

## Benefits of Health and Physical Activity for Calgary and its Citizens

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### Sport and Health

- Levels of physical activity are declining in all age groups in Calgary except for males aged 18-34 years, which remains the same ([www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca))<sup>1</sup>
- Women aged 20-34 and 35-64 in Calgary are less active than the average Albertan ([www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca))<sup>1</sup>
- Between 1983 and 1993 the incidence of cancer in Calgary increased 36% and the incidence of heart disease increased 45% ([content.calgary.ca](http://content.calgary.ca))<sup>2</sup>
- Mental illness has been shown to respond positively to physical activity ([www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca](http://www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca))<sup>3</sup>
- In the Calgary Health Region, 50,000 people have diabetes, which can be prevented and improved by physical activity
- Patients with diabetes experience complications in 40% of cases, these can include kidney disease and hypertension
- Diabetics between 35 and 64 have six times the normal risk of heart disease ([www.in-motion.ca/diabetes](http://www.in-motion.ca/diabetes))<sup>4</sup>

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### Sport and the Community

- Physical activity increases with increased educational attainment ([www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca))<sup>1</sup>
- Activity declines with age, and is consistently lower in women than men ([www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca))<sup>1</sup>
- In 1992, Calgary was ranked first overall in terms of quality of life in Canada. When asked to name the best things about living in Calgary, 37% of respondents said parks and recreation features and activities. ([www.cd.gov.ab.ca](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca))<sup>5</sup>
- 56% of Calgarians who volunteer, do so in the area of sport
- The top 2 reasons that Calgarians did not participate in physical activity were cost related, indicating that more low cost facilities need to be made available
- 76.6% think the average expenditure on municipal recreation and parks of \$103/year/person is reasonable, 12.8% believe it to be too low ([www.cd.gov.ab.ca](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca))<sup>6</sup>

## Design of neighborhoods needs to be regulated

- Those who live within 1km of shops are 7% less likely to be obese
- Men who live in the suburbs are on average 10lbs heavier
- Calgary neighborhoods were assessed for friendliness to pedestrians, and determined that new communities (i.e. Sandstone) rate much lower in regards to factors such as accessibility by foot, sensory stimulation, and safety in traffic ([www.hearthealthcalgary.com](http://www.hearthealthcalgary.com))<sup>7</sup>

## Outdoor opportunities for physical activity in Calgary need to be maintained and promoted, as they improve the health of residents and offer solutions for concerns such as traffic congestion

- There was a 55% increase in pathway use from 1994 to 2002, while the population only increased by 22.6% during that time period ([www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca))<sup>8</sup>
- Users surveyed indicated that they use the pathway for
  - Exercise (41%)
  - Commuting (38%)
  - Recreation (21%)
- The top three reasons for liking the pathway system:
  - Extensiveness
  - Scenery/nature/green spaces/close to river
  - Well maintained/quality (<http://www.calgary.ca>)<sup>8</sup>
- The continued expansion and maintenance of the pathway system is imperative to the continuing physical activity of Calgary residents, and could help remedy Calgarian's #1 concern: Traffic
- The pathway system is composed of 260km of bike routes, and 550km of pathways, but only 2,500 commuters use this system ([www.goforgreen.ca](http://www.goforgreen.ca))<sup>9</sup>
- Only two bus routes in the city have bike racks, and two C-Train stations have bike lockers – this is not beneficial to the promotion of alternate modes of transportation
- Each year, Banff National Park receives 8 million visitors, 58% from Alberta, and over half of that are from Calgary ([www.canadianrockies.net](http://www.canadianrockies.net))<sup>10</sup>
- The potential for physical activity is not being utilized, as backcountry use has decreased from 20,300 user nights in 1975 to 18,000 user nights annually ([www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca))<sup>11</sup>
- Day hiking is nearly unlimited with 1500km of trails, and further steps need to be taken to promote this inexpensive outdoor activity (<http://www.rockiesguide.com>)<sup>12</sup>

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## **Sport and Child Development**

- Parents report that 12% of children aged 12-17 spend less than 15 minutes/day being physically active outside school (<http://www.crha-health.ab.ca>)<sup>13</sup>
- Calgary youth are less active than the average Albertan youth ([www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca))<sup>1</sup>
- Alternative means of physical activity for children and youth need to be explored, as seen by the effectiveness of the Shaw Millennium Skate Park, which is free of charge, and sees over 1000 visitors each day in the summer (<http://www.gov.calgary.ab.ca>)<sup>14</sup>

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## **Physical Activity, The Olympics and the Economy**

- A cohesive civic sport policy would build cohesion and the efficient use of funds ([www.calgarysportcouncil.ca](http://www.calgarysportcouncil.ca))<sup>15</sup>
- Requests for amateur sports funding exceed \$1,000,000 in Calgary each year, but the Calgary Sports Legacy is only able to provide \$250,000. This means that many may be left without the opportunity to participate in sport ([www.parksfdn.com](http://www.parksfdn.com))<sup>16</sup>
- Sport and physical activity are the reason 36.3% of tourists visited Calgary in 2001 ([www.tourismcalgary.com](http://www.tourismcalgary.com))<sup>17</sup>
- Allowing Canadian freestyle skiers to train in Calgary will save \$60,000 to \$100,000 (versus US training costs) per year (<http://www.ccose.com>)<sup>21</sup>
- Visiting athletes, supporters and fans spend over \$10 million dollars per year while in Calgary
- The Olympic Games in 1988 saw a 12% increase in tourism the year of the games, and 3.25% increase in the 5 years following the games.
- The Games created \$1.4 billion in benefits, including capital projects, and visitor expenditures ([www.breadnotcircuses.org](http://www.breadnotcircuses.org))<sup>18</sup>
- The facilities remaining from the legacy fund as well as new projects offer Canadian athletes an international advantage
- Plans to expand COP are expected to draw 1,000,000 visitors/year (<http://www.ccose.com>)<sup>19</sup>
- International training facilities will draw athletes from across Canada and the world to Calgary and Alberta

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