



2011 Rating

Recreation
and Sports
in Niagara

3a • • • • 3b

Between a little progress is being made and
a lot of progress is being made.
Expert Opinion Leader Rating

EMERGING ACTIVITY

Some shared awareness and coordination is occurring through the establishment of the Niagara Sport Commission and the development of some community projects.

Use of the League Toolkit in many organizations helps volunteer groups in planning and administration.

ProKid, Jump Start and other subsidies help reduce barriers to access for those who are disadvantaged.

Toronto's successful bid to host the 2015 PAN AM Games will see the rowing competition hosted in St. Catharines, and the canoeing, kayaking, and long-distance swimming in Welland.

This is the first time recreation and sports are included as a sector in the Living in Niagara Report.

For many, recreation and sports activities provide friendships, purpose, and meaning. They also provide significant economic, social and health benefits to our region. Recreation and sports are essential contributors to the economy and they add to the prosperity of Niagara by attracting visitors through sport tourism and hosted regional, provincial, national and international events. Participation in sports builds leadership skills, facilitates social inclusion and develops a sense of belonging, teamwork, and community spirit. The Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario states that “Everyone has the right to quality, accessible and inclusive recreation and parks services in their communities – services that are essential for the health of Ontarians, the quality of life in our communities and the sustainability of our environment” (Charter, 2009). Engagement in formal and informal indoor and outdoor sports and recreation makes Niagara a healthier, more active place to live.



What we are doing well...

Over 250 community sports organizations (CSOs), and thousands of volunteer citizens deliver sports and recreation programs to an estimated 100,000 children, youth, adults and seniors in Niagara. Local CSOs host over 150 small to medium size sporting events annually for tournaments, competitions and multi-sport events.

The economic impact of hosted events in Niagara was estimated at over \$17 million in 2009, and the estimate has risen substantially since then.

The Niagara Parks Commission and private clubs provide beautiful golf courses. Local associations, municipal recreation departments, and the YMCA of Niagara facilitate and develop a variety of indoor and outdoor programs for participants of all ages. These are offered in facilities and community venues across Niagara, utilizing local and professional leadership contributions. Niagara's school boards, Brock University, Niagara College and private clubs offer fitness programs, activities and sports, recreation and leisure facilities.

By working together, we can improve recreation and sports in Niagara

Historically, many of Niagara's sports and recreation clubs and organizations have developed separately. Strategic efforts for coordination, shared funding, access and joint hiring and training could strengthen delivery and further development. Increased understanding of the powerful potential of sport as an economic engine could lead to even greater planning, and positive benefits for Niagara's economy. Supportive links for event hosting between local sports and recreation organizations and the tourism sector could benefit both groups. Increased efforts to enable citizen access and inclusion in sport and recreation would assist everyone, regardless of age, finances, gender or circumstances to be able to participate fully in what their community has to offer. Organizations' increased use of planning/sharing tools such as the League Toolkit and an event inventory would help them to be more effective in administrative planning as well as raising public awareness and access.



Sector No.12 RECREATION AND SPORTS IN NIAGARA

Indicators

affecting life in Niagara that are described and quantified in Living in Niagara - 2011 (a total of 7 indicators for this sector):

- 1) Evidence of recreation and sports programs for all ages and citizen involvement.
- 2) Evidence of recreation and sports facilities.
- 3) The link of recreation and sports to the economy.
- 4) Involvement in recreation and sports and the community.
- 5) Time involved in recreation and sports and leisure activities.
- 6) Evidence of planning and coordination in recreation and sports.
- 7) Example of a cross-Niagara recreational trail system - the Greater Niagara Circle Route.

Visit the Niagara Research and Planning Council website: www.nrapc.com for the full Living in Niagara - 2011 report. It includes the accompanying data, descriptions, trends, comparisons, tables, figures, sources and discussion of implications for all report sectors.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS that emerged from the data, and discussions with community expert opinion leaders:

- 1 Measure, acknowledge and nurture the economic impact of this sector on Niagara, including the volunteer leadership and contributions.
- 2 Encourage more formal partnerships between this sector and leaders in tourism to capture opportunities for economic impact in Niagara.
- 3 Develop intersectoral cooperation to plan together for big projects to benefit Niagara.
- 4 Increase access to recreation and sports for all ages, including for family-shared types of recreation.
- 5 Create a planning framework to bring all principals in the sector together to answer key questions, such as: What are we doing? How are we doing? Are there enough opportunities, for whom and where? What are we doing to increase access and opportunities, and is it working?
- 6 Increase civic engagement by developing and facilitating leadership skills and capacity for all ages, through recreation and sports.

