

Let's Get Active!

Physical Activity in Canadian Communities

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



Multi-purpose recreation trails for physical activity and sport

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

Amount of multi-purpose recreation trails

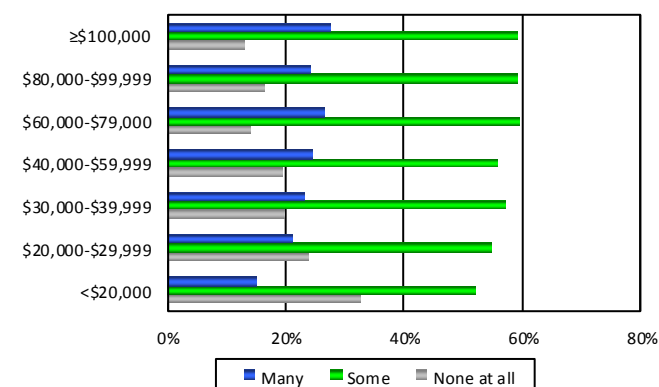
The 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor asked adults aged 18 years and older about their perceptions of the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails in the community. As such, one-quarter (25%) report that there are *many* multi-purpose trails, 58% indicate that there are *some*, and 17% say that there are *none*.

Individual characteristics Relatively more men than women indicate that there are *many* multi-purpose recreation trails in the local community. Perceptions of the availability of these types of trails also vary by age. For example, a higher percentage of older adults (65 years and older) indicate that there are *many* trails compared to 45 to 64 year olds and compared to 18 to 24 year olds. On the contrary, a higher percentage of adults aged 18 to 44 years say that there are *no* trails *at all* compared to those who are older. 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* trails in their community, whereas a higher proportion of adults with a high school education or less say that there are *no* trails *at all* compared to adults with a university education. Compared to the average, a higher proportion of adults who are not working for a specified reason (e.g., unemployed, on leave, illness) report that there are *no* multi-purpose recreation trails *at all* in their community, whereas relatively fewer retirees state this.

Conversely, a higher percentage of retirees say that there are *many* multi-purpose recreation trails in their community compared to the national average.

FIGURE 1

Amount of multi-purpose recreation trails by household income



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Household and community characteristics A greater proportion of adults living in the highest income households cite the availability of *many* multi-purpose recreation trails in the community compared to those living in the lowest income households, yet a higher percentage of adults living in the lowest income households indicate that there are *no* trails *at all* compared to those in higher income households. Generally, a higher percentage of residents living in larger communities cite *many* recreation trails, whereas relatively fewer residents in these larger communities indicate that there are *no* trails *at all* compared to residents living in smaller communities. Compared to the average, a greater proportion of rural dwellers and a lower proportion of adults living in urban environments indicate that there are *no* trails, whereas the opposite relationship exists citing *many* multi-purpose recreation trails in the community.

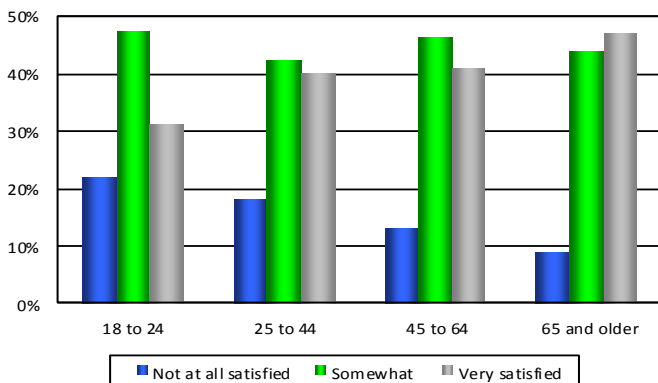
Region Compared to the national average, relatively fewer adults living in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Manitoba cite the availability of *many* recreation trails, whereas a higher percentage of those living in British Columbia or the Yukon report this. Relatively more adults living in Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories report that there are *some* trails, while relatively fewer residents of British Columbia and the Yukon say this. Compared to the national average, a higher percentage of residents of Nunavut, Newfoundland and Labrador say that there are *no* recreation trails *at all* in the community.

Level of satisfaction with the amount of recreation trails

The 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor also examined adults' perceptions of satisfaction with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails in their community. Two-fifths (40%) of adults indicate that they are *very* satisfied with the amount, 45% are *somewhat* satisfied, and 15% are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of trails in the community.

Individual characteristics Despite no gender-related differences in satisfaction levels with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails in the community, there are age-related differences. For example, older adults (65 years and older) are most likely to report that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of trails. The proportion of adults who are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of trails generally decreases with increasing age. Adults who are single or who have never been married are least likely to indicate that they are *very* satisfied with the number of recreation trails in the community, whereas they are more likely than those who are widowed, divorced, or separated to say that they are *not at all* satisfied. A greater percentage of retirees report being *very* satisfied, and are least likely to report being *not* satisfied *at all* with the number of trails in their community compared to the national average.

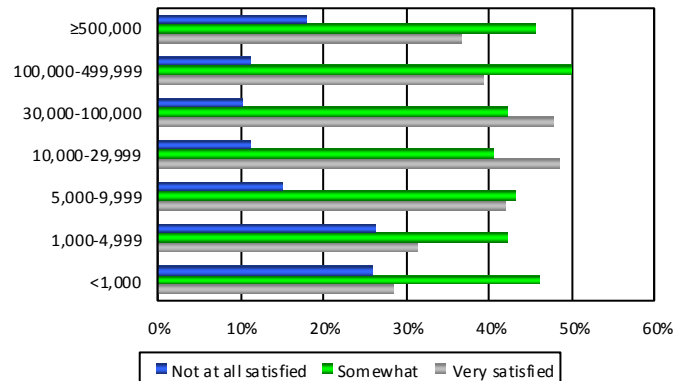
FIGURE 2
Satisfaction with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails by age



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Household or community characteristics Although there are no significant differences by household income, there are differences by community characteristics. For example, a higher percentage of adults living in some larger cities report being *very* satisfied with the amount of trails, whereas a greater proportion of residents living in the smallest communities (<5,000 residents) say that they are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of trails. Compared to the average, relatively more rural residents report being *not at all* satisfied with the number of trails available in the community.

FIGURE 3
Satisfaction with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails by community size



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Region Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails in their community, whereas fewer in Quebec say this. Relatively fewer residents of British Columbia or the Yukon indicate that they are *somewhat* satisfied with the amount of these places when compared to the national average, whereas relatively more adults living in Northwest Territories report this. Compared to the average, a greater proportion of adults living in Quebec, British Columbia and the Yukon indicate that they are *very* satisfied with the number of trails, whereas relatively fewer adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories say that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of multi-purpose recreation trails in the community.

Usage of recreation trails in the community

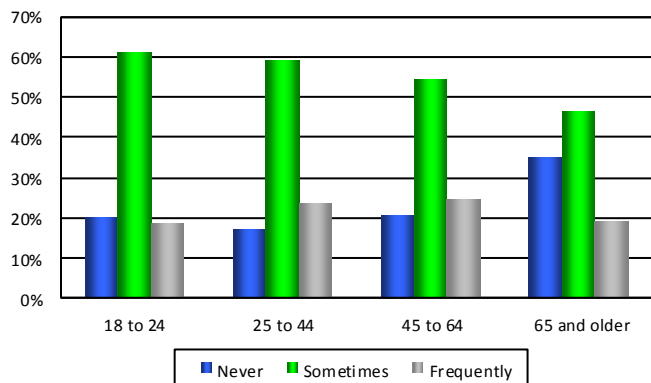
The survey also asked adults about their actual usage of multi-purpose recreation trails in their community. As such, just over one in five (22%) indicate that they *frequently* use these trails, 55% *sometimes* do, and 23% *never* do.

Individual characteristics Reported usage of trails in the community varies by age, although not by gender. For example, older adults (65 years and older) are most likely to indicate that they *never* use recreation trails in their community.

Compared to adults 25 to 64 years, relatively fewer older adults say that they *sometimes* use these trails, and similarly, older adults are less likely than 45 to 64 year olds to indicate that they *frequently* use trails.

FIGURE 4

Usage of multi-purpose recreation trails by age



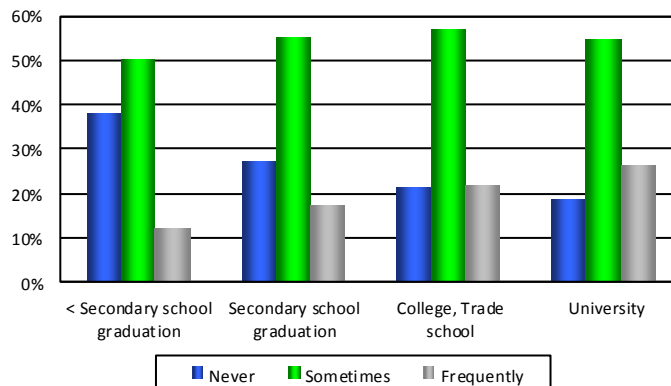
2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are most likely to report *never* using these recreation trails compared to others, and are least likely to say that they *sometimes* do. Regarding employment status, a greater proportion of retirees or adults who are not working for a particular reason, yet a lower proportion of those who are employed, state that they *never* use the recreation trails in the community compared to the national average. Relatively fewer retirees indicate that they *sometimes* use these places when compared to the average. Adults who have not graduated from high school are most likely to report *never* using recreation trails and this percentage generally decreases with increasing education level, whereas the opposite relationship generally exists for those citing *frequent* use.

Household or community characteristics Adults living in lower income households are most likely to say that they *never* use these trails in their community, and generally speaking this proportion decreases with increasing household income. A greater proportion of adults living in the highest income households say that they *sometimes* or *frequently* use these trails compared to some living in some lower income households.

FIGURE 5

Usage of multi-purpose recreation trails by education level



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Generally, relatively more residents of larger communities say that they *frequently* use trails in the community to be active, whereas more residents of smaller communities say that they *never* use these trails, although there are no significant differences by community location.

Region Compared to the national average, a slightly lower percentage of residents living in the Yukon report that they *never* or *sometimes* use the recreation trails in their community. A higher percentage of adults living in British Columbia or the Yukon, yet a lower percentage of adults living in Ontario indicate that they *frequently* use these trails in their community when compared to the average.

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Production of this bulletin has been made possible through a financial contribution from Sport Canada and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.