



## Recreation and Sports

Having access to local facilities, spaces, and opportunities to participate in recreation and sports activities enriches residents' lives and helps to attract people to Niagara.

### Happening Now

- A brief by The Centre for Sport Capacity at Brock University describes the benefits, beyond economic impact, of developing a regional sport-hosting strategy. The brief emphasizes the importance of focusing on Niagara's unique portfolio of physical, capital and human-resource infrastructure; and on supporting Niagara sport stakeholders such as local sport clubs and associations that already have human resources and technical expertise.
- The connection between access to enjoyment of outdoor spaces and mental wellness is being described through implementing the provincial Mood Walks hiking program in Niagara. Research about the program's benefits calls for greater collaboration between the parks and recreation and health sectors, to benefit residents' physical, mental and emotional health.
- The Canada Summer Games will be held August 6 to 21, 2022 in Niagara. An estimated 5,000 young athletes and their coaches, as well as thousands of volunteers will participate.
- The Active Niagara Network and Age-Friendly Niagara Network are two examples of region-wide groups promoting the importance of collaboration, to increase residents' access to opportunities to participate in recreation, sport, and life-long physical fitness activities.



## What's Emerging

- The COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in increased attention being paid to the importance, for people of all ages, of being outdoors and connecting with nature.
- The pandemic is having a profound effect on volunteers, and volunteering opportunities across all sectors in our community. This has major implications for the recreation and sports sector in Niagara and beyond.
- Evidence is being gathered to strengthen planning for parks and recreation departments across Niagara as our community emerges from the pandemic.

## Suggested Community Action Steps

- Take a coordinated approach across Niagara to gather information from recreation providers, that will help to strengthen planning for getting back to full capacity as we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Consider the effects that potential pent-up demand during the pandemic may have on recreation facilities being able to provide access.
- Pay attention to the trend toward balance, with families and individuals participating in unstructured, less formal programming.
- Prepare to safely welcome back both participants and volunteers, as programs and services re-open in our community.

## Indicators

Measures for these indicators can be found at: [www.livinginniagarareport.com](http://www.livinginniagarareport.com)

- **Facilities**
- **Green and Open Space**
- **Participation Levels**
- **Benefits**
- **Partnerships**