



Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)

Canadian Recreation Facilities Council (CRFC)

Finance Pre-Budget Consultations-2017

August 2016

Executive Summary

Recommendation

The CPRA and CRFC recommend that the 2017 federal budget include commitments:

- To provide \$ 1 million in funding toward creating a **national and comprehensive inventory of sport and recreation facilities** in Canadian communities to empower governments and community leaders to make evidence-based decision that will improve the health of communities and Canadians.
- To create a **dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure ‘repair’ fund** that would include a **reserved envelope for small communities**. This will allow communities to prioritize sport and recreation infrastructure projects while still addressing other community infrastructure needs. This ‘repair’ fund would address the acute need for critical repairs, maintenance and adaptation that ensures existing public assets remain safe and reliable.
- To create a **dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure ‘new build’ fund** that would include a **reserved envelope for urban communities with large ethnic populations**. This fund would address the growing, aging and diversifying demographic in Canadian communities. The changing sport and recreation needs of our population can be addressed to ensure the aging population remains active and that new Canadians have a community entry point that is reflective of their sport and recreation culture.

We call upon the federal government to commit **\$1.2 billion per annum for the next ten years in total to the two dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure funds**. This request represents only **10% of the total \$120 billion over 10 years** – overall a small investment to secure the health of its citizen and communities and the sustainability of the health care system.

Opportunity

High quality, accessible recreation and sport opportunities are essential to **healthy, productive and contributing individuals and communities**. Canadians have the right to the health and social benefits derived from recreation pursuits, but many citizens are inhibited from this opportunity because of the:

1. Physical deterioration of existing sport and recreation infrastructure in communities across Canada; and
2. The increased but unfulfilled need for new sport and recreation infrastructure to meet a growing, aging and diversifying population.

The *2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (CIRC)* reinforces the acute need for infrastructure investments into sport and recreation facilities across Canadian communities. The *Report Card* demonstrates that of all infrastructure categories –**sport and recreation infrastructure faces the most immediate and critical need for repair and refurbishment**.

Yet, when tough decisions need to be made by communities on infrastructure priorities, sport and recreation projects are often trumped by commitments to roads, sewers, water and bridges. In the meantime, **our citizens, especially our youth, become increasingly sedentary, obese and unproductive.**

An investment in sport and recreation facilities is **growth infrastructure**. The link between fiscal health and physical health is well documented. Sport and recreation are economic drivers and provide increased productivity via healthy citizens, community economic development, sport tourism, job creation (especially for youth), community entry points for new Canadians and sustainability of the social fabric of rural and remote communities.

The estimated costs to repair existing sport and recreation facilities at this time are \$16 billion (\$9 billion accounting for the facilities that are in 'very poor' or 'poor' condition and \$7 billion accounting for the facilities that are in 'fair' condition). Additionally, this figure does not include required funding for new sport and recreation infrastructure for the growing, aging and diversifying population.

The request for a national inventory of sport and recreation facilities will ensure governments at all three levels have a long-term and sustainable database to make strategic and evidence-based decisions on sport and recreation infrastructure investments

Full Submission

CPRA

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is the national voice on the social, health, economic, community and environmental benefits of parks and recreation.

CRFC

The Canadian Recreation Facilities Council (CRFC) is a national advocate for strong and sustainable recreation infrastructure in communities across Canada.

Opportunity

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1. Physical deterioration of existing sport and recreation infrastructure in communities across Canada; and
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The *2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (CIRC)* reinforces the acute need for infrastructure investments into sport and recreation facilities across Canadian communities. The *Report Card* demonstrates that of all infrastructure categories –**sport and recreation infrastructure faces the most immediate and critical need for repair and refurbishment**.

Yet, when tough decisions need to be made by communities on infrastructure priorities, sport and recreation projects are often trumped by commitments to roads, sewers, water and bridges. In the meantime, **our citizens, especially our youth, become increasingly sedentary, obese and unproductive**. It is now undeniable that active people with healthy lifestyles place less of a financial burden on the healthcare system and are more productive citizens. The federal government must lead by example by making sport and recreation infrastructure a priority thus making the health of citizens and communities a priority.

Sport and recreation infrastructure is one of the most important core investments that can be made into the prosperity, health and security of urban and rural communities. An investment in sport and recreation facilities is **growth infrastructure**. The link between fiscal health and physical health is well documented. Health and wellbeing are tied directly to income, education and other social determinants. Sport and recreation are economic drivers and provide increased productivity via healthy citizens, community economic development, sport tourism, job creation (especially for youth), community entry points for new Canadians and sustainability of the social fabric of rural and remote communities.

In rural communities sport and recreation facilities not only provide an essential venue for citizens to be active but they also serve as the community social hub venue for including community picnics, senior gatherings, weddings, youth dances and club meetings. These **facilities are the social core of rural Canada** and many are at the end of their lifespan without any ability for the community to repair or replace.

In addition, a national inventory of sport and recreation facilities does not exist and is a necessary asset to build. This inventory would ensure governments at all three levels have a long-term and sustainable database to benchmark and to make strategic and evidence-based decisions on sport and recreation infrastructure investments. This data would also allow community leaders to learn from best practices, to identify strategic facility alignment opportunities and to support the requests for infrastructure asks based on national evidence.

Recommendation

The CPRA and CRFC recommend that the 2017 federal budget include commitments:

- To provide \$ 1 million in funding toward creating a **national and comprehensive inventory of sport and recreation facilities** in Canadian communities to empower governments and community leaders to make evidence-based decision that will improve the health of communities and Canadians.
- To create a **dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure ‘repair’ fund** that would include **are served envelope for small communities**. This will allow communities to prioritize sport and recreation infrastructure projects while still addressing other community infrastructure needs. This ‘repair’ fund would address the acute need for critical repairs, maintenance and adaptation that ensures existing public assets remain safe and reliable.
- To create a **dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure ‘new build’ fund** that would include a **reserved envelope for urban communities with large ethnic populations**. This fund would address the growing, aging and diversifying demographic in Canadian communities. The changing sport and recreation needs of our population can be addressed to ensure the aging population remains active and that new Canadians have a community entry point that is reflective of their sport and recreation culture.

We call upon the federal government to commit **\$1.2 billion per annum for the next ten years in total to the two dedicated sport and recreation infrastructure funds**. This request represents only **10% of the total \$120 billion over 10 years** – overall a small investment to secure the health of its citizen and communities and the sustainability of the health care system.

Existing Programming

The challenge for the sport and recreation sector is that despite recently being included as an eligible category in the *New Building Canada Fund* (and always being an eligible category under the *Federal Gas Tax Fund*), there are almost 20 other eligible categories including public transit, waste water management, drinking water, energy systems, bridges, roads, highways and airports. History clearly demonstrates that many **municipalities will allocate funds to transit or sewer projects rather than pools, arenas or trails**.

In the 2015 Federal Budget, a Canadian 150 Community Infrastructure Program was announced and although recreation facilities were included as eligible projects, the overall funding that is available is no more than a token amount when compared to the realities of the sport and recreation infrastructure funding needs in communities.

Sport and recreation infrastructure is as essential as any category of community infrastructure but the **need for the infrastructure capital far exceeds the capital available for investment** – this is especially true for rural communities.

The Need

The capital funding requirements of the parks and recreation sector across Canada is in desperate need of additional investments. This was re-confirmed in the recent *Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (CIRC)*, which demonstrated that the need to address parks and recreation infrastructure is acute. The *CIRC* estimated replacement costs for sport and recreation facilities in Canada that are in 'very poor' or 'poor' condition to be \$9 billion. The *CIRC* also noted that the replacement costs for sport and recreation facilities in Canada that are in 'fair' condition are \$14 billion. However, if we act now to repair the facilities in 'fair' condition, the estimated cost will be only \$7 billion as opposed to replacement costs, which are estimated at \$14 billion.

To summarize, the estimated costs to repair existing sport and recreation facilities at this time are \$16 billion (\$9 billion accounting for the facilities that are in 'very poor' or 'poor' condition and \$7 billion accounting for the facilities that are in 'fair' condition). Additionally, this figure does not include required funding for new sport and recreation infrastructure for the growing, aging and diversifying population.

As a result, CPRA and CRFC call upon the federal government to make a significant investment in an initial infrastructure fund that would be dedicated specifically to sports and recreation facilities. A dedicated fund is critical as history has shown that without a dedicated fund, sport and recreation infrastructure needs are ignored at the expense of other infrastructure requirements. This point was demonstrated again in the *CIRC*, which noted that the greatest infrastructure deficit was identified as sport and recreation facilities.

CPRA and CRFC also identify the need to build a national inventory of the sport and recreation facilities in communities across Canada to ensure strategic, knowledgeable and evidence based investment are made by all level of government as well as private investors. A national inventory does not presently exist and this asset management tool will be a critical compass for strategic decision making in communities across Canada.

Conclusion

Canada has a multi-billion dollar sport and recreation industry that supports economic sustainability in urban and rural communities and is a foundation to healthy, productive and contributing citizens.

The recommendation put forward by CPRA and CRFC strongly aligns with the government's commitment to investing in social infrastructure. The inclusion of a dedicated recreation and sport infrastructure fund will deliver a meaningful and tangible impact on the lives of families in rural and urban communities across Canada.

The CPRA and CRFC respectfully request the opportunity for a collection of stakeholders from the sport and recreation sector to appear together before the Finance Committee to present further details on this opportunity to invest in the health and productivity of citizens and communities across Canada