The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing:

Implementation Factors in Alberta Municipalities

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore how Alberta municipalities have implemented the goals and priorities from the Framework for Recreation as a means of understanding the impact of the document. A multi-site case study methodology was utilized among Alberta municipalities distinguished through their municipal classification. Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted with recreation and park professionals and recreation plans were collected as secondary sources.

Ten sub-themes emerged, which were grouped into three categories of *content*, *impact* and *influence*. The Framework for Recreation contributed to implementation through the *content* (goals) being integrated into initiatives, *impact* of the Framework for Recreation by staff through implementation in their recreation master plans, and finally *influence* of the Framework for Recreation by the perceived value placed in implementation efforts. Results show that the Framework for Recreation has had a positive impact on municipal recreation in Alberta through implementation efforts.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my parents who have supported me through my entire academic career and my beautiful wife who fell in love with me despite the many hours devoted to completing. Thank you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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List of Symbols, Nomenclature or Abbreviations

ARPA – Alberta Recreation & Parks Association

CPRA – Canadian Parks & Recreation Association

Framework for Recreation – The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to

Wellbeing

IMWG – Implementation & Monitoring Working Group

ISRC – Interprovincial Sport & Recreation Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

As a public good, the recreation sector of Canada is important for maintaining a healthy society. As Broadbent and Guthrie (1992) explained, federal, provincial, and municipal government agencies "provide utilities and services to the community and which traditionally have been seen as essential to the fabric of our society" (p.3). However, the challenge that exists for government agencies within the public recreational sector is that it was only recently, after nearly 30 years, that a national guiding framework document was produced (i.e., Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing [henceforth, the Framework for Recreation]). Thus, up until 2015, the guiding framework document for Canada was the National Recreation Statement (NRS) of 1987, which was arguably outdated and often not utilized within the public sector. Therefore, the focus of this study was to explore the implementation of the developed Framework for Recreation by municipalities as a means of understanding the subsequent impact.

The Framework for Recreation provides the leading recreational actors (i.e., public, non-profit, and/or for-profit), within the sectors guidance, recreational policy adoption, and planning initiatives. As such, the Framework for Recreation provides a renewed definition for recreation; "…recreation is the experience that results from the freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p. 8).

Work developing the Framework for Recreation began in 2011 at the National Recreation Summit in Lake Louise, Alberta (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). The process then took four years to complete and was produced collaboratively with various stakeholders,

including the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC), provincial and territorial governments, and provincial/territorial parks and recreation associations (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). The Framework for Recreation was endorsed by all provincial ministers (with the exception of Quebec) and supported by the federal government (CPRA, 2015) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in 2015 (FCM, 2016; Noble & Porter, 2016).

Following the endorsement of the Framework for Recreation, the Canadian public recreation sector shifted towards implementation efforts on a collaborative basis (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). For the purpose of this study, implementation will be the utilization of the Framework for Recreation and/or the documents goals into the municipal recreation settings of study participants. Furthermore, implementation of the Framework for Recreation could be the inclusion of the goals and the associated goal priorities into current municipal recreation plan development. Implementation could also be the inclusion of such things as Active Living (Goal 1) into municipal recreation initiatives through promoting lifelong participation in recreation. The implementation efforts involve multiple actors that include provincial and municipal governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. The scope of the collaboration among non-profit organizations and 13 provincial/territorial governments are diverse; the desired outcome is for them to work together to complete common goals. Due to the diversity of the actors (i.e., non-profit, provincial governments, and the private sector), it is challenging to create continuity in the implementation of the Framework for Recreation as the design of the document is a one-size-fits-all approach. The government actors' roles and responsibilities were outlined in the Framework for Recreation:

- The provinces and territories have primacy of jurisdiction for recreation, as they do for health and education (except on First Nations reserves as defined in federal legislation).

- Local government is the primary supplier of direct recreation services.

- The federal government plays a role in matters of national and international concern, and in collaboratively developing and supporting policies and funding mechanisms that enable all Canadians to participate in recreation. (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p. 9)

The degree to which municipalities respond to changes in the public recreation environment can be a result of political, financial, social, environmental, and legal factors. Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) suggest 71 factors that, to some degree, influence the implementation of municipal recreation plans. Albeit, the Framework for Recreation in and of itself is not a municipal recreation plan, but the 71 factors suggested by Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) span over the same municipal environment. A disparity of recreation management capacity between small and large municipalities exists as identified by Gerhardt and Eagles (2014) with smaller municipalities having a lack of recreation management capacity in comparison (Gerhardt and Eagles 71 factors is discussed further below).

Because of the described variation among municipalities, this research study is focused on different size municipalities (based on their municipal classification) and their response to the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. The implementation phase has been underway since the official endorsement by all the provincial/territorial ministries in 2015, with the exception of Quebec. Therefore, the specific purpose of this

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study was to explore how municipalities (cities, towns, and villages [later changed to municipal districts/specialized municipalities]) have implemented the goals and the goals associated priorities from the Framework for Recreation as a means of understanding the impact of the document. Based on this purpose, three research questions were proposed:

- Why have municipalities taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities?;

- How have recreation directors/managers implemented the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities?; and,

- What impact has the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had on the municipality?

To answer the above research questions, this study takes a qualitative case study approach. This study provides a foundation for future studies in other municipalities and provinces who have implemented the Framework for Recreation. It is important to note that the specific participants that were sampled for this research only included those municipalities that indicated they have implemented components of the Framework for Recreation. Municipalities that have not implemented the Framework for Recreation are outside the scope of this study.

The case population parameters were drawn from Alberta municipalities through the Municipal Government Act of Alberta (Municipal Government Act, 2017). The reason Alberta was chosen as the focus for the research was: (1) support for this study (see Appendix A) from the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) whose membership consist of 87% of the provinces' municipalities (Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, 2016); and, (2) Alberta played a crucial role in the development of the

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Framework for Recreation. As stated in the Framework for Recreation, municipalities are the primary supplier of recreational services and programs. Governments have little commonality among municipality sizes; thus, three distinct groupings of municipalities – cities, towns, and villages (later changed to municipal districts/specialized municipalities) – as defined by the government of Alberta, were utilized (Government of Alberta, 2017) as size of municipalities is considered a factor in implementation.

Each municipality implements the goals and the goals associated priorities from the Framework for Recreation differently, however, this came to the forefront in this study more often for the goals of the Framework for Recreation. As a result, the current state of implementation of the Framework for Recreation has only been applied in a limited number of municipalities as stated through the CPRA and the provincial/territorial parks and recreation associations (CPRA, 2017). To increase the implementation of the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities among all municipalities, it is the responsibility of every municipality. CPRA and ISRC's role is to assist in this process by promoting and utilizing resources for implementation efforts.

Significance of the Research Study

The state of public recreation in today's municipalities is subject to numerous manipulations by current trends and issues. The Framework for Recreation is a national document to reaffirm recreations role in Canada and to combat the trends and issues facing Canada; as the Framework for Recreation provides the guidance and direction through the goals and the goals associated priorities listed in the document. For instance,

goal one is active living, and its associated priorities are designed to combat the inactivity epidemic facing the health of Canadians. The state and overall health of Canadians is one trend in Canada that has been on a negative trajectory, such as obesity with its associated health risks (Tremblay, Shields, Laviolette, Craig, Janssen, & Gorber, 2010). Consequently, the health of Canadians and many western nations has been deteriorating. This trend is popularly characterized as an inactivity epidemic (Piggin, & Bariner, 2016; Twells, Gregory, Reddigan, & Midodzi, 2014). The prevalence of the negative health trend, and other similar issues in Canadian society, demonstrate the state of wellbeing in the country. Other societal trends in Canada, including demographics, have seen several characteristic shifts in recent decades. Those characteristic shifts include an aging population (Statistics Canada, 2012), increased diversity (Statistics Canada, 2016), urbanization (Durpas, Marull, Parcerisas, Coll Gonzalez, Girard, & Tello, 2016), and rural issues. Other trends include the participation of religious attendance in Canada, which between 1986 and 2008 declined by 20% (Eagle, 2011) and the level of involvement within the arts and culture sector also is declining (Rabkin, & Hedberg, 2011). With lacking investment in recreation funding for recreation facilities a recreation infrastructure deficit is being created (Slack, 2003).

In Canada alone, the prevalence of obesity between 1985 and 2011 tripled from 6.1% to 18.3%, with that number expected to grow to the point where overweight adults will outnumber normal-weight adults by 2019 (Twells et al., 2014). The gap of economic inequality is on the rise among Canadian income levels, which negatively implicates recreational opportunities (Brzozowski, Gervais, Klein, & Suzuki, 2010). The amount of new and emerging technologies has also taken its toll on recreation and wellbeing, with

the amount of screen time increasing and sport participation declining (Canadian Heritage, 2013; Hale, & Guan, 2015). Finally, threats to the natural environment have been steadily increasing, especially in vulnerable areas such as flood plains with the role of recreation needing to adapt and form to the emerging environmental shifts (i.e., natural disasters; Owrangi, Lannigan, & Simonovic, 2014).

The Canadian public recreation sector has the overarching responsibility to address these aforementioned negative trends facing Canada; the Canadian public recreation sector can be reinvigorated through the Framework for Recreation. However, the need to study the current response to implementation is necessary to provide the sector with best practices for future implementation of the Framework for Recreation by municipalities.

To the knowledge of this researcher, there have been no scholars that have explored the degree to which municipalities have implemented the Framework for Recreation. The academic significance of this report is that it will ideally contribute to the knowledge about the implementation of the Framework for Recreation, and it can be "…used to identify research topics and inspire choices for professional development" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.32). The information obtained in this report may then be shared with recreational directors and departments of both municipalities and organizations. The anticipated findings from this report are that it will allow for an increase in the utilization of the Framework for Recreation within the recreation and other sectors of Canada, because it may provide guidance for other municipalities.

The ensuing chapters will provide detail of the study and will include an empirical setting, literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion chapter. The empirical

setting chapter will review the history of the NRS and the evolution of the Framework for Recreation from inception to endorsements. The literature review will articulate the current state of knowledge on municipalities, collaboration/wicked problems, and policy and frameworks in the recreation sector of Canada. The methodology chapter will contextualize how the study was conducted, which was through a multi-site case study design. The findings chapter states how the information presented by the study's participants was collected through the interview process, and secondary sources analyzed. The discussion chapter takes the findings and connects them to the three research questions of how, why, and what impact implementation has had in the local municipal recreation settings of Alberta. The intention was to further the state of knowledge surrounding municipal recreation and their response to the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. Following the discussion chapter, the report concludes with recommendations and future research directions.

Chapter 2: Empirical Setting

Recreational activities may be understood as a group or individual experience and are pursued for a variety of reasons, including "fun, enjoyment, fitness, health, social interaction, creative expression, a desire to connect with nature, relaxation, and enhance[ing] their quality of life" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p. 8). As articulated by Johnston, Hunter, and Webster (2011) the recreation sector of Canada began a period of rapid growth in the 1960s and 70s, which is categorized as the *Input Era*. The *Input Era* saw the increase of recreation and leisure university programs, more financial contributions, and increased infrastructure (Johnston et al., 2011). In contrast, the 1980s and '90s were categorized as an *Output Era* for the recreation field (Johnston et al., 2011). These decades included a rise in efficiency within the sector, although not necessarily a demonstrated increase in effectiveness. Finally, the past two decades have given rise to the *Outcome Era* (Johnston et al., 2011). The outcome era gave rise to more of a user-pay model, declining recreation infrastructure due to lifespans coming to an end, participation in organized sports starting to wane and unstructured play increasing (Johnston et al., 2011). These three descriptive eras articulate the state of recreation in Canada and its progression over time.

What constitutes a recreation actor can either be classified as an organization, such as the CPRA, or an individual, such as a professor, recreation practitioner (e.g., recreation centre manager) or an elected official. The collaborative effort among actors in the recreation sector involves partnerships between "departments and non-profit organizations at all levels, and the private sector" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.5). Collaboration among recreation actors can represent a variety of industries or areas of

focus, and the Framework for Recreation specifies recreation actors and the variety of collaborative industries involved:

> These include stakeholders [or actors] in sport, physical activity, health, urban planning, Aboriginal affairs, infrastructure development, rural development, natural resources and conservation, arts and culture, social development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development, and active aging. (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.5)

The collaborative effort of affiliated actors contributes to what constitutes recreation in Canada. Therefore, there is a need for actors to work together as an overarching recreation sector collaboratively, and the Framework for Recreation can act as the guide.

National Recreation Statement (1987)

In the 1970s, Sport Canada, and a parallel department, Recreation Canada, were both created under the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate. Recreation Canada's role was to primarily encourage the general health and wellbeing of Canadians through mass participation efforts. Recreation Canada was not an institution very long, and by the 1980s, it was dissolved (Macintosh, Bedecki, & Franks, 1987). The dissolving of Recreation Canada exemplifies the direction of the federal government's actors who regarded recreation as a sport, which became the primary directorate at the federal level of Canada. The development of the NRS in 1987 was an attempt by the national and federal actors of the ISRC to refocus the recreation sector.

The NRS of 1987 provided the first cohesive definition of the term recreation for the public sector. In addition, the NRS included two main contributing characteristics, which influenced the 2015 Framework for Recreation. The first characteristic was the

roles and responsibilities of the public-sector actors, and the second was the definition of

recreation. As stated, the roles and responsibilities outlined in the NRS of 1987 still hold

for the Framework for Recreation in 2015. Of concern to this study is the point that the

municipality is the primary recreation provider (CPRA & ISRC, 2015; ISRC, 1987).

Municipalities are acknowledged as the primary provider of recreation directly within the

Framework for Recreation, which explains,

> Implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 will respect the
>
> current roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial/territorial and municipal
>
> governments that are described in the National Recreation Statement (1987) and
>
> other existing governmental agreements addressing specific jurisdictional
>
> circumstances. (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.9)

The second characteristic from the NRS integrated into the Framework for

Recreation was the definition of recreation, which is stated as "all those things that a

person or group choose to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more

enjoyable and more personally satisfying" (ISRC, 1987, p. 4). The NRS definition of

recreation included a few unique distinctions, which are separate in comparison to the

revised form in the Framework for Recreation's definition of recreation. Those unique

distinctions are the wording utilized, the difference of the recreation sector in contrast to

other social services (i.e., health, police, fire), and the absence of the word wellbeing.

Recreation was deemed as the activity in the NRS definition, while in the Framework for

Recreation, recreation was considered to be the outcome of an activity. Recreation is in

the business of wellbeing and individuals freely choosing to partake in activities are

recreating. Furthermore, the term leisure is found in the NRS definition of recreation, but not the Framework for Recreation's definition.

It was concluded that recreation could not be confined to just leisure time, which does not adequately address the physical component of recreation (Lenihan, 2013). The comparison of recreation in the public sector as a social service was associated with other social services, such as health and education in the NRS (NRS, 1987). Finally, there is the absence of wellbeing in the NRS definition. Though, the term wellbeing is alluded to in the NRS of 1987. The concept of wellbeing is discussed further below.

Framework for Recreation, Pathways to Wellbeing

The Framework for Recreation attempts to refocus the term recreation by discussing the components of what constitutes a recreation experience, which includes: physical activity and sport; art and culture (Torjman, 2004); social (Putnam, 1995, 2001; Sander & Putnam, 2010; Toye, 2007; WHO, 1998; Yen, & Syme, 1999;) creative and spiritual (Winter, 2007); and intellectual (Newmeyer, 2008). The Framework for Recreation defines a recreational experience as the act of freely choosing to partake in those activities. These actions that are defined as a recreation experience by the Framework for Recreation provide the conduit for individual, community, and built and natural environment wellbeing (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). In the Framework for Recreation, associated actions of recreation are defined as an experience, which fosters the factors of wellbeing.

A contributing addition to the notion of quality of life is the concept of well-being, which has been increasing in occurrence in both academic literature and more

broadly in the media. Individual wellbeing can be portrayed in a variety of forms including physical (Long et al., 2015), and mental (Fenton et al., 2017; Vella, Milligan, & Bennett, 2013). Individual health is a large component of wellbeing, particularly in the context of combating the inactivity epidemic facing Canada and many western nations. Community wellbeing draws its connection to individual wellbeing through the social component of connectedness. Social connectedness of the community influences both the physical and mental degree of individual community members health.

The economic benefit of community wellbeing is well established within the for-profit and non-profit sectors of recreation, as the number of jobs and monetary benefits from the industry are documented within the Framework for Recreation (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). Finally, the wellbeing of built (i.e., recreation infrastructure that allows individuals to experience recreation) and natural (i.e., natural environment of outdoor spaces and places) environments are important in influencing factors of health (Norman, Annerstedt, Boman, & Mattsson, 2010). Trends focused on sustainability within recreation's built and natural environments, are increasingly important for the global climate issues now facing the recreation sector.

Quality of life for Canadians is, in part, attributed to recreation and wellbeing, which the Framework for Recreation redefines, and sets the direction through the term recreation in the Canadian context. Quality of life is explained as:

The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated

populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to

and participation in recreation and culture. (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.36)

The increased clarification of recreation and wellbeing in the public recreation domain is

intended to establish a path forward for continuity across every province/territory and

municipality. That path forward was articulated through the planning and development of

the Framework for Recreation.

    Planning. The Working Group wrote the Framework for Recreation with

continuous input by all associated actors (elected officials, academics, students, and

recreation professionals; CPRA, 2013). The conference papers presented at the National

Recreation Summit in 2011 provided the sector with a formal direction in the initial

stages of development. Topics presented at the conference included history (Szabo,

2011), accessibility and affordability (Dayton, 2011), policy (Burton, 2011), and

agenda/path forward (Brimacombe, 2011; Markham-Starr, 2011). The initiation of the

developmental process began at the summit and continued throughout the country

alongside a multitude of stakeholders (CPRA, 2013).

    After the acknowledgment to refocus public recreation in Canada at the National

Recreation Summit in 2011, the working group took those discussions and

collaboratively wrote a discussion paper titled, "*Toward A National Recreation Agenda*"

(Working Group, 2013). Within the discussion paper, eight key themes were brought to

the forefront for collaborative discussion: (1) Background/Context; (2) A Compelling

Need Today; (3) Definition of Public Recreation; (4) A Vision for the Recreation Field;

(5) A Strategic Approach: Foundational Elements; (6) A Blueprint for Action; (7)

Forging Ahead; and, (8) Summary of Discussion Points (Working Group, 2013). The

eight themes were centered around the discussion from 2011, and the newest iteration of information was written to guide the discussions at the national gathering.

That ensuing national gathering took place in Fredericton, New Brunswick in May of 2013, which continued the Framework for Recreation's refinement process through roundtable discussions (Lenihan, 2013). The development process continued throughout the country in consultations with associated stakeholders. The National Roundtable concluded with six sections that laid the foundation for the first draft of the Framework for Recreation, which was developed the next year in 2014. A section within the synopsis of the roundtable session presents a contribution to the alignment of the recreation sector as it discussed the linking of initiatives and sector documents (CPRA, 2013, 2015; CPRA & ISRC, 2015).

Within the Framework for Recreation, several documents were aligned to provide continuity to the public recreation sector, such as: the NRS of 1987, Active Canada 20/20 (an agenda for Canadians to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour by providing a guide [Active Canada, 2012]), and the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 (this provides the direction sport in Canada will take in a variety of settings, such as, recreation and elite sports [Sport Canada, 2012]). Aligning the Framework for Recreation with these sector documents, contributed to both future implementation and combating fragmentation within the public recreation sector.

The first draft of the Framework for Recreation was completed in 2014, and the final copy was endorsed in 2015. Upon the completion of the document, the provincial and territorial ministers endorsed the document on February 13, 2015. Dean Gibson, president of CPRA, stated, "This is an enormous milestone for CPRA and all our

provincial and territorial members who have been engaged in this process since its inception" (CPRA, 2015, p.1). The Framework for Recreation consists of a vision, values, principals of operation, and five goals with lists of priorities in each. Table 1 articulates the Framework for Recreation's five goal areas and gives a brief description of the priorities within each goal area.

Table 1. Goals and priorities of the Framework for Recreation (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, pp. 20-29)

Goal Areas	Priorities
Active Living – Foster active living through physical recreation (p. 20)	1.1 Physical activity and participation through the life course. 1.2 Incorporate physical literacy into programming. 1.3 Support UN Convention on the Rights of the Child through the child's right to play and participate in age-appropriate recreational experiences. 1.4 Educate recreation leaders on the significance to reduce sedentary behaviours.
Inclusion and Access – Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation (p. 22)	2.1 Development and integration of strategies and policies to ensure equal recreation access. 2.2 Enable individuals of all ages to participate in recreation experiences. 2.3 Respectful and appropriate recreational opportunities and experiences for a variety of ethnocultural groups. 2.4 Creation of a holistic approach to recreation to recognize and enable the experience of Aboriginal people. 2.5 Address the barriers of women and girl's participation in recreation experiences to help achieve their potential and establish gender equity. 2.6 Creation of policies of non-discrimination on gender identity or expression while providing a safe and open environment. 2.7 Creation of programs, policies, information for the full participation of people of all abilities in all settings. Provision of leadership, support, and encouragement to achieve inclusion. 2.8 Address the unique challenges of rural and remote communities. Provision of equal and appropriate spaces and places for recreational experiences.

Connecting People and Nature – Help people connect to nature through recreation (p. 24)	3.1 Collaborative work among stakeholders to provide natural spaces and places through a variety of natural addition and retention of areas, such as natural areas. 3.2 Collaborative work among government stakeholders of parks to create access to year-round nature experiences. Sharing of best practices. 3.3 Education campaigns to show the importance of sustainability, the role of recreation to connect with nature, and the necessity in child development. 3.4 The minimization of non-renewable resources and negative impacts on the natural environment through policies and practices.
Supportive Environments – Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities (p. 26)	4.1 Provision of recreation infrastructure in under-resourced settings. 4.2 Collaboration with partners to increase the use of existing infrastructure for recreation. 4.3 Enable the renewal of recreation infrastructure to be a green space. 4.4 Advocate and lead the efforts of increasing active and public transportation in community planning. 4.5 Increase efforts of creating supportive social environments for mental and social wellbeing. 4.6 Recreation education campaigns that increase awareness and knowledge of the benefits of recreation. 4.7 Develop community assessment tools for a common understanding of community wellbeing. 4.8 Alignment of community building with existing initiatives.
Recreation Capacity – Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field (p. 28)	5.1 Increase collaborative efforts of all recreation stakeholders to achieve the vision and goals of the Framework for Recreation. 5.2 Attract and educate new leaders in the recreation sector through career awareness, preparation, and development strategies. 5.3 Advocate recreation in education curricula development and discover the supply and demand needs of the recreation industry. 5.4 Training of recreation practitioners and organizations through high-quality programs. 5.5 Enhancement of community-based leadership in recreation. 5.6 The development and rejuvenation of the recreation volunteer base. 5.7 Advocate and support for a Canadian knowledge development strategy.

Of the five goals and associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation, actors within the recreation sector can choose which goals best meets their jurisdiction and subsequently implement them (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). The Framework for Recreation calls upon government actors at the local level to "…develop implementation action plans in areas of their jurisdiction" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.32). Recreation provides local government constituents with the capacity to develop wellbeing for individuals, the entire community, or through places and spaces (CPRA & ISRC, 2015). How local government actors have incorporated the Framework for Recreation's goals, including the goals associated priorities, in the pursuit of wellbeing will be within the investigative scope of this study.

Implementation. Since the endorsement of the Framework for Recreation, the implementation phase began with the development of a Framework Implementation and Monitoring Working Group (IMWG) co-chaired by the CPRA and the ISRC (Noble & Porter, 2016). The implementation of the Framework for Recreation in municipal settings is the focus of this study. To date, the IMWG has concluded three national surveys sent to stakeholders in the recreational sector across the country. As previously mentioned, the 1987 NRS first outlined municipalities as the primary supplier of recreation in Canada (ISRC, 1987). Relating to the NRS, the Framework for Recreation is being slowly implemented across Canada at the local municipal level, with **"**…municipal master plans that are built around the Framework goals, Framework endorsements by municipal leaders and new and emerging programs and processes based on the Framework" (Noble & Porter, 2016, p.1).

To date, the IMWG has published a summary report of the surveys. Table 2 reflects the major outcomes and recommendations of the three surveys. Three distinct populations were surveyed with a targeted survey and a set of questions for each group. Survey A was provided to all thirteen provincial/territorial governments, survey B was provided to provincial/territorial organizations with eleven of thirteen CPRA members responding and five regional/coalitions replying, and survey C was an open call to local governments and organizations with 182 nationwide participating (IMWG, 2017). Survey C had the most responses out of all three surveys, with 182 participants (IMWG, 2017, p.14). It should be noted that all three surveys had a small sample size and do not necessarily reflect the sentiment of the entire country, and results should be cautiously used.

Table 2. Summary of the 2016 national survey's (IMWG, 2017)

Survey	Sample Population	Response (n)	Outcomes	Recommendations
Survey A	Provincial & Territorial Governments	8 of a possible 13	Most common raising awareness strategy was introducing it during meetings The most common partner ministry was Education & Health. Six of seven respondents used the Framework for Recreation as their internal strategic plans	High level of uptake from provincial & territorial governments, continue promoting the Framework for Recreation Where appropriate, share resources and tools to raise awareness and implementation
Survey B	Provincial & Territorial Recreation and Park Associations	Total 16: 11 CPRA Members, 5 Regional	81% have officially endorsed the Framework for Recreation in some capacity of the sample	Leadership initiatives by provincial & territorial partners

	Associations Coalitions		Majority of endorsement was through the Board of Directors of the sample The Framework for Recreation was most often used as an underlying document for all work of the association of the sample	Contribute to the collection and alignment of resources and tools Through a working group, provide direction. Advocate for funding
Survey C	Local Government & Other Recreation Providers	182	49% municipal response of the sample 56% Rural; 44% Urban 63% Either not aware or vaguely aware of sample 56% not endorsed and no plan to, of the sample Introduction at meetings was the most popular strategy for raising awareness of the sample. Several activities of utilization were discovered including, master planning, cross-jurisdictional plans and policies, and using the renewed definition of recreation of the sample	Use data as a baseline and continue to monitor and measure implementation Support long-range implementation plan efforts Collaborate to form standard message for resources and tools among stakeholders

The summary report explores and provides context for the results of the three surveys conducted in 2016. Notably, of the provincial/territorial governments who responded, they most commonly used meetings to raise awareness of the Framework for Recreation (IMWG, 2017, p. 5). Survey B, given to provincial/territorial organizations, showed an 81% endorsement rate for the Framework for Recreation of those who

participated in the survey (IMWG, 2017, p. 8). Of the local governments and organizations that participated in survey C, 62% were either not aware or vaguely aware of the Framework for Recreation (IMWG, 2017, p. 15). Subsequently, 82% of local organizations had not endorsed the Framework for Recreation, with only 26% stating a plan to endorse (IMWG, 2017, p. 15). Of the small sample size from a national scale survey, the results indicate a possible broader limited level of awareness and implementation of the Framework for Recreation. To accurately articulate this sentiment, a larger sample size would need to be obtained.

Municipal implementation is being monitored by the IMWG, and the Framework for Recreation also calls for knowledge development through its implementation process. This report will contribute to the current state of monitoring from an academic perspective, and no known academic research is currently investigating the state of implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canadian municipalities.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

As previously stated, the Framework for Recreation is the first document to outline a plan for the Canadian public recreation sector in nearly 30 years. Thus, this literature review focuses on three key areas surrounding the Framework for Recreation in the public recreation sector. The literature review, first, presents the current state of municipalities recreation, then collaboration and wicked problems associated with providing municipal recreation, and finally municipal recreation policy and frameworks in the public recreation sector of Canada.

Municipalities and Recreation

The responsibility of recreation in Canada has been primarily placed, on and carried by, municipalities and provincial/territorial governments since the 1800s (MacIntosh, Bedecki, & Franks, 1987). Public recreation was static and did not grow or develop until the mid to late 1900s (MacIntosh, Bedecki, & Franks, 1987). Within the Canadian Constitution, there is no clear role for recreation, leaving a void in the sector that was later filled by other resource documents such as the NRS in 1987 and now the Framework for Recreation in 2015. Slack (2003) suggested that Canadian municipalities did not receive any power or authority concerning recreation and are only mentioned as provincial entities, with each province deciding the roles and responsibilities of their respective municipalities through various provincial, municipal acts, causing notable differences across the country.

One approach to understanding past public recreation sector trends was outlined by Johnston et al. (2011) who named three distinct eras of Canada's recreation sector –

input, *output*, and *outcome era* (Johnston et al., 2011). Johnston et al. (2011) stated the

recreation sector could most recently be categorized in an era titled "*Outcome Era*"

(Johnston et al., 2011, p.15). The outcome era called upon the public recreation sector to

utilize existing resources to complete more programs and services while receiving less

financial assistance (Crompton & Kaczynski, 2003; Glover, 1999). During this era, the

recreation system transformed into a user-pay system with one in three operating dollars

coming from the user of the service (Crompton & Kaczynski, 2003). The current state of

the recreation sector in Canada, is attempting to continue increasing effectiveness with

decreased funds; however, inevitably, certain recreation areas are simply weakening,

such as opportunities for physical activity (Herman, Hopman, & Sabiston, 2015;

Koezuka, Koo, Allison, Adalf, Dwyer, Faulkner, & Goodman, 2006).

In the 2016 census of population and dwellings, Alberta was found to have six of

the top ten fastest growing municipalities of 5,000 or more inhabitants within census

metropolitan areas. These municipalities had an increased range between 26.8% to 47.1%

between 2011 and 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Alberta also had the fastest growing

municipality of 5,000 or more inhabitants outside census metropolitan areas, with an

increased rate of 48.1% between 2011 and 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Alberta was a

growing province with many municipalities, and thus, it is especially critical for the

recreation sector to contribute to resident's wellbeing as municipalities grow.

With a growing population, the demand for community services increases, too,

which may strain the current financial resource structure. The provincial and federal

allocation of funds towards recreation is insignificant in comparison to municipalities.

The difference in monetary investment for recreation is corroborated by the statements

made in the Framework for Recreation that designates municipalities as the primary supplier of recreation services, programs, and resources. All government spending from both Alberta municipalities and the provincial government is public information. An ARPA report, the most recent of its kind, explains that if municipal spending were to have maintained its levels from the late 1980s, $2.7 billion more would have been spent by 2007 (all statistics adjusted for population and inflation; APRA, 2008).

Within municipalities, it was found that an average of only 10% of the operating budget was allocated towards recreation (ARPA, 2015). Examining the municipal classification system in Alberta, towns are revealed as the municipal category that spends more per capita on recreation than cities or villages (ARPA, 2008). Slack (2003) investigated financial support for recreation from municipalities across Canada at a provincial level, and he stated that the primary funding for municipal recreation came mostly from local property taxes and user fees; provincial governments, including Alberta, do not contribute a significant portion of their budget towards recreation. The funding structure of the recreation sector in Canada has become increasingly stringent and is forcing the sector to attempt to do more with less (Glover, 1999).

Collaboration/Wicked Problems

The collaborative efforts of recreation, sport, active living and health were a matter of discussion throughout the process of the Framework for Recreation's development as to how they contribute to the wellbeing of Canadians. As identified in the literature, a 'wicked problem' is when multiple sectors within a society are called to provide a unified front to solve a complex problem (Sam, 2011; Shannon, Oncescu, &

Hutchinson, 2016). A wicked problem is defined as, "…social problems that are difficult or impossible to solve because of the complex interdependence on incomplete, contradictory, or changing requirements that are tough to recognize" (Shannon et al., 2016, p. 255). As outlined in the Framework for Recreation, the collaborative process extends past the recreation and parks field and requires multiple sectors to work together to provide pathways to wellbeing (CPRA & ISRC, 2015).

Although wicked problems are not limited to the recreation sector, multiple sectors that are considered stakeholders in recreation have identified the need for collaborative efforts to combat wicked problems facing society. These sectors include sport (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007; Sam, 2009), health (Blackman et al., 2006), public policy (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Mcgivern, Dopson, & Bennett, 2011; Head & Alford, 2015), and education (Borko, Whitcomb, & Liston, 2009). Each of the above distinct sectors contributes to recreation and recreation contributes to each of the above sectors. The complex social challenges faced by the recreation sector is not a sector only problem but may require a collaborative effort to provide solutions to complex social issues. Thus, different sectors contribute to providing and effecting recreation for the advancement of wellbeing for individuals and communities. The Framework for Recreation has reinforced the roles and responsibilities of the sector stakeholders for recreation and the need for a collaborative effort in addressing the social complex issues associated with recreation.

Policy and Frameworks

Policy and frameworks within an institutional setting are utilized in defining motives and directing decisions for that institution. The general purpose of policy in institutions, primarily in organizational settings, is to, "… prescribe, govern, and routinize the activities of formal organizations. By prescribing courses of action, policies standardize decision making, enhance organizational efficacy, and help organizations achieve their goals" (Livermore, & Midgley, 2009, p.x). More specifically, public policy is the essence of the democratic system as it guides elected officials and employees. Public policy is defined as "policies formulated and implemented by governments… They are used by governments to deal with major issues that affect a country's social, economic, environmental, and political affairs" (Livermore, & Midgley, 2009, p.x). Organizations operate in multiple contexts (e.g., non-profit, for-profit, government); however, the scope of this study was on public-sector policy and frameworks.

The ability of the public sector to operate, make decisions, and set parameters, begins with policy. Public-sector actors are increasingly looking to private partners to provide services and programs to their constituents (Pal, 2006). This kind of partnership has limited ability to develop operational policy, and instead guiding documents, like the Framework for Recreation, are used. It is important to note the distinction between policy and frameworks. Where a policy is bound by law, a framework is a set of guidelines.

The comparison between policy and framework begins to overlap in the instance of framework policies. Framework policies are set in those previously mentioned public-private partnerships as they establish "…parameters but [let] others deliver the program" (Pal, 2006, p.262). The Framework for Recreation is indeed a framework, and ideally,

policy will be developed in connection with the public sector. Furthermore, the life cycle of a framework starts with planning, then moves to implementation, which is then concluded by monitoring and evaluation. For this study, the focus was on the implementation of the Framework for Recreation with the desired outcome of this report's findings to contribute to that of the monitoring and evaluation stage.

   Implementation. A well-developed plan can determine the future outcome of a specific sector for years to come, which in the public recreation sector of Canada is determined by eight factors introduced by Gebhardt and Eagles (2014). Those eight factors are the factual base; the goals; implementation; policies; internal consistency; monitoring; inter-organizational coordination; and plan presentation (Gebhardt, & Eagles, 2014). Within the context of community recreation planning, "plans offer municipalities innovative strategies to address the changing nature of recreation services and the populations they serve" (Leone, Barnes, & Sharpe, 2015, p.66). Thus, the initial implementation of plans is a necessity for any actor (e.g., organizations, government agency, individual, or government department) to move forward the plan and form further policy. The Framework for Recreation offers the recreation sector of Canada with direction to address multiple changing circumstances in recreation through "a new vision, and suggests some common ways of thinking about the renewal of recreation, based on clear goals and underlying values and principals" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.4) to which municipalities can choose to implement. There is a distinct difference between "planning implementation and plan implementation" (Talen, 1996a, p.79). Planning implementation is the act of organizing, during the development phase of a plan, to know how the plan will be integrated into use. In contrast, plan implementation is whether or not the plan is

actively utilized. The distinction can mean the difference between a plan that is used and one that is not. The Framework for Recreation has moved beyond the planning implementation stage as this would have had to occur during the development stages. However, the Framework for Recreation can be untiled to the fullest potential in the plan implementation stage and the purpose of this report was to discover the factors of implementation for the Framework for Recreation by Alberta municipalities.

Implementation has its place among literature within a variety of contexts, such as political science, public administration, and management sciences (Berke et al., 2006). The discussion in current planning literature is centered on determining if a cause-effect relationship exists between plans and implementation; "…Planners have not yet developed an equivalent ability to link plans and plan implementation practices to subsequent impacts" (Berke et al., 2006, p.582). Potential disconnects exist in the community planning process as a plan moves through different key stages which are, the visioning process, plan writing, local government actions, and ordinance enforcement (Leone et al., 2015; Loh, 2012). The implementation stage is the second stage in the planning process and "...successful implementation results from successful negotiation of decision points as the plan moves through different key spaces: from community to planner, planner to department, and department to council" (Leone et al., 2015, p.65). For the Framework for Recreation and its goals to be implemented into municipal settings it will have to move through similar, if not the same, stages as identified by Leone et al. (2015).

Until recently, limited research had been conducted in the Canadian community recreation planning context. Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) established 71 factors of

planning that improve implementation in a Canadian context. The 71 factors for

recreation and parks in municipalities can be categorized into four sections: (1) Plan

process; (2) Plan content; (3) Human/implementation; and (4) Obstacles. Table 3 displays

the areas of importance outlined in each of the four sections. During the planning phase,

the associated factors of this phase contribute to the overall degree of plan

implementation. Their methodology included three phases: first, choosing a municipality;

second, quantitative content analysis of parks and recreation master plans; and third,

interviews of recreation staff or individuals involved in the development and

implementation of recreation master plans (Gebhardt & Eagles, 2014).

Table 3. Areas of importance in implementation during planning (Gebhardt, & Eagles, 2014)

Implementation Categories	Areas of Importance
Plan Process	1) Involvement of Agency Staff; 2) Involvement of the public in formulation and committees; 3) Roles of the terms of reference and consultants.
Plan Content	1) Clearly defined goals of municipal plans; 2) The convergence of important plans, such as master plan and culture; 3) Articulation of public consolation material in the plan; 4) The plan should incorporate a comprehensive inventory of all recreation facilities.
Human/Implementation	1) Municipality council endorsement of the plan, which distinguishes priority; 2) All actors involved should support the plan; 3) Updates should be made to the municipal council of plan implementation.

Obstacles	1) Staff, five obstacles that can be counteracted through staff involvement which leads to commitment, knowledge of plan, and high staff retention (1) negative feelings of staff, (2)lack of involvement by staff, (3) lack of staff knowledge, (4) lack of staff commitment, & (5) staff turnover; 2) Advisory committees consisting of the public can combat resistance and communication concerns; 3) Municipal amalgamation was not always an issue.

The implementation of plans into the municipality is a multifaceted task with many actors involved. The degree to which plans are implemented is based on the determination of success (e.g., meeting specific goals). The determination of success can either include planning of success or plan success, which can have two distinct outcomes. Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) indicated, "planning success indicates that the planning process is successful whereas plan success refers to the extent to which the plan's recommendations were implemented" (p.325). Leone et al. (2015) debated what the best measure of implementation success is; either conformance, performance, or influence. Berke et al. (2006), adopted the case of Talen's (1996b) idea of conformance success, highlighting "the importance of assessing plan implementation on the basis of whether the objectives included in the plan are achieved" (Berke et al., 2006, p.584). Within conformance success, plans and planners have an important influence on implementation success (Berke et al. 2006). Although, the determination of success is outside the scope of this report, the factors of implementation will include content from the Framework for recreation being incorporated in the municipal recreation setting as does conformance success has objectives in municipal plans achieved in municipal recreation settings.

Regarding recreation planning, the scope of this study is not necessarily on the success of the Framework for Recreation; however, on the planning of success and how that is determined within the municipality through implementation efforts of the Framework for Recreation. The implementation of the Framework for Recreation is outlined in the document's vision, values, and principal operators. The vision of the Framework for Recreation is for all Canadians to be involved in the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the natural and built environments. Table 4 identifies values and principal operators of the Framework for Recreation, depicting how the document functions in the public recreation sector. The outcome is that the identified factors, among the values and principal operators of the Framework for Recreation, will contribute to the Framework for Recreation's goals, including the goals associated priorities, being implemented into the public recreation sector of Canada.

Table 4. Values and principal operators of the Framework for Recreation (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.17)

Values	Principal Operators
Public Good	Outcome-Driven
Inclusion & Equity	Quality & Relevance
Sustainability	Evidence-Based
Lifelong Participation	Partnerships & Collaboration
	Innovation

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study presents an exploration of the implementation of the Framework for Recreation using a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. To date, the quantity of literature addressing the Framework for Recreation is limited, with the exception of Shannon et al. (2016) which addresses the Framework for Recreation in the context of combating wicked problems with leisure education. Thus, this study was exploratory and contributed to the gap in academic literature regarding the Framework for Recreation. The exploratory nature of this investigation was due to the lack of academic literature pertaining to the Framework for Recreation's implementation, and it should be noted that exploratory studies are often used in sport, recreation, and leisure literature (Lankford, Pfister, Knowles, & Williams, 2003; Moyle, Wiler, & Moore, 2014).

A qualitative research approach allowed the complexities of the municipal recreation sector to be better understood through the use of interviews and documents. Smith and Chaddick (2012) described the qualitative research approach as not being complex, rigid, or fixed, but rather a method that can flow with circumstances and allow for subjective meaning. Qualitative research is recognized as a meaningful way of conducting social research (Crotty, 1998), through a "discovery-oriented approach" (Patton, 2002, p. 39) that uses a "form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (Shank, 2002, p. 5). Through the works of Gubrium and Holstein (1997), Smith and Chaddick (2012) explained that a qualitative research approach could be used as a means to scrutinize a world comprised of meanings, interpretations, feelings, talk, and interaction.

This study utilized a case study methodology by using a multi-site design, meaning multiple geographical locations (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Case studies have been used in a variety of qualitative studies to explore real-world phenomena. Yin (2014) defined a case study as,

> …an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident. (Yin, 2014, p.16)

The components of this definition reveal Yin's (2014) twofold explanation of case studies as case studies are both a real-world phenomenon and in-depth. Yin's (2014) definition is corroborated by Creswell and Poth's (2017) definition of a case study:

> Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (pp.96-97)

This study followed both Yin's (2014) and Creswell and Poth's (2017) definition of case studies. Table 5 displays the features of a case study design as it pertains to research questions, definition, case identification, intention of case studies, generating description, and conclusions. Case studies are used to understand a real-world phenomenon, and therefore, this research explored the real-world phenomenon of the implementation of the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities.

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Table 5. Case study research

Features of a Case Study	Connection to Study
Research questions of a case study answer the "how" and why" of a real-world phenomenon, which the researcher has little control over (Yin, 2014).	Three research questions: 1) How have recreation directors/managers implemented the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the documents' goals and priorities? 2) Why have the municipalities taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities? 3) What impact has the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had on the municipality?
What constitutes a case study is the investigation of a real-world phenomenon in its context, where the case parameters may not always be identifiable or defined (Yin, 2014).	This study explored the real-world implementation of the Framework for Recreation in a variety of municipal contexts.
Case identification is through determining the parameters (e.g., location, population) that can be bounded or described. Cases can either be single or multiple (Creswell, 2013).	This study utilized a multi-site case study approach. Cases were identified through the population, participants' duration in a current role, and the degree of current Framework for Recreation implementation.
A case study to investigate a unique case is intrinsic. While investigating a phenomenon or issue is an instrumental case (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2013).	The phenomenon explored in this study was the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. Thus, this study was classified as instrumental.
The findings of a case study include both a description of the case(s) and themes identified (Creswell, 2013).	The findings of this study were coded by descriptive coding and subsequently had identifiable themes to compare within and among cases.
The conclusions of a case study include the "assertions" of the researcher's overarching understanding and meaning of the case(s) (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2013).	The conclusions of this case did have the assertions of the researcher, but also that of the researcher's supervisor and committee as they are included in the trustworthiness initiative of peer review.

Case studies have been used in a variety of research contexts such as psychology, medicine, law, and political science (Creswell, 1998). Both Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) and Leone et al. (2015) categorized their cases by municipal population sizes while using a case-study research design in a municipal recreation context. Cases can be classified in a variety of ways such as by an, "…individual, a community, a decision process, or an event" (Creswell, & Poth, 2017, p.97). This study defined and categorized multiple cases by municipal population (i.e., cities, towns, and villages [later changed to municipal districts/specialized municipalities) by following the process of Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) and Leone, et al. (2015).

Multi-Site Case Study

A multi-case study is considered by Creswell and Poth (2017) as a study that includes multiple geographical locations. Recreation literature includes examples of multi-site case studies as seen in the work of Eyler et al. (2008) and Leone et al. (2015). This study is similar to that of Leone et al. (2015), as both studies use a multi-site case study methodology in a Canadian context. Leone et al. (2015) set criteria for their case selection. The case study methodology of holistic and instrumental cases further characterizes a multi-site case study. The multiple geographical settings of the cases provided an investigative scope that is holistic in nature and presented the case and the phenomenon of each case within a different context (Leone, 2008).

This study explored the phenomenon of the implementation of the Framework for Recreation's goals, including the goals associated priorities, in Alberta municipalities. This phenomenon was also explored in a variety of settings, as a multi-site case study.

Stake (2006) explains a multi-site case study as "…[a] study is to examine how the program or phenomenon performs in different environments. This often means that cases in both typical and atypical settings should be selected" (p.23). The definition of the phenomenon under investigation guided the selection of the cases (Stake, 2006). The classification of cases was established by parameters to which the bounded system will be determined (i.e., the case[s]).

Methods

Sample Population

This study called upon employees in senior level management within their recreation departments for data collection. The categorization of recreation departments within municipal governments varied among municipalities. Thus, for the purpose of this study, recreation departments were those departments that develop plans and implement action items that are understood to be, "…all aspects of parks and recreation, from arts and culture to individual and team sports, and outdoor activities such as nature appreciation, hiking, and bicycling" (Leone, 2008, p.14).

Representatives within recruited municipalities were from towns, cities, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities; municipal districts/specialized municipalities were utilized instead of villages due to the lack of village participant recruitment. As a result, this approach was understood to be purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is used extensively in qualitative research as it is the subjective choosing of participants who will contribute and "…inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 158).

The nature of case studies often forces smaller than usual sample sizes, making it difficult to permit random sampling (Stake, 2006). Instead, purposeful sampling is used to "...build in variety and create opportunities for intensive study" (Stake, 2006, p. 24). Purposeful sampling allowed for participants who fit the inclusion criteria, which is discussed below, to be chosen based on adequate knowledge of the Framework for Recreation.

The recruitment process was conducted with the support of the ARPA. On behalf of the researcher, the ARPA contacted municipalities and their recreation representatives who fit the inclusion and case criteria for this study. If municipalities and their recreation representatives showed interest, the researcher was directed to the participants to begin the facilitation of time and location for an interview.

Following the process of municipal recreation studies of Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) and Leone et al. (2015), municipalities were put into categories and given codes. Those categories were based on population as cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities. Within each category, there were four participants, except for municipal districts/specialized municipalities who only had three participants in the case, recruited for a combined total of 11. Table 6 illustrates the codes that were utilized for this study. The names of participating individuals were taken off the transcripts and given pseudonyms, such as V-P1 (Municipal District/Specialized Municipality Participant 1[previously Village]), T-P1 (Town Participant 1), or C-P1 (City Participant 1), to maintain the categorical classification of municipalities while preserving anonymity.

Table 6. Coding and sample size

Code structure	Sample Size
V-P#	4
T-P#	4
C-P#	3

This study had a total of 11 participants with four participants in town and city cases and three in the municipal districts/specialized municipal case. Stake (2006) stated that many multi-case studies have no less than four or more than 15 cases as their sample size. Stake (2006) further explained that if a study has less than four, there will not be enough information pertaining to the "interactivity between programs and their situations" (p.22). Whereas, a case or sample size greater than 15 will provide too much specific information for the research to be understood fully by academics and readers (Stake, 2006). The community recreation planning studies of Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) and Leone at al. (2015) vary in their number of participants, having nine and eleven participants, respectively.

Table 7 further subdivided each classification of the municipality into smaller population cases. The case selection was chosen based on the parameters discussed above, and the number of the sample size indicated in Table 7. The classification breakdown of each case depended on the recruitment of willing participants. As a result, population sub-categorization was removed within the cases as participants were submitted as they were identified to the researcher. Participants were always categorized into cases according to their provincial classification of either a municipal district/specialized municipality, town or city.

Table 7. Selected cases by cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities

Population of Cases	Number of Participants Interviewed
Municipal Districts/Specialized Municipalities (Case Study 1)	
0.1 population density per square kilometer	1 participant
3.6 population density per square kilometer	1 participant
13.4 population density per square kilometer	1 participant
Towns (Case Study 2)	
6,600	2 participants
14,000	1 participant
29,000	1 participant
Cities (Case Study 3)	
34,000	1 participant
63,000	1 participant
93,000	1 participant
933,000	1 participant

To be a viable participant in this study, all participants had to fit into three inclusion parameters. The first parameter for inclusion as a participant in this study was population and provincial, municipal classification. Classification of municipalities on population size has been previously explained in the literature of Gebhert and Eagles (2014) and Leone et al. (2015) studies. Classification of Alberta municipalities is through divisions established into municipal districts, villages, towns, cities, and specialized municipalities by the Government of Alberta (Government of Alberta, 2017). As of 2017, Alberta consists of 18 cities, 108 towns, 89 villages, and 69 municipal districts/specialized municipalities (see Appendix B; Government of Alberta, 2017). Villages are the smallest entity, having a population of 300-999, followed by towns with a population of 1,000-9,999, and cities, which have the largest populations of more than 10,000 (Government of Alberta, 2017). This study focused solely on cities, towns, and

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municipal districts/specialized municipalities after village recruitment did not provide any suitable participants.

The second parameter for inclusion as a participant was centered on the sample population. To be considered a viable participant for inclusion, the sample population of recreation directors or managers, needed to be in their respective roles for at least two years. This time requirement matched the timeline of the national endorsement of the Framework for Recreation. This participant requirement ensured that all municipalities and their respective representatives had ample time to become familiar with the Framework for Recreation. The inclusion of a time requirement also allowed an opportunity for the Framework for Recreation to be implemented to some extent, which has been tracked by CPRA (CPRA, 2017). The third and final parameter for inclusion as a participant was the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. A municipality must, to some extent, have had to implement the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities. The pretext of the Framework for Recreation being implemented to some extent, was through participants self-identification. The self-identification primarily came through recreation plan integration, but other instances included participants firsthand professional knowledge of the Framework for Recreation. This parameter of requiring a degree of implementation of the Framework for Recreation was the final inclusion criteria for each participant and provided insight into the phenomenon in its current context.

Data Collection

The data collection process of this study was achieved through multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews (i.e., primary source) and documents (i.e., secondary sources). Drawing from multiple data-sources allowed for the trustworthiness of the findings to be ensured (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Trustworthiness is dependent on the ability of the researcher to provide a rich description, resulting in confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The data collection process was the same in each case of the study, but alterations were made to the research design as discoveries were made (i.e., villages changed to municipal districts/specialized municipalities and the population classification for recruitment), as to not distort or ignore discoveries (Yin, 2014). The research design changed during the data collection phase by the addition of municipal districts/specialized municipalities instead of villages and the removal of population sub-categorize.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data collection for this study. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face and phone conversations. The type of interview (i.e., face-to-face or phone) conducted was contingent on the geographic location of the participants. The variation of interview type was due to the large geographic size of Alberta, and the distance of participating municipalities. The participants recruited for the study were municipal recreation directors or managers with the assistance of ARPA. Participants were civil servants in a variety of roles, such as municipal recreation directors/managers. Due to that, data was collected during a municipal election year, civil servants, rather than elected officials,

were chosen as representatives, due to their role within the municipal government remaining constant.

The semi-structured interview included open-ended questions that were used throughout the data collection process. The participant's perspective and insight concerning the research questions are clearer and more concise through the semi-structured open-ended interview process (Patton, 2015). Open-ended questions allowed the interviewer to probe and flow with a two-way conversation with the participant (Shank, 2002). The researcher had in-depth conversations throughout the interview process with the civil servants that represented the municipal recreation departments for cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities.

With the permission of each participant, the interview was audio recorded through two possible interview formats. Three face-to-face interviews were conducted in a quiet and secured room, determined before the scheduled interview, or at a comfortable location determined by the participant. In the case where face-to-face interviews could not be conducted, the remaining eight interviews were done by phone and done in a secured and private room for the researcher. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 20 to 60 minutes, and the length of the interview was dependent on the participant's duration of response to the researcher's probing questions. Interviews were audio recorded with the exception of one where a recording issue was encountered, which resulted in no audio recording. With the one interview not recorded, the researcher's notes were sent to the participant for feedback with no concerns or changes articulated by the study participant.

The interview followed an interview guide (see Appendix C) and consisted of 25-30 open-ended questions. The interview guide focused on the Framework for Recreation's implementation within the municipality, with exploratory questions pertaining to the goals and the goals associated priorities. The interview guide was led by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. The introduction section of the interview guide dealt with background information on the participant, including their municipality and recreation department. The conclusion of the interview asked questions regarding the Framework for Recreation's future implication. The topic of implementation was central to all sections of the interview guide. Thus, the focus was specific to the goals , including when possible the goals associated priorities, of the Framework for Recreation. The interview guide looked to draw upon the participant's personal experiences and knowledge pertaining to their municipality's implementation response to the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities. Therefore, the interview guide questions were developed with alignment to the various sections of the Framework for Recreation. Not all interview questions were utilized in the findings and discussion chapters to the same extent. For instance, in the background portion of the interview guide it asked about the participants community recreation department, which included volunteers. This is an example of a question that was not incorporated in the findings or the discussion chapters as a stand-alone item, but instead this question assisted in contextualizing the recreation capacity for the purpose of understanding the municipal recreation setting of the participants.

Before interviews commenced with participants, the interview guide and its questions were pre-tested. The pre-testing of questions allowed for evaluation of the flow

of the interview guide and the relativeness of the questions to the study for trustworthiness purposes. Pre-testing or pilot studies are common in many studies, both qualitative and quantitative (Chenail, 2011; Coolen, Elizabeth, & Ozaki, 2002; Cote & Raz, 2015), including within a sport-specific context (Clement, Arvinen-Barrow, & Fetty, 2015; Hodge, Henry, & Smith, 2014; Kunkel, Funk, & King, 2014). The pre-testing of the interview guide was done with ARPA employees who have years of experience with municipal recreation and with the Framework for Recreation's development.

After the pre-testing interviews, the interview guide went through minor updates. The updates included, removing three questions that were either repeated elsewhere in the interview guide or came out naturally through other questions, question order was changed in the introduction to proceed naturally from an organizational perspective to an individual perspective, one question was moved to be a probing question instead of a standalone, and finally, one question was added, which was a combination of the deleted questions. The academic supervisor confirmed the changes before moving forward with the recruitment stage. Upon conclusion of the interview guide testing, the studies recruitment and interview process commenced.

Documents. Document collection was a secondary data source for this study. Document analysis is defined as "…a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p.27). Using the same classification for recreation departments as stated above from Leone (2008; i.e., population), documents were used for adding a new perspective to the context of municipal recreation. Documents are utilized in qualitative research in multiple ways through the interpretation of their content. Prior (2004) stated

…documents are not just manufactured, they are consumed, and as with all tools

they are manipulated in organized settings for many different ends. They also

function in different ways – irrespective of human manipulations. In short,

documents have effects. (p.91)

This study analyzed existing municipal recreation documents to contribute to the

discovery of the status of implementation of the Framework for Recreation's goals,

including when possible the goals associated priorities, in the public recreation sector.

Documents were taken from public domains of chosen cases, primarily the

municipalities' web pages. Of the secondary documents collected from the eleven study

participants, six were recreation master plans and the remaining five included a culture

master plan, two strategic plans (one community centered the other active living

centered), a recreation needs assessment and master plan, and a recreation area policy.

Documents added a unique perspective, such as values and beliefs of the setting,

which may augment the primary data source (Edwards & Skinner, 2009; Marshall &

Rossman, 1995; Miller, & Fox, 1997). Secondary source documents existed in all three

classifications of municipalities studied. Of the three classifications, cities held the most

recreation plans or strategies, which addressed everything from facilities and sports fields

to cemeteries and parks. As the population size decreases through the municipal

classifications of cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities, so did

the number of developed and implemented recreation plans and strategies. The

documents collected for this study were primarily municipal recreation master plans.

Although, other recreation plans were accepted when either a recreation master plan was

not present or directed otherwise by the participant. Recreation master plans are

documents that direct, influence and promote community recreation. Recreation master plans can outline anything from land dedication parameters for recreation to the philosophy of recreation for the community. The Municipal Government Act (2017) of Alberta does not mandate municipalities to have a recreation master plan; however, recreation master plans are commonplace in municipalities. This study took recreation master plans when possible or otherwise directed from participants, which brought forward specific recreation plans that focused on one particular segment of recreation.

When document and interview analysis processes are combined, they benefit the study beyond just supplying multiple data-source trustworthiness. Bowen (2009), gave multiple reasons why the document analysis process is important on its own and in conjunction with interviews. Bowen (2009) also outlined the benefits of using both sources together, explaining how the information from document analysis can guide multiple iterations of the interview guide probing questions. Another contrast Bowen (2009) provided between document analysis, and interview analysis is the significance of reactivity. Document analysis through only text provides the values and beliefs of the organization in their setting. The use of documents can provide insight into the municipality and its values and beliefs within a recreation context.

Data Analysis

Data was transcribed following data collection, data analysis commenced, using a form of Miles and Huberman's (1994) analysis framework. A modified version of Edwards and Skinner (2009) was applied to this study: 1) Familiarization; 2) Identifying a thematic framework, indexing, and charting; and (3) Interpretation. The familiarization

stage requires the researcher to become immersed in the data. This immersion is with the raw data, which consisted of audio recordings, transcriptions, notes, and collected documents (Edwards & Skinner, 2009).

The second stage in the data analysis framework consisted of three steps. The first was identifying a thematic framework. The thematic framework was determined through the Framework for Recreation's content. Creswell (2013) described themes as "broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p.186). The second step was indexing, where the coding scheme of both transcripts and documents was applied to all subsequent data collected. The initial coding step was where each line or segment was given a code. Descriptive coding was consequently utilized throughout the coding process. Descriptive coding was where the researcher's knowledge and understanding were not a hindrance, but a crucial part of the method to identify further meaning from the initial coding. Content linked to the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities was used to guide the collection of data from documents of participating municipalities. The analysis of the secondary source data, documents, followed the same coding process of the interview transcripts.

The emerging themes and codes further instructed how the interviews were conducted, to further focus and direct the questions on the central phenomenon of each case. The third step within the second stage was charting. Charting is the organization and categorization of the data collected. The descriptive codes developed in the first step were assigned with their corresponding text from the transcripts, and document data gathered, which was completed in this study through a qualitative software from QRS, NVivo 11 (NVivo).

NVivo, as a qualitative software, was chosen based on the increased amount of manual handling of the data in comparison to other qualitative software available (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014). The use of the software is to "…assist in the analysis of data sets [as] a pathway to increasing the rigour and flexibility of the research" (Sotiriadou et al., 2014, p.231). NVivo is a research tool for interpretive approaches to qualitative studies (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). For researchers, the ability to receive assistance in charting while remaining immersed in the data was key to the trustworthiness of this study.

The final stage of Edwards and Skinner (2009) data analysis framework was interpretation. Interpreting involved using the themes and codes within the broader literature to understand how the municipalities have implemented the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities. The specific municipal cases were analyzed to discover patterns between two or more of the code (Creswell, 2013) and were cross-referenced with the code structure for identifying the sample population. In conjunction with a case study research design, a rich description of the cases was provided. Within the context of the description of each case, the sub-themes were discussed, and differences and similarities between cases were discussed. As described by Yin (2009), the findings were formed by the researcher developing patterns through the data.

As a means of examining the codes identified from the findings in the context of the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities, a matrix was used. A matrix is defined as "the crossing of two or more main dimensions or variables to see how they interact" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.239). The variables or dimensions

discussed by Miles and Huberman (1994) in the context of this study were represented by the sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. The matrix can be a visual representation of how the codes correspond within the context of the Frameworks for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities. Determining how the codes intersect was based on the definition of the goals in the Framework for Recreation. Table 8 provides an example of a matrix for each goal area.

Table 8. Example of the matrix from all five goal areas

The Framework for Recreation Goals and Priorities	Codes	Examples from the Findings
Change in municipal recreation meaning – Goal 1 Active Living	Municipal Profile / Scope / Renewed Definition / Lifelong Participation	T-P2: Okay, well recreation and physical activity and sport. These are opportunities that can be either informal and completely ad hoc or formalized in terms of a league and even become competitive. We have a pretty good range of opportunities in [T-P3 community name] but being close to Edmonton makes it a lot easier to access more competitive stuff that isn't available here and facilities too that we don't have. Then there is the whole idea of life long physical activity and how that can change over time through a person's life in their stages.
Implementation of Goals and Priority Themes – Goal 2 Inclusion & Access	Public Good / Inclusion & Equity / Inclusion & Access	C-P4: Well, we really believe, I said our vision statement is about access for all. So, we haven't broken it down and say we need to serve kids, or we need to serve adults, or low income [C-P4 citizens]. We really need to find a way to get all [C-P4 citizens] engaged. So, we have a number of ways we try and do that. We do have a leisure access program for all low income [C-P4 citizens]. We provide lots of free programs. We try and make sure that we have a broad range; it really is going to appeal to everyone. We take it quite seriously, the access and inclusion and equity piece is kind of fundamental in our rec facility master plan, in

		our business planning. So, we're not just trying to hit those, middle and upper-income families who can afford to rent ice, afford to pay a fee, a greens fee on our golf course. We're saying, that's fine, we have to make sure that everyone is participating in some regard in the way that they want to.
Alignment – Goal 3 Connecting People and Nature	Implementation / Recreation Capacity / Supportive Environments / Inclusion & Access / Active Living / Connecting People & Nature	T-P1a: No, I think we look, within five, so if you wanted to say, which goals are we the most, active living is part of our active transportation plan, facility, inclusion, and access, connecting people and nature, that's our parks and pathways, that's the number one thing in all of our visioning. Whenever you do a service survey that's the number one thing that people in [T-P1 community name] like, is the parks, pathways, and natural areas. Interviewer: Yep. T-P1a: They all [inaudible] is number one. And then we do work with part of the environment and recreation capacity.
National Sector Tie-in – Goal 4 Supportive Environments	Implementation / Quality & Relevance / Supportive Environments / Partnerships & Collaboration / Help Build Strong Families & Communities	V-P2: I think again supporting us in our work that we're doing in terms of the value or the rationale around why we're looking to invest money in certain areas and develop certain types of amenities and potentially programming and that sort of thing. In supporting that in a broader nature so it is not just the county coming up and saying, ya I think we should spend your tax dollars on this because we think it's a good idea. Certainly, we would tie it, I mean what we heard in the parks, recreation, culture master plan public engagement. But having a tool like this would be able to support it at a broader, more, obviously national level as well. I think it just provides some validity to our recommendations.
Partnerships – Goal 5 Recreation Capacity	Partnership & Collaboration	Partnerships with other organizations to provide recreation, such as their current recreation office building sharing with a gymnastics organization or their Tri-Leisure Centre. Those partnerships contribute to the allocation of funds towards providing recreation. It isn't necessarily going directly for

recreation programs but to organizations who are providing those programs to residents.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness and quality of a study are meaningful in establishing the study's trustworthiness. Creswell (1998), provided eight procedures for verification to be potentially used in a study and recommends that at least two should be incorporated into a study. The eight procedures consist of 1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; 2) triangulation or using multiple data sources; 3) peer review or debriefing; 4) negative case analysis; 5) clarifying researcher bias; 6) member checks; 7) rich, thick description; and 8) external audits (Creswell, 1998).

Of the eight verification procedures suggested by Creswell (1998), this study incorporated three – multiple data-sources, peer review, and member checks. This study used semi-structured interviews and secondary sources of municipal recreation plans as its multiple data-sources (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). Data-source triangulation for trustworthiness purposes is established within research methods (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Edwards & Skinner, 2009). Triangulation is the collection of data through multiple sources to interpret the real-world phenomenon in multiple contexts. The convergence of data collection through triangulation results in the "development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2014, p.17).

The second trustworthiness method for this study is Creswell's (1998) peer review or debriefing, which will be an individual who plays "devil's advocate" (Creswell, 1998, p.202). The research supervisor provided guidance and questioned the researcher's interpretations and understandings of the data. Finally, the third validation method,

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member checks, was conducted by the researcher sending interview transcripts to study participants for review. This step was done to ensure that quotes and their subsequent interpretations will be verified and grounded. All three of these verification and quality control measures added to the trustworthiness of this study and its conclusions.

In addition to these trustworthiness techniques, the pre-testing of the interview guide also added to the trustworthiness of the study. The pre-testing of the interview guide revealed potential issues with either the flow or content of the interview guide. The semi-structured, open-question nature of the interview questions allowed for perspectives of the interviewees to be represented, which subsequently allowed for openness to theoretical directions of the data as suggested by, Charmaz (2006). The pre-testing was an addition to the trustworthiness stage and was not incorporated into the analysis stage.

Ethical Considerations

Regarding this study using human participants, the study sought and received approval from the University of New Brunswick's Ethics Board. Through a letter, the 11 participants were informed the study was voluntary and that they may leave the study at any point in time (see Appendix D). All necessary confidentiality precautions were taken. Any identifiable markers, such as names and municipal identifiers, were removed from reports and transcripts, with the exception of the copies for researchers, supervisors, and committee members for reviewing purposes upon request. Therefore, consent was obtained from all participating individuals.

Consent was sought before any aspect of the interview process began as interviews are being conducted in a variety of formats; the type of consent varied. For face-to-face

interviews, a written consent form requiring a signature was provided to the participant

by e-mail and physical copy, (see Appendix E). An email was sent during the recruitment

stage with supporting documents from ARPA on behalf of the researcher. Those

supporting documents included brief information of the proposed study (see Appendix

D), the ARPA support letter (see Appendix A), and the aforementioned consent form. If

there was no response from prospective participants after two weeks, a follow-up phone

call or email was sent. For phone interviews, the participant was asked for verbal consent

prior to the start of the interview, which was audio-recorded. All participants were

reminded before getting started that they may withdraw consent at any point during the

study process.

It was essential to address ethical considerations in research, as it was the

researcher's responsibility to be professionally and scientifically responsible and to

protect the rights and dignity of participants (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). In accordance

with all ethical requirements from both the Tri-council Policy and the University of New

Brunswick Research Ethics Board, all of the studies participants were provided

anonymity in all research documents (e.g., transcripts, reports, and presentations).

Confidentiality was ensured throughout the interview process, and the names of

participants were not released.

All physical copies of transcripts and other identifiable documents were kept

under lock and key at the researcher's primary residence. In accordance with the Tri-

council Policy, all transcripts are to be kept for five years. Electronic copies were stored

on the researcher's password-protected computer. Municipal names were also taken off

all transcripts, reports, and presentations to ensure the anonymity of participant's

locations. All audio recordings were kept until the completion of the study and remained on the researcher's password-protected computer. Any documents with identifiable markers were held on the researcher's same computer.

Researcher Bias

The ability of the researcher to acknowledge any preconceived notions is essential to eliminate any potential bias in the study (Bailey, 1992). The varied experiences of different interpreters can create multiple understandings of the same piece of text, which can be countered with member checks and peer reviews (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). The peer review process helped limit research bias in this study and contributed to the trustworthiness of the study. The guidance and checks from the research supervisor also limited the effect of any potential research bias. The writing of field notes during both the interview and coding process gave the researcher the ability to stop, check, and acknowledge any potential biases that may have occurred during those stages.

Minimal bias was foreseen from a personal standpoint for the primary researcher. Potential bias may have occurred with a possible blurring of commitments when working on both the study and other tasks with ARPA. The identified bias of blurring of roles and commitments was mitigated through the separate reporting of roles with the supervisor and separately to ARPA staff. Regular email and phone communications with the research supervisor was made to prevent any potential bias. The quality control procedures were undertaken to contribute to the trustworthiness of this study.

Chapter 5: Findings

This study utilized a multi-site case study methodology among Alberta municipalities (cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities) to investigate the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. More specifically, three research questions were posed: 1) Why municipalities have taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals & priorities?; 2) How have recreation directors/managers implemented the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals & priorities?; and 3) What impact has the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had on the municipality? The context of each case – cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities – impacted the phenomenon of the Framework for Recreation's implementation. Understanding the context of each case facilitates the understanding of the sub-themes presented in this chapter that influence implementation.

Case Description – Cities, Towns, Municipal Districts/Specialized Municipalities

Among the three cases (cities, towns, municipal districts/specialized municipalities), there were eleven participating municipalities. Table 9 provides a summary of each participating municipalities key characteristics, which were: population from the 2016 Canadian Census, recreation revenue from Alberta Municipal Affairs, recreation expense from Alberta Municipal Affairs, recreation master plans, and the final column stating if there was a reference made to the Framework for Recreation in the study participants recreation master plan. The population, recreation revenue, and recreation expenses, as stated in Table 9, are approximates to protect the anonymity of the participants of this

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study and fulfill ethic requirements. In this study, to calculate municipal recreation revenue and expenses, the Framework for Recreation's definition of recreation was utilized, which gave a broad interpretation of reporting categories from the Alberta Municipal Affairs structured reporting. The Alberta Municipal Affairs categories utilized in Table 9 are from both recreation revenues and expenses in Alberta municipalities, which included:

- Recreation Boards

- Parks & Recreation

- Culture: Libraries Museums, Halls

- Other Recreation and Culture

The municipal parameters in Table 9 framed the context of the phenomena in each case and dictated the phenomena during data analysis.

Table 9. Participating municipal profiles (Government of Alberta, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2016)

Case	Population (2016)	Recreation Revenue 2016 (Millions)	Recreation Expense 2016 (Millions)	Recreation Master Plan/Secondary Document	Framework for Recreation Reference in Secondary Document(s)
			City		
C-P1	88,000	$5,945,000	$59,000,000	**Yes**	No
C-P2	36,000	$5,562,000	$13,648,000	No	No
C-P3	63,000	$11,542,000	$30,028,000	**Yes**	No
C-P4	933,000	$111,477,000	$331,668,000	Yes	**Yes**
			Town		
T-P1	29,000	$4,860,000	$13,369,000	**Yes**	**Yes**
T-P2	7,000	$569,000	$2,825,000	Yes	**Yes**
T-P3	6,000	$4,119,000	$4,198,000	**Yes**	**Yes**
T-P4	12,000	$8,564,000	$11,354,000	**Yes**	**Yes**
		Municipal Districts/Specialized Municipalities			
V-P1	11,000 (3.6 /km2)	$1,366,000	$1,462,000	**No**	No
V-P2	32,000(13.4 /km2)	$5,399,000	$8,928,000	**Yes**	**Yes**
V-P3	11,000 (0.1 /km2)	$90,000	$2,081,000	No	No

Recreation master plans were also collected as secondary sources for data analysis either taken from public sources (i.e., municipal websites) or voluntarily provided by study participants. Those study participants who did not have a similar document that was a part of their overall recreation strategy for the municipality or the documents were over a decade old, which is the typical life-span of municipal master plans, were recorded as not having a recreation master plan in place (see Table 9). Within the recreation master plan column in Table 9, the bolded rows indicate which study participants had a

consultant develop their recreation master plan. For this study, a consultant is articulated as those individuals or organizations that are hired separately to that of a community or municipality to research and develop master plans, which in this study will be recreation master plans. Whether a consultant was utilized or not, consultants influenced the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. For example,

> And again, I'm not that familiar with it [the Framework for Recreation]. The consultant we hired to do the rec. master plan included it; it's an appendix to the document. It is foundational, as far as looking does our plan fit relevant legislation, including the recent provincial report on the future of recreation. Those things are incorporated. My personal familiarity with the document is pretty weak. But I see there are some things in there that relate to some of the things that we're doing, whether it's like I say, as we discussed connecting with other departments. (T-P4)

The incorporation of elements conveyed the extent of use regarding the Framework for Recreation into study participant's recreation master plans by a consultant or third party. However, the daily, or staff use, of the Framework for Recreation was limited or non-existent, as indicated through T-P4. Contrasting to T-P4, were study participants who consciously implement the Framework for Recreation into their recreation master plans or daily work with or without the use of a consultant or third party (C-P2; C-P3; C-P4; T-P1; T-P2; T-P3; V-P1, and V-P2). That implementation of the Framework for Recreation was even seen as completely implemented, "If you're asking me if we believe we've fully implemented the Framework into our programming and planning the answer is yes" (C-P2). The conscious decision to implement the

Framework for Recreation and its content (i.e., goals and priorities) was also

corroborated in the municipal district case,

> Connecting with nature, we try and do that. We try and promote our campgrounds
>
> to our residents. There are quite a few, six. They're very popular. They're very
>
> rustic. We're kind of out there. Recreation capacity, right? We try and sustain the
>
> rec field. We try and provide guidance to people providing programs. Like, we
>
> want to do youth programs, instead of you trying to do a program, why don't we
>
> bring sport ball in, see how that works. We subsidize it, right. We find politics in
>
> small rural, very tough. Parents don't want to pay their best friends dad to teach
>
> them a class. They want someone who has credits…. (V-P1)

The incorporation of the Framework for Recreation into municipal recreation

master plans varied among the study participants, which consultants can influence.

Consultants can either guide or limit the municipalities ability to implement the

Framework for Recreation. In some cases, the study participants relied on the consultant

for the implementation of the Framework for Recreation, "To be honest, we relied on the

consultant to look at alignment…" (T-P4). Throughout the cases and the study

participants that utilized a consultant, the study participants' implementation of the

Framework for Recreation, particularly in their master plans, varied from just the

consultant, or the consultant and staff together, implementing the Framework for

Recreation.

Among the secondary data sources collected and analyzed, there were only six

recreation master plans that specifically referenced or acknowledged the presence of the

Framework for Recreation to the sector. Of those six recreation master plans, all were

created after the official endorsement of the Framework for Recreation. None of the recreation master plans that do not reference the Framework for Recreation have been updated or created since the official endorsement of the Framework for Recreation. The lack of official endorsement can be due to several factors such as the term of an existing plan may not be ending or have ended since 2015, or resources to update a municipal recreation master plan is limited. The Framework for Recreation was being implemented into new recreation master plans by council allowing "me to build a master plan based upon that endorsement and then they built the master plan based upon the Framework for Recreation, which of course they had to approve" (T-P3). Furthermore, of those municipalities who have developed a new recreation master plan and that reference, the Framework for Recreation only T-P2 and C-P4 were done without the use of a consultant.

The two sections below showcase sub-themes that are re-occurring among all cases, but also those sub-themes that were case specific. Using the Framework for Recreation as the foundation among all study participants and their cases, ten sub-themes were found to be reoccurring while only three were case specific. Those reoccurring sub-themes are *value, national sector, guiding document, partnerships & collaboration, renewed definition, limited scope, implementation constraints, council integration, new & existing implementation,* and *document development influence.* The case-specific sub-themes are minor change (cities), ownership/leadership (towns), and rural vs. urban (municipal districts/specialized municipality).

Through using the Framework for Recreation as the foundation, ten sub-themes emerged that existed (see Table 10) in all three cases. The sub-themes were categorized as common when it was found to be among all three cases and in multiple study participants per case. These ten common sub-themes provide a base for all future implementation efforts in municipalities as these sub-themes were found in all contexts (as described above) and multiple cases of this study. Of the ten reoccurring sub-themes each provides a piece to the phenomenon under investigation of implementing the Framework for Recreation into Alberta municipalities.

Table 10. Sub-Themes covering all cases

Sub-Themes
Value
National Sector
Guiding Document
Partnerships & Collaboration
Renewed Definition
Limited Scope
Implementation Constraint
Council Integration
New & Existing Initiatives
Document Development Influence

Value. An inclusion criterion of study participants was, that to some extent, municipal recreation and parks staff had to be implementing the Framework for Recreation. Due to this inclusion criteria, the sentiment of value in recreation and that of the Framework for Recreation was biased. However, the value was still a factor that contributed to the overall implementation of the Framework for Recreation and will be

discussed further. The bias of not only the study participants but also the researcher was noted upon the outset of this research chapter.

The implementation of the Framework for Recreation was influenced through the extent to which study participant(s) value recreation and/or the Framework for Recreation. Value among study participants was articulated through the importance placed by staff, the community, and municipal councils in recreation and components of the Framework for Recreation such as active living and inclusion, which are goals of the Framework for Recreation. As stated by a city study participant,

> There is a lot of value in the Framework [for Recreation] and how it shapes what we do in parks and recreation. We just find a balance between our local needs and council priorities with the goals and objectives, or outcomes in the Framework [for Recreation]. It is paramount in how we plan for the future for sure. (C-P3)

As C-P3 states, the value that is placed in the Framework for Recreation shaped their path forward in parks and recreation. The value that is described here by C-P3 was also found in a town case which found this value in the Framework for Recreation too, "Think the value is that within [T-P1 community name] and within other communities, it gives a structure and framework to say, here are the things that you're working towards" (T-P1a). The value of the Framework for Recreation was articulated throughout the cases as an important factor in directing their overall path forward through initiatives, programs, and even the structure of municipal recreation. Alternatively, the value that was placed in the Framework for Recreation and attributed by study participants as a factor to implementation was expressed by other study participants as not being an influential factor to the same degree. As stated by V-P2,

V-P2: I think it can, it has, I wouldn't say it has to date. Yes, it was noted in our

master plan document, but as you said, I don't know if the connection was made

as to the value of it compared to our master plan. I would say to date it has not

made an impact but the potential is there for sure.

V-P2 had implemented the Framework for Recreation into their recreation master plan,

but it was not valued to the same extent as displayed by the other study participants in

both the city case and town case as shown above.

Among the three categories of cases, the value of the Framework for Recreation

and recreation generally was perceived through the lens of three different audiences (i.e.,

municipal staff, municipal council, and the community). Study participants were all

municipal staff from recreation and parks in their respective communities. Of those

municipal recreation and parks staff that participated in this study the value in the

Framework for Recreation to their work was recognized, "It's been, I think its [the

Framework for Recreation] valuable to us as professionals working in the industry every

day" (C-P4). Study participants stated that they are or would integrate the Framework for

Recreation into the training of their staff (C-P1; C-P2; C-P3; C-P4; T-P1; T-P2; T-P3;

and V-P3). Furthermore, a well-educated staff not only in the Framework for Recreation

but recreation, in general, was valued among study participants. As T-P1a explains,

We have a very highly trained specific skill set. And we don't have, for example,

our neighbouring municipality where they had a guy in planning who was a good

junior hockey player, so they made him the community services director, right?

Like people we have, have good skill sets, community-minded, understand the

overall purpose of recreation and I think that's an enabler within our community

too because they are able to, with all of the community groups that they work with, they are able to impart that knowledge and why things [recreation] are important. We're able to work with our community that way and as well as in the interaction that they have, presenting reports and talking informally with council members and community members.

What the above examples show is that the study participants valued the Framework for Recreation in not only their work but that of their staff through training. Among the changing municipal characteristics and personal characteristics of staff, the overarching nature of the Framework for Recreation goals and the goals associated priorities were valued differently among study participants. Municipal characteristics of individual study participants influenced the value placed in the goals and priorities of the Framework for Recreation and its implementation, "…makes sense the motion the active living [Goal 1] piece and our [C-P4 recreation plan name]. I think we will continue to lean on it as another, kind of, base document about the value in what we do" (C-P4). A connection was made between the value in the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation and municipal initiatives. Furthermore, municipal staff saw overarching value in the goals and their priorities of the Framework for Recreation and adapted them to fit within their context. Additionally, supported through T-P2's statement,

I think, within the community. For staff, it's kind of like guiding principles. [T-P2 recreation coordinator] and I sat down and had a full day session where we talked about our priorities for 2018. And obviously, we have to follow through on our master plans, so that's part of it, but we also just looked at, what the things we

have been doing well, or proud of, do we want to do more or just stay status quo

based on our resources. Are there things that we have wanted to do that we just

haven't been able to make happen yet because this thing always seems to take

priority, or we get distracted with this or whatever. We have six priorities this

year. I won't be able to tell you all of them off the top of my head. They pretty

much match the Framework [for Recreation]. We've got inclusivity, we've got a

welcoming community, we've got physical activity and educating people about

the benefits of recreation. We've got some pretty broad headings, and it always

seems to come back to the Framework [for Recreation].

The second audience within the value decisions of this study was that of municipal

councils. Study participants articulated different values placed in the content of the

Framework for Recreation, such as Goal Five, recreation capacity. The difference in

value among the goal areas of the Framework for Recreation came to light through the

allocation of resources for municipal recreation. For example,

We're just rolling out a new strategic plan, and one of the key pillars is about a

healthy city. Our council just adopted a number of council initiatives. One of

them is around live active, health, and recreation. The health piece is really about

improving health through active recreation. It's really a prevention piece. We had

two councilors who wanted to lead that, so they are sort of championing it. It's

got four goals, implementation of [C-P4 community recreation plan name] plan,

increase the number of active recreation opportunities for kids to make sure kids

overall wellbeing is a priority, making sure we have a good climate for pro sports

and continue to foster that kind of excellence events/pro sport and the

implementation of the [inaudible] [C-P4 recreation plan name] strategy. So broad-

based, a bit of capital, but lots of programming. (C-P4)

As the above quote shows, the value placed in the Framework for Recreation's goals and

priorities by study participants' municipal councils and their initiative to apply them to

the community was emphasized by some cases.

The value placed in recreation programming, services, and facilities occurred

differently among study participants. Those variations were subject to the level of

resources council was willing to invest or how the public saw recreation contributing to

their overall quality of life. For example, the public values recreation and how it is

incorporated into their quality of life was expressed in some municipal recreation master

plans. When recreation master plans present the question, if recreation contributes to the

quality of life, during the consultation period for the plan, the results range from 70-97%

stating they value recreation as an important characteristic to their quality of life (T-P1;

T-P3; T-P4 Secondary Sources).

The third and final area of evidence of value during this study was that of

community awareness. The community may not directly know or reference the

Framework for Recreation,

Well, I don't think the community really cares to be honest with you, they're not

paying attention to what ARPA is advocating for or what parks and recreation

advocates for and the reasons for it. They don't understand it at the level that we

do. They just want things to do that are fun and active, and some parents might

pay attention to things like active living or connecting to nature. But the

community doesn't, most of the community, the majority of the community isn't

paying attention whether we have supportive environments or building capacity,

you know what I am saying? (C-P3)

Despite the community not knowing directly about the Framework for Recreation the content of the Framework for Recreation is recognized among communities, "I've started to use inclusion and because in talking to the community recently what they were looking for in parks as far as opportunities is opportunities to meet each other and engage each other" (C-P1). As C-P1 states, the community is seeking the components that make up the Framework for Recreation such as inclusion and access, goal two, or community wellbeing, which is the Framework for Recreation's Vision. The value placed on the Framework for Recreation and recreation in general through the lens of municipal staff, municipal councils, and the community all played a role in the extent of why, how and the impact of implementing the Framework for Recreation had in municipal communities.

National Sector. Through all three categories of cases, the Framework for Recreation was viewed as justification for, validation of, and acted as a national sector unifying document to study participants local recreation initiatives. The national sector of recreation in Canada spans all 13 provinces and territories across non-profit (e.g., Canadian Parks & Recreation Association) and government institutions (e.g., Canadian Heritage). Study participants expressed the concept of justification as a reason to implement the Framework for Recreation. The justification came from connecting to a nationally endorsed document to use in their local recreation jurisdictions. C-P4 explains this by comparing the recreation sector to transportation,

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Many other professions within the corporation, we have transportation planners,

engineers, and accountants. All of them tend to reference national policies and

procedures. These are the, you know, road width guidelines for the national

transportation association. For us to have something to lean back and say were

consistent with the national Framework on Recreation. I do think it's a benefit to

us.

The Framework for Recreation acted as a justification for municipal staff to invest in a

particular direction that aligned with the Framework for Recreation as the nationally

endorsed document would provide that justification to elected officials and decision

makers. As stated in one municipal recreation master plan,

The Master Plan has also been developed in alignment with the following key

provincial and national frameworks and policies. Alignment with this broader

thinking positions the Master Plan in collaboration with leading practices and

approaches that have been validated by research and accepted at senior

government levels. [Such as,]

• A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

• The Active Alberta Policy

• Canadian Sport for Life (T-P1 Secondary Source)

The concept of the Framework for Recreation being used as justification to a national

sector was corroborated through the study participants in all cases, "I think it's, I mean

it's one that we can obviously bring forward to council as part of a justification for things

that we are doing, or proposing to do. I think that having a national standard is always

nice" (T-P4). As the quote by T-P4 demonstrates, the Framework for Recreation was

implemented with the benefit of being a justification. The justification was not explicated stated but referred to in a municipal district case, "It [the Framework for Recreation] backs what we're doing. If we provide proof that it ties in with whatever goal it is or needs assessment, then we have, hopefully, some funding to go forward" (V-P1). The use of implementation of the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation was utilized as a justification for investments into resources, programs, or infrastructure. As stated by C-P3,

> It [the Framework for Recreation] provides us a tool, defendable tool that we can go back and work from and say this is how. This is how we decided. We have an obligation to the industry and not just the community. We have an obligation to the industry to keep things moving forward. It kind of helped us in two ways, it helped us inform our decision making, but it also gives us something defendable that we can fall back on and say this is how we plan our activities and set our priorities.

The connection to a broader national sector was seen as valuable by participants through their implementation efforts. The Framework for Recreation was utilized as an implementation tool for defending or justifying investments or directions in municipal recreation.

The Framework for Recreation also acted as a validation tool among study participants. Study participants identified validation, whether they be in a city, town, or municipal district/specialized municipality, as an aspect to their implementation of the Framework for Recreation. Validation "gives us something defendable" for municipal staff to take towards their community, council, or other recreation stakeholders for their

initiatives (C-P3). Validation in a national sector document, the Framework for Recreation, came from the value placed in the Framework for Recreation and the national sector of recreation by individuals, organizations, and institutions; "It [the Framework for Recreation] may be in retro spec the council felt some comfort in knowing that it was in alignment with a national document" (T-P4). The Framework for Recreation was utilized as a resource to validate their local initiatives with a nationally recognized document,

> I think again supporting us in the work that we're doing in terms of the value or the rationale around why we're looking to invest money in certain areas and develop certain types of amenities and potentially programming and that sort of thing. (V-P2)

The final piece of the national sector sub-theme was the Framework for Recreation acting as a national sector uniformity document. The uniformity was characterized by study participants as connecting to a more substantial part of the recreation sector other than at the municipal or local level. C-P3 describes this uniformity in the context of government institutions,

> I think one of the restraints or one of the things we haven't done is say okay, we want to see this collectively moving in the same direction at a national level and then you get a little bit more finite and granular at the provincial level and then ultimately it is at the municipal level where you want to see the action. You want to make sure it's coordinated, and we probably haven't done a good job of that. That's just a matter of having the time and energy to do it.

The above quote discusses the coordination of the Recreation sector at all levels (i.e., municipal, provincial, and national). The Framework for Recreation was identified as the

route to that coordination or uniformity. The implication of connecting to a national document was the unification it provided, "…sort of that high arching goal in saying here are some of the things to aim towards, and it gives that structure, so we're not all communities doing different, totally different things" (T-P1a). The uniformity of connecting on a national scale was identified in all three categories of cases by study participants.

In addition to connecting to a national sector as municipal staff, study participants indicated the implication of this national connection. Through the development and implementation of the Framework for Recreation it was viewed by some study participants, that this document was created by and primarily for recreation professionals, "…I think to some degree we are preaching to the converted here with this document [The Framework for Recreation]" (V-P3). Silos being the specific sectors such as recreation, health and infrastructure. It was identified that the national sector of recreation works well within its own sector but not with others, as V-P3 shared,

> … recreation people, people that are involved overall, great intent and I'm one of them. I've created intent to promote and so on. But we do that well within our own faculty. Really what we need to be doing is getting it out to everyone else and somehow getting commitment from health, from the municipalities, from provincial and federal governments.

Bringing the Framework for Recreation outside of just the recreation silo and working in partnership with other recreation stakeholders under a uniform goal of seeing such aspects of active living and all its health benefits come to light was an influence towards implementation, active living being the first goal in the Framework for Recreation.

Participants viewed the national sector uniformity that the Framework for Recreation

brings to the sector as delivering the necessary measures to break down silos and work in

partnerships to meet the recreation demands at local levels.

Guiding Document. As the Framework for Recreation is the only nationally

endorsed recreation document in the country the document and the goals and the goals

associated priorities within were referenced as being a "guideline(s)" (C-P3; T-P4; V-P1),

or "guiding principles" (T-P2). In conjunction with the Framework for Recreation acting

as a link connecting local municipal settings with a provincial and national recreation

sector, the Framework for Recreation acted as a guiding document in the study

participants local settings. The Framework for Recreation was viewed as broad and

overarching, which one study participant articulated as providing latitude, "I think there

is enough latitude within the Framework; it's not too prescriptive." T-P2 explained it as,

> Everything seemed to fall in line. It really resonates, it makes sense. I like that it
>
> has nice broad categories, but specific enough it's easy to apply. In whatever
>
> situation that you're in. If you're running a municipality or just a facility or even
>
> just a program. The same principles, priorities are applicable, at every level of
>
> scale basically. I like that.

The broad and overarching aspects of the Framework for Recreation, as viewed by the

participants, allowed them to adopt the goals, including the goals associated priorities, to

their specific circumstances, "…but again as a rural municipality, we have to pick and

choose, right? Modify how we can implement it [the Framework for Recreation]" (V-P1).

The specific circumstances of the participant's municipal recreation environment allowed

the Framework for Recreation to naturally align due to the perceived adaptability that the Framework for Recreation brought to their specific recreation circumstances.

Partnerships and Collaboration. Partnerships and collaboration were identified in the Framework for Recreation as a "Principal of Operation" which dictates how the recreation sector is to conduct its business (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p. 19). This principle of operation lays out ideally which recreation stakeholders are to connect to provide recreation opportunities in municipal settings. Partnerships and collaboration among study participants were the municipal staff connecting with other recreation stakeholders to provide recreation opportunities that otherwise would not be possible. The facilitation of recreation would be non-existent without these partnerships and collaborations among the study participants' recreation stakeholders. Among the study participants, from the Framework for Recreation, it was partnerships and collaboration that was the most common sub-theme among all three categories of cases. Table 11 shows the number of times the sub-theme partnerships and collaboration were identified among the cases.

Table 11. Partnerships & collaboration sub-theme per case category

	Cities	Towns	Municipal Districts
Partnerships & Collaboration	172	180	177

Partnerships and collaborations were utilized in two ways by the study participants. The two ways consist of either inter-collaborative or intra-collaborative relationships. Inter-collaboration relationships were found to be among recreation field

and system stakeholders, which the Framework for Recreation defines as, "non-profit, private and public sectors; including volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations and governments that work collectively …" (CPRA & IRSC, 2015, p.34). Municipal recreation departments and these inter-collaborative partnerships combine to provide residents with programs, services, and facilities. V-P3 stated,

> We provide a lot of our services through Hamlets and other recreation services. We partner with those and fund some of those other societies that provide some of those. We do believe in offering recreational services to people. It's usually through, more through facilities than through programs. We rely a lot on other societies who provide the hands-on stuff. Services I guess if you like, but we do provide some facilities.

The extent that recreation stakeholders are responsible for which activity varies among municipalities, "…we've got a bunch of programs we don't run but that we work closely with to provide them with facilities and they provide those recreational outlets" (T-P4), but study participants identified the inter-collaborative partnerships as essential to providing recreation programs, services, and facilities. What study participants municipal staff did not provide in recreation opportunities their partnerships, and collaborative working environments did provide, "as a municipality, we don't provide a lot of direct programming. We will contract out programming" (V-P1). Inter-collaborative relationships were identified by study participants through the development and implementation of the Framework for Recreation into their local settings as a part of providing recreation services, programs, and facilities, "the capacity piece we continue to

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fund organizations and staff will work with them. Partnerships are a key element in how we deliver a lot of our services" (C-P4).

Alternatively, intra-collaborative relationships were among the municipal departments with the structure varying per case and even per study participant. Study participants distinguished intra-collaborative partnerships by connecting with other municipal departments within their municipal organization. Participating municipalities structures varied in how their recreation, parks, environment, horticulture and infrastructure departments were classified as dictated through the various titles of study participants, General Manager of Parks & Recreation (C-P3); Manager Community, Recreation Facilities Branch (C-P4); Community Services Director (T-P1a); Manager of Parks, Recreation & Culture (T-P2); Director for Recreation Community Services (T-P3); Director of Leisure & Community Services (V-P1); and Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture (V-P2). The different titles of roles in the municipal recreation sector provide a link into the broad scope of how recreation is structured and that it is not just one overall recognized classification as municipal health or transportation. It was viewed that working among these departmental structures is key to how the Framework for Recreation was to be implemented into study participants local setting, including individual goals and the goals associated priorities by study participants, "…as we discussed connecting with other departments. Social development around affordability. Working with arts a culture, parks, those sorts of things are kind of identified in the plan" (T-P4). The working relationships with other departments within the municipality were found to be vital to providing further recreation programs, services, and facilities.

Renewed Definition. The Framework for Recreation provides a renewed

definition for the recreation sector. Recreation is defined as, "…the experience that

results from the freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and

spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (CPRA & ISRC,

2015, p.4). The study participants each viewed recreation with their interpretation. Some

municipal staff viewed recreation as, with a more physical activity perspective such as V-

P2, while others such as C-P4 had a wider perspective: "Personally I have a pretty broad

definition of recreation. It encompasses physical activity and sport, but it would be those

other things that people choose to do" (C-P4). Furthermore, terms identified in the study

participants personal definition of recreation were broad and all-encompassing through

such terms as physical activity, lifelong participation, sport, and physical literacy, which

are terms found through the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework

for Recreation. As T-P2 explained,

> Whatever brings you a sense of wellbeing and peace could be considered
>
> recreation. It could be reading or knitting or sports or whatever it is, and there
>
> were people who, like you could see that opera light bulb moment kind of thing.

The scope of what was included as recreation was clarified and broadened with the

introduction of the Framework for Recreation. The renewed definition from the

Framework for Recreation provided a common nationally accepted standard from which

to work.

The second aspect of a renewed definition evident throughout the interviews was

the unstructured nature of recreation and the role of municipal recreation being the

facilitator of recreation opportunity. In conjunction with the Framework for Recreation's

definition of "freely chosen participation" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.4), municipal staff saw their role changing to work with the trend of unstructured or spontaneous recreation for the community to freely choose their recreation activities. For example,

> …when I say spontaneous, I say things like, well if I can go to one location and I'm going to drop my kids off at hockey practice while they're practicing, I can run on the treadmill just little further down the hallway in the same building, people like that. When I say spontaneous activity, I mean those types of things. (C-P3)

The act of freely choosing one's recreation activity is becoming more spontaneous with municipal recreation needing to accommodate and provide the opportunity for that instead of structured programs, "We had a fairly rigid model before. We had a lot of programs that were canceled because not enough people registered. It just wasn't really working for us" (T-P2).

Unstructured or spontaneous recreation is being identified by more than just the study participants, but by their recreation master plans, which comes from the community at large, "Unstructured 'spontaneous' activities are increasing in popularity" (T-P1 Secondary Source). Recreation master plans that were developed through consultants identified spontaneous and unstructured recreation as a trend based on the community, which should be incorporated in future initiatives (T-P3 Secondary Source; T-P4 Secondary Source; C-P1 Secondary Source; and C-P3 Secondary Source). The trend of spontaneous recreation opportunities identified by the study participates reflects the renewed definition of recreation, as stated in the Framework for Recreation as freely chosen.

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Limited Scope. Participants in this study each had their distinct set of municipal governance, including staff (titles, roles, and amount of staff) and community (population and demographics). Among the study participants, the Framework for Recreation was being implemented to suit the characteristics of that municipal setting. As V-P1 states,

> If 80% of our land mass is rural and only 20% of the population - talk about active living, active transportation, well that's not applicable. You live on a corner section, and your buddy lives two sections over. You're not walking; you're quading or snowmobiling, that's what they do, right? They want those active amenities.

The rural setting of V-P1, as described in the quote above, will dictate how and which goals, including the goals associated priorities. Of those characteristics within each municipal setting, the study participants brought their own personal and professional perspective of implementing the goals and the goals associated priorities from the Framework for Recreation. The study participants distinct municipal settings influenced their personal and professional perspectives of the Framework for Recreation. Some viewed it as having a limited scope. As articulated by study participants, this was the first time the Framework for Recreation did not fully suit their distinct municipal setting needs. Study participants, based on their municipal circumstances, all had their perspective of what to include in the Framework for Recreation as a goal or a priority, as discussed by T-P3,

> If I had a recommendation for the Framework for Recreation is to have a little bit more emphasis, if there is going to be a re-write or the inclusion of another topic

area into the Framework for Recreation, it would be sports tourism or tourism

activities with recreation.

Other aspects that were viewed by the study participants as missing from the

Framework for Recreation were: a stronger connection to parks (C-P1), sports tourism

(T-P3), environment (T-P3), arts (C-P4), culture (C-P4), heritage (C-P4), and a

connection to rural settings (V-P1). Study participants saw a gap in the content of the

Framework for Recreation to their distinct municipal characteristics, "We think as a rural

municipality they're [Framework for Recreation goals and priorities] more geared

somewhat toward urban, right? They're hard to obtain, you can adopt them" (V-P1). The

Framework for Recreation was seen as having a limited scope when pertaining to specific

municipal characteristics of study participants, such as the identification of the

preconceived notion of the Framework for Recreation's urban focus of the goals (e.g.,

Goal 1: Active Living).

Implementation Constraint. Implementation constraints were factors that

impaired the use of the Framework for Recreation into the municipal setting. The most

recognizable constraint among all cases was that of budget or financing, which is not all

that uncommon, "There's probably no constraints like other than the typical resources

and budget and stuff like that" (C-P1).

Municipalities had to adapt their programs, services, and facilities to align with

changing trends, which at times proved to be difficult with limited resources such as

finances, which was identified in all three case categories. For example,

As a rapidly growing community, we don't have the pleasure, should I say, of

having like built up of a large tax base and those reserves. And the reserves are

built on the population of tentative being thousands. And we are all of a sudden

having to add a whole bunch of programs and services to meet high demand from

our residence. A little short on cash. I don't think that is a surprise to a lot of

people. (T-P1a)

The above example presented the changing municipal characteristic of the population,

which impacted the tax base, ultimately affecting budget allocation. The tax base was

also identified in V-P2, "It's having [legislation changes], will have a huge impact in

terms of our tax base" which impacted V-P2's allocation of budget and financing for their

recreation. Furthermore, cities were influenced by changing municipal characteristics

around financing as C-P3 describes,

With the oil prices taking a dip the last couple of years, as I mentioned our oil and

gas revenues from our oil and gas division have fallen off. That used to equate to

a 50-million-dollar dividend every year. It's leveled off at about 25, and we are

trying to find 23. Every department within the city is taking a hit, including public

services parks and recreation.

Albeit the budget and financing constraint is not a new revelation to implementation of

any kind of framework, policy, service, or program but it was distinctly identified among

all three case categories as a constraint to the implementation of the Framework for

Recreation into study participants municipal settings.

Council Integration. Municipal recreation staff work in an environment that

corresponds to and is directed by the vision and mission of their elected officials or

council. All three case categories (cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized

municipalities) had a different relationship with their associated council. From a city to a

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municipal district/specialized municipality, the study participants interaction in grasping the sentiment and anticipated direction of council for recreation differed. From one municipal district study participant meeting with council regularly twice a month (V-P3) to cities having little to no interaction with the council, which if done at all is through a formal presentation (C-P3; C-P4). Municipal staff seeking to endorse the Framework for Recreation was minimal with a limited number of study participants choosing to seek some form of endorsement, "[Framework for Recreation] presented to the recreation board who endorsed it, who then had council endorse it, who then allowed me to build a master plan based upon that endorsement…" (T-P3), while other study participants do not see the need to have the Framework for Recreation endorsed by their council, "Again, I haven't stood in front of council and asked them to endorse the Framework [for Recreation]. We don't think we need to; we've quite a bit of latitude to do what we need to do on a day to day basis here" (C-P3).

Among all three case categories, the need for the participation of council in municipal recreation was sought. Whether that was through direct interaction with the Framework for Recreation in an endorsement or through the implementation of the Framework for Recreation in municipal recreation, the Framework for Recreation was endorsed by association. As one town representative explained,

Well, our council has never officially endorsed [the Framework for Recreation]. But it has endorsed it through the inclusion, and we purposefully included it in, a working session with the council in saying here is the Framework [for Recreation], right?... Do you want to make… make sure it is written so that it is in alignment with the Framework [for Recreation]? And the council said, yes. And

then they have officially endorsed our plan, which means they've officially

endorsed the reference to the Framework for Recreation because it's there on 25

pages, right? (T-P1a)

Using the Framework for Recreation in a recreation master plan and having the

Framework for Recreation endorsed by association through being included in the

recreation master was also seen in T-P2's case, "I mean this is a pretty good

endorsement, but it wasn't like a formal endorsement of the Framework [for Recreation]"

(T-P2), but also in a municipal districts case,

I think it [the Framework for Recreation] will be, and I think it will probably be

something like it said. We haven't taken it to the council, but I think its part of our

implementation plan. We would likely, again, make them aware of the document

and where it ties in. It is spoken to in our master plan but again unless you read

the document cover to cover you may not pick up on that. (V-P2)

Each study participant was able to articulate how they operated with their associated

council. Council integration into the implementation of the Framework for Recreation

among the study participants varied from no endorsement to endorsement by association

through their recreation master plans.

New and Existing Initiatives. The content of the Framework for Recreation, as

in the goals and their associated priorities, were both aligned and implemented into

existing (programs and service – inclusion and staff training) and new (recreation master

plans) and municipal recreation initiatives. Study participants identified municipal plans

and future integration as avenues for implementation. As previously stated, all master

plans that have been developed since the 2015 endorsement of the Framework for

Recreation have implemented portions of the document to some degree. That

implementation effort was also noted by the study participants in their municipal plans.

T-P1a states that "It's incorporated straight in our master plan" and T-P1b explained that

"We don't have a choice but to live it, breath it, neutralize it, and implement it."

Similarly, C-P4 explains,

> We, [C-P4 community name], somehow really was not involved in the creation.
>
> But we've been pretty active in trying, on the implementation side, once it was
>
> approved, we said, this is completely aligned with where we are. We want to use
>
> this to make sure it's part of what we do; it is integrated with what we do. I think
>
> you see it on our facility master plan; we show it as kind of a key external driver.

What the above examples show is that the implementation into new initiatives was

primarily carried out through the inclusion of the Framework for Recreation in new

recreation master plans, which was carried out by C-P4, T-P1, T-P2, T-P3, T-P4, and V-

P2.

The implementation of the Framework for Recreation, including its goals and the

goals associated priorities, into new municipal recreation initiatives was one form of

implementation with the other being the implementation of the Framework for

Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities in existing municipal recreation

initiatives. The existing recreation initiatives of municipal recreation departments were

aligned with the goals, including the goals associated priorities, of the Framework for

Recreation, "we've tried to identify it as a key policy that we want to adhere to. We are

pretty aligned organically. The notion of active recreation, inclusion, and access is a big

part of our department's mandate" (C-P4).

With regards to alignment, the Framework for Recreation was included into existing initiatives in multiple municipal recreation settings, "we purposefully aligned with not only the Framework [for Recreation] but our community vision which is our overarching document. And of course, with Active Alberta as well to say, how do these 25 strategies align with those three major policy documents" (T-P1a). As T-P1a showed, they aligned the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities through their existing community vision document. Such alignment was identified through the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation in study participants municipal recreation settings.

The most referenced goals from the Framework for Recreation of the data collected for alignment in master plans were supportive environments and recreation capacity. As in the case of T-P4's recreation master plan recommendations, it was goal four of the Framework for Recreation that was utilized the most, 21 out of 26 possible recommendations (T-P4 Secondary Source). Table 12 shows the number of sub-themes among all the Framework for Recreation goals in the interviews and the secondary sources (*multiple recreation master plans). Of the Framework for Recreation goals aligned in municipal recreation settings (including municipal plans) Table 12 indicates that the Framework for Recreation's goals is being tied into current and new municipal initiatives; whether that be through existing or new initiatives. Study participants are identifying and utilizing the Framework for Recreation into their settings, which after all is the focus of the nationally endorsed Framework for Recreation.

Table 12. Framework for Recreation coded goals

Framework for Recreation Goals	Case Category 1 (Cities)		Case Category 2 (Towns)		Case Category 3 (Municipal Districts/Specialized Municipality)	
	Interv-iews	**Recreation Master Plans**	**Inter-views**	**Recreation Master Plans**	**Intervi-ews**	**Recreation Master Plans***
Active Living	15	62	15	38	4	2
Inclusion & Access	7	21	17	52	6	20
Connecting People & Nature	7	9	8	40	4	36
Supportive Environments	23	95	26	154	20	118
Recreation Capacity	22	40	34	66	27	66

Document Development Influence. The Framework for Recreation is a national document working amongst 13 unique governmental and non-profit associations, which at times has challenges. A challenge that arose among study participants was the difference in participation in the development process of the Framework for Recreation. The document development influence sub-themes were identified during the interviews with study participants in all three case categories as the participation in the development process of the Framework for Recreation influenced their implementation efforts. Study participants had multiple degrees of participation in the development of the Framework for Recreation, from none at all to being a part of the process at the beginning. Overall, the study participants of the three case categories exemplified a wide range of knowledge and understanding of not only the Framework for Recreation itself but also the development of it.

This study revealed that being involved in every aspect of the development or none at all influenced the integration of the Framework for Recreation into study participants municipal recreation settings. As T-P1a describes, "because I sit on the ARPA and I had been involved, actually I was involved in, what was it 5-6-7 years ago when they first did the recreation when we were in Lake Louise." This example shows that there were examples of some participants being involved since the beginning of the development process of the Framework for Recreation. T-P1 was a study participant that had several implementation efforts underway with their master plan including everything from concepts and imagery from the Framework for Recreation, which assisted with their implementation efforts,

> Having that involvement even, like I didn't write it, I was part of those, when they
> had the big group sessions. But being aware that that was coming and being aware
> of what was being said and what was some of the major issues. That helps. And I
> can share that with all the managers within their recreation, parks, and leisure. To
> make sure that we're current and we're aware of best practices. (T-P1)

Other study participants were not part of the development process, and it influenced their implementation efforts. As C-P4 was not part of the development process and their municipality nearly missed out hearing about the existence of the Framework for Recreation,

> It might be, in the launch and the role out and the development. As we kind of, as
> a city, we were somehow asleep at the wheel and became engaged in it once it
> was done and kind of only through the activities of some volunteers in ARPA, say
> hey, have you guys in [C-P4 community name] actually read this thing. Here's a

copy, you guys should be adopting it, which is probably not a great roll out.

Thankfully ARPA was able to do that. Making sure that every municipality got it.

(C-P4)

A commonality in the development of the Framework for Recreation was the communication of the document to municipalities through the Provincial Parks and Recreation Associations in each province and territory. The non-profit provincial association in Alberta, Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, was named in all three case categories as a part of the discovery process for the Framework for Recreation and its eventual implementation. The non-profit provincial and territorial associations of Canada are primarily comprised of members who are municipal recreation departments, the non-profit provincial and territorial associations were an essential form of communication and transfer of knowledge when it came to the Framework for Recreation, both during the development and the implementation. As one of the representatives from the cities describes,

> …I knew it was out there, but I wasn't well versed in it until I attended the ARPA conference in 2015, in Lake Louise. I recognized it was going to be a valuable tool to help kind of provide a compass for us as we plan our activities and services moving forward. We decided at a very basic level that we would incorporate some of it. (C-P3)

With the non-profit provincial and territorial associations providing a key avenue of discovery for the Framework for Recreation it was still difficult for all municipal recreation departments to hear of the Framework for Recreation. The difficulty in communicating the existence and use of the Framework for Recreation was especially

seen at the municipal district/specialized municipality case. The lack of communication caused missed opportunities for implementation, "I've been with the county for 5. Three years into it, this could have been used as part of the needs assessment as well, but this was never included in it" (V-P1). Those who were not part of the development process relied on communications of the Framework for Recreation to know of its existence, but despite the best efforts of communicating the Framework for Recreation, it was still missed by some users. The participation in the development of the Framework for Recreation by study participants assisted with it being implemented.

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Sub-Themes that were found to be Case Specific

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In conjunction with the common sub-themes that were among all three case categories, some sub-themes were found to be unique to just one case category. Table 13 shows the associated case categories and sub-themes that were found to be case category specific. The case category specific sub-themes were found to be associated with their municipal characteristics. For example, as municipal districts/specialized municipalities are primarily rural, their implementation efforts reflected rural nature. For future implementation efforts, the case specific sub-themes add further insight, along with the common sub-themes, on how to dictate implementation efforts among cities, towns, and municipal districts.

Table 13. Unique case sub-themes

Case Categories	Sub-themes
City	Minor Change
Town	Ownership/Leadership
Municipal District	Rural Vs. Urban

Case 1: Cities

Of the 18 cities in Alberta, as categorized by the Provincial Government (see Appendix B), this study had four recreation and parks professionals from four cities in Alberta participating. The participating cities of this study were sampled evenly between southern and central Alberta. The study participants of cities found little to no change in their service, programs, or facilities connected to the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. A reoccurring sentiment among city participants was that their municipal recreation initiatives were moving in the same trajectory with or without the introduction of the Framework for Recreation. For example,

> That's a hard question, more than what? We are always expanding our services.
> Did we expand services, did we add new programs because of the Rec.
> Framework? Probably not. Does it support having new things, absolutely? It tells
> us we are going in the right direction. It wasn't the catalyst to the provision or to
> expand. (C-P1)

Not to say that cities are not referencing the Framework for Recreation or aligning it with their recreation work, "…I think it really is a kind of, validation of the work we're doing. Tells us we're on the right path" (C-P4). With cities, it was found that most if not all study participants in this case category were moving in the direction they were headed with or without the Framework for Recreation. Some participants identified shifting resources to initiatives that aligned with the Framework for Recreation, as stated by C-P3,

> I don't think I could say that we could tie it in that it was additional programs or
> services related to the outcome or to the Framework [for Recreation]. But we

reoriented ourselves, so where we were spending money in some cases, we're not

spending it anymore. We diverted it to activities that would support the outcomes

of the Framework [for Recreation].

Among cities, little to no change was found in their recreation and parks services,

programs, or facilities that can be solely attributed to the Framework for Recreation.

Case 2: Towns

There were many municipal profile characteristics from the towns that made each

case participant unique, which was articulated by both study participants and their

secondary sources. One such characteristic was ownership or leadership. This

characteristic was found in other cases but did not emerge with more than one participant.

The implementation of the Framework for Recreation in a town setting was influenced by

the degree of ownership or leadership taken by one or a small number of municipal staff.

It was found that the personal passion of a few led to the implementation of the

Framework for Recreation,

I guess even before the Framework was put into place, it was kind of a passion of

mine to make accessibility a high priority. Building the tri-leisure centre in

[Alberta community name] and then building the [Alberta town name] recreation

centre, and then building the [T-P3 name of recreation centre] here in [T-P3

community name]. That was a passion, and I expressed that during the

Framework for Recreation. The accessibility needs to be addressed for all new

facilities or renovated facilities. The standards are there, but they're still weak. (T-

P3)

As suggested in the quote above, the sub-themes and priorities found in the Framework for Recreation were connected with study participants passion of recreation, which study participants would utilize that passion for implementing the Framework for Recreation and the goals and the goals associated priorities. Implementation in this manner was done through the ownership taken or the leadership of a few municipal staff. The passion for recreation by the municipal staff of towns had a relationship to the Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities, but as seen by T-P4 municipal staff were not always directly referencing the Framework for Recreation;

> My personal familiarity with the document is pretty weak. But I see there are some things in there that relate to some of the things that we're doing, whether it's like I say, as we discussed connecting with other departments. Social development around affordability. Working with arts and culture, parks, those sorts of things are kind of identified in the plan. I think they are things we're doing whether a plan or not and going through our rec master plan may have opened our eyes to some of that. (T-P4)

The use of community engagement was a deliberate decision to invest in and empower study participants community members to be behind recreation in their municipal settings. As stated in T-P2's master plan,

> Unlike most local governments that typically hire a consultant as the expert to drive the process, make recommendations, and write the final plan, we are implementing a different approach. Far more than simply consulting with citizens, our approach sees the citizens of [T-P2 community name] as the experts.

We are using a community development approach that will tap the wisdom,

knowledge, and ultimately, the engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders

engaged and owning the process and the resulting plan.

Municipalities, in the case of towns, saw the benefits of connecting with the community

and having recreation stakeholders and the community at large support and advocate for

recreation in their community through a recreation master plan. The implementation

among the town case study participants was influenced by the amount of ownership and

leadership displayed by stakeholders (e.g., municipal staff, the community, and elected

officials).

Case 3: Municipal Districts/Specialized Municipalities

 What made municipal districts/specialized municipalities an atypical case was their

unique municipal structure. Municipal districts/specialized municipalities consist of

several municipalities within their geographical boundaries, which involve municipal

districts/specialized municipalities recreation staff to partner and collaborate with

multiple recreation boards and departments. This municipal recreation structure was

atypical and unexpected to this researcher. The recruitment of village study participants

was unsuccessful during the recruitment phase; thus, the option to expand to municipal

district/specialized municipalities study participants was sought.

Rural recreation was described by study participants in the municipal

districts/specialized municipalities case to be different from that of urban recreation. As

such, the implementation of the Framework for Recreation would have to be adapted for

rural settings. Within the municipal district/specialized municipality settings, the land

coverage of its county citizens in relation to the municipalities in their area set challenges

to the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. The rural challenges for the

implementation of the Framework for Recreation begin with the capacity of staff. In rural

settings municipal recreation staff is linked to several different roles, "We have a

combined position like many rural municipalities have, I think. According to our survey

with rural rec initiatives" (V-P1). As positions within the department are combined, the

capacity decreases for focusing on longer-term initiatives such as the implementation of

national documents (i.e., Framework for Recreation). The distinction of rural versus

urban municipal profile characteristics for the implementation of the Framework for

Recreation is also more finite at the goal and priority level. V-P1 explained,

> I think, like with active living we try and do that. Everyone's like, we're rural, we
>
> do a lot of exercise, but we know now distance and time is a big factor in trying to
>
> get kids into after-school programs. Who is going to pick them up? There are
>
> those constraints, and those are the two biggest ones, distance and time to get to
>
> where you want to do physical activity. We do have our rural recreation, our rural
>
> rink, which we have our minor hockey association, does a good job of getting kids
>
> active. I think it's about 8,000 people in that area they come and play. But it's
>
> tough, its distance, time.

The distinct settings of a rural area showcase the overarching design of the Framework

for Recreation's audience to include all municipal settings (i.e., cities, towns,

 municipal districts/specialized municipalities). One study participant (V-P2) had the

Framework for Recreation implemented into their recreation master plan, with the

guidance of a consultant, and another study participant (V-P1) was actively engaged in

the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, which was found to be the primary form of communication for the Framework for Recreation.

Conclusion. The implementation of the Framework for Recreation among study participants varied in why, how, and the impact of implementation. Study participants in all three cases articulated the need for partnerships and collaboration among municipal departments, but also recreation stakeholders. The importance placed in the Framework for Recreation as a justification and validation tool for study participants work was included among all three cases of this study. As work continues among municipal recreation staff to implement the Framework for Recreation into their local settings, it will be key to utilize techniques that suit their municipal settings.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The Framework for Recreation was found to have a role in influencing the development and implementation of municipal recreation plans and policy among municipal recreation departments across Alberta. As Pal (2006) stated, a framework constitutes the role of building "…parameters but [letting] others deliver the program" (p. 262). Among the study participants context, as per Pal's (2006) description of a framework, the Framework for Recreation contributed to municipal recreation departments building their parameters in their recreation circumstances, with the outcome being municipal plans, policies, services, programs, or initiatives. Of the eleven participants, no municipal recreation department implemented the Framework for Recreation as a stand-alone document. The Framework for Recreation, according to the study participants in Alberta, guided the development of parameters in their recreation plans, policies, services, programs, or initiatives.

This discussion chapter will articulate the findings of this study into three overarching categories. These categories are *content, impact, and influence*. The categories are used to organize the research questions on the implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada and more specifically in Alberta municipal recreation departments. As Table 14 displays, the common sub-themes presented in the findings chapter are organized into one of three categories in this chapter. The remaining portion of this chapter expresses each common sub-theme discussed in the findings of this study into one of the three categories and how, why and what impact it contributed to Alberta municipalities implementing the Framework for Recreation. The case-specific sub-themes were not a part of the discussion as the scope of this report is on the all-

encompassing factors to implementation of the Framework for Recreation across all cases.

Table 14. Sub-themes within their corresponding categories

Content	Impact	Influence
Partnership & Collaboration	New & Existing Initiatives	Value
Renewed Definition	National Sector	Guiding Document
	Council Integration	Limited Scope
		Implementation
		Constraints
		Document Development
		Influence

Content

The *content* category corresponds to the specific material of the Framework for Recreation that was found to be present in Alberta municipalities. Of the three cases (cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities) *content* from the Framework for Recreation was discussed with study participants and was found to be integrated into their municipal recreation setting. The content of the Framework for Recreation is not ordered through importance to the sector (e.g. Goal 1 through 5), but instead the extent of importance "…will be determined by the organization, communities, and individuals who are using the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 to guide the development of their own action plans" (CPRA & ISRC, p.20). Two of the sub-themes that are among the *content* category from the findings chapter were partnerships and collaboration, and renewed definition. Furthermore, the *content* category presented below was implemented across all three cases of cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities.

Partnerships & Collaboration. The content from the Framework for Recreation that was referenced the most by study participants was partnership and collaboration. Within the Framework for Recreation, there are several forms of partnerships and collaborative relationships discussed between: "public, non-profit and private; public and private planners; all forms of government; different sectors; and individuals" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.19). The partnerships and collaboration that were described by study participants align with the content stated in the Framework for Recreation and the literature in such areas as public policy (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012; Campbell, 2016; Torfing, 2018).

Partnerships and collaboration content from both the Framework for Recreation and study participants can be explained through both inter and intra-collaborative relationships. The description of study participants engaging in both inter and intra-collaboration relationships coincided with that of Campbell's (2016) definition which stated, "collaboration is undertaken between individuals or groups, both between and within organizations, and has been defined variously" (p.656). Study participants were found to be facilitating this type of collaboration through the development of partnerships by both developing individual and collaborative group partnerships between and within their municipal environment. Furthermore, Campbell (2016) described intra-organizational collaboration as, "any formed strategic partnership within an organization aimed at achieving 'common goals through community and sharing strategies, knowledge, resources, and information'" (p.657).

Throughout the cases, intra-organizational collaborations were the bases to provide recreation, which was the common goal as described in Campbell's (2016)

definition. The Framework for Recreation's identification of partnerships and collaboration provided a starting point for study participants to build intra-collaborative partnerships within their organization. The ability for staff to bring in an outside, nationally endorsed document to be the bases of this intra-collaborative partnership formation was a valuable resource. In conjunction with intra-organizational collaboration was inter-organizational collaboration.

The partnership and collaboration content from the Framework for Recreation was identified by study participants who were integrating this content through inter and intra-organizational collaboration pathways. The development of inter and intra-organizational collaboration partnerships is articulated in the literature, which aids the successful integration of recreation in the municipal setting (Campbell, 2016). Of the collaboration efforts articulated by study participants it was shown that implementing the content of the Framework for Recreation (e.g., Active Living, Connecting People and Nature) was not only a recreation sector responsibility but health, sport, infrastructure and planning departments (i.e., inter-organizational collaboration). Respectably, municipal recreation departments worked alongside others (e.g., community groups, non-profit associations, park departments) to combat wicked problems, which Shannon et al. (2016) defined as;

> …a term used to describe social problems that are difficult or impossible to solve because of the complex interdependencies or incomplete, or changing requirements that are tough to recognize. (Shannon at el., 2016, p.225)

Study participants from all three cases described the need to work in collaboration with other departments and recreation stakeholders to reach the goal of wellbeing for

individuals and the community, because of the complexities surrounding the recreation sector stakeholders. Furthermore, Shannon et al. (2016) explained that in a social complex subject matter, such as municipal recreation, "addressing wicked problems requires innovative and flexible approaches along with collaboration, knowledge transfer, and knowledge integration that cross disciplinary and agency boundaries" (p.266). Study participants acknowledge the need to build partnerships and collaborate with recreation stakeholders and to not only operate in the recreation silo but work with stakeholders from other sectors (e.g., health, infrastructure, economic development). The ability of the recreation sector to build partnerships and collaborative spaces with the motivation to combat wicked problems associated with the recreation sector (e.g., health, screen time, demographic changes, economic inequalities, social challenges, threats to the natural environment, and infrastructure deficit) depended on a variety of influences and factors among inter and intra-collaborative environments.

Along with partnerships and collaboration, the contradicting issue of silos was identified by study participants. The issue of silos was determined as a hindrance and a limiting factor of the Framework for Recreation's implementation by study participants. The Framework for Recreation identified several stakeholders to build potential partnerships within collaborative spaces, "these include stakeholders in sport, physical activity, health, urban planning, Aboriginal affairs, infrastructure development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development, and active aging" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.5). Implementation of the content from the Framework for Recreation is not solely a recreation endeavor as emphasized by the study participants explanation of the need and desire to work outside the recreation silo to solve complex social issues (e.g., wicked

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problems) of individual and community wellbeing. As study participants stated in each of the cases, the area of partnerships and collaboration are key to building up the recreation sector, and its capacity, despite the concerns of resource challenges (e.g., Implementation Constraints). The implementation of the Framework for Recreation into the local municipal recreation sector of Alberta was linked to the formation of partnerships and collaborative environments.

Renewed Definition. Of the content within the Framework for Recreation that study participants discussed it was that of the renewed definition of recreation that emerged. The definition states that "recreation is the experience that results from the freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.4). The components of the Framework for Recreation's definition that was identified by study participants in their municipal recreation setting were the broad scope of what constitutes a recreation activity and the notion of recreation being the ability of freely choosing.

Study participants discussed the broad nature of what constitutes a recreation activity as discovered through the renewed definition in the Framework for Recreation. This comprehensive definition of recreation in the Framework for Recreation was seen as an education piece for recreation staff in the community. The education piece for municipal recreation staff from the Framework for Recreation gave the community a better understanding of what is considered a recreation activity.

The other piece of the renewed definition found in the Framework for Recreation was the ability of recreation participants to freely choose their desired recreation activity, which study participants described as evident through an increase in spontaneous

recreation activities. Instead of regular programmed recreation activities to choose from it was the spontaneous freely chosen recreation activities that were in high demand within municipal recreation settings. As in the case of T-P2, the ability to have trails and benches out in parks was the catalyst for citizens to participate in recreation, instead of having a structured exercise program at a recreation facility for instance. The trend in the recreation sector of more spontaneous or unstructured programming was described by study participants and explained through the renewed definition of individuals freely choosing to recreate. Spontaneous or unstructured recreation can be understood through the findings of Zanon, Curtis, Lockstone-Binney, and Hall (2018). Specifically, the authors found that there is an expected increase in "independence and convenience" for recreation programs by participants (p.3). The freely chosen nature of the renewed definition connects with this same notion in the broader recreation sector of Canada. The spontaneous nature of recreation activities is a trend in the recreation sector in Alberta, which can contribute benefits to a series of related issues such as health, inactivity, sedentary nature and many others (Johnston et al., 2011; Spengler et al. 2011). Study participants identified this trend within their communities and to varying degrees used the implementation of the Framework for Recreation to assist in creating more active communities. Moving forward, municipal recreation can use the broad nature and concept of freely choosing recreation activities as identified in the renewed definition to extend their partnerships and collaboration of what constitutes recreation and working that in the trend of providing unstructured recreation opportunities (e.g., spontaneous recreation).

Impact

The *impact* of the Framework for Recreation is an area of investigation that has yet to be fully understood and explored in the recreation sector. The findings of this study suggest that the Framework for Recreation has had an *impact* on the municipal recreation sector of Alberta. Alternatively, depending on how the Framework for Recreation is interpreted by municipal recreation staff, it can have a result where the Framework for Recreation is not valued or even ignored (Leone, 2008; Gebhardt & Eagles, 2014). Of the municipal recreation departments who have implemented the Framework for Recreation, there was an acknowledgment of an *impact* on existing initiatives, and it is incorporated into new initiatives. The results suggest that the Framework for Recreation becomes a binding mechanism that connects the national recreation sector, to the provincial/territorial sector and finally to the municipal recreation sector.

New and Existing Initiatives. The impact of the Framework for Recreation within the study participants municipal settings was linked with alignment into new or existing recreation initiatives of study participants. As Leone (2008) found, the ability of recreation plans to be aligned, the further that plan was supported and implemented into the municipal setting,

> By positioning recreation so that it aligns with key community issues, there is a
> likelihood that public support and working with allies and advocates in the
> community the implementation of the plans and initiatives may be more
> straightforward (p.115).

The Framework for Recreation followed Leone's (2008) findings with implementation occurring with study participants aligning it within their setting. This

alignment took place through new or existing initiatives but was always linked to a key item of the community or council (e.g., recreation master plans, new programs or initiatives).

Each study participants' recreation master plan developed since 2015 has implemented the Framework for Recreation to some degree. However, the majority of study participants' recreation master plans utilized the services of a consultant. The use of a consultant meant that the study participants' knowledge of the Framework for Recreation varied, which affected the overall implementation of the Framework for Recreation into their municipal recreation setting beyond that of the recreation master plan. Study participants were either knowledgeable and personally promoting the Framework for Recreation to others or not acknowledging it and giving full credit for the Framework for Recreation's presence in their recreation master plan to the consultant. For the Framework for Recreation to continue impacting the recreation sector through being integrated into recreation master plans the role of the consultant to include the staff in linking the Framework for Recreation to the local recreation master plan and context is essential.

Alternatively, when a consultant was not utilized a community engagement model was, and the connection of the developed recreation master plan to the Framework for Recreation was higher than instances where only a consultant was used to draw the connection. The implementation into new initiatives (i.e., recreation master plans) was evident and shows that the Framework for Recreation is making an impact through its implementation in recreation master plans by either consultants or community engagement. The community engagement model that was utilized was a 10-step

community development approach that was shared by a consultant. The ten steps in the community engagement model worked to develop a recreation plan that was developed in conjunction with the community and stakeholders to establish outcomes and strategies for community municipal recreation. Among public/community engagement models, the ownership is not only with staff but also the community at large. Public/community engagement research describes a paucity of placating the public through such models during policy development (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006; Levac, 2012). The fear associated with what Levac (2013) stated for is that the "…primary interest of government officials may be in engaging members of the public in government's agenda, rather than engaging with a public agenda" (p.339).

With the ten step-model described as being utilized by one of the study participants to implement the Framework for Recreation, the fear of proceeding at a preconceived agenda was minimalized by the inclusion of all public/community topics into the recreation master plan. This technique connected ownership of the municipality's recreation master plan back to the community. The benefits of a community engagement model were based on Herchmer's (2013) description, which among other findings can be referred to as empowering the community. This empowerment was used in the case of implementing the Framework for Recreation and its goals and the goals associated priorities into the community through the integration and alignment of content. All communities did not utilize the community engagement model; but when it was, the impact of this process guided implementation of the Framework for Recreation.

In 2018 another national survey was conducted to investigate the state of implementation of the Framework for Recreation in municipalities nationally. Although

this survey received over twice the number of participants as was achieved in 2016, the survey results should be taken cautiously when applying them to local regions, such as Alberta. The 2018 survey asked municipal staff the level of alignment based on the five goal areas and it was determined, by those who participated, that over 50% of each goal was beginning to be aligned in existing/already aligning existing and/or creating new initiatives to align each goal area of the Framework for Recreation into their specific setting (CPRA, 2018).

Participants for this current study were speaking about current and existing recreation initiatives that are taking place in their community that were and are in alignment with the Framework for Recreation. Implementing the Framework for Recreation does not have to be a new or foreign idea as the content of the Framework for Recreation was in alignment with many current practices in the recreation sector developed through a "comprehensive [consultation] process" (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.8).

National Sector. As previously stated, the Framework for Recreation is the first national document in Canada to guide the national recreation sector in nearly 30 years since the NRS of 1987. The Framework for Recreation thus plays an important role in setting the direction of the national recreation sector in Canada. That direction was also stated by participants who assisted in the development of the Framework for Recreation through several "overarching requirements," from "marketing messaging: the need for a national voice" and the fact that this "field needs a stronger national voice" (Lenihan, 2013, p.14). Furthermore, this was confirmed in the "overall views on the discussion paper" by those recreation and park professionals present at the Framework for Recreation's development gatherings who established the need for a "focus on enabling a

national recreation culture" (Lenihan, 2013, p.19). These thoughts and ideas during the development process made its way into the final product as,

> Doing this requires a clear understanding and commitment to a shared vision, values, and goals, as well as the development and implementation of action plans. The Framework provides a foundation for reflection, discussion, and the development of such action plans (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.4).

The notion of connecting to a national sector was evident before the official endorsement of the Framework for Recreation and during this study. The connection to a national Canadian recreation sector was demonstrated through three distinct forms from study participants; justification, validation, and as a national sector unifying document.

The factors of justification and validation of the Framework for Recreation were explained by participants just as it was in 2013 during the planning and development of the Framework for Recreation. Having a nationally endorsed document in the recreation sector of Canada to guide the decisions and validate the work being done locally was deemed as an invaluable characteristic by study participants. The components of the Framework for Recreation chosen for implementation by study participants in their municipal recreation setting had a justification element of connecting to the current national recreation standards. The current standards, as laid out in the Framework for Recreation, align with other current national guiding documents of recreation stakeholders such as: the Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada, The Canadian Sport Policy, Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Wellbeing of our Citizens, The Declaration on Prevention and

Promotion, Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment and IndigenACTION.

The "convergence and collaboration" of the Framework for Recreation with these recreation stakeholders and their national guiding documents provides the Framework for Recreation with affirmation towards its validity, which subsequently can be utilized as a justification for investments, programs, services or initiatives (CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.15). As Burton states, "practitioners in numerous related fields within the quality of life sector [i.e., recreation] are beginning to act in concert pursuing shared mandates and common goals and offering coordinated and mutually supportive responses" (Burton et al., 2011, p.23). The national focus of the Framework for Recreation in the national sector was a motivator for incorporating components of the Framework for Recreation by study participants into their local municipal recreation setting.

Having a standardized Framework for Recreation is an important step in guiding the Canadian recreation sector forward. Otherwise, municipal recreation departments across the country would have a wide variation in their initiatives towards recreation. Gebhardt & Eagles (2014) pointed out that "the research concluded that some of the planning deficiencies found were due to the absence of a coherent provincial plan toward plan development and content" (p.321). Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) findings provincially was a sentiment that was echoed among study participants in the municipal recreation sector of Alberta. Participants stressed the need for a unifying document to guide the recreation sector, and the Framework for Recreation was utilized as such.

Council Integration. Civil servants are employed staff members that represent the municipality in their departments; whereas elected officials are there to represent the

people of the community. The impact of the Framework for Recreation can not only be monitored by civil servants but also elected officials, who can link the desire and impact of implementation among a given municipality. As Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) found, "P & R [Parks and Recreation] plans are much more likely to be successful if the elected council approves the plan" (p.339). Through the CPRA 2018 national survey, the endorsement of the Framework for Recreation by the highest level within an organization (e.g., Board of Directors, Elected Officials), by those who participated in the survey, was 22.14% (CPRA, 2018). The plan to endorse the Framework for Recreation has also been decreasing nationally among those who participated in the 2016 and 2018 surveys. As Table 15 shows between those who participated in the two national surveys, of the municipal recreation staff the rate of planning to have a council, elected officials, or the highest level of their organization endorse is dropping. This trend is in conjunction with the participants of this study, showing that official endorsement of the Framework for Recreation itself at the municipal level may not be the most effective way for monitoring implementation.

Table 15. IMWG & CPRA survey endorsement comparison

2016 IMWG	2018 CPRA
26%	20.66 %
Plan to endorse	No [endorsement], but plan to

Not a single study participant had their municipal elected officials explicitly endorse the Framework for Recreation. However, components of the Framework for Recreation were implemented ad hoc because of the municipal recreation master plans. Endorsements may not have come through full integration of the Framework for

Recreation but, as described in the Alberta municipal context, endorsements came explicitly through alignment into municipal plans. As expressed through study participants, is a specific endorsement of the Framework for Recreation as a standing document in the municipal sector, the preferred form of measurement for implementation efforts? Leone (2008) stated, "when plans were consistent with goals and priorities of council, they were more likely to be implemented" (p.118).

The study participants in all three cases did not have their councils endorse the Framework for Recreation, but what was found is that, specifically, the Framework for Recreation was integrated into all municipal recreation plans developed since 2015. Components of the Framework for Recreation were aligned and implemented into recreation master plans that were important to the council or the community at large. Thus, the Framework for Recreation was endorsed by association. As Leone (2008) found, goals and priorities are more likely to be implemented and subsequently endorsed through aligning those goals and priorities with the interest of the public. Through this study, the integration of the Framework for Recreation's own goals and the goals associated priorities was through incorporation into recreation master plans, which then were endorsed by council.

<p align="center">**Influence**</p>

Influence presents the value the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had for study participants in their municipal recreation settings. The *influence* of the Framework for Recreation comes through in this study by way of the five associated sub-themes, as value to the recreation sector, as a guiding document, as having limited scope,

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as implementation constraints and as document development influence. Not all *influences* provide a positive implementation effect for the Framework for Recreation but all sub-themes, positive or not, contribute to the influence of the Framework for Recreation through the implementation that can assist in future endeavors.

Value. The methodology was utilized to guide the discovery of the Framework for Recreation's content in each case as cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities have a distinct set of recreation parameters for their communities. Considering this methodology of multi-site case studies, each case exemplifies how the content of the Framework for Recreation suits the distinct municipal recreation setting. Leone (2008), found that municipal recreation parameters change to meet the local municipal settings through "optimizing department capacity…[by] adapting the department to meet community needs" (p.90). The Framework for Recreation, in Part III Moving Forward, suggests for each municipal government to move forward with the Framework for Recreation and "to develop implementation actions plans in areas of their jurisdiction…" (p.32).

The study participants utilized the content of the Framework for Recreation with what their community and council valued in order to direct their department's services, programs, and initiatives amid their local context. The integration of components from the Framework for Recreation by study participants' provided insight into the type and extent of value placed in municipal recreation by staff, the community, and elected officials. For the Framework for Recreation's content to be implemented, it was the role of the municipal recreation staff (i.e. study participants) to comprehend the value placed in recreation by key stakeholders (e.g. sport, physical activity, health, urban planning,

Aboriginal affairs, infrastructure development, rural development, natural resources and conservation, arts and culture, social development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development and active aging [CPRA & ISRC, 2015, p.5]) and connect that to the content of the Framework for Recreation.

The role of these key stakeholders and the importance to the overall influence of the Framework for Recreation into municipal settings cannot be underestimated. As Leone (2008) stated,

> Instead, what impacts implementation is the dedication and commitment of recreation staff to the plan, the level of support from key stakeholders in the community, such as elected officials and community partners (i.e., sports and arts groups), and the status of recreation within city hall and other municipal departments (i.e. planning, engineering, finance).

Study participants and their municipality each functioned with their own set of values for recreation among the key stakeholders, which the components that were implemented from the Framework for Recreation provided influence on those values in the study participants unique municipal recreation setting.

Utilizing the content of the Framework for Recreation to what was valued in the local municipal recreation settings was used by study participants to contribute to the wellbeing of the community. Wellbeing was defined in the Framework for Recreation as,

> The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated

populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to

and participation in recreation and culture (CRPA & ISRC, 2015, p.36).

Each study participant utilized the goals and associated priorities differently to what was

valued among their local municipal recreation setting by the department at large, the

community and/or council. The motivation of implementing specific content of the

Framework for Recreation (i.e., goals and priorities) was to increase wellbeing, which

contributes to increasing the quality of life of individuals and communities (Eby, Kitchen,

& Williams, 2012). Recreation is viewed as a resource used to increase wellbeing and

quality of life (NRS, 1987; CPRA & ISRC, 2015). Implementation of the Framework for

Recreation was connected in each case to the specific values in recreation held by

stakeholders. These values will continue to drive the implementation of the Framework

for Recreation in the future.

Guiding Document. Recreation departments, when planning and developing

services, programs, and initiatives, will look to do so from the most up-to-date and

relevant, data of trends that influence recreation, which in turn is primarily lead and

conducted by consultants (Leone, 2008). Among the study participants, the Framework

for Recreation fulfilled the role of a guiding document for municipalities in this study;

which subsequently were utilized to provide a base for their services, programs and

initiatives on the most relevant information from the national recreation sector. The

Framework for Recreation acknowledges this purpose,

> This paper [the Framework for Recreation] is designed to guide and stimulate
>
> coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related jurisdictions in Canada

that aim to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and

natural environment. (CRPA & ISRC, 2015, p.6)

Through the findings of this study, the Framework for Recreation already attributes a part

of the influence of this document through the identification of it being a national sector

document. This finding works in conjunction with the Framework for Recreation being a

guiding document. Together, the Framework for Recreation is a national sector

document, which then functions as a guiding document for municipal recreation.

The Framework for Recreation acted as a guiding document for the Alberta

municipal recreation sector through the characteristics that were among the findings of

this study, which contributed to it being a validating document. The validation in the

Framework for Recreation by study participants was through the implementation of

specific components of the Framework for Recreation (e.g., Goals 1 through 5 and their

associated priorities). Through the implementation of those individual components, study

participants viewed the Framework for Recreation more relevant than not, which was

displayed in this study through the ability of recreation staff being able to pick and

choose the goals and the goals associated priorities that were pertinent to their municipal

recreation circumstances. As Leone (2008) states, plans need to be realistic to become

implemented, which study participants achieved through utilizing the goals and the goals

associated priorities that were key to their staff, council, and community (i.e., Value).

Furthermore, as reported by Gerhardt and Eagles (2014) and stated by Leone (2008),

recreation master plans are not mandatory by law, which is directly comparable to the

status of the Framework for Recreation. Thus, implementation of the Framework for

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Recreation was not mandatory, but study participants were still implementing the document into their municipal recreation setting.

Despite the uniqueness of each study participant in their community, the Framework for Recreation was implemented and utilized as a guiding document because it was adaptable to their unique setting. Future implementation efforts by municipal recreation staff should continue to view the Framework for Recreation in their perspective and incorporate the goals and the goals associated priorities that are key to their staff, council, and community. With the overarching content of the Framework for Recreation, components from it can be implemented into municipal recreation services, programs, and initiatives and become, as seen by the study participants in all three cases, a guiding document. The influence of the Framework for Recreation can grow within the municipal, provincial, and even the national recreation sector if the implementation is promoted and expressed to recreation departments. The influence of a national guiding document, such as the Framework for Recreation, can begin to shape and unify the national recreation sector of Canada, through justification, validation, and as a unifying document.

Limited Scope. The Framework for Recreation is seen as a guiding and overarching document by most study participants, but that did not exclude study participants also viewing the Framework for Recreation as having gaps in its content (i.e., limited scope). As the Framework for Recreation went through the development process the report developed on the round table in 2013 by Lenihan (2013), identified the balance that needs to be achieved in not being too specific to exclude particular communities while simultaneously not being too vague that no correlation can be made between the

Framework for Recreation and communities recreation work. Among the struggle present in public policy development, the positives and negatives associated with both vagueness and specific policies can either improve or hamper public policy (DeLeo, 2012). DeLeo (2012), used an example of power struggles among stakeholders during the implementation of vague policies. The concept of power struggles during implementation on vague policies is transferable to the Framework for Recreation as key stakeholders (e.g., municipal government, specific municipal departments, and non-profit organizations) work to implement the components that are directly benefiting their strategic plan but can now consider diverting focus to the broader recreation sector. The concept of a limited scope influencing the implementation stems from the idea presented by Lenihan (2013) during the development phase of the Framework for Recreation.

Throughout this study, the participants among all three cases described a component of the broader recreation sector that, in their perspective, the Framework for Recreation missed. These components ranged from sports tourism, environment, arts, culture, heritage, and rural connectivity. The limited scope of the findings of this study contributes to the notion mentioned above of wicked problems (Sam, 2009; Shannon et al., 2016). The concept of a complex social problem (i.e., wicked problem) was articulated by study participants as the Framework for Recreation was not incorporating other components of the social complex problem of the municipal recreation sector.

The concept of a limited scope among study participants can provide insight into the perspective of municipal recreation staff to what components, sectors, or partnerships that can be included among the collaborative nature of recreation through such a document as the Framework for Recreation. Despite the influence of limited scope,

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findings on the implementation efforts of goals from the Framework for Recreation were still implemented into municipal recreation services, programs, and initiatives. Although municipal recreation staff may have the perspective of the Framework for Recreation not encompassing all the goals of the recreation sector that they deem fit, study participants were still able to take goals and implement them into their setting. As Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) reported, it is imperative during implementation for there to be a human/implementation factors while avoiding obstacles. This human/implementation factor was through a personal connection or passion for specific goals of the Framework for Recreation.

   Implementation Constraints. It is no surprise that through the implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Alberta municipalities that obstacles (i.e., constraints) were encountered. Furthermore, it may not be a revelation that the most identified constraint to implementation by study participants was financing. This finding is in conjunction with that of Slack (2003) in Ontario and ARPA (2008) study in Alberta who reported that the recreation sector at the municipal level is not being maintained financially in comparison to other departments and services. The identified constraint of financing for implementing the Framework for Recreation brought to the forefront the concept of recreation being utilized as a public good in society (Johnston et al., 2011). The relation of where recreation stands in the grand scope of municipal priorities of infrastructure, services, and departments among essential services of fire, police, or health is a subjective perspective among stakeholders in and associated with recreation (Lenihan, 2013). Traditionally, recreation was "held in the minds of stakeholders is that

of a discretionary, nonessential service, that is nice to have, but should be funded only when all essential services have been taken care of" (Leone, 2008, p.113).

The local municipal recreation and parks sector is no different from many other public sectors in Canada that struggle to provide services with decreasing amounts of resources (Glover, 1999). What is unique about the local municipal recreation and parks sector is that resources (i.e., finances) is not keeping pace with inflation and changing demand, "the result of this overall financial situation is that operation expenditures on recreation and culture are declining (in constant dollars) and recreation infrastructure is deteriorating" (Slack, 2003, p.34). The decrease in financial resources for recreation and parks at the local municipal level is in conjunction with the notion of "'do more with less' or to 'do less with less'" (Glover, 199, p.2). Study participants struggled with the "outcomes era" (Johnston et al., 2011) of trying to do more with less. Municipal recreation departments of this study were in a constant struggle to provide increasing recreation services with either the same or fewer resources under growing demands from growing municipalities while trying to keep to the "public good" concept (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Lack of resources for implementation efforts of recreation plans was one of the two highest ranked obstacles in the implementation process, as discovered by Gebhardt and Eagles (2014). Thus, the need for non-profit (e.g., Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, or YMCA) and for-profit (e.g., Edmonton Sport and Social Club, Gold's Gym) partnership was essential for study participants to provide recreation services, programs and initiatives to their citizens. The lack of resources, specifically financial, contributed as an implementation constraint for

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the Framework for Recreation. Among the limited resources facing municipal recreation departments to provide recreation, the allocation of staff time to implement initiatives such as the Framework for Recreation were limited. If initiatives, such as the Framework for Recreation, are to succeed the implementation needs to be seen as seamless, have a personal connection and viewed as essential to the larger audiences as found in Gebhardt and Eagles (2014). Study participants who allocated resources to such an initiative as the Framework for Recreation's implementation were more often found to be in towns. The combination of staff dedication and resources among towns provided the ideal scenario for implementation.

   Document Development Influence. The Framework for Recreation was developed over four years ago from its onset in 2011 to the official endorsement in 2015. During that time, there were several collaborative development sessions with key stakeholders from across the country (CPRA, 2013). Of the study participants that were a part of the development process, they were more inclined to show ownership towards their municipality's implementation efforts. As Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) found, "…creation of the P & R [Parks and Recreation] plan must have as one of its key objectives the creation of a planning process that heavily involves the agency staff, so that a strong commitment to implementation is created within those staff" (p. 341). The personal/professional connection to the development process gave ownership to study participants, and this was articulated through their efforts of implementation. The inclusion of staff in the development of parks and recreation plans in Gebhardt and Eagles (2014) case found that ownership among staff was connected to implementation. This finding is comparable to the Framework for Recreation. Of the study participants

that were interviewed in the development process, ownership towards using the

Framework for Recreation was higher. The personal connection to the Framework for

Recreation influenced the implementation among study participants' municipal recreation

settings. The first-hand knowledge of the Framework for Recreation through the

development process gave these individuals a thorough understanding of how the content

was to be implemented. The commitment and ownership placed in the Framework for

Recreation through participation in the development process contributed to the overall

influence of the document and its eventual implementation.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

As indicated at the onset of this report, there has been limited research conducted on not just the Framework for Recreation, but a framework's impact on the Canadian recreation sector. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how Alberta municipalities, specifically cities, towns and municipal districts/specialized municipalities, have implemented the Framework for Recreation and its goals and the goals associated priorities to discover the impact of the document. The researcher posed the following research questions:

1. Why have municipalities taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities?

2. How have recreation directors/managers implemented the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities?

3. What impact has the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had on the municipality?

This study utilized a multi-site case study methodology, which investigates a real-world phenomenon in multiple settings. The phenomenon of this study was the implementation of the Framework for Recreation and its impact in the Alberta municipal recreation setting. The conclusion of this study also has the assertions of the researcher, which were furthered by that of the supervisor. The multi-site case study methodology utilized semi-structured interviews with 11 study participants. Recruited participants for this study were from the municipal recreation level in Alberta, which included cities, towns, and municipal districts/specialized municipalities that form the case categories.

Through the data collection and analysis, ten common sub-themes emerged 1) Value, 2) National Sector, 3) Guiding Document, 4) Partnerships & Collaboration, 5) Renewed Definition, 6) Limited Scope, 7) Implementation Constraint, 8) Council Integration, 9) New & Existing Initiatives, and 10) Document Development Influence. The common sub-themes were classified into three categories: *content, impact, and influence*.

The categorization of the findings into *content, impact, and influence* was utilized to articulate the study questions under investigation, as seen in Table 16. Table 16 shows the relationship between the research questions, discussion categories, the Framework for Recreation goals, and sub-themes.

Table 16. Research questions, discussion categories, Framework Goals, and sub-themes

Research Question	Discussion Categories	Framework Goals	Sub-Themes
How have recreation directors/managers implemented the Framework for Recreation as it pertains to the goals and priorities?	Content	Goal 4 – Supportive Environment; Goal 5 – Recreation Capacity	Partnerships & Collaboration Renewed Definition
What impact has the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had on the municipality?	Impact	Goal 4 – Supportive Environment; Goal 5 – Recreation Capacity	New & Existing Initiatives National Sector Council Integration
Why have municipalities taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation as it	Influence	Goal 4 – Supportive Environment;	Value Guiding Document Limited Scope

pertains to the goals and priorities?	Goal 5 – Recreation Capacity	Implementation Constraints Document Development Influence

Each sub-theme and discussion category go to describe the phenomenon under investigation by expressing how, why, and what impact the implementation of the Framework for Recreation had among Alberta municipalities.

Content refers to the material within the Framework for Recreation, which was subsequently implemented into the municipal recreation settings of study participants. The sub-theme of partnership and collaboration and renewed definition correspond to the *content* category and express how study participants implemented the Framework for Recreation. The integration of the two sub-themes, partnership and collaboration, and renewed definition, was done through study participants description of implementing the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation through the development of partnership and collaborative environments to meet the needs of community members. The development of partnerships and collaborative environments led to all five goals being implemented. For instance, the development of partnerships with community groups to develop and facilitate programming increased active living, inclusion and access, and connecting people and nature opportunities among community members. Albeit, partnerships have been a previously reoccurring recreation sector process of operation but having national third parties (e.g., CPRA & ISRC) state the importance of those partnerships to develop wellbeing through five goals and their

priorities contributed to those components being implemented in the Alberta municipal recreation setting. This same notion can be said for collaborative environments. The Framework for Recreation lists stakeholders of recreation, which contribute to the building of community members wellbeing through partnerships and collaborative environments. The Framework for Recreation and its content is a foundational document for directing the recreation sector. The work of the recreation sector is not to be achieved in a silo but done in partnership and collaboration with other sectors and stakeholders.

Furthermore, the clarification of the recreation definition led to an expansion of how some staff, elected officials, and the community understood what a recreation activity can be, which ultimately led to the implementation of the goals and the goals associated priorities. That implementation can also be said for recreation capacity. Under the standard definition, recreation capacity also increases as more sectors and stakeholders become involved.

The *impact* of the Framework for Recreation in the municipal sector was the second category of the discussion chapter to express the findings. Subsequently, the findings of new and existing initiatives, national sector, and council integration all contributed to the research question of *the impact* regarding the Framework for Recreation's implementation in municipalities. A call to action was derived from the Framework for Recreation and attributed to an impact in the Alberta municipal recreation sector. The Framework for Recreation made an *impact* among the study participants by it being implemented into new initiatives (e.g., recreation master plans) and existing initiatives (e.g. recreation programming), municipal recreation departments being able to

connect to the national sector as a justification and validation tool, and, finally, being implemented to varying degrees through council integration.

The Framework for Recreation made an impact through implementation by not only being integrated into new initiatives but through alignment in existing initiatives. The Framework for Recreation had an impact on new initiatives through the integration of the document into all new recreation master plans. Through study participants using the Framework for Recreation in all new recreation master plans since the official endorsement, the Alberta municipal recreation sector has articulated their confidence in the Framework for Recreation. If this articulation of confidence were not as evident through the study participants, then less municipal recreation master plans developed since 2015 would have implemented the Framework for Recreation. The implementation of the Framework for Recreation in municipal recreation master plans will have a lasting legacy for the Framework for Recreation. Most municipal recreation master plans have 10-year life cycles, which would mean the earliest recreation master plan of the study participants that could be renewed is 2025. That recreation master plan renewal would bring the Framework for Recreation into the redevelopment process during that time. The impact of having this type of implementation among municipal recreation master plans of the Framework for Recreation can bring strength to the national recreation sector. Not only having the Framework for Recreation as a lasting legacy but having the goals and the goals associated priorities be among the standards at the municipal recreation level for the duration of those plans' life. Thus, the Framework for Recreation is not only making an impact now in the Alberta municipal recreation setting but into the future as well.

The Framework for Recreation is also being implemented through the alignment of existing programs, services, and initiatives to match the goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation. As a point of future implementation, the concept of aligning can contribute to the overall impact of the Framework for Recreation to the municipal recreation sector. New initiatives are not necessarily the only path to implementation, but the municipal staff and their supporting organizations (e.g., the provincial government, provincial non-profits, community groups, recreation businesses) can support the review and implementation of the goals and the goals associated priorities into existing initiatives. The perspective of municipal staff to review and reflect on existing initiatives may contribute to the overall impact and implementation moving forward for the recreation sector.

The implementation of the Framework for Recreation into the cases among the Alberta municipal recreation context characterized a connection with the national recreation sector. A proportion of municipal recreation directors and managers described that a connection to a broader national sector among recreation practitioners was a benefit to their local recreation initiatives and work. The ability to show other staff, council and the community that local municipal recreation decisions and directions were, in fact, a part of a broader standardized direction for recreation nationwide and not only at their local setting provided validation. The connection to a national sector was desired and warranted by study participants and distinguishes the impact the Framework for Recreation had among Albertans. The concepts of justification and validation were key areas described by study participants in their approach to implementing the Framework for Recreation in their unique settings.

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Council integration of the Framework for Recreation took a variety of shapes in these Alberta cases. Each case had a distinct variation of council integration that affected the impact of the Framework for Recreation. Among the cases within the Alberta municipal recreation context, council integration had little to no effect on the overall impact and implementation of the Framework for Recreation. The impact among council integration of the Framework for Recreation was never direct, but instead only through association (i.e., through the endorsement of new recreation master plans). The endorsement through association was for symbolic purposes as no direct affiliation of impact through the Framework for Recreation's implementation was observed among the study participants due to no study participants council directly endorsing the Framework for Recreation. A direct acknowledgment of the Framework for Recreation by councils may or may not have any impact on the overall implementation of the document in future efforts. The endorsement through association shows the staff and more importantly the community, whom the council represents and serves, that their recreation plans and directions are following the national standards of the sector (e.g., National Sector sub-theme). Future efforts of council integration may or may not come solely through this avenue but also the education of council on the Framework for Recreation's national standards.

Furthermore, this education piece was discussed by study participants as happening through their local recreation master plan development and endorsement. Again, this gave municipal recreation staff justification for their work and future direction. Council integration did have a direct impact on the implementation of the Framework for Recreation, but instead, the impact came through a local adaptation of the

Framework for Recreation into their context. Overall, council integration, in conjunction with other findings of this study, can be utilized to re-evaluate the implementation tracking of endorsements currently utilized as tracking of impact for the Framework for Recreation in the sector nationwide.

The last category was *influence,* which describes the value placed in the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. *Influence* had the most sub-themes associated with it, which included: value, guiding document, limited scope, implementation constraint, and document development influence. All of the sub-themes contributed to building the recreation case of the Framework for Recreation in the Alberta municipal recreation sector. Not all *influences* provided a favourable contribution to the implementation of the Framework for Recreation, favourable contribution being the furthering of municipal implementation of the Framework for Recreation. However, all *influences* contribute to the broader knowledge development of implementation efforts of the Framework for Recreation.

There is value among the municipal recreation sector stakeholders in recreation. Components of the Framework for Recreation (i.e., goals and priorities) were implemented because the recreation sector is moving towards the goal of wellbeing. The Framework for Recreation, including the goals and priorities, was a resource utilized to exemplify the value of recreation towards the goal of wellbeing. The values of a public good, inclusion, and equity, sustainability, and lifelong participation were all components of the Framework for Recreation that provided a base for the goals and their priorities to be implemented into the municipal recreation setting. Municipalities have taken steps to implement the Framework for Recreation; because it was deemed a public good by the

council and/or the community, it was a source of inclusion and equity information, the

municipal recreation sentiment needed to be sustainable, and municipal recreation had to

be for all ages. With these values among municipal staff, council, and the community, the

Framework for Recreation exemplified the goals and the goals associated priorities that

were imperative for municipal recreation to move forward towards wellbeing. The

Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities are national

standards that framed the values of those audiences (i.e., municipal staff, council, and the

community), which resulted in the Framework for Recreation's implementation.

With the NRS of 1987 being the most recent national guiding document to the

Canadian recreation sector of Canada, it can be argued that the recreation sector lacked

an up to date national direction. The Framework for Recreation and is goals and the goals

associated priorities were implemented because it fulfilled this role, the role of a guiding

document. Along with the national sector sub-theme, the sub-theme of guiding document,

came into the forefront by Alberta municipal recreation staff as the Framework for

Recreation fulfilled this role among the study participants. The Framework for Recreation

was seen as a justification and validation document for recreation initiatives, and in

conjunction with those factors other components were also implemented (e.g., goals and

priorities), thus the Framework for Recreation was viewed among study participants as

being a guiding document to their municipal recreation initiatives. As seen in the Alberta

cases, the Framework for Recreation was viewed as a justification or validating document

because it connected to the national recreation sector/standards, the outlook of the

Framework for Recreation among study participants was seen as a guiding document on

other initiatives. The Framework for Recreation's goals and the goals associated priorities

were implemented among Alberta cases because it was viewed as a guiding document for the work being conducted in the municipal recreation setting.

In addition to the influences of value and national guiding document to why municipalities have implemented the Framework for Recreation, including the goals and the goals associated priorities, was the connection between study participants and the document development influence due to their participation in the development process. Through participation in the development process, there was a sense of ownership and leadership identified by study participants, and that was reflected in their effort towards implementation. The personal connection to the development process resulted in the sense of ownership and leadership towards implementation because those individuals who did participate in the process knew the sentiment of the national recreation sector, which was later articulated through the goals and the goals associated priorities. Study participants expressed a sense of responsibility and connection as to why they were implementing the Framework for Recreation.

Within the category of influence were the sub-themes limited scope and implementation constraints. These two sub-themes do not necessarily dictate why the Framework for Recreation was implemented but are factors to consider addressing or avoiding in future implementation efforts. The limited scope was brought forward as the Framework for Recreation was being implemented as a consideration for future iterations to the document. However, the Framework for Recreation and its goals, including the goals associated priorities, were to be implemented at the transgression of municipal recreation staff to address local concerns the Framework for Recreation did not necessarily cover. The transgression of implementation by municipal staff is no surprise

but should be a consideration during future implementation efforts as the goals, including

the goals associated priorities, are not meant to fit every local circumstance but were

developed as general concepts to adapt around those local circumstances to address them

whenever possible. These limited scope concepts can be taken into consideration by

CPRA, ISRC, and IMWG in future editions of the Framework for Recreation.

The second sub-theme to consider for future implementation efforts was

implementation constraints. Through understanding what was expressed by study

participants as hurdles to implementation efforts, then future efforts can address those

concerns preemptable. The most identifiable implementation constraint was resources.

Through reiterating this implementation constraint, and the others identified through this

study, future efforts can address this constraint through the content of the Framework for

Recreation (e.g., Principal Operation). The last two sub-themes of limited scope and

implementation constraints can better be understood through the results of this study in

the Alberta municipal context to address hurdles to why the Framework for Recreation

and its goals and the goals associated priorities may not be implemented to the fullest

extent.

As stated, this report identifies a consultant as an individual or organization that is

hired separately from that of a community or municipality to research and develop a

master plan, which for this study are recreation master plans. The full influence of

consultants in the implementation of the Framework for Recreation will warrant further

research, but from what was articulated in this study among participants, consultants had

a role in the implementation of the Framework for Recreation into Alberta municipalities.

Consultants included the Framework for Recreation into their development of municipal

recreation master plans, which depending on the involvement of municipal staff influenced the understanding and over all implementation of the Framework for Recreation into those municipal recreation settings. Consultants who implement the Framework for Recreation have a role in furthering the factors of implementation in Alberta municipalities.

Contributions to implementation were valued (value of municipal staff, council, and the community at large), guiding document (the standards that the nationally endorsed Framework for Recreation provided locally), and document development influence (firsthand experience in the development of the Framework for Recreation providing a sense of ownership to those individuals which led to implementation). The unfavorable *influences* on implementation were limited scope (the Framework for Recreation did not incorporate all areas important to study participants in their unique setting) and implementation constraints (which were primarily resources, including finances). The categories of *content, impact,* and *influence* classified the overall implementation of the Framework for Recreation, as seen by study participants at the municipal recreation level in Alberta.

Contribution

The Framework for Recreation has been in an implementation stage for four years, and in that time, several unique initiatives have been undertaken towards making an impact locally. To date, no other academic study has been conducted on the implementation stage for the Framework for Recreation. This study provides the recreation sector with academic examples of local implementation efforts in Alberta to

determine the impact that the Framework for Recreation is having. With implementation being a difficult concept to quantify the qualitative nature of this study's methodology contributes attributes to the implementation tracking of the Framework for Recreation that may have otherwise been overlooked. The study results, in conjunction with sector implementation tracking, can provide decision makers of the Framework for Recreation (i.e., CPRA & ISRC) with valuable information on future document development, implementation, and impact. Also, in addition to the Framework for Recreation, the results may apply to more recent national guiding documents to associated sectors such as Parks for All, and A Common Vision.

As previously stated, the Framework for Recreation is not the first national sector unifying document for the recreation sector. The NRS of 1987 was the national document for close to 30 years before the Framework for Recreation. The recreation sector of Canada adapted over those decades, but with no new national sector guiding document until the Framework for Recreation. Is there to be another 30 years until the next national recreation sector document for Canada? It is the hope of this researcher that the findings of this study contribute to maintaining the implementation efforts of the Framework for Recreation. The results of this study can also contribute to later editions or revisions of the Framework for Recreation. Study participants identified several components that were not directly covered in the Framework for Recreation, which could be included in future editions or revisions.

The IMWG monitors the current efforts nationally towards the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. This study may provide insight into the local implementation and impact of the Framework for Recreation, which can be integrated

into strategies for future IMWG efforts. Although this study was conducted in the Alberta municipal recreation sector of Canada, parallels may be taken cautiously to other provinces or territories. As the Framework for Recreation is a leading national document, the concepts drawn in Alberta may, in fact, be similar to other comparably sized municipalities elsewhere.

The results of this study contribute to the overall impact of the Framework for Recreation by providing detailed examples of current municipal implementation efforts. Not only nationally (i.e., CPRA, ISRC, and IMWG) or provincially (i.e., ARPA) but local municipal recreation staff, primarily in Alberta, can use the results to implement the Framework for Recreation into their recreation setting. The notion of further Alberta municipal implementation can come from a variety of the findings, as in the integration of the Framework for Recreation into new recreation master plans. The findings of this study report on the variety of approaches to the inclusion of the Framework for Recreation into new recreation master plans for other Alberta municipalities. Municipal staff who may not know where to begin or know the preferred way of implementation can utilize the findings of this study to reference in their local settings.

This study and its findings provide the recreation sector with firsthand knowledge of the implementation efforts that influence the degree of impact the Framework for Recreation has. The results can be utilized among the national bodies (CPRA, ISRC, and IMWG) or utilized by other Alberta municipal recreation staff or taken cautiously nationally. The overall study begins to add to the sector's understanding of the impact that the Framework for Recreation is making but from an academic perspective.

Recommendations

The Framework for Recreation has now been endorsed among key stakeholders, including the CPRA, ISRC, Provincial Recreation and Park Associations, Provincial Governments, and FCM within the past four years. In that time, implementation at the municipal level has varied across the country. After the research into the Alberta context, I offer four recommendations to further implementation efforts of the Framework for Recreation within the Alberta municipal context. First, the development of recreation partnerships and the formation of collaborative environments among key stakeholders in recreation to contribute to the solution of wicked problems which recreation is associated. Recreation is a complex social construct with many parameters that involve stakeholders from multiple sectors, but through the development of recreation partnerships and the formation of collaborative environments the benefits of recreation (goals and the goals associated priorities of the Framework for Recreation) can be implemented into the municipal recreation context of Alberta.

Secondly, for municipalities to connect to a national sector document like the Framework for Recreation for the potential provision of justification or validation in implementing the goals and the goals associated priorities from the perspective of staff, municipal departments, elected officials and the community. The justification and validation components of implementing the Framework for Recreation can provide municipal recreation departments with an invaluable case for new and existing recreation initiatives. Third, as seen in the first few years in the Alberta context, ownership in the Framework for Recreation provided further momentum to initiatives of implementation. For the Framework for Recreation to continue exemplifying momentum to the

implementation of a connection or level of ownership should be encouraged in the

Framework for Recreation among recreation stakeholders (e.g., individuals or

organizations).

Lastly, the Canadian Provincial/Territorial non-profit Recreation and Park

Associations can assist in furthering the implementation efforts of municipalities. Study

participants acknowledged the role that the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association had

in communicating and influencing implementation, which was corroborated nationally

through those who participated in the CRPA 2018 survey (CPRA, 2018). These four

recommendations are based on the research taken in an Alberta context and should not be

taken ad hoc and utilized in another provincial/territorial context without due diligence.

Future Studies

During the onset of this report, it was stated that this study was exploratory due to

there being very little current academic work on the Framework for Recreation. Thus,

this study contributed to developing the body of knowledge on the implementation being

done in the sector for the Framework for Recreation. The need for further research into

the Framework for Recreation is warranted through an academic lens. To that end, here

are four routes identified for future research into the Framework for Recreation. First, a

longitudinal study of the Framework for Recreation's content, impact, and influence can

be the subject of future studies.

Secondly, as seen in this study, the types, benefits, and downside to partnerships

and collaboration between and within recreation stakeholders can be the subject of future

research. Each municipal study participant had a unique tactic and set of partnerships to

form collaborative working relationships, which could be the setting of future research projects in an attempt to conceptualize partnerships and collaboration among the recreation sector. Third, an investigation into why municipalities are not using the Framework for Recreation can be the stage for future research. This study had the inclusion criteria that to some degree the Framework for Recreation had to be implemented, but there are still several municipalities in Alberta who have not implemented the Framework for Recreation and to what extent should be a topic of a future research project. Lastly, similar research studies can be conducted in other provinces. The results from this study cannot be taken ad hoc from Alberta to other provinces. Thus, future studies can include conducting similar studies in other provinces of Canada to contribute to the understanding of the national implementation efforts of the Framework for Recreation.

Ultimately, the Framework for Recreation had *content* implemented that made an *impact* on and *influence* in the municipal recreation departments who implemented it. The Framework for Recreation provides a national standard for recreation in Canada that guides the development of the recreation case. The recreation case being the expression of the invaluable contribution that recreation plays in individual, community, and the natural and built environment wellbeing to stakeholders at the municipal, provincial, and national levels. This recreation case is furthered through the findings of this study, which describe the implementation of the Framework for Recreation; this includes recreation stakeholders identifying as a sector the wicked problems unfolding, identifying possible solutions and then implementing those solutions. The Framework for Recreation is a

national document that can be the avenue to building a unified recreation case and expressing the associated benefits of recreation to the municipal level across the country.

The Framework for Recreation is currently in the implementation stage nationally, which is monitored by the IMWG. This study provides an academic perspective in the Alberta setting to the current status of the *content, impact,* and *influence* of the Framework for Recreation's implementation for the IMWG. Ideally, the findings here will be recognized, shared, and expanded on by the IMWG as this endorsement and implementation stage of the Framework for Recreation continues to proceed. Although this study took place in Alberta, components to how, why, and what impact the Framework for Recreation's implementation had may be taken cautiously when or if applied in other provinces or territories. The Framework for Recreation is a document that is being implemented across Alberta, which indicates a demand for such a document; ideally, almost another thirty years should not go by before another edition or document be created and provided to the national recreation sector of Canada.

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Appendix

Appendix A

May 3, 2017

Benjamin Jonah
Graduate Student
University of New Brunswick

Dear Benjamin,

SUBJECT: **Support for the research study titled "The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing: Implementation Factors in Alberta Municipalities"**

The Alberta Parks and Recreation Association (ARPA) is pleased to support your study entitled "The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing: Implementation Factors in Alberta Municipalities." This type of study is of great importance to ARPA, its members and the larger recreation community across Canada.

It is our hope that the work and learnings from this study will continue to create a legacy of implementation tracking and evaluation as it relates to the Framework for Recreation in Canada. This is a high priority for ARPA, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Alberta as well as the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA).

ARPA is a non-profit organization committed to building healthier and happier communities and citizens by developing and promoting recreation and parks. We offer a range of programs that enhance the quality of life of Albertans. With over 1,700 members, including 110 municipal governments, ARPA has actively been involved in education, training, advocacy, and research for over 60 years.

We are proud to be able to support this study through your internship this summer with ARPA and are looking forward to you joining our team.

We would be interested in promoting the findings of your research through our various communication strategies. Some avenues we would have to promote these findings are through our e-newsletter REConnect, social media and by having presentations at some of our conference events such as our Annual Conference and in particular the Connecting through Research stream.

Sincerely,
Bill Wells
CEO

Alberta Municipalities

Municipal Districts	Village	Town	City
Acadia No. 34	Village of Acme	Town of Athabasca	City of Airdrie
Athabasca County	Alberta Beach	Town of Banff	City of Brooks
Barrhead No. 11	Village of Alix	Town of Barrhead	City of Calgary
Beaver County	Village of Alliance	Town of Bashaw	City of Camrose
Big Lakes County	Village of Amisk	Town of Bassano	City of
Bighorn No. 8	Village of Andrew	Town of Beaumont	Chestermere
Birch Hills County	Village of	Town of	City of Cold
Bonnyville No.87	Arrowwood	Beaverlodge	Lake
Brazeau County	Village of Barnwell	Town of Bentley	City of
Camrose County	Village of Barons	Town of Black	Edmonton
Cardston County	Village of Bawlf	Diamond	City of Fort
Clear Hills County	Village of Beiseker	Town of Blackfalds	Saskatchewan
Clearwater County	Village of Berwyn	Town of Bon	City of Grande
Cypress County	Village of Big	Accord	Prairie
Fairview No. 136	Valley	Town of Bonnyville	City of Lacombe
Flagstaff County	Village of Bittern	Town of Bow	City of Leduc
Foothills No.31	Lake	Island	City of
Forty Mile No. 8	Village of Botha	Town of Bowden	Lethbridge
Grande Prairie No.1	Village of Boyle	Town of	City of
Greenview No.16	Village of Breton	Bruderheim	Lloydminster
Kneehill County	Village of Carbon	Town of Calmar	City of Medicine
Lac Ste. Anne County	Village of	Town of Canmore	Hat
Lacombe County	Carmangay	Town of Cardston	City of Red Deer
Lamont County	Village of Caroline	Town of Carstairs	City of Spruce
Leduc County	Village of Cereal	Town of Castor	Grove
Lesser Slave River	Village of	Town of	City of St. Albert
No.124	Champion	Claresholm	City of
Lethbridge County	Village of Chauvin	Town of Coaldale	Wetaskiwin
Minburn No.27	Village of Chipman	Town of Coalhurst	
Mountain View	Village of Clive	Town of Cochrane	
County	Village of Clyde	Town of	
Newell County	Village of Consort	Coronation	
Northern Lights	Village of Coutts	Town of Crossfield	
County	Village of Cowley	Town of Daysland	
Northern Sunrise	Village of Cremona	Town of Devon	
County	Village of Czar	Town of Didsbury	
Opportunity No.17	Village of	Town of Drayton	
Paintearth No.18	Delburne	Valley	
Parkland County	Village of Delia		

Peace No. 135	Village of	Town of
Pincher Creek No.9	Dewberry	Drumheller
Ponoka County	Village of Donalda	Town of Eckville
Provost No.52	Village of	Town of Edson
Ranchland No.66	Donnelly	Town of Elk Point
Red Deer County	Village of Duchess	Town of Fairview
Rocky View County	Village of Edberg	Town of Falher
Saddle Hills County	Village of Edgerton	Town of Fort
Smoky Lake County	Village of Elnora	Macleod
Smoky river No. 130	Village of Empress	Town of Fox Creek
Spirit River No.133	Village of	Town of Gibbons
St. Paul No.19	Ferintosh	Town of Grande
Starland County	Village of	Cache
Stettler No.6	Foremost	Town of Granum
Sturgeon County	Village of	Town of Grimshaw
Taber	Forestburg	Town of Hanna
Thorhild County	Village of Gadsby	Town of Hardisty
Two Hills No.21	Village of	Town of High
Vermillion River	Girouxville	Level
Vulcan County	Village of Glendon	Town of High
Wainwright No. 61	Village of	Prairie
Warner No.5	Glenwood	Town of High
Weslock County	Village of Halkirk	River
Wetaskiwin No.10	Village of Hay	Town of Hinton
Wheatland County	Lakes	Town of Innisfail
Willow Creek No.26	Village of Heisler	Town of Irricana
Woodlands County	Village of Hill	Town of Killam
Yellowhead County	Spring	Town of Lamont
Lac La Biche County	Village of Hines	Town of Legal
Mackenzie County	Creek	Town of Magrath
Municipality of	Village of Holden	Town of Manning
Crowsnest Pass	Village of	Town of
Municipality of	Hughenden	Mayerthorpe
Jasper	Village of Hussar	Town of McLennan
Regional	Village of Hythe	Town of Milk River
Municipality of	Village of Innisfree	Town of Millet
Wood Buffalo	Village of Irma	Town of Morinville
Strathcona County	Village of Kitscoty	Town of Mundare
	Village of Linden	Town of Nanton
	Village of Lomond	Town of Okotoks
	Village of	Town of Olds
	Longview	Town of Onoway
	Village of	Town of Oyen
	Lougheed	Town of Peace
		River

Village of Mannville
Village of Marwayne
Village of Milo
Village of Morrin
Village of Munson
Village of Myrnam
Village of Nampa
Village of Nobleford
Village of Paradise Valley
Village of Rockyford
Village of Rosalind
Village of Rosemary
Village of Rycroft
Village of Ryley
Village of Spring Lake
Village of Standard
Village of Stirling
Village of Veteran
Village of Vilna
Village of Wabamun
Village of Warburg
Village of Warner
Village of Waskatenau
Village of Willingdon
Village of Youngstown

Town of Penhold
Town of Picture Butte
Town of Pincher Creek
Town of Ponoka
Town of Provost
Town of Rainbow Lake
Town of Raymond
Town of Redcliff
Town of Redwater
Town of Rimbey
Town of Rocky Mountain House
Town of Sedgewick
Town of Sexsmith
Town of Slave Lake
Town of Smoky Lake
Town of Spirit River
Town of St. Paul
Town of Stavely
Town of Stettler
Town of Stony Plain
Town of Strathmore
Town of Sundre
Town of Swan Hills
Town of Sylvan Lake
Town of Taber
Town of Thorsby
Town of Three Hills
Town of Tofield
Town of Trochu
Town of Turner Valley
Town of Two Hills
Town of Valleyview
Town of Vauxhall

Town of Vegreville
Town of Vermilion
Town of Viking
Town of Vulcan
Town of
Wainwright
Town of Wembley
Town of Westlock
Town of
Whitecourt

<center>**Appendix C**</center>

<center>**Interview Guide for Municipal Recreation Directors/Managers**</center>

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study and taking the time out of your busy schedule. The interview questions that I will ask you today are in regard to the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing. This document and the degree of community recreation planning will be the topics of discussion.

Introduction

1. Tell me about your role within the municipality?

2. Can you describe your community? (i.e. Vision, Values, Goals)

3. How would you define recreation, physical activity, or sport?

4. What capacity do you view recreation having within your community?

The purpose of this study is to investigate to date your communities' factors of content implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing's goals and priorities in Alberta Municipalities. The intent of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing is to be implemented and to what extent that is occurring is the focus of this interview today.

Background

1. What is your budget for your community?

2. What is the biggest demographic that your committee needs to cater too?

3. How many individuals work within the community recreation department?

    a. How many volunteers?

4. How would you describe the relationship that exists between city council and the

    recreation department?

5. Provide some different examples of programs that are offered?

Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing

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1. In your own words, how would you describe the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing in regard to the goals and priorities of the document?

2. What has been your experience with the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing?

   a. Were you a part of the development process?

3. What type of budget exists for implementing the framework?

4. What aspects of the Framework did you focus on and why?

5. How have you communicated the use of the framework to the different actors?

6. What value has or should the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing have for your community?

   a. Why is that important? Or,

   b. Why is that not important?

7. Is it important for your municipality to official endorse the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing?

   a. How has the council responded to the implementation of the framework?

8. Because of the creation of the document, has it enabled your department to provide more recreation within the community?

   a. Services, programs, policy, or facilities?

   b. How has outdoor and open space recreation been impacted by the implementation of the Framework for Recreation?

   c. Has your budget, resources, or spaces and places changed to accommodate the Framework for Recreation's implementation?

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      d. Has the Framework for Recreation increased the recreation capacity of your community?

          i. Has it influenced your communities' recreation inclusion and access?

9. What are challenges or constraints to implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing in your community?

10. What are enablers to implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing in your community?

11. How do you define implementation success?

12. Do you use the framework in your hiring practices and training?

13. Can you describe how the Framework for Recreation has been implemented?

      a. Is it going to be and/or stay an integral part of your communities' recreation process moving forward?

Conclusion

1. Do you feel the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing can make or has made an impact in your municipality?

2. How would you improve/change the implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing?

3. How do you see the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing being used in the next 5 years in your municipality?

Appendix D

Title of Study: ***The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing: Implementation Factors in Alberta Municipalities***

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Benjamin Jonah and I am a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick currently working towards a Master of Arts in Sport and Recreation Studies. Based on your involvement in your municipality as a recreation manager/director, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview regarding the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick and is on file as [*Insert REB file #*]. Specifically, for this interview I would like to draw on your experiences in recreation planning within your municipality and in connection with the implementation of the Framework for Recreation. The study is voluntary and you will only be included if you provide permission.

I would like to invite you to take part in an interview that is either face-to-face, Skype, or over the phone. The interview will last about 30-60 minutes and can be done over the phone, Skype, or in person. A review of the information letter will take place prior to the start of the interview and you will be required to complete a consent form or in the case of a Skype or phone interview verbal consent. The interview session will be audio recorded. Furthermore, you will receive a summary report regarding the findings for the study within approximately one year of the completion of the study. There are no known risks with this study. You are free to withdraw at any time up until the analysis of the data begins and you can request that the tape recorder be shut off at any time during the interview without any consequence. There are no negative consequences for non-participation in this study.

All transcribed data will remain confidential and be stored on password protected computer. Data will be stored for a period of five years' post-publication. All the names of interviewees, organizations, or municipalities will be removed and pseudonyms will be used in the written report and within the transcribed data so that your identity is kept private. As a participant, you will be provided with a copy of your transcript, which you will have a chance to review for approximately two weeks.

The benefits of participating in this study are that you will be involved in evaluating the current implementation of the Framework for Recreation in Canada, Pathways to Wellbeing. Furthermore, the information that you will be providing will assist in determining the factors to recreation within municipalities as it pertains to the goals and priorities of the Framework for Recreation. Also, this research will provide a foundation for understanding the implementation success of the Framework for Recreation, which can be a "stepping stone" for future research in this research setting as well as practical implications for other municipalities.

If you have concerns about this study, you can contact Dr. Wayne Albert, the Dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of New Brunswick, at 506-453-4576 or by email at walbert@unb.ca. Dr. Albert has no direct involvement with this project. If you have any questions about the study, please free to contact the principal investigator or research supervisor using the contact information included below.
Sincerely,

Benjamin Jonah

Principal Investigator:

Benjamin Jonah;
M.A. Sport and Recreation Studies – Candidate;
Faculty of Kinesiology;
University of New Brunswick;
Ph: (780)-893-5387;
Email: bjonah@unb.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Jon Edwards
University of New Brunswick Faculty of Kinesiology
Jonathon.edwards@unb.ca
506-453-5139

Title of Study: ***The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, Pathways to Wellbeing: Implementation Factors in Alberta Municipalities***

Principal Investigator: Benjamin Jonah; M.A. Sport and Recreation Studies - Candidate; University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Kinesiology; bjonah@unb.ca; 780-893-5387 (cell)

Supervisor: Jonathon Edwards; Professor; Faculty of Kinesiology; jonathon.edwards@unb.ca; 506 453 5139

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?   Yes   No

Have you read and received a copy of the attached information sheet?   Yes   No

Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this study? Yes No

Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence?

                                                                                        Yes   No

Do you understand that your name will remain anonymous?   Yes   No

Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you?   Yes   No

Do you understand that this interview will be audio recorded?   Yes   No

Do you understand who will have access to the information that you provide?

                                                                                        Yes   No

Do you understand that the information that is provided may be used for publication purposes?

                                                                                        Yes   No

I agree to take part in this study:

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   Date   Printed Participant's Name

_____
Signature of the Researcher

Curriculum Vitae

Candidate's full name: Benjamin Mark Jonah

Universities attended: LeTourneau University, August 2011 – May 2015, Bachelor of

Science – Kinesiology Exercise Science, Summa Cum Laude

Publications: Hamm E., Jonah B., Rispin K., 2015. Comparative Study on the Energy

Cost of Pushing The Hope Haven KidChair and Free Wheelchair Mission Gen 2

Wheelchair. International Journal of Exercise Science: Conference Abstract Submissions:

Vol 2: Iss 7.

Conference Presentations:

Jonah, B. (2017, October). *Framework for Recreation: Factors of Content*

Implementation in Alberta Municipalities. Presented at Recreation New

Brunswick Annual Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Hinch, T., Wells, B., and Jonah, B. (2018, January). *Framework for Recreation in*

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Noble, C.J., Porter, N., Jonah, B., English, D., & Lavigne, M. (2018, May). *Framework*

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