

# RECREATION & HEALTH FACT SHEET



## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

### Social Impact Valuation Map

#### Identify Stakeholders

Who influences investment in parks & recreation in your area? (Think: City council, city managers, P&R professionals...)

Who experiences change because of participation in parks & recreation in your area? (Think: Public, participants, & residents...)

Due to the challenges of reaching all potential stakeholders, focus on identifying those who have material, or measurable, experiences with P&R.

#### Determine Inputs

How much is being invested in your facility, or in parks and recreation as an aggregated resource?

Generally, because P&R receives continuous investment, it is best to evaluate both investment and outcomes on an annual basis. Some SROI analyses investigate this as an average over several years. SROI can also be used for a particular intervention, or one-time investment, too.

#### Describe Services

What activities are being provided as a service in exchange for this investment?

This list should be exhaustive; park maintenance, maintenance of facilities and gathering spaces, classes, events, initiatives, classes, programming...

#### Describing Outputs & Valuing Related Outcomes

What outputs are experienced by stakeholders as a result of investment in P&R?

Outputs are often first order experiences: Increased/decreased community cohesion during planning & execution of an annual event, increased/decreased participation (of youth) in sport, increased/decreased participation in physical activity, increased/decreased skill-building.

What outcomes are experienced by stakeholders as a result of investment in P&R?

Outcomes are often second order experiences, or downstream effects of participation in P&R. These can include things like: Decreased health expenditures (valued outcome for investors), increased health & mental well-being of participants (valued outcome for participants)

Outcomes receive a value (operationalized for ease of communication by a currency value. Conservative valuation is recommended for extrapolated values; if there is a range of potential values, it is most powerful to choose one towards the lower bound for social impacts.

#### SROI Analysis & Report

Social Return on Investment is calculated by dividing the amount of money invested (in P&R, a facility, a program, or specific recreation intervention), by the summed amount of all outcome values.

This provides a more concrete representation of values that are often challenging to advocate for, as they do not usually have obvious financial value to point towards, though their social impacts are vast & great.

This number can be utilized as an outcome value ("The SROI for P&R is \_\_\_ dollars") or as a ratio (Investing \$1 in P&R results in a nearly \$5 return").

These can be used for marketing purposes, and for advocacy to city officials and the public for increased investment in P&R

An example of an infographic utilizing SROI can be found [here](#).

### Making the case for P&R Funding

#### Valued Outcomes of P&R Spending

While the social benefits of Parks & Recreation participation and access are often immediately salient to practitioners and participants, the financial benefits can be challenging to quantify.

The Social Return on Investment framework can be an aid in bridging that gap in understanding & communication between stakeholders by providing an objective benefit utilizing Cost Benefit Analysis and attributing a fiscal value to social & community impacts.

More information can be found by scanning the QR codes:  
King et al. 2014; [Davies et al. 2019, 2020](#); [Keane et al. 2019](#)



Investing in Parks & Recreation is associated with increased self-reported health metrics in the US.

[Mueller, Park, Mowen 2019](#)

Increased Parks & Recreation spending is associated with decreased mortality rates.

[Mueller, Park, Mowen 2019](#)

Access to parks & recreational facilities decreases healthcare costs for adults in the US.

[Sato et al. 2019](#)