

Alberta's Sport Development Policy Framework

April 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to the Minister	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	7
Policy Development Process	10
Policy Foundation	11
Defining Sport in Alberta	12
Funding Definitions	13
Limitations	14
Recommendations and Priorities for Action	15
(I) Provincial Government Funding Stability and Predictability	16
(II) New Tax Measures for sport organizations	17
(III) Youth Involvement and Assistance for Low Income Families	18
(IV) Increased Research and Development Capacity	19
(V) Increased Physical Activity of Youth in Schools	20
(VI) Importance of Communities and Volunteers	21
The Role of the Provincial Government	22
Notes	23
Appendices	25
Appendix I: Alberta Population Report	26



April 18, 2007

The Honourable Hector Goudreau
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture
Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Goudreau,

It is with great pleasure that we present you with this draft of a Sport Development Policy Framework for the consideration of the Province of Alberta.

This policy has the ability to impact various segments of Alberta including the Ministries of Health and Wellness, Education, Justice and Attorney General, and Employment, Immigration and Industry. Additionally, the policy will take into consideration sport at all levels, and will have a direct impact on youth education and development.

This Sport Development Policy Framework has been designed to parallel similar policies which have been developed on the Federal level (Canadian Sport Policy) and within Alberta's municipal jurisdictions (Calgary Civic Sport Policy). Likewise, it has been modeled out of the existing Alberta Sport Plan which has been admittedly employed by your Ministry as a "guiding document."

Ministry specific priorities outlined in Premier Stelmach's letter of 15 December 2006 suggested the development of a culture policy which has the potential to operate as a parallel policy or incorporate elements of the Alberta Sport Development Policy Framework. This policy will act as a vehicle to ensure that Alberta becomes the model province for sport within Canada and identifies 6 priority areas and their subsequent recommendations for action.

I hereby submit this Sport Development Policy Framework to you for your review and would like to reemphasize Sport Alberta's willingness to work alongside the Provincial Government in further developing Alberta's First Sport Development Policy.

Sincerely,

Dale Henwood
Chair
Sport Alberta

David J. Rothwell
Policy Development Coordinator
Sport Alberta

Alberta's Sport Development Policy Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alberta has always been a Province characterized by hard work and innovation and only now, during these times of unprecedented growth and economic prosperity, can the citizens of this great province be vaulted onto the international stage as world-class providers of sport and recreation programming and development.

In response to numerous issues which consumed the Alberta sport sector, a consultative process was undertaken to begin designing a Provincial sport policy for the Province. This policy framework would build off of the previous Alberta Sport Plan and attempt to correct the ad hoc characteristics of the current system. The creation of this document, entitled *Alberta's Sport Development Policy Framework*, would be Alberta's first Provincial sport policy and would serve to guide both the Provincial Government and the sport sector for years to come. This document has identified six (6) priority areas of attention and the recommendations for their implementation which simultaneously aim to establish long-term program sustainability. These priorities are as follows:

(I) Provincial Government Funding Stability and Predictability

- Sport within Alberta requires a stable and predictable funding commitment from the Alberta Provincial Government which is based on 1% of health care spending.

(II) New Tax Measures for sport organizations

- Sport organizations must be re-classified as registered charities in order to grant tax receipts thereby providing incentive for philanthropic contributions which benefit the sector.

(III) Youth Involvement and Assistance for Low Income Families

- The Government of Alberta is encouraged to implement a subsidy program to assist low income families which would ensure that physical activity and sport is accessible to all Albertans.

(IV) Increased Research and Development Capacity

- The Government of Alberta is encouraged to work in conjuncture with sport organizations and post secondary institutions to develop greater research and development capacity.

(V) Increased Physical Activity of Youth in Schools

- The Government of Alberta is encouraged to maintain sport and physical activity as a critical component in the daily activities of Alberta's schools.

(VI) Importance of Communities and Volunteers

- The Provincial Government must continue to develop working relationships and channels of communication with community and volunteer organizations in order to access frontline knowledge and ensure optimal service delivery.

A policy has the ability to impact many segments of Alberta including the Ministries of Health and Wellness, Education, Justice and Attorney General, and Employment, Immigration and Industry. This policy will take into consideration sport at all levels, and will have a direct impact on youth education and development. Additionally, it will act as a vehicle to ensure that Alberta becomes the model province for sport within Canada.

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

Alberta has always been a Province characterized by hard work and innovation and only now, during these times of unprecedented growth and economic prosperity, can the citizens of this great province be vaulted onto the international stage as world-class providers of sport and recreation programming and development. The hosting of previous world-class sporting events, such as the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton and the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, has created a collection of world class facilities and a nucleus of athletes which few other Canadian jurisdictions can boast. However, due to a lack of commitment from the Provincial Government, as a key partner in the sport system, the planning of programming and development, especially in the long-term, is becoming increasingly difficult.

In response to numerous issues which consumed the Alberta sport sector, a consultative process was undertaken to begin designing a Provincial sport policy for the Province. This policy framework would build off of the previous Alberta Sport Plan and attempt to correct the ad hoc characteristics of the current system. The creation of this document, entitled *Alberta's Sport Development Policy Framework*, would be Alberta's first Provincial sport policy and would deal serve to guide both the Provincial Government and the sport sector for years to come. Although sport is comprised of two essential components, programming and facilities, this document will focus solely on the program side and has identified six (6) priority areas of attention and the recommendations for their implementation which simultaneously aim to establish long-term program sustainability.

These issues of concern are not exclusive to elite athletes but span the entire spectrum of sport and recreation in Alberta including amateur athletes and children through to senior citizens. Similarly, gender, age, ethnic background, ability, or socio-economic status should not limit individuals from engaging in sport. These dichotomies in access and support have resulted in a situation whereby not all Albertans have the opportunity to participate in physical activity/sport at a level which is aligned with their skills, abilities, and interests.

Sport provides the opportunity for every Albertan to create a better environment and quality of life for themselves, their families, and others around them.

Sport has the ability to address the aforementioned concerns and to strengthen other areas of Provincial jurisdiction by attenuating the capital costs incurred by Provincial Ministries. The Ministries which would be directly affected by such a policy would include (but are not exclusive to) Health and Wellness, Education, and Justice and Attorney General.

This is reflected in numerous studies conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) which illustrated that a \$1 increase to sport and physical activity resulted in a \$3 decrease in health care spending.¹ This reflects amicably on Alberta's budget for Health and Wellness in 2006 – 2007, which at \$10.5 Billion, could be lessened or whose growth could be slowed through a more proactive and preventative approach. These approaches could include increasing the physical activity and health of the Alberta population. Likewise, at the Federal level, estimates regarding the cost of inactivity on the health care system range from \$2.1 billion to \$5.3 billion annually or roughly 4.8% of the total health care budget.²

Additionally, the rapidly growing population of Alberta will require policies which can keep pace with the growth pressures and the demands which come with that. As of January 2007, Alberta's population was slightly more than 3.4 million people and expected to grow by 3.27% or approximately 108,000 people throughout the year (*See Appendix I*). On the national level, 55% of the adult population is involved in sport through volunteerism, participating, or through attendance.³ When this figure is extrapolated to the Provincial level, it can be inferred that approximately 1.87 million Albertans have some direct link to sport.

The development of sport also plays a significant role in improving Alberta's communities and quality of life which has been identified as a priority of the Provincial Government. This is mirrored in a recent study which found that among young Canadians, sport was attributed to improved health, improved social skills, increased self esteem, increased success at school, and increased activity with family members.⁴

¹ World Health Organization, *Health and Development Through Physical Activity and Sport* (Geneva: WHO Production Services, 2003), p. 4.

² Michael Bloom, et al, "Strengthening Canada: The Socio-economic Benefits of Sport Participation in Canada," Conference Board of Canada, August 2005, p. ii.

³ Ibid. p. 4.

⁴ Sport Canada, *Reconnecting Government with Youth Survey (2003)*. Ottawa: Sport Canada, 2003. http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/info-fact/youth_e.cfm. (25 March 2007).

The Alberta Sport Development Policy Framework is one element in an iterative process intended on providing guidance to both the public, private, and non-profit sectors through the establishment of communication networks and stable and predictable funding regimes which create accessibility for all Albertans. While this document is intended to cover a wide variety of sport related issues, it is, by no means, a completely comprehensive document. This is primarily noted in the absence of facilities policy in lieu of more small scale programming development projects; however, this should not detract from the importance of the former. Rather, this document should convey, to all Albertans, the importance of maintaining sport in our daily lives while continuing to develop Alberta as model for sport to the country and the world.

THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Alberta Sport Development Policy Framework has evolved from a combination of several parallel documents concerning sport and physical activity in the Province of Alberta as well as in other Canadian jurisdictions. Beginning in January of 2007, numerous research and consultative processes began to create a collaborative document which more readily identified the issues facing sport within Alberta as well as potential policy solutions.

Of the documents analyzed, the Alberta Sport Plan, Canadian Sport Policy, and the British Columbia Policy on Sport and Physical Activity were given the most consideration. This marked an attempt to mirror the Alberta Sport Development Policy with existing policies and plans in order to maintain general consistency within the sector and towards Government.

With the creation of a new Provincial Government came an opportunity to address present concerns within the sport community which were consistent with the new priorities of the Government. The policies contained within this framework spell out the collaborative actions of government as well as organizations within the sector to accomplish the goals, herein, while maintaining an active dialogue for the continued creation of innovative and effective policy reforms.

POLICY FOUNDATION

Alberta's Sport Development Policy Framework reinforces the Province's commitment to sport and physical activity, based on a shared vision while emphasizing their role as a key partner. It establishes the values the Province holds and outlines its goals.

Specifically, a policy will:

- Ensure that the goals of the policy are consistent with the objectives of the Alberta Government while also meeting the needs of the public.
- Clearly indicate how sport can contribute to the priorities established by the government.
- Illustrate the important role which sport plays within the various Provincial Ministries.
- Illustrate the important role of sport and physical activity within the everyday lives of Albertans.
- Promote sport programs on all levels from youth to senior and from community to elite.
- Express the increasing public awareness towards sport in regards to the impacts which it has on health, society, and community.
- Provide a framework for business plans, strategies, and action regarding sport.
- Make certain that decision making conducted by the Government of Alberta regarding sport is consistent, transparent, and accountable while adhering to the stated values and goals of this policy.

DEFINING SPORT IN ALBERTA

Within this policy, sport will be defined using commonly accepted vernacular and will include reference to sport and physical activity at all levels of the sport continuum (with the exception of the professional entertainment sector). The following definition of sport mirrors that used by Sport Canada and has been recognized and used by the Alberta Sport Plan; this correlation provides consistency and allows for greater alignment within, and transferability between, the current documents.

For the purposes of this policy, sport will be defined as:

A regulated form of physical activity organized as a contest between two or more participants for the purposes of determining a winner by fair and ethical means. Such a contest may be in the form of a game, match, race, or other form of event.⁵

Additionally, amateur sport involves participants who execute skills that require practice or preparation; it involves competition with other participants, oneself, or nature; and it occurs in a structured environment. Amateur sport does not include professional sports teams, or spectator spending associated with these teams.⁶

⁵ Sport Canada. Sport Funding and Accountability Framework III, 2005 – 2010.
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/prog/cfrs-sfaf/criteriasfaf3_e.doc. p. 6.

⁶ City of Calgary, Calgary Civic Sport Policy (November 2005).
http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_394787_0_0_18/csps002.pdf. (15 March 2007).

Definition for Funding Purposes

Sport is governed and sanctioned by a sport governing body (provincial sport association and/or national sport federation) that holds the responsibility for, notably, setting out the rules of play, either at the national level or at the world level, for awarding the organization of its championship(s), and designating the winner(s) of its championship(s). For the purpose of determining eligibility to its funding programs, the following characteristics have been set out which are consistent with those set out by Sport Canada:

- “Its primary activity involves physical interaction between participants and/or between participants and the environment: air, water, ice, snow, ground, special surface or apparatus, with or without the use of a special conveyance (e.g., bicycle, canoe, horse, luge, parachute, sailboat, skate, ski, and wheelchair).”⁷
- “Sport requires specialized neuromuscular skills - such as speed, strength, stamina, flexibility, balance, precision and coordination - that involve large muscle groups or those which the individual has the ability to utilize, and which can be taught, learned and improved.”⁸
- “Sport relies on recognized general principles of Long Term Participant/Athlete Development that are adapted to the specific sport and are designed to provide a technically and ethically safe and sound sport experience at all levels of the continuum from initiation to playing, to training and competing up to and including performing at the highest levels of the sport, under the guidance of qualified coaches.”⁹

⁷ Sport Canada. Sport Funding and Accountability Framework III, 2005 – 2010.
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/prog/cfrs-sfaf/criteriasfaf3_e.doc. p. 6.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

In brief, sport involves/requires the following:

- It requires fair, ethical and effective tactics and strategies.
- It requires a competitive format and structure, sanctioned by the recognized governing body for the sport, either at the national or world level, and open to all participants who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the rules of the sport.
- Its competitive events require the on site presence of officials sanctioned by the sport governing body to objectively, fairly and consistently apply the rules.

Limitations for funding purposes:

- Sports in which the performance of a motorized vehicle is the primary determinant of the outcome of the competition (e.g., racing of automobiles, motorcycles, power boats, aircraft, snow machines, etc.).
- Games of skill such as billiards, darts, board games (chess, bridge, scrabble), and electronic games.
- The professional or commercial component of sports, owned and/or operated outside the jurisdiction of the sport's recognized National or International Sport Federation by private enterprises, promoters, major professional leagues, franchises or other professional associations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS &
PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

(I) Provincial Government Funding Stability and Predictability

Sport within Alberta requires a stable and predictable funding commitment from the Alberta Provincial Government which is based on 1% of health care spending.

Presently, Provincial sport organizations within Alberta are allotted funding on an annualized basis with little consideration for future growth and long-term development. In a Province such as Alberta which is encountering rapid migration and a thriving economy, uncorrelated program development can have a detrimental impact on service provision. According to Statistics Canada, Alberta's population grew at a rate nearly double the national average (10.6%) between 2001 and 2006 and accounted for nearly 95% of all population growth among the Prairie Provinces. Alberta now also accounts for 10% of the entire Canadian population; however, the commitment, funding, and program delivery are not representative of this fact.

In order to respond to the rapidly changing population and demographics, as well as to compensate for inflation, the Provincial Government must adopt a more proactive system for articulating its commitment to sport.

Policy Response:

Due to the large impact which sport and physical activity has on the health care system any commitment should be representative of 1% of health care spending within Alberta. This will ensure funding consistency in regards to population growth and inflation making it possible for sport organizations to more effectively plan programs and implement them based on a projected budget. One direct contribution would be the increasing excellence in sport through higher quality coaching and travel assistance for athletes seeking training.

(II) New Tax Measures for sport organizations

Sport organizations must be re-classified as registered charities in order to grant tax receipts thereby providing incentive for philanthropic contributions which benefit the sector.

Presently, sport organizations within Alberta do not qualify as charitable organizations and therefore cannot grant tax receipts for donations. This lack of incentive for persons to contribute philanthropically negatively impacts sport.

The adoption of such a policy could operate under or parallel the Community Spirit Program for Charitable Giving while modeling other sport tax credit programs in other Canadian jurisdictions. These program include the Government of Canada's Children's Fitness non-refundable tax credit, the Government of Nova Scotia's Healthy Living Incentive, and the Government of Quebec's tax credit for recognized performance.

Policy Response:

Although there are no projections regarding the impact which the granting of charitable status will have on donations to sport, it is strongly believed that they will increase. Due to various differences in donor base, increased donations to sport will not negatively impact other charities or non-profit organizations but rather provide a forum for athletes and/or parents who wish to financially support a specific sport or organization. This incentive for donations will also directly increase participation of private partnerships and attract funding from private businesses.

(III) Youth Involvement and Assistance for Low Income Families

The Government of Alberta is encouraged to implement a subsidy program to assist low income families which would ensure that physical activity and sport is accessible to all Albertans.

Due to the expense which is attached to many sports, income remains a determining factor in the participation of both children and adults. According to the Conference Board of Canada, net family income levels of \$20,000 and less correlate to per annum sport spending of less than \$800; a figure which is more variable due to the non-essentiality of sport when balanced against food and shelter. This is in comparison to families earning net income of \$100,000 or more who spend an average of \$3,500 on sport per annum.¹⁰

Policy Response:

The implementation of a sport subsidy program for low income families would exist to primarily benefit children who, otherwise, would not be able to participate in sport. This program should be modeled after existing programs such as the Alberta Health and Wellness Premium Insurance Plan which identifies a family with children as “low-income” if they earn less than \$32,210 per annum.¹¹ The amount of subsidy provided can be modeled on a bracket system which would incrementally increase as net family income decreases beyond \$32,210.

¹⁰ Michael Bloom, et al, “Strengthening Canada: The Socio-economic Benefits of Sport Participation in Canada,” Conference Board of Canada, August 2005, p. 39.

¹¹ Government of Alberta, Ministry of Health and Wellness, “Health Care Insurance Plan,” January 12, 2007, http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip/ahcip_subsidies.html (25 March 2007).

(IV) Increased Research and Development Capacity

The Government of Alberta is encouraged to work in conjunction with sport organizations and post secondary institutions to develop greater research and development capacity.

Alberta is increasingly becoming one of the most innovative Provinces in Canada in regards to research and development. This is despite the fact that there are limited incentives for sport research at the post secondary institutions to conduct research and development. This gap in the research network prevents Alberta from remaining abreast on many issues in sport and from providing the best possible service to its citizens.

An increase in research capacity would allow the Government and sport organizations to have access to the most recent data which could be employed within numerous policy issues.

Policy Response:

The expansion of research and development would greatly increase the quality of service which Albertans receive. More adequate sport research can be accomplished through increasing the number of grants specified for this area or through directly partnering with select post secondary institutions throughout Alberta. An increase in this collaborative research would also be achieved through private sector partnerships such as the Nike/Bauer/NSERC funding for the Hockey Biomechanics Laboratory in Ottawa.

(V) Increased Physical Activity of Youth in Schools

The Government of Alberta is encouraged to maintain sport and physical activity as a critical component in the daily activities of Alberta's schools.

Presently, children's physical activity administered through the Alberta school system is insufficient to combat the increasing incidence of childhood obesity and a plethora of associated diseases such as Type II diabetes. These activities, combined with those outside of school time, do not meet the recommended 90 minutes of physical activity per day.¹² As such, a recent study concluded that 26 percent of Canadian children are now classified as overweight or obese thereby increasing the probability of children dying at a younger age than their parents.¹³

Policy Response:

The Government of Alberta must continue to coordinate its efforts with the various school boards throughout the Province in an attempt to make physical activity an important component of daily education along with wise nutritional choices. This could be aided through the removal of many high-fat products from schools in conjunction with encouraging better overall nutritional choices.

¹² Government of Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, "Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children," April 2002, http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/children/index.html (15 March 2007).

¹³ Juliet O'Neill, "Obese kids risk dying earlier than parents," Can West News Service, Wed. March 28, 2007.

(VI) Importance of Communities and Volunteers

The Provincial Government must continue to develop working relationships and channels of communication with community and volunteer organizations in order to access frontline knowledge and ensure optimal service delivery.

As of 2003 there were more than 161,000 registered non-profit and volunteer organizations within Canada of which 21% were involved in the area of sport and recreation. This sector accounted for 40% of all volunteers in Canada at more than 2.2 million. This collection of volunteers, combined with the role of local municipalities as key providers of sport, enhances the delivery of services and improves the overall quality of life and safety of Alberta's communities. The inclusion of communities as key players in sport provides reduced cost opportunities to users because of the proximity to services and programs while developing local pride, assisting in integrating new Albertans, and increasing the physical and mental well being of the population.

It is at the community level, and through the efforts of the volunteers, that others have the opportunity to play and compete. These volunteers coaches, officials, club administrators require support as they invest their time for the advancement of their particular sporting activity and the betterment of the participants.

Policy Response:

Through the creation of new relationships and the maintenance of existing ones with community and volunteer organizations, the Government of Alberta has the opportunity to optimize service delivery and minimize costs. The articulation of the importance of both communities and volunteers will increase the overall quality of life of Alberta's communities through improved integration of new Albertans, increased proximity to services, increased safety of communities, and improved overall health and well-being of citizens.

THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

The role of the Government of Alberta is to ensure that sport and physical activity within the province correlates to the physical, social, demographic, and cultural demands of the population. In order to respond to the changing needs and values of Albertans, the Provincial Government must remain innovative in its development, implementation, and delivery of policy while mirroring the changing environment of other Canadian and international jurisdictions. Additional roles which the Provincial Government will play as a key stakeholder in the policy include but are not exclusive to:

- Continually supporting organizations and initiatives to ensure that the goals of this policy, as well as any additional needs of the sport community, are met in a timely and effective manner.
- Establish and maintain key partnerships with organizations and groups within the sport community in order to access the resources, knowledge, and skills which the frontline can provide.
- Ensure that organized sport remains accessible to all Albertans regardless of age, income, ability, or culture.
- Ensure that Alberta's schools strive to include and expand physical activity programs within the daily curriculum to ensure the overall health of Alberta's children.
- Ensure that the goals, values, and benefits of sport are coordinator across all Government departments.

Notes

Bloom, Michael, et al. "Strengthening Canada: The Socio-economic Benefits of Sport Participation in Canada," Conference Board of Canada, August 2005.

City of Calgary, Calgary Civic Sport Policy (November 2005),
http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_394787_0_0_18/c_sps002.pdf. (15 March 2007).

Government of Alberta, Ministry of Health and Wellness, "Health Care Insurance Plan," January 12, 2007, http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/ahcip/ahcip_subsidies.html (25 March 2007).

Government of Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, "Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children," April 2002, http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/children/index.html (15 March 2007).

O'Neill, Juliet. "Obese kids risk dying earlier than parents," Can West News Service, Wed. March 28, 2007.

Sport Canada. Sport Funding and Accountability Framework III, 2005 – 2010.
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/prog/cfrs-sfaf/criteriasfaf3_e.doc.

World Health Organization, *Health and Development through Physical Activity and Sport*. Geneva: WHO Production Services, 2003.

APPENDICES