

# LEGACY PLANNING ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOSTING OF A SMALL SPORT EVENT

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Legacy is considered the post or long-term economic, social, and/or environmental outcomes from hosting an event (c.f. Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Ritchie, 2000). Several scholars have attempted to define and conceptualize legacy (Cashman 2003, 2006; Preuss 2007); for example, Preuss (2007) noted that “irrespective of the time of production and space, legacy is all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself” (p. 211). Legacy has become a focal point in the discourse of sport event hosting. Positive legacies such as urban regeneration and tourism development have been examined (Gratton et al., 2005); however, there is also evidence that event hosting can be detrimental to local communities and economies (Searle, 2002). These mixed outcomes signify challenges for host cities in creating and implementing legacy plans, which requires evaluation throughout the event lifecycle (Matheson, 2010) and the identification of targets and methods for measurement that will maximize legacy benefits before, during, and after the event (Taylor & Edmondson, 2007). Much of the legacy literature focuses on the concept of ‘Olympic legacy’; this research project seeks to expand the body of academic work by studying the legacy plan associated with a smaller sporting event. The aim of this research is determine how small event stakeholders create a legacy plan to deliver and sustain long-term positive impacts to the community from hosting the event.

The case study selected is a medium sized Canadian city, Kamloops, British Columbia, which hosted the 2011 Western Canada Summer Games (WCSG). The event was held over a two-week period (August 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011) that included 2300 competitors in 19 sports. The WCSG are held every four years, in a rotation between the Canadian Western Provinces and Territories. In October 2011, the Western Canada Games Organization announced they were working with the host committee and government actors to develop a legacy plan in Kamloops. The literature presents several classifications of legacies (c.f. Cashman, 2006; Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Preuss, 2007). For this study Chappelet (2006) classification was employed, which argued there are five main categories of legacies: sporting; economic; infrastructure; urban; and social. The analysis explores each of these categories to assess occurrences of legacy initiatives within the community. For example, Kamloops will host a biennial sporting competition ‘Kamloops Legacy Performance Games’ a multi-sport event for athletes across Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest. The event will be run by the municipal sport council, and is in part funded by the 2011 WCSG Legacy Fund.

The municipal government of Kamloops has branded the city as the ‘Tournament Capital of Canada’. The branding initiative is listed as one of the top strategic goals of city council, and considered a cornerstone of the local economic development policy. The goal of the policy is to attract at least 100 sport events per year. This focus on hosting sport events, which formally began in 1985, suggested that the community stakeholders would be familiar with the associated impacts and to some extent hold the belief that sporting events confer lasting positive economic, social, and environmental benefits to their community. Kamloops proximity to Vancouver, host of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, was also viewed as a favorable factor for this case study as Vancouver had established an independent organization to plan for and deliver legacy benefits associated with hosting the Olympic Games. Part of the organizations’ mandate is to foster the sharing of information, resources and best practices among communities across the province, which provided Kamloops a unique opportunity to engage in legacy-specific policy learning and knowledge transfer when developing and implementing their own self-sustaining community legacy plan.

The research strategy employed a two-phase qualitative approach. Initially data were collected related to the event and the organization of the WCSG. Sources of data include: newspaper articles; government documents, such as council reports; and related organization documents, such as those prepared by the Kamloops Sports Council. Following the review of the collected secondary data, semi-structure interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders, which included event organizers, city government, and local sport organizations. The study is currently in progress; however, preliminary analysis identifies how small event organizers and community stakeholders develop a legacy plan, indicating which legacy categories were prioritized, and how the plan was, or will be, implemented. The results will provide significant insight for municipal and sport managers, whose communities are hosting a small sporting event, on how to best achieve and sustain long-term positive benefits from the event.

## References

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