

Nexus of Change



“The future is not some place we are going, but one we are creating. The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.”

Futurist John Schaar

Foundations for Action

Changing Alberta

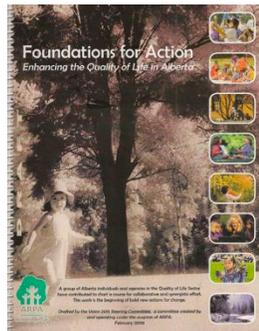
Prime opportunity to shape a better future

Albertans are living through a time of dramatic change. We are being propelled into a future so complex and unknown that we must work better together or risk losing what we love about living here.

The speed and scope of change raise anxiety, but also offer a prime opportunity to reshape Alberta into the place we want it to be. Concerned about climate change? Invest in earth-friendly technologies. Budgets eaten up by healthcare needs? Put priority on wellness and prevention. Unsure how to relate to people from other cultures? Get to know each

other. Losing residents to more dynamic communities? Make your community come alive with recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage.

Creativity is key to success in the new global context, and this province has no shortage of that. The challenge is to harness Alberta’s creativity so that we are all pulling together toward common goals.



Seeing the need for united action, the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) called Alberta leaders from many disciplines together through Vision 2015 to imagine what could be and chart a way forward. They discovered remarkably similar values and goals, including a desire for healthy people, sustainable environments and strong, vital communities. Their work resulted in *Foundations for Action: Enhancing the Quality of Life in Alberta*, a plan for working together to create a province where everyone enjoys quality of life. This bulletin is part

Change drivers

A shortlist of some of the key forces propelling change in Alberta.

External drivers

1. Global marketplace
2. Knowledge economy
3. Population growth
4. Global communities
5. Increasing disparity
6. Green economy
7. Climate change

Internal drivers

1. Health care pressures
2. Threatened resources
3. Rural/urban divide
4. Municipal sustainability
5. Unbalanced lifestyles
6. Growing cultural diversity
7. Governance focused on outcomes

of a series based on *Foundations for Action*.

This is a time of tremendous opportunity—if we work differently together. *Foundations for Action* gives us a template for doing exactly that. It’s already guiding the work of ARPA and a growing number of communities. For your copy of the full report, go to www.vision2015.arpaonline.ca.



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Working together better

This time in history demands a distinct shift in how we live and work. A shift from bowling alone to teaming up for the long haul.

The issues facing Alberta are so significant and interlinked that they

cannot be solved by any one person or group. Success depends on working across boundaries (*shift one*) to tackle several issues at once (*shift two*).

Reversing epidemic diabetes rates among Alberta’s Aboriginal peoples, for example, takes a team approach that looks at poverty, unemployment and facility access as well as lifestyle choices.

The leaders we looked to in the past can’t solve today’s crises, nor do experts have all the answers. In this new reality, the most powerful initiatives are locally driven (*shift three*) and tap citizen knowledge and passion (*shift four*).

With citizens at the table, the focus shifts in remarkable ways to community building and quality of life. People recognize that they are not simply individual consumers, but part of a greater whole that depends on them. Leadership emerges from within

as people work together to create a better life for all Albertans.

This time in history also demands a shift from short- to long-term perspectives. Now more than ever, we need bold, lasting solutions (*shift five*) rather than timid stop-gap measures. We need a shift from consuming resources as if they were infinite to building a way of life that is sustainable (*shift six*). By preserving green corridors and heritage sites, for example, we create assets that can be enjoyed now and in the future.

By working better together, we can create a far more livable future than our current course would produce. A future that not only provides a higher quality of life but costs less in the long run.

In sum, this is a time when the silos, hierarchies and consumption of the past are giving way to more fluid, networked and stewardly interactions with each other and with the

environment that sustains us. Alberta’s future relies on our ability to make these core shifts—and work better together.

The Core Shifts

Shift from	Towards	New Reality
1. Working in silos	Working across boundaries, organizations, sectors	Collaborative
2. Focusing on one element	Improving multiple outcomes at once	Multiple outcomes
3. Top-down decision-making	Bottom-up processes	Locally driven
4. Exclusively professionally driven	Unleashing citizen knowledge, expertise, energy, commitment	Citizen involvement
5. Cautious, small, short-term fixes	Ongoing learning, change and improvement with long-term goals	Long-term solutions
6. Consumption of supposedly infinite resources	Stewardship of scarce resources	Sustainability



parks, arts, culture and heritage are essential in a time when creativity has surpassed raw resources as the ticket to success. After all, many of today's brain-powered jobs can be done from anywhere, and most creative

governments are addressing issues more holistically than in the past. Thinking, planning and doing are spread across a broader spectrum of providers, including the community. This more interdependent approach is raising the profile of such important concepts as human capital, sustainable development and wellness.

The shift from government to governance gives third parties such as authorities, companies, communities and not for profits significant roles in managing and delivering public services. Accountability for getting the job done is shared between the public and arms-length agents.

The shift to monitoring multiple outcomes recognizes that it's not good enough to count how many people walk through our doors. We need to know whether our work adds to the quality of their lives.

In shifting from centralized to distributed services, governments aim to make services as convenient and relevant as possible. Toward that end, there is heightened interest in tapping local ingenuity, insight, wisdom and energy. While opportunities to shape policies and services are welcome, communities can become overwhelmed by the many responsibilities downloaded by other levels of government.

Despite such caveats, governments' more integrated and collaborative way of doing business has opened doors for all of us to play important roles in improving Alberta's quality of life.

We're at a hinge point in history a time when the silos, hierarchies and consumption of the past are giving way to more fluid, networked and stewardly interactions with each other and with the environment that sustains us.

Shifting our approach to public policy and services

Increasingly, the people who contribute to quality of life are at the tables where important policy decisions are being made. Governments realize that recreation,

people choose to live in communities with places to go and things to do.

Being at the table, quality of life advocates can take advantage of several shifts in public policy decision-making and delivery to shape a better Alberta. The chart below shows four of those shifts.

The shift from policy envelopes to integrated paradigms means that

Public policy shifts		
Shift from	Towards	New Reality
1. Discrete envelopes	Integrated paradigms	Interdependence
2. Government	Governance	Shared accountability
3. Isolated outcome	Multiple outcomes	Integrated outcomes
4. Centralized	Distributed	Where people live

Public policy paradigms that address quality of life	
Human capital paradigm	Recognizes creativity, knowledge and skills as key economic resources, in contrast to the previous industrial economy
Sustainable development paradigm	Considers the economic, social and environmental impact of policies, thus highlighting the long term implications of unsustainable practices
Wellness paradigm	Understands that wellness is more than absence of disease, but rather includes physical, economic, social, psychological, emotional and spiritual well being

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The Alberta we can create together:

- Albertans living longer, more positive, active, healthier lives.
- A vibrant Alberta society with active, creative, safe, inclusive and sustainable communities of place and interest.
- Increased youth resiliency and engagement and positive child development.
- Improved chronic disease prevention, reduced obesity and chronic disease resulting in lower health care costs.
- Alberta's public lands actively conserved and managed to preserve cultural, natural and recreation resources.
- Improved community and regional governance with better local decisions advancing quality of life pursuits.
- A renaissance, in all regions, of grassroots recreation and parks; sport; culture, arts and heritage.
- A rejuvenated, proactive recreation and parks field.

How will Alberta be different?

This is a time of tremendous opportunity. By working together better, we can use the shifts sweeping across Alberta to shape the future we want our children to inherit.

Those rising to the challenge are already discovering the power of working together with a common vision. Consider what Alberta will be like when we're all on board.

With citizens fully involved in setting direction, quality of life will move to the top of the agenda. People of all ages, cultures and circumstances will become involved, sparking a renaissance of grassroots recreation, parks, sport,

culture, heritage and the arts.

Rejuvenated communities, rural as well as urban, will attract creative newcomers who have exactly the right skills for the new Alberta economy. That economy will tick along healthily, fueled by an unwavering commitment to sustainable development. Corridors of green and unique heritage sites will

entice citizens to connect with nature while attracting tourists who help diversify the economy.

From before birth to the final years of life, no one will go without essential public services. Dynamic after school and preschool programs will be part of the mix. Youth will be fully engaged in shaping services that work for them.

Thanks to all those shifts and more, Alberta citizens will live longer, more positive, healthier lives. With obesity and other lifestyle related diseases no longer at epidemic levels, health care costs will plummet, to everyone's relief.

In short, the Alberta we create together will be home to healthy people, sustainable environments and strong vibrant communities. A place we're proud to call home.

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Find out more

This bulletin is part of a series based on *Foundations for Action*, a collaborative action plan for Alberta wellness and quality of life. The plan draws from the insights of individuals and agencies from many disciplines that share the vision of a future Alberta with healthy people, sustainable environments and strong vital communities. *Foundations for Action* is a key outcome of Vision 2015, a project that is linking the good work of organizations, government and agencies and creating new ways to make a difference together. ARPA is pleased to provide leadership for Vision 2015. For a full copy of *Foundations for Action*, go to the Vision 2015 website at www.vision2015.arpaonline.ca.