

Healthy Communities:
The Township of Beckwith
2015



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 health care system. People are drawn to health 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 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 that the Township of Beckwith is doing to create a healthy community and make the “healthy choice, the easy choice” for the residents of their township. The Township of Beckwith staff completed the Municipal Questionnaire.

THE TOWNSHIP OF BECKWITH 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 field *** with a soccer program
- Baseball diamond * with baseball/ softball/t-ball program
- Indoor swimming pool ** with a swimming program
- Ice arena(indoor) *** with a hockey, ringette, and ice skating/figure skating programs
- Outdoor skating rink **
- Public beach *** with a swimming program
- Community centre *** with dance and fitness programs, day and sports camps
- Tennis courts *
- Curling club *** with a curling program
- Skateboard park **
- Bike paths ***
- Walking trails *** with a walking program and geocaching
- Splash pad/wading pool ***
- Indoor artificial turf***
- Snowmobile trails***
- Multipurpose sports field (outdoor artificial turf) *** with football, rugby and lacrosse programs
- Canoe club *** with canoeing and kayaking programs
- Beach volleyball court ***



Safety is taken seriously and the municipality ensures there is lighting and appropriate signage, supervising staff have first aid training, and trails and playing surfaces are inspected. An AED machine is on site at each municipal building, and first aid and CPR training is offered. Hunting and safety courses are available.

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

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

- National Coaching Certification Program
- First Aid

Reaching out to the Residents

Recognizing that children and adults have different interests the municipality provides specific programs for the following 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 youth with disabilities/special needs
- Intergenerational



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

- Notices and brochures
- Website
- Social media
- Newspaper advertisement and community newspaper notices
- Notices at recreation facilities, community interest spots and businesses
- 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. With new development, the Township of Beckwith has many policies and practices in place to further support physical activity as part of healthy living:

Current

- Safe places to walk and/or cycle (e.g. sidewalks, walking paths or 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 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.
- Require trails to be included as part of the infrastructure of development plans
- Create access to Mississippi Lake which can be used for recreational use and physical activity

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.

The Township of Beckwith has the following in place to promote active transportation

- Linkages of trails, sidewalks and street crossing that connect to public institutions (i.e. schools, seniors centres, retirement homes), offices, commercial and multi-residential areas with signage (*municipal policy)
- Bike lanes
- Segregated paths (i.e., the physical separation of cars from cyclists) (*municipal policy)
- Bike racks located on municipal property
- Shared use paths or trails
- Lighting or traffic calming measures that enhance personal safety

Residents enjoy 18 km of shared use paths and bike lanes, and 15 km of walking trails and paths within the township. A trail links the local school to the recreation facility enabling students and staff to actively move between the two. Trails are promoted in the 'Beckwith Beaver', on the website and at events.

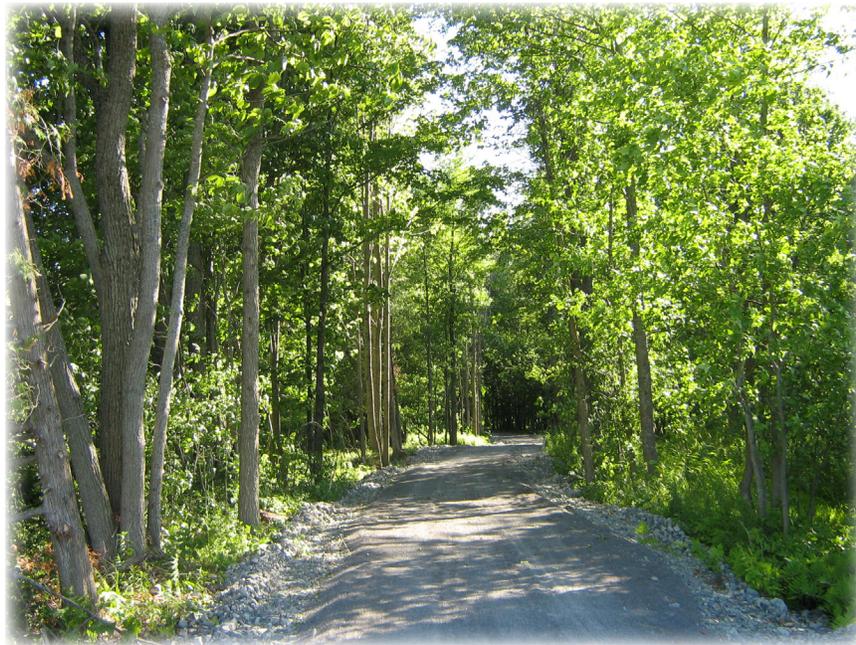
Section 3: Outdoor and natural environment

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

1. Maintaining a network of trails for:
 - walking/hiking trails
 - trails for non-motorized used only
 - trails that allow motorized vehicles.

The Township of Beckwith has a trail strategy to plan and coordinate the expansion of the trail network.

2. Providing parks and playgrounds with an established system to repair and/or upgrade the parks/playgrounds
 - 5 parks
 - 2 playgrounds
3. Promoting parks and trail systems to residents
4. Outdoor festivals and events
5. Earth Day – tree planting
6. Signage on trails.



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, the Township of Beckwith provides the following:

- Reduced or eliminated membership fees/rates or usage fees
- Municipally-run facilities in the community fully accessible to children, youth and adults with disabilities or special needs.
- Culturally specific and culturally sensitive planning and programming
- Free universal programs
- All trails are accessible, with no charge or membership fees and are open at all times for all ages
- Works with partners to provide facilities (F) or programs (P) for residents:
 - With other municipalities F
 - With private sector F P
 - With sports organizations or other providers of physical activity programming F P
 - With non-profit organizations P
 - With organizations that facilitate access to meaningful recreation P
 - With Family and Children's Services P
 - With Social Services P
 - With Schools/school boards P
 - With faith based organizations P
 - With community service agencies P
- Meetings for employees and elected officials
- Events for employees and elected officials

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 the Township of Beckwith:

- For residents, healthy food and beverage options are available at the following:
- Meetings with non-municipal employees
- Events that are open to the public
- Meetings for employees and elected officials
- Events for employees and elected officials
- 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 municipality provides access to municipal (non-bottled) water at no cost at municipal facilities and events.

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.

The Township of Beckwith 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
- Municipal zoning by-law structured to be permissive in allowing compatible large and small scale agriculture uses and supporting accessory uses across a variety of zones (e.g. zoning that allows: back yard chickens, farm gate sales, small scale value added production of agricultural goods in a general 'rural' zone, secondary dwelling permitted for season farm workers etc.).
- Municipal Official Plan includes designations and policies that protect both prime agricultural lands and specialty crop areas as applicable
- Municipal zoning bylaws or planning policies that provide opportunities for food production in residential areas(e.g. community gardens, keeping bees or chickens in residential areas)
- Providing municipal tax credits for agricultural properties
- Including fruits and vegetables in municipal landscaping (e.g., integrating tomato plants in flower beds or planting fruit or nut trees in municipal green space)
- Official Plan polices which support local foods and agri-tourism
- Economic development programs and projects which focus on the agricultural sector
- Site Plan Control by-law exemptions for agricultural related development

- Promote the production of local food through events such as the Beckwith Heritage Days and the Harvest Festival
- Planning policies and zoning bylaws that allow value-added activity (e.g. washing, packaging) on agriculture land
- Providing incentive programs (e.g. property tax relief for processing facilities, providing a matching contribution for feasibility studies for facilities or community projects)
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to develop regional processing initiatives or facilities (e.g. regional abattoir, regional cold storage facility)
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to develop a regional food hub to aggregate, distribute and market locally produced foods
- All food prepared for Harvest Dinner was grown locally
- Running or providing financial or in kind support for farmers markets
- Zoning laws that permit farm stands or pick your own businesses
- Promoting the use of locally grown foods (e.g. hosting local food events)
- Providing information to the public on local food
- Working in partnership with other municipalities and organizations to promote and brand locally produced foods regionally
- Supporting programs in the community that provide resources for accessing healthy foods through either funding, facility or other in kind contributions
 - Food bank
 - Seniors lunch program

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