

Let's Get Active!

Physical Activity in Canadian Communities

2009 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES



Do more opportunities mean more physical activity?

In Bulletin 3 of the 2009 *Physical Activity Monitor* series, perceptions about the number of supports and facilities to be active in Canadian communities were explored. This bulletin investigates whether Canadians would be more active if more supports and facilities were available: If we build it, will they come?

Generally speaking, moderate proportions of Canadians say that having *more* supports and facilities available in the community would increase their own personal usage. The proportions that say that they would use each of the following supports or facilities more often, if there were more available are as follows:

- Places to safely cycle, 39%
- Multi-purpose trails, 30%
- Places, programs, and facilities designed specifically for physical activity and sport, 32%
- Places to walk safely, 28%
- Support services, 24%
- Places not designated specifically for physical activity, 22%

Table 1 outlines the regional differences who state that more of each of these facilities or supports would result in greater personal use.

TABLE 1

Regional differences* in proportions stating that they would use supports and facilities more often if more were available

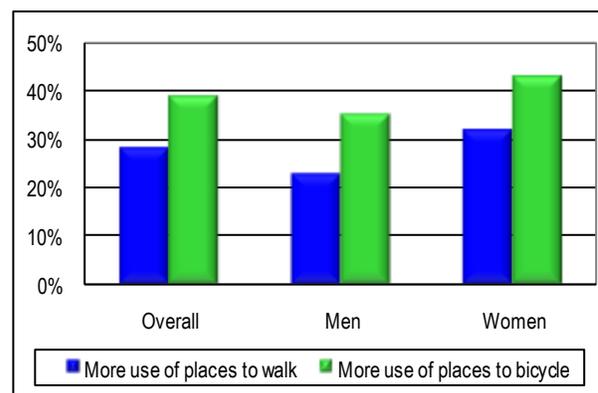
	less likely to say that they would use more	more likely to say that they would use more
Places to safely walk	YT	NT
Places to safely cycle	YT	NS
Multi-purpose trails	PE, YT	
PA designated facilities		NL, NS, AB
Non-designated PA facilities (e.g., schoolyards)	YT	NL
Support services (e.g., info, instruction, child care)		NT

* compared to national average

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FIGURE 1

Would use walking and bicycling facilities more often, by gender



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Socio-demographic characteristics

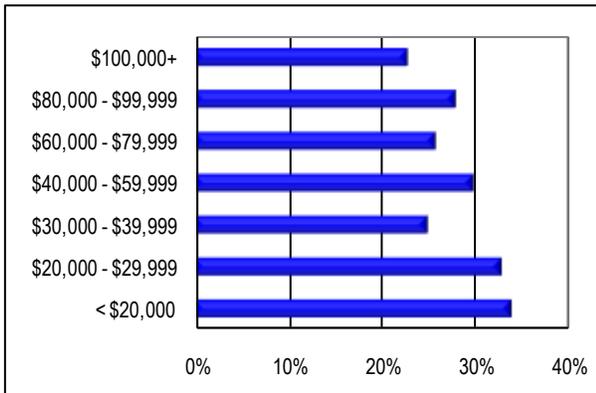
More women than men say that they would use walking and bicycling facilities in their community more often, if more of such places were available. Younger adults are more likely than older adults to indicate that they would use each of these supports and facilities more frequently, if there were more available. Twenty-five to 44 year-olds are most likely to report that they would use support services more, if more were available to them; within this age group, women are most likely to indicate this.

More low-income adults (household income of less than \$20,000) indicate that they would use walking facilities more often, if more were available compared to those with high incomes (\$100,000 or more). More college educated adults say that they would use multi-purpose trails or PA-designated facilities more often, if more were available (compared to those with a high school education), and would use support services often (compared to those who have not completed high school).

Canadians who live in small communities (1,000 to 9,999 residents) are more likely than those in larger communities to indicate that

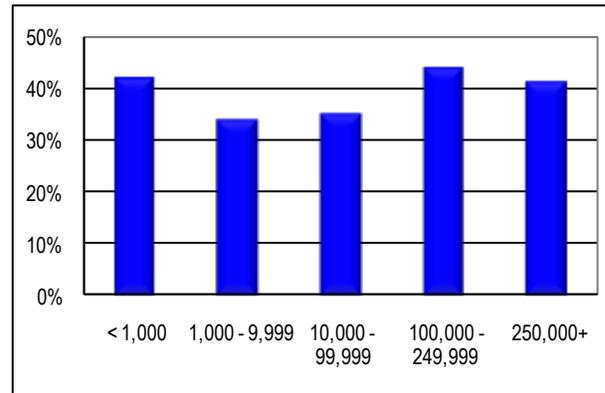


FIGURE 2
Would use walking facilities more often, by income



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FIGURE 3
Would use multi-purpose trails more often, by community size



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they would use PA-designated facilities more often, if more were available. Further, compared to small (fewer than 10,000 residents) or the largest communities (250,000 or more residents), fewer residents of communities with population sizes of between:

- 100,000 to 249,999 say that they would use trails or PA-designated facilities more often, if more were available; and
- 10,000 to 249,999 say that they would use non-PA designated places more frequently, if more were available.

Compared to the national average,

- fewer retirees say that they would more frequently use each of the support or facilities, if more were available;
- more homemakers say that they would use bicycling facilities, multi-purpose trails, and support services more often, if more such services were available; and
- more students would use PA-designated and non-PA designated facilities more often.

Activity level and sport participation

Sport participants are more likely than non-participants to say that they would use PA-designated and non-PA designated facilities more, if more of these types of facilities were available in their community. No differences appear by activity level.

Trends

Compared to 1999, there have been several changes in the proportions of Canadians reporting that they would be more active if more opportunities were available as follows:

- A higher proportion of adults would more active if there were more support services.
- In Saskatchewan, a greater proportion of people would be more active if there were more PA-designated and more support services.
- Whereas in 1999 women were generally more likely than men to say that more of all the supports and facilities would encourage them to be more active, this is only true presently for safe places to walk and cycle.

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