

## Canada’s Recovery from the Impact of COVID-19 Role of Parks and Recreation Sector

While we manage the daily challenges of COVID-19, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is also looking toward a **recreation and parks recovery plan for communities** across Canada. These efforts will ensure that communities can safely restore fundamental parks and recreation services, at the appropriate time, bringing a sense of routine and normalcy back to Canadians. CPRA stands ready to partner with governments accordingly.

The recovery mechanisms proposed below can be implemented via CPRA’s established systems and communication channels into 90% of Canadian communities.

### Parks

Given the imposed self-isolation currently stemming from the public health response to the COVID-19 crisis, it will be essential that government recovery programs for citizens incorporate the social, mental and physical health benefits of spending time outdoors. Municipal parks are by far the most accessible space for connecting with the outdoors and will play a key role in rebuilding the social and economic health of Canadian communities.

#### *Proposed Recovery Mechanism: Green Jobs Initiative*

Extend the Government of Canada’s Green Jobs Initiative that is scheduled to expire on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The renewal of this program will be turn-key and will seamlessly provide employment for youth who will experience a slow ‘up-take’ on employment due to COVID-19. It will also help municipalities restore parks and natural space services as a key component of societal recovery from COVID-19.

### Recreation

Past crises have proven that recreation is one of the first and most crucial services to return to communities. It plays a critical role in the mental and physical health recovery of citizens, and in community social and economic revival. Access to recreation facilities (arenas, pools, gyms) and programs (hockey, summer camps, exercise programs) is a fundamental service for Canadians that will usher in a return to normalcy -- especially for children and seniors. A quick return to recreation will also curb the demands on the health and justice systems.



However, the municipal recreation system is experiencing a severe loss of revenue due to the required closure of recreation facilities, the suspension of programs and the pause on recreation and sport tourism. Federal government support will be absolutely critical for the return to accessible community recreation in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

***Proposed Recovery Mechanism: Community Recreation and Sport Fund***

Municipalities will require a dedicated financial assistance program to restore essential community recreation and sport programs during the recovery period.

A dedicated *Community Recreation and Sport Fund* will cushion the hundreds of millions in lost revenue from closed facilities and program cancellations in communities across the country. It will allow municipalities to immediately rehire staff and resume services.

In addition, increased funding to the existing federal infrastructure envelope dedicated to community, culture and recreation is also a 'turn-key' investment that can create jobs and economic benefits, while re-establishing access to community recreation and sport.

CPRA stands ready to advise, collaborate and administer the delivery of this national recovery fund, while building consensus amongst our provincial and territorial partners.

**Not-for-Profit Recovery**

Going forward, the federal government must speak to the need of all three sectors: business, government and non-profit.

The economic impact of COVID-19 on not-for-profit organizations is equally, if not more significant. The cancellation of conferences, events and programs has eliminated the main or only generators of income for not-for-profit organizations.

Without emergency government funding provisions, many not-for-profits (including in the parks and recreation sector) will not have the financial capacity to keep their doors open during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

These organizations play an important leadership role in providing social services to Canadians that will significantly assist in their recovery from events resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.

***Proposed Recovery Mechanism: Funding Support for Not-for-Profits***

The government must provide an equally significant recovery fund for not-for-profit organizations, so they may continue to play an important role in society - both during and after this crisis.