

**Exploring Inclusion Policies in Canadian Municipal Recreation Contexts**

by

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## Abstract

This thesis introduces knowledge regarding inclusion within recreation and leisure contexts. The words ‘inclusion’ and ‘disability’ can be complex and used to address multiple marginalized populations (e.g., persons of different ethnicities, low-income). The focus of this research was to understand how persons living with a disability are addressed in inclusion policy within municipal recreation contexts in Canada. Based on a review of literature regarding the inclusion of persons living with a disability in leisure or recreation contexts, and the role of therapeutic recreation (TR), there is need for more scientific understanding of how inclusion should be defined and implemented within community recreation settings. Therefore, the research question asked was *how do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?* An environmental scan methodology was applied; policy documents (n=24) were collected to represent data from eight municipalities chosen to represent each province (n= 8). 22 policy documents were included for extraction to analyze how inclusion of persons living with disabilities is currently being addressed. The themes that were constructed include: the socio-ecological approach to inclusion, policy intent, social and physical environment, definitions, addressing persons living with disabilities in policy, intervention. The thesis concludes with five key recommendations for policy development: 1) Apply the socio-ecological framework, 2) Use inclusive language, 3) Develop implementation policy documents specific to recreation procedures, 4) Consult and involve persons living with disabilities, and 5) Develop Therapeutic Recreation municipal role.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

The field of leisure studies was developed, in part, in an attempt to understand and analyze leisure contexts (Aitchison, 2009; Allison, 2000). Leisure associations such as the World Leisure and Recreation Association represent a variety of views on the global rights of individuals and the political position leisure professionals have on influencing them (Rojek, 2006). Exclusion and marginalization are experienced by various groups of individuals; one group of people that experience this is persons living with disabilities. Westernized understandings of the term disability are commonly associated with ‘unfortunate’ or ‘tragic,’ and as costly for employers and society (Davis, 2013). In turn, individuals living with disability have historically experienced exclusion in community contexts (Baynton, 2013; Davis, 2013). By understanding the history of persons living with disabilities and leisure, we can begin to unravel what steps are needed in order to develop inclusive community recreation practices and services.

Recreation participation contributes to quality of life for all individuals (Sharpe et al., 2016). It provides opportunities for building a sense of belonging, which has been identified as a fundamental human need (Sharpe et al., 2016). Opportunities for recreation participation can vary, but typically municipalities within Canada will offer a wide range of recreation (arts-based, sport, physical activity, life skills etc.) programming to community members.

One of the reasons this research project focused on persons living with disabilities was because Canada introduced its newest legislation focusing on the rights of this population. As we enter a new decade, Canada attempts to combat the exclusion of persons living with disabilities by introducing federal legislation: The Accessible Canada Act (Government of Canada, 2020). Although organizations, such as municipal recreation departments, attempt to provide programming that is both equitable and fair, persons living with disabilities still experience

exclusion within their communities (Kruithof et al., 2018). Researchers identify a need for further exploration within the field of leisure studies with regard to inclusive service delivery at a community-level (Miller et al., 2010). This study aimed to explore how inclusive service delivery is supported by inclusion policies within municipal recreation departments.

## **1.1 Introduction to Integration and Inclusion**

The word integration is defined as bringing separate people or things together; this was introduced in the 1960s when children living with disabilities were brought into the local school system within North America (Vislie, 2003). Although the primary focus of integration was on the school system other community systems began to adopt integration practices.

The term inclusion was developed to recognize that bringing people together in the same physical space isn't enough; rather certain actions or tools are needed to support the group or structure (Vislie, 2003). Inclusion is identified as a process that attempts to respond to persons as individuals, understanding that exclusion and inclusion are interconnected processes (meaning the process of inclusion effects exclusion, and the process of exclusion effects inclusion of individuals) (Vislie, 2003). Therefore, inclusion is defined as a multidimensional process striving towards an ideal society, with belonging as the main outcome (Sharpe et al., 2016).

When conducting a preliminary scan of inclusion services offered in recreation departments across Canada, it was noticeable that both integration and inclusion were words used by recreation centres when addressing community recreation supports/services for persons living with disability. When considering the current research that focuses on individuals living with disabilities and community recreation participation, research has identified a lack of inclusive recreation opportunities for this population (Bowers et al., 2016; Darcy & Dowse, 2013).

## 1.2 Introduction to Policy

A policy is defined by Liddy and Mill (2014) as any course of action or broad direction endorsed by a body of authority and delivered through forms such as frameworks, strategies, action plans and official priority documents. Policies “explain how goals will be achieved and serve as guides that define the general course and scope of activities permissible for goal accomplishments” (Carter, Smith, & O’Morrow, 2014, p. 62). Policies provide a grounding “for future decisions and actions, help coordinate plans, control performance, and increase consistency of action by increasing the probability that different managers will make similar decisions when independently facing similar situations (Carter et al., 2014, p. 62). Procedures are a type of policy that provides a plan of acceptable actions that can be taken to accomplish a specific task (Carter et al., 2014).

Leisure professionals have acknowledged that they have new obligations to those they serve, as the face of community’s change and become more diverse. For example, the Accessibility Act of Canada indicates that all persons living with disabilities deserve equitable and barrier-free services. This, in turn, has pressured provinces to respond. For example, Nova Scotia has developed the Provincial Accessibility Act and the Access by Design 2030 (2018) Framework which mandates municipalities to develop inclusion and access committees and by extension mandates municipal recreation departments to develop inclusive and accessible services.

This current study is premised on the assumption that most cities in Canada have parks and recreation departments that have developed policies that address inclusion and accessibility in some way, acknowledging that the services provided should reflect the needs of their community members. There is a need to understand the nature and scope of these policies and

the extent to which they address the needs of individuals living with disabilities related to accessing recreation programs and facilities in their communities.

### 1.3 Introduction to a Socio-Ecological Approach

A socio-ecological approach focuses on determinants of health and interventions that are influenced by individual and population-levels and the environment it interacts within (Townsend & Foster, 2011). This research takes a socio-ecological approach, understanding that the behaviours of an individual are affected by multiple levels of influence (Townsend & Foster, 2011). There are different variations of a socio-ecological approach; however, levels of influence typically include: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy (macro-organizational) (Townsend & Foster, 2011). The table below provides a description of each level adapted from Townsend and Foster’s (2011) framework.

**Table 1**

***Socio-ecological Levels of Influence***

Level of Influence	Description
Intrapersonal	Individual knowledge or characteristics internally influencing behaviour.
Interpersonal	Individual’s relationships with others as well as their social environment (i.e., social supports or norms).
Organization	Policies, informal structures, and rules provided by a specific organization.
Community	Relationships between a specific organization and other organizations or institutions.

Policy (Macro-level Organization)	Policies or legislation provided at a local, provincial, or national level to regulate or promote a behaviour.
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For the purposes of this study, only the organizational, community, and macro-level of the socioecological approach will be applied when analyzing inclusion policies.

#### **1.4 Purpose, Methodology, and Research Question**

Although the movement for inclusion of persons living with disabilities in community is apparent, when considering municipal governments, it is unclear how persons living with disabilities are being supported within leisure and recreation contexts. There is a limited amount of literature exploring municipal recreation contexts and therefore the study aimed to answer the following research question:

*How do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?*

An environmental scan was used to understand how current inclusion policies are addressing inclusion for persons living with disabilities within recreation departments in Canada (Taymour et al., 2018). The goal of this environmental scan is to understand how inclusion policies are addressing inclusion of persons living with disabilities through a socio-ecological lens. The findings of this research project aim to contribute to the current body of literature that exists in hopes of coming closer to understanding how future inclusion frameworks or tools should be structured and implemented when addressing inclusive recreation programming and services within community recreation contexts across Canada.

#### **1.5 Positionality and Interest**

Through personal and professional experience, the idea of studying inclusion and community came naturally to me. Professionally, I've worked within municipal inclusion

recreation settings as well as on a community mental health team as a Therapeutic Recreation practitioner. Through my professional experiences I began to notice that although I was applying Therapeutic Recreation practices to support my clients, my clients still needed more support in order to be successful when engaging in community recreation and leisure opportunities. I began to identify that although this approach to supporting my clients was person-centred, there was a need to assess and evaluate community and organizational environments to understand what support (or lack thereof) was needed for my clients to successfully engage into mainstream activities independently.

Currently, I have obtained a pilot position with the Government of Nova Scotia called the Recreation and Sport Inclusion Consultant. The role was developed to consult and support rural community recreation and sport organizations, and municipal recreation departments in advancing inclusion initiatives targeting persons living with disabilities. This role has provided me the opportunity to have a greater understanding of the complexities involved with providing inclusion services within community programs, which I will address within the discussion chapter of this paper. Personally, I've been impacted by recreation and sport as I first-hand was able to see how important the opportunities provided contributed to my personal growth. My cousin, who lives with an intellectual disability, was not as fortunate to engage in those same personal growth milestones during typical developing years. I believe that everybody, despite personal differences, deserves to feel supported by their community. Everyone deserves to feel a sense of belonging and personal satisfaction through meaningful community engagement.

## **1.6 Key Terms**

Throughout this thesis paper there are various terms that are used that warrant definitions.

*Disability:* The definition used throughout this thesis has been adopted from the Government of Canada (2013):

[A]n umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. (p. 2)

*Inclusion Services and Services that are Inclusive:* These are terms used within this paper with different meanings. Inclusion services refer to services that are provided in programs or facilities to assist persons living with disabilities specifically. An example of an inclusion service is a one-to-one support for a person living with a disability. Services that are inclusive are considered to be practices or environments that promote access for everybody; an example of a service that is inclusive is an accessible or universal changeroom.

*Physical Environment:* "...includes natural or man-made environments. At this level, physical environment includes availability and access to welfare facilities such as parks, playgrounds, sports facilities and gyms" (Tehrani et al., 2016, p. 2)

*Social Environment:* "Social environment includes culture and interpersonal interactions, and has a considerable effect on performing behavior" (Tehrani et al., 2016, p. 2)

*Universal Design:* Is defined by the Disability Act (2005) as: The design and composition of an environment so that it may be accessed, understood and used: (a) To the greatest possible extent; (b) In the most independent and natural manner possible; (c) In the widest possible range of situations; (d) Without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solutions, by any persons of any age or size or having any particular physical, sensory, mental

health or intellectual ability or disability; and (e) Means, in relation to electronic systems, any electronics-based process of creating products, services or systems so that they may be used by any person.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Disability Authority. 2020. "What is Universal Design: Definition and Overview"  
Retrieved April. 12, 2021 (<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/Definition-and-Overview/>)

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to highlight current literature that addresses the topic of inclusion within community recreation, focusing specifically on the inclusion of persons living with disabilities. The literature review will attempt to provide an overview on the current knowledge available on topics such as leisure and disability, inclusion and accessibility, legislation for persons living with disabilities, municipal recreation structure, and the role of Therapeutic Recreation in community settings. The review will conclude with a justification for why there is a need to research inclusion policies within municipal recreation in an attempt to understand what gaps are still not being addressed within current inclusion policy guided by the barriers identified within the current literature review.

### **2.1 Understanding Disability**

According to a 2017 Canadian survey, over six million Canadians (22% of the population) over the age of 15 identified as living with a disability, with the actual numbers most likely being higher than reported (Government of Canada, 2019). Disability is defined as “a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairment- or a functional limitation- whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, that, in interaction with barrier, hinders a person’s full or equal participation in society” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 16). Invisible disability is an umbrella term used for disabilities that interfere with the day-to-day functioning of an individual without having a physical distinction (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). An example of an invisible disability could be an individual who lives with autism and experiences sensory overload when entering public spaces such as a gym due to loud music or bright light. It could be argued that there is more difficulty for individuals living with invisible disabilities to

feel included in social settings as compared with people whose disabilities are visible, and therefore easier to acknowledge and accept as well as accommodate.

### ***2.1.1 History of Leisure and Disability***

Within the past 30 years persons living with disabilities have only just recently been recognized by governing bodies, as most rights movements for persons living with disabilities did not start to take place until the early 1980s (Baynton, 2013). As persons living with disabilities began to fight for their rights, deconstruction of societal norms began to take place within organizational structures (Baynton, 2013). For example, some of the most notable disability rights movements that have taken place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century within North America were de-institutionalization (the replacement of long-stay psychiatric hospitals with community living and programming) and the inclusion movement within the school system (children with physical and mental disability were accepted into local schools) (Baynton, 2013). Although efforts have been made to improve access and inclusion there is still unequal treatment and segregation that occurs, such as not being able to physically access all parts of a facility or not feeling a sense of belonging during a program (Baynton, 2013).

When considering the evolution of leisure and persons living with disabilities, there are two separate histories to understand. The first is the history of World War I and the therapeutic recreation services provided by Red Cross to wounded soldiers. The recreation-based rehabilitation services provided to wounded soldiers during World War I were delivered through a medical model lens; in other words, the services delivered were to promote cure, remedy, repair, or improve functionality (American Therapeutic Recreation Association, 2013). In contrast, recreation opportunities provided as part of the Playground Movement and Settlement houses were developed out of social concern for overpopulated areas and hazardous conditions

of industrialized cities, using a social model approach to address the issue by attempting to change the environment to help the person (Devine & Mobily, 2017). The social model of disability suggests that disability occurs due to barriers to access designed by social constructs (Devine & Mobily, 2017).

Despite the shift to a more social model approach of disability, leisure for persons living with disabilities is still viewed as therapy or intervention, typically called Therapeutic Recreation (TR) (Devine & Mobily, 2017). Critics claim that TR was developed on the foundation of the medical model of disability and therefore stands in opposition to the fundamental beliefs of leisure. These beliefs are that leisure is derived from freedom of choice and used in a variety of ways to meet one's personal needs such as relaxation, pleasure, or self-reflection (Devine & Mobily, 2017). The medical model interpretation of disability has dominated the recreation sector. For example, while abled-bodied persons are viewed as participating in recreation, once a person is classified as injured or disabled the recreation activity is then interpreted as a therapeutic intervention or rehabilitation (Aitchison, 2009). Although there are different contexts where one understanding of disability might be more appropriate than the other, this study has adopted a social model interpretation of disability in order to understand the environments that shape inclusion and participation.

In 2006, Article 30 of the United Nations (2006) *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* recognized "... the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life" (defined as participation in recreation, leisure, the arts, sport and tourism) (cited in Darcy, Lock, & Taylor, 2017, p. 3). As a societal shift encourages leisure contexts to include marginalized populations within current structures, there is now emphasis on changing these structures (Devine & Mobily, 2017). As legislation, such as Article 30 of the

United Nations, begins to recognize leisure as a fundamental human right, persons living with disabilities are slowly being recognized by community organizations and attempts to develop inclusive programming have begun to take place. However, the following section will shed light on the current recreation experiences of persons living with disabilities to describe the barriers encountered when attempting to access community recreation.

### ***2.1.2 Accessibility Legislation for Persons Living with Disabilities***

Within North America one of the earliest policies developed addressing persons living with disabilities was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established in 1990 (Emens, 2013). The ADA prohibited discrimination (including the failure to accommodate) within areas such as employment, public accommodations, and government services (Emens, 2013).

Although this act was supposed to support persons living with disabilities, the interpretation of the act was skewed by persons of the law and, in 2008, the US Congress passed the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA). The ADAAA attempted to restore the original vision of the ADA but understood the need to have a more definitive term for ‘disability’ to ensure the appropriate persons were supported by the act (Emens, 2013). Since the establishment of ADA in 1990, Canada has been questioned about whether a similar act should be passed by federal government to address the persistent barriers associated to stigma, exclusion, and poverty for persons living with disabilities (McColl et al., 2010).

In Canada persons living with disabilities have been addressed in policy since 1982. Legislation such as the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1985) both speak to protecting persons living with disabilities from discrimination (McColl, Schaub, Sampson, & Hong, 2010). By the end of 1995 Canada had begun investing in social spending and started to address disability issues by making it its own policy area, introducing the

beginning of the inclusion movement (McColl et al., 2010). Between 1996 and 2005 provincial leaders began to push for disability policy at a federal level, recommending a national disability act be developed (McColl et al., 2010). Between 2006 to 2009 Canada contributed data related to issues for persons living with disabilities to the *UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and ensured its signing in 2010 (McColl et al., 2010). Finally, in 2019, the Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81) was passed by the Senate.

The Accessibility Act of Canada was developed as a mandate to create a barrier-free Canada through identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to access within areas that fall under Federal Jurisdiction of Canada (Government of Canada, 2019). Although inclusion and accessibility are words used throughout the Bill, only two words are defined: Barrier and disability. Barrier is defined as:

anything- including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice- that hinders the full and equal participation in society of person with a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairment or functional limitation (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 2).

Disability is defined by the Government of Canada (2019) as:

a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and mind and features of the society in which they live. A disability can occur at any time in a person's life; some people are born with a disability, while others develop a disability later in life. It can be permanent, temporary or episodic. Disability can steadily worsen, remain the same, or improve. It can be very mild to very severe. It can be the cause, as well as the result, of disease, illness, injury, or substance abuse. (p. 2)

It is interesting that neither inclusion nor accessibility are defined, as Bill-C81 seems to target a very broad range of disabilities. Bill-C81 has six key focus areas including:

1. Built environments (buildings and public spaces)
2. Employment (job opportunities and employment policies and practices)
3. Information and communication technologies (digital content and technologies used to access it)
4. Procurement of goods and services
5. Delivering programs and services; and
6. Transportation (by air as well as rail, ferry and bus carriers that operate across a provincial or international border)

It could be argued that recreation services fall under ‘built environments’ and ‘delivering programs and service.’ However, currently the Bill is only applied to federally governed services and programs. There is a need to understand how our government, along with other organizations that provide programs and services, create inclusion standards to ensure that a place, program, or service is completely accessible.

Although federal legislation has just recently passed, several provinces have begun to develop their own accessibility legislation. Currently Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia have established official accessibility legislation. One of the key challenges is that recreation departments are not viewed as essential services and therefore not within the jurisdiction of provinces. However, municipalities are being held to a new standard through provincial legislation by developing inclusion and access committees to support initiatives and change within municipal departments. As an example, under the Province of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act, it is required that municipalities develop an accessibility advisory committee and prepare an

accessibility plan that is publicly available by the end of 2021 (Province of Nova Scotia, 2018). Therefore, municipal recreation and inclusive practices should be explored in order to understand the current relationship between disability and community recreation within different community contexts in Canada.

Although legislation is still being developed to address the removal of barriers for persons living with disabilities within Canada, national organizations such as the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and Active Living Alliance (ALA) have started to develop research and frameworks targeting inclusion and accessibility in a recreation setting. As Canada progresses towards being fully accessible for persons living with disabilities, municipalities will be held to new standards with regard to the development and delivery of inclusion services.

## **2.2 Understanding Policy**

As mentioned in the introduction, the definition of policy is any course of action or broad direction endorsed by a body of authority and delivered through forms such as frameworks, strategies, action plans and official priority documents (Liddy & Mill, 2014). Carter et al. (2014) recognize that collaboration during policy development across stakeholders is encouraged as it “standardizes practices and creates opportunities to determine best practices” (p. 63). It is suggested that a committee of key stakeholders be created to collaborate on the development, implementation, and evaluation of policy (Paige, 2003) whether at a departmental, organizational or regional level. Collaboration of stakeholders throughout the policy process ensures the ability for stakeholders to create guidelines that can be followed by staff (Carter et al., 2014).

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2015 [Govt NFL]) has provided an overview of the general stages involved during the development and implementation of policy, called the policy cycle. The first stage of the cycle is *Issue Identification and Definition*. They

suggest that it is important that policy development starts by clarifying the problem and defining the problem, as stakeholders involved in the policy development, known as the decision-makers, might have different views or understanding of the issue (Govt NFL, 2015).

An issue can be identified in three different ways: it is either originated, appealed, or imposed (Carter et al., 2014). In some cases, a policy can be originated from top management; however, policy can also originate from the department level. In some cases, policies can originate simultaneously from both directions (Carter et al., 2014). When a policy is originated it usually forms through team collaboration and is circulated for feedback before being finalized (Carter et al., 2014).

Once the issue is identified and defined, decision-makers will move to the *Policy Research and Analysis* stage. “Research is the systematic collection and presentation of information and it is the backbone of policy development” (Govt NFL, 2015). It is recommended that in order to justify the decision-making of the decision-makers, thorough research and data analysis should be completed.

Once the decision-makers have accumulated a thorough amount of data it is time for the group to *generate policy solutions and alternatives* (Govt NFL, 2015). There are various ways in which policy can respond to an issue; the instrument/option (legislation, managerial, education etc.) that is chosen can have a lot of impact on the outcome of the policy (Govt NFL). Policy documents can be “reviewed to describe the content or categorize the approaches to specific health problems in existing policies” (Dalglish, Khalid, & McMahon, 2020, p. 2). Types of policy documents identified by Dalglish, Khalid, and McMahon (2020) are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2**

***Policy Document Types***

Policy Document Type	Examples
Official documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Official statements and declarations</li><li>• Statistical surveys or publications</li><li>• Strategic plans</li><li>• Frameworks</li></ul>
Implementation documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training manuals or work tools</li><li>• Operational plans</li><li>• Procedures</li></ul>
Working documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee reports</li><li>• PowerPoint presentations</li><li>• Draft documents</li><li>• Mission reports</li><li>• Emails</li></ul>

It is important for decision makers to think of policy solutions and how they might influence future conditions or developments (Govt NFL).

*Consultation* has been provided its own stage within the policy cycle; however, consultation should be woven into every stage of policy development and implementation (Govt NFL, 2015). Consultation is the process of creating dialogue between the stakeholders developing the policy and the department, the organization as a whole, as well as other organizations or governments, and with other professionals in the field (community

organizations, community members, advocacy groups and more) (Govt NFL). Consultation serves as a way to ensure transparency and accountability between the decision-makers developing the policy and the community it aims to serve creating a stronger and more efficient final policy (Govt NFL).

*Developing policy proposals* is the next consideration for decision makers when following the cycle of policy development. The value of a policy is typically dependent on how well the policy is communicated (Carter et al., 2014). Attention to how the proposal is written is needed by decision-makers, including consideration to the logic of the argument, clarity of the writing, organization of the information, and evidence to support the decision-makers proposal (Govt NFL, 2015). It was noted that having consistent format and definitions/language allows for clear communication and understanding of the policy (Paige, 2003).

Once the policy is approved the policy is implemented. *Policy implementation* is considered to be done well when attention to three key factors is considered: 1) Clarity of the policy's goals, 2) Information intelligence (i.e., research and consultation), 3) Strategic planning (Govt NFL, 2015).

The final stage of the policy cycle is *policy monitoring and evaluation*, evaluation is a component of policy development that should be considered early in the development process (Govt NFL, 2015). Monitoring and evaluation a new policy is important to collect information and data on how the new policy is impacting the initiative it set out to address (Govt NFL, 2015). Through evaluation decision-makers can understand how the policy is being interpreted and implemented by employees, as well as understand its influence on community members (Govt NFL, 2015). Typically, evaluation happens periodically with amendments and changes occurring over time (Govt NFL, 2015).

For the purposes of this study, official policy documents and implementation policy documents will be analyzed to understand how recreation department inclusion policies address inclusion for persons living with disabilities. It is assumed that the policies reviewed in this study have been developed as per the policy cycle stages provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2015).

## **2.3 Understanding Canadian Municipal Recreation Landscape**

### ***2.3.1 Framework for Recreation in Canada***

*The Framework for Recreation in Canada* (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association/ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council [CPRA/ISRC], 2015) is supported by governing provinces and territories of Canada (with the exception of Quebec) in hopes that key recreation partners adopt the Framework when delivering recreation services. Within the Framework recreation is defined as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing” (CPRA/ISRC, 2015, p. 4). The five overarching goals and priorities of the framework are: *Goal 1 Active Living*, foster active living through physical recreation; *Goal 2 Inclusion and Access*, increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation; *Goal 3 Connecting People and Nature*, helping people connect to nature through recreation; *Goal 4 Supportive Environments*, ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities; and *Goal 5 Recreation Capacity*, ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field (CPRA/ISRC, 2015). The Framework provides insight on the many benefits recreation can provide from individual wellbeing to community economic growth and suggests that if communities engaged in upstream investments in recreation it could

lead to individual and community wellbeing, reducing costs within health care, social services and the justice system (CPRA/ISRC, 2015).

The two goals that address the needs of persons living with disabilities are Goal Two (Inclusion and Access) and Goal Four (Supportive Environments). Goal Two (Inclusion and Access) has eight specific priorities that articulate how to provide inclusion and accessibility to populations facing constraints, stating that recreation is a service that has the ability to bring people together (CPRA/ISRC, 2015). Priority seven addresses persons living with disabilities stating:

Provide leadership, support, encouragement, information, policies and programs that facilitate full participation in recreation by people of all abilities across all settings. Work with persons with disabilities and special needs to create inclusive opportunities and build leadership capacity. Ensure that recreation environments are accessible and remove physical and emotional barriers to participation. (CPRA/ISRC, 2015, p. 23)

This quote demonstrates the importance of involving persons living with disabilities in the development and building of inclusion policy within an organization, as to ensure the policies fully supports participation of persons living with disabilities in barrier -free recreation environments. Sterman et al. (2019) also identified the importance of community engagement when investigating the important factors related to accessible playground development, as he noted that families identified the absence of meaningful community engagement directly contributed to poor playground development by their local government. However, more understanding on how community recreation organizations are currently structured and address inclusion is needed in order to strategically remove the barriers and constraints faced by populations such as persons living with disabilities.

Goal Four (Supportive Environments) acknowledges the importance of building supportive physical environments (recreation centres, parks, facilities) and social environments (collaborating with partners such as social service groups, the arts community, private sector) to help people adopt healthy active lifestyles by “making healthy choices the easy choices” (CPRA/ISRC, 2015, p. 26). *The Framework for Recreation in Canada* (CPRA/ISRC, 2015) acknowledges that there are many different tools used to create supportive recreation environments, including policies and guidelines, innovative programming, social action, education and funding.

This research project will investigate the relationship between inclusion policy and community recreation to understand how current policies assist or hinder supportive environments for persons living with disabilities.

### ***2.3.2 Understanding Municipal Recreation***

The Canadian history of municipal recreation departments begins during the early 1900s when recreational opportunities were self-driven and provided in settings such as churches, ethnic organizations, sports clubs, and volunteer organizations (BC Recreation and Parks Association [BCRPA}, 2009). By the 1950s the development of parks, recreation and culture services were more formally established (BCRPA, 2009). By the late 1960s communities began to build their own facilities expanding recreation services to serve not just children, but persons of all age groups, genders, and conditions (BCRPA, 2009). As recreation services continued to grow and expand throughout the country, the “benefits era” began in the mid-1990s and continues to happen as departments begin to use evidence-based benefits to communicate and inform politicians and the public (BCRPA, 2009). As recreation services began to broaden their role and partners, the ‘quality of life’ era began in 2016 focusing on benefit-based outcomes,

public goods, and integrated approaches to ensure well-being of all community members (BCRPA, 2009).

Lucas and Smith (2019) conducted a survey across municipalities within Canada to understand what policy issues local politicians (mayors and councillors) deem as most important. With over 1000 responses, the survey allowed responders to rate 18 public policy areas by importance, resulting in a systematic understanding of what influences prioritization of public policies for local politicians based on size, regions and provinces (Lucas & Smith, 2019). The short summary of this report is that size matters; municipalities that are classified as ‘big cities’ not only have to deal with the common policy issues such as waste management, but also have to deal with additional issues such as homelessness to immigrant settlement (Lucas & Smith, 2019). All municipalities agreed that parks and recreation are within the top ten policy issues to address, as most bigger municipalities have developed recreation service delivery frameworks to deliver services (Lucas & Smith, 2019). ‘Big cities’ experience a more diverse culture and larger population sizes adding a need for more extensive service delivery plans to meet the needs of each individual served within the community (Lucas & Smith, 2019). Lucas and Smith (2019) claim that future research should go into understanding the policy development and relationships of ‘big city’ issues to gain a more in depth understanding of how they are being addressed. There is a need to explore the inclusion policies developed within parks and recreation departments in ‘big cities’ across Canada to understand the complex relationship of providing inclusive services to diverse populations, specifically persons living with disabilities.

When considering recreation contexts in big cities, local governments can usually have an important role in providing accessible recreation opportunities (Sterman et al., 2019). In a study conducted by Sterman et al. (2019) the goal was to understand what decision-making

factors a local government and families considered as important when developing accessible playgrounds for children living with disability. Four key themes were constructed: perceptions of disability, absence of meaningful community engagement, just getting there is too hard, and think about it as a minimum standard (Sterman et al., 2019). When speaking to perceptions of disability, the local government felt that some families were in denial about having a child with a disability and that supports were needed. With regard to ‘absence of meaningful community engagement’, the local government seemed to fear offending community members as there was concern about approaching families or persons from different religious or cultural backgrounds. Families also spoke to how hard it was to get to the larger urban parks within their community due to transportation and time, it was easier for the family to attend their local park with less amenities. Both budget and service delivery of the local government reflected the ‘minimum requirements’ put-on inclusive playgrounds and outdoor play. One employee within an organization described how the attitudes of council members affected the priority of inclusive play opportunities for children (Sterman et al., 2019). Although this study focused on children and families with a disability accessing playground settings, it is possible that similar outcomes would emerge if the study had explored recreation programming as the local government process would be similar.

## **2.4 Role of Therapeutic Recreation in Community**

Therapeutic Recreation is defined by the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (2020) as “a health care profession that utilizes a therapeutic process, involving leisure, recreation, and play as a primary tool for each individual to achieve their highest level of independence and quality of life”. Beginning in the 1980s families, persons living with disabilities, advocacy groups, and TR professionals began to push for community inclusion

(Miller et al., 2009). Although TR has traditionally been viewed as a clinical profession, there has been a movement towards establishing TR roles within community contexts. Devine and Mobily (2017) identified how leisure service professionals continue to view services provided to persons living with disabilities as ‘therapy,’ making it difficult to bridge the gap within community recreation and ultimately provide inclusive recreation programming and services. However, academics and researchers argue that TR professionals have an important role to play in providing optimal inclusion services within community recreation contexts (Craig et al., 2019). This role could go beyond providing inclusion services, as TR’s could provide education to recreation practitioners on what successful inclusion supports could look like within a recreation context, impacting policy development.

A strength of TR as a profession is its systematic processes and understanding of leisure and recreation. One of the TR processes is the APIE (Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation) process, which is a systematic method to guide decision and service delivery within TR settings (Stumbo, Wolfe, & Pegg 2017). The APIE process provides TR professionals with specific steps to follow to ensure accountability to their clients and organization; there is the suggestion that without implementation of the APIE process, there would be no differentiation between a recreation activity and a therapeutic recreation activity (Wolfe, 2017). It is acknowledged by TR associations that the APIE process is the most valued job task within the TR profession in relation to service delivery (Wolfe, 2017). A brief introduction to each step of the APIE process will be provided below.

The first stage of APIE is *assessment*. “The assessment process provides the recreational therapist with an opportunity to gain greater understanding of client strengths, interests, and abilities” (Wolfe, 2017, p. 226). After assessment is complete, the *planning* stage occurs.

Recreation therapists typically develop plans at three different levels: individual-level, program/activity-level, and departmental level (Wolfe, 2017). Within the planning stage, goals and objectives are developed, along with developing an evaluation plan. Once a plan is complete, the TR implements the plan. *Implementation* is when the participant engages in the intervention/activity designed by the TR; within this step client action primarily occurs (Wolfe, 2017). The final step, once implementation is occurring, is *evaluation* (Wolfe, 2017). Evaluation provides opportunity to assess whether the intervention is effective, or if modification or changes are needed (Wolfe, 2017). Evaluation can occur formative or summative, but the key to the evaluation process is the “concept of revisiting other components of the process” (Wolfe., 2017, p. 226). It is clear there are similarities between TR’s APIE process, and the policy cycle introduced by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2015). These similarities could arguably demonstrate why TR professionals might be a strong candidate for inclusion policy development within leisure and recreation services.

Mobily and Dieser (2017) introduced a new model called *a social/recreation community model* derived from the ecological model and social model (from disabilities studies), arguing that a social model approach in TR is more suitable than the medical model approach. The conception of the *social/recreation community model* focuses on changing environmental circumstances to achieve a sense of belonging and ethic of care for an individual. Mobily & Dieser (2017) identify how concepts of TR practice, such as achieving a sense belongingness, align with the intent of a social model understanding of disability as opposed to a medical model understanding. “The social model aims to change the conversation from an inward direction meant to alter the person to an outward direction, intended to correct the environment” (Mobily & Dieser, 2017, p. 13). Mobily and Dieser (2017) identify that an outcome for the proposed

model is a “contra-therapeutic one; becoming engaged in an essential, social/recreation community that supports a sense of belongingness as a worthy result” (p. 14). If a *social/recreation community model* were implemented, more investigation is needed into what knowledge and practices are needed to successfully support persons living with disabilities, and to create recreation communities that apply a social model (Mobily & Dieser, 2017). Mobily and Dieser (2017) call for a new form of TR practice where terms such as therapy are not used when providing inclusive community services, taking a contra-therapy stance. Although there is still a need to understand contributing factors involved in transitioning a profession such as TR from a medical model/clinical environment to a social model/community environment successfully, Mobily and Dieser (2017) identify that TR professionals should prepare to take an interdisciplinary approach and prepare professional content specific to:

Interpersonal skill development (from counselling and related areas), individual and group facilitation, public speaking and presentation, disability studies, disability rights, social justice, inclusive recreation, cultural competence and diversity education, ethics, aging studies, concepts in recreation communities, community development (from social work), and research methods. (p.16)

Mobily and Dieser (2017) provide foundational arguments for why an alternative to the current medical model approach of TR is needed. They describe both the benefits and challenges associated with adopting a social model (contra-therapy) approach of TR; by transitioning to a social model understanding, the TR’s role shifts from focusing on the person, to focusing on changing the environment.

McKenney (2017) suggests that although parks and recreation professionals are reluctant to give resources to TR professionals, the concepts of TR are valued by parks and recreation

bodies. This suggests that more understanding is needed to see how TR professionals and community recreation professionals can collaborate to provide inclusive recreation services, understanding that there is a need occurring within community recreation to provide more intricate services for persons living with disabilities.

The next section will review the research that exists on how inclusive recreation has been provided, understanding that there is limited knowledge of inclusion policy development within a municipal recreation context.

## **2.5 Inclusive Recreation Service Delivery**

Amado, Stancliffe, McCarron, and McCallion (2013) identified that:

There are no clear conclusions about the differences between the terms integration, inclusion, community participation, and community belonging, and the differences between the phenomena for which these terms are used. What is labeled as participation or integration can often be seen as physical integration but not social integration or inclusion. It is not clear whether these different terms reflect different experiences by the person with disabilities or community members that can be measured or described, and whether different measures reflect the differences between these concepts. (p. 364)

When we feel a sense of exclusion it is due to a lack of connection which, in turn, creates a sense of unease and ‘not belonging’ (Ponic & Frisby, 2010). Inclusion and belonging are two concepts that highly relate to one another. Whyte and Sharpe (2016) suggest that a conversation about inclusion cannot occur without the concept of belonging, and vice versa. Belonging has been conceptualized as the ‘feeling’ or the psychosocial dimension of an inclusive society (Ponic & Frisby, 2010) whereas inclusion is described as steps towards an ideal characterized as “a society’s widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of

opportunities and life chances for individuals, and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens” (Sen, 2001, p. 74). There are four dimensions provided by Whyte and Sharpe (2016) that make up inclusion:

*Psychosocial dimension* is the participants’ understanding of their relationships with other members within a given group (sense of acceptance, safety, and trust)

*Relational dimension* is how participants engage and interact with one another across issues of power and differences (e.g., race, income, health status). This dimension focuses on aspects of being welcomed, openness and social support.

*Participatory dimension* is focused on how participants take action within a group. Elements in this dimension include contributing to the work of the organization, engaging in recreation activities, and having a voice.

*Organizational dimension* focuses on community-based organization structures, processes, and values. Demonstrated by having participants’ identified barriers addressed, having access to resources through partnerships with service providers and researchers, and creating an organizational culture based on the ethic of care. (p. 34)

There are some distinct similarities in the dimensions of inclusion and the socio-ecological approach, as both provide ‘levels’ or ‘dimensions’ that influence one another. Both the dimensions of inclusion and the socio-ecological approach identify that there are individual and population-level of influence, however the socio-ecological approach goes beyond the organizational level, taking into consideration the influence of policy. The dimensions of inclusion demonstrates that the term *inclusion* is complex and multi-dimensional, making it difficult to provide one clear and concise definition. Through the descriptions provided above the

following sections will explore how inclusive service delivery was conceptualized and implemented.

Inclusive service delivery within recreation programs has been addressed by several different leisure researchers (Anderson, 2020; Allison & Hibbler, 2004; Arbour-Nicitopoulos, O'Rourke, & Costas-Bradstreet, 2020; Clement & Bigby, 2009; Craig et al., 2019; Kruithof et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2009; Miller, Schleien, & Bowens, 2010) all alluding to the fact that inclusion needs to be further explored in order to understand how to better sustain inclusive initiatives in community recreation settings. "The goal of inclusion has been central to policies that have shaped services for over the past 30 years" (Clement & Bigby, 2009, p. 264) and yet inclusion is still a poorly defined word that has confusion about its meaning, the problems it seeks to address, and how it should be accomplished (Clement & Bigby, 2009). This section reviews research on how recreation services that are inclusive have been designed and implemented in order to gain understanding on the successes and challenges of delivering inclusive recreation services.

Clement and Bigby (2009) designed a multi-method study that examined the lives of individuals living with intellectual disability after leaving an institutional setting. Clement and Bigby (2009) began by critiquing a traditional inclusion model acknowledging that it begins by assessing the individual rather than first assessing the current structures and functioning of the individual's social network. Clement and Bigby (2009) noted that by assessing only the individual level, professionals do not gain a clear understanding to how their services and structures contribute to the quality, amount, and experience of inclusion. This was demonstrated in their findings, as staff were more likely to measure participants' community presence (physically being within the space), rather than community participation (engaging with

members of the community). These researchers concluded that, until more time and focus are put into understanding inclusion barriers on an organizational and community level from the perspective of those living with a disability, the inclusion needs of individuals will remain unanswered and individuals living with disability will continue to engage in social spaces that feel isolating (Clement & Bigby, 2009).

Kruithof et al. (2018) conducted a study using an intervention model to research social inclusion. The study was developed to address person-first perspectives of social inclusion using program theory to design a communal eating intervention within a community in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Kruithof et al. (2018) determined that communal eating in a given neighborhood can be viewed as an inclusive intervention as it attracts a wide range of individuals. The aim of the study was to determine if the intervention brought about experiences of social inclusion and overall quality of life to persons living with disabilities. It was noted that there should be caution used when developing interventions to not homogenize segregated groups of people, specifically those living with disability, but rather use social network interventions that are tailored to participants' pre-existing networks and individual needs (Kruithof et al., 2018). When specifically addressing the perspectives of the individuals that participated in the communal eating intervention at a local church, participants addressed policy and artificial experiences as key influences on feelings of social inclusion. One participant identified that even when attending an inclusive event such as the communal meal, once the individual left, they had already forgotten about the experience as they did not achieve a sense of belonging, identifying that "there are a lot of schemes to make people self-reliant, but they [politicians and policy makers] forget the people who need more help. And those people end up in the gutter, or up against the wall... this is how our society works. (Jacob, 53)" (Kruithof et al., 2018, p. 6). This

quote addresses how, even though a thoughtful initiative that was community-based, there are still barriers to social inclusion that need to be understood and removed in order for individuals living with disability to feel like a part of society.

Craig et al. (2019) interviewed people who provide inclusive recreation services in Malawi, Africa, looking at inclusive sport programming from the perspectives of practitioners or researchers (e.g., director, research assistant, professor, sport director, physiotherapist, physical education teacher, and sports administrator). Craig et al. (2019) focused their research on youth, sport, and disability, identifying three types of constraints that exist when attempting to achieve inclusive sport. The first constraint identified was cultural beliefs and social perceptions of disability, identifying a need for disability awareness and attitudinal change in relationship to social perceptions of disability within the community. Another constraint was limited access in the physical environment; this included access to housing, transportation, and public spaces which in turn became barriers to accessing adapted sport. Barriers in the socio-environmental context (such as human, financial, and equipment resources) included “fragmented interagency coordination and networking structures; and limited evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of legislative and policy implementation efforts” (Craig et al., 2019, p. 255). Craig et al. (2019) argue that Therapeutic Recreation (TR) practitioners are in a unique role to contribute to the development and design of inclusive policies while advancing the international dialogue around disability rights due to the unique understanding and skillset TR professionals have in relation to recreation service delivery and persons living with disabilities. This project is a good example of how TR can be used as a potential tool to bridge and network the idea of inclusion to an international level and knowledge build the idea of inclusion (Craig et al., 2019).

Allison and Hibbler (2004) interviewed recreation professionals (n = 18; ten people of color and eight Euro-American women) who were all employed within parks and recreation departments in four mid-west cities within the United States. The goal of the interviews was to understand the perspectives and experiences of these professionals and the issues or barriers they perceive inhibit recreation program access and availability focusing on ethnic minority populations. When addressing the potential barriers associated with delivery of inclusive services, Allison and Hibbler (2004) identified two different levels of bias and discrimination that can occur: the individual level and organizational level. The individual level of bias was interpreted as perceptions or views held by an individual person towards other persons or cultures whereas organizational bias can occur within the program delivery, policies and practices when there is failure to adapt to the cultural needs of their given community (Allison & Hibbler, 2004). Allison and Hibbler (2004) identified five primary barriers associated with access to recreation programming: 1) The changing face of community (i.e., the inability of organizations face to adapt services to a changing community), 2) The changing face of management and staff (i.e., the need for management and workers to reflect the diversity of the community), 3) Deferred program responsibility (i.e., attempts from organizations to support their diverse population but recipients continue to feel that these attempts are misguided or ineffective), 4) Language barriers and the politics of voice (i.e., whose voice was being communicated [e.g., language barriers] and whose voices were being heard [e.g., which voiced needs were being addressed by organization) and, 5) Management and staff attitudes and stereotypes (i.e., prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes held by management and staff towards members of community). Although this study was specifically looking at ethnic groups, literature focusing on individuals living with disability seem to relay a similar message.

Miller, Schleien, and Lausier (2009) collected data from 15 agencies representing all but one of the National Recreation and Park Association's eight geographic regions and a variety of community sizes across the United States. An interview guide was constructed to understand the role of inclusion facilitators and support workers, including day-to-day responsibilities, qualifications and hiring, training and supervision. The findings addressed three key messages for community recreation organizations to understand: 1) hire appropriate staff members for the complexity of supports, 2) appreciate the crucial roles that inclusion facilitators have on the success of these supports, and 3) the need for alternative methods to more effectively support participants with disabilities in inclusive settings (Miller et al., 2009). Miller et al. (2009) concluded that there is a need for more research to understand the major influences involved with creating inclusive recreation opportunities in community recreation for persons living with disabilities.

When considering social inclusion supports for persons living with disabilities within recreation programs Miller, Schleien, and Bowens (2010) conducted a study interviewing inclusion facilitators and/or administrators using a semi-structured interview guide. The individuals interviewed identified that "80% or more of all accommodations to support inclusion was the employment of direct support staff" (Miller et al., 2010, p. 40). Inclusion support staff typically assisted by directly supporting the participant, facilitating communication with peers and staff, and removing barriers for participant to engage in the program activity equally (Miller et al., 2010). However, needs of participants go beyond just engagement in program; many one-to-one inclusion support roles also support physical assistance such as personal care, maintaining routine (sensory breaks or administering medication), and ensuring safety at all times (Miller et al., 2010). The role of a one-to-one support staff is versatile, and therefore appropriate training

and education is necessary to provide safe and effective support. The study concluded by stating that the role of an inclusion facilitator is considered important to creating social inclusion within recreation. The role of an inclusion facilitator varies from hiring and training support staff, to developing inclusion programming and initiatives, educating policy makers and decision-makers, as well as take responsibility to shift the ‘we/they’ mentality among programming staff and the general public. Although this study sheds light on the value of inclusion support workers and inclusion facilitators within a recreation setting, there is a need to understand other social inclusion strategies that can be adopted by organizations to provide for successful inclusive programming, specifically when thinking about the social environment.

When looking at best practices for inclusive recreation in Canada, Arbour-Nicitopoulos, O’Rourke, and Costas-Bradstreet (2020) conducted interviews with representatives from each provincial or territorial recreation association to understand the current work associations are doing to address inclusion and access for persons living with disabilities. Summaries of the organizations’ strategies to address inclusion and access are provided along with some highlighted community interventions to represent how each province or territory is practicing inclusion and access. They proposed four key recommendations to grow inclusion and access in recreation developed from the strategies and learnings showcased within the report: 1) Capacity and professional development, 2) Common language, 3) Policy and practices, and 4) Leadership. When speaking to capacity and professional development, Arbour-Nicitopoulos and colleagues (2020) acknowledged that there is a lack of training opportunities and tools to educate and inform front-line workers, senior managers, and decision makers when providing inclusion services for persons living with disabilities. They also identified the importance of building partnerships with outside organizations that can help assist in the identification of existing tools

and opportunities, or collaborating in the development of new tools to assist with inclusive service delivery. Finally, they acknowledged that there is a need to adopt the Government of Canada's definition of disability as well as a need to define terms related to inclusion, access, and disability. They suggest that consistency in terms is needed across the sectors (Provincial/territorial & municipal levels); the definitions should be understood by all sectors clearly, and not just focus on physical aspects of accessibility. Arbour-Nicitopoulos, et al. (2020) concluded that the strategies demonstrated by provinces and territories are excellent examples of enabling and supporting inclusion and access in Canada, but also "reinforces the need for action in policy, practice, programs, knowledge sharing, education, training and research that stems from the ground level" (p. 34). Some of the strategies highlighted within the report included accessible beach and sport field initiatives, as well as highlighted provincial organizations and their roles in educating recreation professionals.

Anderson (2020) evaluated a leisure education training called *Inclusion U* and the *inclusivity assessment tool* received after completion of the course. Typically, leisure education is person-centered, focusing on the individual, but by "using a social model of disability, the training program empowers citizens to educate recreation service providers to make changes toward more inclusive recreation environments" (Anderson, 2020, p. 355). *Inclusion U* is a 10-hour course with nine different learning modules and a final exam. Once an individual completes the course and the exam the individual will become a certified inclusivity assessor (CIA). The course educates the learner (an advocate, recreation practitioner, or other community service professional) on concepts related to inclusion such as the physical environment (built and natural environment) as well as the social environment (program and administrative environment). Anderson (2020) identified three overall types of environments for inclusion: 1) physical

inclusion (i.e., built and natural environments); 2) social inclusion: administrative practices (i.e., administrative and ground level-support, inclusive communication, inclusion training and evaluation); and 3) social inclusion: program practices (i.e., adapted equipment and activity adaptations). The findings from this study are discussed in relation to these three types of environments. In order to complete the course, there is a final test where the participant must receive 80% or higher to pass. Once the individual completes the course, they can implement the inclusivity assessment tool. The total sample for this study was 555 recreation facilities; data were collected using the online recreation database entries made by CIAs when assessing community-based recreation agencies. Within the findings it was noted that the information or education provided by CIAs to recreation organizations was related to the physical environment (accessible signage, ramps, door pressure, lowering registration desks) and “administrative practices (e.g., adding an inclusion point of contact, changing marketing materials or website, using person-first language, adding policies)” (Anderson, 2020, p. 365). Anderson concluded by providing implications for practice, with the largest implication being a shift in how leisure education is conceptualized by professionals, and how the focus of leisure education should be on building best practices and procedures for inclusive community recreation services. This study sheds light on how training stemmed from leisure education and the social model understanding of disability can provide a simple and concrete tool to assist recreation providers in delivering more inclusive community services.

All the studies highlighted in this section identify the need for better inclusion policies or procedures within recreation departments or organizations. Miller et al. (2009) suggest that there has been a number of ‘how-to’ guides that have been developed by organizations, and a lack of good science, effective model building, and a comprehensive understanding of the inclusive

recreation landscape when looking at scholarly-based literature within leisure studies. Municipal recreation programs should have quality service delivery as they are tax supported programs and therefore, should aim to deliver services that meet the needs of all community members despite gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age and ability (Allison & Hibbler, 2004). All the reviewed studies had a different definition of inclusion, ranging from disability to ethnic backgrounds; this contributes to the misunderstanding of inclusion and related terms when attempting to provide inclusive service delivery. A social model view of disability acknowledges that change does not need to occur at an individual-level, but rather at the organizational and community level of a recreation service or program, with a focus on both the physical and social environment (Anderson, 2020; Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020). Although the studies differed in many ways the constraints identified by each study are very similar, each study claimed that to properly understand and contribute to the development of inclusive frameworks and tools more research is needed.

### ***2.5.1 Accessing Community Recreation: Person-first Perspectives***

“Inclusive service delivery provides promise for the development of a civilization where designations ‘we’ and ‘they’ no longer exist” (Schleien & Bowens, 2010, p. 47). Although initiatives have been undertaken by community researchers and organizations to provide inclusive recreation opportunities for persons living with disabilities, this population continues to identify feelings of exclusion and isolation when accessing community recreation (McClimens et al., 2014; Schleien & Bowens, 2010). This section will review articles that attempted to provide insight on the recreational experiences of persons living with disabilities in community recreation contexts.

Using a qualitative approach McClimens et al. (2014) collaborated with persons living with learning disabilities to understand their experiences at their local shopping centre in Sheffield, UK. Within the findings McClimens et al. (2014) identified two major themes: safety concerns and levels of support. Persons living with learning disabilities identified that feeling safe in the environment was an important factor to their return to the centre. Participants identified that their sense of safety was impacted by negative or unwanted attitudes of others in community, and were less likely to return to the shopping centre. Participants identified never attending cultural activities such as going to an art gallery or movie theatre due to not having appropriate supports (e.g., person to assist with transfers, not feeling comfortable going alone). It was noted in the study that the level of support for individuals living with disability is highly dependent on housing or accommodation circumstances of the individual (McClimens et al., 2014). McClimens et al. (2014) claim that in order for inclusion to be successful service providers need to have a major shift in thinking from acknowledging individuals living with disability not as passive recipients of service, but as service users and therefore citizens. However, this study was done in the UK and it is unknown what key supports might be perceived as important within a Canadian municipal recreation context.

Similar findings were identified by Hall (2017) who used a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews to ask participants living with disabilities about their experiences of inclusion in community activities within a mid-sized mid-western city in the United States. Hall (2017) identified that changes in environments, such as physical accessibility and cultural acceptance, could increase community involvement of individuals living with intellectual disability. This was demonstrated in a statement from one of the participants who said her friends

living with disabilities were ignored because they could not communicate well: “Sometimes the people in public and at stores, the people that work there, just ignore them” (Hall, 2016, p. 866).

Darcy and Dowse (2013) looked at participation and non-participation of individuals living with intellectual disability in sport and active recreation activities. Instead of implementing interviews, the study implemented an online survey using selected organizations to advertise the survey to potential participants. Both families and persons living with disabilities could partake in the survey. Darcy and Dowse (2013) noted that lack of choices, cost, insufficient support to take part, the attitudes of others and lack of interest were all things that survey respondents identified as stopping them from taking part in sport. The respondents identified that benefits of participation ranged from a sense of achievement and the thrill of competition to social and psych-emotional benefits such as making friends and spending time with family, increased well-being, and learning new skills (Darcy & Dowse, 2013). Darcy and Dowse (2013) concluded that this issue of inequality experienced by persons living with disabilities in recreation must be addressed, arguing that persons living with disabilities have the right to the same choice as their ‘typical’ peers, to participate.

Evans, Bellon, and Matthews (2017) used a grounded theory approach to explore why barriers to community inclusion exist and to propose innovative ideas using leisure and recreation modalities. Participants were self-selected individuals with disability and family members providing support to a person with disability in South Australia. Focus groups, face-to-face interviews, and an online questionnaire were used to understand participants’ experiences. The following quote provided by a participant summarizes why more research and understanding needs to be put into inclusion in recreation contexts:

All of the people in the real world, they tend to judge you, [smile] at you and [not] very nice, you know. Here [specialized program] it's cruisy; it's all good. No-one judges anyone, not like the real world where you get judged a lot. (Evans et al., 2017, p. 341)

This quote addresses the bias and discrimination individuals (and, by extension, organizations) unknowingly hold towards persons living with disabilities, and how there is a divide in the sense of belonging for persons living with disabilities between specialized programming and community programming. Evans et al. (2017) stated that they hoped that the highlighted themes would contribute to potential government frameworks, arguing that by providing more community inclusion initiatives that focused on these issues there would be increased recreation opportunities for this population.

In summary, feelings of defeat are an undertone from many of the articles reviewed; individuals voiced their concern that although programming opportunities are available the experiences do not bring a sense of belonging and therefore can be considered not inclusive (e.g., Darcy & Dowse, 2013; Evans et al., 2017). One commonality between all the articles reviewed in this section was the importance of organizational structures (e.g., program structure, awareness, service delivery) to providing an inclusive experience (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; Evans et al., 2017; Hall, 2016; McClimens et al., 2014). All also recommended that practitioners should be addressing environmental and organizational structures in order to construct new and sustainable inclusive community opportunities. Although community recreation participation was addressed within these studies using different recreational settings, this proposed study will look at the municipal recreation environment.

## 2.6 Summary

This literature review has provided understanding of the history of leisure and disability, acknowledging that historically recreation services provided to persons living with disabilities have been through a medical model understanding of disability categorized as intervention or therapy. New national and provincial legislation, as well as new models of service delivery (e.g., the social model of TR), call for community service providers to adopt new strategies to provide services that are inclusive to everybody. With this shift there is a need to understand how service and program delivery within community recreation contexts can best be developed and implemented to properly serve a new demographic. While frameworks begin to address a need for inclusion of persons living with disabilities, there is limited guidance provided to recreation professionals on what inclusion policies should be addressing or how inclusion policies should be created and implemented, other than suggesting policy or tools should be developed. The literature supports the need for this project as Canada begins to develop new standards within community contexts to ensure inclusivity of persons living with disabilities. Literature reviewed addressed how other recreation bodies across the world have attempted to support and provide inclusive recreation to marginalized communities. While there have been several programs or interventions designed to remove barriers to access there remains a need to more effectively support recreation organizations to address the needs of persons with disabilities. The following section will provide the research design methodology and steps taken, using the literature from this section to guide the research design.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Study Design

The original methods design for this study was to conduct a two-phase qualitative descriptive study. Phase one was to involve interviewing municipal recreation staff from different recreation departments across Canada and the second phase of this project was to conduct a policy scan. Due to restrictions associated with the pandemic the ethics application for this research project was paused, as there was uncertainty if research not related to COVID-19 would be reviewed by the Research Ethics Board in a timely fashion. While the ethics application was being put together, municipalities across Canada began to stop all recreation programming and conduct layoffs of municipal recreation staff. Due to the uncertainty of the current pandemic landscape and concerns about accessing potential study participants, a change in the research question and study design was made.

An environmental scan was decided as the most appropriate study method to answer the following research question: *How do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?* The following sections will outline the study design and context, the search strategy and methods, as well as how the data were analysed and interpreted.

#### 3.1.1 Worldview

A social constructivist worldview was adopted, as social constructivists seek to understand the world in which they live and work (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). There are three beliefs associated with a social constructivist worldview. The first is that “human beings construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 8). Therefore, as a qualitative researcher, it was important for me to pay attention to the

meanings I associated with the policies that I reviewed. This was done through the use of memos throughout each phase of the research process (described in more detail in section 3.6.1 below). The second belief is “humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives- we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 9). Throughout my research I sought to understand the current inclusion policy landscape within recreation departments for persons living with disabilities using my own experiences and background to shape my interpretations and understandings of the data and the findings. The final belief is “the basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive; the inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 9). Throughout this research, I used an inductive approach by collecting specific data to make broad generalizations about how inclusion policies within municipal recreation departments are addressing persons living with disabilities.

### ***3.1.2 Research Design***

Environmental scans (ESs) are used to examine publicly available information or documents that might not be academically published and are typically referred to as grey literature (Taymour et al., 2018). Environmental scans have been identified as an important tool to inform decision-makers on things such as policy, programming, and planning development (Charlton et al., 2019). An environmental scan was chosen as the most accessible and pragmatic approach to conduct a national scan on inclusion policies within municipal recreation departments across Canada. Environmental scans are used to collect and interpret data from a wide range of sources including government policies, academic literature and journals, as well as public websites (Penner et al., 2019). Through use of an environmental scan, the goal was to

understand how current inclusion policies are addressing the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in municipal recreation contexts across Canada.

### **3.2 Study Context**

This study has gathered inclusion policies from municipal recreation departments to represent each Canadian province and/or territory. As noted in the literature review section, Lucas and Smith (2019) suggested that future research should go into understanding the policy development and relationships of ‘big city’ issues to gain a more in depth understanding of how they are being addressed. For this reason, the municipalities chosen for the study had to be considered a ‘big city’ (also called an ‘urban municipality’) representing at least one percent of the Nation’s population. Purposeful sampling was used to select one urban municipality to represent each province and territory of Canada. Cities were chosen based on wanting to have a large enough population size to be considered urban (representing at least 1% of the Canadian population). The next section describes the process used to select each of the municipalities included in the study.

### **3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

There were two different inclusion and exclusion criteria adopted for this study. The first set of criteria were used to decide which municipalities were to be included. The second set of criteria guided decision making about which policy documents were to be included.

To choose each municipality to represent each given province or territory it was decided that urban municipalities (one percent of the Canadian population) would be selected for their inclusion policies. A table developed by Statistics Canada (2020) was used to make decisions about which municipalities would be selected to include in the study. The table, reproduced in Table 3 below, includes the municipality name and origin, ranked by percentage of the Canadian

population. London was the first chosen municipality representing Ontario, as it was the first municipality on the table to meet the threshold of one percent of the Canadian population. From there, the next municipality chosen was Halifax to represent Nova Scotia, as it was the next closest municipality to London, meeting at least one percent of the Canadian population. For each of the remaining provinces, municipalities were selected if they had the population closest to London, Ontario and met the one percent of Canadian population threshold. Six of the thirteen municipalities chosen met the one percent threshold (London, ON; Halifax, NS; Laval, QC; Surrey, BC; Winnipeg, MB; Edmonton, AB). Table 3 highlights each municipality selected.

**Table 3**

***Municipal Population Sizes***

Rank	Municipality name	Province	CMA in which the municipality is located	Population	
				number	percentage of the Canadian population
1	Toronto	Ontario	Toronto	2,731,571	7.8
2	Montréal	Quebec	Montréal	1,704,694	4.8
3	Calgary	Alberta	Calgary	1,239,220	3.5
4	Ottawa	Ontario	Ottawa–Gatineau	934,243	2.7
5	Edmonton	Alberta	Edmonton	932,546	2.7
6	Mississauga	Ontario	Toronto	721,599	2.1
7	Winnipeg	Manitoba	Winnipeg	705,244	2.0
8	Vancouver	British Columbia	Vancouver	631,486	1.8
9	Brampton	Ontario	Toronto	593,638	1.7
10	Hamilton	Ontario	Hamilton	536,917	1.5
11	Québec	Quebec	Québec	531,902	1.5
12	Surrey	British Columbia	Vancouver	517,887	1.5
13	Laval	Quebec	Montréal	422,993	1.2
14	Halifax	Nova Scotia	Halifax	403,131	1.1
15	London	Ontario	London	383,822	1.1
16	Markham	Ontario	Toronto	328,966	0.9
17	Vaughan	Ontario	Toronto	306,233	0.9
18	Gatineau	Quebec	Ottawa–Gatineau	276,245	0.8
19	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	246,376	0.7
20	Longueuil	Quebec	Montréal	239,700	0.7
21	Kitchener	Ontario	Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	233,222	0.7
22	Burnaby	British Columbia	Vancouver	232,755	0.7

A municipality meeting the one percent threshold was excluded if the province or territory was already represented by a municipality that was closer in percentage to the

population to London, Ontario. For example, the City of Laval, QC was closer to London, ON when considering population size and therefore was included, while other Quebec cities were excluded. Not all provinces or territories have a municipality that met the one percent population threshold; in these cases, the municipality with the largest population rate was included to represent that province or territory. Seven municipalities were selected with the greatest population for its respective province or territory: Saskatoon, SK; Charlottetown, PEI; St. Johns, NL; Moncton, NB; Whitehorse, YT; Iqaluit, NT; Yellowknife, NWT.

After the selected municipalities were contacted and asked to provide inclusion policies, a second set of criteria was used to decide if the policy documents that were provided were to be included for the extraction phase. As noted previously, a policy is any course of action or broad direction endorsed by a body of authority and delivered through forms such as frameworks, strategies, action plans and official priority documents that the Parks and Recreation department might refer to (Liddy & Mill, 2014). The types of municipal recreation department policies in the analysis included official documents (e.g., strategic plans, frameworks, official statements) and implementation policies (e.g., procedures, operational plans, training manuals). Working documents (e.g., draft documents, emails, committee reports) were originally included; however, after consultation with the thesis committee members it was decided that the working documents did not contribute meaningfully to the analysis and were excluded.

Inclusion policies were included as long as they were developed by the municipality. Once stored, the documents were scanned for keywords including ‘disability’ ‘inclusion’ ‘access’ ‘barriers’ ‘assistive equipment’ or ‘adaptations’ as a way to decide if the policy was appropriate for analysis. Policies were excluded if the policy was developed by an outside organization or if persons living with disabilities were not addressed within the document.

### **3.4 Data Collection & Management**

Data were collected from June 2020 until December 2020. Sources used to collect data included emails, phone calls, and municipal websites. The following paragraphs will provide detail on the data collection process.

The primary search of publicly available inclusion policies was conducted by accessing the selected municipalities' websites. If the policies were not openly available on a municipality's Parks and Recreation web page, then a 'Freedom of Information Request' form was filled out. The form was submitted to the Services Department, who then would forward the request to the Recreation Department. After learning that a 'Freedom of Information Request' form was not necessary to request the type of policies being sought, the recreation departments or human resources departments were contacted directly using contact information provided online. The request statement did not have a standardized verbatim script; however, Liddy & Mill's (2014) definition of policy was provided when asking for any publicly available inclusion and access policies.

If the municipality did not reply within a two-week time period, a follow up email request was sent by the lead researcher. After four weeks with no response a phone call was initiated as a last attempt to collect policies to represent that municipality. Some municipalities required phone calls to clarify the types of policy that were being requested. Four municipalities did not reply and were marked as N/A. One city responded to the email request by stating that they did not have any inclusion policies, despite identifying inclusion services on their webpage, claiming it was due to no policy being provided on a provincial or federal level. Out of the 13 municipalities chosen to represent the 10 provinces and three territories, official documents and implementation documents (n=22) were retrieved from eight municipalities across eight provinces.

As the documents were obtained, they were stored in separate file folders titled with their respective province or territory on a password encrypted drive. A number was assigned to each saved policy document file as to keep track of documents in a systematic order. The policy title was extracted from each document as well as which municipality it was retrieved from and publication date (if provided). None of this information was analyzed; however, it allowed for organization of documents when being reviewed and referenced.

### **3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Document analysis of policies was conducted using the READ approach, which is a “systematic procedure for collecting documents and gaining information from them in the context of health policy studies at any level (global, national, local, etc.)” (Dalglish et al., 2020, p. 3). The READ method involves the following steps: (1) ready your materials, (2) extract data, (3) analyze data and (4) distil your findings (Dalglish et al., 2020). Step one of the READ approach was already described in the *Data Collection and Management* section, as this step involved setting parameters such as developing the research question, setting a timeline for data collection, developing inclusion/exclusion criteria, and describing how the policies will be searched and stored.

Data extraction was conducted as per recommendations for Step two in the READ analysis approach (Dalglish et al., 2020). Documents were read thoroughly from start to finish, and notes and memos were recorded during each reading and re-reading of the policies to assist with the analysis (Step Three) (Dalglish et al., 2020). Data were extracted into an Excel spreadsheet, with a row dedicated to each document collected, and each column was labelled with a code to guide data extraction from each document (Dalglish et al., 2020). The categories of the extraction table included: document number, policy title, location, date published, relevant

definitions of key concepts, target population (e.g., persons with disability, staff, other), environment focus (e.g., social or physical), socio-ecological model level (e.g., community, organizational, policy), policy intent, and intervention strategies used. While the first categories (document number, policy title, etc.) were used for data organization purposes it was the latter categories (definitions, target, environment focus, etc.) that were of most conceptual interest for this study.

When reviewing policy documents an understanding of what levels of influence inclusion policy's target was needed. In this study, it was identified that when reviewing policy documents only the organization, community, and macro levels of influence could be observed. An *organizational* level of influence is defined as a policy document that addresses social networks and norms, or standards (Robinson, 2008); an example is a policy that addresses the relationships between recreation centres and other community organisations or institutions. An organization level of influence policy document is defined as rules, regulation, policies, and informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviors (Robinson, 2008). In this study a policy document that *addressed the recreation department specifically* was considered *organizational level of influence*, an example being policies, formal structures/procedures and rules in recreation departments that may constrain or promote accessibility/inclusion such as staff training. *Community* level of influence was described as an inclusion policy that focused on relationships between recreation centres and other community organisations or institutions, informal social networks within centres themselves (i.e., community users), and/or procedural documents within the department. An example of this was the Surrey policy document [Attendant Procedure] as it outlines the step-by-step process that should be taken by both the community members and the staff during the time of sale at community centres. Lastly, a policy

document that reflected the *macro level of influence* is a policy document that is local, provincial, or federal policies that regulate or support healthy actions and practices for prevention, early detection, control, and management (Robinson, 2008). Examples of macro level of influence policy documents are goal statements, action plans, or frameworks developed by municipality as a whole addressing all departments.

A codebook was developed as per recommendation of Dalglish and colleagues (2020), guided by literature and a preliminary analysis of two municipalities policy documents (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020). Initial codes were generated to highlight interesting features of the data within two selected municipality's inclusion policy documents (Clark & Braun, 2017). Creating an extraction codebook helped ensure concepts of interest were clearly defined/described; in turn this enabled me to systematically extract the appropriate information from each policy. For example, originally *environment* was my extraction category, but as I reviewed the preliminary documents to see if it was addressing the physical or social environment, I quickly realized I had no systematic way to decide if a policy was addressing the social or physical environment. After reviewing more literature, I was able to break down the *environment* category into two columns, *social* and *physical*, and refer to my descriptions developed within my codebook to say 'yes or no' to if the policy was addressing that specific type of environment. Refer to Table 4 for the finalized descriptions of each category used to extract information from each inclusion policy.

**Table 4*****Description of Each Extraction Category***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Codebook Description</b>
Target Population: Persons living with disabilities	The policy addresses the rights or procedures for community members to follow in order to access the service (i.e., Guide animal rights, procedures for attendants).
Target Population: Staff	The policy addresses how the employee is to provide an inclusion or access service to the public (i.e., program adaptations, training)
Target Population: Other	Individuals that do not fit the category of Persons living with disabilities or staff. This could include the general public or outside organizations.
Definitions	The document provides definitions for key words such as disability, inclusion, accessibility, barriers, or any other defined terms provided within the document.
Social environment	A policy was considered to be addressing the social environment if it addressed a function of relationships where aid and assistance is exchanged through social interactions (e.g., encouragement, providing equipment, feedback, having one-to-one support)
Physical environment	A policy was considered to be addressing the physical environment if it addressed the natural or built environments, including but not limited to sport facilities, parks, playgrounds, or gyms.
Level of Influence: Community	The codebook considered a policy as community-level of influence if it addressed community networks and norms or outside groups and/or organizations (e.g., relationships between recreation centres and other community organisations or institutions) (Robinson, 2008)
Level of influence: Organizational	The codebook indicated a policy as meeting an organizational level of influence if it provided rules, regulation, policies, and informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviors specific to the recreation department (Robinson, 2008)
Level of influence: Policy	A policy was considered as meeting the policy level of influence if it was a policy document that addresses or refers to local, provincial, or federal policies that regulate or support healthy actions and practices for prevention, early detection, control, and management (e.g., policies that addressed the municipality as a whole) (Robinson, 2008)
Policy Intent	The purpose of the policy, content explicitly stating the purpose or goal of the policy document
Intervention Strategy	Addresses the procedures or actions taken to achieve policy intent

Miles and colleagues (2020) describe priori codes as “researcher-generated codes, based on what preparatory investigation suggests might appear in the data before they are collected and analyzed” (p. 69). Priori codes made up the titles of each column within the extraction document, later becoming the categories discussed within the findings. For example, one a priori code developed was *level of influence: organizational*. If a policy met the description of this level of influence than a checkmark was inputted in the extraction table under this column. Columns that provided a priori codes (*yes* or *no* indicator) were scanned to quantify responses and analyze.

Data extraction and analysis occurred simultaneously for the categories applied thematic analysis (e.g., definitions, policy intent, and policy intervention strategy) (Dalglish et al., 2020), meaning interpretation was happening as data were being extracted. Analysis during extraction was recorded by using the comment function within the extraction table. Thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret patterns of meaning within the categories or columns identified above. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyze, and report themes in greater detail (Clark and Braun, 2017). After extracting (copying and pasting) relevant data from each policy document into each category, data for categories *definitions*, *policy intent*, and *policy intervention* were transferred into separate word documents (i.e., a separate file for each category). Once the data was inputted into a word document the data and notes that were jotted down during extraction were re-read (Clark & Braun, 2017). As noted previously, initial codes were generated to highlight interesting features of the data within two selected municipality’s inclusion policy documents (Clark and Braun, 2017). A search for codes within the other municipality’s inclusion policies was conducted to see if other data related to the initial codes, forming themes (Clark and Braun, 2017). For example, when considering the definitions

category, definitions were extracted from two municipality's policy documents; reflexive memoing occurred during extraction (my thoughts on the definitions or if none were provided, why). The data was transferred to a Microsoft word document, where initial codes were created based on the definitions provided. From there all other policy documents were extracted for definitions. The data in the definitions column of the extraction table was then transferred into the Microsoft word document where the same terms (e.g., inclusion, disability) were grouped together. From there the terms were coded using the initial codes based on patterns and any additional codes were created, the codes than turned into themes. The same process occurred for policy intent and intervention strategy. The themes formed within each column are discussed within the results chapter. For a visual of the thematic analysis process please refer to Appendix A.

### **3.6 Quality and Rigour**

When conducting this research project, the method chosen was guided by other research as a way to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the research design. Method approaches provided by Clarke and Braun (2017) and Dalglish et al. (2020) were referred to during data extraction and analysis. To enhance rigour the Graduate Supervisor, Dr, Susan Hutchinson, reviewed the coding framework.

To improve trustworthiness of the analysis and interpretation of this study, analysis of the first two policies were reviewed by the Supervisor before commencing with the extraction the remaining policies. 'Reflexive' memo documenting was used to consider my own positionality while reviewing the documents to capture my thinking during extraction and analysis (Dalglish et al., 2020).

### ***3.6.1 Reflexivity and Memoing***

Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe reflexivity as a method a qualitative researcher uses to reflect on how “their role within the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations” (p.182) and direction of the study. Reflexivity requires the researcher to address two key points: the first being to address past experiences related to the research topic, and the second requires commenting when identifying how past experiences have shaped the researcher’s interpretations. Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that personal experiences “may cause researchers to lean toward certain themes, to actively look for evidence to support their positions, and to create favorable or unfavorable conclusions about the sites or participants” (p. 184). In this study, my experiences shaped my interpretation of the research in the following ways. First, it was my observation that inclusion policy has provided minimal support to persons living with disabilities, as inclusion is typically left up to the individual or their support person to advocate for. Second, when working in recreation departments as an inclusion support as well as a Recreation Therapist in the community, the individuals I supported during a community activity still experienced isolation. I acknowledge that my professional experiences have made me critical of how inclusion of persons living with disabilities is being addressed when reviewing inclusion policies. As a result, I wanted to see role responsibilities identified by recreation departments, as well as to what guidance (procedures) are in place for recreation staff when providing inclusion to persons living with disabilities.

Memos are “notes written during the research process that reflect on the process or that help shape the development of codes and themes” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 184). I first used memos to record the day-by-day activities in relation to my thesis on a ‘sticky note’ app on my computer. I recorded dates and methods of contact for each municipality, as well as sidenotes

of potential contacts referred to by others and information that was interesting but excluded from data extraction/analysis (such as how Laval, Quebec offers an integrated youth camp and a specialized camp for youth 6-17 who live with disability). This contributed to providing an ‘audit trail’ that enhanced the rigor of the methods used.

Also, during the data extraction phase I noticed I began to self-interpret the data as I extracted. As a way to document my personal thoughts and interpretations I developed a column to memo these thoughts throughout the extraction phase. An example of a memo I wrote during extraction of an inclusion policy provided by Surrey, BC was: *It’s interesting that the policy states “their challenging needs” ... this language can be interpreted as negative and demeaning to an individual living with a disability..* This later informed my analysis when focusing on the theme surrounding language. I would use reflexive memos to write down any questions that popped into my mind during data extraction/analysis, which were later used throughout the discussion chapter. Using reflexive memos allowed me to recognize when I was interpreting data through my professional lens as opposed to through my researcher lens. For example, I began to make assumptions that certain inclusion policies did not have influence over recreation departments due to the nature of the policy’s intent; however, without directly speaking to recreation employees I knew I couldn’t make this assumption.

Once all the data were extracted, I reviewed the reflexive memos as a way to assist me in ensuring I was analyzing data while acknowledging my personal bias and its influence on my interpretation of the data. For example, I recognized that when I made the comment about the language used in the inclusion policy provided by the City of Surrey was negative, it influenced my interpretation of my data as I felt it was important to recognize language and the importance of language and terminology. However, I wanted to ensure I didn’t bring a negative attitude

towards terms or language used. Therefore I memo'd these more critical thoughts for reflection during the development of my discussion once I had an opportunity to analyze and understand the data. Using reflexive memoing provided me a safe space to record my personal thoughts and questions, without allowing the thoughts disrupt my data extraction and analysis.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

When considering what ethical issues may arise throughout this research, it was considered to be low risk. All documents collected throughout this environmental scan were publicly available documents. If the document publicly stated that it should not be used due to privacy reasons it was to be discarded; however, no documents reviewed provided such statements.

### **3.8 Dissemination Strategies**

Dissemination will be done by using a knowledge translation (KT) process to disseminate results of this study in hopes of improving community recreation contexts for persons living with disabilities. The first strategy will target recreation practitioners with the aim of assisting them to improve or create inclusion policy within their department. Infographics will be developed highlighting key findings and considerations. The infographic and a summary report will be communicated through email to contacts involved in the study. Within the report a summary of the research method, data collected, and findings will be presented. A free consultation call will also be offered for any municipality that might be interested in order to learn more information.

The second dissemination strategy will be to develop an article for a peer reviewed journal such as *Leisure/Loisir* to disseminate the findings of this study to other recreation and leisure academics and researchers who might be interested in inclusion policy within a community recreation context, and inform future research initiatives. The hope is that the

research article is published not just within an academic journal, but promoted through a summary report highlighting the findings and recommendations on websites that support inclusion initiatives within recreation such as *Active Living Alliance* and *Canadian Parks and Recreation Association* and *Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association*.

Lastly, knowledge transfer will be applied through conference presentations to inform the practitioners and educators in the Therapeutic Recreation field. The hope is to use the findings of this research to demonstrate how TR professionals can play an essential role in guiding the development of inclusion policy within community sport and recreation settings.

## Chapter 4 Results

### 4.1 Environmental Scan

The research question guiding this environmental scan of policy was: *How do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?* The READ document analysis process was applied to extract and analyze the data, this section will provide a detailed overview of findings within each category developed. An overview of policies collected are provided in the following section.

**Table 5**

#### *Number of Policy Documents Provided per Municipality*

<b>Municipality Name</b>	<b>Number of Policy Documents Provided</b>
Surrey, BC	n= 4
Edmonton, AB	n= 2
Saskatoon, SK	n= 2
Winnipeg, MB	n= 3
London, ON	n= 2
Laval, QC	n= 2
Moncton, NB	n= 3
Halifax, NS	n= 4
	Total= 22

### 4.2 Overview of Policy Document Types

When retrieving policy documents from municipalities throughout Canada, the types of documents received varied (official documents n=18 & implementation documents n=4).

**Table 6*****Policy Document Descriptions***

<b>Policy Document Title</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Type of Policy Document</b>	<b>Abbreviated Title</b>
Service Animals in the Facility	Surrey, BC.	Implementation document	Service Animal Policy
Attendant Procedure	Surrey, BC.	Implementation document	Attendant Procedure
Inclusion Policy	Surrey, BC.	Official document	Inclusion Policy
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027	Surrey, BC	Official document	Strategic Plan
Diversity and inclusion	Edmonton, AB	Official document	D&I Policy
The Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity & Inclusion Framework	Edmonton, AB	Official document	D&I Framework
Recreation and Parks Master Plan	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	Official document	Recreation Master Plan
Universal Design Policy	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Official document	U&D Policy
Introducing the Accessibility for Manitobans Act	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Official document	Accessibility Act
2019-2021 Accessibility Plan	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Official document	Accessibility Plan
2018-2021 City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	London, Ontario	Official document	Accessibility Plan
Integrated Accessibility Standards Procedure	London, Ontario	Official document	Standards Procedure
Plan d'action 2019-2020 à l'égard des personnes handicapées	Laval, Quebec	Official document	Action Plan for PwD
Portrait de l'environnement social à Laval	Laval, Quebec	Official document	SE Portrait
Moncton Accessibility Assessment: Universal Access, Guide to Standards and Best Practices	Moncton, New Brunswick	Implementation document	UA Guide
Accessibility Policy for Renovations, Additions	Moncton, New Brunswick	Official document	Accessibility Policy

and New Construction of City-owned Buildings			
Quality of Life for all monctonians: Plan 2016-2021	Moncton, New Brunswick	Official document	QoL Plan
Access and Discount Policy	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Implementation document	A&D Policy
Community Access and Inclusion Strategy: Parks and Recreation	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Official document	Recreation A&I Strategy
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Official document	I&A Policy
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: Recreation Programming Roles and Responsibilities	Halifax, Nova Scotia	Official document	Recreation I&A Policy

Surrey’s documents provided both implementation policy documents and official policy documents, identifying the intent and processes to providing inclusive services specific to the recreation department such as service animals in the facility, attendant procedures, and an inclusion policy. Surrey also provided a Parks, Recreation and Culture strategic plan with a detailed framework of how the department is going to improve inclusion services between 2018-2027. Edmonton and Winnipeg provided policy documents that focused on the municipality departments as a whole [D&I Policy; D&I Framework; UD Policy; Accessibility Act; Accessibility plan], instead of addressing just the Recreation department itself. Documents provided were frameworks or strategic plans, speaking more broadly about diversity and inclusion in regard to its employees and services; no implementation policy documents were provided. Saskatoon provided a master plan document [Recreation Master Plan] specific to inclusion within the recreation and parks department. Sections of the document focused on persons living with disabilities from individual to environmental contexts. London provided two official policy documents [Accessibility Plan; Standards Procedure] addressing inclusion and

accessibility at a policy-level addressing all municipal departments. Laval provided an official document [SE Portrait] summarizing data from statistical surveys to portray the challenges faced by community members of different backgrounds as an attempt to guide decision makers when developing inclusion policy or practices. Laval also provided an action plan policy document (formal document [Action Plan for PwD]) addressing specifically persons living with disabilities and accessing municipal services. Moncton and Halifax both provided extensive official policy documents and implementation documents, referring both to municipal services as a whole [UA Guide; Accessibility Policy]. Halifax provided policy documents that also targeted the recreation department [Recreation I&A Strategy; Recreation I&A Policy]. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador promotes inclusive services online, but responded to email requests by stating "...It is difficult to have a municipal policy surrounding inclusion and accessibility without provincial and national legislation. In absence of legislation, we tend to focus on strategies and best practices." No responses were provided to represent the province of PEI, or the Territories.

#### **4.3 Overview of Policy Categories**

As noted previously, policy categories and sub-categories were identified using the READ analysis (Dalglish et al., 2020) and thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In total six categories were constructed to describe how inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation contexts are being summarized within inclusion policy: 1) Levels of Influence, 2) Policy Intent, 3) Social and Physical Environment, 4) Definitions, 5) Target population, and 6) Intervention strategies. Thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was then applied to examine columns that provided extracted textual information (i.e., definitions, policy intent, policy intervention), while the categories that provided indicators of a *yes* or *no* response were quantified and interpreted.

#### **4.4 Level of Influence**

Each inclusion policy was categorized into one or more levels of influence from the socio-ecological approach (Appendix B). Intra and inter-personal levels were removed from the extraction table as they could not be evaluated within a policy document. In total, eight out of 22 inclusion policies representing four municipalities were categorized as fitting within the community level of influence.

##### ***4.4.1 Community Level***

The community level of influence was described as an inclusion policy that focused on relationships between recreation centres and other community organisations or institutions, informal social networks within centres themselves (i.e., community users), and/or provided procedural documents within the department. An example of this was Surrey's procedure [Attendant Procedure] policy document as it outlines the step-by-step process that should be taken by both the community members and the staff during the time of sale at community centres.

##### ***4.4.2 Organizational Level***

As described in table 4, a policy was categorized as meeting an organizational level of influence if it provided rules, regulation, policies, or informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviors specific to the recreation department (Robinson, 2008). When looking at the organizational level of influence, 11 inclusion policy documents from four different municipalities fit the description as a policy that addresses the recreation department either by constraining or promoting accessibility or inclusion; this included but was not limited to staff, staff training, departmental training (recreation/aquatic), inclusion training. An example

of an organizational level of policy was provided by Halifax where a section of the policy document [I&A Policy] focused on staff training which aimed:

To provide ongoing education and training to Parks & Recreation staff to ensure all staff are able to perform their duties, to provide the best and safest recreation experiences for all citizens of the HRM.

#### ***4.4.2 The Macro-level Approach to Inclusion***

As identified in table 4, a policy was considered as meeting the macro level of influence if it was a policy document that addresses or refers to local, provincial, or federal policies that regulate or support healthy actions and practices for prevention, early detection, control, and management (e.g., policies that addressed the municipality as a whole) (Robinson, 2008). More than half of the inclusion policies extracted fit into the macro level of influence (n=15) from six of the eight municipalities. This level focused on policy documents that addressed the municipality as a whole. This included policies and legislation at a local or national level aiming to regulate or support inclusion in municipalities i.e., goal statements, action plans, or frameworks developed by the municipality.

The only municipality in the study to not address inclusion policy at a macro-level was Surrey; all other municipalities provided inclusion policy documents that addressed inclusion at a macro-level. Winnipeg developed policy documents guided by the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. The policy document addressed the municipality as a whole, stating that their mission is to be “working together to achieve affordable, responsive, and innovative public service” [accessibility plan] providing roles and responsibilities for each sector of the municipal government. Saskatoon had also developed a ‘Master Plan’ to address inclusion within the recreation department [Recreation Master Plan]. Although this policy fits within the

organization-level of influence, it also fits the policy-level of influence as it was built based on the *Framework for Recreation in Canada* (2015) which is a national framework. Another policy from Edmonton provides an inclusion and diversity framework that focuses primarily on the municipality's workplace stating that the policy:

... includes a glance at our initial strides to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, and presents a detailed look at the path we have set to help each of us feel valued for our uniqueness and a strong sense of belonging in our workplace. (I&D Framework)

Due to the policy addressing all municipal work environments, the policy is considered macro-level, as the policy would have met the organizational level if it was developed to address the recreation department. The policies extracted from Winnipeg and Edmonton show variations in how inclusion policy is addressed at a macro-level, as each policy takes a different approach. While two of the policies address the municipality as a whole [D&I Framework; Accessibility Plan], one of the policies does this from an internal perspective (workplace inclusion and diversity [D&I Framework]), while the other focuses on providing inclusive public services [Accessibility Plan]. The inclusion policy document to cross-over between all three levels of the social ecological model was provided by Saskatoon [Recreation Master Plan] and was influenced by the *Framework for Recreation in Canada* (2015).

London outlined the city's strategic plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers within the municipality's services, programs, and facilities to meet the requirements designed by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) [Accessibility Plan]. Another policy provided by London stated its intent to eliminate accessibility barriers within areas of the municipality including customer service, information and communication, employment,

transportation and the design of public spaces [Standards Procedure]. Similarly, Laval's action plan "is based on the four main areas of universal accessibility: 1/ Architectural and urban planning, 2/ Programs, services and employment, 3/ Communication, 4/ Awareness and information" [Action Plan for PwD], providing various municipal departments with different objectives and action items to be completed. All three inclusion policies identify services or departments that aim to eliminate barriers to access. One of the documents provided by Laval provides a table with concrete objectives, action items, a timeline, and indication of success for each department [Action Plan for PwD]. Moncton provided an inclusion policy document focused on making municipal buildings inclusive for all participants by conducting accessibility assessments [Accessibility Policy]. In a policy plan provided by Moncton the document addresses how the municipality as a whole will adopt policies and practices to support social inclusion of all its citizens [QoL Plan].

These policies are all considered local-level government policies that regulate or support inclusion across all municipal departments. One document provided by Saskatoon [Recreation Master Plan] was specific to the recreation department, but was influenced by a national-level framework meeting both the policy-level and organizational-level of the socio-ecological model.

#### **4.5 Policy Intent**

This category was constructed to identify policy intent trends (i.e., the purpose of the policy) across the extracted documents. A few documents (n=4) did not provide a direct intent or purpose statement, and therefore were not included for analysis. Of those that did provide a statement (n=18), three themes were identified to represent a policy's intent or purpose: 1) To support equal access and opportunity, 2) To provide knowledge or understanding, and 3) To remove barriers. Examples of each are provided below.

#### ***4.5.1 Support Equal Access and Opportunity***

Surrey's inclusion policy document identified that the intent was "to support equal access and promote recreation for all" [inclusion policy] specifically targeting its community members. Saskatoon identified that it aims to provide opportunity within its programming to facilitate social inclusion, as well as mandate their community partners to do the same [Recreation Master Plan]. The purpose of inclusion policy documents focus majority on supporting equal access by providing opportunity. Some policies kept their statements more general and open to interpretation such as London's accessibility plan that states its intent is to outline "...the City of London's strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers within our municipal services, programs, and facilities and meet the legislative requirements set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005" [accessibility plan]. While other documents were more intentional and focused on a specific service, like the Surrey's implementation policy document where its intent is "to provide guidance to staff in the event that a patron attends a City of Surrey facility or program accompanied by either a Guide/Assistance (Service), or Therapy dog" [Service Animal Policy]; these two policy documents demonstrate the wide range of how broad or specific an inclusion policy can be.

#### ***4.5.2 Provide Knowledge or Understanding***

When looking at policies that intended to provide knowledge, Halifax identifies that the purpose of the strategy "is to provide guidance and direction to Park and Recreation staff, volunteers, stakeholders and partners to ensure that everyone has the opportunity, to participate in our programs and services." [A&I Strategy]. Laval identifies that the document is intended to guide the municipality in implementing guidelines and measures to make it an inclusive municipality by briefly describing the major issues and factors associated with social

development within the municipality [Action Plan for PwD]. Working documents are intended to be aspirational, capturing community members insights and reflecting on the community effort and interest in regard to building an inclusive municipality (Community, Diversity, and Inclusion, 2020). All the policies approached the intention to provide knowledge or understanding differently. When providing knowledge or understanding of inclusion different tactics seemed to be applied within the policy documents. The most common ways of providing knowledge or understanding were by providing community perspective or insight of inclusion, \procedures or steps to deliver a service or program, clarification of terms used, or knowledge of why inclusion is important. It seems that when the intent of the policy was to remove barriers associated to inclusion, the types of barriers addressed differed, this is explored in more detail in the next section.

#### ***4.5.3 To Remove Barriers***

Almost all of the inclusion policies used the term ‘barriers’ within their plan/framework/objective when addressing how a program or service would be accessible or inclusive to everybody. For example, Surrey provides two objectives to eliminating barriers to recreation [Strategic Plan]. Objective 1.1 focuses on identifying and reducing barriers more generally to provide access for everybody, with a focus on providing a low-cost program opportunity for families in need [Strategic Plan, Surrey]. Objective 1.3 provides a more specific focus on vulnerable populations by stating that “Barriers to recreation will be reduced through providing opportunities for people who are not currently participating, and by developing programs that are responsive to the needs of communities of people.” [Strategic Plan]. Surrey also provides a policy document the identifying departmental challenges that they face due to growing community awareness of the health benefits from participating in recreation activities,

acknowledging that they have barriers associated “to service, such as access, language and cost” [Recreation Strategic Plan].

Edmonton identifies the removal of systemic barriers as an objective although no description or procedures are provided to understand this statement in more detail [Inclusion Framework]. Winnipeg identified the removal of barriers in regard to accessing information [Accessibility Act]; notably, this policy is addressing all municipal sectors, and is not specific to the parks and recreation department. Both of these policies provided the term barrier briefly, provided below:

Remove systemic barriers and support innovation [D&I Framework]

For 2016, and every second year after that, the act will require Manitoba government and broader public sector organizations to prepare accessibility plans that address the identification, prevention and removal of barriers. [Accessibility Act]

London states that the municipality is committed to working towards:

elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

[Standards Procedure]

The document then goes into detail about the procedures associated with eliminating the identified barriers. Laval provides a policy document reviewed that identifies the major challenges experienced by persons living with disabilities and other groups of individuals in regard to social inclusion within their community [SE Portrait].

Halifax provides policies that address the reduction of barriers, specifically within the parks and recreation department [Recreation A&I Strategy; Recreation I&A Policy]. General statements such as “Parks and Recreation will aim to reduce barriers so everyone regardless of age, ability, income, culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and sexual identity has the opportunity to participate” [Recreation A&I Strategy] were most commonly used. However, some policies addressed more specific barriers such as financial barriers and barriers to participation. Halifax provides an example of how it will eliminate barriers to participation:

examples include developing equitable fee structures for those who face financial barriers, providing free play spaces (i.e. playgrounds, splash pads) in low income areas, developing equitable rental policies, and strategies to increase community access in unused facility space. [Recreation A&I Strategy; Recreation I&A Policy].

Four municipalities (Surrey, London, Laval, and Halifax) were able to provide some form of procedure to explain how at least one of the identified barriers will be removed, reduced, or prevented. The other municipalities identified removing barriers as an objective but did not provide any form of procedure or action that should be taken. The barriers identified varied in specification from addressing barriers that were in direct relation to accessing recreation programs or services, to more general barriers that addressed multiple municipal departments.

#### **4.6 Social and Physical Environment**

The physical and social environment of inclusion was equally addressed across all inclusion policy documents reviewed (Appendix C). The social environment of inclusion is defined as a function of social relationships where aid and assistance are exchanged through interpersonal interactions (including interactions between staff, interactions between community members and administration or staff, interactions between community members and others). A

policy was considered to be addressing the social environment if it focused on areas such as administrative support, staff training, hiring, assessment and evaluation, communication services, activity adaptations, procedural documents, a sense belonging and more (Anderson, 2020). A policy was considered to be addressing the physical environment if it targeted the availability and access of the built or natural environment including places such as parks, playgrounds, sports and recreation facilities and gyms (Anderson, 2020).

Policies that addressed the social environment most commonly addressed one or more of the following areas: administrative support, staff training/knowledge, a sense of belonging. Surrey policy documents provided administrative support by outlining procedures that should take place in order to support access to community members [Service animals Policy; Attendant Procedure]. Halifax focused on administrative support by providing guidance on administering a fee discount for individuals living with a disability [A&D Policy]. In Surrey's strategic plan one of the main objectives involves focusing on creating welcoming environments for all, identifying the importance of providing recreational spaces that foster a sense of belonging [Strategic Plan]. Edmonton addresses staff knowledge by stating that staff will have an awareness and understanding of the issue's community members experience and accept community differences [D&I Framework]. Saskatoon provides a where two out of three goals address the social environment, focusing specifically on fostering a sense of community identity and individual growth [Recreation Master Plan]. London and Laval provide policy documents that all focus on promoting the social participation of all community members, providing understanding of the social barriers experienced by community members through community consultation [Accessibility Plan; Standards Procedure; Action Plan for PwD; SE Portrait]. Halifax provides policies with a focus on the social environment. For example, Halifax identifies the importance

of individual and community wellbeing. One of the training topics that will be provided to staff is how to effectively interact and communicate with persons living with disabilities [Recreation A&I Strategy]. Two inclusion policy documents addressed activity adaptation. Assessment or evaluation was mentioned in the policy only to address the built environment.

The built environment was addressed in more than half of the inclusion policies, identifying the importance of developing accessible and inclusive physical environments. Surrey mentions the physical environment briefly within two policy documents, stating that the purpose of the policy is to “Identify needs and opportunities related to facility and service delivery” [Recreation Strategic Plan]. All the other municipalities provide policy that describes the physical environment of inclusion in more detail. Examples of this include: implementing built environment measurement tools, referring to building codes or universal design criteria, and removing physical barriers associated to access of a facility or program [Accessibility Plan; Accessibility Policy; Standards Procedure; UA Guide; Recreation Master Plan; UD Policy].

#### **4.7 Definitions**

Out of the 22 policies analyzed, 11 policies provided definitions for key terms used throughout the document, from those 11 policies seven out of the eight municipalities were represented. The term inclusion and disability were defined the most, appearing in four separate policy documents.

Inclusion was defined by two municipalities, Edmonton and Halifax. Three different definitions were provided, two of the definitions were provided by Edmonton, one from a policy developed in 2008 while the other was provided in a policy developed in 2019. The definition provided by Halifax was modified from the definition provided by the Oxford dictionary. Refer to table seven for the definitions of inclusion.

**Table 7**

***Inclusion definitions***

<b>Definition of Inclusion</b>	<b>Source</b>
Involving and valuing human differences and viewing such differences as strengths	Edmonton [D&I Policy]
Creating an environment in which all individuals feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and skills. Differences are considered opportunities for individual and organizational growth. Everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to our City's success.	Edmonton [D&I Framework]
Inclusion is the state of being included within a group, structure or activity regardless of ability, culture, ethnicity, language, race, age, economic status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation or sexuality. (Adapted from "Community facility Master Plan II, p24 and modified from Oxford Dictionary)	Halifax [Recreation A&I Strategy]

All three documents refer to inclusion as a sense of belonging despite individual differences. The Edmonton document provides definitions that acknowledge individual differences as a community strength. All inclusion definitions address one or more populations, keeping the definitions broad and inclusive to anybody within a community.

Four definitions of disability were provided; of these, three out of four were cited or adapted by another organization. The definitions are provided in table eight below.

**Table 8*****Disability Definitions***

<b>Definition of Disability</b>	<b>Source</b>
Has no social, economic or educational boundaries, can occur at any stage of life, may be temporary or permanent.	Winnipeg [Accessibility Act]
a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device, b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, d) a mental disorder, or e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.	London [Standards Procedure]

<p>The United Nations Convention on Disabilities states the following: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.</p>	<p>Moncton [Accessibility Policy]</p>
<p>Disability is an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, intellectual, mental, sensory, developmental, or some combination of these impairments that results in restrictions on an individual’s ability to participate in what is considered “normal” in their everyday society. A disability may be present from birth or occur during a person’s lifetime. “Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives”. — World Health Organization, Disabilities</p>	<p>Halifax [I&amp;A Policy]</p>

The disability definitions provided by both the Halifax and Moncton address a more holistic understanding of disability, acknowledging that living with a disability means that there is some sort of impediment in their ability to participate within the social constructs of day-to-day living, while both Winnipeg and London use a more medically oriented definition of disability.

The terms *access* and *support person/attendant* were the next two most frequently defined terms, as they were identified in three separate inclusion policy documents. Other terms that were defined more than once within the 11 inclusion policies included: guide dog, diversity, equity, barrier, and recreation. For all additional definitions refer to Appendix D.

#### **4.8 Target Population**

The four inclusion policies provided by Surrey address persons living with disabilities. Surrey provided two implementation documents [Service Animal Policy; Attendant Procedure], and one official document [Inclusion Policy]. All provide procedures for recreation staff to follow if a person living with a disability was to access the facilities or programs. Although these documents address persons living with disabilities, the overall intent of the documents seems to focus on educating staff on the rights of a patron and the steps that should be taken to reduce any barriers when accessing the service [Service Animal Policy]. Surrey's strategic plan includes community consultation processes that were completed with persons living with disabilities amongst other minority groups to assist with the development of the strategic plan [Recreation Strategic Plan]. However, it is unclear whether the consultations addressed within the strategic plan had any influence over the other policy documents identified above.

Saskatoon implemented community consultations with persons living with disabilities [Recreation Master Plan]. This policy is a framework for creating meaningful, accessible

recreation at a community, organizational, and individual level. Saskatoon determined five focus areas, complemented by three goals and 19 service outcomes, each directly or indirectly addressing the rights of persons living with disabilities; examples of some service outcomes that focus on persons living with disabilities from individual to environmental settings include [Recreation Master Plan]:

- All citizens of Saskatoon feel included and welcome: Community growth and development in Saskatoon is fostered through increased contact between people of varying ages and backgrounds. This contact can take many forms. For example, recreation and parks services provide opportunities for interchange between seniors and younger adults or children, with a view to transmitting cultural heritage across generations. Community growth is fostered through an integrative mixing of ethnic and cultural groups so each better understands and appreciates the differences and strengths of the other. Multicultural recreation and cultural services will be important in the years ahead as Saskatoon experiences increased immigration. Community growth is also fostered by integrating people with disabilities into mainstream programming. Whether individuals have physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities, recreation can be used as a leveling force. (p.15)
- Saskatoon's environment is interpreted for all to understand and enjoy: Residents have opportunities to learn about, understand, relate to, and experience various aspects of our built and natural environments as well as our impacts on them. (p.17)

Winnipeg provided two documents addressing persons living with disabilities [Accessibility Act; Accessibility Plan]. Both of these documents addressed the involvement of persons living with disabilities during the development of the documents through either community

consultation or formal provincially mandated committees. For example, one of these committees was mandated by the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* which states “all public sector bodies are required to consult with persons disabled by barriers or representatives from organizations of persons disabled by barriers in the development of their plans” [Accessibility Plan]. Similarly, London included persons living with disabilities within the development of their accessibility plan by identifying their involvement within the strategic working groups, although it does not provide enough information to understand the extent or consistency of their involvement throughout the development of policy [Accessibility Plan].

Halifax targeted persons living with disabilities within their policies, both identifying the rights of persons living with disabilities, but neither provide enough information to understand if persons living with disabilities were consulted during the development of these documents [A&D Policy; Recreation A&I Strategy].

In summary, 10 out of the 24 policies extracted focused directly on persons living with disabilities; of the ten documents four identified the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in the development of the policy document from three separate municipalities (Appendix E).

#### **4.9 Intervention strategies**

The intervention category in the extraction table was constructed to represent intervention strategies implemented (or recommended) within inclusion policies. An intervention strategy is described as either a procedure or action taken to achieve the policy intent. Four key intervention strategies were identified throughout the analysis of the inclusion policies: 1) Assessment, 2) Universal design, 3) Role of staff, and 4) Advocacy and awareness.

An example of a policy document that uses assessment as a strategy is from Moncton as it provides an assessment tool that “sets out technical provisions for the design and construction

of new buildings. It also applies to the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings.” [UA Guide].

When considering intervention strategies with a focus on universal design, Winnipeg provides methods to ensure universal design within their practices, an example of this being “All public meetings and community consultations will take place in accordance with universal design principles” [UD Policy]. The sections below will discuss the role of staff and advocacy/awareness as intervention strategies, and the different ways these intervention strategies were addressed.

#### ***4.9.1 Role of Staff***

Intervention strategies that targeted the role of the staff typically addressed accessible customer services and frontline duties. Surrey provides a more detailed procedure on the actions to be taken when having a service animal within the facility [Service Animal Policy]. Similarly, a step-by-step procedure is also highlighted by Surrey, for staff to follow for when an individual attends a recreation facility with an attendant present [Attendant Procedure]. Halifax addresses customer service outcomes by identifying the specific steps a staff person should take when providing service such as admitting an attendant without charge and tracking attendant registrations or drop-ins during point of sale [I&A Policy]. Other inclusion policies identified training, improving customer services, information and communication, and customer support as action items but lacked procedures or steps on how these actions were to be implemented (Edmonton [D&I Framework], Winnipeg [Accessibility Act; Accessibility Plan], Laval [Action Plan for PwD], London [Accessibility Plan]).

#### ***4.9.2 Advocacy and Awareness***

Many of the inclusion policies addressed advocacy or awareness as part of their inclusion policy. Training was identified as the primary tool to promote awareness of inclusion amongst employees, as the Surrey identified that

Parks and Recreation values ongoing training and development to ensure that staff and volunteers have the knowledge and skill necessary to provide service excellence in the area of access and inclusion. [I&A Policy]

Surrey also addressed the importance of increasing public awareness through public education and providing awareness events as a way to promote the accessible opportunities the Parks and Recreation Department had to offer [Inclusion Policy]. Edmonton stated within their policy that they would “encourage institutions, organizations, community groups, and individuals in Edmonton to adopt inclusive approaches to diversity” [D&I Policy] as a way to advocate for community inclusion. Winnipeg identified within their policy that they would collaborate across municipal departments to develop new programs or training tools rather than utilizing existing ones [UD Policy] as a way to build staff knowledge. Although the approach to building awareness of inclusion has been identified through policy through the use of education, it is clear the type of education varies depending on the target audience of the inclusion policy varying from formal trainings to public events.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

Through the analyses of this environmental scan, six themes and five sub-themes were developed by reviewing 22 municipal policy documents across eight municipalities in eight different provinces. The findings aimed to understand the landscape of inclusion policy within municipal recreation departments when addressing persons living with disabilities. Most

inclusion policy targets municipal staff or community partners. It was also noted that very few municipalities identified whether the inclusion policies were developed in collaboration with persons living with disabilities. Few inclusion policies provide definitions of terms such as inclusion, accessibility, disability, or barriers. Overall, municipal recreation departments as a whole have an awareness that inclusion is important to address but have not yet developed implementation policy documents to provide the *how*.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

This research study used an environmental scan to collect inclusion policy documents from municipal recreation departments across Canada to answer the following research question: *How do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?* Through the review of 22 municipal policy documents across eight municipalities in eight provinces, six key findings were identified in relation to: 1) Levels of Influence, 2) Policy intent, 3) Social and physical environment, 4) Defining accessibility and inclusion, 5) Inclusion of persons living with disabilities in inclusion policy, and 6) Intervention strategies.

This section will provide discussion on key concepts or issues derived from the findings chapter. Throughout the analysis of the findings the social model understanding of disability (Devine & Mobily, 2017) and my reflexive memoing influenced the interpretation of the data. As a reminder, a social model of disability that understands that disability is a product of the barriers created by social constructs was used (Devine & Mobily, 2017). Reflexivity is used to reflect on how a researcher's "role within the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 182). The landscape of inclusion policy in municipal recreation and the implications for practice are interpreted from the findings of this study. This chapter will conclude by providing recommendations for future research in the area of inclusion policy for recreation contexts.

### **5.1 Landscape of Inclusion Policy in Municipal Recreation**

#### ***5.1.1 Macro-level of Inclusion Policy***

When considering the socio-ecological level of influence of an inclusion policy, the majority of policies reviewed fit under the macro-level of influence (n=15) as seven of the eight

municipalities provided macro-level policy documents. A macro-level influence meant that the policy was developed at a local, provincial, or national level to regulate or support inclusion of a municipality as a whole (Robinson, 2008). Inclusion policies under this level are characterized as goal statements, action plans or frameworks targeting all municipal departments (Townsend & Foster, 2011) by using blanket statements without specifically targeting each individual municipal department. These policies typically address a variety of marginalized populations including Indigenous or Aboriginal people, newcomers or immigrants, as well as persons living with disabilities. In some cases, this level of policy will communicate explicit intentions (e.g., value and respect diversity and inclusion when considering cultural, economic, social, and political environments) without identifying specific populations.

As noted previously, Lucas and Smith (2019) found that majority of municipalities agreed that parks and recreation are within the top ten policy issues to address, given that most bigger municipalities have developed recreation service delivery frameworks. An important finding from the current study was that the policy documents that addressed all municipal departments did not provide details on how each department is to achieve inclusion successfully. Within the current study, it was noted that the documents reviewed did identify possible barriers to access and/or inclusion and did provide potential solutions, but did not outline the steps that would need to be taken to implement recommended strategies. As an example, one formal inclusion policy document identified that the programs were to support full inclusion for individuals who may require additional supports, but yet did not identify what additional supports could be provided; nor did they provide policy documents that should be implemented to achieve full inclusion of a participant. Overall, policy documents that addressed all municipal departments did not provide details on how each department is to achieve inclusion successfully.

Policies “explain how goals will be achieved and serve as guides that define the general course and scope of activities permissible for goal accomplishments” (Carter et al., 2014, p. 62). Due to the varying types of policy documents reviewed there were also significant variations in what was to be addressed in the policy documents, allowing opportunity for interpretation by the implementer or reader. Until more inclusion training and tools such as the *Inclusion U* training (Anderson, 2020) are developed to guide recreation practitioners, opportunities to address inclusion in different environmental contexts will be missed.

### ***5.2.2 Terms and Language Used***

When considering the research question, it is clear that many of the inclusion policy documents reviewed neglected to provide an explicit definition or description of inclusion and disability, which is an issue that has been noted in the literature. Clement and Bigby (2009) identified that inclusion has been a focus in policy for the past 30 years. However, they indicated that inclusion is a poorly defined term causing confusion about its meaning, confusion about how to understand the issues it is attempting to address, and confusion about how it is measured or evaluated to ensure it is accomplished. It seems 12 years later this conclusion is still relevant. Within the current study there was a lack of definitions provided within policy documents, resulting in misinterpretation of *who* and *what* the policy is addressing, as well as *how* inclusion will be accomplished.

Sterman et al. (2019) identified that one of the issues that influenced decision-making within local government is perceptions of disability. Necessarily these perceptions influence definitions that are adopted and vice-versa (the definitions inform the way to think about inclusion issues). Within the current study, four definitions of disability were provided by four of the municipal policies reviewed. Within the definitions provided, two municipalities offer

definitions of disability that support a medical model view of disability (American Therapeutic Recreation Association, 2013). By using a medical model understanding of disability the organizations are sending the message that it is up to the user to find services that meet their needs, as opposed to a social model view of disability that recognizes the social constructs [built environment, program service delivery] within recreation environments as the barriers that need to be changed, in order to become inclusive/accessible spaces (Anderson, 2020).

Approaching disability from a medical model perspective can create a culture of ‘othering’ persons living with disabilities and supports an able-bodied view of society (Aitchison, 2009); examples of this within a recreation setting might include providing a segregated program option or providing inaccessible spaces. In some cases, it could be that a medical model definition of disability is adopted by the organization and, although they may offer inclusive services, they promote a culture where persons living with disabilities are viewed as sick or injured and in need of repair (Aitchinson, 2009). The risk of an organization adopting a medical model understanding of disability might be that inclusion of persons living with disabilities is only measured from a physical presence, and therefore, a sense of belonging or acceptance is not taken into consideration by the organization.

It was heartening that the social model of disability was adopted by some of the participating municipalities. As noted above, adoption of the social model view of disability promotes the understanding that disability is a product of a barrier created by social constructs when trying to access a community service (Devine & Mobily, 2017). When considering what the social model of disability might look like within a recreation setting, examples vary from providing environmental supports such as adapted equipment or activity adaptations to inclusion training and evaluation (Anderson, 2020). It is clear through the policy documents reviewed that

the intent of municipalities is to address disability from a social model lens; however, the language and terms provided did not seem to always align with the strategies identified.

With 11 documents providing some type of definition for key words used within the document, inclusion was defined by two municipalities with three definitions provided. The definitions of inclusion provided by the two municipalities address acceptance of individual differences, and the importance of creating an atmosphere that is accepting to everybody creating a sense of belonging. These definitions are aligned with my own understanding of inclusion derived from Sharpe et al. (2016) and Ponio and Frisby (2010) as a process striving towards a sense of belonging as the main outcome. By providing definitions of key terms within policy documents a clearer understanding of what inclusion means and how it is being addressed will be understood by both employees implementing the policy and the general public (Paige, 2003).

The importance of focusing on common language has been recently emphasized in a report looking at best practices for inclusion in Canada (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020). In particular, Arbour-Nicitopoulos and colleagues suggest adopting the Government of Canada's definition of disability which is a definition of disability influenced by the social model. They further identify the importance of defining terms related to disability, inclusion, and access to create some consistency. In turn, consistent terminology will provide consistent directions for organizations to understand who is being supported and how they (organizations) are providing support.

In summary, it is important for policy developers to consider clear, concise, and consistent language for both employees and general public to have transparent understanding of inclusion in service delivery.

### ***5.2.3 Organizational Level of Inclusion Policy***

The organizational level of policy is defined by Robinson (2008) as rules, regulation, policies, and informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviors. Within this current study, an inclusion policy document was considered to meet the organizational level if the policy addressed formal structures/procedures and rules specific to the recreation department. Examples of organizational level policy documents included recreation staff roles, departmental training (recreation/aquatic), and program adaptations. Based on this current review, half of the municipal recreation departments provided inclusion policy designed specifically for the recreation department. When looking at the type of inclusion policies developed for recreation departments, two municipalities provided implementation policy documents specific to the recreation department. When implementation documents were provided it allowed the reader to have a more concrete understanding of *how* the recreation department was implementing inclusion policy that may have been briefly addressed within municipal (policy level) strategic plans or frameworks. Echoing the words of Mobily and Dieser (2018) “the devil is in the details” (p.12) which suggests that implementation policy documents are needed to guide community members and staff through a step-by-step process of *how* the inclusion initiative identified will be delivered/received within the recreation department.

Arbour-Nicitopoulos and colleagues (2020) published a report called *Canadian Practices in Inclusive Recreation* during the data collection phase of this research project. Provincial and territorial recreation associations were interviewed to gather an understanding of how recreation was currently practicing inclusive recreation. Within the report they identified four key recommendations to further inclusion and access in recreation within Canada; one of those recommendations was *Policy and Practices*. Within this recommendation it was noted that there

is a need to develop tools that specifically focuses on “inclusion and access in all aspects of operations” (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020, p. 33).

Organizational level policies should provide some level of detail on the *how* with regard to the implementation of inclusion practices/policies through implementation policy documents (i.e., procedures or operational plans). If implementation documents are developed by municipal recreation departments both the consumer and staff member can have a concrete understanding of who is being addressed in the policy and how the policy will be implemented. Lucas and Smith (2019) identify the need to understand how policy development occurs within municipal structures as it seems as though there is no mandated framework or structure in place, but rather an assumption that municipalities are following policy development best practices or have policy analysts that develop municipal policies. When considering organizational policies (such as the recreation department), there is uncertainty about who is in charge of policy development, and if development of inclusion policy only happens if there is a role specifically devoted to it (i.e., an inclusion facilitator role is hired and expected to develop inclusion policy specifically targeting recreation departments services).

When considering inclusion policy development, two municipalities explicitly mention involving persons living with disabilities during policy development. Literature recommends that in order to best understand inclusion service delivery, persons living with disabilities should be consulted throughout each step of inclusion policy development (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020; Sterman et al., 2019). Other researchers (Anderson, 2020; Craig et al., 2019; Clement & Bigby, 2009; Kruithof et al., 2018; Lucas & Smith, 2019) claim that there is a need to understand the organizational and community barriers associated to inclusion from the perspectives of persons living with disabilities. Community consultation is an important step within policy

development (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015). Therefore policy documents should consider highlighting a consultation summary to identify how community consultation impacted policy development. Clement and Bigby (2009) identified that recreation professionals do not have a clear understanding to how their services and structures contribute to the quality, amount, and experience of inclusion. Sterman et al. (2019) also addressed the absence of meaningful community engagement to ensure inclusion services, programs, or policy, meets the needs of the persons it is attempting to address. By conducting community consultation that involves persons living with disabilities, professionals are able to better understand the barriers impacting persons living with disabilities when accessing recreation and leisure services, as well as provide solutions that can be integrated into policy (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020).

Until recreation departments take on a leadership role in the development of inclusion policy and adopt methods such as community consultation to understand inclusion from the perspective of their community members, the inclusion needs of individuals living with disabilities will continue to be unmet, and social inclusion will unlikely be accomplished in recreation or leisure settings (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020; Clement & Bigby, 2009).

#### ***5.2.4 Physical and Social Environment***

The policy documents reviewed appear to be designed to address both the social and physical environment. For example, some provided a table that identified the barrier experienced (physical or social), assigned a specific department to address the barrier, and an anticipated timeline for completion. The importance of addressing both the physical and social environment within inclusion-related policies and practices has been identified within both practice and the extant literature (Anderson, 2020; Arbour-Nicitopoulos, et al., 2020; Clement & Bigby, 2009; CPRA/ISRC, 2015; Mobily & Dieser, 2018). As previously reviewed, Anderson (2020)

identified three overall types of environments for inclusion: 1) physical inclusion, 2) social inclusion administrative practices, and 3) social inclusion program practices. The findings from this study are discussed in relation to these three different types of program environments.

#### **5.2.4.1 Physical Environment.**

When reviewing inclusion policy documents that focused on the physical environment it appeared there was no direct influence on the recreation department unless the respective public works departments were developing a new facility. Within the documents reviewed, accessibility of the physical environment included elements such as parking lots, path of travel to entrance, the entrance to facility, the facility, and washrooms. The parks and recreation department was assigned the design of public spaces (physical environment) including renovating playground spaces, outdoor eating areas and pathways of travel within park areas.

Recreation literature identifies location and transportation of the accessible facility or playground as important factors when considering the physical design (Craig et al., 2019; Sterman et al., 2019). Yet, based on the review of policies included in this study, the majority of inclusion policies did not address these elements of the physical environment or provide context for how these factors impact facility design. When considering the physical environment and recreation, inclusion policy documents need to consider barriers beyond path of travel and the internal facility features and include factors like location of the facility, transportation/or accessibility of the facility location.

#### **5.2.4.2 Social Environment and Administrative Practices.**

Common ways inclusion policy documents within the study addressed inclusion within the social environment and administrative practices was through strategies such as staff and management training, attendant fee deductions within programs, as well as other fee deduction programs for

individuals experiencing financial issues. This is consistent with the best practices recommended by Anderson (2020).

Darcy and Dowse (2013) identify the need for fee deduction programs, as cost was identified as a barrier to sport and recreation participation. It is encouraging to see that the policy documents reviewed have identified the importance of providing reduced cost opportunities for individuals living with disabilities. The ways in how fee reduction was addressed differed between policy documents. Some policy documents addressed program fee reduction, understanding that individuals living with disabilities typically experience financial constraint. Other policy documents provided fee waiver procedures to waive the cost for accompanying attendants or support persons during attendance of a program or service.

Most policy documents reviewed suggested that staff and/or management receive some sort of inclusion training. Inclusion training is addressed in literature as one of the most important methods to providing inclusion (Anderson, 2020; Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2010). Quality inclusion training/education can provide recreation staff the appropriate knowledge needed to provide supportive recreation environments for individuals living with disabilities (Anderson, 2020; Miller et al., 2009). However, Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al. (2020) identify the lack of training opportunities available in Canada to provide education to recreation practitioners. After reviewing the policy documents there is a need to further understand what kind of inclusion trainings the current policy documents are addressing and how training programs are evaluated to ensure consistency in core competencies being educated.

None of the policy documents addressed the importance of using inclusive communication when engaging with the public. Inclusive communication is considered an asset when attempting to create inclusive administrative services. By addressing inclusive

communication/language within policy a foundational understanding of what inclusion means and who it addresses can be understood by both community members and the organization (Anderson, 2020; Clement & Bigby, 2009).

Needs assessments were not addressed within inclusion policies reviewed in this current study. Yet, by providing needs assessments as a component of registration processes inclusive recreation services can be more personalized to the user accessing the recreation facility or program and should be considered by a recreation organization (Anderson, 2020). Within the current study, no policies provided an understanding of how inclusion services will be evaluated. However, this is an important consideration if an organization is to understand if their inclusion services are working as they intended (Anderson, 2020; Miller et al., 2009). Future inclusion policy documents should consider targeting other areas of the administrative environment such as inclusive communication and assessment/evaluation.

#### **5.2.4.3 Social Environment and Program Practices for Inclusion in Recreation.**

When understanding how the social environment and program practices are addressed in inclusion policy documents, the inclusion policies reviewed most commonly mentioned services such as attendants and one-to-one staff. Miller, Schleien, and Bowens (2010) provided a study that specifically addressed the importance of support staff within a recreation setting, stating that most recreation organizations reported allocating 80% or more of their inclusion budget to hiring support staff. Miller et al. (2009) identified that although inclusion facilitators and supports can have a crucial role in inclusive service delivery, research and policies need to consider providing alternative inclusion support methods when implementing inclusive service delivery (e.g., adapted equipment, activity adaptations, training).

Further, when reviewing the policy documents, it was assumed that if a service such as *inclusion support worker* was offered by the municipality that implementation policy documents would be provided. Within the current study most formal policy documents highlighted *support persons* as a service without providing any implementation policy documents to understand what a support person can or cannot do when accompanying a participant. Whether these documents are considered confidential and therefore not provided or do not exist is unclear. However, there is concern and potential risk if municipal recreation departments do not provide detailed implementation policy documents informing more complex practices such as personal care, de-escalation protocols, or medication protocols.

The inclusion policies reviewed seemed to be in their infancy when addressing inclusion initiatives specific to the recreation department. More implementation policy documents are needed to provide understanding on the boundaries of inclusive services such as adapted equipment or programming, positive behavioural supports, activity adaptations and more. Mobily and Dieser (2018) identified that recreation professionals are quick to address the adaptation of an individual to fit into the environment, as opposed to adapting the environment to fit the needs of the individual. More inclusion education and tools are needed to support recreation practitioners to understand how to adapt and remove barriers within the organizational environment of recreation services (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020).

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

This section will address five key recommendations for practice when considering inclusion policy development within municipal recreation departments for persons living with disabilities. From there the concept of a sport and recreation inclusion consultant role will be explored by describing a pilot position supported by the Province of Nova Scotia.

### **5.3.1 Overall Recommendations**

Throughout the review of inclusion policies only four municipalities provided policy documents that directly targeted recreation departments. No research exists to understand what steps should be taken when developing inclusion policy within municipal recreation departments. The five key recommendations were developed after completion of this study: 1) Apply the socio-ecological framework, 2) Use inclusive language, 3) Develop implementation policy documents specific to recreation procedures, 4) Consult and involve persons living with disabilities, and 5) Develop Therapeutic Recreation municipal role.

In order for inclusion policies and practices within municipal recreation departments to be preventative, an ecological approach should be taken. By applying a socio-ecological framework, recreation departments' approach to supporting individuals living with disabilities will shift from focusing on providing individual education to support the opportunity to access a service, to focusing on changing the physical and social environment of recreation services to provide more supportive and inclusive opportunities (Anderson, 2020). A socio-ecological approach to inclusion policy means that procedures or practices influence varying levels (community, organization, macro-levels) in order to be effective. Both the physical and social environment also need to be addressed in policy if inclusion is to be achieved. To further understand how these two types of environments are addressed within a recreation setting, it is recommended that education opportunities like the *Inclusion U* training developed by Anderson (2020) are taken by recreation professionals as a way to further their knowledge and understanding of inclusion and accessibility prior to developing inclusion policy or programming.

Inclusive language is recommended as a key consideration when developing inclusion policy. Clear understanding of terms such as inclusion and disability are important in order to understand the boundaries of their meanings. The inclusion policy documents have demonstrated that the term inclusion can have various definitions and meanings. By providing a clear definition of what inclusion means, it can allow for more meaningful policy development as recreation professionals will be able to understand the parameters of how they can address inclusion. Therefore, it is recommended that definitions that are provided by federal or provincial government bodies such as *disability* are adopted to create consistency in language. For more abstract terms such as *inclusion* it is recommended that the definition acknowledge that inclusion is for all persons (regardless of ability, culture, race, ethnicity, language, age economic status, sexual orientation, gender, or religion) and its main goal is to achieve a sense of belonging and acceptance when engaging in an activity, program, service, or space. How inclusion looks is dependent on community needs and values, engaging community members to develop a more intricate definition of inclusion is recommended. By providing clear definitions both the consumer and the organization can have transparency on the meaning of *who* or *what* is being addressed in policy documents. It is also important that when providing inclusion education or training, that inclusive communication (e.g., person-first, strength-based) is included within the training, as to ensure staff or volunteers are promoting a socially inclusive space.

Most disability advocacy groups have the slogan *nothing about us without us* as a statement to infer that policies should be developed in collaboration with the population it is attempting to address. We see this at a policy level by Saskatoon and Surrey, as both address community consultation within their policy documents when creating objectives or actions for the municipality as a whole. Arbour-Nicitopoulos, et al. (2020) also recommended developing a

training and advocacy tool that increases awareness and understanding of why it is important to create or improve inclusive programming; emphasis was given to including community members voices throughout the tool development. Recreation departments should focus their efforts on including persons living with disabilities throughout the inclusion policy development process, engaging key stakeholders to provide input and feedback on what social and physical supports are needed for an inclusive recreation department. When finalizing inclusion policy documents, it is recommended that the document identify if community consultation occurred during the development and how, in order to provide transparency.

McKenney (2017) identified the need for professionals in both the community recreation and TR sectors to collaboratively work together to provide inclusive community recreation opportunities for diverse populations. As noted in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the national framework for recreation in Canada (Pathways to Wellbeing) also highlights the need to address inclusion as one of its five strategic priorities. While the *Framework* document does not explicitly identify TR professionals as partners in implementing strategic priorities within the Framework, there is an emphasis on the need for partnerships and collaboration. For example, in the Executive Summary it is stated:

Although this paper and the Framework it contains is primarily written for and by the recreation and parks field, its implementation requires discussion and collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders... Our opportunity is to identify concrete ways to work together that enable all people in Canada to enjoy recreation and outdoor experiences in supportive physical and social environments (Framework for Recreation in Canada, 2015), p. 5)

Reid, Murphy, Hutchinson, & Sullivan (2018) identified areas of the *Framework* that strongly align with TR programming, suggesting that the strongest alignment between the TR profession and the *Framework for Recreation in Canada* (2015) was goal two, inclusion and access. It is clear that community recreation and TR have more similarities than differences between the two professions; Reid et al. (2018) suggested that stronger partnerships between the professions of community recreation and TR are needed in order to achieve the goals of the *National Recreation Framework* (Reid et al., 2018).

As mentioned in the literature review, TR is a “health care profession that utilizes a therapeutic process, involving leisure, recreation, and play as a primary tool for each individual to achieve their highest level of independence and quality of life” (CTRA, 2020). McKenney (2017) suggests that although parks and recreation services are cautious to provide resources to TR professionals, the concepts of TR are valued by parks and recreation bodies. TR professionals are unique as they implement systematic processes through assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating (APIE) when providing recreation services (Wolfe, 2017). It is recommended that TR professionals become involved in inclusion program and policy development due to the systematic processes that are utilized by TR professionals. Collaboration between community recreation and TR professionals during the different stages of the policy development is recommended, to develop multi-level influenced inclusion policies specific to recreation services for persons living with disabilities.

The following section will introduce how one Canadian province bridged the role of TR within the recreation and sport sector, and how the role has provided support in relation to providing inclusive community services for persons living with disabilities.

### ***5.3.2 The Role of a Sport and Recreation Inclusion Consultant***

Within the province of Nova Scotia in the department of Community, Culture, and Heritage department each geographic region within the province of Nova Scotia has a team made up of a regional manager, a sport consultant, and a physical activity consultant. Each is responsible for supporting community and municipal organizations from individualized projects to assisting with grant applications. The Fundy and Highland Regional Managers collectively agreed that data were needed to understand the inclusion and accessibility landscape of sport and recreation within the Northern Region (East Hants County, Cumberland County, Colchester County, and Pictou County). In 2017 the regional managers and sport consultants partnered with a local university to conduct community interviews, focus groups, and surveys as well as a jurisdictional scan to identify the barriers associated with inclusion and access to recreation and sport for persons living with disabilities. Organizations that serve the general public or persons living with disabilities, as well as families of individuals who live with a disability, were involved in the data collection process. The findings in the report identified three key barriers in their region: 1) lack of resources (time and money to create inclusive programming and make changes to the built environment), 2) lack of organizational and decision-maker knowledge (in relation to accessibility demographics and issues at the community level is limited and often difficult to find), and 3) lack of community awareness and knowledge (about existing programs, policies, and other resources is low) (Province of Nova Scotia and Sport Nova Scotia, 2017). As a result, from these findings the northern region was able to fund a pilot position called the *Sport and Recreation Inclusion Consultant*.

I've been fortunate enough to serve in this role since March 2020. The workplan for my position was designed based on the findings of the data from 2017 and an Inclusion and Access

Committee was created. The Northern Region Inclusion and Access Committee was built from a variety of community stakeholders, including advocacy groups like Special Olympics and Parasport to municipal recreation managers and healthcare professionals within the region. The Committee provides direction and guidance to my role and the work that I do. The development of this role has demonstrated the need for someone with expertise related to disability and inclusion/access to educate and support recreation and sport-based organizations through the development of frameworks, policies, and services related to inclusion.

When considering how my role has specifically been able to support municipalities, I've assisted with projects such as framework development, providing seminars to understand intricate processes like developing inclusion policies, developing education series to increase awareness of accessibility and the built environment in regard to recreation. This role has provided opportunities to have open dialogue with recreation departments about what they want to achieve in regard to inclusion services and has allowed professionals to ask questions without judgement. In the role of the inclusion consultant, I've been able to listen to the needs of both persons living with disabilities and the organizations to develop strategic plans to educate and support inclusion initiatives. By having a role that dedicates its time to understanding the research and resources available and condensing these large concepts into deliverable tools that can then be utilized by organizations, it can create consistency in how communities understand and provide inclusion in recreation and sport.

There are two specific examples of how the inclusion consultant's knowledge has assisted with the progression of inclusive recreation. The first example is in relation to language. I was invited to assist with a provincial project to develop definitions for adapted equipment pieces that could then be adopted by municipalities to describe the equipment offered within

their loan programs. Through this project, I was able to create consistency, not just within the region, but within the province creating consistent language when speaking about adapted equipment. Second, municipalities identified that although they offer adapted equipment it is rarely used, and they felt their staff did not necessarily feel confident when handling the equipment potentially contributing to the lack of promotion. In an attempt to create a free and accessible resource, I was able to secure funding to hire a videographer to develop five adapted equipment training videos and two promotional videos showcasing adapted equipment in action. By having an inclusion consultant lead these types of initiatives it allows recreation managers to continue their day-to-day responsibilities while the inclusion consultant leads initiatives that will impact their inclusion service delivery. These are only two project examples that I've been involved with during the past 11 months. Municipalities continue to contact me for feedback in relation to working policy documents, wayfinding sign projects, or other inclusion tools/resources. By providing an inclusion consultant role, I've been able to provide services to recreation and sport organizations free of charge, eliminating the barrier of time and finances associated with inclusion initiatives identified by both the Northern Region report (Province of Nova Scotia & Sport Nova Scotia, 2017) and researchers (Craig et al., 2019; Davis, 2013).

Having a therapeutic recreation (TR) background was identified by the Province of Nova Scotia as an asset to obtaining the sport and recreation inclusion consultant role. The inclusion consultant role has been able to collect research, resources, and develop educational tools to support organizations. This position was easily accepted by recreation and sport professionals, as there was already a consensus that inclusion services were needed to better support persons living with disabilities. In this case scenario, the province of Nova Scotia is mainly made up of rural towns and municipalities therefore an inclusion consultant role provided by the province

allows for access to a service they themselves could not afford to fund within their own community.

This understanding should motivate TR and leisure professionals to research/explore the potential frameworks in which both professions can work together collaboratively to best serve diverse populations within a community setting (McKenney, 2017). As the diversity of persons served within community recreation continues to grow TR's can be viewed as an asset to a community recreation team based on having extensive experience supporting the needs of diverse populations (Stumbo et al., 2015). As the view shifts on persons living with disabilities from a medical perspective to a social model perspective, roles like the *sport and recreation inclusion consultant* are needed to assist with the education of recreation and sport professionals as inclusive recreation services begin to normalize and take shape in community settings. If an inclusion consultant or specialist role is being considered by sport or recreation organization or body, considering a candidate with a therapeutic recreation background might be most beneficial as research identifies the importance TR can have on providing optimal inclusion services (Craig et al., 2019; McKenney, 2017).

#### **5.4 Limitations**

In this research I was unable to gain understanding on how inclusion is turned into actionable items within recreation departments. The original research design was going to interview recreation professionals to gain a better understanding of how policies are implemented in practice. Clement & Bigby (2009) identified the need to develop research that attempts to gain understanding on how community inclusion services are being implemented, in order to understand what factors, contribute to successful social inclusion. Although reviewing implementation policy documents provided insight on how implementation policy documents are

being conceived and written, there is a need for further research to learn how recreation practitioners understand and implement these policies. This could also have been a sampling issue, as it is not clear if all policy documents were retrieved or if implementation ‘practices’ are written or standardized. From the eight municipalities reviewed, only four municipalities provided organizational level inclusion policies. Only two municipalities from the four provided procedural policy documents. Although inclusion policy documents identify the municipalities’ awareness of need for inclusion and accessibility policy, the documents do not provide a full understanding of how to address the barriers in detail. It is up to researchers, advocacy groups, and inclusion specialists (TR’s) to develop educational tools specifically targeting the community and organizational levels in order for recreation professionals to increase capacity and professional development in relation to providing inclusive programming and policies for persons living with disabilities (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020; Gallant et al., 2020).

Covid-19 impacted aspects of this project including data collection and the study design. One limitation created by Covid-19 was the policy collection phase of this research, as there was some difficulty getting responses back from municipalities. Some municipalities didn’t respond at all; even when contacted by phone voicemails were left with no call-back. It is anticipated that, pre-pandemic, there might have been a higher response rate due to regular work hours and duties of employees. Data were collected from June until December 2020 which was in the middle of the pandemic when many recreation departments and municipalities went through lay-offs and re-hires, causing inconsistency in communication. Policies may have been overlooked or missed due to lack of knowledge of the policies by the individual that became the contact for policy collection. If inclusion policies were missed it could speak to the lack of communication

and awareness between interdisciplinary departments or professionals or to being stressed and understaffed during the time of request.

A second limitation due to Covid-19 was that the original plan to interview recreation practitioners needed to be altered and instead data was only collected from inclusion policy documents. A stronger research design would have been to include a second phase through a method such as interviews to understand how the policies were implemented/understood by recreation practitioners and the barriers associated to providing inclusive recreation opportunities. By conducting an environmental scan of inclusion policy and then conducting interviews of recreation practitioners, there could have been a stronger understanding of the relationship between the inclusion policy documents and practice. More understanding on the development of policies might have also been useful knowledge in order to identify how current inclusion policies are developed within municipal recreation departments.

Another limitation relates to the fluidity of inclusion policies; many documents provided may have already been changed since the published findings mentioned in this paper. The landscape of inclusion policy is constantly evolving within municipal departments as it becomes a pillar or mandate within governing bodies. For example, due to Covid-19 many recreation departments within the province of Nova Scotia have been shifting their focus to redevelop or create inclusion policies or procedures to better their services during a pandemic as well as to improve services that pre-existed specifically focusing on access of persons living with disabilities and the built environment. In some jurisdictions (e.g., Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Manitoba) provincial accessibility acts are being enacted. With limited programming happening due to provincial restrictions of gatherings, it is possible that other recreation departments across the country have been shifting their focus to improving their policies and procedures. Being able

to capture a clear snapshot of the current inclusion policy landscape within municipal recreation departments therefore can be difficult; especially when municipalities clearly acknowledge that the current documents provided are in the middle of being created or re-developed.

Lack of involvement of persons living with disabilities in this study has also been noted as a limitation, as it is best practice to involve person-first perspective. This study provided a person-first perspective literature review section in an attempt to incorporate person-first perspective; however, a stronger study would have been to involve person-first perspectives during the review of the inclusion policy documents.

Finally, this study was conducted by reviewing urban city inclusion policies and therefore does not capture the full scope of how different sized cities might be addressing inclusion within their recreation policy or programs. To better understand inclusion policy, it is recommended that a review of inclusion policies from a broader recreation and potentially sport context is needed.

## **5.5 Future Research**

The findings and recommendations from this research could potentially fit other community recreation and sport contexts, as well as different sized municipalities, however more research is needed. Inclusion in community recreation is still a developing area. Much more research needs to go into understanding inclusion policy and practices within community recreation settings. However, there have been important actions within the Canadian context. Future research should consider using community-based research methods to collaborate with community organizations to create resources or tools to address the gaps experienced by persons living with disabilities. Researchers should also consider exploring language, especially terms such as inclusions, disability, barriers, accessibility, and other key terms that might be used to

address inclusive recreation. It is clear that there is a need for a clear understanding of terms commonly used to address inclusive recreation. More research is needed to understand how key terms are defined and understood by organizations, and how these terms influence the type of policies or procedures developed by the recreation departments. When gaining perspective researchers should consider involving person first perspectives within the research design, as their insight would be of great value.

Future research should also consider interviewing recreation practitioners to understand the gaps associated to providing inclusive recreation services. Although there are inclusion policies that exist, it would be interesting to see how recreation practitioners refer to these policies to guide their services and programming, if at all. Future research should also consider an implementation sciences approach to develop, implement, and evaluate tools or frameworks involving persons living with disabilities throughout the development process. Inclusion tools are needed to assist recreation departments with measuring, understanding, and implementing inclusive programming and services (Arbour-Nicitopoulos et al., 2020).

## **5.6 Conclusion**

When considering *how do current inclusion policies intend to address inclusion of persons living with disabilities within municipal recreation departments in cities across Canada?* it is clear that inclusion policies within recreation departments are still in their infancy. This research project collected 24 inclusion policy documents: 22 out of 24 inclusion policies targeted persons living with disabilities in some way. Overall, this research has identified the need for: 1) an ecological approach in inclusion policy development, 2) Clear and concise inclusion terms and language, 3) implementation policy documents specific to the recreation department, and 4) Involvement and consultation of persons living with disabilities. The value of

a TR role was also highlighted as a need in contributing to community inclusion in recreation services.

Some of the biggest learning moments for me that occurred during the undertaking of this research project were identifying the lack of inclusion processes available within recreation departments, the lack of definitions provided to define inclusion-related terms, as well as the limited inclusion strategies taken to address the social environment. When requesting inclusion policy documents from municipalities, the various policy documents collected addressed different marginalized groups. Seeing how municipalities understood and targeted inclusion within their community was interesting, as the policy documents reviewed varied in strategies that addressed either internal (inclusion of employees) or external (inclusion of diverse community members) structures. Most inclusion policies reviewed were targeting municipalities as a whole; there is need to expand on these policies by creating implementation policy documents that are specific to service delivery within the recreation department. It is a question of what role within the recreation department takes lead on the development of inclusion policies, as well as who decides what the core principles of an inclusion training is. I've realized that until a national understanding of inclusive community is adopted by *everybody* inclusion policy documents that are procedural in nature are needed to guide community practice.

Inclusion policies reviewed appeared to do a poor job at providing clear definitions or descriptions on what inclusion and disability means to an organization; without a clear understanding of these terms community members and employees will continue to have misunderstanding about what inclusion services are and who they serve. I've realized that in order for inclusion policy to be fully inclusive, appropriate terminology and language needs to be used. By providing clear definitions or descriptions of terms used in a policy document, the

organization and community members served, will have a clearer understanding of the parameters of inclusion services offered within recreation.

When focusing on the social environment, inclusion training seems to be the main strategy to addressing the social environment of inclusion. I believe there is a need to develop leisure education tools that provide education to recreation professionals using the ecological model to expand their understanding of the physical and social environments in relation to inclusion in recreation. Through the development and implementation of education tools derived from an ecological approach, recreation professionals can begin to understand how inclusion might look within a social or physical context, and how it impacts an individual's recreation experience. Through this understanding recreation professionals can begin to expand the type of inclusion services they might offer impacting the types of inclusion policies developed within a recreation department.

In summary, inclusion is not being addressed by recreation departments as much as the barriers and needs of persons living with disabilities is acknowledged. More intricate processes and procedures are needed in order to provide inclusive municipal recreation services. The hope is that the findings of this research paper will provoke thinking by recreation professionals on how to advance inclusion policy in their department, as well as encourage researchers and therapeutic recreation professionals to focus their attention on developing frameworks, tools, and resources that can support recreation practitioners in the transition to providing inclusive recreation services.

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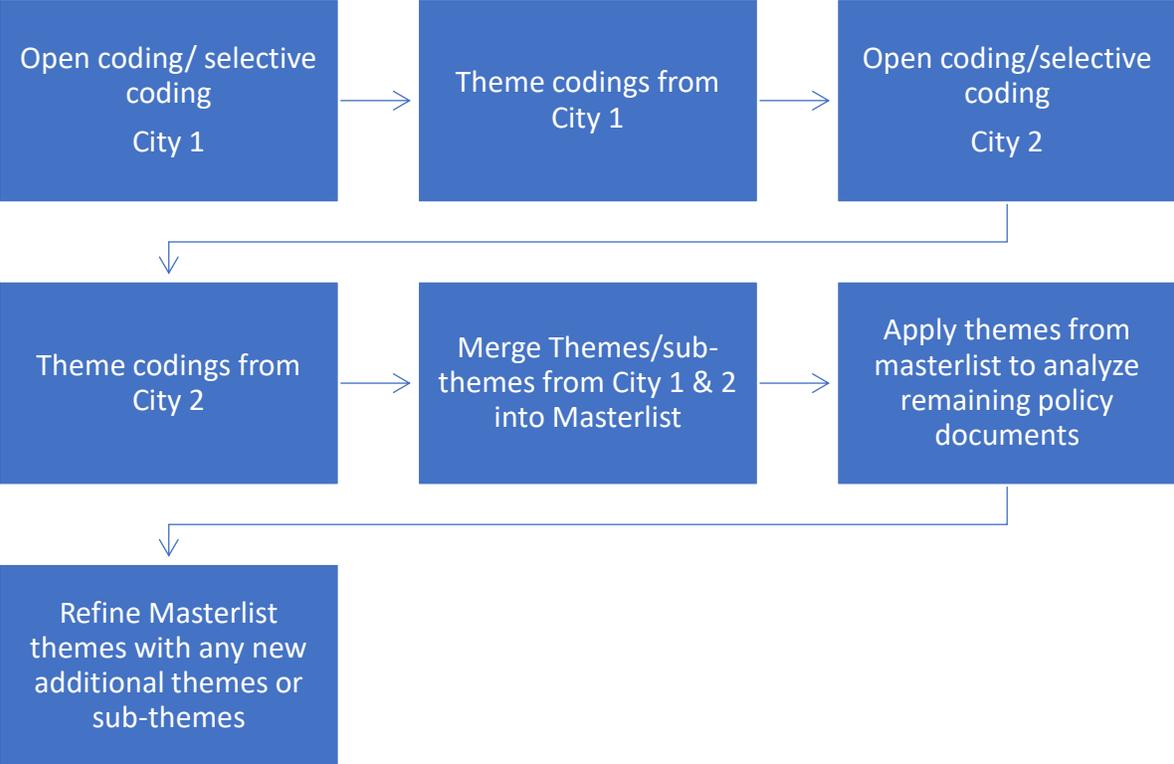
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**APPENDIX A Thematic Analysis Process**



### APPENDIX B Extraction Table: Level of Influence

Document Title	Level of Influence: Community	Level of Influence: Organizational	Level of Influence: Policy
Service Animals in the Facility		✔	
Attendant Procedure	✔	✔	
Inclusion Policy	✔	✔	
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027	✔	✔	
Diversity and inclusion			✔
The Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity & Inclusion Framework			✔
Recreation and Parks Master Plan	✔	✔	✔
Universal Design Policy			✔
Introducing the Accessibility for Manitobans Act			✔
2019-2021 Accessibility Plan	✔	✔	✔
2018-2021 City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan			✔
Integrated Accessibility Standards Procedure			✔
Plan d'action 2019-2020 à l'égard des personnes handicapées			✔
Portrait de l'environnement social à Laval			✔
Moncton Accessibility Assessment: Universal Access, Guide to Standards and Best Practices			✔
Accessibility Policy for Renovations, Additions and			✔

New Construction of City-owned Buildings			
Quality of Life for all monctonians: Plan 2016-2021			✓
Access and Discount Policy		✓	
Community Access and Inclusion Strategy: Parks and Recreation	✓	✓	
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy	✓	✓	
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: Recreation Programming Roles and Responsibilities	✓	✓	

**APPENDIX C Extraction Table: Environment**

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Focus is on Social Environment</b>	<b>Focus is on Physical Environment</b>
Service Animals in the Facility	✓	
Attendant Procedure	✓	
Inclusion Policy	✓	✓
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027	✓	✓
Diversity and inclusion	✓	✓
The Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity & Inclusion Framework	✓	✓
Recreation and Parks Master Plan	✓	✓
Universal Design Policy Universal Design Policy		✓
Introducing the Accessibility for Manitobans Act	✓	✓
2019-2021 Accessibility Plan	✓	✓
Community, Diversity, and Inclusion (website: <a href="https://london.ca/CDIS">https://london.ca/CDIS</a> )	✓	✓
2018-2021 City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	✓	✓
Integrated Accessibility Standards Procedure	✓	✓
Plan d'action 2019-2020 à l'égard des personnes handicapées	✓	✓
Portrait de l'environnement social à Laval		
Moncton Accessibility Assessment: Universal Access, Guide to Standards and Best Practices		✓
Accessibility Policy for Renovations, Additions and New Construction of City-owned Buildings		✓

Quality of Life for all monctonians: Plan 2016-2021		
Access and Discount Policy		
Community Access and Inclusion Strategy: Parks and Recreation		
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy		
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: Recreation Programming Roles and Responsibilities		

## APPENDIX D Extraction Table: Definitions

Document Title	Definitions
Service Animals in the Facility	<p><b>Guide/Assistance (Service) Dog:</b>            According to BC Guide Animal Act – a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.</p> <p>A person with a disability accompanied by a guide/assistance (Service) dog has the same rights, privileges and obligations as a person not accompanied by an animal, and may enter and use any space where public is invited, so long as the guide/assistance animal is prevented from occupying a seat in a public conveyance or eating place, and is held by a leash or harness</p> <p><b>Therapy Animal:</b>            A social interactive animal/dog trained for work for a handler to provide service and comfort to other people.            A therapy animal/dog is trained to provide a service to others, and could be working for a handler who may not have a disability at all.            Therapy Animals/Dogs do not share the same public access rights as assistance/service/guide dogs and therefore may be denied admittance to public places.</p>
Attendant Procedure	<p><b>Attendant:</b> A volunteer, caregiver, family member, and/or agency staff providing support. The attendant must be a minimum of 14 years of age. In providing support, the attendant must be in close proximity to the individual requiring support at all times.</p> <p>Attendants are only responsible for the individual they are supporting. Under no circumstances does the attendant take on the role of a staff or registered City of Surrey volunteer and will not be considered in staff/participant ratios.</p>
Inclusion Policy	N
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027	N
Diversity and inclusion	<p><b>Diversity</b> - the range of human difference; each person has layers of diversity which make their perspective unique.</p> <p><b>Inclusion</b> - involving and valuing human differences and viewing such differences as strengths</p>

<p>The Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity &amp; Inclusion Framework</p>	<p>Diversity - The range of our different identities, backgrounds and perspectives. Each person has layers of identity that make their perspective unique.</p> <p>Equity - Fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for everyone, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Equity is different than equality, which focuses on treating everyone the same way. Equity recognizes that people have different needs and experience different barriers.</p> <p>Inclusion - Creating an environment in which all individuals feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and skills. Differences are considered opportunities for individual and organizational growth. Everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to our City's success.</p>
<p>Recreation and Parks Master Plan</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Universal Design Policy</p>	<p><b>Definitions</b></p> <p><b>Accessibility</b></p> <p>Accessibility issues are far reaching and affect everyone from parents pushing strollers, to newcomers who struggle with reading English, to people manoeuvring large rolling delivery carts, to people with both temporary and permanent mobility, sensory and agility limitations. Accessibility also affects all aspects of how we live, work and play.</p> <p><b>Age Friendly</b></p> <p>An age friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capabilities.</p> <p><b>Mobility</b></p> <p>Mobility refers to the efficient movement of people and goods in the urban environment.</p> <p><b>Universal Design</b></p> <p>In an urban context this could mean that buildings, sidewalks and other public facilities are accessible to all people, with or without physical, cognitive or sensory limitations.</p> <p>The underlying principle is that while accommodating people who may travel using assistive devices to help navigate and move you are also creating an environment that is more pleasant and easier to use for everyone.</p>
<p>Introducing the Accessibility for Manitobans Act</p>	<p>A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating in the social or economic life of our communities.</p>

<p>2019-2021 Accessibility Plan</p>	<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> result when people think and act based on prejudgments or false assumptions that indirectly or directly discriminate</p> <p><b>Information and Communication Barriers:</b> are created when information is offered in a form that suits some, but not all, of the population</p> <p><b>Technological Barriers:</b> occur when technology, or the way it is used, cannot be accessed or modified to support various assistive devices and/or software by people with disabilities</p> <p><b>Systemic Barriers:</b> can occur through policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded</p> <p><b>Physical and Architectural Barriers:</b> can occur when the environment, including elements of buildings or spaces, presents challenges that restrict or hinder some people physical access to a place</p>
<p>Community, Diversity, and Inclusion (website: <a href="https://london.ca/CDIS">https://london.ca/CDIS</a>)</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>2018-2021 City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Integrated Accessibility Standards Procedure</p>	<p>2. Definitions</p> <p>2.1. Accessible Formats: May include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.</p> <p>2.2. Assistive Device: A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.</p> <p>2.3. City: The Corporation of the City of London, excluding boards and commissions.</p> <p>2.4. Communications: The interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.</p> <p>2.5. Communication Supports: Communication supports are alternative ways of communicating with people with disabilities. Examples of a communication support may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language through an interpreter and other supports that facilitate effective communications.</p> <p>2.7. Guide Dog: A guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.</p> <p>2.8. Kiosk: An interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.</p>

	<p>2.9. Mobility Aid: A device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability.</p> <p>2.10. Service Animal: Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily identified that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal or where the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to their disability;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario</li> <li>• A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario</li> </ul> <p>2.11. Support Person: A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities. Examples of a support person may include, but are not limited to, sign language interpreters, interveners, a guide for a person with vision loss, and personal care assistants.</p> <p>2.12. Taxicab: A motor vehicle as defined in the Highway Traffic Act, other than a carpool vehicle, having a seating capacity of not more than six persons, exclusive of the driver, hired for one specific trip for the transportation exclusively of one person or group of persons, one fare or charge only being collected or made for the trip and that is licensed as a taxicab by a municipality.</p> <p>2.13. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.”</p>
Plan d'action 2019-2020 à l'égard des personnes handicapées	N
Portrait de l'environnement social à Laval	N
Manager Response	N

<p>Moncton Accessibility Assessment: Universal Access, Guide to Standards and Best Practices</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Accessibility Policy for Renovations, Additions and New Construction of City-owned Buildings</p>	<p>Accessibility: means providing people of all abilities the opportunity to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.</p> <p>Building: means a structure that has a roof and walls and stands permanently in one place.</p>
<p>Quality of Life for all monctonians: Plan 2016-2021</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Access and Discount Policy</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Community Access and Inclusion Strategy: Parks and Recreation</p>	<p>Recreation  Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing (modified from “A Framework for Recreation in Canada” 2015)</p> <p>Access  An individual is able to enter a space and obtain the necessary information to participate. Access is the first step towards participation. (Modified from Access to Recreation (ATR) in Peterborough County (page 6) and Oxford Dictionary)</p> <p>Equity  Equity understands that not everyone faces the same level of barriers to participation and ensures resources are in place so that all can fully participate. Equity recognizes that we must work towards removing systemic barriers. (Adapted from Interaction Institute for Social Change <a href="http://www.interactioninstitute.org">www.interactioninstitute.org</a>; original concept by Craig Froehle. As cited in “Celebrating Equity and Inclusion: Bridging Diversity Newsletter Summer 2016”)</p>

<p>Inclusion and Accessibility Policy</p>	<p>Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing. (Adapted from “A framework for Recreation in Canada, 2015)</p> <p>Inclusion is the state of being included within a group, structure or activity regardless of ability, culture, ethnicity, language, race, age, economic status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation or sexuality. (Adapted from “Community facility Master Plan II, p24 and modified from Oxford Dictionary)</p> <p>Support Person – A support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.</p> <p>Communication Support – May include, but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain text, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communication</p> <p>Inclusion Process – The process used to ensure access, participation and supports are put in place to support full participation. Process is supported by assessment, identify supports necessary to participate, participation and evaluation.</p>
<p>Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: Recreation Programming Roles and Responsibilities</p>	<p>N</p>

## APPENDIX E Extraction Table: Consultation of Persons living with Disabilities

Document Title	Consulted Persons Living with a Disability
Service Animals in the Facility	
Attendant Procedure	
Inclusion Policy	
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2027	☑
Diversity and inclusion	
The Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity & Inclusion Framework	
Recreation and Parks Master Plan	☑
Universal Design Policy	
Introducing the Accessibility for Manitobans Act	☑
2019-2021 Accessibility Plan	☑
2018-2021 City of London Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	
Integrated Accessibility Standards Procedure	
Plan d'action 2019-2020 à l'égard des personnes handicapées	
Portrait de l'environnement social à Laval	
Moncton Accessibility Assessment: Universal Access, Guide to Standards and Best Practices	
Accessibility Policy for Renovations, Additions and New Construction of City-owned Buildings	
Quality of Life for all monctonians: Plan 2016-2021	
Access and Discount Policy	

Community Access and Inclusion Strategy: Parks and Recreation	
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy	
Inclusion and Accessibility Policy: Recreation Programming Roles and Responsibilities	