

DEVELOPING A PAN-CANADIAN PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK

# **Consultation and Engagement Summary Report**

Presented to:  
Federal, Provincial and Territorial Physical Activity and Recreation  
Committee

The Conference Board of Canada – March 2017

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# Executive Summary

Physical inactivity and sedentary behavior are critical public health issues in Canada. Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) Ministers<sup>1</sup> responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) make a unique and important contribution in addressing this serious issue. Minister's requested the development of a pan-Canadian physical activity framework<sup>2</sup> to be completed for discussion at the next Ministerial meeting in July 2017.

The goal of the framework is to build upon the unique and essential role of governments in supporting opportunities for Canadians to improve their health and well-being through regular physical activity, as well as considering new strategic opportunities. The framework will aim to align with and complement existing and emerging government and community efforts that encourage Canadians to live an active lifestyle. It will build upon key FPT policies and programs such as the *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*; the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being*; and the non-governmental strategy, *Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity and Change Agenda for Canada*.

FPT governments heard from a broad array of stakeholders including individuals, parents, professionals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the public. The Conference Board of Canada was engaged to lead the consultation and engagement process that reached Canadians across provinces and regions. It gathered perspectives and insight from people whose input reflected a range of sectors, including health, physical activity and sedentary behaviour, sport and recreation, infrastructure, transportation, education, environment, parks, and other sectors. The consultation and engagement process included public surveys, a set of interactive webinars, a national workshop, and a series of key informant interviews.

This report provides a summary of the consultation and engagement activities and their findings that were convened between October 2016 and December 2016. The addendum to this report provides a summary of consultation and engagement activities that were convened between January 2017 and March 2017 and their findings. These activities elicited more focused input on issues facing Canada's Indigenous communities, as well as northern, rural, remote, and municipal issues.

Between October 2016 and December 2016, 1,431 individuals participated in an online survey that was open to the public. Survey respondents were comprised of individual/Canadian residents, professionals, government, non-profit organizations, and private business. Survey

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<sup>1</sup> Québec shares the general objectives of increasing physical activity, but does not support a Canada-wide framework in a field that falls under its jurisdiction. Québec remains solely responsible for the development, implementation, and communication of programs to promote physical activity within its borders. However, the province intends to continue sharing information and best practices with other Canadian governments.

<sup>2</sup> "Framework" serves as a working title only.

respondents came from across Canada, representing all provinces and territories, and a wide range of sectors. Although a substantial portion of the respondents reported full-time employment and relatively high household income, respondents as a whole came from a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds. Over 200 individuals took part in the webinars, over fifty individuals participated in the workshop. Six individuals provided their thoughts through key informant interviews.

Consultation and engagement activities revealed four recurring themes that are being considered in the development of the framework:

- 1. Achieving multi-sectoral collaboration to develop and implement the framework.** Using a physical activity lens to identify areas of convergence with key stakeholders will help different sectors work together to achieve common goals. Key areas of collaboration across all sectors of society include community design, infrastructure renewal, transportation, health, education, and the outdoor environment, among others.
- 2. Focusing on the life-course approach.** Creating opportunities to benefit from and enjoy life-long physical activity; play at all ages—including for children, adolescents, adults, and seniors; and incorporating physical activity into everyday life across the lifespan.
- 3. Ensuring the framework is inclusive of all Canadians.** Physical activity opportunities, programs, and strategies should be equitable, inclusive, affordable, accessible, and culturally relevant to all Canadians regardless of ability, age, income, education, ethnicity, language, or geography (e.g., incorporating Indigenous perspectives and lifestyles). This means including northern, rural, and remote populations, as well as populations that are considered a higher risk for physical inactivity (such as individuals or families with lower socio-economic status), in addition to urban populations.
- 4. Focusing on community design and infrastructure renewal.** Leveraging the built environment to increase physical activity levels. Creating smart, livable communities that promote activity through the effective and sustainable use of facilities, green space, and transportation infrastructure.

The input from the consultation and engagement process is being used to inform the vision, direction, objectives, priorities, and scope for the pan-Canadian physical activity framework, as well as a plan for monitoring and reporting.

# Background and Objectives

## A Pan-Canadian Physical Activity Framework

Physical inactivity and sedentary behavior are critical public health issues in Canada. Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) Ministers<sup>3</sup> responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) make a unique and important contribution in addressing this serious issue. SPAR Ministers requested the development of a pan-Canadian physical activity framework to be completed for discussion at the Ministerial meeting in July 2017.

The goal of the framework is to build upon the unique and essential role of governments in supporting opportunities for Canadians to improve their health and well-being through regular physical activity, as well as considering new strategic opportunities.

The physical activity framework will aim to complement existing and emerging government and community efforts that encourage Canadians to live an active lifestyle. In addition, it will examine the relationship of these efforts to other existing FPT and national policies and programs (e.g., *Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity and Change Agenda for Canada*, *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*, *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being*, and *Curbing Childhood Obesity: A FPT Framework for Action to Promote Healthy Weights*).

Principles established to guide the development of the pan-Canadian physical activity framework are:

- **Alignment and Complementary:** The pan-Canadian physical activity framework will build on SPAR efforts to address coherence across and within frameworks, policies, and strategies to enhance the magnification of results, be responsive to government austerity measures, and leverage existing investments across shared policy objectives.
- **Evidence-based:** The purpose, scope, context, and goals of the physical activity framework will be evidence-based to achieve measurable results at a population level.
- **Innovation and emerging approaches:** The pan-Canadian physical activity framework will embrace new and emerging approaches to affect population-level change in physical activity, including, but not limited to, social finance, behavioural economics, and social innovation approaches.

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<sup>3</sup> Québec shares the general objectives of increasing physical activity, but does not support a Canada-wide framework in a field that falls under its jurisdiction. Québec remains solely responsible for the development, implementation, and communication of programs to promote physical activity within its borders. However, the province intends to continue sharing information and best practices with other Canadian governments.

- **Sedentary behaviours:** Addressing sedentary behaviours, along with increasing physical activity, will be considered in active living policies, practices, and programs.
- **Shared value:** Physical activity promotion approaches will aim to achieve shared value across governments and policy domains, where they aim to harness and leverage policy activity and investments across sport, recreation, health, and other policy domains that influence population-level physical activity.

## Consultation and Engagement Objectives

FPT governments wanted to hear from a broad array of stakeholders including individuals, parents, professionals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the public to inform the physical activity framework. To do this, they engaged The Conference Board of Canada to lead consultations and engagement with key stakeholders across a variety of sectors at the national, provincial-territorial, regional, and local levels, including health, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, sport and recreation, infrastructure, transportation, education, environment, and parks, among others.

Given the principle of alignment and complementarity guiding the development of the framework, past consultation and engagement efforts to inform the development of *Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity and Change Agenda for Canada*, *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*, and the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being* were considered.

From October 2016 through March 2017, the consultation and engagement process included two public online surveys, five webinars, a national workshop, and a set of key informant interviews.

This report provides a summary of the consultation and engagement activities that were convened between October 2016 and December 2016 and their findings. The addendum to this report provides a summary of consultation and engagement activities and findings that were convened between January 2017 and March 2017 and designed to elicit more focused input on issues facing Canada's Indigenous communities, and northern, rural, remote, and municipal issues.

The input from the consultation process is being used to help inform the vision, direction, objectives, priorities, and scope of the pan-Canadian physical activity framework, as well as a plan for monitoring and reporting.

# Methodology

As a starting-point for the consultation and engagement process, The Conference Board of Canada reviewed seminal documents and synthesized current and past efforts in Canada to address physical inactivity and sedentary behavior. In an effort to be forward-looking, promising and new potential policy approaches, as well as emerging trends relevant to the development of the framework, were identified and documented.

Discussion questions were then designed based on a review of a number of relevant policy and evidence-based documents, including the FPT SPAR discussion paper entitled *Toward Alignment: A Collaborative Agenda for Recreation, Sport and Physical Activity in Canada*, as well as the following documents: an *Environmental Scan of Existing and Emerging Federal, Provincial and Territorial Government Policies, Programs and Investments in Physical Activity (2016)*; *Population Physical Activity in Canada—Infographic Report (2015)*; <sup>4</sup> *Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity and Change Agenda for Canada (2016)*; the *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*; *Curbing Childhood Obesity: A FPT Framework for Action to Promote Healthy Weights (2010)*; and the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being*.

The discussion questions used throughout the process centered on documented areas of convergence between existing national-level policies, strategies, and frameworks listed above, the guiding principles for the development of the framework, and existing plans for monitoring and reporting (see Table 1). Consultation participants were also asked to identify other priorities or considerations for the development of the framework.

Table 1  
**Areas that Guided the Development of Discussion Questions**

Identified Areas of Convergence	Principles Guiding the Development of the Pan-Canadian Physical Activity Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life-course approach</li> <li>• Access, equity, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• Physical literacy</li> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Infrastructure renewal and the effective, sustainable use of facilities and green spaces</li> <li>• Community design (built and natural environments)</li> <li>• Knowledge development and sharing</li> <li>• Voluntarism (capacity development and support)</li> <li>• Evaluation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment and Complementary</li> <li>• Evidence-based</li> <li>• Innovation and Emerging Approaches</li> <li>• Sedentary Behaviours</li> <li>• Shared Value</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> These three internal FPT SPAR documents are available upon request.

## Survey

The public on-line survey was launched on October 5, 2016, and closed on November 30, 2016. It was open to the general public (any Canadian resident 18 years of age and older). A number of social media platforms were used for engagement and outreach, including The Conference Board of Canada's website, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. FPT government officials also promoted the availability of the survey to colleagues and through their respective networks.

Survey responses were analyzed using appropriate quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. For the qualitative analysis, an independent narrative thematic analysis of survey respondents' feedback was completed to uncover in-depth insights.

## Webinars

Webinars were convened in November 2016 to engage multi-sector stakeholders on the priorities and policies that should be considered in the framework. In addition to promoting the availability of the webinars through social media platforms, select individuals and/or organizations were contacted directly based on their sector, geographic diversity, and/or knowledge and expertise. Audio recordings and a de-identified chat log of each webinar were undertaken and archived for analysis purposes.

## Workshop

A full-day facilitated workshop was held in Ottawa on November 24, 2016 to engage multi-sector stakeholders on the priorities and policies that should be considered in the framework. Individuals and/or organizations were invited to participate based on their sector, geographic diversity, and/or knowledge and expertise.

## Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted to gain additional and deeper insights from northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, as well as from select municipalities. Individuals and/or organizations were invited to participate based on their sector, geographic diversity, and/or knowledge and expertise. The Conference Board of Canada leveraged previous discussions from other components of the consultation and engagement process to dialogue with the key informants.

For example, participants were asked about some of the challenges experienced by rural, remote, northern, and/or Indigenous communities in regards to opportunity and motivation to be more physically active. They were also asked to identify policies, programs, or approaches that should be addressed in the framework, as well as examples of successful programs or policies. See the Addendum report for additional insights on these perspectives.

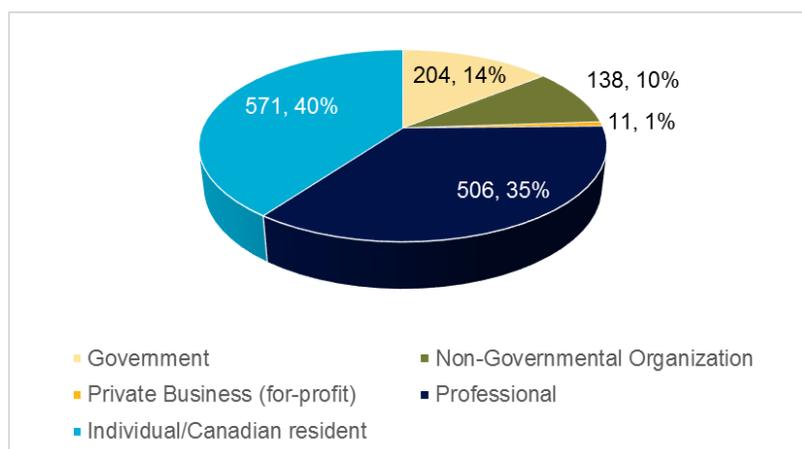
Participant lists for the webinars, workshop, and key informant interviews, and detailed methodology and analysis for each of the consultation and engagement activities are available upon request.

## Who Participated?

FPT governments wanted to ensure that a broad range of key stakeholders were represented in the consultation and engagement process and that the perspectives of all geographic regions were included—this was achieved. Spanning all provinces and territories in Canada, in total, 1,431 individuals completed the first survey, 187 individuals participated in the webinar, 52 individuals attended the workshop (in addition to four facilitators and Conference Board staff), and 6 individuals shared their views through a key informant interview.

FPT governments also invited different sectors, professionals, businesses, organizations, and the general public to be engaged. This goal was also achieved (see Figure 1). For example, among survey respondents, the general public was the largest group that participated in the survey (40 per cent); three quarters of the survey participants self-identified as female; and over a third (37 per cent) had at least one child in their household. Almost two thirds (63 per cent) of respondents were employed full-time and 41 per cent of individuals reported household income of \$100,000 or more. Professionals represented 35 per cent, government represented 14 per cent, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) represented 10 per cent. There was strong representation from the physical activity sector in the survey (18 per cent); however, a wide variety of representatives from other sectors also participated in the survey, such as recreation and leisure (16 per cent), sport (14 per cent), and health care (8 per cent). Although lower (1 to 3 per cent), transportation, infrastructure, design/architecture, environment, parks/wildlife, and child care representatives also participated. Three per cent of participants self-identified as Indigenous and 11 per cent self-identified as new immigrants. Fourteen per cent of the participants were from rural communities.

Figure 1  
**Perspectives Captured in the Public Survey**



Overall, all target sectors, populations, and communities participated in the consultation and engagement process.

## What We Heard Overall

Participants in the consultation and engagement process were asked questions that centered on five areas. These areas were selected based on several factors, including documented areas of convergence between existing national-level policies, strategies, and frameworks that include physical activity, the principles that guide the development of the framework, and plans for future monitoring and reporting. Participants were also asked to identify other priorities or considerations for the development of the framework.

A summary of inclusive notable insights identified from analysis of input from the survey, webinars, workshop, and key informant responses is provided in the following order (additional information is available upon request):

- A. Alignment & Complementarity
- B. Shared Value
- C. Evidence-based approaches
- D. Innovative and emerging approaches
- E. Monitoring and Reporting
- F. Other Priorities and Considerations

## A. Alignment and Complementarity

A number of areas of convergence emerged between existing FPT and/or national policies, strategies, and frameworks related to physical activity. Participants were asked to identify (from a list provided) which areas of convergence should be considered as priorities for the pan-Canadian framework. Table 2 provides a summary of the findings.

Overall, survey, webinar, and workshop participants thought that all of the identified areas of convergence were important to include in the framework to make a unique and value-add contribution to existing efforts.

Table 2  
**Findings—Summary of Areas of Convergence**

Area of Convergence	Survey Mean Score 1= least important 5= most important	% of Webinar Participants that selected as a top-5 priority
Emphasis on play at all ages	4.37 (S.D. 0.87)	57
Community design	4.25 (S.D. 0.86)	60
Infrastructure renewal and the effective, sustainable use of facilities and green space	4.22 (S.D. 0.85)	57
Life-course approach	4.14 (S.D. 0.96)	66
Physical literacy	4.14 (S.D. 0.96)	61
Improved access, equity, diversity, and inclusion	4.14 (S.D. 0.99)	82
Evaluation and monitoring	3.98 (S.D. 0.92)	46
Knowledge development and sharing	3.88 (S.D. 0.97)	30
Volunteerism	3.68 (S.D. 1.01)	9

Together, the survey, webinar, workshop, and key informant interview results help to further validate all areas of convergence that were previously identified. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of basing decisions and investments on values (e.g., inclusion) and evidence (proven effectiveness). They also emphasized the importance of collaboration, as research has shown that multiple and coordinated interventions generate positive results, and national platforms and campaigns can be leveraged by and benefit all. Participants agreed that the pan-Canadian physical activity framework should not only align with and complement existing policies and strategies, but should also move towards finding and implementing the scale-up of evidence-based effective approaches, but also new, emerging approaches that show promise.

### The Life-Course Approach

Survey, webinar, workshop, and key informant interview participants all emphasized the importance of a life-course and whole-of-society approach to increasing physical activity.

Overall, the life-course approach was ranked as “very important” to include in the framework by survey participants. The life-course approach was identified as a top-five priority by 66 per cent of webinar participants and five of six workshop groups.

Further insights:

- Workshop participants noted that all levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal), and multiple, relevant departments and agencies within these governments, should be included in a comprehensive whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Workshop participants agreed that the life-course approach should apply to both physical activity and sport.
- They also emphasized the importance of encouraging physical activity throughout the life span, integrating it into daily activities, and providing ongoing opportunities for lifelong participation in both sport and other forms of physical activity.
- Webinar participants stressed the importance of the quality of the experience in impacting desired outcomes from life-long physical activity; promoting physical activity among children and youth at school (since lifestyle habits anchored early in life are more likely to be maintained through adulthood); and taking targeted approaches.
- Webinar participants recommended that a specific area of focus for the forthcoming pan-Canadian physical activity framework should be increasing the recreational physical activity levels of those with no or low participation rates.

### **Inclusion, Access, Equity, and Diversity**

The theme of inclusion, access, equity, and diversity was selected as a top priority by all three engaged groups. Survey participants ranked the area as “very important”, while 82 per cent of webinar participants selected it as a top priority. The area was also chosen as top priority by workshop participants.

Further insights:

- Webinar participants emphasized that creating a welcoming environment motivates people to participate and to feel comfortable engaging in physical activity. They noted that positive experiences that are culturally respectful can also help reduce stigmas and bullying, and that inclusion is important because many of the programs currently available are designed for the people who want them, not necessarily for those who most need them (those with the lowest physical activity rates).
- Webinar participants highlighted the crucial role an equity lens plays in the development of interventions and programs and cited research demonstrating the link between low income backgrounds and being less physically active. They highlighted the importance of removing social and financial barriers to ensure equitable participation and noted that low-income individuals, those with physical or other limitations, cultural or linguistic minority communities, or those living in rural or remote areas are often excluded from physical activity opportunities.

- Survey participants emphasized that equitable programs create inclusive opportunities for everyone to develop physical literacy and, again, highlighted the importance that recreational programs should not only include sport (e.g., the performance arts).
- Government and NGOs participating in the survey ranked it as one of the two most important areas.
- Key informant interviewees added that for some heavily disadvantaged rural and remote communities, a targeted approach to address community concerns is needed and that an equity lens should be used to assess risks and interventions.
- Workshop participants emphasized the importance of adopting policy and program principles and approaches that can be combined and adapted to particular Canadian contexts (e.g., one solution may not necessarily fit all, as urban, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities often have different resources and needs).
- Both workshop participants and key informant interviewees highlighted the importance of cultural inclusion (especially of Indigenous perspectives). Interviewees also noted that programs for Indigenous communities should focus on restoring traditional values, culture, and behaviours (e.g., using traditional trap lines) that promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.

## **Physical Literacy**

Survey participants ranked physical literacy as “very important” and noted its importance in relation to creating inclusive opportunities. Physical literacy and knowledge transfer was selected as a top-five priority by 61 percent of webinar participants and five of six workshop groups.

Further insights:

- Stratifying the survey results by perspective revealed that NGOs ranked physical literacy as one of their top two priorities.
- Several webinar participants selected physical literacy for its ability to bring together sport, recreation, physical activity, and health, and provide the foundation for physical activity and sport participation over the life-course. They cited physical literacy and play as key starting points for increasing physical activity (regardless of geography), as without it children and youth will not acquire the skills to start thinking about participating.
- A few workshop groups highlighted the importance of knowledge development and transfer in increasing physical literacy, and noted the connection with evaluation and monitoring, education, assessment, sharing evidence, accessibility, and evidence-based decision-making. Another group added that framework indicators relating to physical literacy should be identified up front, and be all-encompassing/national in scope, accessible to the public, and explained through communications and promotion. Increasing physical literacy and knowledge transfer is especially important for populations that currently rank lower in these areas, and resources are needed to provide the necessary education and information.

- Interviewees highlighted the downstream benefits (i.e., longer-term returns) of using the education system as a lever to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour among children and adolescents. For those living in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, and those over the age of 20, they suggested focusing on physical literacy and incorporating elements from their traditional culture.

### **An Emphasis on Play at All Ages**

An emphasis on play at all ages, but especially in child development, was ranked highest (along with community design) by survey participants. This area was selected as a top-five priority by 57 per cent percent of webinar participants and four of six workshop groups.

Further insights:

- Survey participants emphasized lifelong participation in activity/play (not just through organized sports), as well as the need for intergenerational activities in combination with fun and free play. Webinar participants also noted the distinction between physical activity done through play and recreation and physical activity done through organized sport. They argued that emphasizing play at all ages helps integrate physical activity into daily activities, encourages participation, and provides ongoing inclusion opportunities. They also noted that although a great deal of excellent work is already being done to promote active play among children, play at all ages is also relevant to adults and seniors.
- Many survey, webinar, and workshop participants, and interviewees, suggested that sport and other forms of physical activity should be integrated and made mandatory throughout the school day, so that physical activity becomes part of a child's lifestyle and comprehensive school health. They argued that physical education should be incorporated at all levels (pre-school through to post-secondary) and that the ministries of education and the Joint Consortium of School Health must be engaged. Participants noted that programs such as Active and Safe Routes to School and SPARK can help achieve these goals.
- The workshop group that selected education as one of its top priorities focused on the importance of providing daily physical activity in Canadian schools, engaging and empowering youth over the course of their lives, and providing quality sport experiences.
- Survey participants cited the need for mandatory physical education classes in schools; the importance of education, training, and the accreditation of exercise staff/teachers/trainers; and the need for program structures that promote physical activity.
- Webinar participants added that a lack of financial and training resources seems to be an ongoing problem in providing all students with quality physical education programs and physical activity opportunities throughout the school day.

## **Infrastructure Renewal and the Effective and Sustainable Use of Facilities and Green Space**

Infrastructure renewal and the effective and sustainable use of facilities and green space was ranked as “very important” by survey participants, receiving the second-highest mean score. The area was selected as a top priority by 57 per cent of the webinar participants and five of the six workshop groups (in the ensuing conversations, webinar participants and workshop groups blended aspects of infrastructure and community design when discussing the built environment).

Further insights:

- Webinar and workshop participants noted that infrastructure and community design are critical physical environment features that either enable or hinder the physical activity levels of individuals of all ages and abilities. Infrastructure renewal is a key element of community design that can improve inclusion, access, equity, and diversity over the life course for different populations. It should also align with other areas that it also impacts, such as climate change, air quality, and injury reduction.
- A key theme that emerged in the webinars and workshop was the difference between rural and remote settings. Participants noted that some of the standard infrastructure questions asked by Statistics Canada (regarding bike lanes, sidewalks, short walks to transit, or shopping) do not resonate with rural and remote community members, and that a better understanding of how the built environment impacts physical activity in different geographies across Canada is needed. They further noted that rural and remote communities often lack the infrastructure found in larger urban communities (e.g., recreation centres).
- As not every rural and remote community has the funding or means to invest in the types of infrastructure found in larger urban settings (e.g., infrastructure renewal costs can be immense very high in the Arctic), the framework needs to consider how physical activity can be integrated into daily lifestyles in a way that is not dependent on recreation and sport facilities. Suggested strategies included encouraging better and multi-purpose use of existing spaces and places, investments in “active buildings” (a concept which could be applied to homes, workplaces, and schools), partnerships and crowd source funding/contributions, and the targeted use of available resources (e.g., federal gas tax funding for recreation facilities).
- Several webinar participants also highlighted the importance of adapting community and cultural approaches to Canada’s Indigenous communities, as a pan-Canadian physical activity framework needs to be relevant to their culture, perspective, and traditional lifestyle.
- Interviewees also emphasized the lack of programs and infrastructure (both financial and human resource-related) that support sport and recreation in many rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Sport and recreation funding is often not a priority and funding that did become available was often distributed as a “one-off” program with no long-term funding stability or support. As Indigenous communities were largely excluded from the professionalization of organized sport and activities in Canada, with no interface

between Indigenous communities and the broader sport community, interviewees highlighted the importance of ensuring that programs and those delivering them connect with the community's own goals.

## **Community Design**

Community design (built and natural environments) ranked as “very important” among survey participants, receiving the second highest mean score after emphasis on play at all ages. It was indicated as a top-five priority by 60 percent of webinar participants and by five of six workshop groups.

Further insights:

- Survey participants noted that community design plays a crucial role in improving physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior, not only through its design (built and natural environments), but also through the promotion and delivery of physical activity initiatives that are available in each municipality. Private sector survey respondents ranked distance between home, work, and recreation activities as one of their top two priorities (relative to the other areas), and ranked local infrastructure, accessibility, and design of the community the highest.
- An insight raised in all of the webinars was the important role community design and the built environment plays in making physical activity a default and easy choice. Webinar participants recommended that opportunities for active living be emphasized as a lens that overlays building and renovating plans. They also stressed the importance of aligning the built and policy environments to ensure common ground—starting with the environments in which people live, work, and play.
- Webinar and workshop participants cited active transportation, active recreation, and active buildings as three key community design components that require coordinated public policy development across multiple sectors. They also highlighted the importance of building compact/walkable communities, active transportation, bike lanes, cross walks, and green space, as well as using GIS tools to reveal trends and weaknesses in walkability, access to recreation facilities, and the use of green space.
- Key informant interviewees added that to increase walkability and security, some small Indigenous communities would also benefit from trails that are walkable in the winter and a solution to stray dog problems. Individuals could also substitute physical activity into daily life (e.g., taking the stairs instead of elevators or building adult-friendly parks with elliptical machines and other gym equipment so parents can exercise while children play).
- Webinar participants suggested that the new framework should direct or allow for the evaluation of policy options that reduce dependence on both auto-focused transportation and highly structured programs. Strategically building physical activity into how people get around can help overcome two of the largest identified barriers: convenience and time. Walking was cited as a foundation for other activities that will have a lasting impact on different population segments—as well as getting people outside on parks and trails. To encourage walking, biking, or busing instead of driving, key destinations such as

community centres and libraries should not be spread too far apart, as large distances make active commuting impractical.

- Webinar participants also recommended “health community” and “collective impact” approaches that incorporate open space and infrastructure, provide a common vision, and encourage resource sharing (e.g., *Prendre Soins de Notre Monde* offers an innovative approach to developing living spaces and environments conducive to good health).
- Webinar participants would also like the framework to specify how municipalities will be assisted in implementing community design and infrastructure renewal.
- Several workshop groups mentioned the importance of being able to apply the framework to urban, rural, and remote communities.

### **Knowledge Development**

Survey participants ranked knowledge development and sharing among the lowest of the identified areas of convergence, and only 30 per cent of webinar participants selected it as a top-five priority. Five of six workshop groups ranked the area as a top-five priority, but did so by linking it to physical literacy.

Further insights:

- Participants in all four webinars highlighted its importance in a number of key areas—both professional (those working in the physical activity space such as mentors and coaches) and public (improving awareness in target groups).
- Several webinar participants emphasized the importance of targeting knowledge development to those who would most benefit from behaviour changes and increased use of available facilities and programs (e.g., those with lower physical activity levels). Gender gaps were also cited as one area where improvement was needed.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Survey participants ranked evaluation and monitoring second-lowest in importance. The area was indicated as top-five priority by 46 per cent of webinar participants and two workshop groups.

Further insights:

- Survey participants linked evaluation and monitoring to several sub-themes, including evaluation measurements, physical activity messaging, and knowledge development.
- Webinar participants agreed that the physical activity framework should incorporate some form of evaluation and monitoring, and that integrating it throughout the various framework components will help show successes and gaps (whether particular strategies are actually working) in improving and enhancing efforts.
- They argued that establishing good baseline data is an important starting point for evaluation and being able to access good quality data is important to measure progress.

One webinar participant even called it the 'cornerstone' to evaluating lifelong activity, developing positive habits, and addressing issues upstream.

- Webinar participants and one workshop group also noted that evaluation and monitoring is critical to ensuring the ongoing funding of successful programs and projects, and that measurement allows for better alignment of resources and outcomes.

## Volunteerism

Volunteerism was ranked lowest in importance by survey participants. The area was indicated as a top-five priority by 9 percent of webinar participants and one workshop group.

Further insights:

- Private sector survey participants ranked volunteerism as the most important area to make a unique and value-add contribution to existing efforts.
- Webinar and workshop participants emphasized the role volunteers play in sport activities and park and trail maintenance. They also noted the importance of properly training volunteers and the importance of thanking and appreciating them to ensure continued efforts.

## Other Approaches

Participants were asked to identify other approaches that they think would improve physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.

- **Value-based experiences:** half of the workshop groups highlighted the importance of providing quality experiences. While this issue also came up in the play-at-all-ages discussion, half of the groups selected this theme as its own category.
- **Workplace/employer policies supporting physical activity:** this was another sub-theme with a high frequency of occurrence in the survey.
- **Available funding support/cost:** survey participants suggested increasing funding to maintain and renew infrastructure, providing free access to physical activity programs and opportunities for all, reimbursing kinesiology services by private insurers, increasing the physical activity tax credit, tailoring more funding for physical activity, and providing incentives at the municipality level. Webinar participants emphasized the importance of providing funding assistance to communities, and suggested using taxation to increase funding for sport, recreation, and other forms of physical activity.
- **Health approaches:** webinar and workshop participants suggested incorporating health public policy and population health approaches involving upstream planning, policies, and dedicated resources that promote and enable healthy physical activity choices. They highlighted multidisciplinary approaches and a closer relationship between physical activity and health care systems (e.g., additional health care practitioner training on the

importance of exercise and making healthier choices), as recreation, sport, and other physical activity areas positively impact health care pathways.

**Mental health:** webinar and workshop participants also highlighted the importance of including mental health in promoting overall health and well-being.

- **Social determinants:** survey and webinar participants suggested the framework take an integrated approach that includes socio-economic and health determinants that are culturally relevant and equity-focused, and reduce structural and other barriers.

## B. Shared Value

Survey, webinar, and workshop participants were asked how the framework could build on shared value and effectively leverage the policy activities and investments across various sectors including sport, recreation, health, and non-traditional sectors, and how the leadership of FPT governments (through the framework) could complement or build-upon the activities of other national and/or regional and/or community actors. Intersectoral partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration emerged as a key theme in the survey, webinars, and workshops.

Further insights:

- Survey participants identified systemic/strategic/financial efforts, opportunities for intersectoral partnerships/multidisciplinary collaboration, and community level initiatives and leadership as value-added contributions to existing work. Intersectoral partnerships/multidisciplinary collaboration, physical activity in schools, and promoting importance of physical activity had the greatest frequency of occurrence. Intersectoral engagement/collaboration/partnership and buy-in, funding investment/sponsorship, and physical activity in schools and daycares also had a high frequency of occurrence.
- To facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, webinar participants highlighted the importance of a shared, welcoming, inclusive vision, strong partnerships, and mechanisms that facilitate federal and provincial communication and co-ordination. They saw huge opportunity for cross-sectoral synergies in leveraging the convergence of interest and investments in community walkability, and noted that existing multi-sectoral collaboration entities and mechanisms, such as inter-departmental working groups, should be leveraged by those working in related sectors (e.g., education, transportation, urban planning and zoning departments, etc).
- Participants from the webinars and workshop emphasized the importance of national leadership and messaging. They suggested that national campaigns and platforms use mass media, employ clear and consistent messaging, and have a specific call to action.
- Webinar participants recommended engaging stakeholders and organizations at the local level, such as charities, foundations, organizations (e.g., Heart and Stroke, Diabetes, Cancer, and Lung Foundations), other NGOs, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, youth advocacy and engagement groups, and asset-based community development approaches.
- To increase the involvement of those not traditionally engaged (e.g., vulnerable populations), survey participants identified the need to have an equitable and relevant

physical activity strategy for all Canadians. The importance of aligning the framework with Indigenous cultures and perspectives, and the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations, was also noted.

- Workshop participants emphasized closer connections with health providers, employers, and the education sector. They suggested the framework incorporate a whole school approach, with mandatory K-12 physical education courses taught by professionals and specialists, with specific impact measures. Other important collaboration opportunities exist with health and medicine, housing, transportation, community/urban design and land-use planning, active infrastructure, municipalities, education, environmental protection, social and economic development, justice, immigration, insurance, community development and organization, arts and culture, crime prevention, and workplace health and wellness programs and policies. Engagement with organizations/employers had the greatest frequency of occurrence, with a clear focus on the private sector, including for-profit corporations, small businesses, and the manufacturing industry.
- Survey participants suggested opportunities to improve the development of the framework including:
  - focus on the format, content, and language of the framework
  - continued consultation and engagement (strategic discussions with specific stakeholders/groups of interest, including kinesiologists, youth, physical education teachers, schools (including universities), and governmental and non-governmental organizations/leaders/professionals working in the field of PA and sport), and consulting in both official languages
  - action plans/programs for physical activity
  - breaking down silos
  - policy/strategy emphasis
  - research and evidence
  - connect with experts and local level/community level leadership
  - involvement and engagement also had a high frequency of occurrence
- Survey participants also suggested opportunities to improve the implementation of the framework. Recurrent emphasis was placed on implementing policy initiatives that encourage or reward physically active Canadians (e.g., through tax credits, subsidized healthy foods, and subsidized opportunities for sport and recreation). Other suggestions included:
  - having a sustainability plan
  - intersectoral engagement, collaboration, and partnerships
  - funding investment/sponsorship
  - continued communication
  - promotion and knowledge transfer
  - integrating policy for physical activity
  - continued communication/promotion of key messages/knowledge transfer, with a clear focus on the importance of adequate marketing and publicity of the framework amongst the population

## C. Evidence-Based Approaches

Government, NGO, Private sector, and Professional survey participants were asked to rate eight evidence-based approaches (see Table 3) from “least impactful” (1) to “most impactful” (5). Overall, all eight approaches were identified as “very impactful” (4) to “most impactful” (5).

Table 3

**Rating of Evidence Based Approaches by Survey Participants**

<b>Evidence-Based Approaches</b>	<b>Survey Mean score 1= least important 5= most important</b>
Apply whole-of-school programs	4.58 (S.D. 0.74)
Support livable community design	4.32 (S.D. 0.88)
Integrate activity into the health care system	4.26 (S.D. 0.94)
Collaboration across sectors	4.20 (S.D. 0.92)
Workplace adaptations and incentives	4.19 (S.D. 0.91)
Support multi-modal transportation	4.18 (S.D. 0.92)
Provide sport-for-all programs	4.04 (S.D. 1.01)
Change social norms	3.95 (S.D. 1.00)

### Further Insights:

- Some survey participants noted that additional attention should be paid to rural, remote, and northern areas in Canada that require improvements in community planning and infrastructure upgrades.
- Some survey participants noted that in schools, physical education classes should be fitness-based rather than sport-based, and teachers should be used as a key resource to encourage physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior throughout the school day.
- In addition, some argued that health care professionals should prescribe/encourage exercise as medicine, and there is a need for a better approach to prescribing and implementing exercise.
- Some survey participants highlighted the need to change the terminology of “sport-for-all programs” to “physical activity (or participation) for all”, as sport was deemed to be an exclusive term.
- The top evidence-based areas highlighted by workshop participants included all of the eight approaches, in addition to two others: physical literacy and outdoor education programs.
- Other notable evidence-based approaches that came up in the workshop included the importance of quality data in making informed evidence-based policy decisions (e.g., having Statistics Canada collect more physical activity data on the census and/or creating a national database or repository which contains examples of successful

approaches from both home and abroad (to facilitate knowledge transfer and ensure that we are learning from other efforts).

- Workshop participants agreed that the framework should assist in making the healthy choice the default or easy choice, with incentives for healthy habits and disincentives for bad behaviours (similar to strategies employed for tobacco and sugary beverage reduction). They noted that funding should be flexible rather than prescriptive to allow decision-makers to adapt approaches as necessary, and expanded on previously covered areas (e.g., health system interventions, whole-school approaches, workplace adaptations, the importance of multi-sectoral approaches, and encouraging outdoor, risky play). They agreed that evidence must be sector-specific and practical.

#### D. Innovative and Emerging Approaches

Participants were asked to consider a list of innovative and/or emerging policy approaches and levers, and to identify those that would be impactful and should be considered for the framework. Participants were also asked to identify examples of additional promising approaches.

While a range of approaches were discussed during each activity, a few approaches were identified as important or potentially impactful across all activities, (e.g., multi-sectoral partnerships and approaches, leveraging technology (particularly data mining and open data), and nudging.

Further findings:

- Although survey respondents overall ranked all the new and emerging approaches or levers listed as very impactful, NGOs rated the three policy approaches at a lower rate than other perspectives. They found these approaches/ levers to be impactful (3), but not very (4), or most impactful (5). Another interesting difference was that the private sector found influencing behaviour change and decision-making at the individual, family, and community levels to be impactful, but not very or most impactful.
- **Collaborative approaches and partnerships:** survey participants emphasized that approaches need to be evidence-based and collaborative (including FPT/local governments, NGOs, and industries) and should be grounded in community knowledge and resources. Survey participants listed *incentives for physical activity* and *intersectoral partnerships* as recurrent sub-themes, in addition to examples of emerging policy approaches or levers governments should consider when developing the framework (however, the sample size of responses was too small to identify leading sub-themes in terms of frequency of occurrence). Interviewees also highlighted the importance of strong, committed government leadership that presents a strong vision and attainable goals.
- **Existing programs:** webinar participants suggested that the framework leverage approaches and resources that have already been implemented both locally and globally (e.g., Vancouver's One Card, Calgary's FairFare, BC's Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It! program, Alberta and Saskatchewan's programs encouraging healthy lifestyles for children, Manuevie's *Vitalité* program, PHAC's Carrot Rewards, airline and

other corporate support of Northern athletes and children, San Francisco's new development requirements aimed at reducing driving, New York's community design and active transportation initiatives, Sport England's "This Girl Can" movement, etc.). They suggested that micro-granting programs and other fitness models (e.g., military physical and police routines) could also support the framework.

- **Leveraging technology and open/data mining:** several webinar participants agreed that leveraging technology (specifically smart phones), data mining, and open data are promising approaches, and that accelerometers and geomapping are relevant approaches to data mining and gamification. They noted that technology could help with user segmentation and targeting, and could also engage groups in fun challenges with attainable goals. Open data also puts valuable information in the hands of those who need it to make good decisions and is important for accountability, evaluating, tracking progress, and reporting, as well as building community understanding and advocating for change.
- **Community connections:** a large portion of the workshop discussion centered around technology's ability to connect with specific audiences and its ability to create social organic communities. Potential advantages include bottom-up approaches to data sharing, the ability to connect in real time with others who are also working on increasing their physical activity levels, and the ability to better identify and connect with target groups. Webinar participants also identified point-of-decision prompting, nudging, and gamification (e.g., Pokémon Go) as promising behaviour change strategies, especially when supported by culture, a sense of belonging, and community design.
- **Limitations:** webinar participants raised some limitations, noting that technology may not be as inclusive for the elderly, those with limited access (e.g., remote communities), or those living in poverty—groups who are often at the highest risk of poorer health. They also suggested that caution should be taken to ensure that unintended consequences do not result (e.g., gaming addictions).
- **Nudging through awards and prizes:** webinar participants noted that a host of nudging, gaming, and prize options are available (e.g., the Carrot Rewards app). While some suggested using funds and rewards to increase physical activity and health, others argued that funds could be better used elsewhere to encourage participation and suggested that other forms of incentives and rewards would be more effective than prizes. Webinar participants also noted that if nudging, gamification, prizes, and other strategies are going to be included, they should be implemented according to a national comprehensive behaviour-change marketing plan.
- **Workplace wellness:** webinar participants also emphasized workplace wellness initiatives and policy, and the importance of partnering with the labour sector to reduce sedentary behaviour and incorporate more physical activity into the work day. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of office design and workplace culture in reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity (e.g., the placement of staircases, flexible work hours, dedicated time for team sports, spaces that promote walkability, and the number of printers).
- **Built environment/community design:** interviewees noted that building and community design are especially important in rural, remote, and Indigenous

communities, and that a multi-sectoral, collaborative approach is needed to improve recreational opportunities, walkability, and public transportation systems. The built environment includes infrastructures (e.g., sidewalks, drinking fountains, bike paths, recreation centers, play areas, gymnasiums, buildings that are close to recreational facilities and bus stops), transportation (e.g., both active and shared), and nature (e.g., parks and trails).

- **Active transportation:** to improve walkability and public transportation use, interviewees suggested examining how communities encourage active, pedestrian, and multi-modal transport (e.g., walking a few blocks to and from the bus), which improves community safety, neighbourhood connectivity, and environmental sustainability. They suggested the framework include strategies to maximize bus ridership in rural and remote communities such as providing seniors with easy and affordable access to more frequently running public buses.
- **Schools:** interviewees specifically identified schools as ideal sites to improve multi-purpose use of existing spaces and facilities. They suggested looking for opportunities to encourage more walking to, from, and within schools (e.g., safe transportation plans, walking school buses, and better use of corridors between buildings). These programs encompass important safety measures and concerns (e.g., lowering speed limits, improving signalization, and building and maintaining side-walks), infrastructure (e.g., more bike racks in schools), and active transportation awareness and promotion amongst parents. Integral components of the school environment include physical literacy, breaking up sitting time, and providing physical education-related classes. Teachers and educators also need to be trained (both theoretically and practically).

## E. Monitoring and Reporting

Government, NGOs, private sector, and professional survey respondents were asked whether they have any key performance indicators in their work related to physical activity or sedentary behaviour and out of 12 policy areas (see Table 4), which areas should be used to monitor and evaluate the impact on improving physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. Survey and workshop participants were asked to identify short, medium, and longer-term indicators that should be considered to inform the evaluation of the framework; key informant interviews were asked their general thoughts about evaluation and monitoring.

Overall, participants favoured a comprehensive and phased approach to evaluation in which key performance indicators in other sectors are monitored in addition to population level physical activity and sedentary behaviour measures.

Key Performance Indicators:

- 36 per cent of the survey participants reported that they have performance indicators or measures in place, while 48 per cent did not; 16 per cent did not know or were unsure.
- Key performance indicators with the greatest frequency of occurrence from the survey included population level data for physical activity, rate of active participation in physical

activity programs, and evaluation of physical activity programs/program performance indicators.

- Specific evaluation suggestions included the instructor/caregivers' assessment for physical activity participation as part of a curriculum—which coincided with measuring rates of participation in daily physical activity in schools and post-secondary institutions, participation rates, attrition/retention rates, and performance outcomes.
- Survey participants also mentioned existing tools, such as the Canadian Health Measures Survey and the Aboriginal Children's Health and Well-being Measure.

Short, medium, and longer-term indicators:

- Increased participation in physical activity programs/meeting guidelines and population-level baseline data for physical activity had the greatest frequency of occurrence for survey participants. Other **short-term performance** indicators identified by the **survey** participants include:
  - identify key program indicators
  - create clear and functional policies guiding physical activity
  - number of health care professionals receiving training to implement physical activity
  - participation in physical activity programs
  - number of Canadians meeting recommended physical activity guidelines/changes in daily physical activity at the population level (e.g., self-reported logs)
  - rate of green space in communities
  - participation in daily physical activity in schools
  - changes in the built environment
  - increased number and accessibility of physical activity initiatives
  - increased collaboration with organizations working in physical activity and sports (among various groups of the population, or at the community level), and including organizations involved in the surveillance, monitoring, and evaluation of physical activity progress among francophone communities
- **Short-term performance indicators** identified by the **workshop** participants include:
  - developing a mission, vision, and framework objectives
  - ensuring alignment with other foundational documents (e.g., Active 20/20)
  - identifying indicators relating to play at all ages
  - physical literacy, inclusivity, and the school/work environment
  - identifying how other, related frameworks are being measured, and incorporating some form of evaluation metrics at the outset that can be expanded upon over time
  - changes in knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes surrounding physical activity
  - establishing a community-based baseline on predictors of physical activity
  - engaging new Canadians and Indigenous Communities
  - creating Open Play Streets

- implementing relevant by-laws
- ensuring that data sources include marginalized groups
- incorporating flexibility to permit course correction
- **Intermediate-term performance indicators** identified by the **survey** participants include:
  - indicators of chronic health
  - changes in physical activity level and related health behavior
  - public participation in physical activities
  - proportion of schools that have daily physical education, and more broadly, enhancement in capacity, resources and infrastructure development
  - Increased use of community infrastructure (indoor and outdoor)
- **Intermediate-term performance indicators** identified by **workshop** participants include:
  - increases in physical activity levels and healthy behaviours
  - have a health lens incorporated by municipal, provincial, territorial, and federal governments
  - track common metrics relating to physical activity (e.g., Physical Education (PE) specialists teaching PE, the number of workplaces with shower facilities, the number of early childcare educators with physical activity training, and the number of bike racks and lanes, sidewalks, and complete streets)
  - develop a report card to track progress
  - identify underperformers and ensure corrections through funding mechanisms
  - continue to scan national surveys for consistency and overlap
- **Long-term performance indicators** suggested by **survey** participants include:
  - equitable access for all Canadians to public infrastructure, physical activity programs, improved health outcomes/reduced disease burden, and reduced health care costs
  - mandatory daily physical activity for all students
  - increased physical activity among all Canadians
  - reduction in workplace absenteeism
  - reduction in sedentary behavior/lifestyle
- **Long-term performance indicators** suggested by **workshop** participants include:
  - improvements in specific population health goals, such as an increase in physical activity levels and a decrease in the overweight population
  - improvements in mental health
  - an increase in quality food
  - reductions in health care costs
  - increases in workplace productivity and decreases in work absenteeism and presenteeism
  - a fundamental shift in cultural norms to include improved physical activity levels

Policy Indicators:

- Overall, survey participants responded that all 12 policy areas are important to evaluate, especially recreation, education, and health care.

Table 4  
**Evaluation of Policy Areas**

Policy Areas	% of Respondents (survey only)
Recreation	13
Education	13
Health Care	11
Sport	10
Built environment/design/architecture	9
Natural environment/parks	9
Transportation	8
Infrastructure	8
Child Care	7
Environment	5
Human Services	5
Other	1

Key informant interviewees representing rural, remote, northern, and/or Indigenous community perspectives, suggested that surveillance, evaluation, and monitoring should:

- be **pragmatic and adaptive** without rigid and unnecessarily excessive analysis,
- **balance efficacy and real-life effectiveness** (e.g., programs that work in one community may not work as well in another),
- **stratify community or population subsets** (e.g., by socio-economic status) to truly understand a program’s impact,
- **take a comprehensive approach** to evaluation, and
- **provide sufficient time and space** for appropriate evaluation.

## **F. Other Priorities and Considerations for the pan-Canadian Framework**

During the consultation and engagement process, other ideas emerged that were separate from the five thematic areas and/or included general ideas about the framework. For instance, survey and workshop participants were asked to share their thoughts on a potential vision statement for the framework. Participants emphasized several ideas that should be included:

- equitable, affordable, and accessible programs
- a supportive environment (including infrastructure)
- a focus on the life-course perspective

- building stronger and healthier communities
- empowerment
- daily activity
- physical literacy
- promoting the importance of physical activity
- encouraging every Canadian to get involved in physical activity
- highlight the many benefits of physical activity
- changing cultural norms so all Canadians embrace daily physical activity

Other notable insights and considerations for the pan-Canadian Framework:

- No one factor will be enough to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior, which suggests that all of the identified areas of convergence need to be considered by decision makers to promote an active population.
- To create an active, living document that is well-used, the framework's different critical phases should be mapped out (e.g., development, baseline evaluations, launch, dissemination, implementation in Canadian communities, and process and outcome evaluations).
- Survey, webinar, and workshop participants, as well as key informant interviewees, suggested that shared measures, evaluation, reporting, and accountability outcomes be incorporated in the framework.
- Participants emphasized the need for clear communication (using simple and consistent language) and education about the importance of physical activity.
- Participants also emphasized the need for framework policies to have sustained funding and resources for effective implementation.
- From the key informant interviews, particularly from the rural, remote, northern, and/or Indigenous communities' perspectives, some unique perspectives on how to better integrate a multi-sectoral approach were identified. The need for multi-sectoral collaboration was identified numerous times throughout the discussions with the various key informants.
- A strong emphasis was placed on engaging all relevant sectors and reframing the approach so that other sectors' mandates are met as well—rather than solely focusing on the improved physical activity and better health outcomes piece. For example, the education/school sector could be approached by saying “we would like to work with you and we have some ideas around how physical activity is an important and necessary component of developing a better school environment that creates better learning outcomes. How do we help you?”; rather than have the government present their own mandate of improving physical activity.
- Governments could also approach other key stakeholders in a similar manner, including municipal planners, by asking them how they could work with them (e.g., to meet their environmental objectives of reducing greenhouse gases). Conclusively, by working and supporting these other sectors' mandates, and opening the door to mutual understanding, the agenda for health and physical activity can be advanced as well.

- From the perspective of specifically leveraging strategic partnerships with the public health sector, key informant interviewees suggested including the Public Health Network Council and sports and recreation policy stakeholders in the development of the framework. They also suggested that both federal and provincial/territorial Ministers of Health and SPAR sign the framework to ensure collaboration within the FPT structure, so these levels of government all have a vested interest and shared sense of ownership in this very important work.

# Four Recurring Themes

Overall, four recurring themes emerged across the webinars, public on-line survey, workshop, and key informant interviews: the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to develop and implement the framework; the need to focus on the life-course approach; the need for the framework to be inclusive of all Canadians; and the need to focus on infrastructure renewal and community design.

## **1. The need for multi-sectoral collaboration to develop and implement the framework**

It is important to develop clear, common priorities and goals across key sectors, not only by using a physical activity lens, but also by considering other sectors' mandates. Key sectors include community design/architecture, infrastructure, transportation, health (both physical and mental), education, and the outdoor environment.

## **2. The need to focus on the life-course approach**

Providing ongoing opportunities for lifelong participation in sport and recreation was also continually emphasized across all participants. This includes children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. Emphasis was placed on play at all ages, but especially in child development. To accomplish this, strong emphasis was placed on the education sector to support physical literacy at school. Physical activity also needs to be incorporated into our everyday life, as well as across the lifespan. Some form of evaluation and monitoring also needs to be incorporated to assess progress.

## **3. The need for the framework to be inclusive of all Canadians**

Physical activity opportunities, programs, and strategies should be equitable, inclusive, affordable, accessible, and culturally relevant to all Canadians regardless of ability, age, income, education, ethnicity, language, or geography (e.g., incorporating Indigenous perspectives and lifestyles). This means including Northern, rural, and remote populations, as well as populations that are considered a higher risk for physical inactivity (such as families or individuals with lower socio-economic status), in addition to urban populations.

#### **4. The need to focus on community design and infrastructure renewal**

There needs to be a focus on the built environment, transportation, and other community design and infrastructure renewal strategies. It is important to acknowledge that physical activity is not limited to sport and recreation, but includes integrating physical activity into our everyday lives. Livable city development needs to be supported by designing neighbourhoods that promote outdoor activity. This also includes the effective, sustainable use of facilities and green spaces.

## **Next Steps**

The findings from this consultation and engagement process will be shared with consultation participants and government officials, and will be used to inform the vision, direction, objectives, priorities, and scope for the framework, as well as a plan for monitoring and reporting. The writing and development of the pan-Canadian physical activity framework began in January 2017 and will be completed in June 2017 for presentation to FPT SPAR Ministers in July 2017.

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DEVELOPING A PAN-CANADIAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
FRAMEWORK

# **Consultation and Engagement Addendum Report – Northern, Rural, Remote, and/or Indigenous Perspectives**

Presented to:

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Physical Activity and Recreation  
Committee

The Conference Board of Canada – March 2017

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# Background and Objectives

## A Pan-Canadian Physical Activity Framework

Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) in Canada<sup>1</sup> requested the development of a Pan-Canadian physical activity framework<sup>2</sup> that will help guide efforts for governments to address physical activity and sedentary behaviour. The physical activity framework is to be completed for discussion at the Ministerial meeting in July 2017. It will build upon other related national and FPT policies, strategies, and frameworks such as the *Canadian Sport Policy 2012*; the *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being*; *Curbing Childhood Obesity: A FPT Framework for Action on Healthy Weights*; and, the non-governmental strategy, *Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity and Change Agenda for Canada*.

## Consultation and Engagement Objectives

This is an addendum to the “Consultation and Engagement Summary Report” that provides a summary of consultation and engagement activities that were undertaken by FPT SPAR officials between January 2017 and March 2017. These activities were designed to elicit more focused input on issues facing Canada’s northern, rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities than were captured in the initial consultation activities that took place between October 2016 and December 2016.

In its entirety, all input from consultations will be used to help inform the vision, objectives, priorities, and scope of the pan-Canadian physical activity framework, as well as a plan for monitoring and reporting.

## Methodology

From January 2017 to March 2017, the consultation and engagement process included one public online survey, one webinar, and a set of key informant interviews. Discussion questions were centered on gathering further insight from a Northern, rural, remote, and/or Indigenous perspective on the challenges, opportunities, and possible solutions to increasing physical activity levels for individuals, their family, their community, and/or the communities they work with. Detailed methodology for each of the consultation and engagement activities are available upon request.

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<sup>1</sup> Québec shares the general objectives of increasing physical activity, but does not support a Canada-wide framework in a field that falls under its jurisdiction. Québec remains solely responsible for the development, implementation, and communication of programs to promote physical activity within its borders. However, the province intends to continue sharing information and best practices with other Canadian governments.

<sup>2</sup> “Framework” serves as a working title only.

## Survey

FPT governments wanted to hear from individuals, parents, professionals, businesses, governments, community organizations, and others as they work to develop the framework for physical activity. The public on-line survey was launched on February 22, 2017 and closed on March 13, 2017. It was open to the public (any Canadian resident 18 years of age and older). The Conference Board of Canada promoted the availability of the survey through its website, and directly to webinar participants and key informants from this phase. FPT government officials also promoted the consultation activities to government colleagues and to non-government stakeholders through their networks.

Survey responses were analyzed using appropriate quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. For the qualitative analysis, an independent narrative thematic analysis of survey respondents' feedback was completed to uncover in-depth insights.

## Webinar

The webinar was convened on February 22, 2017 to engage multi-sector stakeholders in a discussion around key issues and opportunities of importance to Northern, rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities. Select individuals and/or organizations were contacted directly based on their sector, geographic diversity, and/or knowledge and expertise. During the webinar, the participants were asked to either use the chat option (in writing) or voice their thoughts through the phone line. Audio recording and a de-identified chat log of the webinar were undertaken and archived for analysis purposes.

## Key Informant Interviews

Five key informant interviews were conducted to gain additional and deeper insights from Northern, rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities, as well as from select municipalities. Individuals and/or organizations were invited to participate based on their sector, geographic diversity, and/or knowledge and expertise. The Conference Board of Canada leveraged previous discussions from phase I of the consultation process, and tailored specific questions to dialogue with the key informants. The interview consisted of five short, open-ended questions and took approximately one hour to complete. It was audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis purposes.

## Who Participated?

FPT governments wanted to ensure that a broad range of key stakeholders were represented in the consultation and engagement process and that the perspectives of all geographic regions were included—this was achieved. Spanning all provinces and territories in Canada, in total, 210 individuals completed the survey, 36 individuals participated in the webinar, and five individuals/organizations shared their views through a key informant interview.

Among survey respondents, three-fifths (59 per cent) lived in a northern, rural and/or remote community. When asked to “select all that apply” in the follow-up question, 60 per cent reported living in a northern community, 24 per cent in a rural community, and 38 per cent in a remote community. Additionally, almost a quarter (24 per cent) of all the respondents self-identified as an Indigenous person (i.e., First Nations, Metis, or Inuk (Inuit)).

For participants living in a northern, rural, and/or remote community, and/or who identified as an Indigenous person, additional socio-demographic questions were asked on gender, children in the household, and age. Two-thirds (69 per cent) of these participants identified as female, and three-fifths (64 per cent) did not have a child in their household. Most respondents were between the ages of 25 to 69. In terms of representation across Canada, a larger proportion of the survey participants lived in Ontario (21 per cent), British Columbia (15 per cent), the Northwest Territories (14 per cent), Saskatchewan (12 per cent), and Alberta (10 per cent); however, there was still representation from the territories, with the Yukon Territory comprising 5 per cent of all responses, and Nunavut at 3 per cent.

Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of the survey respondents worked with northern, rural, and/or remote communities, and of these participants, 25 per cent worked with at least a northern community, 44 per cent with a rural community, and 32 per cent with a remote community. Moreover, two-thirds (69 per cent) of the survey respondents worked with an Indigenous community, and four-fifths (79 per cent) of the respondents worked in an area related to physical activity. All sectors were represented in the survey with recreation and leisure (21 per cent), physical activity (17 per cent), sport (14 per cent), public health and health promotion (11 per cent), education (10 per cent), and health care services (8 per cent) having the greatest representation. The survey respondents also had various roles in the community, from being a member of the community (28 per cent), to a sport and recreation leader (24 per cent), health leader (17 per cent), and/or to community official (7 per cent). Additional information on survey stakeholder self-identification is provided in Appendix 1.

## What We Heard Overall

Unique experiences and insights from the perspectives and viewpoints of northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities were gathered to inform the development of the FPT physical activity framework. Participants were asked about challenges and opportunities to be physically active for themselves, their family, their community, and/or the communities that they work with. A summary of inclusive notable insights from across the survey, webinar, and key informant responses is provided in the following order:

- A. Challenges
- B. Opportunities and Possible Solutions
- C. Other Insights

### A. Challenges

Participants were asked to identify the main challenges experienced in regards to opportunity and motivation to be more physically active. Recurring challenges identified by the survey,

webinar, and key informant participants included climate and environment; time constraints; a lack of affordable access to facilities, equipment, and programs due to lack of funding; a lack of knowledge, education, and motivation; a lack of personnel and leadership; and lack of active transportation options.

### **Climate and environment**

- Survey respondents and webinar participants both emphasized that winter weather is a barrier to being more physically active for themselves, their family, their community, and the communities they work with. Specifically, they noted an extremely cold climate and icy/uncleared sidewalks, which makes getting active outdoors and enjoying free activities such as walking difficult.
- When the weather limits safe outdoor physical activity opportunities, access to suitable recreation facilities becomes especially important. Stray dogs, bears, and other wildlife also pose a safety risk in many communities.

### **Time constraints**

- Survey respondents emphasized that they just did not have the time and/or opportunity to be more physically active due to several factors such as young and/or single parent families, working long hours, fatigue after work, and/or the cost associated with participating in physical activity programs. Many found it difficult to prioritize and incorporate physical activity into their daily routine or create opportunities for the family to be active together (mainly due to busy school and work schedules, and the need to drive children to events).
- Additionally, survey respondents noted that there were not enough “affordable options at convenient times.” For example, communities using the school gym for recreation in the evenings often face limited availability for all ages to participate (e.g., gyms are often not open after typical business work-hours).

### **A lack of affordable access to facilities, equipment, and programs due to lack of funding**

- Survey respondents, webinar participants, and key informant interviewees cited cost as a major barrier for being more physically active, as in many communities, indoor facilities, other recreational infrastructure, space, programming, and quality equipment are often either lacking or are not affordable.
- Emphasizing the importance of equal access, webinar participants added that even when facilities do exist, they are not always open or available for youth and others to use (e.g., school gyms or community centres with restricted access), often offer limited programming (greater variety is needed encourage participation), and have limited supports available for activities that are not sports-centered. In some communities, Northern youth have therefore requested more outdoor, “on the land” activities. Survey respondents who worked with these communities added that there was a lack of or limited governmental funding for culturally-relevant and meaningful programming, parks, and recreation to engage youth.

- Key informants also emphasized accessibility issues, noting that many existing facilities are not being used for multiple purposes or do not have enough children to form sports teams or offer activities to, which increases the cost of hiring counsellors to run these physical activity programs.
- Several webinar participants cited the challenge of finding cost-effective activities in northern and rural areas that do not require specialized knowledge and resources. Transportation to and distance from facilities was also raised as a key barrier.
- A few webinar participants suggested that activities and programs be low cost, rather than free.
- A key informant also added that there is systemic, chronic under-funding in these communities across the board—in health, education, and/or infrastructure—mainly due to historical patterns and ideas about proper physical activity, which become embedded in the system and create inequality.
- A few webinar participants added that the siloed nature of government departments that do not agree or coordinate with each other regarding potential opportunities to co-fund recreation and physical activities creates barriers.
- Another key informant added that funding is population-based rather than needs-based (i.e., funding is linked to the number of people in the community, but it does not consider context). A municipal key informant noted that a lot of the recreational facilities and programs are funded on a cost-recovery basis, so while some free opportunities exist, municipalities need to recover some of the expenditures associated with them.

### **A lack of knowledge, education, and motivation on the benefits of physical activity**

- Survey respondents, webinar participants, and key informant interviewees described a lack of knowledge, education, and motivation as barriers to being more physically active.
- Survey respondents stated that sometimes, increasing physical activity can occur by simply prioritizing physical activity over other tasks, changing existing habits and sedentary lifestyles associated with technology use (e.g., computers, television, video games, and cell phones), and finding a group to work out with or a network of active people. However, they noted that opportunities to develop physical literacy are insufficient, and that sometimes, existing activities, services, and programs were not well-known in the community because they are not being advertised or promoted. Many mentioned that the one-size approach to promoting healthy active living in these communities and engaging diverse demographics has not been working.
- As further highlighted through the key informant interviews, the context and barriers are different and unique in each community; communities need to be empowered by their own knowledge and what makes sense in their own place.
- Interviewees also emphasized the role of schools in promoting physical activities.
- Webinar participants emphasized the importance of finding champions within Aboriginal communities. They also noted that many current physical activity models are geared to the

general Canadian public and lack specific strategies to meet the specific needs of those who need to be engaged. Targeted initiatives are required to engage specific demographics.

- Webinar participants emphasized low physical literacy levels and the importance of increasing education regarding the long-term health benefits of physical activity. They highlighted the importance of building environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and recommended increasing children's physical activity in schools and incorporating it throughout the curriculum/day.
- Webinar participants also suggested age-specific programming for both younger and older adults (as programs specifically geared to older populations (50+) are limited even though this group should also be included in the development of the physical activity framework).
- Survey respondents identified aging; health diseases/conditions such as hip fractures, arthritis, and multiple sclerosis; chronic injuries; disability; mental health or addiction issues; and other social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and crime that lead to stress as barriers to being more physically active.
- A few webinar participants mentioned the lack of other incentives (e.g., tax credits for participating in sport and recreation activities that are only available in some provinces).

### **A lack of personnel and leadership**

- Survey and webinar participants raised the issue of capacity within communities to develop and deliver quality programs.
- According to some survey respondents, a key challenge to being more physically active in their communities is the lack of trained/experienced coaches and instructors to run activities and programs. Without training opportunities for coaches and instructors, there are not enough trained coaches/supervisors/facilitators to support youth in becoming physically literate.
- Webinar participants added that human resource challenges include a lack of qualified program leaders and educated sport and recreation staff (e.g., programmers, coaches, officials, other league staff, and physical education teachers) who understand the issues and challenges youth and adults experience in rural/remote/fly-in communities. Other human resource challenges include a lack of resources to attract and support these leaders (which could lead to burnout), the retention of qualified staff, a lack of mentorship programs to develop and sustain local coaches/volunteers/youth mentors, and a heavy overall reliance on volunteers. These human resource challenges make providing a steady schedule of activities the community can rely on difficult, and momentum is lost when good programs stop running.
- Webinar participants indicated that community engagement (especially with youth), building supportive environments, and involving parents can also be challenging.
- Survey respondents identified a lack of youth leadership opportunities which results in poor youth engagement in physical activities. Respondents noted that in many cases, there was no process in place to recruit and mentor youth to take on leadership positions if and when the current trained leader leaves the community or retires.

### **A lack of active transportation**

- A lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure was identified as a challenge by survey respondents, such as a lack of clear, connected sidewalks and trails to outdoor parks and recreational facilities. Fear and risk of stray dogs, bears, and mosquitos, as well as limited street lighting, make active transportation difficult.
- General transportation and public transit to recreational facilities was also identified as a challenge by the survey respondents due to distance.
- Transportation was also identified as a challenge through the key informant interviews, specifically within the school context. In some communities, school children often do not have the opportunity to engage in physical activity or sports after school as they need to catch the bus right after school to make their 100-km journey back home.

## **B. Opportunities and Possible Solutions**

Thinking about the challenges that were identified, participants were then asked to consider what would help them and/or their community to be more physically active. Identified opportunities and possible solutions include providing more funding to allow for more programming and indoor facilities; incorporation of traditional lifestyles and supporting culture reclamation; securing and developing qualified personnel; supporting community organizations, partnerships, and programs; increasing knowledge and education; expanding the role of workplaces, schools, and community centres; focusing on active transportation; and leveraging technology.

### **Providing funding to allow for subsidized or free programs, and the creation of new programs and indoor facilities**

- Survey respondents, webinar participants, and key informants highly recommended providing low-cost or free programs, activities, and equipment, as well as drop-in programming outside of regular work hours in the evenings and weekends (although some webinar participants recommended low-cost rather than free programs, with opportunities to volunteer in lieu of paying fees to increase commitment).
- Webinar participants added that municipalities often partner with organizations to provide recreation programs and activities or fund (through grants) the programs and activities offered by community groups, which helps with administration costs. Unfortunately, many groups do not have resources to prepare grant applications. Survey and webinar participants therefore emphasized that consistent long-term funding is needed to maintain qualified and committed leaders, and consistent and subsidized programming.
- Survey respondents further recommended having more indoor facilities (such as heated indoor pools), recreation centres, and sports equipment available to be more physically active. They also emphasized the need for more outdoor winter activities and inclusive community opportunities for families to participate together.

### **Incorporating traditional lifestyles and supporting culture reclamation**

- Survey and webinar respondents identified the importance of promoting and supporting physical activities that are accessible and traditional, such as Nordic walking, snowshoeing, kick sledding, cross-country skiing, hunting, preparing skins, Inuit games, igloo building, qamutik building, fishing, food sharing practices, and square dancing, in addition to assisting Elders with activities like snow shoveling and water fetching. They also suggested reviving traditional dances and offering learning experiences with physical aspects (e.g., teaching survival skills and geocaching).
- Survey and webinar participants both emphasized on-the-land programs because these activities build upon past activity and include important cultural practices such as the gathering of plants for medicinal use and the passing on of traditional knowledge and cultural practices. They highlighted the importance of widening the thinking around physical activity, and making sure all programs are intergenerational and not tied to a facility.
- Survey respondents indicated that there was a need to encourage and support traditional land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering into daily life.
- Survey respondents further noted that innovation in physical activity for Indigenous communities means addressing the poverty and supporting cultural revitalization by having these activities created and run by Indigenous peoples.
- Webinar participants further recommended encouraging walking and other forms of active transportation to school, work, or stores instead of snowmobiling or driving a car.
- Key informants emphasized culture reclamation (e.g., activities such as fishing, hunting, and gathering) as one option to increase physical activity; and culturally-relevant policies, approaches, and programs, such as dance and gardening, which may not be typically viewed as physical activities.
- As a follow-up question, some key informants were also asked: “What should be included in the framework to ensure that it is culturally relevant, and incorporates Indigenous perspectives and traditional lifestyles?” Recommendations included treating these communities and Reserves as viable places to live by breaking down existing silos, more training at the community level, more funding for educating students who work in the health and physical activity sector, engaging with researchers, educating the media on how to talk about sport and Indigenous people, addressing gender differences and sports participation in communities where resources are limited, and incorporating activities into schools, such as skiing, hunting, “stick gambling,” and harvesting “bison.”

### **Securing and developing qualified personnel**

- Survey respondents highlighted the need for qualified facilitators, physical activity coordinators, and leaders to deliver programs. To create qualified coaches/supervisors/facilitators, they suggested that training be provided regularly in these communities, including training parents and young people to coach. Funding for professional development opportunities need to occur both in and out of the community. Webinar participants added that resources are required to provide part-time staff to coordinate physical activities in the community (in many Indigenous communities, only one or two people are responsible for these initiatives).
- Other recommendations identified by the survey respondents included having health care professionals such as physiologists/kinesiologists in the community encouraging people to exercise, and increasing youth leadership/mentorship opportunities in each community so they can deliver programming.

- Webinar participants also cited several examples of achieving success by helping youth develop leadership skills and helping them learn to organize and lead recreation activities that are inclusive of everyone. They noted that youth often crave responsibility and are good at learning new things. They in turn can then pass on what they have learned to their peers, families, and community, which increases participation in recreational programming. Examples include youth mentorship programs that provide training, skill development, and mentoring to youth to help them implement programs for children, the HIGH FIVE program (equivalent to a school class), and Alberta's Future Leaders Program which bring youth mentors to rural Indigenous communities during the summer to identify new candidates for leadership and physical activity training to continue the program throughout the year, among others.
- Webinar participants also recommended supporting education in terms of increasing physical activity and literacy levels in schools.

### **Supporting community organizations, partnerships, and programs**

- Webinar participants agreed that increasing access to sport and recreation activities was important for smaller communities. Several also highlighted the importance of increasing communication and collaboration, and building partnerships between organizations, communities, and private partners (e.g., Canadian Tire), as multi-sectoral partnerships can often better leverage resources and address barriers to physical activity (e.g., sport/recreation partnering with business owners and education to deliver structured after-school programming that can be delivered by older youth through an employment program).
- Some suggested a community (rather than a targeted age group) approach to increasing physical activity, with collaboration and support from different community leaders, family, friends, and volunteers (supporting motivation, supervision, and companionship).
- Others recommended investment in organizations and programs which have found success and are ready to expand and serve more people.
- Webinar participants also suggested that more spaces and facilities should be made available after hours and programs regularly using community facilities should not be bumped for other bookings.

### **Increasing knowledge and education on the benefits of physical activity**

- Survey respondents emphasized that awareness campaigns, workshops, and education to develop physical literacy and inform community residents about available resources could help increase physical activity. Communication channels with surrounding communities (especially Indigenous and other rural communities) need to be established.
- Survey respondents also emphasized the importance of parents attending educational workshops offered through the school or health systems, to help them learn why physical activity is important for their children, how beneficial it also is for them, and how they can support their children's physical activity and sporting pursuits.
- Key informants acknowledged that effective knowledge transfer involves packaging key messages in different ways, and that it needs to be built into daily life and culture through policy. Key sectors include education, health, and those involved with walkability/transportation. While all levels of government need to embrace the physical activity framework, empowerment and knowledge transfer must occur at the community

level. There must be both a top-down, and bottom-up approach, so that programs and plans can be developed and implemented at the cross-sectoral, grass-root level.

- In terms of marketing and social marketing, key informants emphasized the importance of having individuals see themselves in the solution, and what this means for their everyday life. Moreover, key informants highlighted the need for better cultural awareness in media and campaigns, so that they are not prescriptive and their language does not include “blame” or “shame”.

### **Expanding the role of workplaces, schools, and community centres**

- Survey respondents identified several opportunities whereby workplaces and schools could support physical activity. In the workplace, this includes sit-stand desks, physical infrastructure at work to support biking (e.g., a bike rack or storage room), better work-life balance, and flexible work time that incorporates exercise time in the traditional work day. In schools, this includes developing curriculum or extra-curricular programs focusing on fitness instead of just sports.
- Key informants also emphasized that schools should be a focus, as physical activity can be instilled there as a value from a young age. Cultural awareness and sensitivity should also be taught in school systems. Schools play an important role in fostering an environment of positive encouragement, rather than an environment of judgment and low self-esteem.
- Survey respondents and key informants strongly agreed that using schools, community centres, parks, or other community buildings and spaces for different purposes would be a great way to encourage physical activity.
- Key informants indicated that there are benefits that could come from the use of multi-use facilities, but this requires training people to upkeep those facilities and providing the necessary resources to maintain them over the long-term. Additionally, solutions should be contextual and allow for community input (e.g., solutions should not be prescriptive as they will need to be adapted for different communities based on their specific needs).

### **Focusing on active transportation**

- Connected active transportation networks which include continuous walking trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes to get people more actively commuting to work or school was also repeatedly emphasized by the survey respondents. Improved lighting in neighbourhoods and green spaces was also suggested.
- Survey respondents also suggested providing a subsidized transportation system/network to get children to and from remote facilities.

### **Leveraging technology**

- Webinar participants noted that physical activity often competes with other leisure time activities. As technologies such as video games and movies are relatively easy to engage with and require smaller time and financial investments, programs and games using these mediums can also encourage people to become more physically active (e.g., Pokemon Go) and similar platforms can be used to develop other games that are appropriate for specific

target audiences. As technology use will likely continue to increase over time, including it in physical activity programming can help engage participants at all levels. However, potential barriers such as cost and accessibility (e.g., cellular data in the rural north) should be considered.

## **C. Other Priorities and Considerations for the Pan-Canadian Framework**

Survey and webinar participants and key informants were asked to share any other comments or suggestions for the development of the framework. They recommended taking a collaborative/multidisciplinary approach towards the development and implementation of the physical activity framework, engaging Indigenous peoples and the community directly to increase ownership of the physical activity framework, and expanding community thinking around the use of community areas and buildings.

### **Taking a collaborative/multidisciplinary approach towards the development and implementation of the physical activity framework**

- Some survey respondents indicated that more effort needs to be put into aligning or involving different sectors to encourage people in rural, remote, northern, and Indigenous communities to become more active in their everyday lives. This may involve partnering with outside agencies, building relationships with service providers, and involving municipal governments, schools, and workplaces. Teamwork is vital to support program leaders and a collaborative cohesive plan is required. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches will help all demographics see themselves in the framework.
- Key informants also repeatedly emphasized the need to look at strategic partnerships within communities to make programs more sustainable. They noted that the role of the food industry and nutrition needs to be integrated into programming. They also suggested aligning with other areas and sectors (e.g., the pan-Canadian physical activity framework could strengthen and formalize relationships with the education sector, and perhaps soften the difference between sport and recreational practitioners, while helping people better understand the role of health care professionals).
- Webinar participants also emphasized the importance of open forum opportunities for stakeholders to connect and share more insights into the challenges rural, remote, and Indigenous communities face.

### **Engaging Indigenous peoples and the community directly to increase ownership of the physical activity framework**

- Survey respondents indicated that Indigenous peoples and communities need to be engaged and lead the process for both the development and delivery of the physical activity framework to help ensure that key barriers (including socioeconomic realities) and solutions are highlighted. Both survey and webinar participants noted that each community's situation

is different and that rural, remote, and Indigenous communities can have very different needs, wants, and beliefs.

- Survey respondents also emphasized the need to focus on reconnecting with or reclaiming culture, by drawing on the richness of Indigenous spirituality and understanding of the environment, to allow for an increase in positive physical health outcomes.
- Key informants highlighted recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report; arguing that government silos need to come down, people at the community level need to be trained, and ongoing funding for healthy active living needs to be provided. A one-size-fits-all approach to funding will not succeed.

### **Expanding community thinking around the use of community areas and buildings**

- Webinar participants agreed that community access to public facilities and spaces is essential to existing and emerging programs, and that one of the greatest benefits is the ability of shared areas and buildings to offer a variety of activities that accommodate different age groups. Agreements with local Hamlets can facilitate this process.
- Webinar participants noted that some communities that only have a school as a recreational centre often have difficulty accessing the facilities and securing equipment. Problems can also arise from competing priorities between different organizations and groups caused by limited available space options in the community. Costs for renting space, electricity, and supervision can also hinder programs. Greater community engagement is therefore needed, and the familiarity of spaces can be leveraged to encourage participation. Culturally sensitive modifications (e.g., using the gym door rather than the main school entrances or starting activities in alternative spaces before moving them to schools) can be made to encourage participation in those who do not have a positive relationship with the institution.
- As cost is a significant participation barrier, webinar participants re-emphasized the importance of reduced fees for older adults and those with lower income to allow marginalized groups access to necessary transportation, facilities, and programs. They also noted that the long-term success of activities and programs depends on people staying in the community or passing on the training.

## **Summary**

The consultation and engagement activities convened between January 2017 and March 2017 revealed more focused input on the issues facing Canada's northern, rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities. Through a survey, webinar, and key informant interviews, participants revealed unique experiences, insights, and perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and possible solutions to increasing physical activity levels for themselves, their family, their community, and/or the communities they work with.

Participants identified several key challenges and barriers Canada's northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities face, including the climate and environment; time constraints; a lack of affordable access to facilities, equipment, and programs due to lack of funding; a lack of knowledge, education, and motivation; a lack of personnel and leadership, and a lack of active transportation options.

To overcome these challenges, they suggested a number of opportunities and potential solutions, which include providing more funding to allow for more programming and indoor facilities; incorporating traditional lifestyles and supporting culture reclamation; securing and developing qualified personnel; supporting community organizations, partnerships, and programs; increasing knowledge and education; expanding the role of workplaces, schools, and community centres; focusing on active transportation; and leveraging technology. Participants also recommended that the pan-Canadian physical activity framework take a collaborative/multidisciplinary approach towards its development and implementation, engage Indigenous peoples and communities directly to increase ownership of the physical activity framework, and expand community thinking around the use of community areas and buildings.

These barriers and solutions highlight the unique social and cultural contexts within which northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities exist, and special consideration needs to be taken to ensure that the pan-Canadian physical activity framework is also accessible, useful, and relevant to these communities.

## **Next Steps**

The findings from this consultation and engagement process will be shared with consultation participants and government officials, and will be used to inform the vision, direction, objectives, priorities, and scope for the framework, as well as a plan for monitoring and reporting. The writing and development of the pan-Canadian physical activity framework began in January 2017 and will be completed in June 2017 for presentation to FPT SPAR Ministers in July 2017.

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# Appendix 1: Survey Stakeholder Self-Identification

Characteristic	Frequency	Per Cent
<b>Province/territory</b>		
Alberta	21	10.0
British Columbia	31	14.8
Manitoba	1	0.5
New Brunswick	21	10.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	0.5
Northwest Territories	30	14.3
Nova Scotia	7	3.3
Nunavut	7	3.3
Ontario	43	20.5
Prince Edward Island	0	0
Quebec	12	5.7
Saskatchewan	25	11.9
Yukon Territory	11	5.2
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
18 to 19	1	0.7
20 to 24	5	3.6
25 to 29	14	10.1
30 to 34	15	10.9
35 to 39	14	10.1
40 to 44	23	16.7
45 to 49	19	13.8
50 to 54	10	7.3
55 to 59	13	9.4
60 to 64	8	5.8
65 to 69	10	7.3
70 to 74	3	2.2
75 to 79	2	1.5
80 years or older	1	0.7
Prefer not to answer	0	0
<b>Area of work</b>		
Physical activity	79	17.4
Sport	64	14.1
Recreation and leisure	93	20.5
Education (including school boards, teachers, administrators)	44	9.7
Transportation	11	2.4
Land use planning and development	11	2.4
Social services	14	3.1
Public health and health promotion	48	10.6
Health care services	37	8.2
Environment	7	1.5
Parks and wildlife	10	2.2
Academia/Research	11	2.4
Childcare	12	2.6
Other (please specify)	13	2.9

<b>Role in the community</b>		
Member of the community	98	27.5
Elder	17	4.8
Community official	23	6.5
Health leader	60	16.9
Sport and recreation leader	85	23.9
Researcher	20	5.6
Other (please specify)	53	14.9