

Culture, recreation & sports infrastructure in rural Ontario

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Highlights

- Lower-tier municipalities in rural and small town Ontario own 1,526 facilities providing culture, recreation or sport services.
- The bulk of facilities were built in the three decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.
- However, for some facilities, a sizeable share was built from 2000 to 2016 (such as 10% of indoor ice arenas, 63% of outdoor ice arenas, 32% of libraries, 23% of outdoor sports fields, 22% of museums and archives, 20% of community centres and 10% of indoor ice arenas).

Why look at public infrastructure?

Facilities providing culture, recreation and sports services are important public infrastructure assets for rural municipalities in Ontario and a key component of the local quality of life for citizens. Some are approaching the end of their useful life and population expansion in some areas is causing a demand for additional public infrastructure.

In 2016, there were 15,384 separate facilities in Ontario. One group (outdoor sports fields) had 6,772 facilities (44% of the total).

Lower-tier municipalities in RST (defined in Box 1) areas in Ontario own 1,526 facilities providing culture, recreation or sport services.

Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey¹ was conducted by Statistics Canada in 2017 in order "to collect 2016 statistical information on the inventory, condition, performance and asset management strategies of core public infrastructure assets" owned or leased by each level of government in Canada.

The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to show the status of the infrastructure of culture, recreation and sports facilities among incorporated towns and incorporated municipalities (hereafter "municipalities") (See Box 1) in rural Ontario

Findings

Almost all facilities providing culture, recreation or sport services are provided by municipalities (Table 1). Only four groups² of facilities have some (up to 8% of the total) provided by other tiers of government.

¹ Statistics Canada. (bi-annual) **Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Surveys and Statistical Programs) (<http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&id=1256357>) and Infrastructure Canada. (2019) **Canadian Infrastructure Report Card 2019: Monitoring the State of Canada's Core Public Infrastructure** (Ottawa: Infrastructure Canada) (<http://canadianinfrastructure.ca/downloads/canadian-infrastructure-report-card-2019.pdf>).

² Specifically, galleries, libraries, museums and archives and presentation and performance spaces (Table 1).

Box 1: Municipalities

"Municipalities" in Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey (CCPIS) refer to incorporated towns/cities and incorporated municipalities. The Statistics Canada terminology is "census subdivisions" (CSDs)." The focus of this Fact Sheet is the data for CSDs.

The CCPIS also enumerates the public infrastructure owned or leased by regional governments and by the provincial government. Counties serving rural regions are included as regional governments in the CCPIS. These data are included in the first column of our tables and thus the difference between the first column and the column for all CSDs represents the data for regional governments and for the provincial government.

Lower-tier municipalities (i.e., CSDs) are classified by population size within "**Larger Urban Centres (LUCs)**" and within "**Rural and Small Town (RST)**" areas", as defined by du Plessis *et al.* (2001). Specifically, LUCs comprise Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) (with a population of 100,000 and over) and Census Agglomerations (CAs) (with a population of 10,000 to 99,999) and each includes neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50+% of employed residents commute to the CMA or CA. RST areas comprise all municipalities outside CMAs and CAs.

The data for each respondent to the survey (municipality, regional government, provincial department) are available from Statistics Canada, upon request (Statistics Canada, 2019).

References:

- du Plessis, Valerie, Roland Beshiri, Ray D. Bollman and Heather Clemenson. (2001) "Definitions of Rural." **Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin** Vol. 3, No. 3 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 21-006-XIE) (<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?obid=21-006-X&objType=2&lang=en&limit=0>).
- Statistics Canada. (2019) "Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey: Micro data, 2016," **The Daily** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11-001, November 7) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/191107/dq191107g-eng.htm>).

Due to low population density, RST areas have more facilities per 100,000 residents. Undoubtedly, these facilities are smaller than in LUC areas as each facility would be designed for a small population base.

The bulk of facilities were built in the three decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Table³ A22). For example, 69% of RST indoor ice arenas (with a single pad) were constructed in this 3-decade period. However, another 10% were built in the 16 years from 2000 to 2016.

However, 32% of RST libraries were built in the 2000-2016 period but only 5% of indoor curling rinks were built in this period.

In 2016, 46% of RST (single pad) indoor ice arenas were rated with a physical condition of fair to poor (Table A23). A fair to poor rating applied to 27% of

libraries and 35% of community centres. In some cases, a small share of facilities was rated as “poor” but a larger share was rated as fair: 2% and 24% respectively for curling rinks and 8% and 23% respectively for outdoor sports fields.

On average, one-half of municipalities in both RST and LUC areas reported having an asset management plan (Table A25). (average of 37 years) (Table A10).

Summary

Lower-tier municipalities in rural and small town areas of Ontario own 1,526 facilities providing culture, recreation or sport services.

The bulk of facilities were built in the three decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Table 1. Number of publicly-owned culture, recreation and sports facilities, Ontario, 2016

Cultural, recreational and sport facilities	Facilities owned by all jurisdictions (provincial, regional, municipal)	Facilities owned (or leased) by lower-tier municipalities	Percent municipal owned	Culture, recreation and sport facilities owned (or leased) by lower-tier municipalities (census subdivisions ¹)																	
				Census subdivisions ¹ (CSDs) within Larger Urban Centres (i.e., within Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations)				Census subdivisions ¹ (CSDs) within Rural and Small Town Areas (i.e., outside Census Metropolitan Areas and outside Census Agglomerations)				All census subdivisions (included in survey)	Census subdivisions ¹ (CSDs) within Larger Urban Centres (i.e., within Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations)				Census subdivisions ¹ (CSDs) within Rural and Small Town Areas (i.e., outside Census Metropolitan Areas and outside Census Agglomerations)				All census subdivisions (included in survey)
				CSDs with population of 30,000 or more	CSDs with population of 5,000 to 29,999	CSDs with population of 1 to 4,999	All CSDs in Larger Urban Centres (subtotal)	CSDs with population of 5,000 and over	CSDs with population of 1,000 to 4,999	All CSDs in Rural and Small Town Areas with population of 1,000 or more (subtotal)	CSDs with population of 30,000 or more		CSDs with population of 5,000 to 29,999	CSDs with population of 1 to 4,999	All CSDs in Larger Urban Centres (subtotal)	CSDs with population of 5,000 and over	CSDs with population of 1,000 to 4,999	All CSDs in Rural and Small Town Areas with population of 1,000 or more (subtotal)			
																			Number of facilities		
Indoor ice arenas, single pad	506	506	100	241	56	7	304	117	85	203	506	2	5	13	3	11	32	16	4		
Indoor ice arenas, 2 or 3 pads	141	141	100	93	34	-	127	15	-	15	141	1	3	-	1	1	-	1	1		
Indoor ice arenas, 4 pads	23	23	100	23	-	-	23	-	-	0	23	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	0		
Indoor ice arenas, 5 pads or more	1	1	100	1	-	-	1	-	-	0	1	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	0		
Outdoor ice arenas	706	703	100	503	56	12	571	80	52	132	703	5	5	23	5	8	19	10	5		
Indoor pools, 25 metres or longer	22	22	100	169	22	-	191	20	F	30	221	2	2	-	2	2	-	2	2		
Indoor pools, 50 metres or longer	13	13	100	11	1	-	12	1	-	1	13	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0		
Indoor pools, leisure pools	116	116	100	90	11	-	102	9	F	15	116	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1		
Outdoor pools	263	263	100	192	20	1	214	39	F	49	263	2	2	2	2	4	-	4	2		
Wading pools	240	240	100	215	10	-	225	9	F	15	240	2	1	-	2	1	-	1	2		
Splash pads	759	759	100	620	65	1	686	54	19	72	759	6	6	2	6	5	7	6	6		
Galleries	66	63	95	46	5	-	51	9	F	12	63	0	0	-	0	1	-	1	0		
Libraries	777	728	94	371	88	13	472	147	110	256	728	3	9	25	4	14	41	20	5		
Museums and archives	317	292	92	140	39	5	184	53	55	107	292	1	4	10	2	5	20	8	2		
Presentation and performance spaces	193	192	99	97	28	4	130	46	F	63	192	1	3	8	1	5	-	5	1		
Community centres (senior and youth centres)	1,252	1,252	100	643	161	18	823	277	152	429	1,252	6	16	34	7	27	56	33	9		
Indoor skate parks	8	8	100	5	-	-	5	-	F	F	8	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	0		
Outdoor skate parks	363	363	100	201	61	6	268	67	27	95	363	2	6	11	2	7	10	7	3		
Indoor curling rinks	66	66	100	11	9	3	23	18	25	43	66	0	1	6	0	2	9	3	0		
Indoor stadiums	13	13	100	8	2	-	10	-	F	F	13	0	0	-	0	-	-	-	0		
Outdoor stadiums	47	47	100	36	4	-	40	1	F	F	47	0	0	-	0	0	-	-	0		
Indoor tennis courts	36	36	100	34	1	-	35	1	-	1	36	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0		
Outdoor tennis courts	2,437	2,437	100	1,984	213	10	2,207	167	63	230	2,437	18	21	19	18	16	23	18	18		
Indoor sports fields	48	48	100	41	5	-	46	2	-	2	48	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0		
Outdoor sports fields	6,772	6,770	100	5,178	810	27	6,015	582	174	756	6,770	47	79	52	50	57	65	59	51		
Total number of facilities	15,384	15,301	2,480	10,953	1,701	107	12,765	1,714	762	2,526	15,301										

1. Municipalities in the Core Public Infrastructure Survey have been identified using the concept of a census subdivision (CSD). A CSD is the general term for incorporated towns and municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (e.g., Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories). Municipal status is defined by laws in effect in each province and territory in Canada. A CSD is classified as urban (Larger Urban Centre) if it falls within a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or Census Agglomeration (CA) and is classified as rural otherwise. CMAs have a total population of 100,000 or more (with 50,000 or more in the core) and includes all neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50% or more of the workforce commutes into the core. CAs have a core population of 10,000 or more and includes all neighbouring towns or municipalities where 50%+ of the workforce commutes into the urban core. Rural CSDs (Rural and Small Town Areas) have no population centres over 10,000 and have less than 50% of employed individuals who commute to a CMA or CA for work. Excluded are 140 Indian Reserves (comprising 64 thousand residents) and 84 census subdivisions within rural and small town areas with a population of 1 to 999 inhabitants (comprising 43 thousand residents).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada's Core Public Infrastructure Survey, 2016, Tables 34-10-0065-01 and 34-10-0067-01.

³ Tables labelled with an “A” are available in the accompanying “Appendix Tables: Canada’s Core Public Infrastructure Survey, 2016.”

The Rural Ontario Institute gratefully acknowledges the work of Ray Bollman in preparing this edition of [Focus on Rural Ontario](#). Questions on data sources can be directed to RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net. Any comments or discussions can be directed to NRagette@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca