

Advancing the importance and benefits of recreation and parks

Research and Education



Repositioning Parks and Recreation



Benefits of Parks and Recreation Services

Community Engagement



PLAY WORKS

Policy Development



Access Policy Framework



Charter for Recreation and Parks

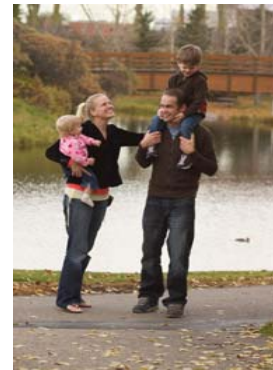
Quality Assurance



RECREATION AND PARKS: Vital for Sustainable and Healthy Communities

An Information Bulletin for Ontario's
Municipal Candidates

August 2010



Recreation and Parks:

- ✓ Foster economic growth and sustainability
- ✓ Strengthen community image and safety
- ✓ Promote health and wellness
- ✓ Protect our natural environment
- ✓ Support cultural unity
- ✓ Provide community leadership

**Recreation and Parks Matter to
Ontario Citizens!**



The Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario

Everyone has a right to quality, accessible and inclusive recreation and parks services in their communities, services that are essential for the health of Ontarians, the quality of life in our communities, and the sustainability of the environment.



Parks and Recreation Ontario
1 Concorde Gate, Suite 302
Toronto, ON M3C 3N6
www.prontario.org

This document was prepared by Parks and Recreation Ontario for municipal candidates and their staff to help raise awareness of the importance and benefits of parks and recreation in building strong and viable communities

**Learn more about how you can secure
a more livable future for your municipality.**

VOTER PRIORITIES

97% of Ontario households use local parks
98% believe that recreation and parks are essential services that benefit their entire community

2009 Parks and Recreation Ontario Public Opinion Survey

Recreation and Parks offers great benefits to individuals, families and communities and can help municipalities overcome some of today's toughest challenges.

- **Positive Community Image.** Parks, recreation facilities, programs and community events are key factors in strengthening community image.
- **Economic Development.** Parks, recreation programs and facilities attract and retain businesses and residents, as well as attract tourists and increase property values. Recreation and parks create jobs and generate income for the community and for local businesses.
- **Safety and Security.** Recreation and parks provide safe environments for recreation. Facilities, programs and services are designed to reduce criminal activity.
- **Health and Wellness.** Participation in recreational activities in facilities and parks improves physical, psychological and emotional health. It can reduce rates of some types of chronic diseases, including type-2 diabetes and heart disease.
- **Human Development.** Recreation and park services foster social, intellectual, physical and emotional development, and participation in recreation can reduce reliance on other social services.
- **Cultural Unity.** Recreation and parks increase cultural unity through experiences that promote cultural understanding and celebrate diversity.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** By acquiring, protecting and managing valuable natural spaces and culturally important assets, parks and recreation ensure environmental sustainability. Parks and natural areas contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, improve air quality and lessen the effects of urban heat islands.
- **Community Leadership.** Park and recreation professionals have skills in facilitation and leadership that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.

Recreation and parks have positive benefits for all residents and the community!

Here's what local government can do to improve quality of life and build a strong, sustainable community:

Support sustainable communities

- **Make green space development a priority for environmental stewardship**
- Create a plan for active and sustainable transportation, such as community design and land use planning that promote walking and biking, trail systems and safe routes to school
- **Promote children's healthy, active lifestyles by providing nature-based recreational and educational opportunities and barrier-free access to green space**

Keep community recreation affordable

- **Establish affordable access policies that include fee subsidy initiatives and free, universal programs**
- Invest in public spaces that can be used by everyone
- **Ensure joint-use agreements with school boards to maximize use of community facilities and green space**
- Recognize the impact of economic changes such as HST by keeping program and facility rental fees affordable

Maximize investment in public spaces

- **Create partnerships with non-profit sport and recreation providers to facilitate community development and local planning while maximizing resources**
- Invest in parks, sport and recreation infrastructure
- **Encourage and work with school boards and community partners to include physical activity in full-day learning programs**

