alberta's recreation facilities is in worse condition than that of urban recreation facilities.

Currently there is no accurate database of the state of Alberta's recreation and parks infrastructure. The solution is not just replacing what exists with a new version. Informed decision making would be responsive to changing demographics, life styles and community needs.

Recreation and parks facilities are huge consumers of energy and given the age of many facilities extremely wasteful consumers of energy. They are also the most numerous of municipal facilities. Energy efficient solutions exist that can reduce operating costs and thus reduce the property taxes and fees required to operate these facilities. In addition the economies and efficiencies possible in these facilities can make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change.

Platform Recommendation

That the xxxxxxxx Party include in its 2019 election platform a commitment to collaboration with the ARPA, AARFP, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, RMA and AUMA to actively:

- **develop an inventory of the condition of recreation and parks facilities; and**
- **reduce the energy demands of recreation and parks facilities.**

That the xxxxxxxx Party support utilizing a multi-year funding

arrangement to achieve appropriate outcomes and outputs.

Wellbeing of Albertans

Investments in health care are valid, necessary and popular. But investments at and after the emergency room doors cannot be the only measure or solution. We envision recreation and parks as an element of an integrated preventative health care system. Investing in wellness initiatives has been proven globally to have positive effects on the health of the population and can bend the health care budget in the right direction.

Current sedentary lifestyles and poor diet choices are key contributors to chronic illness and disease and eventual increases in health care costs. Recent studies have demonstrated that inactivity and unhealthy eating are costing approximately 7 billion dollars in Canada.

(Page 14 *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing*)

The recently released report driven by federal, provincial and territorial governments entitled "**Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving**" places a significant emphasis on the wellbeing of Canadians.

"Being physically active is key to good overall health and to preventing chronic disease. Levels of physical inactivity and sedentary living among Canadians are critical issues in Canada." Government of Canada

Recreation and parks services are not the only answer to this increasing challenge but they are essential components of a better future for Albertans. ARPA/AARFP welcomes the opportunity to partner with others to continue to contribute to the wellbeing of Albertans.

Platform Recommendation

That the xxxxxxxx Party include in its 2019 election platform a commitment to collaboration with the ARPA and AARFP, to proactively use recreation and parks as a means of reducing current and future incidents of chronic illnesses and diseases: and

That the xxxxxxxx Party support utilizing a multi-year funding arrangement to identify and achieve appropriate outcomes and outputs.

Indigenous Albertans

The Truth and Reconciliation Report - Calls to Action 87 to 91 identify recreation and sport as the path forward to improving the quality of life in Alberta's indigenous communities and for indigenous populations in Alberta's municipalities.

ARPA has been engaged in reconciliation with indigenous communities and organizations prior to the publishing of ***The Truth and Reconciliation Report***. ARPA currently has established working relationships/partnership a significant number of Alberta's indigenous communities and organizations.

Platform Recommendation

That the xxxxxxxx Party Party include in its 2019 election platform a commitment to collaboration with the ARPA and others to advance the solutions identified in *The Truth and Reconciliation Report - Calls to Action 87 to 91*; and

That the xxxxxxxx Party Party support utilizing a multi-year funding arrangement to identify and achieve the appropriate outcomes and outputs.

Lottery and Gaming Revenues

The Alberta Lottery Fund was established through *The Interprovincial Lottery Act (1989)* with the expressed intention that the revenue from lottery ticket sales would be directed to community enrichment and to related community developmental purposes including sport, recreation and parks, arts, culture and heritage. In part this was also intended to offset the loss of income derived from bingos and other gaming revenues for the Not for Profit sector.

While the profits from gaming in Alberta have risen dramatically since 1989 the portion of these monies dedicated to those original purposes has declined in relative and absolute terms.

In many cases those community based organizations best positioned to provide community enrichment and related community development initiatives have seen funding frozen or reduced since 1989. Thus the competition for grants has increased and in many respects as a consequence grants are awarded on the basis of outputs and not outcomes. Outputs are a measure of activity not necessarily a measure of performance.

While accountability for tax dollars is essential, NGOs like ARPA/AARPF spend a disproportionate amount of their time and resources applying for funding and reporting on activity rather than achieving results. It is not uncommon for the majority of the fiscal year to be spent on applying for funding, waiting for funding to arrive and reporting on activity and a smaller portion of the year spent on getting results.

In addition it should be noted that some NGOs like ARPA/AARFP work with a variety of ministries. For example ARPA has in the recent past engaged with the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, Environment and Parks, Health, Justice, Municipal Affairs, Indigenous Relations, Labour, Human Right Commission and Infrastructure.

As an alternative, in Saskatchewan a portion of gaming profits are allocated to the provincial organizations responsible for sport, recreation and parks, arts, culture and heritage. These funding agreements are based on a five year cycle. The agreements identify specific outputs and outcomes. In addition the agreements represent a "one window" approach to services, funding and accountability. This would be a "value for money" approach to tax dollars.

Platform Recommendation

That the xxxxxxxx Party include in its 2019 election platform a commitment to uses a portion of gaming profits to support those provincial organizations responsible for sport, recreation and parks, arts, culture and heritage; and

That the xxxxxxxx Party Party support utilizing a multi-year “value for money” funding agreement and a multi-ministry “one window” approach to identify and achieve the appropriate outcomes and outputs.