



Beyond the Boundaries:

The Untold Value of Parks & Recreation Infrastructure

PART II: Infrastructure for
Community Resilience



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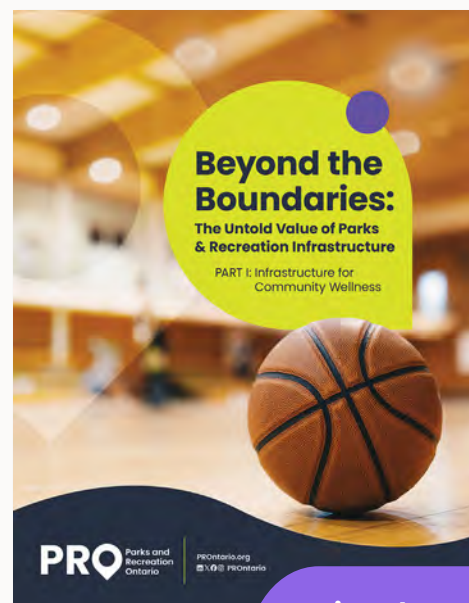
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**Missed Beyond the
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Click here to read
the report.**



About Parks and Recreation Ontario

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is a non-profit association with over 7,000 members that deliver services to more than 85% of Ontario's population. We are devoted to advancing equitable access to quality parks and recreation services for all Ontarians. PRO champions the health, social, economic, and environmental benefits of parks and recreation through evidence-based practices, advocacy, and collaborative cross-sectoral partnerships. Our work includes policy, research, education, training, professional development opportunities, and our flagship quality standards program, HIGH FIVE®, which includes a stream called *Principles of Healthy Child Development*. We envision a future for Ontario where every person has equitable access to vibrant communities, sustainable environments, and personal health.



Reading Note: Endnotes (references) are hyperlinked throughout the document.

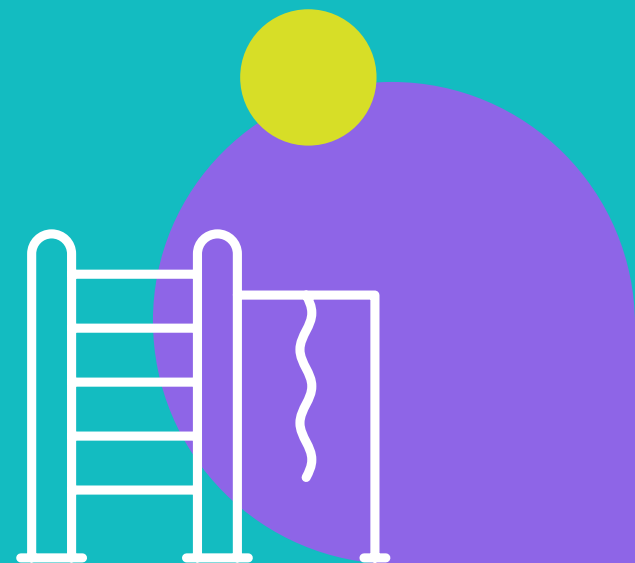
Simply click on the end note number to view all reference links at the end of this document.





CHAPTER 1:

Parks and Recreation Infrastructure: Built to Help



Built to help

When the United States airspace closed on September 11, 2001, Gander Newfoundland, became the emergency landing site for 38 planes¹. Many Canadians have heard inspiring accounts from this event – a small community banding together to house, feed, clothe, and welcome nearly 7,000 stranded passengers from all corners of the globe. Gander’s exceptional emergency planning enabled the small community to respond efficiently and effectively. Perhaps a lesser-known detail of this incident was the pivotal role of parks and recreation infrastructure in Gander’s crisis response.



Photo credit: Gander Public & Resource Library

When news broke of passengers’ imminent arrival, food deployment began almost immediately. Gander’s Community Centre ice rink was converted into Canada’s largest walk-in freezer and food distribution hub, local gymnasiums were transformed into massive dormitories, and parks, playgrounds, and fields became gathering spaces for much needed respite and play².

Gander is a prime example of why investing in quality parks and recreation infrastructure is also an investment in community safety, emergency management, and crisis response.

Parks and recreation equity is emergency management equity, playing a key role in prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.



Beyond the Boundaries: Part 1, explored why investment in parks and recreation infrastructure is prudent economic, health, and social policy, demonstrating that parks and recreation equity is health and social equity. Building on these findings, this report will demonstrate that *parks and recreation equity is emergency management equity*, playing a key role in prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. For too long, parks and recreation infrastructure has been treated as an advantageous yet non-essential investment. Recent events in Canada and across the globe have repeatedly dispelled this assumption, proving that parks and recreation infrastructure deepens community capacity for crisis response.

The backbone of modern life

When disaster strikes, communities depend on a complex network of infrastructure to withstand the storm and keep citizens safe. Infrastructure is commonly portrayed as roads, bridges, electrical grids, water systems, etc. – also referred to as grey infrastructure. Well-functioning grey infrastructure is critical during times of crisis. However, research has shown that green infrastructure (i.e., natural vegetation systems and green technologies) and social infrastructure (i.e., spaces that facilitate social connections), are also key to community resilience³.

Types of physical infrastructure

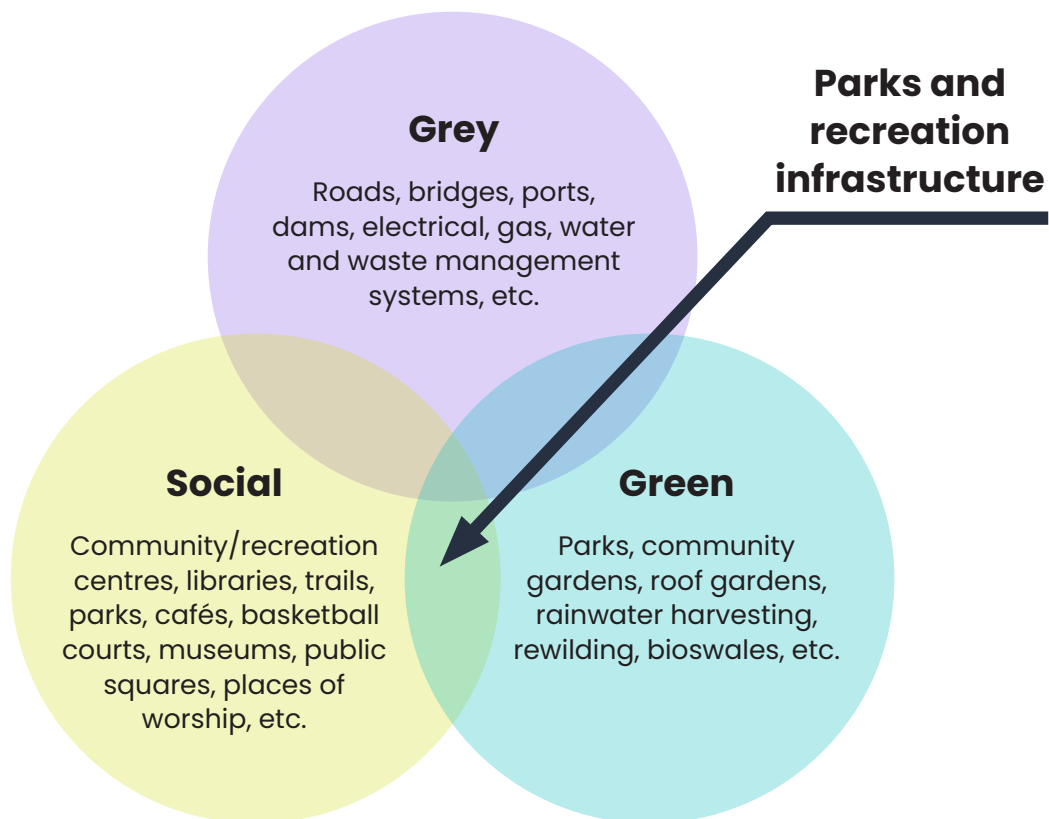


Chart adapted from Aldrich, D. P. (2023). How social infrastructure saves lives: a quantitative analysis of Japan's 3/11 disasters. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 24(1), 30–40.

Infrastructure for community

In July 1995, a heat wave ravaged the City of Chicago, resulting in 739 heat-related deaths over the course of 5 days. Dr. Eric Klinenberg, a leading scholar of this devastating event, found that lively neighbourhoods with busy streets and vibrant public spaces suffered fewer deaths⁴.

Communities with higher prevalence of recreation facilities, libraries, parks, and other social infrastructure experienced lower mortality rates.



found comparable results in his examination of Japan's 2011 tsunami. A review of 550 Japanese neighbourhoods revealed that communities with a higher prevalence of recreation facilities, libraries, parks, and other social infrastructure experienced lower mortality rates, even when compared to communities with significant grey infrastructure, such as sea walls⁶.

Lessons learned from these global emergencies illustrate that social infrastructure is a protective factor, increasing resiliency and reducing mortality rates during widespread crises. While we do not suggest that recreation centres and parks alone will save us, we do assert that our sector can no longer be excluded from conversations about emergency management and community resilience. Social infrastructure, like recreation centres and parks, are places where neighbours meet, friendships grow, and cities become home. As history has shown, social infrastructure provides the setting that enables citizen's to interact, coordinate, and develop relationships necessary during times of crisis. The remaining chapters of this report will demonstrate how parks and recreation infrastructure in Ontario and across Canada are already providing essential community functions, including, reinforcing healthcare services, managing impacts of extreme weather, responding to unexpected events, and empowering democratic participation.



"While social infrastructure alone isn't sufficient to unite polarized societies, protect vulnerable communities, or connect alienated individuals, we can't address these challenges without it⁷."

Dr. Eric Klinenberg

Political Scientist & Public Policy Expert

Similarly, during the 2021 heat wave in British Columbia, neighbourhoods lacking in green space and recreation facilities were more likely to experience heat-related deaths⁵. Political scientist and public policy expert, Dr. Daniel P. Aldrich,



Aftermath of 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami.



CHAPTER 2:

Infrastructure for Health Services



How recreation infrastructure supports health services

In addition to direct health benefits associated with participation in sport and recreation programming, parks and recreation infrastructure also provides much needed space for other services that directly benefit public health, including vaccine hubs, mobile blood and plasma clinics, and publicly accessible washrooms.

COVID-19 response

In 2020, provincewide shutdowns forced the temporary closure of all recreation facilities in Ontario. However, facilities were not closed for long. Communities across Ontario, and globally, converted arenas, gymnasiums, fields, and community centres into COVID-19 screening sites, field hospitals, shelters, and most commonly, mass vaccination hubs^{8,9}.

Communities including Hamilton¹⁰, Ottawa¹¹, and Kitchener¹², among others, used recreation facilities as isolation centres for unhoused individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. These isolation centres were a critical piece of the COVID-19 response plan for the unhoused population, relieving capacity constraints and outbreaks at shelters.

100% of public health authorities in Ontario used one or more recreation facilities for COVID-19 vaccinations.



Other communities, including Owen Sound¹³, Little Current¹⁴, Sarnia¹⁵, and Windsor¹⁶ used arenas and gymnasiums to set up field hospitals, should capacity in local healthcare facilities be exceeded.

Across Ontario, thousands lined up outside of community centres, arenas, and gymnasiums to receive the much-anticipated COVID-19 vaccine. PRO collected data from across the province and found that 100% of public health authorities in Ontario used one or more recreation facilities for COVID-19 vaccination distribution.

When Ontario began to re-open, public parks became the go-to gathering place for people seeking nature and connection. One study found that 94% of Canadian cities saw an increase in park use during the pandemic; and 60% of Canadians spent more time in parks compared to pre-pandemic¹⁷. Consistent with these findings, conservation areas, and provincial and national parks also experienced a sudden rise in visitors. In February 2021, Ontario Parks reported a surge in campsite reservations, nearly doubling reservations recorded in the same time span of the previous year¹⁸.

As the COVID-19 pandemic becomes a more distant memory, we must not forget the role that parks and recreation infrastructure played in crisis response. Undoubtedly, parks and recreation infrastructure bolstered the province's capacity to shelter, provide medical care, and vaccinate thousands of Ontarians.

Blood and plasma donor centres

Blood donors are essential to Canada's healthcare system, selflessly providing a critical part of everyday medical care required for major surgeries, medical procedures, cancer treatments, and managing diseases and disorders¹⁹. According to Canadian Blood Services, a single blood donation can save three lives²⁰.

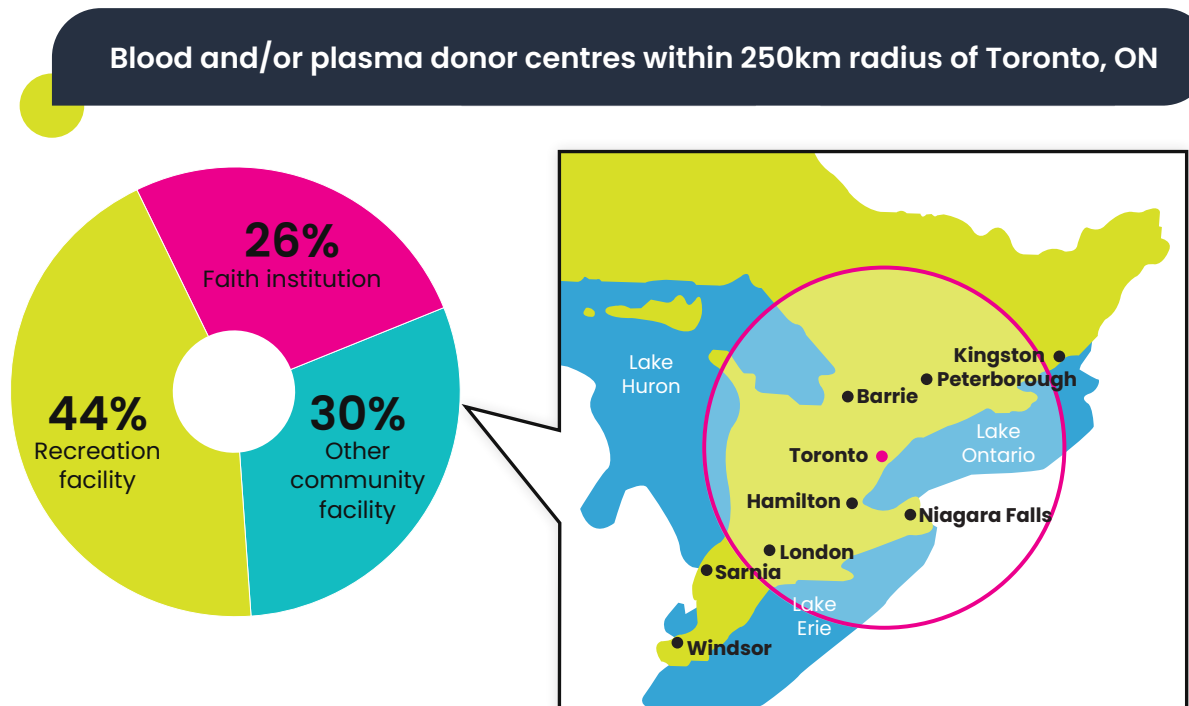
Canadian Blood Services recruits and collects blood, plasma, and platelet donations at over 13,000 donation events each year²¹. Canadian Blood Services operates 35 permanent donor centres and over 4,000 mobile donor centres across Canada²².

Mobile donor centres operate out of various social infrastructure including places of worship, halls/ convention centres, residential buildings, and most commonly, community and recreation facilities.



Recreation centres support Ontario's lifeline

Our scan of donor sites recorded on Canadian Blood Services revealed that 44% of mobile clinics within a 250km radius of Toronto operate out of a recreation facility.



Data collected from PRO's scan of mobile clinics located within a 250km radius of Toronto in 2025 recorded on *Canadian Blood Services*.

Menstrual equity

There are more than 10 million people in Canada who menstruate²³. However, menstruation remains a taboo subject. 1 in 4 Canadians agree that periods are dirty and unclean; 1 in 5 agree that menstruation should not be publicly discussed²⁴. Feelings of discomfort and shame that one may experience during menstruation is further compounded by the financial burden of period products. 1 in 6 Canadians who menstruate have experienced period poverty, which can be defined as a lack of access to menstrual products, education, hygiene facilities, waste management, or a combination of these²⁵. Recreation facilities across Ontario are helping to change this.

Recreation facilities are helping to change attitudes and break barriers

Many Ontario communities are now supplying free menstruation products in municipal buildings, including recreation facilities. **Period Pin** is a Canadian-based organization dedicated to advancing menstrual equity through mapping locations where free menstrual products can be found. Nearly 30% of Ontario locations pinned on their map are recreation facilities. While such an initiative may seem like a minor contribution, municipalities that endorse free period products are destigmatizing conversations around menstruation and menstrual equity, while also setting a precedent for other municipalities to follow suit. Access to free menstrual products enhances the dignity, hygiene health, and comfort of community members who menstruate.



"Access to menstrual products is not a luxury—it's a necessity. Providing them freely in public spaces affirms dignity, promotes equity, and ensures that no one is held back from participating fully. This service helps to minimize barriers and support community members in their pursuit of active healthy lifestyles."

Kristina Zietsma

Director, Recreation and Culture
Town of Oakville



Does your recreation centre supply free menstrual products?

Add your location to Period Pin's database!

Policy implications

This chapter has only begun to touch upon the endless ways that parks and recreation infrastructure supports and supplements Ontario's healthcare services. Specialized fitness classes, First Aid and CPR courses, public health information sessions, and countless other programs operate out of recreation facilities everyday.

Examples of other health services & courses at recreation centres

Service	Description	Community	Recreation Facility
Standard First Aid and CPR	Provides comprehensive training covering all aspects of first aid.	Town of Caledon	Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness
Pharmacy Education	Information about multi-medication management, medical compliance, pharmacy services, and minor ailments.	City of London	Kiwanis Seniors Community Centre
Keep Moving with Parkinson's	Aerobic conditioning, functional strength, and mobility and balancing exercises for people with Parkinson's disease.	City of Thunder Bay	Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre
Babysitting course	Course for youth ages 11-15 for safe babysitting practices.	City of Hamilton	Bennetto Community Centre
Bone 101 workshop	Nutrition, exercise, and fall prevention to reduce risk of fractures.	Woolwich Township	Besleau Community Centre
Second Wind	Exercise class focused on breath work and breathing techniques for individual with chronic illness including COPC, asthma, emphysema, and other lung diseases.	Six Nations of the Grand River	Dajoh Youth and Elders Centre
Mental Health Walk-in Clinics	Free mental health walk-in clinics open Monday-Friday at various recreation centres across Niagara Region.	Niagara Region	Meridian Community Centre Fleming Centre MacBain Community Centre

We know that Ontario's healthcare system is significantly strengthened because of parks and recreation infrastructure. Yet, these contributions are often overlooked. To further strengthen Ontario's healthcare services and adequately support recreation departments in providing these necessary functions, we propose the following.

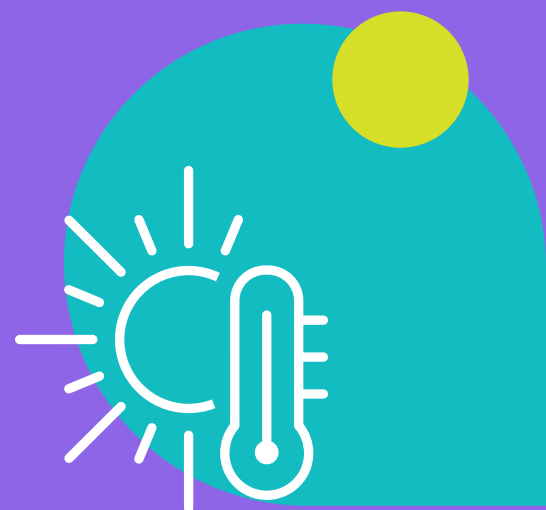
Our recommendations

- Formalize partnerships between public health units and recreation providers to ensure rapid mobilization during future health crises.
- Create an annual funding stream for municipalities to retrofit recreation facilities with infrastructure that supports public health functions (i.e., refrigeration, storage, clinical partitions, etc.).
- Integrate recreation facilities into Ontario's health system planning as official sites for vaccination, blood donor centres, health education programs, etc.



CHAPTER 3:

Infrastructure for Extreme Weather



How recreation infrastructure supports extreme weather response

From extreme heat to extreme cold, unpredictable Canadian weather poses significant challenges, health risks, and financial implications for municipalities. Summer 2024 was the most expensive year on record in respect to weather-related emergencies. Flooding in Ontario alone cost \$940 million in damages²⁶. Summer 2025 weather brought minimal relief. Extreme heat and dry conditions put strain on power grids, increased adverse health effects, and exacerbated wildfires from coast-to-coast^{27 28 29}.

When extreme weather strikes, recreation infrastructure provides necessary shelter and refuge, especially for vulnerable populations. Correspondingly, green infrastructure, like parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of extreme weather by mitigating the effects of extreme temperatures, flooding, and pollution.

Extreme Temperatures

Weather in 2025 will be remembered as the year of extremes. Many parts of Ontario experienced bitterly cold temperatures and near record snowfall³⁰. Six months later, the province was in the middle of an unrelenting heatwave and dry spell³¹. At both ends of the spectrum, parks and recreation infrastructure provided essential services. Communities across Ontario used recreation facilities as heating and cooling centres and emergency shelters during periods of extreme temperatures.

When extreme heat occurs, Health Canada recommends seeking tree-shaded areas and aquatic facilities, especially if your home does not have air conditioning³². Studies show that immersion in cool water is the most effective way to lower body temperature and prevent illness associated with prolonged heat exposure, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke³³. In August 2025, the City of Toronto extended the operating hours of 8 pools to 11:45pm, maximizing citizen access for much needed relief from unusually warm temperatures³⁴. During heat waves, pools and splashpads are both recreation and public health facilities.



"We're excited to invest more into extending pool hours to help Toronto residents stay cool in warmer weather. Outdoor pools are a great way to stay active while safely enjoying the outdoors, and this year Toronto residents can start enjoying the water even earlier. I hope all Toronto residents will enjoy these pools, be safe and have fun this summer³⁵."

Olivia Chow

Mayor

City of Toronto

Storms

Storms can pose serious risk to community infrastructure, including flooding, property damage, and power outages. In March 2025, Ontario underwent a severe ice storm, causing widespread power outages in Orillia, Pefferlaw, Georgina, Dufferin, and Georgina Island First Nation. Thousands of people were left without power – some for over a week³⁶.

Orillia Recreation Centre responds to icy blast

At the Orillia Recreation Centre³⁷, recreation staff adapted quickly to help establish and operate a temporary Relief Centre. The Relief Centre was made possible through a coordinated and collaborative effort between many community partners and agencies, although primarily facilitated by the City of Orillia. As the emergency entered the third day, the Relief Centre also acted as a secondary healthcare space for Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. Hospital patients who received medical clearance were transferred from the hospital to the Recreation Centre, where doctors conducted daily visits. This helped free up hospital beds for patients with acute health conditions directly related to the ice storm.

Over the course of 9 days, 6,000+ residents of all ages and backgrounds from Orillia and surrounding areas visited the relief centre for much needed warmth, shelter, food, showers, and community connection. Recreation staff demonstrated exceptional leadership, playing an instrumental role in the operation of the Relief Centre. Working 12-hour days to overnight shifts, they drew on their skills in managing people, programs and spaces. The Director of Parks and Recreation, Marcia Russell explained that Recreation staff's natural focus on inclusion, empathy and clear communication ensured that residents using the Relief Centre felt heard, supported, and cared for, even under stress.

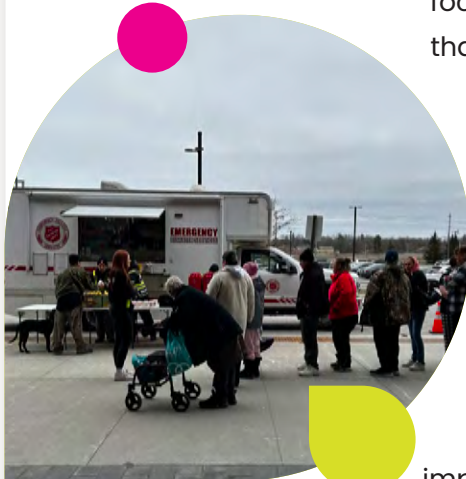


Photo credit: City of Orillia

Opening in 2020, the Orillia Recreation Centre is a relatively new community asset. Without the Centre, or the backup generator that city council approved during construction, the Relief Centre would have not been possible. Forward-thinking investment in recreation facilities empowered the City of Orillia to effectively respond to the ice storm, helping to reduce the severity of impact on local residents.

Wildfires

Thousands of residents from Northern Ontario communities were evacuated this summer due to wildfires. Evacuees from Northern Ontario and Manitoba were relocated to communities across the province, including Thunder Bay, Mississauga, Toronto³⁸, and Niagara Falls³⁹. In August, unprecedented wildfires blazed through Ontario's northeastern and central regions, igniting calls for increased wildfire preparedness among all Ontario municipalities.

While wildfire risk is a relatively new reality for many Ontario communities, provinces much more experienced with wildfire management regularly utilize parks and recreation infrastructure for wildfire evacuation and evacuee care.

When the community of Fort Smith, N.W.T. was evacuated in August 2023, citizens were directed to head to the recreation centre – an identifiable muster area – before boarding the planes⁴⁰. In 2024, the City of Calgary converted an arena into a reception centre to support Jasper wildfire evacuees⁴¹. This summer, recreation facilities in Winnipeg were used by the province and Red Cross as reception areas⁴² and emergency shelters⁴³ for both community members and pets⁴⁴.

Parks also provide important space for connection and respite. Earlier this summer, Flin Flon wildfire evacuees gathered for a barbeque at Assiniboine Park in Winnipeg, Manitoba⁴⁵. Organizers expressed that the barbecue was a therapeutic and needed opportunity to socialize and connect during a difficult and uncertain time.

Provinces experienced with wildfire management utilize parks and recreation infrastructure for wildfire evacuation and evacuee care.



Policy implications

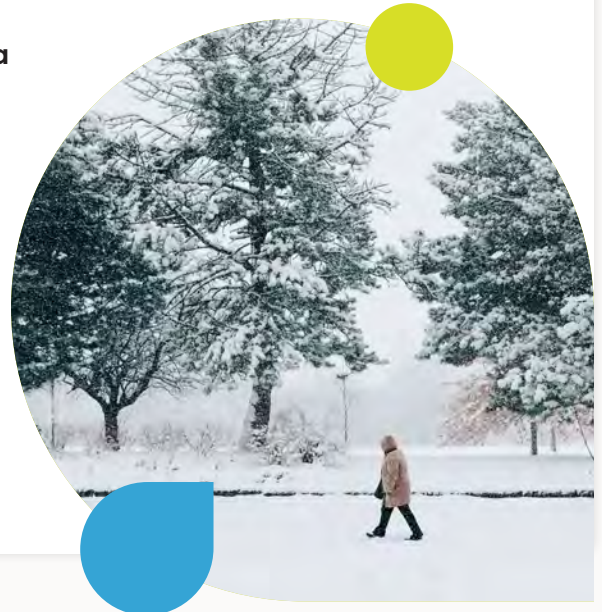
This chapter has primarily highlighted the ways in which recreation infrastructure supports communities during extreme weather events. However, parks also play a critical role. For instance, parks are proven to lower surface temperatures during extreme heat waves⁴⁶, and sponge parks – parks optimized for storm water absorption – are effective at mitigating flooding during heavy rainfall⁴⁷.

Trends suggest that Ontario will experience more frequent and intense temperatures⁴⁸, storms⁴⁹, and wildfires⁵⁰ in the coming years. Municipalities must be adequately equipped to respond to volatile weather conditions that pose a risk to community members and infrastructure.

We know that community response and resilience to extreme weather events is significantly strengthened by quality parks and recreation infrastructure. However, with building and maintenance costs already exceeding municipal budgets, communities often do not have the capital and resources required to proactively build and retrofit infrastructure specifically designed to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events. Accordingly, to bolster Ontario's response to extreme weather events, we propose the following.

Our recommendations

- Incentivize municipalities to integrate extreme weather prevention into parks and recreation master plans, including sponge parks, bioswales, permeable pavement, shaded areas, solar-powered amenities, misting stations, etc.
- Expand the Emergency Preparedness Grant, with a dedicated stream for recreation and community centres to retrofit facilities with infrastructure optimized for emergency response (i.e., HVAC upgrades, backup generators, etc.).
- Collaborate with Parks and Recreation Ontario to provide cross-sectoral training opportunities to ensure parks and recreation professionals are prepared to manage facilities during prolonged extreme weather events.





CHAPTER 4:

Infrastructure for the Unexpected



Stories from the field

Parks and recreation is a sector rooted in well-being, belonging, and community. Therefore, when the unexpected happens, it is unsurprising that recreation facilities and staff are called upon to assist. When Ontarians are faced with decisions about the future of their community, province, and country, parks and recreation facilities are often transformed into spaces of lively political debate and democratic participation. From industrial accidents, to snap elections, communities depend on parks and recreation infrastructure and staff to keep citizens safe and communities in motion.



Rec centre becomes safe haven for displaced seniors

📍 Barrie, Ontario

On January 10, 2025 at 3:00 p.m., staff at the East Bayfield Community Centre in Barrie, Ontario, were informed that 4 buses with 140 evacuated senior residents were enroute due to a fire at the Simcoe Retirement Centre. Recreation staff did not know the severity of the fire nor the resident's expected length of stay. Staff reacted quickly, arranging tables, chairs, and setting up intake areas.

"In true recreation fashion, our team did not only supply basic needs, but they provided the retirement residents with an experience. Supplies were brought in from our local 55+ centres, including games, and cards. TVs were rolled in from our youth centres'. Arrangements were made with our concession stand to provide hot drinks. In scary times, not knowing the severity of the fire and some not even knowing what was happening, we banded together to make the crisis not only safe, but a little bit fun!"

Samantha Sircej

Supervisor, Client Services - East Bayfield Community Centre
City of Barrie

Explosion turns rec centre into refuge

📍 St. Catharines, Ontario

On January 12, 2023, emergency crews were called to the Ssonix Products in St. Catharines, Ontario – an explosion occurred at a waste handling facility in the city. When the neighbourhood north of the facility was evacuated due to smoke and fumes, the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre was quick to respond.



Photo credit: City of St. Catharines

"Our St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre was used as an emergency evacuation centre on the day of this incident. A reception and warming area was set up in the lobby in collaboration with the Canadian Red Cross and other emergency services. We welcomed over 200 evacuees (many with their pets), served several meals, and provided over 38 pots of coffee."

Lori Brunetta

Manager, Recreation Programs and Cultural Services
City of St. Catharines

Rec centre opens doors to long-term care residents

📍 Clarington, Ontario

On January 23, 2025 around 2:30a.m., a pipe burst at Fosterbrooke Long-Term Care Home in Newcastle, Ontario. The home, which has 88 licensed beds, was in desperate need of a space to safely house residents, many of whom had complex medical needs. Clarington's municipal staff sprung into action, opening the doors to the Diane Hamre Recreation Complex in the middle of the night⁵¹.



Photo credit: Municipality of Clarington

"When residents were not able to be quickly placed into new long-term care homes, they were housed in the gymnasium for five days. Recreation staff stepped up to support the operation of the centre as a long-term care home while the Region of Durham and the Province of Ontario worked to rehome the individuals."

Melissa Westover

Manager of Strategic Communications & Initiatives
Municipality of Clarington

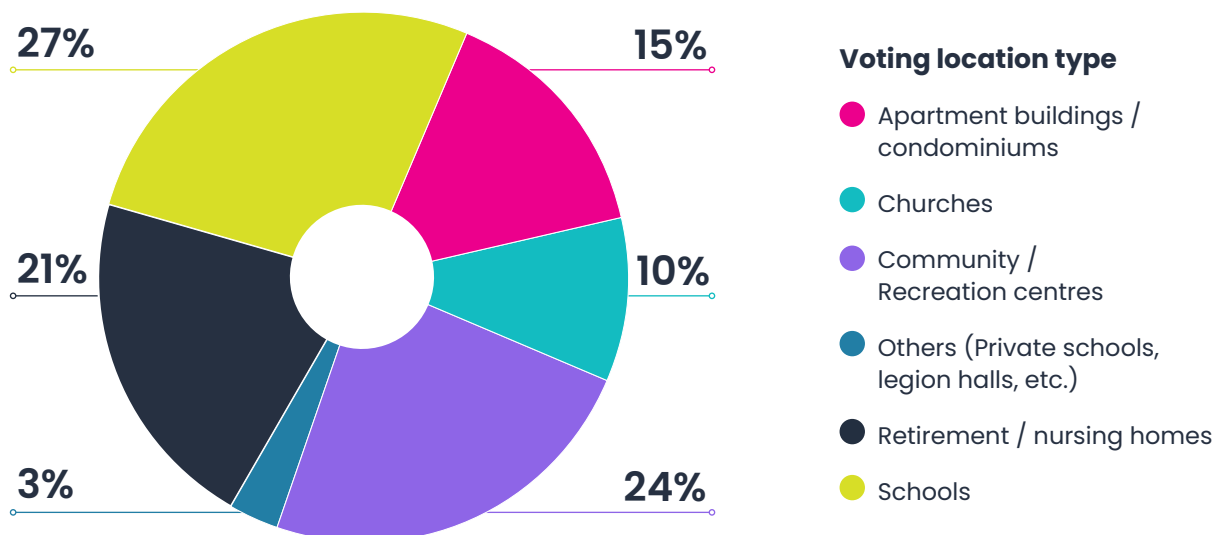
How recreation facilities support democratic participation

The year 2025 was marked by unexpected political events, including back-to-back snap elections at the provincial and federal level. From town halls to public information sessions, to electoral debates, to voting stations, recreation facilities are frequently the host site for civic action and democratic life in Ontario. Particularly in rural communities, recreation facilities provide a central location to cast votes, hear from government officials, and contribute to decision-making at all levels of government.



The use of recreation facilities as voting locations in Ontario has been steadily increasing. During the 2022 Provincial Election, recreation/community centres accounted for 8% more voting locations than in 2018. Over 1,600 voting stations operated out of community/recreation centres in 2022, representing the second most common voting location type⁵². It is also important to note that voting stations in schools most commonly take place in gymnasiums – another recreation asset.

Where Ontarian's Voted: 2022 Provincial Election



Elections Ontario (2022). Resourcefulness & resiliency: 2022 post-event report 43rd Ontario provincial general election.

Policy implications

Nearly every community in Ontario has stories like these. As stewards of wellness, parks and recreation professionals are most often willing to aid and adapt during unexpected events.

We must ensure that the flexibility of parks and recreation infrastructure is not mistaken for dispensability.



However, we must ensure that the flexibility of parks and recreation infrastructure is not mistaken for dispensability.

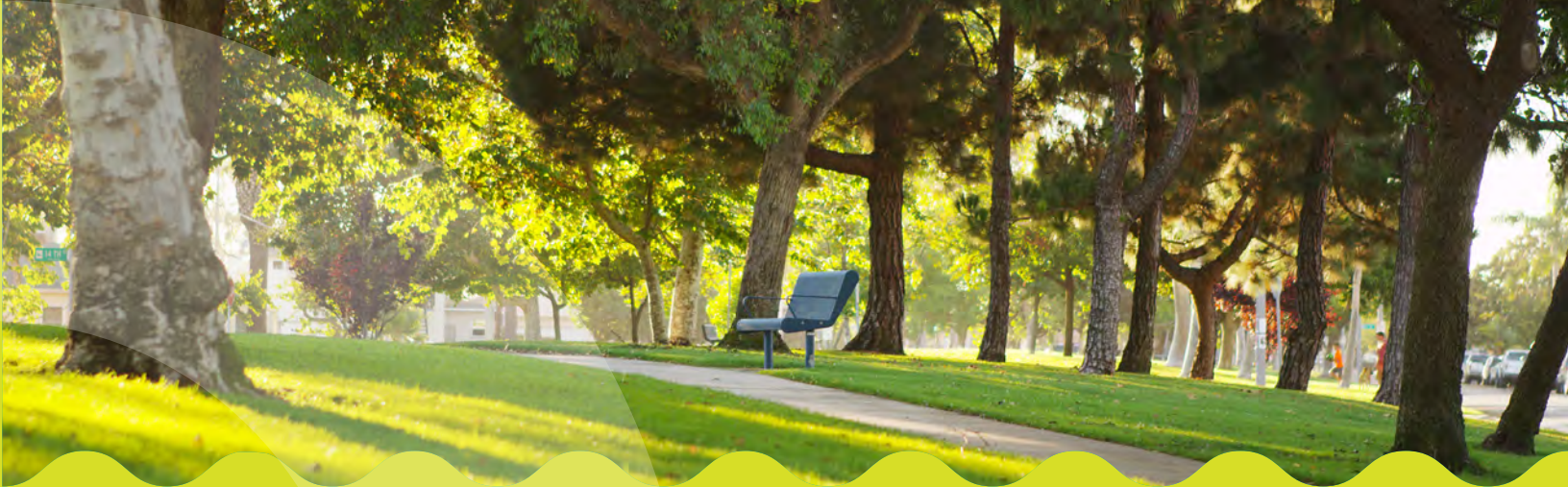
We know that community response to unexpected events is strengthened by parks and recreation infrastructure and staff. Yet, we have also heard from leaders in Ontario and across Canada that emergency events take a toll on the physical, mental, and emotional health of parks and

recreation staff. Therefore, to strengthen Ontario's emergency preparedness and response, we propose the following.

Our recommendations

- Collaborate with Parks and Recreation Ontario to provide cross-sectoral training for parks and recreation professionals related to emergency preparedness and response, including housing, social, public health, and mental health considerations.
- Include parks and recreation leaders at emergency planning tables at all levels of government to ensure local response capacity reflects available community assets.





CHAPTER 5:

Infrastructure for Healing

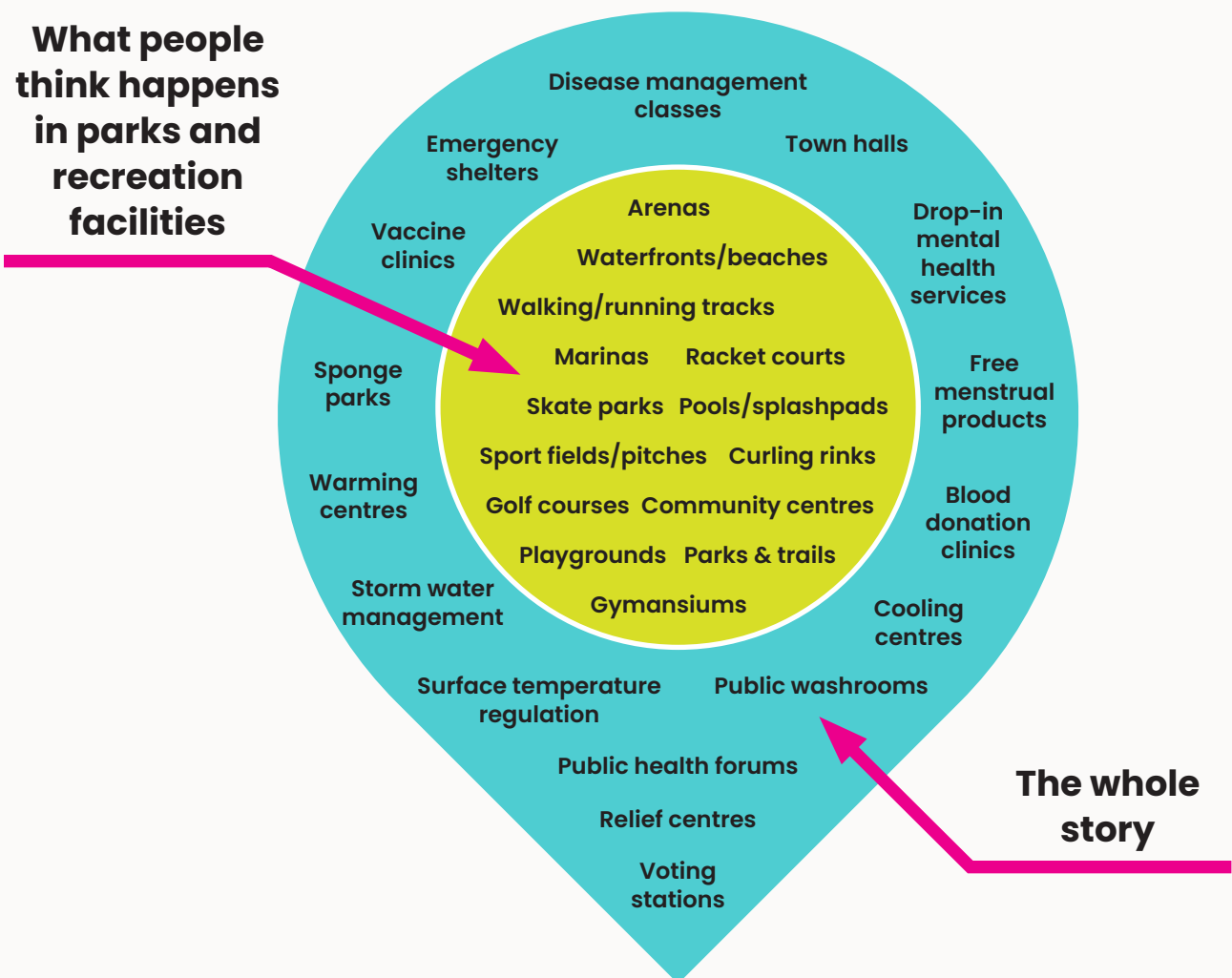


Conclusion

Stories and case studies presented in this report demonstrate how parks and recreation infrastructure supports emergency management through prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response. However, parks and recreation also play a role in recovery. Following a crisis, recreation can provide a sense of normalcy, escapism, and connection with family and friends⁵³. During recovery processes, community events, such as park cleanups, can help citizens come to terms with what has been lost, damaged, or changed⁵⁴.

We know that simply building or updating parks and recreation infrastructure will not prepare Ontario for every coming emergency or crisis. Emergency management requires investment in a complex and coordinated network of infrastructure, education, training, and community partnerships. However, the community stories and case studies shared in this report do affirm parks and recreation as critical infrastructure, empowering community response during times of need.

What people think happens in parks and recreation facilities



Currently, Ontario municipalities bare the majority of financial burden when it comes to parks and recreation infrastructure. We know that parks and recreation infrastructure are versatile facilities, equally matched by employees willing to adapt and support community causes beyond the scope of their traditional roles. However, we also know that responding to community crises is taking a toll – both on recreation professionals and infrastructure. Rising building and maintenance costs and unpredictable economic climates put our sector at risk of spending cuts. Funding for parks and recreation facilities should not only be prioritized as leisure assets that support community health and wellness, but also as multi-use emergency management hubs.

Having access to quality parks and recreation infrastructure should not be considered a luxury. Parks and recreation equity is emergency management equity. In addition to providing venues for engaging in physical activity, parks and recreation facilities provide essential functions for public health services, extreme weather mitigation, democratic participation, and community crisis response. However, to continue this legacy these spaces must have sustainable funding, be accessible, and cater the needs of Ontario communities today and in the future.

We know that parks and recreation infrastructure are versatile facilities, equally matched by employees willing to adapt and support community causes beyond the scope of their traditional roles.



For more information about PRO's advocacy priorities related to infrastructure investment, read our Pre-Budget Submission.



Endnotes



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