

## ARPA Member Communications

### 2025 Alberta Municipalities Resolution - Considerations

Some of you may have seen the resolution brought forward by the Town of Nanton and seconded by the Town of Innisfail has been included in the [2025 Alberta Municipalities resolution book](#) in regards to Funding for Sport and Recreation Facilities (Resolution B4). Some of you may be asked by your administration and council to provide a briefing in regards to this resolution.

ARPA supports this resolution.

The Active Communities Initiative program is highly over subscribed and municipalities are ineligible to submit funding requests directly to the program. This needs to change.

We would support that the Active Communities program funding be increased substantially and that it be opened up so that municipalities can directly apply. Or that a new dedicated fund be created to support community recreation infrastructure directly for municipalities.

Here is some information you may find handy to help build a briefing for your council.

- Most of our community recreation infrastructure, especially in smaller communities across Alberta, were built during the Centennial era and are already being extended well beyond their planned lifecycle. If an injection in funding from all levels of government is not forthcoming communities will start experiencing permanent closures of their local community ice arena, curling rink or indoor pool.
- Our recreation facilities are being utilized more and more as a part of emergency response - commonly housing entire communities when national disasters hit. The current inventory of facilities is not properly equipped to handle these uses as they were often purposely built for recreation and sport. An increased investment would allow for retrofits to add access to proper HVAC, power, sanitary and other facility upgrades. [ARPA]
- Canada's current infrastructure exhibits visible signs of decay including cracked walls, crumbling foundations, and compromised roofing. Canada's Core Municipal Public Infrastructure Survey asserts that nearly half of indoor rinks are in very poor to fair condition, with the majority having been built more than 30 years ago. Many date back to the Centennial infrastructure investment initiated in the 1950s and carried on by successive governments through the 1970s. [CPRA]
- When calculated at an individual level, indoor recreation infrastructure projects cost approximately \$500-\$3,000 per citizen (project cost/population). However, such estimates only include initial investment in hard infrastructure. Ongoing operational costs, repairs, upgrades, and other expenses are not accounted for in this estimation. Inflation, legislative changes, and provincial and federal emphasis on homebuilding, rather than community building, has placed municipalities in a challenging position when it comes to securing funds for parks and recreation infrastructure projects. [PRO]

- Per-person, investment in new parks and recreation infrastructure is significantly less costly than yearly expenditures associated with stroke, diabetes, and depression. For this reason, sustainable and increased investment in parks and recreation infrastructure is prudent economic, social, and health policy. [PRO]
- Sport and recreation programming is an effective method of diversion because it provides opportunities for youth to connect with positive mentors and role models, build social bonds, and improve various aspects of mental wellness including self-esteem, confidence, as well as minimize symptoms of depression and stress. [PRO]
- As we build new homes to accommodate our growing population, it is crucial we remain committed to creating complete, livable communities. Parks and recreation facilities are essential to this, providing green spaces, recreational opportunities, and social hubs that enhance quality of life. [CPRA]
- Upgrading and building new recreation facilities is an expensive undertaking for municipalities. The cost of a newly built multi-use community centre can range from \$30 million to over \$200 million, depending on the size and scope of the project. [PRO]
- These facilities are not only buildings, trails, and playing fields – they are the structures of belonging in Canadian communities. With predictable, sustained investment, they can be community hubs, reduce impact on our climate, improve the health of our citizens, communities, and environments, and be valuable assets during times of crisis such as our recent wildfire seasons. [CPRA]
- Recreation facilities, and the programs that bring them to life – generate economic activity, support local businesses, and help attract and retain workers in communities of all sizes. They also promote physical and mental wellbeing by alleviating pressure on the healthcare system; reduce crime by providing safe and productive outlets for youth; and play a critical role in emergency preparedness by serving as community hubs during crises. [CPRA]
- Aging infrastructure undermines community wellbeing and crisis resilience. Investments in recreation facilities reduce public safety costs and stimulate local economies. Updated facilities also prevent crises from escalating into more expensive emergencies by ensuring accessible, prepared community hubs. [CPRA]
- Alberta's community recreation infrastructure enhances opportunities for health and quality of life amongst all Albertans. This legacy provides places where both urban and rural Albertans congregate, relax and take part in physical activities and stress releasing social activities. The heartbeat of small communities, the neighbourhood core in larger centres, it's a legacy worth building on. In the past, capital needs have always been cost-shared between local municipalities or community groups and the provincial government. Again, we must act together to avoid further deterioration of our community recreation infrastructure.
- Currently, Alberta municipalities bear the majority of economic costs when it comes to recreation and parks infrastructure investments. Yet, physical activity and social engagement is proven to reduce public expenditures that often fall under provincial jurisdiction, such as healthcare and criminal justice. Investing in community recreation infrastructure is in the province's best interest, both from a social and economic perspective.

We look forward to having your community's support behind this important resolution.