



Healthy Communities:
Municipality of Mississippi Mills
2016



Mississippi
Mills



Prepared by:

Healthy Communities Partnership: Lanark, Leeds & Grenville

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 the 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 2) 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 Community 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 Municipality of Mississippi Mills is doing to create a healthy community and make the “healthy choice, the easy choice” for the residents of their municipality. Mississippi Mills staff completed the Municipal Questionnaire.

MISSISSIPPI MILLS 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 municipality has the following facilities in the community provided either by the municipality 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 fields *** with a soccer program.
- Baseball diamonds ** with baseball program
- Indoor swimming pool **
- Ice arenas *** with a hockey and ice skating program
- Outdoor skating rink ***
- Public beaches *** with a swimming program
- Community centres *** 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 ***



Photo by Shawn DeSalvo

There is high community interest in developing a splash pad/wading pool.

Safety is taken seriously and the municipality ensures there is lighting, appropriate signage, enhanced police coverage for major events and ensures supervising staff have first aid training.

All facilities, playing fields, and parks are smoke free.

The municipality encourages:

- Parks and Recreation Ontario: High Five
- National Coaching Certification Program

and requires the following training of coaches and organizers to ensure all are able to participate in activities in a safe and meaningful way:

- First Aid

Reaching out to the Residents

Recognizing that children and adults have different interests the municipality provides specific programs for the following age groups and ensures low income individuals and families are able to access programs.

- Young children (age birth to 6)
- Children age 7 to 12
- Youth age 13 to 18
- Adult and seniors
- Families (children and parents together)
- Children and Youth with disabilities/special needs
- Adults with disabilities/special needs
- Intergenerational (mix of children, youth, adults, seniors)
- Ethnic/cultural groups
- Low Income individuals / families



Photo by Shawn DeSalvo

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 included with program registration information
- Notices sent out by other agencies/partners
- Host a registration event for seasonal recreation programs

Section 2: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Part A: Land Use Planning

Land use planning around both new and existing developments provides 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. Mississippi Mills is planning to add the following elements of a Complete Streets approach in its policy for designing and maintaining streets:

- Specify that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists, of all ages and abilities
- Aim to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected street network for all users, not only motorists
- Recognize the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced
- Apply to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way

- Make any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions
- Direct the use of the latest and best design standards
- Direct that complete street solutions fit into the context of the community
- Establish performance standards with measurable outcomes

Current

Within new developments, Mississippi Mills has several policies and practices in place, and is developing or is interested in developing policies to further support physical activity as part of healthy living:

- Shops that are 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.
- Using a percentage of development charges to support recreation.
- For the recreation department to have the opportunity to provide input on subdivision development plans.
- Preferentially accepting green space/parkland from developers instead of the option of 5% cash in lieu where appropriate
- Criteria for the acceptability of green space/parkland (e.g.: in terms of location or terrain) received from developers

Under Development or is Interested in Developing a Policy

- Safe places to walk (e.g. sidewalks or walking paths)
- Bicycle paths
- Schools 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
- Requiring trails to be included as part of the infrastructure of development plans

The municipality is currently developing new Community Official Plan policies to address the issue of complete streets. The policies will provide details and requirements to developers regarding complete streets, and where and how they are to be implemented in new developments.

Mississippi Mills has instituted another policy initiative, requiring a fee on rural severances and development, not part of a plan of subdivision, which is used to improve existing recreation infrastructure, such as trails and pathways.

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.

Mississippi Mills Council officially received the Active Transportation Plan by Dillon Consultants on January 12th, 2016, and has approved the establishment of an Active Transportation Advisory Committee to provide recommendations toward implementation of the plan. This plan is now available on the municipality's website: <http://www.mississippimills.ca/en/live/resources/finalatplandecember82015.pdf>

A Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan is nearing completion.

The following features are in place to promote active transportation:

- Linkages of trails, sidewalks and street crossings that connect to public institutions
- Bike lanes on roads
- Bike racks located on municipal property
- Shared use paths or trails
- Lighting or traffic calming measures that enhance personal safety (*municipal policy)

Residents enjoy 0.7 km of shared use paths and bike lanes, 32 km of sidewalks, and 10 km of walking trails and paths within the municipality.

Section 3: OUTDOOR AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Being outdoors in nature has been shown to have benefits for physical and mental health. The Municipality of Mississippi Mills supports being outdoors in nature by:

- Maintaining a network of trails either by itself or in partnership for:
 - * walking/hiking trails
 - * trails for non-motorized use only
- Providing parks and playgrounds with an established system to repair and/or upgrade the parks/playgrounds
 - * 18 parks
 - * 8 playgrounds
- Promoting parks and trail systems to residents
- Creating a Recreation Master Plan



Photo by Shawn DeSalvo

The municipality is going on the recommendations in the Recreation Master Plan – which include working on existing and new trails. They are expanding the new Community Official Plan policy to broaden the policies regarding accommodating physical activity in the community, such as trail development and complete streets, all of which have been outlined in the Recreation Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

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 Mississippi Mills provides the following:

- providing assistance to increase access to sports equipment
- municipally-run facilities in the community fully accessible to children, youth and adults with disabilities or special needs
- offering free universal programs

Works with partners to provide facilities (F) or programs (P) for residents:

- With other municipalities F P
- With sports organizations or other providers of physical activity programming F
- Non-profit organizations P
- Schools /school boards F P
- Community service agencies F P

One of the core Community Official Plan policies regarding parkland and open space is accessibility. The current policies ensure that residents have easy and direct access to municipal park facilities. The recommendations contained in the Transportation Master Plan will ensure that the municipality accommodates all forms of transportation guaranteeing that all members can have access to facilities and the ability to be active.

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 Mississippi Mills:

- For residents, healthy food and beverage options are available at the following:
 - * Events that are open to the public
 - * Meetings for employees and elected officials
 - * Events for employees and elected officials
 - * Vending machines in municipal facilities
- 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
- There is an agreement for corporate sponsorship or advertisements of food products at any municipal facility.
- For residents, the municipality provides access to municipal (non-bottled) water at no cost at some municipal facilities and events. They have installed water bottle filler adapters on water fountains 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.

Mississippi Mills 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:

- Municipal Official Plan includes designations and policies that protect both prime agricultural lands and specialty crop areas as applicable
 - Providing financial or in kind support for community gardens
 - Providing tax credits for agricultural properties
 - Official Plan polices which support local foods and agri-tourism
 - Development Charges by-law exemptions of agricultural related development
 - Site Plan Control by-law exemptions for agricultural related development
 - Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to develop regional processing initiatives or facilities
 - Municipal Official Plan or Integrated Community Sustainability Plan includes access to local food
 - Permitting and supporting mobile vendors (e.g., mobile farmers' markets, mobile grocery stores, and produce carts) that provide access to local foods in underserved communities
 - Zoning laws that permit farm stands or pick your own businesses
 - Promoting the use of locally grown foods (e.g. hosting events)
 - 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
- * Meals on Wheels

SUMMARY

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills has done much to create a healthy environment for residents. It provides many places and programs to encourage physical activity, through the municipality 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 municipality of Mississippi Mills 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 municipality going forward.



Photo by Shawn DeSalvo

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