



Healthy Communities:

The Town of Smiths Falls

2015



Prepared by:

Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville

Sensational!



*Heart of the
Rideau Canal*

Healthy Communities Vision Lanark, Leeds and Grenville

*Healthy people in Lanark, Leeds & Grenville live,
learn, work and play in healthy communities*



All community members have the opportunity to make the choices that enable them to live a healthy life, regardless of income, education, or ability. Healthy community environments promote well being and quality of life and contribute to integrated community sustainability (cultural vitality, economic health, environmental responsibility and social equity).

Physical Activity

All community members have the necessary knowledge, interest, resources and opportunities to be physically active, including being active outdoors in nature.

Healthy Eating

All community members have food knowledge and skills, and access to local, safe, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food.

Mental Well Being and Resiliency

All community members are engaged and connected and have access to resources, and are able to cope with life's challenges within a safe, supportive community.

Substance/Alcohol Misuse Prevention

All community members have a responsible attitude towards alcohol and other drugs, and the community supports skills and knowledge for healthy decision making and risk reduction.

Tobacco Use/Exposure Prevention

All community members have knowledge about tobacco use, skills for risk reduction and have less exposure to tobacco smoke in public and recreation settings.

Injury Prevention

All community members have the knowledge and skills to prevent injuries, and a healthy environment in which to live, learn, work and play.

INTRODUCTION

Healthy communities are vibrant and connected. They support healthy choices and enhance learning, growth and development. Economic benefits include less school and workplace absenteeism, more innovation, and less use of health care system. People are drawn to healthy communities.

The Healthy Communities Partnership (HCP) was formed in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville in 2010 to bring communities (e.g., geographic, population) together to mobilize organizations and leaders to develop policies and environments that promote healthy living. The Partnership developed the Municipal Healthy Community Initiative to celebrate what municipalities are currently doing to support a healthy community, and to provide a platform for municipalities to learn from each other.

The objectives of the Municipal Healthy Community Initiative are to:

- Introduce municipal councils and staff to the Healthy Communities Vision, and encourage them to endorse the Vision;
- Highlight what municipalities are currently doing to support a healthy community through the completion of the Healthy Community Asset Inventory Tool (HCAIT);
- Support and provide resources for the work municipalities undertake as they continue their journey towards a Healthy Community by building on current assets and initiatives;
- Track progress towards and celebrate the success of municipal activities to create Healthy Communities across Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.

The HCP held focus groups across Lanark, Leeds and Grenville region to create the Healthy Communities Vision (page 1) that guides the work of the HCP and the Municipal Healthy Community Initiative. The questions posed to participants were: what does a healthy community look like to you, and how do we make the healthy choice the easy choice? Initial drafts of the Vision were shaped by many of these same organizations resulting in a “made in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville” statement of what a healthy community means to residents. Collectively there is much we can do to make the vision a reality, and many municipalities, organizations and individuals have already endorsed the Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Healthy Communities Vision.

Staff from three local municipalities – Rideau Lakes, Beckwith and Smiths Falls – developed a Municipal Questionnaire to collect information on what municipalities are currently doing to support a health community.

This report celebrates the work the Town of Smiths Falls is doing to create a healthy community and make the “healthy choice, the easy choice” for the residents of their town.

SMITHS FALLS SUPPORTS A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Vision: All community members have the necessary knowledge, interest, resources and opportunities to be physically active, including being active outdoors in nature.

Section 1: PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES

Facilities and Programs

The town has the following facilities in the community provided either by the town itself, in partnership, or privately. Some are in high demand (***), others in medium (**), and some in low demand (*). Many have specific programs for the residents.

- Soccer field*** - with a soccer program
- Football field – with a football program
- Baseball diamond** - with baseball program
- Swimming pool (indoor)**
- Ice arena*** - with a hockey and ice skating program
- Outdoor skating rink***
- Public beach** - with a swimming program
- Community centre*** - with dance, art, cards and fitness programs
- Running track***
- Tennis courts*
- Curling club** - with a curling program
- Skateboard park**
- Bike paths**
- Walking trails** - with a walking program
- Lawn bowling pitch**
- Splash pad/wading pool**



Safety is taken seriously and the town ensures there is lighting, appropriate signage and enhanced police coverage for major events. All facilities, playing fields, and parks are smoke free. All facilities, playing fields, and parks are smoke free.

Reaching out to the Residents

The town does not provide any direct programming but works in partnership with service providers as well as providing discounted rates for service for seniors, children, youth and families.

A variety of methods are used to communicate information about recreation facilities and opportunities:

- Notices and brochures
- Website
- Social media
- Newspaper advertisement
- Notices at recreation facilities
- Notices sent out by other agencies/partners
- Host a recreation event for seasonal recreation programs

Section 2: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Part A: Land Use Planning

Land use planning around both new and existing developments provide opportunities to create built environments that promote being physically active in a safe place.

A Complete Streets approach includes elements for designing and maintaining streets with safe access for all users. Smiths Falls has the following elements of a Complete Streets approach in its policy for designing and maintaining streets:

Current

- Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists, of all ages and abilities
- Aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected street network for all users, not only motorists
- Recognizes the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way
- Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions

Planning to add to policy:

- Directs the use of the latest and best design standards
- Directs that complete street solutions fit into the context of the community
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes

With new development, Smiths Falls has several practices in place, and is developing or is interested in developing policies to further support physical activity as part of healthy living:

Current

- Safe places to walk (e.g. sidewalks or walking paths)
- Including bicycle paths
- Shops that are accessible by walking or bicycle.
- Sport and recreation facilities that are accessible by walking or bicycle
- Parkland or green space that is accessible by walking or bicycle.
- Complete, mixed-use communities with good access to employment, shopping, education, recreational opportunities, and health care to help reduce car trips

Under Development

- Schools that are accessible by walking or bicycle

Part B: Active Transportation:

Policies and settings that promote active transportation (walking, biking, wheeling, etc.) have both the environmental benefits of reducing emissions and promoting physical activity during the commute to work or school and for leisure.

Smiths Falls has the following in place to promote active transportation:

- A Pedestrian Linkages Study
- Linkages of trails, sidewalks and street crossings that connect to public institutions (i.e. schools, seniors centres, retirement homes), offices, commercial and multi-residential areas (*municipal policy)
- Segregated paths (i.e. the physical separation of cars from cyclists) (*municipal policy)
- Bike racks located on municipal property (*municipal policy)
- Shared use paths or trails (* municipal policy)
- Residents enjoy 63.53 km of sidewalks and 6 km of walking trails and paths within the town.



Section 3: OUTDOOR AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Being outdoors in nature has been shown to have benefits for physical and mental health. The Town of Smiths Falls has a Trail Strategy and supports being outdoors in nature by:

- Maintaining a network of trails either by itself or in partnership for:
 - * walking/hiking
 - * non-motorized used only
- Providing parks and playgrounds with an established system to repair and/or upgrade the parks/playgrounds
 - * 9 parks
 - * 5 playgrounds
- Promoting parks and trail systems to residents



Section 4: ACCESSIBILITY

It is important that opportunities for physical activity are available for all members of the community. Partnerships with other organizations help to leverage limited resources and connect individuals in the community with assistance in accessing physical activity.

To support accessibility, Smiths Falls provides the following:

- Municipally-run facilities in the community fully accessible to children, youth and adults with disabilities or special needs.
- Works with partners to provide facilities (F) or programs (P) for residents:
 - * with private sector (F)
 - * With sports organizations or other providers of physical activity programming (F P)
 - * With non-profit organizations (F P)
 - * With organizations that facilitate access to meaningful recreation (P)
 - * With Family and Children's Services (P)
 - * With Social Services (P)
 - * With community service agencies (F P)

HEALTHY EATING

Vision: All community members have food knowledge and skills, and access to local, safe, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food.

Part A: Healthy food choices

Healthy eating can be supported for those using municipal facilities or attending municipal events – including municipal employees, elected officials and members of the public.

In Smiths Falls:

- For residents, healthy food and beverage options are available at the following:
 - * Events that are open to the public
- For employees workplace supports for healthy eating include:
 - * Refrigerator access
 - * Microwave access
 - * Suitable separate space for employees to eat a healthy lunch/snack
 - * Suitable break times for employees to eat a healthy lunch/snack
- For residents, the town provides access to municipal (non-bottled) water at no cost at municipal facilities and events.
- There is an agreement for corporate sponsorship/advertisement of food products at municipal facilities

Part B: Municipal plans and policies around local food systems

Locally grown and produced foods can play a key role in healthy eating as well as support the local economy and protect the environment by reducing the distance that food is transported.

Smiths Falls provides support with policy, projects, and support for the production, preparation, distribution and retailing of local food and management of food-related waste as follows:

- Involved in the development of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Food Charter (www.foodcorellg.org)
- Involved in a regional food policy project
- Promoting green initiatives for water conservation (e.g., rain barrels or small scale irrigation systems)
- Official Plan policies which support local foods and agri-tourism
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to develop regional processing initiatives or facilities
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to develop a regional food hub to aggregate, distribute and market locally produced foods
- A Municipal Official Plan includes access to local food
- Permitting and supporting mobile vendors that provide access to local foods in underserved communities
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to promote and brand locally produced foods regionally

- Supporting and promoting composting initiatives (e.g., distributing or selling at cost backyard composters, providing financial or in kind support to local organizations' composting initiatives)
- Supporting programs in the community that provide resources for accessing healthy foods through either funding, facility or other in kind contributions
 - * Food bank

SUMMARY

The Town of Smiths Falls has done much to create a healthy environment for residents. It provides many places and programs to encourage physical activity, through the town itself, in partnership, or privately with a strong emphasis on accessibility for all residents. It recognizes the value of healthy eating and the importance of supporting the local food system.

By endorsing the Healthy Community Vision the town of Smiths Falls has publicly affirmed its commitment to continue its work to make the "healthy choice the easy choice" for residents. The Healthy Community Partnership applauds this work and commits to support the town going forward.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A big **thank you** to the following people who have contributed to the production of this report:

Development of the Healthy Community Asset Inventory Tool:

- Carole Chang, RD - Public Health Nutritionist, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Dr. Catherine Dickson - University of Ottawa
- Susan Dunfield - Manager of Community and Leisure Services, Township of Rideau Lakes
- Michael Dwyer - CAO, Township of Rideau Lakes
- Susan Healey - Communications Coordinator, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Richard Kidd - Reeve, Township of Beckwith
- Elaine Mallory - Director of Planning and Development, Township of Leeds and Thousand Islands
- Cassandra McGregor - Executive Assistant/EDC/Recreation, Township of Beckwith
- Nicole McKernan - Senior Planner, Town of Smiths Falls
- Elaine Murkin, RD - Manager, Healthy Living Department, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Suzanne Rivard - Community Member, Gananoque
- Dr. Paula Stewart - Medical Officer of Health, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, Chair of Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Stewardship Committee
- Lois Dewey - Coordinator, Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville

Completion of the Asset Inventory for the Town of Smiths Falls:

- Nicole McKernan – Senior Planner, Town of Smiths Falls
- Art Manhire – Manager of Community Services, Town of Smiths Falls

Production of the Healthy Community Report for the Town of Smiths Falls:

- Jodi Drummond - Production Specialist, Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
- Dr. Paula Stewart - Medical Officer of Health, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, Chair of Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Stewardship Committee
- Lois Dewey - Coordinator, Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville