



Beyond the Boundaries:

The Untold Value of Parks & Recreation Infrastructure

PART II: Infrastructure for
Community Resilience

Executive Summary

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This report demonstrates why investment in parks and recreation infrastructure is critical to community resilience in Ontario, increasing community capacity to respond to extreme weather, public health emergencies, unexpected events, and more.



Chapter 1: Parks and Recreation Infrastructure: Built to Help

- Park and recreation infrastructure in Ontario, and across Canada, has long been utilized to support communities during crisis – including in Gander, Newfoundland during 9/11.
- Global research illustrates that a higher prevalence of social infrastructure is associated with lower mortality rates during wide-spread disaster.



Chapter 2: Infrastructure for Health Services

- In addition to direct health benefits associated with participation in sport and recreation, 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, publicly accessible washrooms, and more.



Chapter 3: Infrastructure for Extreme Weather

- Trends suggest that Ontario will experience more frequent and intense temperatures, storms, and wildfires in the coming years. Municipalities must be adequately equipped to respond.
- When extreme weather strikes, recreation infrastructure provides necessary shelter and refuge, especially for vulnerable populations. Parks and open green space mitigate the impacts of extreme weather by lowering surface temperatures and absorbing excess stormwater.



Chapter 4: Infrastructure for the Unexpected

- When the unexpected happens, communities in Ontario rely on parks and recreation infrastructure to keep citizens safe and communities in motion. This section highlights recent stories from Barrie, St. Catharines, and Clarington.
- When Ontarians are faced with decisions about the future of their community, province, or country, recreation facilities are transformed into spaces of democratic participation.



Chapter 5: Infrastructure for Healing

- Effective emergency management response requires that parks and recreation infrastructure have sustainable funding, be accessible, and cater the needs Ontario communities today and in the future. Parks and recreation equity is emergency management equity.

