

# ACTIVE ALBERTA

## What We Heard?

*A summary of feedback received  
on the Concept Document*

Draft Date:  
January 20, 2010

## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2008 the Honourable Cindy Ady, Minister of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) announced that she would explore the development of a Recreation Policy.

In early 2009 a TPR coordinating team was formed to facilitate the development of this policy. In April of 2009 a cross-ministry advisory committee was formed to inform the process and to engage commitment across government for resulting policy objectives.

This document is a summary of the feedback that has been received through a series of stakeholder focus group sessions on concepts to inform the policy development.

## HOW WE ARE LISTENING?

The feedback summarized in this report has been gathered through large and small group facilitated sessions. The following table provides an overview of the targeted non-government participants and the sequencing of these consultations. Additional written feedback was also received and was considered during the policy development.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Participants</u>
June - Sept., 2009	Approximately 48 key leaders from the Sport, Recreation, and Physical activity sector.
October 14-15, 2009	180 volunteer Presidents and staff from approximately 110 provincial sport, recreation and active living agencies across Alberta.
October 29, 2009	Alberta Parks and Recreation Association, which includes representatives from Municipal Recreation departments, Active Living agencies, Community Recreation Practitioners, and academics.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

This feedback will be taken into consideration as the department develops a draft Policy on Recreation, Active Living, and Sport. The government will undertake further consultation on the draft policy.

## COMMON THEMES OF WHAT WE HEARD

Overall we heard from stakeholders that it was encouraging that the Alberta Government was working on developing this type of policy and that they appreciated being actively engaged in the discussions at the early stages of the policy development. The following are the common themes of input collected from stakeholders.

### A. ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE

Stakeholders indicated that they are fully supportive of these features but they are concerned about the feasibility of implementation when resources are seemingly limited; while many of their organizations already have limited capacity to deliver their current levels of service. Suggestions included statements like:

... Define these terms

... Ensure that the policy remains at a sufficiently high level that allows flexibility for development of a variety of future investment strategies.

### B. COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Stakeholders indicated support of the proposed vision and outcomes and expressed enthusiasm for the importance for the cross-ministry engagement. Many stakeholders also felt that this policy would be helpful for the various non-government sectors to improve collaboration and coordination of efforts amongst themselves. We heard statements like:

... Without the involvement of the other ministries, the big changes targeted by this policy will not be possible; commitment across government will be critical to the success and achievement of the Vision and Outcomes.

... Need to identify and clarify who the partners are and what they are responsible for doing, including the non-government sector.

### C. DEFINITIONS / GLOSSARY

Stakeholders commented that comprehensive definitions would allow for consistent interpretation of the policy and concepts within.

#### **D. INCLUSIVE OF “ALL ALBERTANS”**

*Stakeholders observed that while it is critically important to address children in this policy, it is also very important that the active lifestyles of “all Albertans” be recognized as critical to achieving the proposed Vision and Outcomes of Active Alberta.*

#### **E. “RECREATION” ONLY ADDRESSES WHAT WE DO IN OUR LEISURE TIME AND IS TOO NARROW A CONCEPT FOR A POLICY AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO INACTIVITY.**

*Feedback indicated while “recreation” is acknowledged as very important it only represents a portion of our daily lives and that the policy needs to address the broader idea of “physical activity” across all aspects of daily living. Suggestions included:*

- ... Add “physical activity” or “active living” throughout the document in conjunction with term “recreation” [and sport].*
- ... Give greater emphasis to the focus on items like active transportation, active work places, active community design, and active schools.*
- ... Address “in school” activity as this is likely the place where the greatest impact can be achieved for the policy outcomes.*
- ... Recognize the National Recreation Statement but provide an augmentation to that definition that provides direction to the Active Alberta policy.*

#### **F. “SPORT” NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNIZED.**

*Suggestions to better represent “Sport” included:*

- ... Add “sport” throughout in conjunction with term “recreation”.*
- ... The Active Alberta Policy should reflect the Canadian Sport For Life Model (CS4L) in order to reflect the full spectrum of sport from the Active Start (grass roots, community-based, sport and recreation programs) to Active For Life and including the sport performance system from entry levels through to high performance sport.*
- ... Add an Outcome entitled, “Achievement in Sport” with an emphasis on “Excellence in Leadership”; and fully recognize the F-P/T approved CS4L model (2005 Ministers’ Conference).*

## APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

### SECTION 1 - VISION

#### STRENGTHS

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *I Like where it is leading*
- ... *This is Long overdue*
- ... *It is positive and encouraging*
- ... *Includes personal and community*
- ... *Link between recreation and health*
- ... *high quality of life is an important strength*
- ... *It is clear, concise and short*
- ... *relevant to different population sizes and ages*
- ... *Shows a compelling social agenda*
- ... *Government backing broader 'recreation' vision "with" 'sport'*
- ... *The policy's vision statement does a good job of capturing the individual and community benefits generated through recreation - however (see weaknesses)*
- ... *Impressed by focus on recreation but need a balance with physical activity, recreation and sport*
- ... *Policy is exciting, getting back to basics*
- ... *I understand the need to group the various activities included in this policy under one heading of, "A Recreation Policy". I thought using the term recreation worked well.*
- ... *The use of the words "high quality of life" and "improved health" is very positive*

### SECTION 1 - VISION

#### WEAKNESSES

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *Wildlife protection is not reflected*
- ... *Nothing about competition and the role of competition in the vision or outcomes when it is part of the continuum*
- ... *The outcomes listed are narrower in scope than the vision statement and the accompanying descriptions of the outcome statements have been further narrowed. This results in a disconnect between the stated vision and the focus of the outcome statements - these need to be aligned in future policy iterations*
- ... *Lacking term "excellence"*
- ... *If goal is to increase participation, it needs to focus on all stages of the Canadian Sport for Life Model (approved and endorsed by F-P/T Ministers in 2005)*
- ... *Does not articulate or support what we (PSA) do as an organization*
- ... *Vision is narrower than Outcomes*
- ... *No reference to nature/outdoors or outdoor recreation in the vision*

# APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

## SECTION 1 - VISION

### SUGGESTIONS / QUESTIONS

#### We heard other Statements like:

- ... *Need to bring in other stakeholders for ties to other ministries*
- ... *needs a stronger link between schools and recreation*
- ... *Need to say "All" Albertans*
- ... *Maybe change statement to read "...through a comprehensive recreation, sport and physical activity delivery system" instead of through "recreational activities"*
- ... *Broaden the vision statement and make it more encompassing of other terms. Introduce the words 'sport' and 'active living' alongside 'recreation'*
- ... *Add 'lifelong' before 'participation'*
- ... *Define key words*
- ... *Pre-amble to clarify purpose and scope of this policy*
- ... *Further elaborate on the linkages between active living and mental health, not only physical health*
- ... *In order for the document to have a strong foundation, it needs to include guiding principles that are the four pillars of recreation, parks and open space, safe communities and sport. Each of the guiding principles should include the benefit for the sector, its values and its needs thus creating a link to underpin the document*
- ... *Add the phrase "from grass roots to excellence"*
- ... *Use "Active Recreation" to indicate focus of policy*
- ... *If the term "sport" is added to the vision and the content of the policy document then I also believe that "wildlife" and/ or "nature" should also be reflected in the vision and given more prominence in the policy document.*
- ... *Is this document about active living or recreation? We don't think that these terms are interchangeable.*
- ... *Change wording to say "... through participation in sport and recreation", drop the word "activities".*

# APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

## SECTION 2 - OUTCOMES

### STRENGTHS

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *Concepts make sense*
- ... *Outcomes all fit well together*
- ... *Could encourage organizations to work together*
- ... *work with communities to develop partnerships – this is good but takes time and money – however, it will need more support, staff, and \$’s*
- ... *Addressing financial sustainability is important during these tough economic times*
- ... *Like that sustainability also addresses human resources*
- ... *Outcome 4 is very important*

## SECTION 2 - OUTCOMES

### WEAKNESSES

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *A few points are quite specific while everything else is broader and high level*
- ... *Word ‘Wellness’ – it should use phrase physical and mental wellness*
- ... *Seems inconsistent*
- ... *Confusion with terminology – no one knew what “youth resiliency” meant in 1<sup>st</sup> outcome*
- ... *Associations are already at capacity, hard to recruit volunteers; this needs to be recognized in Outcomes*
- ... *Confusion with terminology – what does “high levels of voluntary activity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> outcome mean – some thought it was volunteerism, others thought that athletes had the ability to choose which opportunities*
- ... *How are kids introduced to natural areas, how do we get children to the sites? Transportation costs are a barrier; need to be identified as such.*
- ... *What about all of the motorized use in our recreation areas?*
- ... *The fourth outcome states “The Government of Alberta adopts an integrated approach to wellness”. It is unclear what “integrated” and “wellness” mean*
- ... *The outcome statement “...healthier through active living” implies a program rather than the concept of living actively; ‘physical activity’ may be a better label for the target of this.*
- ... *Leaders need to be developed through focused programming, training etc. They are not created simply through participation alone*

# APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

## SECTION 2 - OUTCOMES

### SUGGESTIONS / QUESTIONS

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *If we broaden the foundation, do we weaken the structure?*
- ... *There needs to also be an outcome for safety and inclusiveness*
- ... *Need standards for facility development and design to meet recreation needs to competitive needs of participants;*
- ... *Need to assist athletes that are in between performance levels; need to recognize performance/developmental levels of a sport system in the policy so that this – and other sport issues – can be addressed over time.*
- ... *Why is it just ‘youth’ resiliency and not resiliency in all populations?*
- ... *“Community leaders are developed through participation in recreational activities”; How?*
- ... *Add ‘behaviour changes’ as one of the outcomes; first priority should be to change perceptions, behaviour, culture and awareness*
- ... *Natural heritage – what does it mean?*
- ... *Land use and park already have a policy; just include this in the ‘links’ section; including in these Outcomes mixes other policy objectives with the point of this policy.*
- ... *Define communities...geographic, groups, cities*

## APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

### SECTION 3 - STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

#### STRENGTHS

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *First strategy is very critical because parents no longer allow kids to play on the street*
- ... *Great points but difficult and costly to implement*
- ... *Good start to introduce sports, get youngsters active*
- ... *Supports healthy living*
- ... *Focus on children and youth is excellent; targeted policy could be more successful; not consistent throughout policy however.*
- ... *Strategy #2, bullet #5 was seen as a possible cyclical boon to membership – utilization of events to promote the sport and increase membership*
- ... *Collaborative nature of working with partners was also seen as a positive thing as participants feel that in order for this project to succeed, Albertans need to work together. Government can not solve all the related issues.*
- ... *There was positive feedback on the systematic approach – individual, communities, outdoors and system. Participants felt it works well to have this break down of 4 areas and address them separately yet building linkages*

### SECTION 3 - STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

#### WEAKNESSES

**We heard other Statements like:**

- ... *Word ‘Wellness’ – it should use phrase physical and mental wellness*
- ... *Improved coordination” and “alignment” – the policy needs to be supported by other ministries; specific ministry responsibilities and roles should be included*
- ... *Sports clubs do not often have the capacity to record population stats on members, so can’t support direct initiatives*
- ... *Missing reference to national parks and municipal/urban parks*
- ... *Why are we again singling out park plans and policies?*
- ... *Too focused on recreational trails – formal parks; needs to include sports fields and green spaces if left as “outdoors”*
- ... *Environmental literacy a priority for a recreational policy? - seems a bit of a tangent*
- ... *Accountability statement – doesn’t belong as a priority action – should be a guiding principle or over arching guideline to implementation*
- ... *The word ‘children’ under ‘Active Albertans’ excludes other age groups*
- ... *Who are the partners?*
- ... *Participants felt that the reference to school was limited in scope.*
- ... *Interesting that there is “free” access to health care for treatment but relatively little support and investment in comparison for prevention and keeping people healthy.*

# APPENDIX A: OTHER COMMENTS WE HEARD

---

## SECTION 3 - STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### SUGGESTIONS / QUESTIONS

#### We heard other Statements like:

- ... *Need to identify and clarify who the partners are and what they do.*
- ... *Specific reference should be made to including people with disabilities.*
- ... *“Social marketing” is often a misused term for what is really simply advertising. Question about the efficiency of using resources towards this (e.g. do we really need more pamphlets and posters?) and is the lack of awareness really the key component in Alberta? There may be specific and untapped populations that actually could use “awareness building”*
- ... *Environmental literacy seemed a bit out of place. Acknowledging that we don't have a good grasp on the concept of environmental literacy and acknowledging that we all think environmental literacy is important, we just didn't see the immediate connection to active living.*
- ... *If you're going to explicitly state that funding is tied to these outcomes, be aware that physical activity levels or obesity, for example, are complex behaviours/outcomes – and is “all” funding tied to this policy? Or will groups be also measured against other “government” policies, like Cultural Policy, Parks Plan, and Others?*
- ... *Funding and resources required for these actions? How are these responsibilities distributed across government? Across communities? Across the non-government sector?*
- ... *Review Hosting Grants and look at ‘Sport tourism’*
- ... *Need policy to impact facility design/ guide municipalities*
- ... *it should also mention “sport tourism” – huge economic impacts (World Cups, Multi-sport Games, Master Games, and weekend amateur tournaments)*
- ... *Funding of whom? PSO, other dept's, institutions, municipalities*
- ... *After policy is released, need to implement a Self Assessment Tool to be completed by stakeholders.*
- ... *A lot of school administrators do not want sport in after hours; administrative headache; school autonomy from policy directives could be barrier to success.*
- ... *Need a greater tie to sport tourism, event hosting and the linkage of these to volunteer training and development*
- ... *What are the benchmarks and performance measures for the outcomes*
- ... *Want to see criteria for accountability / results*
- ... *‘Active Communities’ action items refer to strengthening leadership within communities and improving leaders’ competencies – it is important to identify the significance of a role model*
- ... *Technology could be an overriding system strategy*
- ... *Specify what sort of intergovernmental (municipal, provincial, federal) links are important to better achieve goals and objectives; need to engage the active ‘ownership’ of this policy by all Ministries. TPR cannot deliver this alone and the sport and recreation sector cannot deliver this alone.*
- ... *Sharing best practices should also include reference to developing accessible infrastructure.*