

Let's Get Active!

Physical Activity in Canadian Communities

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



Parks and green spaces for physical activity and sport

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor asked adults about the availability, their satisfaction, and usage of places to be active within the community. Previous bulletins explore perceptions about the places that one can safely walk, bicycle, other types of specifically designed places to be active, or multi-purpose recreation trails in the community. This research bulletin examines the availability of parks and green spaces in the community, satisfaction levels with the amount, and usage of these spaces.

Amount of parks and green spaces

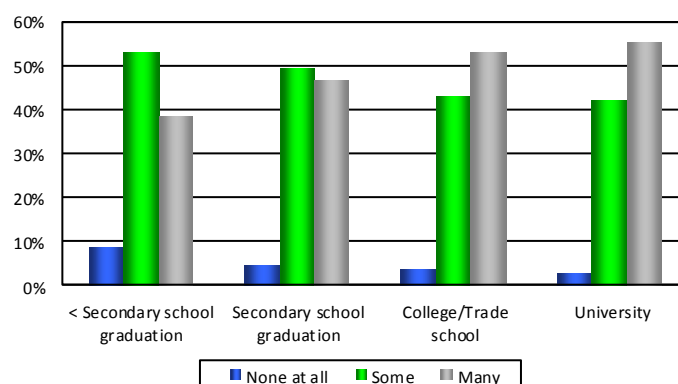
Adults aged 18 years and older were asked about their perceptions of the amount of parks and green spaces in the community, in the 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor. More than half (51%) of adults state that there are *many* parks and green spaces in the community, 45% say that there are *some*, and only 4% report *none at all*.

Individual characteristics Although there are no age-related differences, a higher proportion of men indicate that there are *many*, whereas relatively more women say that there are *some* parks and green spaces in the community. Compared to those who have not graduated from high school, a greater proportion of adults with a post-secondary education say that there are *many* parks and green spaces in their community, whereas a higher proportion of adults who have not graduated from high school say that there are either *some* or *no* parks or green spaces *at all* compared to those with a post-secondary education.

Household and community characteristics A greater proportion of adults living in the highest income households cite the availability of *many* parks and green spaces in the community compared to those living in low income households, yet the opposite relationship appears among those citing *some*.

FIGURE 1

Amount of parks and green spaces by education level



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

A higher percentage of residents living in larger communities cite *many*, whereas relatively fewer residents in these larger communities indicate *some* parks and green spaces compared to residents living in the smallest communities. Compared to the average, a higher percentage of urban dwellers and yet a lower proportion of adults living rurally indicate that there are *many*, whereas the opposite relationship exists citing *some* parks and green spaces in the community.

Region Compared to the national average, relatively fewer adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia report the availability of *many* parks and green spaces, whereas a greater percentage of those living in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the Yukon cite this. On the contrary, relatively more adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia say that there are *some* parks and green spaces, while relatively fewer residents of British Columbia and the Yukon report this.

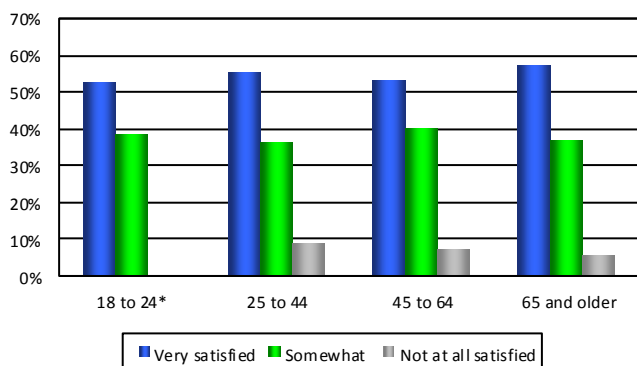
Level of satisfaction with the amount of parks and green spaces

The survey also examined adults' perceptions of satisfaction with the amount of parks and green spaces in their community. Slightly over half (55%) of adults indicate that they are *very* satisfied with this amount, whereas 38% are *somewhat* satisfied, and 7% are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces in the community.

Individual characteristics There are no significant gender-related differences in satisfaction levels with the amount of parks and green spaces in the community, yet there are some age-related differences. A greater proportion of older adults (65 years and older) report that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces compared to those who are 45 to 64 years, whereas a higher percentage of 25 to 44 year olds say that they are *not at all* satisfied compared to older adults. A higher percentage of adults with a post-secondary education indicate that they are *very* satisfied with the number of parks and green spaces in the community compared to those who have not graduated from high school, whereas the opposite relationship appears among those stating that they are *not at all* satisfied. A lower percentage of adults who are not working for a specific reason report being *very* satisfied with the number of parks and green spaces in their community, compared to the national average.

Generally, a higher percentage of adults living in larger cities report being *very* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces, whereas a greater proportion of residents living in the smallest communities (<5,000 residents) say that they are *not at all* satisfied. A higher proportion of rural residents state that they are *not at all* satisfied with the number of parks and green spaces available in the community compared to the national average, whereas relatively fewer suburban residents say this. The opposite relationship appears among those saying that they are *very* satisfied with this amount.

FIGURE 2
Satisfaction with the amount of parks and green spaces by age

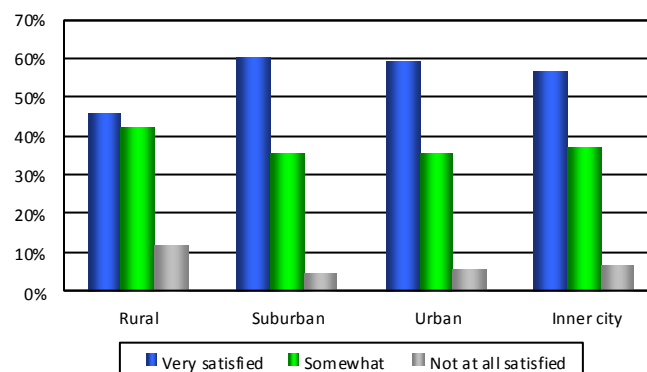


*Data not released due to sample size

2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Household or community characteristics A higher percentage of adults living in the highest income households report that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces compared to those living in lower income households, whereas the opposite relationship exists for those saying that they are *somewhat* or *not at all* satisfied with the number of these spaces.

FIGURE 3
Satisfaction with the amount of parks and green spaces by community location



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Region Compared to the national average, a higher percentage of adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces in their community. A greater proportion of adults living in Nova Scotia and Quebec say that they are *somewhat* satisfied, where relatively fewer residents of British Columbia or the Yukon say this compared to the national average. Compared to the average, a greater proportion of adults living in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon, whereas relatively fewer adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories say that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of parks and green spaces available in the community.

Usage of parks and green spaces in the community

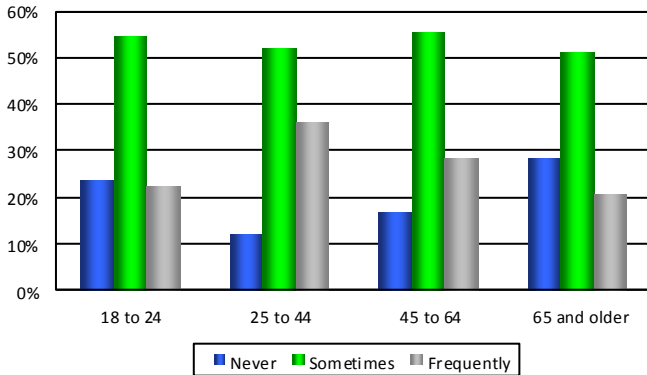
The survey also asked adults about their usage of parks and green spaces in their community, and just over one-quarter (28%) say that they *frequently* use these spaces, 53% *sometimes* do, and 19% *never* do.

Individual characteristics Although there are no gender-related differences, reported usage of parks and green spaces in the community varies by age. Adults aged 25 to 44 are most likely to say that they *frequently* use the parks and green spaces in their community.

Compared to adults 25 to 64 years, a greater percentage of older adults say that they *never* use these parks and green spaces. Similarly, a higher proportion of 18 to 24 year olds report that they *never* use the parks and green spaces in the community compared to 25 to 44 year olds.

FIGURE 4

Usage of parks and green spaces by age



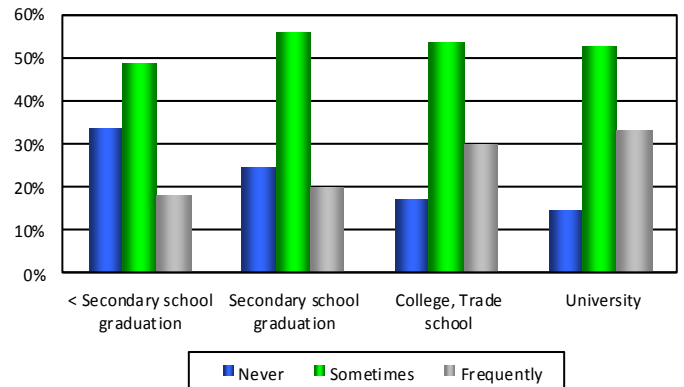
2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

A greater proportion of adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated say that they *never* use parks and green spaces in their community compared to those who are married or living with a partner, while the opposite relationship exists among those citing *frequent* use. Regarding employment status, a greater proportion of retirees or adults who are not working for a particular reason, yet relatively fewer who are employed say that they *never* use parks and green spaces in the community compared to the national average. Relatively fewer retirees indicate that they *frequently* use these spaces compared to the average. Adults who have not graduated from high school are most likely to report *never* using parks and green spaces in their community, and this percentage generally decreases with increasing education level. Adults with a high school education or less are less likely to cite *frequent* use compared to those with a post-secondary education.

Household or community characteristics Adults living in the lowest income households are most likely to say that they *never* use parks and green spaces in their community, and generally speaking this proportion decreases with increasing household income.

FIGURE 5

Usage of parks and green spaces by education level



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Generally speaking, a higher percentage of residents living in larger communities say that they *frequently* use parks and green spaces in the community, whilst a greater proportion of residents living in smaller communities say that they *never* use these spaces. Compared to the average, relatively more rural residents *never* use and relatively fewer *frequently* use the parks and green spaces available in the community. A lower percentage of urban dwelling adults *never* use the parks and green spaces in the community compared to the average.

Region Compared to the national average, a slightly lower percentage of residents living in the Yukon report that they *never* or *sometimes* use the parks and green spaces in their community. A higher percentage of adults living in the Yukon, while a lower percentage of adults living in Prince Edward Island *frequently* use these parks and green spaces, compared to the average.

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