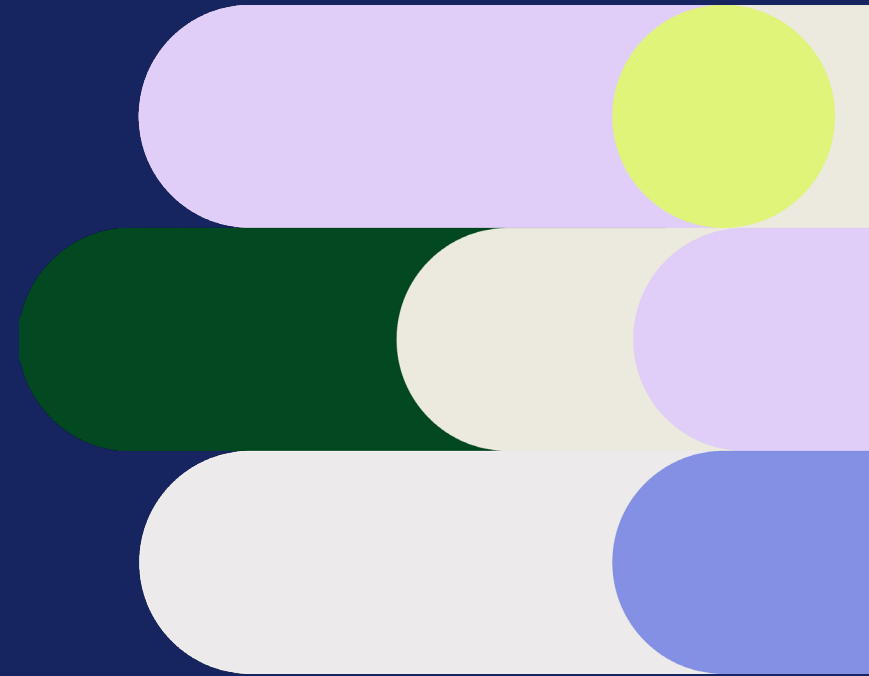


Social Infrastructure: BC's way Forward to Connected Communities

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: BC'S WAY FORWARD TO CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

September 15, 2026 | UBCM Convention



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PANEL



Katie Fenn
CEO
BCRPA



Mary Morrison-Clark
GM, Parks, Recreation &
Culture
City of Burnaby



Carmut Me
Head of Cultural
Space Programs
221A



Andrew Price
CEO
viaSport



John Hawkings
Executive Lead
BC Ministry of
Environment & Parks



221A



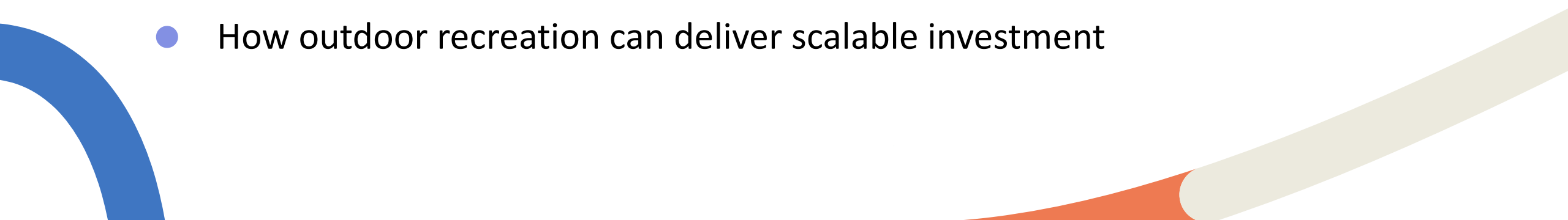


British Columbia
Recreation & Parks
Association

BUILDING A CASE FOR SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS BC & BEYOND



WHAT WE'LL EXPLORE TODAY

- What research and data can tell us about social infrastructure
 - What this looks like on the ground in Burnaby
 - Why arts and culture are part of complete communities
 - How access and allocation shape sport and recreation
 - How outdoor recreation can deliver scalable investment
- 

WHO DOES BCRPA SUPPORT?



5800

BCRPA Members

95%

Of BC Communities

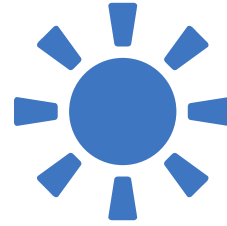
2800

Registered Fitness Professionals

● OUR FOCUS AREAS



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



YOUTH & OLDER ADULTS



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT



FROM A SHARED CHALLENGE TO BETTER EVIDENCE

Scaling Up Social Infrastructure (SUSI)



WHY DO WE NEED A NEW FOCUS ON SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

RATE OF CHANGE

Rate of change of population, sociodemographic, economic, time use and activity patterns



DENSIFICATION

Land use mix, height, massing, tenure arrangements, congestion



COMMUNICATION FAILURE

Misinformation and broken communication channels



GOVERNANCE MODELS

Changing expectations and capabilities of different levels and institutions of governance

CRISIS

Polycrisis: climate extremes, political and social intolerance, acts of desperation



WHAT IS SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE GOOD FOR?

PUBLIC HEALTH

Social determinants of health in the built environment



PUBLIC FINANCE

Long-term asset management beyond initial development costs, full-cost accounting toward self-reliance



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Risk management, crisis response, preparing for cascading/triggers



SOCIAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Self-determination, inclusion, equity, participation, trust, tolerance, belonging

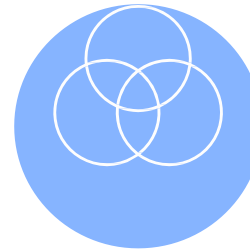


PUBLIC INTEREST

That ineffable thing that planning is supposed to protect



INTERSECTIONAL/ SYNERGISTIC



WHAT DOES THE SUSI PARTNERSHIP PLAN TO DO?



Vancouver
CoastalHealth



A partnership of:   



FROM RESEARCH TO DECISION-MAKING

Using Data to Understand Infrastructure,
Communities & Impact



**CAN Active
Insights**

DATA IN ACTION

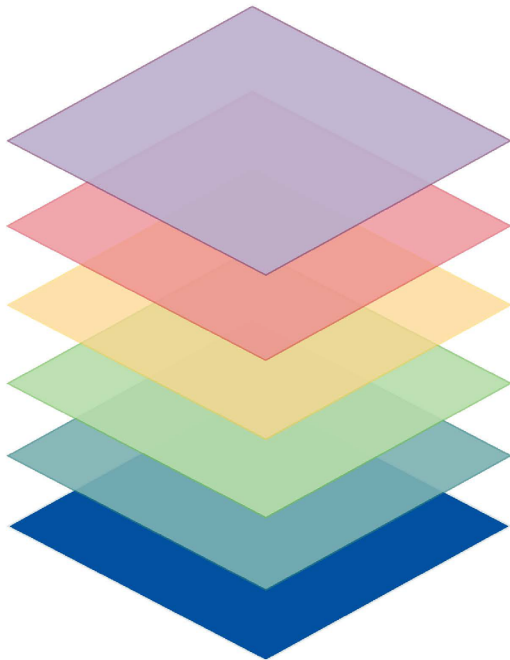
PLACE INTELLIGENCE FOR PARKS,
RECREATION, AND SPORT

CAN ACTIVE INSIGHTS



SIX LAYERS • ONE PLATFORM

Each product can be used not only in isolation, but as a series of connected layers



06

RETURN ON INVESTMENT
CAN Active IMPACT

Calculate the social, health, environmental, and economic return on sport and recreation programs and facilities

05

COMMUNITY REACH
CAN Active REACH

See who you reach and who you don't – connected population and household profiles

04

MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS
CAN Active SPORT

Bookings, memberships, and registrations from formal facilities and sports, connected back to place
(Coming Soon)

03

COMMUNITY VOICE
CAN Active LIVES

Community-level survey data on barriers and equity – the why behind the numbers and resident behaviour
(Coming Soon)

02

PATTERNS AND TRENDS
CAN Active MOVEMENT

Two modules covering the usage and users of any place

Activity Trends

Visitor Reports

01

PLACE ATTRIBUTES
CAN Active SPACES

National Infrastructure Database to verify every site, facility, and program – powered by AI

Planning Database

Activity Finder

Powered by CAN Active MOVEMENT and/or Integrated Registration Data (including CAN Active SPORT)

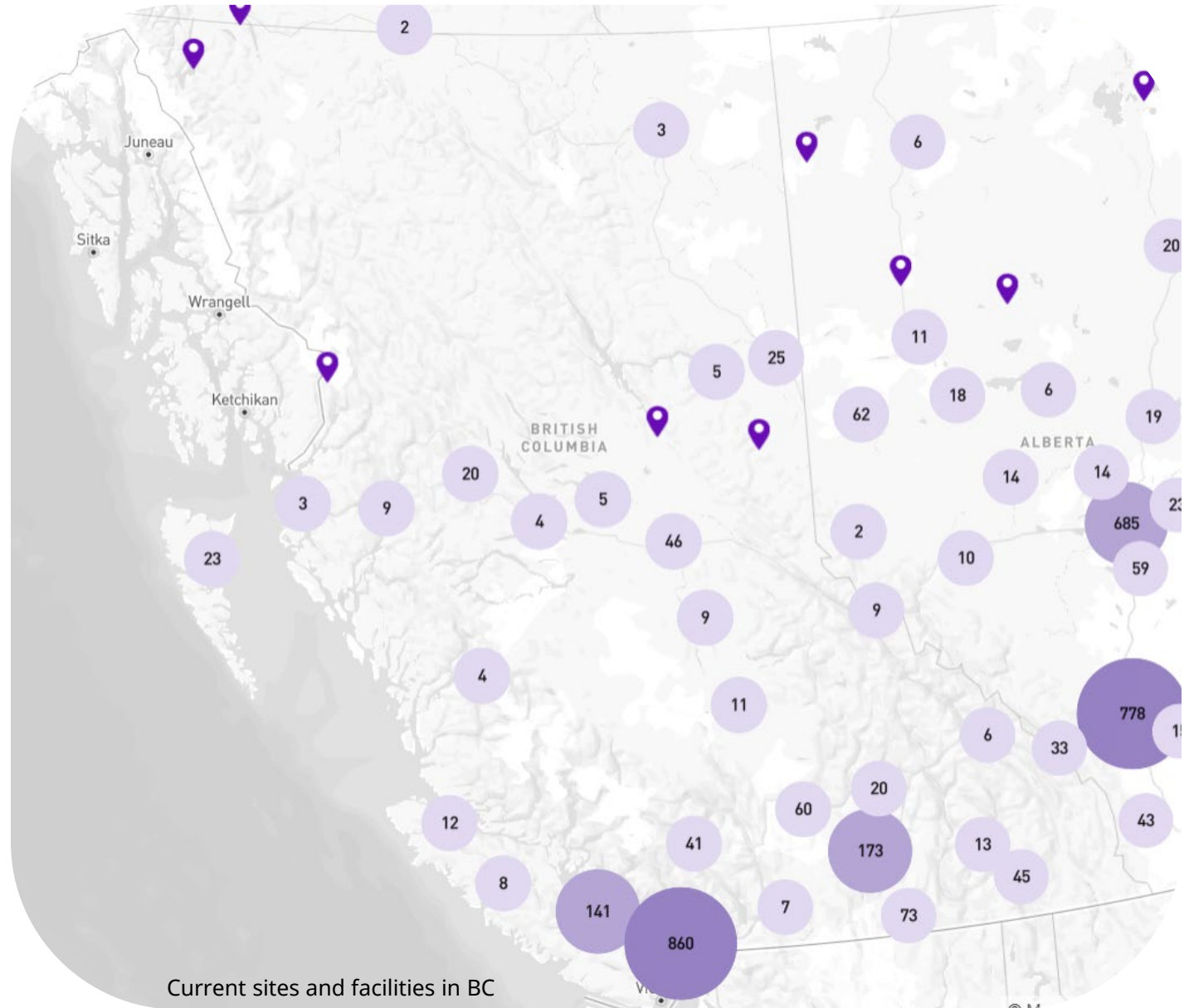
Designed to inform planning and unlock funding

CAN Active Insights displays data in layers that can be used in isolation or together, including:

- **CAN Active SPACES** — Infrastructure Database
- **CAN Active MOVEMENT** — Movement Data
- **CAN Active IMPACT** — Impact Data
- **CAN Active REACH** — Community Profiling
- **CAN Active SPORT** — Coming Soon
- **CAN Active LIVES** — Coming Soon

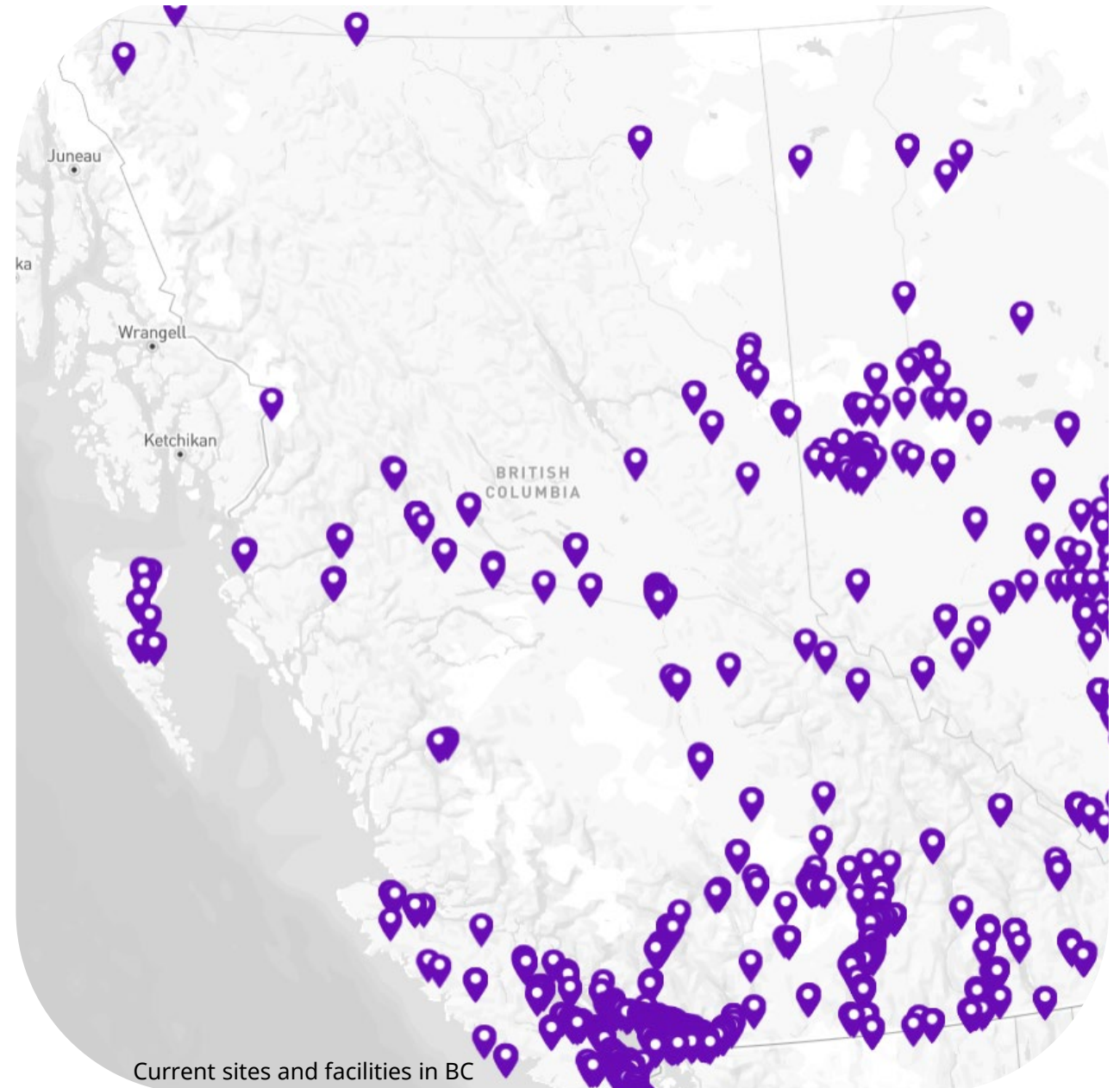
DATA IN CAN ACTIVE SPACES

- **CAN Active SPACES** is a complete, iterative, infrastructure database.
 - Rolling out in 3 tiers, with tiers 1 and 2 now live.
- BC has **1,477 sites** and **3,068 facilities** listed.
- Infrastructure has been the main focus.



FUTURE OF CAN ACTIVE SPACES

- Tier 3 will connect registration, booking, and usage data back to infrastructure, movement, and community profiling data.
 - Next steps include the **activity finder**.
 - Expected to launch this fall.
- Tier 3 will provide a **custom lens** to show infrastructure most relevant to a particular jurisdiction.



WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE ON THE GROUND?

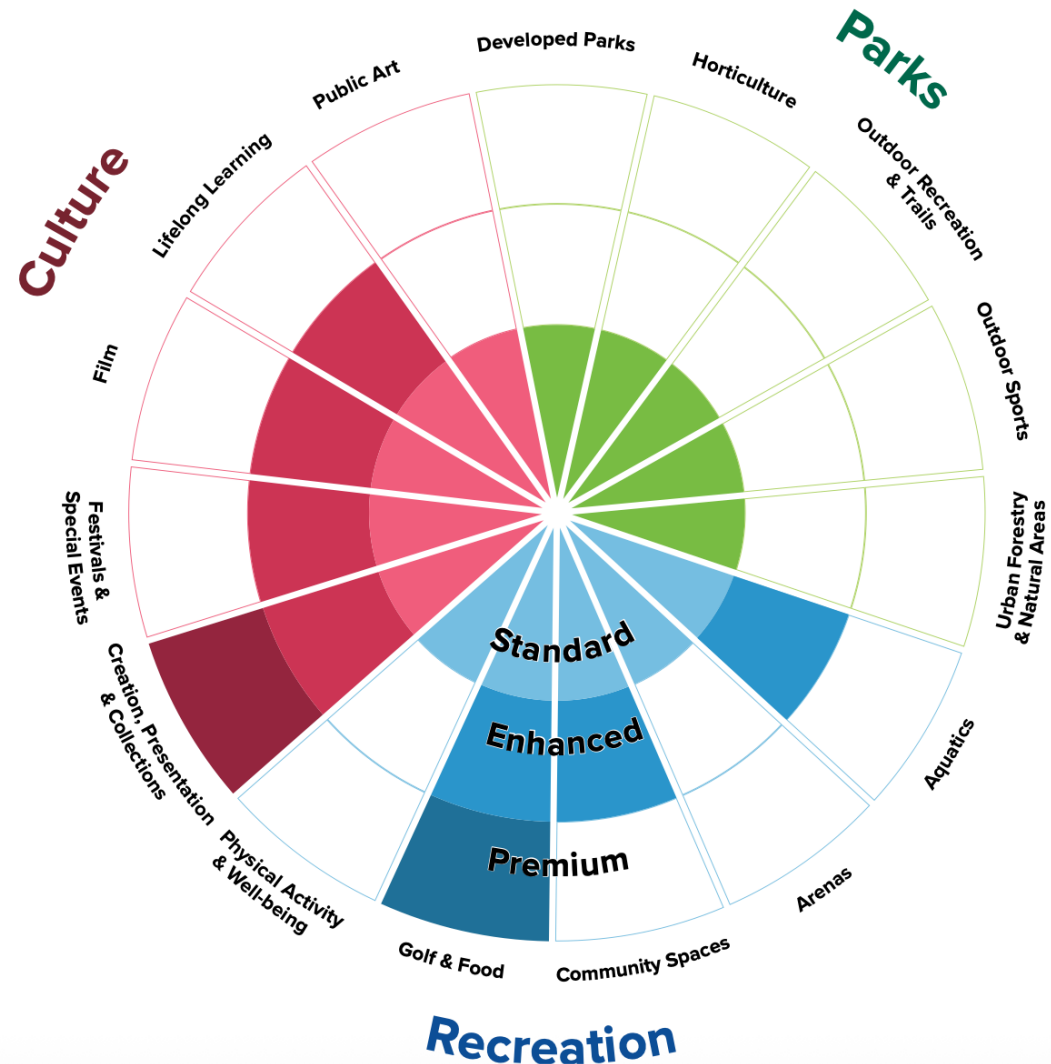
A Local Lens: Burnaby



THE SERVICE WHEEL: CURRENT

Current service levels

The PRC Department oversees 15 service areas, each with a role in meeting community needs. Early in the process of writing *Making Life Better*, current levels for these areas were set based on their **reach**, **quality** and **uniqueness**. These service areas have since been validated with Council, the PRC Committee and the public. In this document, they serve as baselines that *Making Life Better's* builds its directions from.

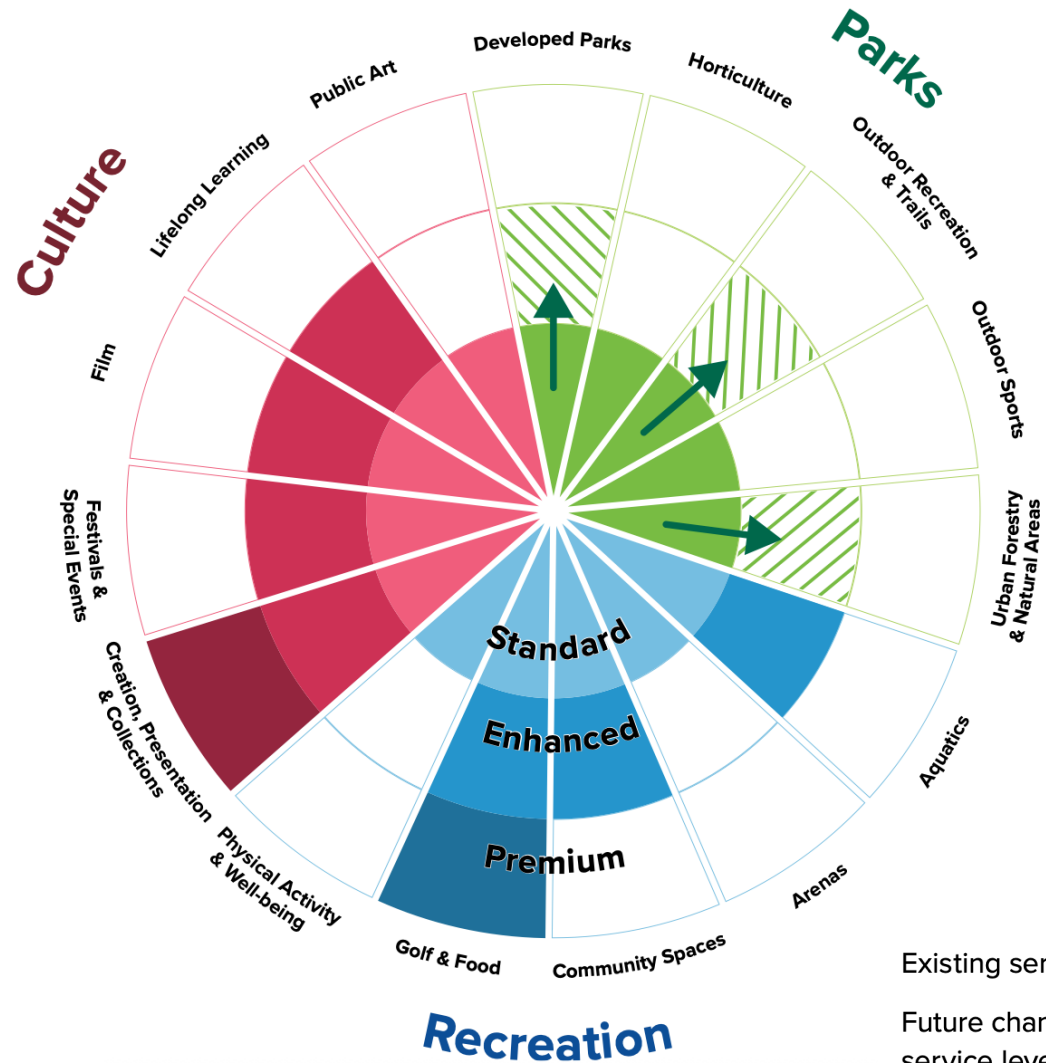


THE SERVICE WHEEL: FUTURE

Future service levels

Contributions from Council and the public identified opportunities to improve each service area. Staff considered these insights, alongside the community's values for PRC services, research on trends and data on usage and the condition of infrastructure to set aspirational levels for each service area.

Proposed service levels in *Making Life Better* serve as targets that service improvements will strive to achieve over the next 25 years.

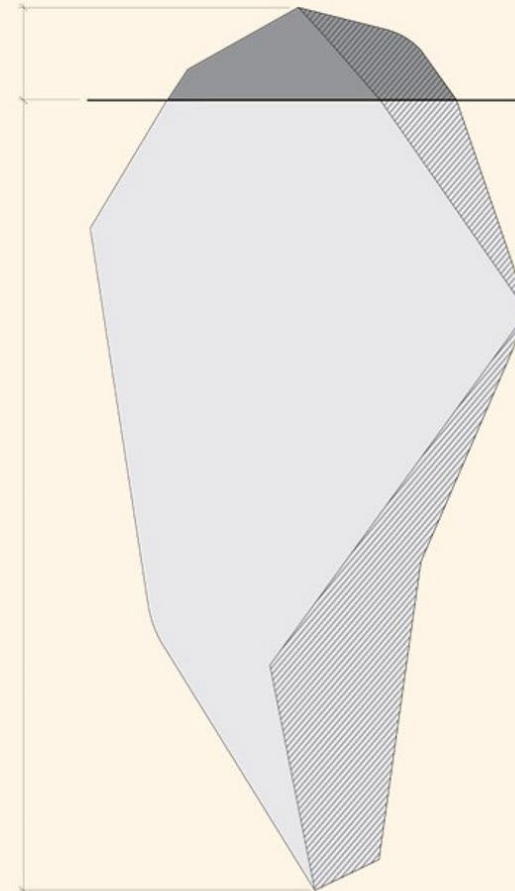


ONGOING OPERATIONAL COSTS

Decision-making
Cost implications

Capital cost →

Operating cost →



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDES CULTURE

Community Spaces, Culture & the Economics
of Keeping Them Viable



BC'S ARTS & CULTURE ECONOMY

\$8.6B 

Value of BC's Arts
& Culture Sector

154,800 

People Employed In
Arts & Culture

=

5.4% 

Of BC's Workforce
In Arts & Culture

3x More 

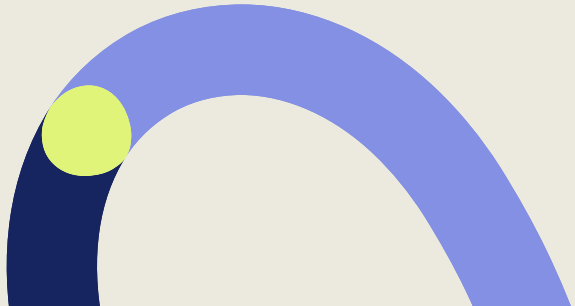
Economic Impact Generated By
Arts Tourism Compared to Other
Tourism Sectors

- **Communities are more resilient when social and cultural infrastructure grows alongside housing.**

Culture is tied to community health and well-being and the identity of BC.

- **Affordable commercial space is also needed for complete communities.**

Social and cultural activities happen in commercial spaces, such as independent venues, non-profit galleries and "third spaces."



LOST ART SPACE IN VANCOUVER

400,000
sq ft

Arts space lost
between 2009
and 2019

\$3.3B

Estimated cost
to replace it



COMMERCIAL RENTS IN BC SURGED BY **270%** BETWEEN 2013 AND 2023

BC Arts Council Operating Allocations Increased Only 25% During the Same Period.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Leverage public investment with untapped private & philanthropic sources:

- An investment vehicle like the **Cultural Land Trust** can help.
 - Recent donation of a \$2.7M asset shows the potential of this model.
- Municipal funding alone cannot scale sustainable cultural infrastructure.
- Provincial investment is needed to leverage public, private, and philanthropic funding.



INVESTMENT MATTERS. SO DOES ACCESS.

Who Gets to Use the
Infrastructure We Have?



WHAT WE KNOW IN CANADA

1 in 5 

Canadian Youth Report
Symptoms Consistent with a
Mental Health Disorder

28% 

Of Children & Youth Meet
the **Physical Activity**
Guidelines

96% 

Of Parents Report a **Positive Impact**
from Sport on their Child's Physical
Health

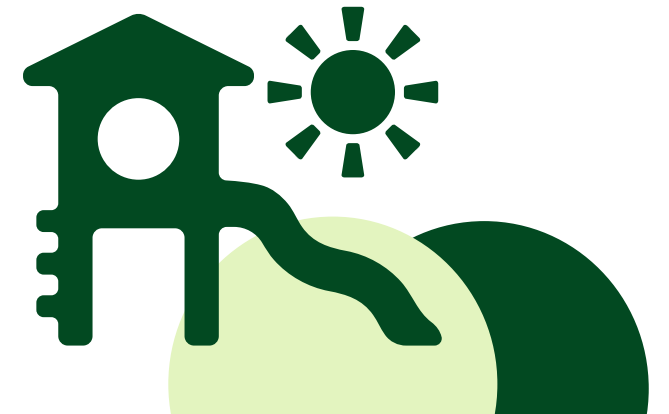
60% 

Of Youth Sport Participants Say
the **Ability to Make Friends** is a
Key Benefit



FROM PLAYGROUND TO PODIUM

- Facilities and spaces to play at every age and stage are essential.
- Plan for the full lifecycle of major sport infrastructure, including operating costs.
- BC's sport and recreation facilities are 45 years old on average and nearing the end of their useful life.
- Closures and capacity gaps are already limiting participation.



ACCESS TO SPACES

- Define equitable allocation policies to improve access.
- Link access to community values.
- Sharing spaces can expand access and make better use of existing infrastructure.



FROM ACCESS TO SCALABLE INVESTMENT



OUTDOOR RECREATION: SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SCALES

Accessible

- Available to virtually every BC community, including small, rural, and more remote communities.
- Does not require a large population base to create value.

Scalable

- Benefits can begin with a single trail, waterfront access point, or recreation site.
- Communities can grow infrastructure incrementally over time.

OUTDOOR RECREATION: SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SCALES

High Return on Investment

- Relatively modest investments can generate transformative community, economic, and quality-of-life benefits.
- Supports residents, visitors, and local businesses.

Fast to Deliver

- Trails, trailheads, access improvements, and recreation amenities can often be implemented on shorter timelines.



Northern BC Tourism/Mattias Fredriksson

- **Outdoor recreation is central to BC's identity.**
It connects communities to the natural spaces that define rural BC.
- **Recreation infrastructure builds community by design.**
It is often planned, built and stewarded through local partnerships and volunteerism, and creates social capital while creating physical assets.
- **Outdoor recreation builds community and economic resilience.**
It attracts and retains residents, builds community health and well-being, and diversifies local economies.



A VITAL PART OF BC'S ECONOMY

\$4.8B Direct Contribution of Outdoor Recreation
to BC's Economy, 2023

\$17B Total Revenue Earned by the Outdoor
Recreation Industry, 2023

**\$1.8
B** Generated in Provincial Tax Revenue

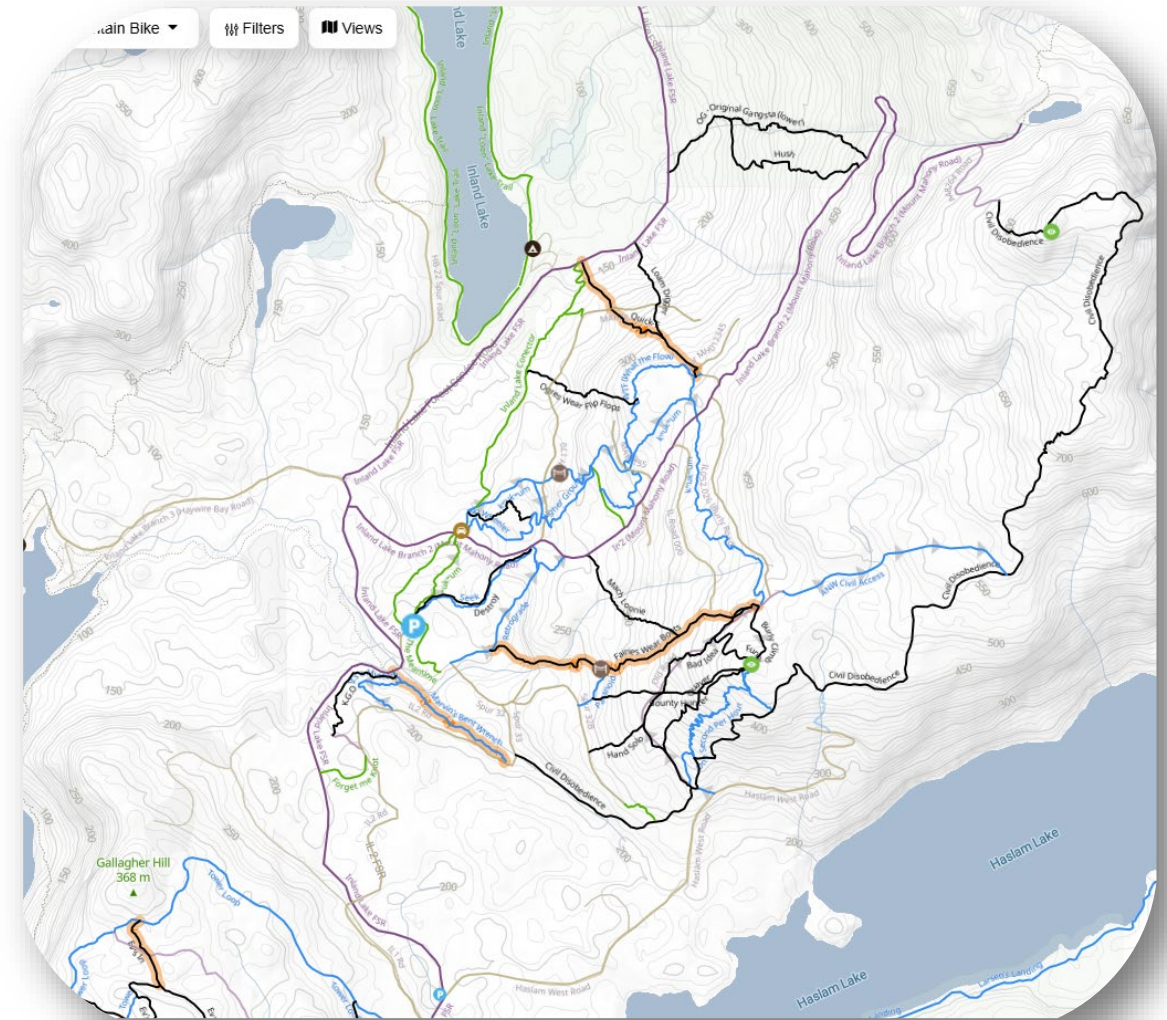
\$186.3M Generated in Municipal Taxes



COMMUNITY-LED INVESTMENT WITH REGIONAL IMPACT

Mount Mahony Trail Project

- A volunteer-led project developed a high-quality mountain biking destination
- Led by qathet Regional Cycling Association (QRCA) & Mt. Mahony Mountain Biking Area Development



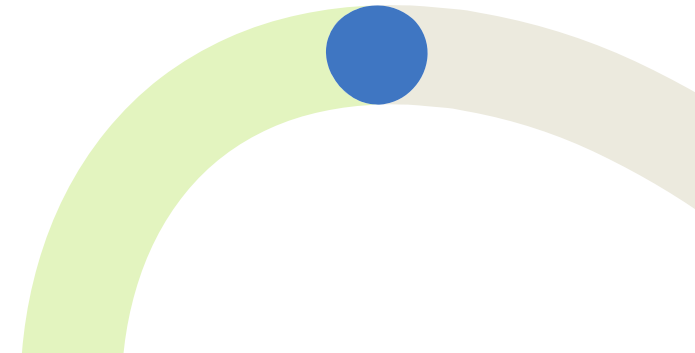
\$684,000 IN PROJECT FUNDING + 2,500+ VOLUNTEER HOURS

Outcomes

- BC High School Mountain Bike Championships hosted in 2025
- 200+ athletes at Island Cup Enduro
- New local businesses supporting cycling and tourism
- Increased recreation opportunities and community economic activity

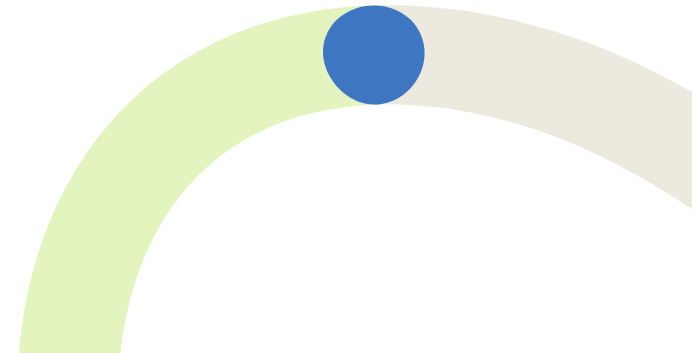


JOIN OUR UPCOMING WEBINAR



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- **Complete Communities Need Complete Infrastructure**
Social and cultural infrastructure supports healthy, connected, and resilient communities.
- **The Challenge Isn't Just Capital**
Access, operating costs, aging infrastructure, affordability, and capacity all shape what communities can deliver.
- **There Are Ways Forward**
Use data. Plan for the full lifecycle. Expand access.
Leverage partnerships. Scale what works.



SHAPING HEALTHIER FUTURES

The value we create is measured
by the difference we make



THANK YOU!

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: BC'S WAY FORWARD TO CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

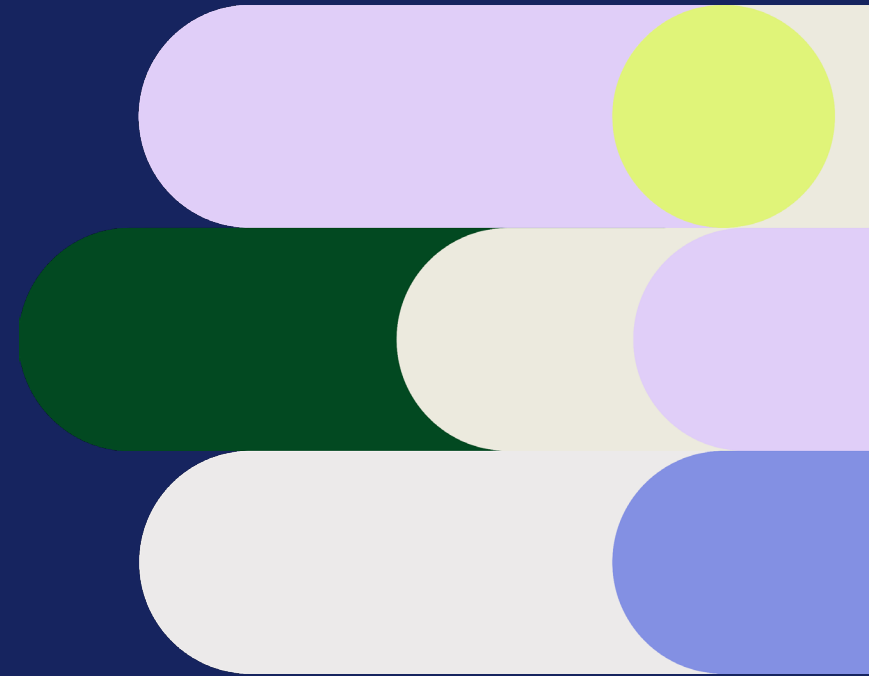
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John Hawkings, Executive Lead | BC Ministry of Environment and Parks





**COMMON
GOOD** UBCM
2026



The Rural Coordination Centre of BC

In appreciation of our speakers today and with thanks for your contribution, UBCM has made a donation to the Rural Coordination Centre of BC. Since their inception in 2007, RCCBC has grown into a network of hundreds of people - rural physicians and other healthcare providers, healthcare administrators, community members, policymakers, educators, researchers, and non-profit and business leaders – guided by the principles of cultural safety and humility.