

Municipal Opportunities for Physical Activity

2015 SURVEY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES IN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES



Perceived infrastructure barriers and needs

The 2015 Survey of Physical Activity Opportunities in Canadian Communities was conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute in order to examine local or community level opportunities, supports, and barriers for physical activity and sport. Municipal administrators (in communities with at least 1,000 residents) were asked about several key barriers and needs pertaining to infrastructure and facilities for physical activity and sport.

- 26% strongly agree that the amount of lighting on sidewalks and streets discourage walking or bicycling at night;
- 14% strongly agree that the amount of crime of streets discourage walking or bicycling.

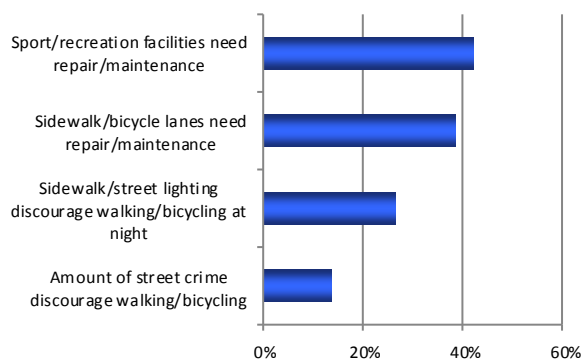
Perceived infrastructure barriers

Municipal administrators were asked about their perceptions about four key barriers related to infrastructure for physical activity and sport. Among municipal administrators (in communities of 1,000 or more residents):

- 42% strongly agree that the sport and recreation facilities are in need of repair or maintenance;
- 39% strongly agree that the sidewalk and bicycle lanes are in need of repair or maintenance;

FIGURE 1

Percentage of communities strongly agreeing with perceived infrastructure barriers



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Community characteristics

Perceptions of two infrastructure barriers vary by region. Compared to the national average, slightly fewer administrators in Quebec communities and slightly more in the West strongly agree that the amount of lighting on sidewalks and streets discourages walking or bicycling at night. Slightly fewer administrators in Quebec and relatively more in Ontario strongly agree that the sport and recreation facilities in the community are in need of repair and maintenance.

A slightly higher proportion of larger communities (10,000 or more residents) indicate strong agreement that street crime in the community discourages residents from walking or bicycling, and that the sport and recreation facilities are in need of repair or maintenance compared to smaller communities (between 1,000 and 9,999 residents). Interestingly, there are no significant differences by community size in perceptions about the state of sidewalks and bicycle lanes requiring repair or maintenance or the amount of lighting on sidewalks and streets.

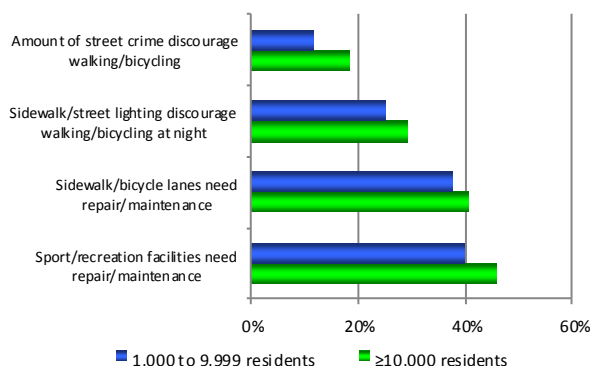
Perceived infrastructure needs

In addition to key barriers, municipal administrators (in communities of 1,000 or more residents) were also asked about their views on the most pressing infrastructure needs to help increase physical activity levels among residents. These are considered in two sections, including the addition of new facilities and the repair, maintenance, and improvement of infrastructure in the community.



FIGURE 2

Proportion of communities strongly agreeing with infrastructure barriers by community size



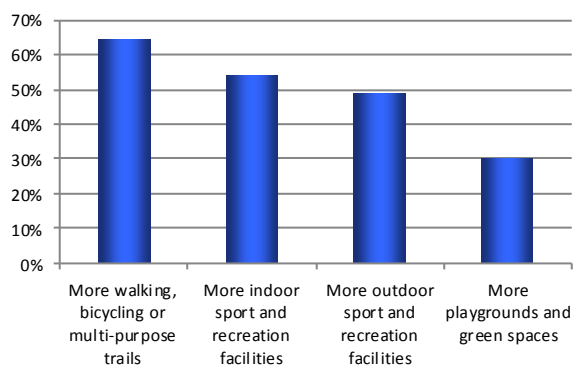
Survey of Physical Activity Opportunities in Canadian communities, 2015, CFLRI

Additional infrastructure

Among communities with at least 1,000 residents, almost two-thirds (65%) of municipal administrators cite more walking, bicycling or multi-purpose trails as the most pressing infrastructure need for increasing activity levels. This is followed closely by roughly half of municipal administrators who say that more *indoor* (54%) and more *outdoor* sport and recreation facilities (49%) are important requirements in the community. In addition, 30% say that more playgrounds and green spaces are pressing needs for the community.

FIGURE 3

Additional infrastructure as pressing needs



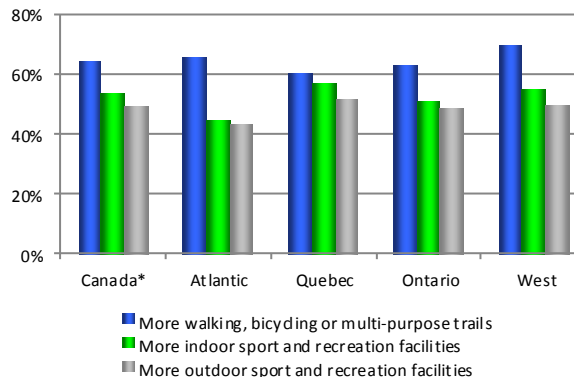
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Community characteristics

Compared to the average, relatively fewer administrators in Atlantic communities cite additional *indoor* and *outdoor* sport and recreational facilities as important requirements. A greater proportion of communities in the West say that more walking, bicycling, and multi-purpose trails are important compared to the average.

FIGURE 4

Additional infrastructure as pressing needs by region



*Sample size limits individual data in the North.

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A greater proportion of municipal administrators in larger communities (10,000 or more residents) say that *more* indoor sport and recreational facilities are a pressing infrastructure need in the community compared to those in communities with between 1,000 and 9,999 residents. There are no other significant differences with respect to community size regarding the addition of infrastructure.

Maintenance or improvements in infrastructure

For communities with at least 1,000 residents, the majority of municipal administrators (59%) say that improvements in the networking of trails, paths, and sidewalks represent an important infrastructure need in the community. Between 40% and 50% of administrators mention the repair, maintenance, and improvements to existing facilities as important, including:

- 46% cite repair of *outdoor* sport and recreational facilities;
- 46% mention improved linkages of bicycle pathways and lanes with roadways;
- 43% say repair of *indoor* sport and recreational facilities;
- 43% report maintenance of walking, bicycling, and multi-purpose trails; and,
- 42% indicate maintenance of playgrounds and green spaces.

Community characteristics

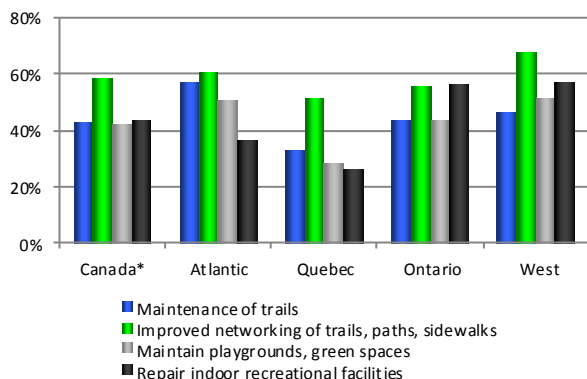
Perceptions of the importance of repair, maintenance, and improvements vary by region. Compared to the average,

- relatively *more* communities in Ontario and the West, and relatively *fewer* communities in Atlantic and Quebec cite repair of *indoor* sport and recreational facilities as important.

- relatively *more* communities in the Atlantic and West, and relatively fewer Quebec communities say that the *maintenance* of playgrounds and green spaces is a pressing need.
- relatively more communities in the Atlantic, and relatively fewer in Quebec cite the maintenance of walking, bicycling, and multi-purpose trails as important.
- relatively more communities in the West, and relatively fewer in Quebec say that improved networking of trails, paths, and sidewalks is a pressing need.

FIGURE 5

Maintenance of infrastructure as pressing needs by region



*Sample size limits individual release of data in the North.

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Relatively more administrators in larger communities (10,000 or more residents) say that the *repair of* indoor sport and recreational facilities, the *maintenance of* trails, the *improvement in* networking of trails, paths and sidewalks, and the *improvement of* linkages of bicycle pathways with roadways are all pressing infrastructure needs in their communities compared to smaller communities.

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