

TOWARDS 2028:

A GAME PLAN

FOR SPARC ALBERTA 2.0



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We begin by acknowledging our location on Treaty 6 territory, in the place known as Edmonton or Amiskwaciwâskahikan. Treaty 6 is the traditional a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Saulteaux/ Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others. As settlers on these lands, the members of SPARC Alberta are committed to ensuring that the spirit of Treaty 6 is honoured and respected. As such, we want to be held accountable for the ways our practices and programs contribute to the ongoing injustices of colonization.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their experiences and learnings with SPARC Alberta over the past 4 years. We would especially like to thank the members of the SPARC Leadership Group. Your guidance and advice has been invaluable.

We would also like to thank the Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative. Your innovative approach to sports-based youth development provided a blueprint for the work in Alberta.

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POSITIONING ALBERTA AS A LEADER IN COMMUNITY GRASSROOTS SPORT

It is apparent, as demonstrated by the [consultations to inform the Canadian Sport Policy 2023](#), that the values and principles surrounding sport are shifting. Canadians are not only pushing for a shift away from performance-oriented culture, they are calling for greater engagement of equity-denied groups in programs that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Arguing that “the sport system should be driven by the needs of grassroots participants and programs,” (SIRC, 2023, p. 7) those who participated in the Canadian Sport Policy consultations expressed an explicit desire for more holistic, person-centered approaches to sport delivery through a grassroots-driven policy.

“Community sport, including introduction to sport and recreational sport: Across all contexts, participants expressed a desire to see a grassroots-driven policy. Survey respondents identified values and ethics (53%), facilities and spaces (46%), physical literacy (43%), coach, official, and leader development (41%), and resources and capacity (34%) as their top priorities for this context.”

–What We Heard: Findings of Government Consultations and a National Survey to Inform the Canadian Sport Policy 2023-2033

Recognizing there is still much to do to finalize the priorities of Canadian Sport Policy 2023-2033, Alberta is uniquely positioned to become a leader in grassroots community sport programs and policy. Over the past two years, SPARC Alberta has consulted with hundreds of community members, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. Each of these consultations has been guided by the following question:

← --- ○ *How might we (re)imagine new futures for community grassroots sport in cities and towns across Alberta?* ○ --- →

The purpose of this document is to offer an answer to this overarching question. By bringing together the calls to action outlined in [Imagining New Futures for Community Grassroots Sport in Alberta: A Summary Of The Sport For Life/SPARC Alberta Summit](#) (see Appendix A) with the information gathered at the 2023 Leader’s Roundtable, this provincial ‘Game Plan’ outlines the next steps in building and sustaining a community grassroots sport movement across Alberta.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY GRASSROOTS SPORT?

Community grassroots sport refers to recreational sporting opportunities developed by communities for communities. As part of a broader network of Alberta's sport and recreation system, these recreational sporting opportunities are intended to be compatible with, but separate from, traditional competitive sporting structures. The primary goals within these sporting environments are fun, belonging, and development.

This definition, while reflective of the efforts of SPARC Alberta, is rooted in three national and international concepts:

1 GRASSROOTS SPORT

Grassroots sport is physical leisure activity, organised and non-organised, practiced regularly at a non-professional level for health, educational, or social purposes.

– *High Level Group of Grassroots Sport, Commission Europeene*

2 QUALITY SPORT

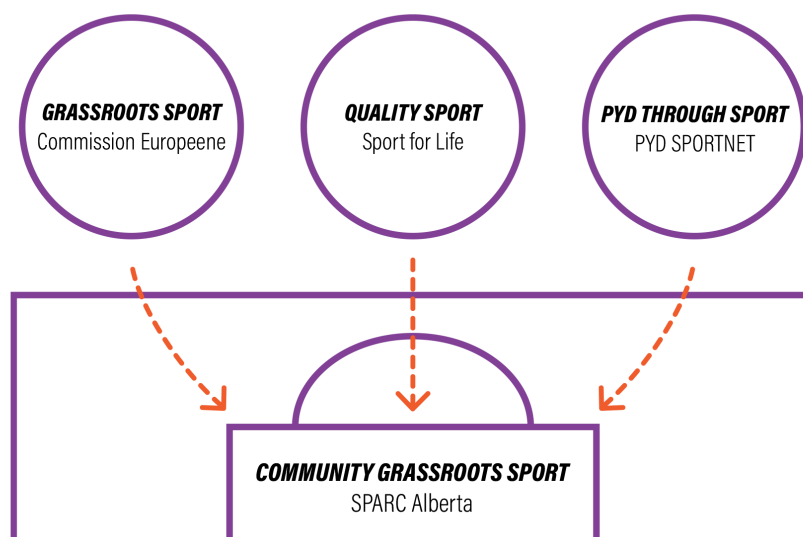
Quality sport is developmentally appropriate (good programs), safe and inclusive (good places), and well run (led by good people).

– *Sport for Life*

3 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD) THROUGH SPORT

PYD through sport is intended to facilitate youth development via experiences and processes that enable participants in adult-supervised programs to gain transferable personal and social life skills, along with physical competencies. These skills and competency outcomes will enable participants in youth sport programs to thrive and contribute to their communities.

– *PYD SportNetⁱ*



WHY IS A COMMUNITY GRASSROOTS SPORT MOVEMENT NEEDED?

THE BENEFITS OF SPORT ARE CLEAR:

- Youth who engage in regular physical activity have improved bone health, weight status, cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, cardiometabolic health, cognitive function, and a reduced risk of depression ⁱⁱ
- 85% of Canadians agree sport participation builds stronger communities ⁱⁱⁱ
- 71% of sport participants see themselves as being in excellent or very good mental health, compared to 59% of non-participants ^{iv}
- Youth who participated in sports within the past two years were 91% more likely to list a very strong sense of belonging in their community ^v
- Adolescents who play sports are eight times as likely to be active at age 24 as adolescents who do not play sports ^{vi}

YOUTH SPORT IS NOT A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD:

- 44% of parents say they cannot afford to register their children for organized sports ^{vii}
- Families in Alberta spend an average of \$1,428 annually for one child to play organized sport ^{viii}
- 75% of Canadians living in rural areas suggest that their “city/town doesn’t have enough to offer for young people” ^{ix}
- 73% of Canadians say children’s sport has become too focused on winning at the exclusion of fun and fair play ^x
- 1 in 3 girls leave sport by late adolescence. By comparison, the dropout rate for teenage boys is only 1 in 10 ^{xi}
- More than 1 of 3 black youth, 1 of 4 Indigenous Youth and 1 of 5 BIPOC youth report having directly experienced racism in sport ^{xii}
- Inequitable access to sport and activities has a negative impact on kids: 4 in 10 parents report adverse effects in children from reduced participation in sport and play, including signs of being less physically fit (42%), and feelings of loss, resentment, (38%) and anxiety (41%) ^{xiii}

TOWARDS 2028: SPARC ALBERTA 2.0

Initiated in 2020, SPARC Alberta began as a collaborative of partners in sport, physical activity, and recreation (SPAR). Focused on increasing access to quality sport programming across Alberta, SPARC Alberta was developed in order to transform a set of individual, siloed efforts in a broader movement.

Over the past three years, SPARC Alberta has taken the lead in creating a provincial community grassroots sporting movement. Building on a number of other sports-based youth development programs (e.g., Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative), SPARC Alberta has gathered ideas from hundreds of community members, practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers offering ideas about how various sectors and levels of government might engage in a multi-phase process intended to increase grassroots sporting opportunities for children and youth across the province (see Appendix A for an overview of the sector's calls to action).

Moving forward, SPARC Alberta seeks to advance this made-in-Alberta community grassroots sporting movement. In order to do so, however, there is a need for the groups involved to firmly establish a formal institutional structure capable of advocating for the policy changes required to improve access to programming in communities across Alberta. By establishing a formal institutional structure, SPARC Alberta will not only be more effective in harnessing the energy and expertise of a wide range of community organizations, it will also be better positioned to leverage the resources and leadership required to build a more collaborative and resilient system whereby sport, recreation, health, and education sectors are aligned and working together to ensure quality programming is equitably available to all children and youth.

SPARC Alberta 2.0 will therefore pursue three goals over the next five years:

1 ENSURE MOVEMENT SUSTAINABILITY

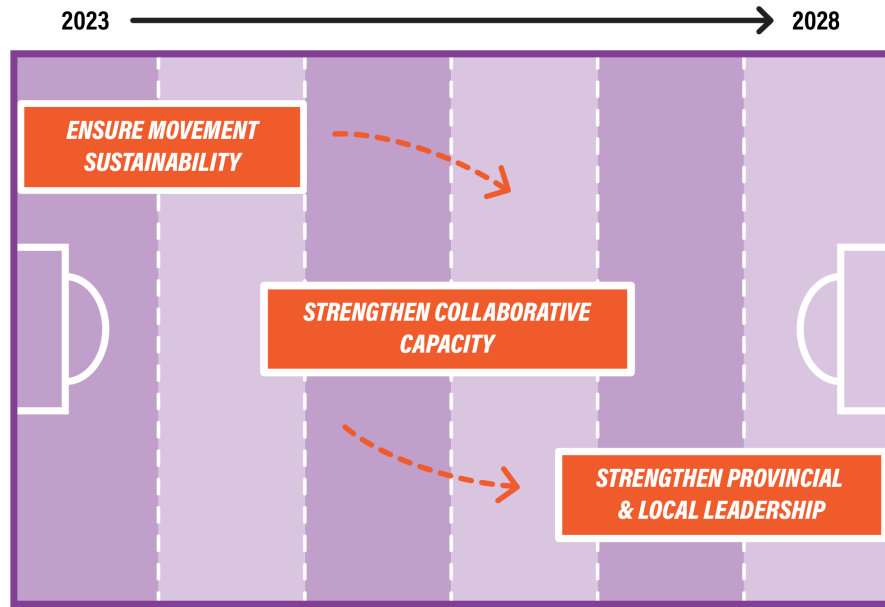
Identify a strong organizational backbone and establish the mechanisms required to acquire and maintain appropriate resources.

2 STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

Engage and work with other sectors (e.g., health, education, early childhood, human services) to ensure efforts are coordinated, while working towards common goals.

3 STRENGTHEN PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Enhance the capacity of organizations and leaders in order to ensure all SPARC Alberta members have the tools and knowledge necessary to position the province as a leader in grassroots sport programming and policy.



While the work required to achieve each of these goals will indeed overlap, there is a level of progression that will be required. In other words, in order to realize goal 2 and 3, the majority of the activities in goal 1 will need to be completed.

The information in the following pages provides a blueprint for achieving these three goals, while also reflecting the need for this temporal sequencing.

TOWARDS 2028: A REFINED VISION & MISSION

Using the information gathered over the last three years, SPARC Alberta has refined its vision, mission and principles.

VISION:

We envision a future where all children and youth have access to safe and meaningful grassroots recreational sporting environments directly in their communities.

MISSION:

We will work towards positioning Alberta as a leader in grassroots sport by developing the most collaborative and well-resourced community sporting movement in the country.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

We believe that in order to achieve our vision we must keep the following principles front of mind at all times:

- *System-oriented: To affect change, we need to create the right conditions to turn our collective ideas into action. We must therefore remain focused on building the systems required to collectively sustain our movement.*
- *Equity-focused: To affect change, we must recognize that sport has been, and continues to be, exclusionary. We must therefore ensure that all of our actions and decisions consider decolonization, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.*
- *Participant-centered: To affect change, we must focus on the holistic development and agency of children and youth. We must therefore ensure coaches and leaders have the knowledge and skills required to consider the unique values, needs, preferences and circumstances of ALL participants.*
- *Safety-focused: To affect change, we must collectively foster a culture free from all forms of abuse and maltreatment and ensure safe sport experiences for ALL participants.*
- *Evidence-based: To affect change, we must keep building evidence that shows the links between the issues we aim to address and the investments in community grassroots sport. We must therefore generate and mobilize the knowledge, insights and learnings we need to ensure investments can be based on timely information and trusted relationships.*
- *Community-led: To affect change, we must meet the needs of communities across Alberta. We must therefore value community voice and action and ensure the lived experiences of people closest to the issues inform all of SPARC Alberta's activities and decisions.*

- *Accountability-focused: To affect change, we must hold ourselves accountable and seek continuous improvement. We must therefore develop the tools and mechanisms to measure and share successes, while simultaneously engaging in the difficult and challenging conversations required for genuine transformation.*

PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION:

During the 2023 SPARC Alberta Leader's Roundtable it was suggested that the collective needs "a contract that details how everyone will operate together." We have therefore developed the SPARC ALBERTA PLEDGE.

The purpose of the pledge is to publicly communicate the commitments made by members of the SPARC Alberta sporting movement. Organizations and individuals who sign the pledge are not simply declaring their support of the SPARC Alberta vision. Rather, they are stating their desire to become an active agent in Alberta's grassroots sporting movement and committing to embrace and promote the SPARC Alberta guiding principles.

You can join the grassroots sporting movement by signing the SPARC ALBERTA PLEDGE here: <https://www.sparcalberta.com/>



I am a member of the SPARC Alberta movement because I am committed to creating a future where all children and youth have access to safe, quality and meaningful community-based sporting environments directly in their communities.

By signing this pledge, I agree to work towards positioning Alberta as a leader in grassroots sport by developing the most collaborative and well-resourced community sporting movement in the country. I also agree to embrace and promote these six guiding principles:

SYSTEM-ORIENTED: I will remain focused on building the systems (not just the organizations) required to collectively sustain our movement.

EQUITY-FOCUSED: I will ensure that all of my actions and decisions consider decolonization, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

PARTICIPANT-CENTERED: I will ensure all of my actions and decisions consider the holistic development and agency of all children and youth.

SAFETY-FOCUSED: I will commit to embracing the principles of Safe Sport by fostering a culture that is free from all forms of abuse and maltreatment.

EVIDENCE-BASED: I will value the role of evidence and commit to investing in the process that will effectively generate and mobilize the knowledge, insights, and learnings needed to grow and sustain Alberta's grassroots community sport movement.

COMMUNITY-LED: I will value community voice and ensure the lived experiences of people closest to the issues inform all of my actions and decisions.

ACCOUNTABILITY-FOCUSED: I recognize that system-level change is challenging and uncomfortable, but I agree to show up with an open mind and hold myself, and others, accountable to the principles in this pledge.

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

X _____



TOWARDS 2028: GOALS & ACTIVITIES

SPARC Alberta will pursue three inter-related goals over the next five years. While the work required to achieve each of these goals will indeed overlap, there is a level of temporal sequencing that will be required. It is envisioned that it will take one to two years to fully achieve the strategies in Goal 1. And while progress will be made in the other areas during this time, the strategies outlined in Goals 2 and 3 will be dependent on many of the activities in Goal 1. It is therefore essential that we collectively focus our efforts on Goal 1 in 2023/2024. Once we have achieved some level of sustainability we will well positioned to shift our efforts to Goals 2 and 3.

GOAL 1 -----> **ENSURE MOVEMENT SUSTAINABILITY**

“The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails”

Kania & Kramer, 2011

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: *Identify a strong organizational backbone and establish the mechanisms required to acquire and maintain appropriate resources.*

Stemming largely from the feedback received at SPARC Alberta’s 2023 Leader’s Roundtable, the activities detailed within this goal are intended to contribute to building the infrastructure needed to achieve the cross-sector, systems-level change that would position Alberta as leader in community grassroots sport programming and policy.

PLAY #1:

DEVELOP A NEW SPARC ALBERTA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Recognizing that any form of collaborative system-change takes time, it is not uncommon for the role of a steering committee to evolve as the collaborative matures. It is therefore recommended, given that the scope and activities of SPARC Alberta has grown significantly over the last three years, that the criteria and commitments of the Advisory Committee be revised and members be renewed.

The purpose of this renewal is not to replace particular people/organizations or to say that the current Advisory Committee hasn’t been successful in their activities to date. Rather, the purpose of this renewal is to gather a group of influential leaders with the skills and relationships required to develop the most collaborative and well-resourced community sporting movement in the country.

It is recommended that the renewed SPARC Alberta Advisory Council focus their efforts on ensuring the sustainability of the movement, leaving management issues and programming

decisions to organizational staff and working groups (the details of each are offered in the following pages). Up to 15 members should be sought based on their ability and willingness to:

- *Embrace and advocate for SPARC Alberta's vision and mission.*
- *Provide access to the business sector, government agencies, philanthropy, academia, elected officials, and community leaders.*
- *Secure resources to position Alberta as the leader in grassroots sport by developing the most collaborative and well-resourced community sporting movement in the country.*
- *Advise on the long-term strategic direction of the movement.*

PROMISING EXAMPLES OF YOUTH SPORT ADVISORY COUNCILS

THE PHILADELPHIA TASK FORCE ON SPORTS-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Formed in 2017, this high-profile task force was developed to enhance support for sports based youth development across Philadelphia. It was co-chaired by Chairman of the Philadelphia Phillies and received support from the Harris Family Charitable Foundation and Poor Richard's Charitable Trust. To learn more about the Task Force visit <https://www.pysc.org/initiatives/game-on-philly-the-citywide-task-force-on-sbyd/>

YOUTH SPORT TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Made up of a group of corporate leaders, government decision-makers, and high performance athletes, the Youth Sport Trust Board of Directors oversee a comprehensive fund development program that includes grants from other charities and foundations, government contracts, and sponsorships from businesses. To learn more about the Youth Sport Trust visit: <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/>

PLAY #2:



IDENTIFY A BACKBONE ENTITY

- *As one participant at the Leader's Roundtable noted, "somebody has to shepherd this movement." Adequately investing in a backbone is therefore an essential step in creating a community grassroots sport movement.*
- *Define loosely as an independent entity with dedicated staff; backbone entities support the key functions and sustained operations of cross-sector collaboratives with the ultimate goal of achieving systems-level change. Recognizing that the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association has been stewarding this work since 2020, they acknowledge that collective work is long-term work and that roles and responsibilities will evolve overtime. As such, they are open to the possibilities of other organizations assuming a backbone role. It is therefore recommended that the SPARC Alberta Advisory Council (after membership has been renewed) work*

with members of the existing collaborative to determine the best structure and site for the backbone. Below are list of questions that could help guide this process:

- *Does it make sense to select an existing organization to house the backbone or create a new organization?*
- *What sector is best positioned to house the backbone (e.g., sport, health)?*
- *If selecting an existing organization, should the selection process be open or closed?*
- *What members of the collective have decision has decision-making authorities?*
- *How much capacity does the backbone need? How many full-time employees? Who will the staff report to?*
- *Is the organizational home also where the staff are located? Or does it make sense to split the fiscal agent from the physical location? (FSG, 2017)*

PLAY #3:



SECURE FUNDING FOR THE BACKBONE ENTITY

According to FSG (2017) “initial operating budgets for backbone operations typically range from \$400,000 to \$600,000 for the first few years... more established and sufficiently resourced backbones tend to operate on annual budgets in the \$500,000-\$750,000 range” Within this budget, the most significant expense is staff salaries, followed by additional costs for community engagement, communications, and research and evaluation. For some collectives, office and administrative costs add to the expenses, but it is also very common for partners to offer in-kind contributions in this area (e.g., office space, shared IT systems).

In order to ensure the sustainability of the backbone it will be important to secure funding for its operations. This will require partnerships with funders who understand the limited impact that one-year program grants have, and are committed to investing in the long-term operations of the backbone. The table below outlines the roles funders have already played in growth and development of SPARC Alberta, as well as the roles that will be required from future funders. It is assumed that the Advisory Council will direct its efforts toward securing the necessary funding.

SPARC ALBERTA FUNDING

YEARS 1-4 (FUNDED)	YEARS 5-10 (UNFUNDED)
<p>PRIMARY FUNDERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Makadiff Sports</i> ● <i>Alberta Government</i> 	<p>PRIMARY FUNDERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>TBD</i>
<p>TYPE OF FUNDING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Short-term, project grants</i> 	<p>TYPE OF FUNDING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Long-term, unrestricted</i>
<p>FUNDED ACTIVITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Community consultations (i.e., 2022 Sport for Life/SPARC Alberta Summit; 2023 Leaders Roundtable; focus groups; sector engagement)</i> ● <i>Data collection and analysis,</i> ● <i>Knowledge mobilization</i> ● <i>Online grassroots coach training module</i> 	<p>PROPOSED FUNDED ACTIVITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Backbone staff and operations</i> ● <i>Backbone activities</i> ● <i>Community engagement</i> ● <i>Training and capacity building activities</i> ● <i>Development of shared research evaluation tools</i> ● <i>Advocacy and policy development</i> ● <i>Partner activities</i> ● <i>Community grassroots sport program development and delivery.</i>

PLAY #4

HIRE BACKBONE LEADERSHIP

The leadership displayed by backbone staff is critical to the success of the collective. Backbone leaders “*must maintain a delicate balance between the strong leadership needed to keep all parties together and the invisible ‘behind the scenes’ role that lets the other stakeholders own the initiative’s success*” (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012).

It is therefore essential that the SPARC Alberta Advisory Council, not only recognize the unique skillset that is required for a backbone leader to be successful, they must also demonstrate that they value these skills by ensuring this individual is positioned as a senior leader and that their salary reflects this (See Appendix B for Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative Executive Director Job Profile).

GOAL 2 **STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY**

“Our solutions are rooted in connection, relationship, and collaboration.”

-Karen Dommett, 2022

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: *Engage and work with other sectors (e.g., health, education, early childhood, human services) to ensure efforts are coordinated while working towards common goals.*

As noted during the Sport for Life/SPARC Alberta Summit, diverse partnerships will be essential in the creation of a future where all children and youth have access to safe and meaningful grassroots recreational sporting environments directly in their communities. The activities detailed within this goal are therefore intended to create the mechanisms required to successfully leverage Alberta’s vast expertise and better coordinate resources.

PLAY #5

FORMALIZE FOCUS AREAS

The focus areas outlined below are suggestions based on the data collected during the Sport for Life/SPARC Alberta Summit and the SPARC Alberta Leader’s Roundtable. However, as the backbone organization and collective takes shape it is recommended that they work to refine each focus area and then look to identify the individuals who could effectively guide the work in each area.

FOCUS AREA 1 CAPACITY BUILDING & NETWORKING

Activities in this area would aim to ensure community members have the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver quality grassroots sporting opportunities. The working group responsible for this area would focus on hosting provincial networking and convening opportunities as well as developing training courses and other educational resources (e.g., coaching training, elected official training, non-profit training, EDI training).

FOCUS AREA 2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADVOCACY

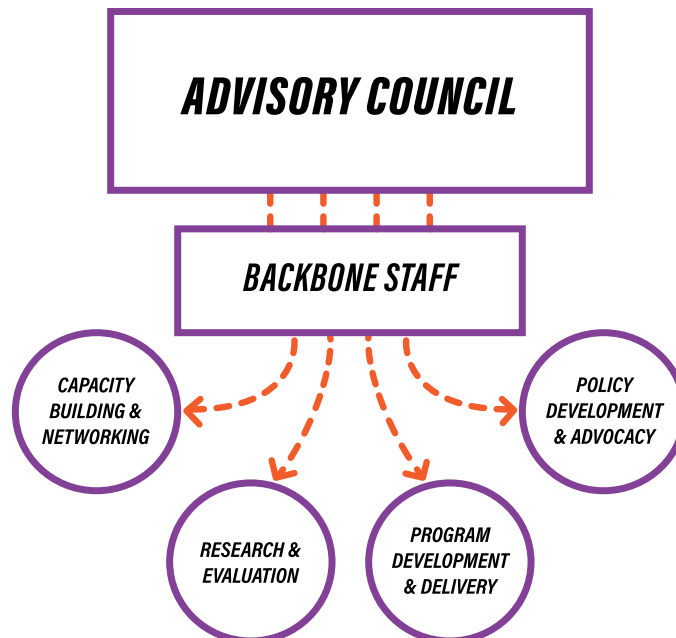
Activities in this area would focus on shaping government and organizational policy while simultaneously raising public awareness of the issues impacting community grassroots sport. The working group responsible for this area would focus on coordinated political messaging, policy analysis, and advocacy efforts.

FOCUS AREA 3 RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Recognizing knowledge generation plays an important role in both program development and innovative thinking, activities in this area would focus on developing mechanisms for shared research and evaluation. The working group responsible for this area would focus on developing more formal relationships with academic intuitions, while also developing practice-based tools and mechanisms to fill the gaps in community-based knowledge generation and strategic foresight.

FOCUS AREA 4 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

Activities in this area would aim to support community-driven, local sporting opportunities in cities and towns across Alberta. Recognizing the importance of local leaders, the work in this area would provide the supports necessary to develop and evaluate programs intended to reach new populations and demonstrate outcomes that will influence public policy and funding decisions.



GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN PROVINCIAL & LOCAL LEADERSHIP

"I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes and who has the courage to develop that potential"

Brene Brown, 2019

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: *Enhance the capacity of organizations and leaders in order to ensure all SPARC Alberta members have the tools and knowledge necessary to position the province as a leader in grassroots sport programming and policy.*

In order for Alberta to become a leader in grassroots sport programming and policy, leadership will be required at the provincial and local levels. Recognizing Alberta already has many of the organizations and people required to realize SPARC Alberta's vision, the activities outlined in this goal are intended build capacity across the entire grassroots sport system in order to achieve the right blend of provincial and local action.

PLAY #6



DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ACTION PLANS FOR FOCUS AREAS

Recognizing that each working group will need to determine what actions will be taken and when, the suggestions below have been developed based on feedback collected over the last two years, along with reviewing the business plans of other grassroots sports collectives.

CAPACITY BUILDING & NETWORKING: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- *Host monthly gatherings for stakeholders to share information, identify promising practices, and critically reflect (at both an individual and a societal level).*
- *Host an annual SPARC Alberta Leaders Summit.*
- *Provide professional development and training opportunities through group trainings, material sharing, and individualized assistance. Topics could include coach training, elected official training, EDI training, evaluation training and training in non-profit basics.*

POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADVOCACY: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- *Develop an advocacy plan to raise awareness among policy makers and funders and influence provincial and municipal sport policy agendas.*
- *Produce an annual report that outlines the state of play across Alberta.*
- *Draft a provincial grassroots sport policy that leaders can promote and advocate for.*
- *Develop a Children and Youth Bill of Rights in Sport (an example of an existing Children's Bill of Rights in Sport can be found in Appendix C).*

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Invest in number of programs to showcase the potential of innovative grassroots sporting programs. Some ideas that were shared by delegates at the Sport for Life/SPARC Alberta Summit include:

- *In-town leagues and tournaments (e.g., city-wide unity soccer cup).*
- *Intramural competitions.*
- *No-cut school sports programs.*
- *Grassroots sport hubs in schools.*
- *'School to club' coaching pipelines by training high school and university students to be coaches and officials and offering credit or bursaries for each semester.*
- *Programs that re-think how we utilize existing 'sport-specific' infrastructure (e.g., Could indoor ice rinks be reconfigured in the summer to benefit more people?)*
- *Programs that re-think age, gender and ability categories (e.g., mixed gender, mixed ability, intergenerational leagues).*
- *Adult-free, youth-led opportunities.*

RESEARCH & EVALUATION: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- *Establish common definitions and means for collecting, analyzing and disseminating data.*
- *Evaluate and report on progress being made by participating organizations in order to attract more public funds.*
- *Develop a series of discussion papers that introduce big ideas and spark transformative change.*

It is worth noting that within each action plan, some activities will be able to be undertaken immediately, some will be able to be tested through pilot projects, while others will require further exploration and funding. It will therefore be important for each focus group to identify short, medium and long-term activities, so that resources can be distributed accordingly.

PLAY #7



LEAD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GAME PLAN

Ensuring SPARC Alberta has effective and ongoing leadership will be essential for the movement's sustainability. It will therefore be important that all members of SPARC Alberta come together to discuss successes, share challenges, and use these learnings to create a the blueprint for action beyond 2028. It is only with commitment, accountability, and ongoing effort that we will be able to continue to build the provincial and local leadership required to ensure all children and youth have access to safe and meaningful recreational sporting environments directly in their communities.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The work that SPARC Alberta has undertaken over the last three years has positioned Alberta to become a leader in grassroots sports programs and policy. The insights gathered from community members, practitioners, policy makers and researchers, combined with our learnings from other jurisdictions have given us the information required to effectively advance a number of the priorities outlined in the Canadian Sport Policy 2023-2033 consultations. It is therefore our hope that provincial and local leaders will collectively use the ideas in presented throughout the 'Game Plan' moving us a few steps closer to a future where all children and youth have access to safe and meaningful recreational sporting environments directly in their communities. Because, as Haley Wickenheiser has noted,

"All children and youth deserve access to high quality sport and recreation environments that foster equity, diversity, inclusion in their own communities. We have the opportunity right now for critical reflection across the entire sport system and to create safe spaces for all to play and belong.

Haley Wickenheiser

APPENDIX A

CALLS TO ACTION

The calls to action are a summary of the information shared by the Sport for Life/SPARC Alberta presenters (leading researchers, practitioners and policy makers from across sport, physical activity and recreation) and delegates. Collectively, the calls to action provide some ideas about how we might reflect, reconnect and reimagine community grassroots sport across Alberta. The full report can be found here: [Imagining New Futures for Community Grassroots Sport in Alberta: A Summary Of The Sport For Life/SPARC Alberta Summit](#)

CALLS TO ACTION	PROPOSED STRATEGIES
ACKNOWLEDGE THE ISSUES WITH EXISTING SPORTING SYSTEMS AND PROMOTE ALTERNATIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Lean into fear and discomfort</i> ● <i>Slow down and build blueprints for change</i> ● <i>Recognize that little changes can have a big impact</i> ● <i>Center the participant, not our organizations</i> ● <i>Ensure social justice and reconciliation are at the heart of the work</i>
DO THE INDIVIDUAL WORK OF LEARNING AND UNLEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Engage in processes of self-reflection and accountability</i> ● <i>Learn about the racisms of the past to understand how they have shaped our present</i>
DEFINE QUALITY, COMMUNITY GRASSROOTS SPORTING EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Ensure accessibility</i> ● <i>Prioritize fun, belonging, and development over winning, travel, and elitism</i> ● <i>Be co-developed with children and youth</i> ● <i>Be compatible with, but separate from, our existing competitive sporting programs</i> ● <i>Emphasize exploration and unstructured play</i>

<p>DEVELOP A LONG-TERM, VISION FOR COMMUNITY GRASSROOTS SPORT IN ALBERTA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer a new vision/ philosophy ● Communicate what is meant by community grassroots sport ● Clearly identify outcomes ● Account for urban and rural differences
<p>UTILIZE RESOURCES IN A WAY THAT SERVES MORE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine the inequitable distribution of funding ● Outline a process for securing appropriate resources ● Utilize new and existing resources ● Engage with corporate partners
<p>DEVELOP MECHANISMS TO AUTHENTICALLY ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunities to listen to equity-denied groups ● Utilize diverse leaders and develop community-led mechanisms ● Embrace the notion of “nothing about us, without us”
<p>LEVERAGE LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize schools ● Innovative use of public spaces ● Rethink processes for facility allocation ● Examine fees at municipal facilities ● Rethink age, gender and ability categories
<p>UTILIZE NEW AND EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rethink collaboration within the sector ● Collaborate with Indigenous-led organizations ● Engage with corporate partners ● Engage with other sectors ● Treat Youth as Partners ● Move from transactional relationships to transformative relationships
<p>TAKE EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) SERIOUSLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure diversity in leadership positions (though equitable processes not tokenistic processes) ● Make equity, diversity and inclusion guiding principles for all programs

<p>DEVELOP MECHANISMS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Centralized, accessible coach certification</i> ● <i>Elected official training</i> ● <i>Spaces to reflect on historical injustices / reconciliation</i> ● <i>Training in non-profit basics</i> ● <i>Other capacity building supports as they arise</i>
<p>DEVELOP MECHANISMS FOR RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Gather qualitative and quantitative data</i> ● <i>Research and share existing/ promising practices</i> ● <i>Develop ongoing mechanisms for knowledge mobilization</i> ● <i>Communicate the value of sport in the broader political context</i> ● <i>Recognize that sport is political and advocacy is essential</i>

APPENDIX B

PHILADELPHIA YOUTH SPORTS COLLABORATIVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB PROFILE

POSITION

Executive Director

ABOUT PYSC

Initiated in 2009 by individuals passionate about meeting the needs of area youth from under-served communities, PYSC was initially a coalition that took the lead in advancing the nationally recognized field of Sports-Based Youth Development (SBYD) to Philadelphia. SBYD engages youth through athletics as a means to advance positive social development, educational achievement, health, well-being and life skills. Sports are the hook; positive youth development is the goal. In six years, PYSC has grown to include over 40 participating organizations serving thousands of youth across Philadelphia.

PYSC is now ready to become a free-standing organization. A local philanthropist has generously committed \$1.5 Million over three years to capitalize the new entity, and will use its commitment and position to encourage other funders to also contribute to PYSC. The new entity takes as its vision and mission the following:

VISION STATEMENT:

Every child in Philadelphia will have access to a high-quality youth sports program grounded in the principles of positive youth development.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To dramatically enhance the capacity of youth-serving organizations in Philadelphia to provide high quality, sports-based youth development programs to children in every community.

PYSC is the only organization within Greater Philadelphia positioned to advocate for the interests of the SBYD field as a whole. A newly incorporated PYSC will have the organizational capacity and visibility to create a coherent, systems-based agenda for the Philadelphia youth sports community. PYSC will mobilize local stakeholders to advocate for policy changes to increase funding and improve access to youth sports programs. It will also facilitate further innovation and collaboration among stakeholders, opening doors to new funding opportunities. In addition, PYSC will build on its prior work by providing training, capacity-building, and technical assistance to SBYD and other youth-serving organizations, to promote the use of best practices, improve data collection and sharing, and support local partners to dramatically expand and scale their work. Overall, PYSC will leverage resources and leadership to create a coordinated citywide approach to healthy youth development in Philadelphia, and become a national model.

PYSC will pursue three goals over the next three years:

- 1** Build the movement. Establish systems that advance and sustain the sports-based youth development movement in Philadelphia.
- 2** Pilot innovation: Launch pilot initiatives that test ways in which sports-based youth development can reach new populations at scale and demonstrate outcomes that will influence public policy and resources.
- 3** Strengthen organizational capacity. Enhance the capacity of Philadelphia SBYDO's and other youth-serving organizations to provide high quality services on and off the field at a scale commensurate with community need.

COMPENSATION

Salary will be commensurate with experience, with benefits aligned with nonprofit industry standards.

BACKGROUND OF IDEAL CANDIDATE

A senior, seasoned professional with a history of accomplishment that combines public advocacy, systems development and fundraising in the nonprofit sector. Preferably someone with direct experience in helping to launch and significantly expand a new undertaking. Understanding of issues related to youth development in low income communities. Experience building collaborative relationships in the nonprofit sector, and between the nonprofit and public sectors.

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 1** At least fifteen (15) years successful tenure in a leadership role in a nonprofit or public sector organization, incorporating programmatic, operational and external relations functions in which s/he played a direct role in organizational growth.
- 2** High-energy person with vision, integrity and a passion for service excellence who is able to mobilize staff, board and other stakeholders towards a common goal.
- 3** Entrepreneurial person capable and comfortable building an organization.
- 4** Deep appreciation of youth development. Ability to quickly learn, if not currently knowledgeable about issues related to sports based youth development is a plus but not essential.
- 5** Skilled in working in a collaborative manner to build relationships and teams with multiple external stakeholders, to include capacity to understand interests of small nonprofits, larger institutional nonprofits, schools and public sector decision makers.
- 6** Effective communicator to multiple internal and external audiences concerning complex issues related to youth development.
- 7** Demonstrated track record in fund development, to include local and national foundations, corporations and the public sector.
- 8** Managerial expertise including budget management and working directly with a volunteer governing board.

SUMMARY OF KEY DELIVERABLES

The Executive Director will lead and facilitate the board of directors and staff in pursuit of the following goals.

- 1** Establish systems and hire staff for the new organization.
- 2** Develop and launch pilot programs.
- 3** Enable participating organizations to improve their performance in order to serve more children and improve the quality of their services.
- 4** Establish sports-based youth development as an understood and well-regarded approach in the eyes of public sector decision makers, funders, and youth serving organizations that should be integrated into all youth serving activities.
- 5** Establish PYSC as a national leader in the field.
- 6** Positive long-term relationships with key partner organizations and stakeholders.
- 7** A diverse, sustainable revenue base able to meet PYSC's and participating organizations' needs and goals.
- 8** An engaged, effective volunteer board of directors functioning as a governing board.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

ORGANIZATIONAL LAUNCH

- 1** Determine sequence and timing of hiring new staff
- 2** Develop organizational systems and processes
- 3** Support new board in organizing itself
- 4** Oversee development of website and communications materials
- 5** Engage participating organizations
- 6** Introduce PYSC to external stakeholders

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- 1** Support design and launch of lines of service
- 2** Establish partnerships and collaborative relationships with stakeholders, the public sector, and youth serving organizations
- 3** Manage the budget

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 1** Advocate for SBYD programs and policies with public sector decision makers and other key stakeholders
- 2** Serves as key spokesperson for SBYD and the needs of SBYDO's
- 3** Fosters media relations and represents the organization at regional and national meetings and events

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- 1** Initiate and secure additional support from foundations
- 2** Steward and expand relationships with funders
- 3** Develop value proposition for fee-for-service revenue and pursue
- 4** Cultivate and solicit major gifts in collaboration with the Development Director and the board.

BOARD RELATIONS

- 1** Nurture a positive, open and collaborative relationship with the Board and its committees
- 2** Work in collaboration with the board to promote the mission
- 3** Participate in soliciting and recruiting additional people to the board; arrange opportunities for board development and education for its members.

REPORTING

Reports to the Board of Directors through the Board President

STAFF

Positions to be hired by the Executive Director: Director of Program Services, Director of Research & Evaluation (may be a consultant), Communications Manager, Administrative Assistant

FINANCES

PYSC will have an annual operating budget of approximately \$700,000 to \$800,000 in its first three years of operation. \$500,000/year for three years is confirmed, with the expectation that other foundations will support it. Participating organizations will be expected to pay a modest amount of annual dues. Public sector contracts and larger national foundation support are also expected.

SERVICE AREA

Philadelphia. Over time, may expand to surrounding counties.

NOTES

- 1** PYSC is an equal opportunity employer that values diversity and practices inclusion.
- 2** Freedom from illegal use of drugs, and freedom from use and effects of use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace.
- 3** Persons who have been found guilty by a court of law of abusing, neglecting or mistreating individuals are ineligible for employment in this position.
- 4** This profile is intended to indicate the general nature and level of work performed by the Executive Director. It is not designed to contain or be interpreted as a comprehensive inventory of all duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of the Executive Director.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interviews will be arranged as soon as a group of qualified candidates is assembled. Resumes should be emailed as soon as possible to: _____ (No paper copies, please.)

Confirmation of receipt of the resume will be sent by return email. Interviews of preferred candidates will be arranged forthwith. No phone calls, please. All candidates will be notified of the final decision via email.

APPENDIX C

NORWAY'S PROVISIONS ON CHILDREN'S SPORT

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SPORT

- 1 SAFETY:** Children have the right to practice in an environment that is safe and secure, without any inappropriate pressure or exploitation. Children under 6 years should be accompanied by an adult to help avoid accidents and prevent injuries.
- 2 FRIENDSHIP AND ENJOYMENT:** Children have the right to participate in training and competitive activities which are designed to help develop friendship and solidarity amongst them.
- 3 COMPETENCY:** Children have the right to experience the feelings of competency and to learn a varied skill-set. They should also be given the opportunity to experience variation in their sports, training and interactions with others.
- 4 INFLUENCE:** Children have the right to express their own opinions and that their opinions should be considered. Children should have the opportunity to participate in planning sessions and can execute their own ideas in sports activities with their coaches and parents.
- 5 THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE:** Children have the right to choose which sport, or how many sports they wish to participate in. Children have the right to determine how much they wish to practice their sport.
- 6 COMPETITIONS FOR ALL:** Children have the right to choose whether they would like to participate in competitions, and should have equal opportunities to participate. Children transferring from one club to another in the same sporting discipline have the right to compete in competitive sports for the new sport club, as soon as the registration is completed.
- 7 ON THE CHILDREN'S TERMS:** Children have the right to participate in training and competition activities that are suitable to their age, physical development and maturation level.

THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN'S SPORT MUST:

- 1** Ensure that the club has good routines for giving coaches, volunteers and parents information regarding the rights and provisions.
- 2** Ensure that the rules and regulations are implemented in the club's board and subsidiary groups and that the perspective of children's sports are safeguarded in the club's management and events, and can explain why this is important.
- 3** Make sure that the club arranges parent's meetings after the activity has started, get to know the parents and make sure that they understand what being a member of the club entails.
- 4** In clubs with multiple sporting disciplines: Ensure that all the sports and groups work together, in a coordinated manner and develop a diverse plan of activity for all the children in the sports club – as described in the plan of development.
- 5** In specialized sports clubs: ensure a broad variation within the activities of the club to stimulate a comprehensive development for the participants – in line with the plan of development.
- 6** Strive to keep the costs of the club on a fair level to ensure a broad participation, and ensure sports are available for groups of people with limited financial resources.
- 7** The activity must be inclusive to all children wishing to participate in children's sports regardless of the background they come from.

THE RESPONSIBLE ADULT CAN INCREASE HIS OR HER COMPETENCY IN CHILDREN'S SPORTS RIGHTS AND RULES THROUGH:

- Participation in the different activities by the regional confederation where children's sports rights and provisions are on the agenda, such as meetings, gatherings and seminars.
- Complete an online module 'The values in children's sports' which is available at www.kurs.idrett.no



ENDNOTES

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- iii* Community Foundations of Canada and True Sport Foundation. (2016). Vital Signs, Sport & Belonging. https://communityfoundations.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vital_Signs_Sport_and_Belonging.pdf
- iv* Ibid.
- v* MLSE Foundation. (2022). Change the game research 2.0, change the culture, change the game. https://assets.website-files.com/5eb9ca182f6df037590c28ea/63596fa30b922c12b8c65818_ChangeTheGame2.0_Report_ReducedSize1.pdf
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- vii* Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. (2023). JUMPSTART STATE OF SPORT REPORT. https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart_State_of_Sport_Report_April_2023_ENG_-_DIGITAL_1.pdf?v=1680706031
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- xiii* Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. (2023). JUMPSTART STATE OF SPORT REPORT. https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart_State_of_Sport_Report_April_2023_ENG_-_DIGITAL_1.pdf?v=1680706031