



# *CITY OF TORONTO* **SPORT PLAN**







# Acknowledgements

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Purpose

The Sport Plan will serve as a guide to the City of Toronto and its partners to collaboratively support lifelong participation in sport for all Torontonians. It will build capacity for the delivery of quality sport programs, increase awareness about community sport and promote inclusive opportunities for participation. Sport participation significantly contributes to the quality of life for both Toronto residents and communities by improving physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing while building communities and generating economic benefits.

This plan was developed in response to Council direction that was initiated by a request from the Toronto Sports Council. It aligns the City's recent sport-specific plans (Tennis Excellence Framework, Skateboard Strategy and Basketball Development Plan) by considering the needs of all sports. Recommendations build upon the momentum of sport development created by the many infrastructure and program legacies of the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

The Sport Plan aligns with Parks, Forestry and Recreation's mandate and Council-approved priorities that support healthy lifestyles, community engagement and equitable access. Specific recommendations that further inclusive sport will support City strategic plans including, but not limited to, the Youth Equity Strategy and TO Prosperity, through actions that improve the quality of life for diverse communities by reducing barriers and increasing participation in recreational sport. The Sport Plan was informed by provincial and national sport policies, such as Game ON, A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 and the Canadian Sport for Life movement.

## Plan Development

The Sport Plan was informed by a range of research activities; including a review of current delivery of sport programs and services, an audit of sport partnerships, demographic projections, sport trends analysis and a review of sport-related guiding practices from across Canada. The Sport Plan was informed by extensive engagement with residents, City staff, stakeholders and other organizations representative of the Toronto sport system to help inform needs and priorities. From the Sport Plan research and consultation activities, key findings were identified by the Internal Working Group and then confirmed as priorities by the Sport Plan Reference Group. These key findings form the basis of the Sport Plan recommendations.

## Current Landscape

Sport programs and services in Toronto are provided by a variety of organizations across the recreation, sport, education, and health and social services sectors. Parks, Forestry and Recreation contributes a large volume of recreational programming and sport infrastructure to this system. The division delivers a diverse range of opportunities for all residents to participate in recreational sport—especially children, youth and older adults. Programming focuses on creating introductory and recreational opportunities that support lifelong participation. Parks, Forestry and Recreation supports further opportunities to participate by permitting a wide range of sport facilities to other providers. They work closely with sports organizations, community groups and agencies to ensure that facilities support quality recreation opportunities and events.



## Sport Plan Recommendations

Sport Plan recommendations are framed to guide Parks, Forestry and Recreation's ongoing planning and delivery of sport programs and support for community sport organizations. By working collaboratively across the Toronto sport system, they will enhance efforts to build capacity for the delivery of quality sport programs, increase awareness about community sport and promote inclusive opportunities for participation.

The following 14 recommendations are community-driven and participant focused. They are organized in three thematic pillars, each with an outcome statement.

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** A strengthened sport system that works collectively towards shared goals to support lifelong participation in sport.

1. Establish a Toronto Sport Resource Group to help guide the implementation of the Sport Plan.
2. Strengthen interactions across the sport system through sustained engagement and communication between stakeholders.
3. Establish a registry of Toronto community sport organizations.
4. Support community sport organizations by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise.
5. Incorporate the development of physical literacy into City-delivered sport programs through enhanced and evidence-based delivery models.
6. Develop an intentional *CITY OF SPORT* partnership framework to catalyze sponsorship and collaboration with institutions, donors and the private sector.

**AWARENESS:** An established *CITY OF SPORT* brand that effectively promotes the value of sport, inspires participation and facilitates access to information.

7. Work with City divisions and agencies to deliver an annual public awareness and social marketing campaign that raises the profile and visibility of sport in Toronto and the *CITY OF SPORT* strategy and identity.

8. Investigate potential online platforms that would facilitate access to information about community sport across program providers.

9. Leverage communication channels, particularly digital platforms, to effectively connect people to volunteer opportunities in community sport organizations.

10. Inspire lifelong participation through the recognition and celebration of the sport accomplishments of Torontonians.

**INCLUSIVE SPORT:** Progressive policies and practices that reduce systemic barriers and support increased participation in sport by diverse communities.

11. Develop an inclusive sport practical guide and training module that fosters a safe and positive environment for recreational sport.

12. Sustain pathways for youth to access meaningful employment in sport through the Toronto Sport Leadership Program.

13. Cultivate diversity in community sport leadership by promoting development opportunities.

14. Through research and ongoing consultation with diverse communities, increase understanding of barriers to participation in sport and effective methods of engagement to identify responsive opportunities and services.

Over the next five years, PFR and its partners will work collaboratively to implement plan recommendations, measure progress and communicate successes and outcomes. Success will rely upon strong leadership, innovative practices and meaningful engagement to build a strengthened Toronto community sport system that is vibrant and sustainable. ■







## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Why a Sport Plan?

**THE SPORT PLAN** will serve as a guide to the City of Toronto and its partners to collaboratively support lifelong participation in sport for all Torontonians. It will build capacity for the delivery of quality sport programs, increase awareness about community sport and promote inclusive opportunities for participation.

#### Service Planning

Service plans that are well researched, based in trends and which are responsive to community needs and demographics ensure organizations remain current in how services are delivered. They help in directing resources, establishing strategic priorities and identifying expected outcomes to ensure that a large service system, like the Toronto's sport system, is working towards shared goals.

#### Council Direction

The Sport Plan was initiated through a direction from the Community Development and Recreation Committee responding to a request for a City sport strategy from the Toronto Sports Council. The Toronto Sports Council has contributed as a key partner in all stages of the Sport Plan development.

#### Alignment of Sport-Specific Plans

Over the past two years, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has developed several sport-specific plans that have been directed by City Council. The Sport Plan aligns these sport-specific plans through a multi-sport lens in order to establish directions for the planning and delivery of programs and services across all sports.

**THE TENNIS EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK** sets out capacity building strategies that will make public tennis instruction and play opportunities more accessible. The framework makes recommendations for:

- ▶ increasing the use of tennis courts for tennis activities
- ▶ enhancing tennis programming
- ▶ improving communication with clubs and users
- ▶ building strong, sustainable community clubs and boards

**THE SKATEBOARD STRATEGY** responds to the growing interest in skateboarding as an activity by establishing methods for:

- ▶ the planning of future skateparks
- ▶ using skateboarding as a tool for community building and engagement
- ▶ promoting skateboarding and Toronto as a city for skateboarding

**THE BASKETBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** initiates strategies to improve community basketball programs and opportunities to participate. Recommendations focus on:

- ▶ improving program quality
- ▶ addressing gaps in service
- ▶ building the capacity of Toronto's community basketball network

These sport-specific plans identified common themes that will be advanced by the Sport Plan, namely: the importance of working collaboratively across the system, an emphasis on quality programming, and the need for sustained engagement to support programs and services that are responsive to Toronto's communities.





## Pan American and Parapan American Games Legacies

The **TORONTO 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games** was the largest multi-sport event ever held in Canada, with 12,000 athletes and officials, 51 sports and 41 participating nations. The Games established numerous legacies for the City and residents, such as over 6,000 trained and engaged sport volunteers now ready for new challenges, a renewed interest in and focus on sport, as well as facility and program development.

### WORLD-CLASS FACILITY LEGACIES INCLUDE:

- ▶ The Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre has doubled the number of Olympic-sized pools in Toronto (from two to four) and serves as the home and training venue for multiple national-level competitive sports organizations.
- ▶ Three City of Toronto track and field facilities, which served as training venues and were upgraded with new state-of-the-art track surfaces for the Games.
- ▶ The Ontario Place West Channel, which was retrofitted to serve as a premier flat water venue for the Games and future events.
- ▶ The BMX Track at Centennial Park is Toronto's first competition-quality bike motocross facility.
- ▶ Improvements to the Etobicoke Olympium pool which served as a training site during the Games.

**SPORT DEVELOPMENT** legacies, initiated through the Host City Showcase Program, include:

- ▶ **Let's Get Coaching!** a community coach education program developed by the City of Toronto in partnership with the Coaches Association of Ontario and MLSE Foundation
- ▶ **Ready, Set, PLAY!** the City's physical literacy program for children
- ▶ **Toronto Sport Hall of Honour**, a recognition program celebrating those who have brought honour to Toronto through sport

With the success of the Games there has never been a better time to strengthen Toronto's sport system. The Sport Plan will sustain and optimize the impact of these legacies so that residents and communities can continue to benefit.

## 2.2 Benefits of Sport

Sport participation significantly contributes to the quality of life for both Toronto residents and communities. Impact on quality of life is commonly framed in terms of the benefits realized through participation. A fulsome understanding of these benefits can be used to promote the value of sport, encourage participation, advocate for sport, maximize positive program outcomes and inform investment.

In 1992, Parks and Recreation Ontario developed the Benefits Catalogue outlining the wide range of personal, social, economic and environmental benefits that can be realized through participation in recreation, sports, fitness, arts, culture and parks activities. The catalogue continues to evolve with the growing



understanding of the importance of recreation and leisure activities. All benefits are supported with updated evidence-based research that is accessible on the 'Benefits Hub' at <http://benefitshub.ca>.

#### **BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUAL PHYSICAL HEALTH AND EXTENDED LIFE EXPECTANCY:**

- ▶ Reduced risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, diabetes and site-specific cancers (especially of the colon, breast and lungs)
- ▶ Prevention of osteoporosis and arthritis, and rehabilitation of back problems
- ▶ Sustained healthy body weight and prevention of obesity

#### **BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUAL MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING:**

- ▶ Reduced stress, anxiety and depression
- ▶ Increased self-esteem and positive self-image
- ▶ Associated with increased levels of overall life satisfaction
- ▶ Reduced feelings of isolation, loneliness and alienation

#### **BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY:**

- ▶ Help build social skills and stimulate participation in the community
- ▶ Foster a sense of belonging and pride in the community
- ▶ Create opportunities to understand and build upon cultural differences

#### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS:**

- ▶ Improved work performance through increased productivity, as well as decreased absenteeism, staff turnover and accidents
- ▶ Reduced health care, intervention and social assistance costs

## **2.3 Policy Context**

### **Parks, Forestry and Recreation Service Plans**

**THE SPORT PLAN** builds on and continues to advance the achievements of the **RECREATION SERVICE PLAN 2013-2017**. It outlines the role of the City in meeting the recreation needs of Torontonians and identifies guiding principles for the planning and delivery of recreation programs, including sports.

**QUALITY:** Providing the highest quality programs and services to enhance the health, quality of life and wellbeing of residents.

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** Providing recreation programs and services of social, economic and physical benefit to all participants and that create a sense of community, belonging and vitality.

**INCLUSION:** Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access and participate in programs and services that are planned, delivered, and managed in a way that recognizes diversity and encourages participation of marginalized and racialized people and groups.

**EQUITABLE ACCESS:** Providing equitable recreation access on a geographic and demographic basis for all residents of Toronto.

## **Other City of Toronto Strategies**

The Sport Plan aligns with Parks, Forestry and Recreation's mandate and Council-approved priorities that support healthy lifestyles, community engagement and equitable access. Specific recommendations that further inclusive sport will support City strategic plans including, but not limited to:

- ▶ City of Toronto Strategic Actions 2013-2018
- ▶ Raising the Village: Measuring the Well-being of Children and Families in Toronto



- ▶ **TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy**
- ▶ **Toronto Newcomer Strategy**
- ▶ **Toronto Senior Strategy: Towards an Age-Friendly City**
- ▶ **TSNS 2020: Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy**
- ▶ **Youth Equity Strategy**

These recommendations will support the quality of life for diverse communities by reducing barriers and increasing inclusive participation in recreational sport.

## Provincial and National Policies

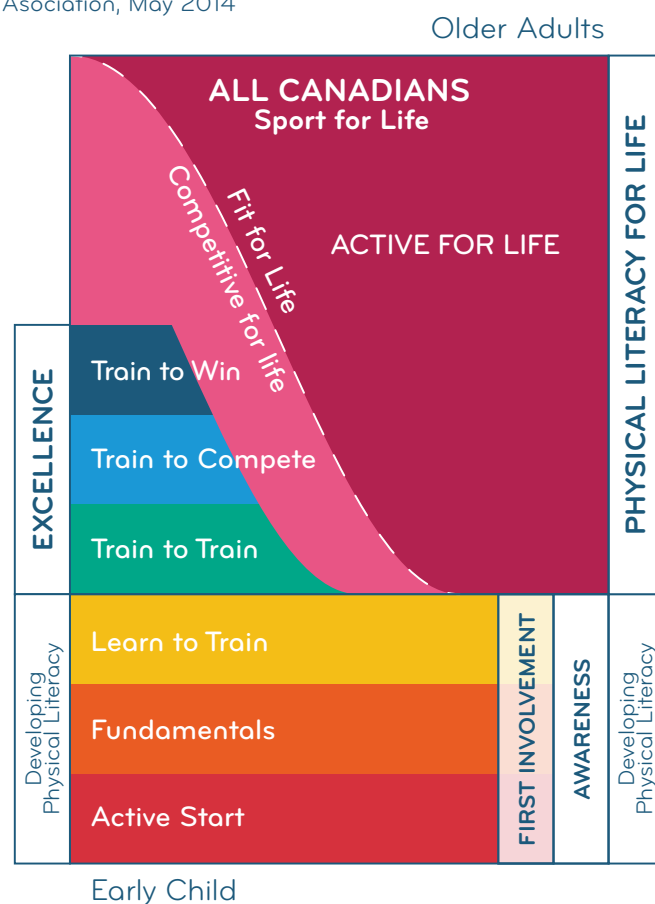
Provincial and national sport and recreation policies provide guiding practices for the Sport Plan.

In **Game ON**, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport identifies three priorities for developing sport in Ontario: participation, development and excellence. The provincial participation plan focuses on improving safety in organized sport, ensuring opportunities to participate and providing a positive sport experience. The province establishes direction for reducing barriers to participation and engaging inclusive and diverse populations in organized sport; specifically aboriginal people, the aging population, children in low income families, newcomers, people with disabilities, and women and girls.

The revised **Canadian Sport Policy** sets directions for the period 2012-2022 and establishes goals and objectives in various contexts of participation. 'Introduction to Sport' focuses on ensuring Canadians have the necessary foundation for participation in sport, including the fundamental skills, knowledge and attitudes to value and feel comfortable participating in sport. 'Recreational Sport' emphasizes the positive impact of sport on the physical, mental and psychological well-being

of participants as well as the importance of quality and accessible opportunities, particularly for under-represented and/or marginalized groups. 'Sport for Development' recognizes the impact of sport and advocates its use as a vehicle of economic and social development. The achievement of goals across these contexts relies on enhanced collaboration and productive linkages between organizations involved in sport across all sectors.

**"Physical literacy** is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life." —The International Physical Literacy Association, May 2014



Modified from the Sport for Life Long-Term Athlete Development Framework rectangle.

The **Canadian Sport for Life** movement advances the Canadian Sport Policy by working to improve the quality of sport and physical activity across Canada. Central to this movement is the Long-Term Athlete Development framework—a seven-stage training,



competition and recovery framework. It guides an individual's experiences across all ages and through all stages of sport participation, emphasizing the importance of physical literacy as the foundation to lifelong participation and the key factors of quality sport. This common framework facilitates alignment of sport programming across sectors, organizations and specific sports. Since 2005, the Long-Term Athlete Development framework has been adopted by every national sport organization in Canada. Supplements to the framework address the needs of specific communities, including Aboriginal peoples, seniors, girls and athletes with disabilities.

The Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing was developed by the

Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and formally endorsed by Canadian provinces and territories in 2015. It advocates a renewed commitment to recreation, emphasizes the benefits of recreation to individual and community wellbeing, and provides a guideline to support coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related sectors across Canada. Goals identified by the framework to which the Sport Plan aligns include: foster active, healthy living through recreation, and increase inclusion and access to recreation. Priorities established to improve access and inclusion address economic disadvantage, particularly by children, youth and older adults, as well as people of diverse and racialized backgrounds, Aboriginal peoples, gender and gender identity, and all abilities.

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## 2.4 Plan Development

The development of the Sport Plan was informed by a range of extensive research and consultation activities.

### Environmental Scan

- ▶ Review of Parks, Forestry and Recreation's current delivery of sport programs and services
- ▶ Audit of Parks, Forestry and Recreation Sport partnerships that support both innovative programming and the development of sport infrastructure
- ▶ Demographic projections and sport trends analysis focusing on Toronto's anticipated future

sport needs and interests

- ▶ Review of best practices across Canada examining the sport programs, services, policies and development strategies of other Canadian municipalities, particularly municipalities with large populations, recent sport development strategies and/or serving diverse communities

### Consultation

The Sport Plan is informed by broad and inclusive consultation strategy that was designed to capture the needs and interests of Toronto residents, the perspectives of community sport organizations and stakeholders, and the knowledge and expertise of City staff and other sport authorities.

#### Sport Plan Internal Working Group

#### 24 City staff

with knowledge and expertise on the range of City sport programs and services, as well as the Chair of the Toronto Sports Council

Input and alignment across Parks, Forestry and Recreation branches and City Divisions, including Economic Development and Culture; Social Development, Finance and Administration; and Toronto Public Health



**Community partners  
and stakeholders survey****132 people**

from 124 organizations

Feedback on organizational  
needs and collaborations**Community Sport  
Organization  
consultations at the  
Toronto Sport Summit****136 people**

from 60 organizations

Detailed discussion on  
best methods for capacity  
building, collaboration and  
communication**Resident survey and 14  
pop-up consultations****546 people**Feedback on sport interests,  
programs and participation**10 Focus groups with  
community partners  
that work with diverse  
communities****120 people**

from 77 organizations

Discussion on inclusive  
practices and programs,  
as well as the needs  
and interests of diverse  
communities**5 Staff information and  
consultation sessions****109 staff**from the Community  
Recreation BranchHigh-level discussion  
on sport programming  
priorities and directions  
with community sport  
organizations**Staff survey****177 staff**from Parks, Forestry  
and Recreation across  
operations from the  
front-line to managementFeedback on sport interests,  
program planning and  
interactions with community  
sport organizations**Sport Plan  
Reference Group**Expertise, guidance and  
feedback on plan pillars and  
prioritiesRepresentatives from 19  
organizationsAboriginal Sport and  
Wellness Council of OntarioCanadian Association for  
the Advancement of Women  
and Sport and Physical  
ActivityCanadian Sport Institute  
OntarioCoaches Association of  
OntarioCanadian Tire Jumpstart  
Charities

Jays Care Foundation

Ministry of Tourism, Culture  
and Sport

MLSE Launchpad

Ontario Senior Games  
Association

OUTSPORT Toronto

PRO-ACTION Cops &amp; Kids

The 519

Toronto Catholic District  
School BoardToronto District School  
Board

Toronto Foundation

Toronto Newcomer Office

Toronto Pan Am Sports  
Centre

Variety Village

YMCA of Greater Toronto

## 3. CURRENT LANDSCAPE

### 3.1 Overview of the Toronto Sport System

**SPORT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES** in Toronto are provided by a variety of organizations across the recreation, sport, education, and health and social services sectors. Below is a brief overview of some key stakeholders in this system, followed by a more detailed summary of the role of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

#### Recreation

The City of Toronto is a major provider of recreational and community sport programs and services, both through the direct delivery of programs and services as well as the provision of community infrastructure. In addition, a number of agencies and organizations such as the Association of Community Centres and the Arena Boards of Management receive City funding and/or operate City-owned assets. Other independent, non-profit multi-service providers that provide recreational and instructional sport programming include the YMCA, Neighbourhood Centres, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Variety Village.

#### Sport

The Toronto sport sector is large and varied. It includes the Toronto Sports Council which serves as an advocate for sport in the city, facilitates networking across the system and collaborates with community groups to implement capacity building projects. There are many not-for-profit and volunteer-driven community sport organizations and a variety of commercial sport clubs that deliver programming and league play. They range from local, informal groups with a few dozen participants to district, regional or city-wide organizations with hundreds of members. They operate in City assets, school properties or have their own facilities. Toronto

and the Greater Toronto Area is also home to many not-for-profit Provincial Sport and Multi-Sport Organizations that serve as governing bodies for their specific sport; develop their sport across the province; provide a competitive pathway for athlete development; recruit and train coaches, volunteers and officials; and encourage participation at both the competitive and recreational levels. They establish shared program standards and provide support to affiliated organizations at the community level, such as club insurance.

#### Education

Toronto schools, including the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Toronto District School Board, Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique and many private schools provide introductory sport training for children and youth, both within class and as extracurricular activities, including intramural and competitive sport leagues. Schools are also major facility owners who provide access through permits to other program providers and community groups.

Toronto has a strong post-secondary education sector that maintains some of the largest and high-quality sport facilities in the city. These institutions provide facility access, especially for events, run community programming such as summer sport camps, provide recreational sport programming for students, staff and alumni, and have competitive varsity sport programs. They are also important centres for the development of research and expertise on sport and participation.



## Health and Social Services

Health and social service providers play an important role in educating Torontonians on the importance of physical literacy and the benefits of sport and physical activity. Some agencies directly deliver and/or support programming

in the community that deliberately uses sport to advance positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Many organizations make important contributions to research-based knowledge that increases understandings of participation in sport and physical activity.

with image courtesy of ParaSport Ontario





## 3.2 Role of Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION** delivers and supports a diverse range of opportunities for all residents—especially children, youth and older adults—to participate in recreational sport.

### Direct Sport Program Delivery

Affordable sport-related programming is a large part of the services the Community Recreation Branch of Parks, Forestry and Recreation delivers to Torontonians. Sport-related refers to sport-specific, multi-sport and sport foundational programs. A sport foundational program is one in which participants develop the skills required to participate in certain sports; for example, learning to skate is a necessary foundation for playing hockey.

Sport-related programs and services provided by Parks, Forestry and Recreation focus on creating introductory and recreational opportunities that support lifelong participation. These opportunities align with the Physical Literacy (Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learn to Train) and Active for Life stages of the Canadian Sport for Life Long-Term Athlete Development framework. Programs are delivered to residents in two ways: as a registered program or a drop-in program.

### Registered Programs

Registered programs are supervised by Community Recreation staff and consist of several classes that run over a period of time; for example, many registered programs are delivered in weekly one-hour sessions over the course of nine weeks. Sport-related registered programs are instructional in nature and offer participants opportunities for progressive skill development, either for sport-specific or foundational skills.

Community Recreation delivered over 46,000 registered sport-related programs in 2016 to almost 300,000 participants; this is almost 60% of all registered programs offered.

Children, twelve years of age and under, account for 86% of sport-related program registrations.

The category with the highest number of registrations across all age groups is water sports (including Learn-to-Swim programs). The second most popular sport category varied by age group: for early child, it was ice sports (including Learn-to-Skate programs); for children and youth, it was team sports (e.g. volleyball and basketball); for adults, it was racquet sports (e.g. badminton and tennis); and for older adults, it was target sports (e.g. darts and bocce). Soccer and basketball had the highest number of registrations for sport-specific programs.

55% of participants registered in sport-related programs identified as male. There were more male than female participants registered in all categories of sport programs with the exception of gymnastics. The largest gender gap was in team sports registrations for children and youth.

### Drop-in Programs

Drop-in or leisure programming is the top sport program delivery type residents indicated was of interest to them. This format accommodates busy schedules by allowing for flexible attendance, as opposed to registered programs, that involve committing to weekly attendance at a specific day and time. Community Recreation delivered over 4,000 sport-related drop-in programs in 2016, providing more than 250,000 hours of opportunities to participate and generating almost 4,000,000 program visits. Water sports and ice sports are the sport-related drop-in programs offered most frequently, followed by racquet and team sports.

### Support for Community Sport Organizations

In addition to the direct delivery of sport programs, Parks, Forestry and Recreation supports further opportunities to participate by providing other organizations with access to sport infrastructure. Over 135,000 sport-related permits



were issued for almost 440,000 hours of use in 2016. The most popular types of bookings were ball diamonds, ice surfaces (outdoor and arenas) and sport fields. Permits are prioritized for not-for-profit organizations that provide recreational opportunities for Toronto children and youth, followed by similar organizations providing recreational programming for older adults and adults. Last in the order of allocation are private and commercial groups and individuals. Almost half of bookings for 2016 were by not-for-profit organizations that provide child and youth sport programming for Toronto residents. Only 6% of permits were issued to commercial organizations.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff work closely with sports organizations, community groups and agencies to ensure that facilities support quality recreation opportunities and facilitate the delivery of sport programming and special events. However, it is important to note that the City bids for and organizes the hosting of sport

events through the Economic Development and Culture Division. These activities are outlined in and guided by the Council-approved City of Toronto Bidding and Hosting Strategy for Significant Special Events. Parks, Forestry and Recreation supports their efforts through the provision of facilities and other services. Tourism Toronto also plays an important role in event hosting. They assist sport organizations throughout the hosting process, including supporting bid-writing, brokering venues and coordinating accommodations.

### 3.3 What We Heard and What We Learned

Key findings from consultation and research activities were validated by the Sport Plan Reference Group. The following is a summary of findings that formed the basis of the Sport Plan thematic pillars and recommendations. ►



#### Free and low-cost opportunities to participate in sport

The City of Toronto is committed to increasing access to recreation, including sport programs. Parks, Forestry and Recreation

provides several options for accessing free and low-cost programs, including sport and sport foundational programs.

► **Free Drop-in Programs:** Many community centres offer free recreation drop-in programs including sport programs for children, youth and older adults.

► **Older Adult Discounts:** Adults over 60 years of age who register for adult programs receive a 50% discount.

► **Free Centres:** The City operates 39 community centres at which all City-delivered, registered and

drop-in programs for Torontonians in all age groups and permits for local non-profit groups are free. These centres increase access to programs in neighbourhoods with high levels of low income by eliminating program fees.

► **Financial Assistance for Low Income Families:** The City of Toronto's Welcome Policy provides an annual fee subsidy to help low income individuals and families who live in Toronto access City-operated recreation programs. Anyone receiving social assistance (Ontario Works) and living in Toronto is pre-approved to receive this credit.

Findings related to building the capacity of Toronto's sport system for the delivery of quality programming include:

- ▶ Canadian Sport for Life identifies the frequent lack of collaboration between the health, education, recreation and sport sectors as a systemic barrier to participation in sport and physical activity. Most municipal sport plans specify a shared leadership model as an enabling factor for successful plan implementation. Stakeholders across the sport system demonstrate an interest in and willingness to work collectively.
- ▶ Community sport organizations have limited interactions with the City and each other. However, there is significant interest in networking opportunities that would encourage discussion across the sport system and establish a foundation for future collaborations.
- ▶ The Toronto Sports Council estimates that there are over two thousand community sport organizations currently operating in the city,

many of which are unknown. The lack of a full understanding of members of the sport community complicates the collection of reliable system data and trends analysis, the promotion of capacity building opportunities,



## Sport Partnerships

Corporate partners support many important sport initiatives, both in collaboration with the City and other program or facility providers. These initiatives facilitate participation by funding sport programs, access to sport equipment and facility refurbishments. Partnership highlights from 2016, include:

- ▶ The City of Toronto, in partnership with MLSE Foundation, Toronto Community Housing and the Daniels Corporation, opened the Regent Park Athletic Grounds in June. This facility includes a running track, a refurbished hockey rink, a field house, a basketball court and an artificial turf field suitable for soccer and cricket play.
- ▶ Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities made accessible a range of City-delivered sport opportunities for Toronto children and youth,

including introductory golf, a girls-only sport camp, a learn-to-swim program for children living in a shelter and a skating library for youth.

- ▶ In collaboration with the City, the Jays Care Foundation began planning Toronto's first fully-accessible baseball diamond to be located at Highview Park in Scarborough.



the referral of participants to programs, the coordination of programming and the potential for productive linkages.

► Community sport organizations would benefit from capacity building support; of particular interest are coach education as well as guidance on funding opportunities, grant writing, volunteer and governance training, shared program delivery models and education on permit processes.

► Rates of chronic disease associated with physical inactivity are on the rise. In order to support lifelong participation, physical literacy needs to be nurtured in all sport experiences and across all age groups.

► Corporate partners make vital contributions to sport in Toronto by supporting initiatives that facilitate participation, particularly by Toronto's diverse communities. This includes funding participant access to programs, sport equipment and facility refurbishments.

*Findings related to raising the profile of sport in Toronto, promoting the benefits of participation and connecting people to opportunities in sport include:*

► The benefits of sport participation in terms of physical health are widely accepted, but the full range of benefits to both individuals and communities is less commonly understood.

► There is a strong need for consolidated, comprehensive and current information about sport in Toronto. Technology has made it possible to quickly publish and access information. The problem has become not just making information available, but how best to facilitate access to the information people need to lead quality lifestyles. Finding information about sport programs and opportunities is a commonly cited barrier to participation and an important dimension of social equity; diverse communities routinely have greater difficulty accessing information.

► Recreational sport relies heavily on volunteers in a variety of capacities, including as coaches,

officials and administrators. In a culture of busy lifestyles and declining volunteerism, recruitment and retention is a challenge for many community sport organizations.

► Role models from sport legends to community-level figures and peer ambassadors are an effective means of encouraging and inspiring participation, especially by children and youth.

*Findings related to supporting and increasing participation in sport by diverse communities include:*

► A welcoming and inclusive environment is one of the most important program features, especially for those who are new or returning to sport. Fostering an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome and encouraged to participate in sport requires knowledgeable sport instructors.

► Sport is a powerful vehicle for engaging residents, including youth, and helping them to become involved in their community. Youth who participate in sport benefit from enhanced academic achievement, the opportunity to cultivate positive values and life skills, and the reduced likelihood of engaging in harmful behaviours. Providing vulnerable youth with opportunities in sport leadership supports positive development that helps youth realize their potential.

► Sport leaders and coaches play a vital role in supporting participation. People are more likely to participate and feel more comfortable in a program led by someone with whom they can identify and/or regard as a peer.

► Diverse communities face many common barriers to participation in sport but they may also experience unique challenges. While knowledge of the range and complexity of barriers (e.g. socio-economic, organizational, communication, cultural and gender) has grown, there is still much that can be learned through sustained engagement and continued research. ■





## 4. SPORT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS





## 4.1 Guiding Principles

**PARKS, FORESTRY & RECREATION** contributes to Toronto's quality of life for both individuals and communities. To ensure that the Sport Plan contributes to this mandate, recommendations are community-driven and participant-focused.

► **Community-driven** means that planning is guided by ongoing and meaningful engagement with diverse communities to ensure locally responsive programming and promote sustainable sport development.

► **Participant-focused** means that programs and services are delivered in a way that promotes a positive sport experience, providing opportunities for the development of physical literacy and supporting lifelong participation for all residents.

The following 14 recommendations are organized in three thematic pillars, each with an outcome statement. ►



## 4.2 Capacity Building

### OUTCOME:

A strengthened sport system that works collectively towards shared goals to support lifelong participation in sport.

### OVERVIEW:

Many organizations contribute to Toronto's sport system, but commonly work independently of one another. Limited formal networks to connect the numerous stakeholders and program providers across the system exacerbate this silo effect. Cultivating shared leadership and creating enhanced opportunities for engagement will facilitate collaboration between organizations to build capacity and contribute to the successful realization of the Sport Plan.

Sustainability is an ongoing challenge for many community sport organizations. Providing opportunities for leadership development, supporting organizational excellence and sharing program standards will help build the capacity of community sport organizations as well as the Toronto sport system as a whole. A strengthened sport system will provide increased quality opportunities for residents to participate in recreational sport.

### Toronto Sport Summit

The City of Toronto, in collaboration with Toronto Sports Council and Humber School of Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism, hosted the Toronto Sport Summit on November 19, 2016. This event provided a consultation, learning and networking opportunity for Toronto community-sport leaders, as well as representatives of clubs, leagues, multi-sport organizations, funding partners and other community sport program providers.

More than 220 members of the Toronto sport

1. Establish a Toronto Sport Resource Group to help guide the implementation of the Sport Plan.

2. Strengthen interactions across the sport system through sustained engagement and communication between stakeholders.

3. Establish a registry of Toronto community sport organizations.

4. Support community sport organizations by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

5. Incorporate the development of physical literacy into City-delivered sport programs through enhanced and evidence-based delivery models.

6. Develop an intentional *CITY OF SPORT* partnership framework to catalyze sponsorship and collaboration with institutions, donors and the private sector.



community, including almost 140 delegates from sport-related organizations across the city and 80 Humber Sport Management and Recreation students participated. Over 60 different sport-related groups participated; this tremendous range of attendees reflects the diversity of sport interests and opportunities available in Toronto.





## Ready, Set, PLAY!

Ready, Set, PLAY! is the City of Toronto's physical literacy program. It launched at over 60 community centres in fall

2016 in conjunction with a physical literacy awareness campaign. Program development was grounded in intensive research on physical literacy, as well

as testing and input from experts, staff, participants and parents. To date, over 700 Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff have been trained in National Coaching Certification Program Fundamental Movement Skills and a specialized Ready, Set, PLAY! physical literacy module. Program activities are designed to introduce children to the basics of moving confidently and competently in a fun and active environment, preparing them for participation in a variety of sports and activities.

## 4.3 Awareness

### OUTCOME:

An established *CITY OF SPORT* brand that effectively promotes the value of sport, inspires participation and facilitates access to information

### OVERVIEW:

Generating awareness is integral to the development of physical literacy and life-long participation in sport. This means cultivating well-informed understanding of the range of benefits realized through participation in sport, connecting residents to programs and opportunities, and inspiring involvement in all aspects of sport.

7. Work with City divisions and agencies to deliver an annual public awareness and social marketing campaign that raises the profile and visibility of sport in Toronto and the *CITY OF SPORT* strategy and identity.

8. Investigate potential online platforms that would facilitate access to information about community sport across program providers.

9. Leverage communication channels, particularly digital platforms, to effectively connect people to volunteer opportunities in community sport organizations.

10. Inspire lifelong participation through the recognition and celebration of the sport accomplishments of Torontonians.



### Toronto Sport Hall of Honour

Launched in 2016, the Toronto Sport Hall of Honour celebrates the

exceptional contributions and accomplishments of those who have inspired and/or brought recognition to the City of Toronto through sport. It recognizes all levels of

performance and ability with awards in ten categories, such as: Athletes, Team and Coach of the Year, Corporate Builder, *CITY OF SPORT* Lifetime Achievement, Sport Legend, and Spirit of Sport Diversity and Inclusion. Inductees are featured on a dramatic video display wall at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre that is accessible to the public and, to date, includes Marilyn Bell DiLascio, Bobby Baun, Johnny Bower, Ellen Burka, Andre De Grasse, Angela James, Adam Lancia, Rosie MacLennan, Victoria Nolan and Milos Raonic. The full list of inductees and biographies is available at [toronto.ca/tshh](http://toronto.ca/tshh).



## 4.4 Inclusive Sport

### OUTCOME:

Progressive policies and practices that reduce systemic barriers and support increased participation in sport by diverse communities.

### OVERVIEW:

As a significant pathway to wellbeing, sport is an important dimension of social equity. Recreational sport opportunities are of benefit to all Toronto residents. However, some communities experience greater barriers to participation and routinely demonstrate lower than average rates of participation. Additional efforts need to be directed to increase sport participation by these diverse communities.

Groups with low participation rates and/or that are identified by the City of Toronto as communities of focus include: Aboriginal Peoples, Children and Families with Low Income,

Girls and Women, Immigrants and Newcomers, LGBTQ+, Residents of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, Older Adults, Persons who are Homeless or Under-housed, Persons with Disabilities and Youth.

**11.** Develop an inclusive sport practical guide and training module that fosters a safe and positive environment for recreational sport.

**12.** Sustain pathways for youth to access meaningful employment in sport through the Toronto Sport Leadership Program.

**13.** Cultivate diversity in community sport leadership by promoting development opportunities.

**14.** Through research and ongoing consultation with diverse communities, increase understanding of barriers to participation in sport and effective methods of engagement to identify responsive opportunities and services.

### Let's Get Coaching!

The Let's Get Coaching! program was developed by the City of Toronto, in partnership with MLSE Foundation and the Coaches Association of Ontario, to support quality community coaching. The program successfully trained over 3,000 residents in National Coach Certification modules at no-cost. The contributions of 27 Provincial Sport Organizations ensured the program addressed a range of sport-specific and abilities. The program has



created many opportunities that advance diverse sport leadership; Parks, Forestry and Recreation worked closely with local agencies that serve youth, newcomers, the LGBTQ+

community, and Aboriginal peoples to promote awareness of the program and design special program sessions that respond to community needs and interests.



## The Toronto Sport Leadership Program

The Toronto Sport Leadership Program is a collaborative intervention model supported by the City of Toronto, YMCA of Greater Toronto, Toronto District School Board, Toronto

Catholic District School Board, Toronto Foundation and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. The program invests in Toronto's vulnerable youth by fostering positive pathways to development through sport and leadership training that prepares participants

for meaningful employment. Participants enroll in their choice of aquatics or sport streams to gain the job-readiness skills and national training qualifications to become employed in positions in their community such as sport or swim instructors, rink guards, camp counsellors, lifeguards or wading pool attendants. Over the past 12 years the program has created opportunities for more than 2,200 youth.

## The Aboriginal Youth Leadership Experience, 2017

In celebration of Canada 150, the City of Toronto, in collaboration with the Toronto Foundation, Community Foundations Canada, Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, developed a special summer session of the Toronto Sport Leadership Program. This session engaged Aboriginal youth

and recognized Aboriginal contributions to Canadian sport culture. 20 Aboriginal youth were recruited to participate in the program; they received national training and certifications, volunteered at the North American Indigenous Games, and received support to complete the application process to become a City sport instructor. Successful candidates were employed by the City to provide lacrosse demonstrations and introductory try-it sessions at summer camps.













# 5. REALIZING SUCCESS

## 5.1 Implementation

**PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION** will initiate implementation of the Sport Plan by engaging key members of the Toronto sport system through the establishment of the Sport Plan Resource Group. Working collaboratively, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Sport Plan Resource Group, partners and staff will develop annual workplans. These will include progress measures and identify the programs, projects and initiatives that will advance the implementation of recommendations.

The following priorities will be actioned over the next five years:

### Short-term Priorities

(Year One)

- ▶ Strengthen interactions across the Toronto sport system, including hosting an annual Toronto Sport Summit
- ▶ Sustain the Toronto Sport Leadership Program
- ▶ Continue engagement with diverse communities that was initiated through Sport Plan consultations

### Medium-Term Priorities

(Years Two and Three)

- ▶ Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise, including coach education through the Let's Get Coaching! program
- ▶ Develop a *CITY OF SPORT* partnership framework
- ▶ Promote sport leadership

development opportunities to diverse communities

- ▶ Connect volunteers to opportunities in community sport
- ▶ Inspire Torontonians through the recognition and celebration of sport achievements

### Long-Term Priorities

(Years Four and Five)

- ▶ Develop an inclusive sport practical guide and training module
- ▶ Further integrate physical literacy into the delivery of sport programs
- ▶ Establish a registry of community sport organizations
- ▶ Increase public awareness of the benefits of sport and opportunities to participate
- ▶ Identify a potential digital platform for information about community sport



#### REALIZATION OF THE SPORT PLAN WILL RELY ON THE FOLLOWING ENABLING FACTORS:

- ▶ Collaboration—Working together towards shared goals, from the creation of partnerships to deliver a local program to joint initiatives that impact sport participation across the entire city.
- ▶ Leadership—Steering change by developing, modelling and sharing best practices for organizational excellence and quality sport program delivery.
- ▶ Innovation—Embracing all aspects of modernization that can strengthen the sport system and/or improve program delivery, including streamlining processes, fostering and implementing new ideas, and leveraging technology.
- ▶ Engagement—Consulting to ensure that sport programs respond to the interests and needs of participants and communities.

## 5.2 What does success look like?

#### THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPORT PLAN WILL REALIZE A TORONTO SPORT SYSTEM IN WHICH:

- ▶ Community sport stakeholders learn from one another, share resources and work collectively.
- ▶ There is a clearer understanding of the scope and capacity of sport delivery in Toronto.
- ▶ Residents of all ages benefit from being physically literate.
- ▶ There is an increased awareness of the range of benefits realized by being active for life.
- ▶ Modernization facilitates access to capacity building and promotional information.
- ▶ Volunteers with a passion for sport can access coach and leadership training and are connected to opportunities across program providers.
- ▶ Role models inspire and support increased

lifelong participation in sport.

- ▶ Inclusive practices that foster a safe and welcoming environment are implemented and supported across program providers.
- ▶ More youth gain valuable training and important life skills, and are meaningfully employed by Parks, Forestry and Recreation and other program providers.
- ▶ Sustained engagement and innovative partnerships support increased participation in sport by diverse communities.

## 5.3 Conclusion

Parks, Forestry and Recreation recognizes the importance of participation in sport and the many benefits it provides for both individuals and communities. Implementation of the Sport Plan over the next five years will build capacity for the delivery of quality sport programs and services, effectively promote the value of sport, support lifelong participation and ensure that the sport system is inclusive and responsive to the changing needs of residents. The plan is intended as a guiding resource for City staff and community sport organizations, as well as all the other partners from across the recreation, sport, education and health and social services sectors.

Through collaboration and embracing the Canadian Sport for Life framework, the Toronto sport system can increase opportunities for Torontonians to develop physical literacy and be active for life. Whether providing capacity building initiatives, increasing awareness of the benefits of sport and the many opportunities available, or ensuring all residents enjoy meaningful sport experiences, each sector brings something unique and collectively make the sport system stronger for everyone. The Sport Plan is the foundation for a strengthened Toronto community sport system that is vibrant and sustainable. ■





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## 7. APPENDICES

### 7.1 Sport Plan Consultations

The City of Toronto, in collaboration with Toronto Sports Council, hosted a series of consultations from November 2016 to April 2017 as part of its Sport Plan research and consultation process, including: focus groups with organizations that work with diverse communities, a Parasport session and consultations with community sport stakeholders at the Toronto Sport Summit.

Comments collected during these discussions helped inform the framing of Sport Plan recommendations. In total, 256 individuals representing 137 organizations interested in community sport and/or the needs of diverse communities attended consultations.

<b>Aboriginal Peoples Focus Group</b> hosted in collaboration with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto Friday, February 3, 2017 Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, 30 College Street	<b>8 participants</b> including representatives from 4 organizations
<b>Access, Equity and Diversity Focus Group</b> hosted in collaboration with The 519 Monday, January 9, 2017 The 519, 519 Church Street	<b>12 participants</b> including representatives from 9 organizations
<b>Family and Children's Services Focus Group</b> Tuesday, February 21, 2017 City Hall, 100 Queen Street West	<b>11 participants</b> including representatives from 11 organizations
<b>Older Adults Focus Group</b> Wednesday, February 8, 2017 North York Civic Centre, 5100 Yonge Street	<b>10 participants</b> including representatives from 4 organizations
<b>Ontario Senior Games Association Focus Group</b> Friday, May 12, 2017 Etobicoke Civic Centre, 399 The West Mall	<b>6 representatives</b> of the Ontario Senior Games Association
<b>Persons who are Homeless or Under-housed Focus Group</b> hosted in collaboration with the Downtown East Softball League Friday, April 5, 2017 John Innes Community Centre, 150 Sherbourne Street	<b>3 participants</b> from 3 organizations



<b>Persons with Disabilities Focus Group</b> Monday, January 30, 2017 City Hall, 100 Queen St West	<b>23 participants</b> including representatives from 20 organizations
<b>Neighbourhood Improvement Areas Focus Group</b> hosted in collaboration with Social Development, Finance and Administration Tuesday, January 17, 2017 City Hall, 100 Queen Street West	<b>16 participants</b> including representatives from 10 organizations
<b>Youth Focus Group</b> Tuesday, January 31, 2017 City Hall, 100 Queen Sreet West	<b>8 participants</b> including representatives from 5 organizations





## Focus Groups with Diverse Communities

**A SERIES OF FOCUS GROUPS** was designed to engage service agencies and other organizations that work with communities that have low rates of participation in sport, are identified by the City as an equity-seeking group, and/or are areas of focus for Community Recreation.

### Highlights

At each focus group, participants were provided an overview of the Sport Plan objectives, scope and development process. They were then engaged in a discussion guided by the following questions:

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1. In the Sport Plan Resident Survey, respondents selected "a welcoming and inclusive environment" as the most important feature they considered, or would consider, when selecting a recreational sport program. How can we foster a welcoming and inclusive sport environment?

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2. Are there specific programs that would encourage more inclusive sport participation?

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3. How can we collectively promote and encourage recreational sport participation?

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4. What other suggestions or advice would you like to provide the Sport Plan team about the needs and interests of the communities you work with?

Recurring comments across focus groups were sorted thematically and are summarized below.

### Awareness

► Information about programs and opportunities across Toronto should be easily accessible through a single point of access, but also be

available in multiple formats to suit individual needs and preferences.

► Engagement is not a one-time effort but something that needs to be cultivated and sustained over time

► Each community is unique, so engagement has to occur at the community level. Specific strategies should be designed to meet the preferences of each community.

► Collaboration should be fostered with existing networks, especially the schoolboards as they can facilitate engagement with parents of children and youth.

► Promotional materials need to be inclusive: represent the diversity of Toronto, be AODA compliant and use plain language.

► Community ambassadors and try-it events were seen as highly effective means of generating interest and awareness.

► Volunteer opportunities need to be promoted.

### Inclusive Sport

► Focus group participants stressed the importance of encouraging and facilitating participation in recreational sport as distinct from competitive sport.

► Attendees advocated for a holistic and inclusive view of sport, particularly emphasizing the social dimensions of participation.

► Programming should be reflective of the community for which it is intended.

► Front-line staff were seen as a crucial factor in determining the quality of participant experiences; participants stressed the importance of staff training and role of staff in creating a welcoming environment, particularly by reflecting the diversity of the community.

► Participants cited numerous barriers to participation; the most common were transportation, cost (fees and equipment) and navigating the sport system.

- ▶ Participants repeatedly cited the need for family and intergenerational programs.
- ▶ The need for more integrated and adapted programs was an area of interest across all focus groups. Other recurring areas of interest included: LGBT+, girls and women and sport for development programs for youth.

## Parasport Focus Group

Monday January 23, 2017

Etobicoke Civic Centre,  
399 The West Mall

**THE SPORT PLAN** project team met with 23 participants from 10 organizations to discuss strengthening and aligning the recreational Parasport system in Toronto, including members of the Ontario Parasport Collective and Adapted and Inclusive Recreation staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Participants were asked: How can we build Toronto's recreational Parasport system; consider what are the most impactful tools, resources and/or initiatives?

## Highlights

### IDEAS FOR TOOLS TO SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING, INCLUDING PROGRAM QUALITY:

- ▶ Equipment modification and sourcing guide
- ▶ Establishment of a shared strategy with specific goals as well as clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Program evaluation tools to support continuous improvement
- ▶ Network map with designated contact information
- ▶ Centres of excellence model that establishes spaces for networking, knowledge sharing and innovation

- ▶ Parasport coach and officials training modules
- ▶ Case studies of best practices and successful innovations

### IDEAS FOR TOOLS TO PROMOTE AWARENESS:

- ▶ Single source to access information that compiles program details across organizations, e.g. web portal, program registry
- ▶ Multi-channel engagement plan
- ▶ Inclusive communication guide covering topics such as a common language, incorporating positive imagery and accessible web design
- ▶ Planning guide for a sport fair for persons with disabilities including information sharing, assistance and try-it session ideas
- ▶ Introductory information sheets for specific sports, including rules and equipment specifications
- ▶ Try-a-sport referral form to facilitate the matching of interests and abilities to specific programs
- ▶ Recruitment strategy outlining methods, partners and materials

### IDEAS FOR TOOLS TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE SPORT:

- ▶ Inclusive sport statement
- ▶ Disability awareness training module for integration into standard staff training
- ▶ Guide compiling methods of integration and adaptation



# Toronto Sport Summit Consultations

Saturday, November 19, 2016

Humber College, North Campus

Sport Plan consultations were held at the Toronto Sport Summit, hosted by the City of Toronto, Toronto Sports Council and Humber School of Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism. 136 delegates from 60 sport-related organizations and services participated in discussions related to Toronto's community sport network, exploring issues of capacity building, collaboration and communication.

## Highlights

**1. What tools and resources would contribute to the growth and sustainability of your organization?**

- ▶ **Leadership and volunteer development:** volunteer database, shared training opportunities, policy development, coach training, business resources and training for board members
- ▶ **Facilities and permits:** tools and resources to address access, cost and quality of facilities, clear permit processes and reasonable response times, maintenance follow-up and inclusive spaces including gender neutral washrooms and change rooms
- ▶ **Networking and collaboration:** a centralized and dedicated communication platform, better access to schoolboard contacts, identified stakeholders with clearly defined roles, networking events, shared administration and a regularly updated registry of community sport organizations
- ▶ **Policy and planning support:** shared best practices, governance models and safety

strategies

- ▶ **Funding and resources:** list of funding opportunities, guidance on grant writing, fundraising assistance and access to insurance
- ▶ **Promotion and engagement:** collaboration with schoolboards to recruit participants, effective use of new technologies such as social media (especially when trying to engage youth), promoting the importance of physical literacy and promoting community sport organizations in City community centres
- ▶ **Research and data:** shared data regarding trends and the sport community as well as a mobile application that provides tracking information on sport program usage

**2. How can we collectively promote sport and connect Torontonians with opportunities to participate? What would a collaborative social media strategy, community sport website or sport participation campaign look like?**

### A. Social media strategy:

Social media was seen as an important vehicle for encouraging and facilitating sport participation. However, it was noted that effective use was time intensive and required specific skills, meaning that sustained engagement through social media is often a challenge. Collaborating with existing networks, for example schoolboards and libraries, was seen as a major opportunity to optimize the use of social media.

### B. Community sport website:

A centralized/multi-channel community sport website, including both the City and community sport organizations, was seen as a priority. Of particular interest were links to resources, up-to-date content and a message board or other communication forum to facilitate discussion between organizations. Ease of use for program participants was a priority, especially functional search filters.

### C. Sport participation campaign:

In order for a program to increase sport

participation to be effective, it was felt that it must occur at the grassroots level and incorporate peer and personal engagement. It should stress the range of benefits associated with sport participation (e.g. social and community benefits not just a focus on health and fitness).

#### **D. Other promotional methods:**

Try-it and other special events were seen as effective opportunities for promoting awareness of opportunities and participation. Summit attendees also expressed interest in attending future summits or other networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

#### **3. How can we work together to enhance sport programs and services to benefit all Torontonians?**

**Facilities:** Physical space was seen as playing an important role in fostering collaboration. Participants were interested in investigating ways to share space in order to reduce costs and address shortages.

**Schoolboards:** Connecting with the schoolboards was seen as both a challenge and an important opportunity. They are perceived as key contributors to community sport as both facility owners and a means of engaging participants.

**Corporate Partners:** These partnerships were seen as highly successful, for example Jayscare, Jumpstart and MLSE Foundation.

**Funding:** It was suggested that funding should be geared towards encouraging collaboration. The capacity to write successful grant applications was seen as a challenge and a strong area of interest for support.

**Volunteers:** Recruiting and retaining volunteers was seen as an ongoing challenge. Shared volunteer policies and training were seen as opportunities, as well as encouraging volunteer participation through corporate partnerships.

**Supporting Community Sport Organizations:** Supporting Toronto Sports Council was seen as a key strategy for helping community sport organizations.



## 7.2 Sport Plan Surveys

### Highlights from the Resident Survey

#### 546 Responses

**52%** Girl/Woman

**46%** Boy/Man

**2%** Prefer not to answer

**10%** Less than 13 years of age

**15%** 13 to 24 years of age

**29%** 25 to 39 years of age

**35%** 40 to 59 years of age

**9%** 60 years of age or older

**36%** Born in Canada

**16%** Lived in Canada less than 10 years

**11%** Lived in Canada 11 to 20 years

**7%** Lived in Canada 21 to 30 years

**8%** Lived in Canada over 30 years

**22%** Prefer not to answer

**71%** Households with children

**29%** Households with no children

#### 86% Participate in recreational sport

**72%** As a player

**42%** As a parent or guardian of a player

**26%** As a coach, official, classifier or volunteer

#### Top three sport program types of interest:

- ▶ League play
- ▶ Drop-in, unstructured or leisure opportunities
- ▶ Family programs

#### Top sport-specific areas of interest:

- ▶ Soccer
- ▶ Basketball
- ▶ Hockey
- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Volleyball
- ▶ Tennis

#### Top three features important when choosing a sport program or opportunity:

- ▶ Trained coaches or sport instructors
- ▶ Welcoming and inclusive environment
- ▶ Cost of registration or membership

#### Top three useful types of information on recreational sport:

- ▶ Opportunities located in the community
- ▶ Calendar of community sport events
- ▶ Directory of sport clubs, leagues and other program providers

#### Top three ways to receive information about recreational sport:

- ▶ Community sport website or mobile application
- ▶ Email or e-newsletter
- ▶ Social media

#### Top three barriers identified by non-participants:

- ▶ Lack of information about opportunities
- ▶ Cost of registration or membership
- ▶ Lack of the required skills

## Highlights from the Community Sport Organizations and Community Partners Survey

132 responses from  
124 unique organizations

### Membership size or number of participants annually:

26%	Less than 100
37%	100 to 500
9%	500 to 1000
23%	Over 1000
5%	Unable to estimate

### Catchment area:

32%	Local residential neighbourhood
19%	District-wide
5%	Beyond City limits
15%	Other

### District Breakdown:

19%	Scarborough
15%	Toronto-East York
15%	Etobicoke-York
11%	North York
27%	More than one district

### Top three sport program types of increased interest to members or participants:

- Youth programming
- Child programming
- Team sports

### Top sport-specific areas of increased interest:

- Soccer
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Hockey
- Cricket
- Paddle sports

### Top three current collaborations with other organizations:

- Exchange of information and expertise
- Service coordination e.g. scheduling
- Shared space for program delivery

### Top three immediate organizational priorities:

- Not enough funding
- Not enough participants
- Lack of storage space for equipment

### Top three useful capacity building resources:

- Funding opportunity workshop or guide
- Coach education
- Grant writing workshop or guide

### Top three useful communication and promotion tools:

- Directory of community sport organizations
- Community sport website
- Shared promotional opportunities



## Notes

[illegible]





