

# A STRONG PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL FOR A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Four out of five North Americans use their local recreation and park system.

70% have a park or recreation facility within walking distance of their home.

Our parks are such a stable influence on our lives that we tend not to give them much thought. But our effective parks and recreation facilities do not just happen on their own. They require professional care and financial support to keep them clean, safe and suitable for the community they serve.

**HEALTH BENEFITS:** *Access to parks and recreation facilities leads to healthy lifestyles for people of all ages.*

Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Every time sedentary people walk a mile, they add 21 minutes to their life. On average, every hour you spend exercising increases your life expectancy by two hours. Exercise increases the brain's capacity for learning.

**ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:** *Parks, open spaces and trails play a key role in preserving water and air quality, reducing congestion and protecting wildlife.*

Through the provision of parks, open spaces and protected natural environment, recreation can contribute to the environmental health of our communities.

Trail and pathway systems save energy and protect air quality by encouraging non-motorized transportation.

**COMMUNITY BENEFITS:** *Parks and Recreation sources give communities a vital identity. Well-maintained, accessible parks and recreation facilities are key elements of strong, safe, family-friendly communities.*

When citizens get involved with their parks and recreation systems, their quality of life improves. Parks and recreation opportunities encourage citizens to be engaged in their communities – as volunteers, stewards, advocates and students. Community recreation reduces alienation, loneliness, and anti-social behavior.

**ECONOMIC BENEFITS:** *Parks enhance property values, contribute to healthy and productive workforces and help attract and retain businesses.*

Parks and recreation facilities make communities desirable places to live, work, play and visit. Parks and recreation services motivate business relocation and expansion in the community.

In a national public opinions survey, the majority of respondents said that if they were in the market to buy a new home, they would be more likely to select a home if it was close to parks and open space.