

MOVING BEYOND STAGNATION:

Elevating Physical Activity in Canada



HOW MUNICIPALITIES & URBAN PLANNERS CAN IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF ADULTS IN CANADA

According to the [2025 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults](#), only **46%** of adults living in Canada are getting the recommended 150 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (PA).

Movement drives economic growth, reduces the strain on Canada's health-care system, strengthens communities, improves mental health and even advances climate change action.

Getting more people in Canada moving can create a stronger, healthier nation, but doing so requires collective action. Municipalities and urban planners can help drive change by:

Policy

- Developing environmental planning policies and incentives like walkability and bike paths instead of regulatory disincentives such as parking fees and vehicle taxes.
- Putting into effect policies that impact multiple sectors and include PA promotion across transportation and urban planning.
- Monitoring how policies implemented at the municipal level impact diverse populations.

Practice

- Focusing on infrastructure changes to improve pedestrians' and cyclists' safety, as well as behavioural and social programs like campaigns, training and regulation initiatives.
- Promoting inclusive and affordable PA programs such as beginner-level classes, culturally relevant activities and options for different age groups and abilities.
- Offering flexible program participation options, including varied times (e.g., evening, weekend, drop-in), locations (e.g., workplaces) and delivery modes (e.g., online).
- Ensuring that facilities and active spaces are welcoming, safe and accessible for all by prioritizing gender-neutral change rooms, accessible entrances and pathways, adequate lighting, and clear signage.
- Prioritizing and continuing to invest in the design and upkeep of walking trails, bike paths, parks, recreation centres and multi-use sport facilities that are free or low cost to use.
- Spreading out infrastructure changes equitably across neighbourhoods, especially in underserved and low-income communities, to reduce barriers and support daily PA for all.
- Considering adults when designing parks and playgrounds to encourage PA across generations (e.g., playground features scaled for multi-generational use).

Together, we can help adults in Canada make room to move! Read the [2025 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults](#) to learn more.

If you would like to share feedback on our recommendations and/or have additional ideas, please email us at info@participaction.com.