

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN BC



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL

Social infrastructure is the fabric that supports vital, healthy and prosperous communities. Places like parks, recreation centres, libraries, arts and cultural institutions, museums, trails, and sports facilities are where people gather, connect, learn, and grow.



BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) convenes a multi-sectoral table of BC's public, private and non-profit organizations. Together we explore changes and needs in the social environment in order to best plan for the essential requirements of complete communities, including connection to nature and one another.

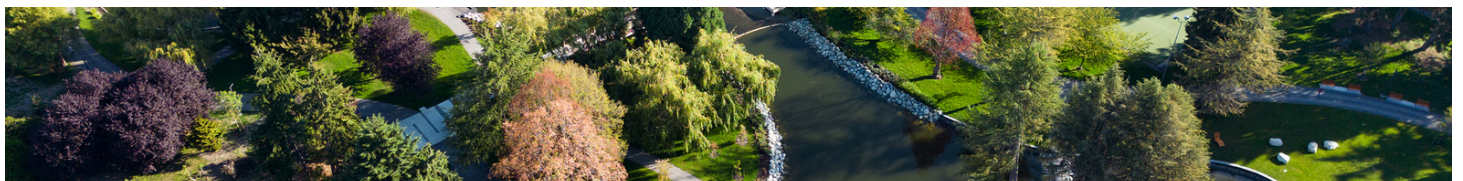
IT DRIVES ECONOMIC GROWTH

Investment in social infrastructure drives economic viability and supports complete communities. It creates and sustains jobs, attracts businesses, drives tourism and strengthens local economies — freeing up resources for economic development. Recreation, physical activity, and sport contribute an average of \$37.2 billion to Canada's GDP each year, covering recreation, amusement, sports sectors, and retail sales.¹

\$37.2B

Annual Economic
Impact to
Canada's GDP¹

BC cannot afford to wait. Without immediate investment, closures will outpace replacements, leaving entire communities without essential spaces and stagnating economic growth while healthcare, policing, and social costs continue to increase.



IT'S PREVENTIVE

Social infrastructure is critical preventive infrastructure. In 2022, the estimated health costs of physical inactivity in Canada totalled \$3.9 billion.¹ Today, 51% of adults and 61% of children and youth in Canada aren't meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines.²

\$3.9B

Cost of Physical
Inactivity in
Canada, 2022¹

Green spaces, libraries, and recreation centres are preventive tools that can decrease the burden on policing and healthcare systems — strengthening community resilience, advancing reconciliation, and fostering inclusion.

Investment in social infrastructure supports residents of all ages and backgrounds to live longer, more engaged and vital lives.



61% OF CHILDREN IN CANADA DON'T MEET PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

IT SUPPORTS PUBLIC SAFETY

Investing in social infrastructure is a proactive public safety strategy. It strengthens community safety and reduces crime by fostering connection, providing safe spaces, and addressing root causes before they require costly emergency responses

Recreation and sport programming also reduces crime and re-offending among at-risk youth, making social infrastructure a proven tool for building safer communities.³



AGING INFRASTRUCTURE IN BC NEEDS IMMEDIATE INVESTMENT

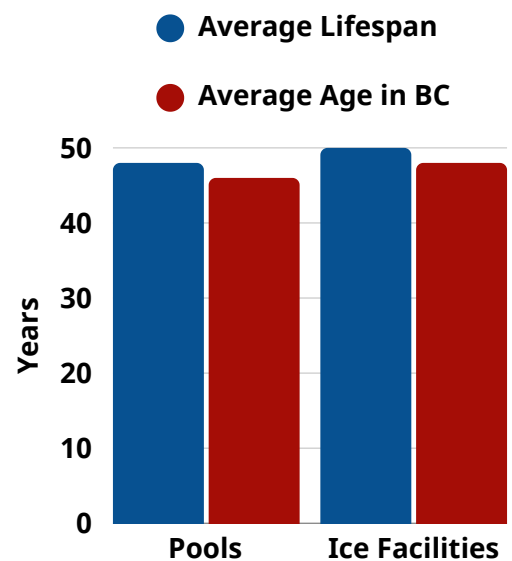
Aging infrastructure is already at a breaking point — not investing now means communities lose space today, and tomorrow.

Despite the far-reaching benefits of social infrastructure, its future is dire in BC. By 2030, many of BC's recreation and sport facilities will be at or past their expected lifespan.

At an average age of 45 years,⁴ BC's recreation and sport facilities are already nearing the end of their typical 35–53 year lifespan.⁵

Across Canada, one in three recreational or cultural facilities require investment by 2029. Between 30–35% are in fair condition to worse, and many are older than 50 years.⁶

To support population growth and equity, we must invest now in resilient, multi-use spaces that serve diverse communities and adapt to future needs.



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROVINCIAL COLLABORATIVE



SOURCES

- 1 [The Price of Inactivity: Measuring the Powerful Impact of Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in Canada, 2023.](#)
- 2-3 [Beyond the Boundaries: The Untold Value of Parks & Recreation Infrastructure: PART I: Infrastructure for Community Wellness, 2025.](#)
- 4 [Canadian Parks, Recreation and Sport Infrastructure Database, 2025.](#)
- 5 [Statistics Canada. Table 34-10-0183-01. Average expected useful life of new municipally owned culture, recreation and sport facilities, by urban and rural, and population size, Infrastructure Canada.](#)
- 6 [Informing the Future: The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card 2019.](#)