

Municipal Opportunities for Physical Activity

2015 SURVEY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES IN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES



Availability of facilities supporting community physical activity and sport

The 2015 Survey of Physical Activity Opportunities in Canadian Communities was conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The survey asked municipal administrators in communities with at least 1,000 residents about the availability of municipally funded facilities supporting community physical activity and sport, as well as the approximate number of these types of facilities. The number of facilities was categorized roughly into quartiles where possible. This bulletin summarizes the findings from this survey in relation to community characteristics such as size and region.

Availability of facilities

The availability of certain types of facilities supporting community physical activity and sport vary considerably, whereby almost all communities with at least 1,000 residents report the availability of parks and green spaces, yet relatively few cite the availability of sports domes. Table 1 describes the overall proportions of the available facilities in the communities, as asked of municipal administrators.

Community characteristics

The majority (over 90%) of communities with at least 1,000 residents cite the availability of parks and green spaces, and this proportion remains high regardless of its size. Slightly more administrators in large communities (10,000 residents or more) indicate that the community has ice rinks, gyms, golf courses or specialized golf domes, and play structures compared to those in communities with between 1,000 to 9,999 residents.

TABLE 1

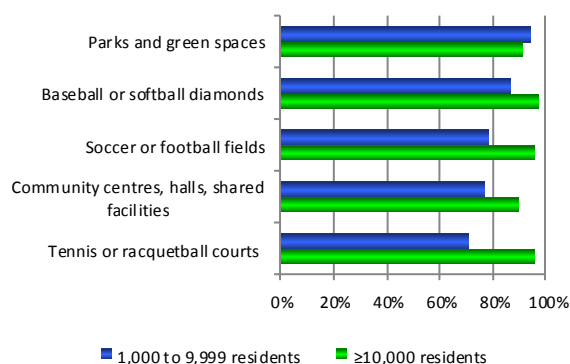
Availability of facilities supporting community physical activity and sport (communities with $\geq 1,000$ residents)

Type of component	% citing availability
Parks and green spaces	93%
Baseball or softball diamonds	90%
Ice rinks	88%
Soccer or football fields	84%
Community centres, halls, shared facilities	81%
Tennis or racquetball courts	79%
Basketball courts	73%
Playing and climbing structures	73%
Arenas	67%
Gyms	65%
Volleyball courts	64%
Skateboard or rollerblade facilities	61%
Swimming pools	58%
Wading pools, splash pads, other water facilities	54%
Weight rooms, cardio rooms, fitness equipment	52%
Golf courses or specialized golf domes	42%
Curling rinks	42%
Outdoor gym spaces	21%
Domes for sport	15%

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FIGURE 1

Availability of select facilities supporting community physical activity and sport by community size



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Similarly, a substantially greater proportion of larger communities indicate the availability of all other facilities compared to those in communities of between 1,000 to 9,999 residents.

The reported availability of facilities varies regionally. The significant regional differences are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Availability of select facilities supporting community physical activity and sport by region

Type of component	Compared to the national average*			
	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	West
Baseball or softball diamonds	ND	↓	ND	ND
Ice rinks	↓↓	↑	ND	↓
Community centres, shared facilities	ND	↓	↑	↑
Tennis or racquetball courts	ND	ND	↑	ND
Basketball courts	ND	ND	↓	ND
Playing and climbing structures	ND	↓	↑	↑
Arenas	↓	↓↓	↑↑	↑↑
Gyms	↑	↑	↓↓	ND
Volleyball courts	ND	↑↑	↓↓	↓
Skateboard or rollerblade facilities	↓	ND	↑	ND
Swimming pools	ND	↓↓	ND	↑↑
Wading pools, splash pads, other water facilities	↓↓	ND	ND	↑↑
Weight rooms, cardio rooms, fitness equipment	↑	↓↓	↓	↑↑
Golf courses or specialized golf domes	ND	↓↓	ND	↑↑
Curling rinks	ND	↓↓	↓	↑↑
Outdoor gym spaces	-	-	-	↑↑

↓ = slightly less likely; ↓↓ = substantially less likely; ↑ = slightly more likely; ↑↑ = substantially more likely; ND = Not statistically different

- = data is not releasable due to sample size

*data for North are not releasable due to sample size

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Number of facilities

The previous section described the general *availability* of facilities that support physical activity and sport within communities. This section looks at the *number* of each type of facility that are available within the community. The number of facilities ranged substantially. Generally speaking, the larger and more costly the facility, the fewer available in the community. For example, among communities who say that a particular facility is actually available:

- 87% have only *one* curling rink
- 77% mention *one* skateboard or rollerblade facility
- 70% cite *one* sport dome
- 68% report *one* outdoor gym space
- 70% indicate *one* swimming pool
- 69% have *one* golf course or specialized golf dome
- 66% indicate *one* other type of water facilities,
- 64% say *one* arena
- 63% mention *one* weight/cardio room with fitness equipment
- 48% report *one* community centre or shared facility for physical activity, and
- 47% have *one* gym.

Community characteristics

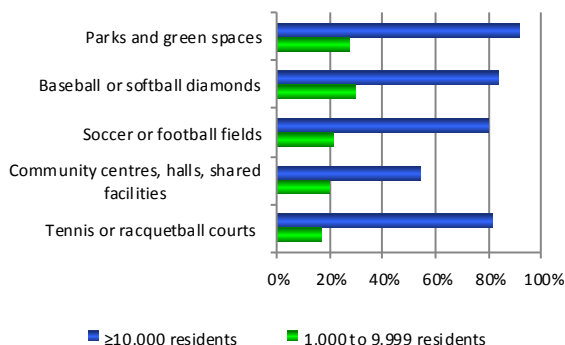
For the purposes of this analysis, the number of facilities were categorized into quartiles in order to compare to community characteristics such as community size and region.

Generally, a greater proportion of large communities (10,000 or more residents) cite higher numbers of facilities (that is, the two highest quartiles) whereas smaller communities (with between 1,000 to 9,999 residents) in general are more likely to cite lower numbers of facilities (that is, the two lowest quartiles).

The number of facilities also varies considerably by region as well. In order to describe the differences succinctly, significant differences related to having more facilities (highest two quartiles) are illustrated in the Table 3. As a brief overview, communities in Ontario are substantially more likely than the average to provide higher number (two highest quartiles) of more than half of the facilities. Similarly, communities in the West are more likely to provide a higher number of some of the facilities supporting physical activity and sport.

FIGURE 2

Higher number of facilities (two highest quartiles) supporting physical activity and sport by community size



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TABLE 3

Regional differences related to a higher number of facilities (two highest quartiles) supporting physical activity and sport

Type of component	Compared to the national average*		
	Québec	Ontario	West
Baseball or softball diamonds	↓↓	↑↑	↑↑
Ice rinks	↓	↑↑	ND
Soccer or football fields	↓	↑↑	↑
Community centres, halls, shared facilities	-	↑↑	ND
Tennis or racquetball courts	↓	↑	ND
Basketball courts	↓	↓	↑↑
Playing and climbing structures	↓↓	↑↑	↑
Parks and green spaces	↓↓	↑↑	↑
Arenas	-	↑↑	ND
Gyms	ND	-	↑
Volleyball courts	↓	-	↑
Swimming pools	ND	↑↑	↓
Wading pools, splash pads, other water facilities	↓	↑↑	ND
Weight rooms, cardio rooms, fitness equipment	-	-	↑↑
Golf courses or specialized golf domes	-	↑↑	↓

↓ = slightly less likely; ↓↓ = substantially less likely; ↑ = slightly more likely; ↑↑ = substantially more likely; ND = Not statistically different

- = data is not releasable due to sample size

*data for Atlantic and North are not releasable due to sample size

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CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

201-185 Somerset Street West • Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2 • (613) 233-5528 • info@cflri.ca • http://www.cflri.ca/



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