

MAKING ACTIVE CHOICES
THE EASY CHOICES

Town of Halton Hills

ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGY

August 2016





Town of Halton Hills

Active Living Strategy

FINAL REPORT

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in
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with



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Section 1: Foundations for **Active** Living

The Importance of Active Living and Physical Activity

Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and personal well-being. In Canada and many industrialized nations, trends indicate that many people are engaging in insufficient levels of physical activity (i.e. physical inactivity) due to a number of reasons such as lack of time, automobile-centric community planning and development, and growing disparities between various socio-economic status factors as they relate to health. Another major cause of growing rates of inactivity and obesity relates to the prevalence of sedentary activities forming a greater share of free time activities, posing competition through increased 'screen time' associated with watching television, playing video games and spending time online.

The World Health Organization defines physical activity as "any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure – including activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits."¹ Participation in physical activity has a number of health benefits including improved physical and mental health, greater prevention of chronic ailments and disease, increased self-esteem, and a higher propensity to engage in positive lifestyle and behaviour choices (particularly among children and teens). Research compiled by Exercise is Medicine Canada found that meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines reduced the chance of developing hypertension by 33%, diabetes by 25%, cardiovascular disease by 33%, stroke by 31%, colon cancer by 30%, breast cancer by 25%, Alzheimer's by 40%, and served as an effective therapy for depression. Attaining physical fitness increased these benefits even more significantly.²

Accordingly, physical activity is not solely relegated to planned exercise or participation in sports, but involves many aspects of daily life. It is in this context that the Town of Halton Hills considers physical activity interchangeably with 'active living', recognizing that a holistic strategy is required to assist the Town in supporting active living principles through built form while also providing services that encourage its residents to engage in healthy, active lifestyles. Simply put, active living can be described as a way of life where individuals make conscious decisions to integrate physical activity into their lifestyle whether it be through walking or cycling to work or school rather than using a car, taking the stairs instead of an elevator, going to an aerobics or yoga class, or other ways in which human energy is expended to do a task.



Active Living

A way of life that integrates
physical activity into daily routines

Active Living by Design (ALBD)

Purpose and Methodology

The Active Living Strategy is intended to “support, engage, and foster an active, healthy Town of Halton Hills community, where the healthy choices are the easy choices at work, home, and play.” The purpose of the Active Living Strategy is to develop actions aimed at promoting a healthier community through physical activity, considering the unique demographics and features of Halton Hills. The Active Living Strategy focuses upon a five-year planning period, providing guidance to the year 2021.

The Active Living Strategy is a collaborative effort guided by the ‘Active Living Strategy Steering Committee’ comprised of Town of Halton Hills staff, a number of representatives from community-based organizations with needed areas of expertise from varying backgrounds, Council representation and community members at large. The planning process was initiated in June 2015 with the assistance of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and Tucker-Reid & Associates. Monthly meetings were convened with the Steering Committee to provide overall study guidance as well as an educational forum.

The Active Living Strategy considers a number of inputs including, but not limited to:

- National, provincial, and local indicators pertinent to active living and physical activity levels;
- Review of background documents, including other Town of Halton Hills strategies and plans, that inform and/or are complementary to the objectives of the Active Living Strategy;
- Halton Hills’ demographic characteristics, particularly those influencing health and wellness;
- Input from a wide range of residents, stakeholders and agencies through surveys, focus groups, interviews and other means of consultation;
- The types of facilities, programs and services available in Halton Hills, how such services are promoted and delivered, and how results are best measured;
- Evidenced based actions that have been effective in other communities and jurisdictions; and
- Strategies and actions that are meaningful to Halton Hills and will increase the number of residents that embrace active living in their daily lives
- The identification of potential partnerships that can collectively implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

Figure 1: Major Components of the Project Methodology



Active Living Opportunities in Halton Hills

The Active Living Strategy considers active opportunities and partnerships that already exist in the community. This information is key to promoting all existing active living opportunities in Halton Hills and looking for any gaps that would result in developing active programs and services for residents of all ages and abilities. This data will also serve as baseline data to determine if the Active Living Strategy is increasing participation in sport and recreation pursuits over time. The premise in developing the Strategy is to build on what is successful in order to create and support a more active-friendly Halton Hills.

An annual comparison of program and service opportunity data should include:

- The active opportunities provided through the Town of Halton Hills and for what age groups;
- The active opportunities that are provided through community partners and sport groups;
- A listing of allied community partners in the work to increase physical activity;
- Active opportunities offered through the school boards;
- Capacity and utilization of Town lead drop in and registered active opportunities;
- The success of efforts to include residents from lower income backgrounds;
- Current and future kilometres of cycling opportunities (Cycling Master Plan); and
- Opportunities to promote active living at community events (an event and participant listing)

The finding of the review of this information is that there is adequate capacity to increase active living opportunities within the sport and recreation infrastructure in Halton Hills in order to accommodate increased participation. Further, efforts to include marginalized populations and residents from low income backgrounds are effective but could garner more impressive results with greater focus.

Pertinent Background Information

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

In 2011, the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology released the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines based on over four years of research analysis funded by several groups including the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines are consistent with the World Health Organization's guidelines, and provide advice on how much physical activity is generally recommended to realize health benefits among various age groups.³

Age Group	Frequency and Duration	Intensity	Types of Activity
Early Years (0 to 4)	180 minutes throughout the day (toddlers)	Any intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– A variety of activities in different environments– Activities that develop movement skills
Children (5 to 11)	60 minutes per day	Moderate to Vigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Vigorous activities at least 3 times per week– Activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days per week
Youth (12 to 17)	60 minutes per day	Moderate to Vigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Vigorous activities at least 3 times per week– Activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days per week
Adults (18 to 64)	150 minutes per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more	Moderate to Vigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week
Older Adults (65+)	150 minutes per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more	Moderate to Vigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week

Source: Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, 2011

Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

Daily participation in physical activity is critical to one's well-being, and one must consider how sedentary behaviours can have a detrimental effect on healthy outcomes. The Sedentary Guidelines developed by the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology⁴ set about to minimize the amount of time that Canadians are inactive in a typical day (the guidelines themselves focus on children and youth under 18 years of age). Sedentary behaviours are defined as "postures or activities that require very little movement" and can be described as time spent in front of a computer, electronic game or television, extended sitting, time spent in motorized transport and in the case of 0 to 4 years old being restrained in a stroller or car seat. Setting limits on the amount of daily screen time is also suggested.

Age Group	Sedentary Guidelines and Screen Time
Early Years (0 – 4)	Sedentary – limit time spent in motorized transport, sitting, time spent indoors and being restrained in strollers etc. Screen Time – not recommended for 0-2 years and no more than 1 hour per day for 2 to 4 year olds
Children and Youth (5 to 11) and (12 to 17)	Sedentary – limit time spent in motorized transport, sitting and time spent indoors Screen Time – no more than 2 hours per day

Data compiled through the Canadian Health Measures Survey indicates that 9% of children and youth accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity recommended through the guidelines. Based on these less than optimal results, the ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth assigns a grade of D- for overall physical activity in 2015 for the third consecutive year.⁵ While the ParticipACTION Report Card does not delve into adult physical activity levels, 2011 data from Statistics Canada also using the Canadian Health Measures Survey showed that 17% of adult men and 14% of adult women attained the recommended 150 weekly minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, though usually concentrated in activities occurring infrequently throughout the week.⁶ Although data specific to Halton Hills is not available, it is assumed that activity levels of Halton Hills residents would align with the Canadian average.

Factors Influencing Participation in Physical Activity in Halton Hills

In order to develop Town-wide strategies that improve active living choices, it is important to understand the various factors contributing to a healthy community. With so many factors influencing how, when and to what degree an individual engages in physical activity, the Active Living Strategy examines built form and land use patterns (i.e. how a town is planned and developed, how it ultimately looks, and where residential, commercial and other employment areas are located, etc.) along with a number of socio-demographic factors based upon the Public Health Agency of Canada's 'Social Determinants of Health'. It is important to recognize that each factor is not mutually exclusive but is often interrelated or correlated with another factor(s).

a) Built Form

Halton Hills is an urban-rural municipality with a population of approximately 59,000 residents distributed between Georgetown, Acton and a number of rural hamlets and settlements. Over the next five years, the population is forecasted to reach 63,750 persons (8% growth), through which the urban communities of Georgetown and Acton are expected to accommodate the vast majority of new residents.⁷

The built form of a community can influence levels of physical activity and well-being. Research from the University of California found that children who live in "smart growth" neighborhoods (developments that are designed to increase walkability and have more parks and green space areas) get 46 percent more moderate or vigorous physical activity than kids who live in conventional neighborhoods.⁸ Through land use planning efforts, guided by the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan⁹ and other implementing documents, the following are examples of how built form contributes to healthy and active living:

- Provision of safe, comfortable and attractive streets, public spaces, buildings and structures that encourage people to access the public realm. The Town's Official Plan speaks to high quality urban realm investments (through various policies, primarily in Section F2 – Urban Design) as does the Town's Urban Design Guidelines.
- The prevalence of segregated land uses (e.g. residential areas which are isolated from services or jobs) versus compact, higher density and/or mixed land uses (e.g. combination of homes, stores, businesses, community facilities, etc. which are located within walkable distances of each other). The Halton Hills Official Plan speaks to the provision of compact, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods containing a mix of housing types, community facilities, commercial centres and open spaces (Section A2.3.2h – Urban Character, and various other sections).
- The layout, design, connectivity and maintenance of the transportation system (e.g. presence of roads, sidewalks and trails) can influence physical activity, where automobile-dependent communities are not always conducive to active forms of transportation (e.g. walking or cycling), thus exacerbating already low levels of physical activity. The Town's Official Plan speaks to establishing an integrated transportation system that accommodates various modes of transportation including automobiles, public transit, cycling and walking (Section A2.8.2c – Infrastructure and various policies in Section F6 - Transportation). Further the Town's Transportation Master Plan advances a number of 'Complete Streets' principles that promote active transportation while the Cycling Master Plan makes recommendations specific to encouraging additional usage through that mode of transport, while the Pedestrian Charter approved by Town Council in 2009 speaks to a vision of a walkable community.
- Access to community gathering and recreational facilities and green spaces which promote social cohesion and well-being through connecting people to their communities. The Halton Hills Official Plan provides policies with respect to the development of the on and off-road trails system (various sections), acquisition of parkland (various policies in Section F7), and development of community facilities and services (Section F8), while the 2007 Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan sets out an implementation plan to address the need for recreation facilities and parks.

The Town's vision for active and healthy lifestyles is also reflected more recently through the preparation of the Georgetown Secondary Plan. The vision for the Secondary Plan area speaks to elements such as "healthy lifestyle" and becoming a "sustainable, complete and compact community." The Secondary Plan's Guiding Principles also speak to being (among other things) an interconnected community supported by an active transportation network of trails and pathways, reducing the need for an automobile to meet daily needs of life, and providing a range of parks and public spaces along with accessible community facilities.

b) Gender and Age

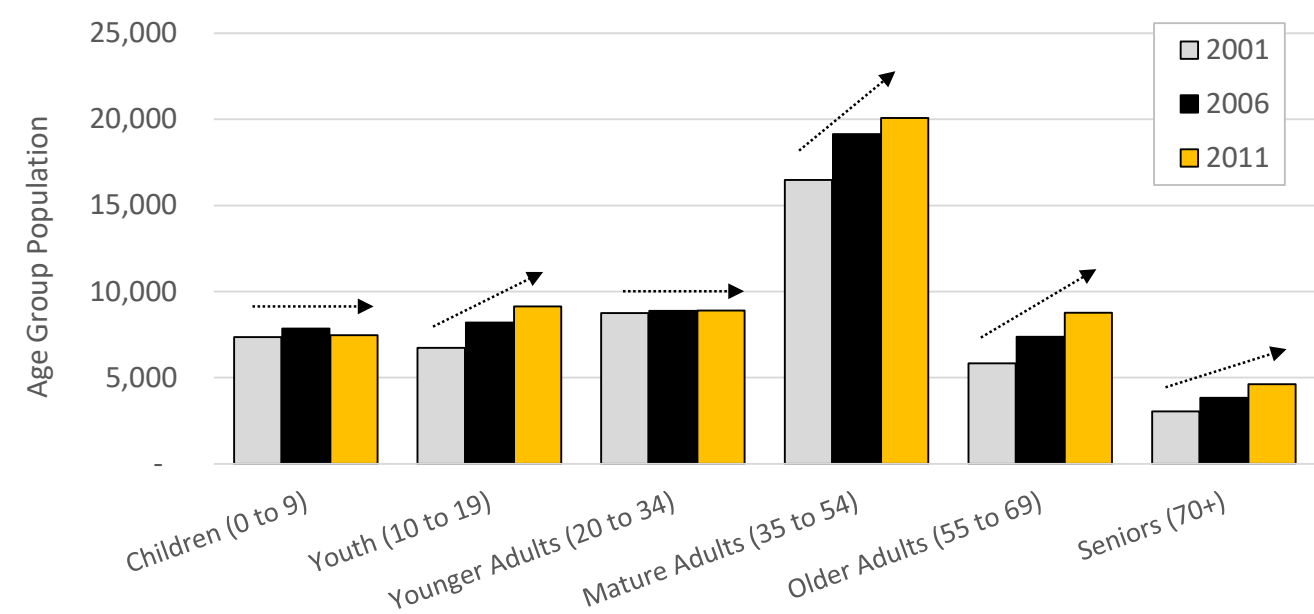
Statistics Canada data indicates that the Town's gender split has been fairly equal over the past three Census periods. The 2011 Census records Halton Hills' median age at 40 years which is generally consistent with the Regional and Provincial medians. The median ages in Acton and Georgetown (38

and 39 years, respectively) are younger than that in the rural areas, consistent with trends across the province that suggest rural areas are aging at a faster rate than their urban counterparts. For Halton Hills as a whole, there is evidence that the population is aging as the median age increased by 3 years between 2001 and 2011 while the number of residents ages 55 and over increased by 51% (4,500 persons) over that time.

Age influences participation in the types and frequency of active living choices pursued by an individual. Children and youth tend to engage in higher intensity recreational activities (e.g. recreation and sports) compared to populations such as older adults and seniors, many of whom remain active but often to a lesser degree than in their past. While children tend to participate fairly frequently, it is not necessarily to the levels recommended by the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. The Canadian Health Measures Survey found that the level of physical activity wanes with age, particularly among females. That said, growing popularity in active living and wellness programming, such as group fitness activities, may be re-engaging individuals that are gravitating away from traditional sports (wellness programs and group fitness has proven to be especially popular among females and older adults).

Figure 2 illustrates that Youth (10 to 19) and Mature Adult (35 to 54) populations in Halton Hills have experienced growth since 2001. The significance of these trends from a physical activity perspective is that continued pursuit of active living opportunities is critical to future health. With participation in physically active pursuits tending to drop in the teenage years, it is crucial to engage younger age groups in staying physically active into adulthood. This is something that has been embraced by provincial and national sport bodies that support The Canadian Sport for Life and Active for Life movements. The growth in the Town’s Mature Adult category will eventually mean continued growth in the 55+ age group as the population (particularly Baby Boomers) continues to age where once again continued participation remains a critical factor in maintaining good health into older adulthood (largely from a chronic disease and disability prevention perspective).

Figure 2: Halton Hills Historical Population Growth by Age Group, 2001-2011



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2001, 2006, 2011

c) Level of Income and Education

Level of income and education are also factors in how much individuals participate in physical activity; generally speaking, higher levels of income and education correlate to greater participation. The prevailing thought is that higher income households (or those with greater levels of disposable income) have a greater ability to participate as the cost of participation is less of a barrier compared to households whose means may not be sufficient to participate in activities as frequently as they would like due to an inability to pay. Level of income also affects many other aspects of a healthy lifestyle including quality of housing, ability to access nutritious foods, psychological state, etc. The 2011 National Household Survey (N.H.S.)ⁱ records Halton Hills' median and average household levels at approximately \$94,000 and \$112,000, respectively, both of which are considerably higher than the province and similar to Halton Region. The number of Halton Hills residents identified by the N.H.S. in the 'after-tax low-income measure' is 3,305 persons or 6% of the population. This is an indicator that specific efforts must be made to include all residents regardless of income and offer a range of opportunities at varying price points.

A report prepared by Halton Region Health Department explores the extent to which income is associated with health of the population. It found that Halton Region has the highest median household income of all health regions in Ontario, and confirmed that many of the health status indicators explored in the Region aligned with accepted associations between income and health status. As it pertains to the Active Living Strategy, the percentage of adults self-rating their health as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' increased across income levels. Similarly, higher income groups self-reported being 'Active' or 'Moderately Active' to a greater extent than middle and lower income groups.¹⁰

People with higher education tend to be healthier than those with lower educational attainment, though education is largely correlated with other social determinants of health such as level of income, job security, etc. Greater education levels can also result in a greater level of literacy, understanding and awareness as to the benefits of healthy living and how to adapt one's lifestyle to attain a healthier lifestyle. N.H.S. data shows that 55% of Halton Hills residents have some form of postsecondary education which is similar when compared to the province, with a greater proportion of local residents possessing a college or trades diploma and a lower percentage of those with a university degree. There are also fewer persons whose highest level of education is a high school diploma; thus it can be inferred that education levels are generally similar to the province. Compared to Halton Region as a whole, however, levels of educational attainment in Halton Hills are lower.

d) Cultural Diversity

A person's cultural background can influence physical activity levels, particularly newcomers to Canada. Cultural background can affect participation in many ways, sometimes tied to other socio-economic status indicators such as income, education and gender. The latter, for example, can be a result of some religious beliefs or customs where females are not comfortable being publically visible in traditionally Canadian work out gear. From an educational perspective, language barriers and knowledge of how local institutions and agencies provide services may impede awareness of opportunities to participate in physical activities.

New citizens may be attracted to activities that are classified as "active leisure" rather than organized sports, which is consistent with research that Canadians are generally spending less time playing

ⁱ The 2011 National Household Survey was a voluntary survey administered by Statistics Canada supplementing the short-form Census of Canada and designed to replace the long-form Census. The data cannot be construed as a complete depiction of local characteristics nor can it be directly compared to previous Census information. The Global Non-Response Rate for Halton Hills was 25.6% in 2011.

organized sports. A report prepared by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship finds that the top physical activities tried at least once by newcomers include **walking (72%), swimming (64%), running (58%), working out at the gym (53%), cycling (50%) and fitness classes (45%)**. As with established Canadians, these are likely appealing to new Canadians since they are all self-scheduled, inexpensive and can be done alone or with others such as families. In terms of more organized sports, the most popular that are played regularly by newcomers include soccer (18%), badminton (12%), tennis (11%), table tennis (9%) and basketball (8%). An encouraging statistic is that 44% of new citizens who are parents report that their children play sports, and that many newcomers felt that sport helped them to learn about Canadian culture and feel more connected to their community. The report reveals that newcomers are often willing and interested in participating in traditional Canadian sports; however, this can be difficult to manage into their schedules when their first years in the country are spent looking for housing, employment, schools and other supports.¹¹

Table 1: Overall Participation Trends among New Canadians

Sports	Played Before Immigrating	Tried Once in Canada	Played in First 3 Years	Regularly Play
Walking	n/a	72%	n/a	n/a
Swimming	32%	64%	35%	32%
Running	31%	58%	31%	39%
Gym	n/a	53%	0%	0%
Cycling	22%	50%	25%	26%
Fitness Classes	n/a	45%	n/a	n/a
Soccer	25%	42%	23%	18%
Table Tennis	15%	42%	9%	9%
Badminton	18%	40%	15%	12%
Volleyball	13%	38%	8%	6%
Tennis	13%	37%	15%	11%
Basketball	14%	36%	10%	8%
Ice Skating	3%	32%	15%	7%
Skiing & Snowboarding	5%	29%	12%	8%
Martial Arts	7%	17%	4%	4%
Cricket	10%	13%	6%	5%
Baseball	3%	13%	3%	2%
Football	3%	12%	3%	2%
Squash	3%	12%	4%	3%
Field Hockey	2%	7%	1%	1%
Rugby	1%	5%	1%	1%
Curling	0%	5%	1%	1%
Ice Hockey	1%	4%	2%	1%
Lacrosse	0%	2%	1%	0%
No Sports	13%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2014

According to N.H.S. data, Halton Hills is beginning to experience a greater degree of cultural diversification from non-European countries, although not yet to the same extent as some other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area. Halton Hills' proportion of visible minorities as part of the total population, at 5%, is the lowest among Halton Region municipalities, where the regional average is 18%. However, the cultural composition of Halton Hills can be expected to become increasingly diverse

with the emergence of new residential areas and as established residential areas begin to 'turn-over' their population base over time.

e) Disability

Certain disabilities can impede participation in physical activity, particularly where programming and the design of the built form is geared to able-bodied individuals. Providing inclusive services and better meeting the needs of persons with disabilities is a key provincial priority, supported by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.), and something that municipalities are increasingly focusing upon through consultation, design and implementation of various municipal services.

While there are no recent statistics regarding the number of persons living with a disability in Halton Hills, Statistics Canada records that 15.5% of Ontarians have a disability. On the assumption that a similar rate prevails in Halton Hills, there could be over 9,100 persons with disabilities residing within the Town. As the population ages, the number of people living with some form of disability is expected to rise. It will be important to ensure that opportunities are available for these individuals given the size of the market and the need to ensure that all residents have access to activities conducive to their abilities in order to sustain personal health and well-being.

f) Employment and Place of Work

Employment and working conditions can affect mental and physical health, and are also related to income-related correlations to level of physical activity. The relationship between income and health is complex as not all high paying jobs will equate to greater degree of health as such jobs could be sedentary in nature while a lower paying job that involves physical activity (e.g. construction, landscaping, etc.) may result in greater physical health on that basis alone. In Halton Hills, the N.H.S. recorded 19% of workers being in occupations relating to trades and transport, natural resource or agricultural, and manufacturing utilities (generally representing occupations that are less sedentary) compared to 14% for the Region and similar to the provincial rate.

While the 2011 N.H.S. did not collect information about the location of residents' place of work (the 2006 Census was the last such survey that did so, recording 66% of residents commuting outside of Halton Hills), it recorded that the median commute duration was 30 minutes which was 5 minutes higher than the rest of Halton Region and nearly 10 minutes higher than the provincial median. This illustrates that Halton Hills residents continue to travel long distances to access employment and unsurprisingly, over 90% of the employed labour force travel to their jobs in a private automobile. Workers walking, cycling and using transit accounted for less than 8% of the employed population, below the Regional rate of 13%. The Town's urban-rural development patterns, dispersed population and limited transit availability likely contribute to a greater reliance on the private automobile.

g) Barriers to Participation

Research through the University of Victoria's School for Exercise Science finds that logistical and structural barriers to participation (e.g. time, cost, insufficient facilities, etc.) in organized sport and physical activity are becoming less of a factor in dropout rates among children and youth. Their research suggests that the drop-off in organized sport and physical activity participation is increasingly being correlated to the pressure and emphasis placed on competition, which is leading to a lack of enjoyment due to greater levels of stress and low perceived confidence in being able to play a sport when the focus is placed on winning.¹² Furthermore, a 2014 CIBC study found that the cost of enrolment and equipment continues to be the primary barrier for children and youth participation.¹³

Locally Available Assets

The Town's Recreation and Parks Department is responsible for providing many active living opportunities to residents through parks, recreation facilities and related programming. Key features of the Town's recreation and parks inventory include (but are not limited to):

- The availability of 200 hectares (494 acres) of parkland that is owned, leased and maintained by the Town of Halton Hills – this is over and above naturalized lands designated as part of the municipal Greenlands System;
- Gellert Community Centre, Acton Arena and Community Centre, Mold-Masters SportsPlex, Hillsvie Acton and Hillsvie Georgetown Active Living Centres;
- Sportfields, hard surface courts, playgrounds and other park-related facilities; and
- Recreation programs for a broad range of age groups, interests and abilities.

A complete listing of municipal recreation facilities and programs can be found in the Town of Halton Hills' Activity and Service Guide.

Background Documents

This section provides an overview of plans and policies that complement or support the goals of the Active Living Strategy.

The **Town of Halton Hills Strategic Plan (2011-2031)** includes a number of goals that support active living including: fostering a healthy community; preserving, protecting and enhancing the environment; and preserving, protecting and enhancing the countryside. Relevant strategies include working with third party recreation providers to optimize opportunities for residents, continuing to implement the Town's Trails & Cycling Master Plans' recommendations, updating promotional materials for the Town's trails, assessing trail linkages and open spaces that are not currently in public ownership, promoting the trail system for public use and enjoyment, promoting and enforcing the Town's policies on natural heritage features and functions, continuing to work with Credit Valley Conservation, Conservation Halton and Grand River Conservation Authorities to maintain and promote the integrity of open spaces and natural heritage features, maintaining the Town's current approach to acquiring open space and natural heritage features through the development application process or other means, and developing promotional material on the benefits of the Town's open space and natural heritage system.

The **Imagine Halton Community Sustainability Strategy (2013)** demonstrates the Town's commitment to leadership on climate change and sustainability. It also strongly emphasizes the promotion of cultural vibrancy and social wellbeing through the inclusion of youth and older adults, the development of inviting parks and trails, the provision of diverse recreation and sports opportunities and a community that offers individual fulfillment through access to sports, recreation, arts, culture and heritage.

The **Recreation & Parks Strategic Action Plan (2007)** is a primary tool for guiding the provision of recreation and parks services and facilities in Halton Hills. The Plan focuses on the implementation of key strategies to meet the recreation needs of a growing and changing population. As the provision of recreation and parks services and facilities is the primary source of active living opportunities for Halton Hills residents, this Plan provides the overarching context for recreation in the Town. The **Five Year Report Card (2012)** showed that the Town completed 58%

of the Strategic Action Plan recommendations by 2012, including increasing its inventory of parks and recreation facilities.

The **Cycling Master Plan (2012)** guides the Town's cycling network and cycling support programs. By promoting connectivity, mobility and pedestrian and transit-oriented development, this plan contributes to active living opportunities for residents.

Town Council also adopted a **Pedestrian Charter (2009)** to promote 'a walkable, healthy, active community'. The charter seeks to encourage a culture of walking (and general active living) in Halton Hills through the promotion of accessibility, well designed and managed spaces and places, better walking routes and networks, land use planning that supports walking, and community safety.

The **Transportation Master Plan Report (2011)** includes Active Transportation as an important component of the Town's overall transportation strategy and incorporates walking, cycling, rollerblading, and movements with mobility devices. The Town's policy is to "continue to implement an interconnected system of active transportation routes providing access to major activity and employment areas".

The **Vision and Guiding Principles for the Georgetown Secondary Plan** for the new development area envisions a community that is walkable, cycle-friendly, less auto-dependent, and with more gathering places, different styles of parks, and a more compact urban design.

Section 2:

An **Active** Community Engagement Process

Actively Engaging the Community

The Active Living Strategy employed a robust consultation process in support of the Town's commitment to ongoing dialogue with residents, stakeholders, and local experts.

The following initiatives were used to identify strengths and gaps around active opportunities and barriers to becoming more active:

- Formation of a Citizen and Stakeholder-based Active Living Steering Committee;
- An information portal - www.haltonhills.ca/activeliving;
- An online survey completed by nearly 200 residents;
- Key Opinion Leader Interviews with Town representatives, local experts and other stakeholders;
- A 'Pop Up' booth as part of the Community Open House at the Georgetown Market Place; and
- Public Open Houses to present the draft Active Living Strategy to the community.

I am a very active person and have found that physical activity has helped me bounce back from my recent pregnancy. I also feel that I will pass on good lifestyle choices and habits to my children since it is a way of life for me.

Testimonial from Online Survey Respondent



Active Living Strategy Steering Committee Work and Directions

The Town of Halton Hills Council approved the appointment of an Active Living Steering Committee to help guide the development and finalization of the Active Living Strategy. The opportunity to sit on the Steering Committee was posted for residents to apply for and submit their applications to demonstrate a transparent process. It was hoped that the Steering Committee would represent the community (geography, gender, age and varying backgrounds) and possess the skills and competencies to provide the necessary expertise and knowledge.

The make-up of the Steering Committee was well rounded and included backgrounds in education, public health, medical profession, health profession disciplines, the business community, fitness, the library system, communications, recreation and sport, public engagement, local governance, community development, sport and activity for persons with disabilities and the environment. It was felt that these diverse yet related opinions would bring an innovative plan forward that considered the broadest of community interests. One of the very innovative approaches that made the Active Living Strategy reflective of community needs was to hear the interests and needs of varying groups interested in active living. Presentations were heard about:

- The Vision Georgetown planning process that is currently underway, with a focus upon the community design principles being utilized;
- The role of Public Health in supporting active environments;
- Parks design and planning principles that lend to the support of an active community;
- The supportive role that the Halton Hills Libraries can play in promoting and supporting active living;
- The development and utilization of the active transportation/trails system in Halton Hills;
- Technology and working with the media;
- Open Streets concepts whereby major streets are closed for a day on the week-ends throughout the summer months to encourage residents to engage in physical activity without having to navigate car traffic;
- Promising practises in increasing active living within communities and in the workplace; and
- Active living and physical activity programs within the education system.

Key Directions from the Steering Committee in the Development Active Living Strategy

The Active Living Steering Committee met monthly and the strategy was developed and discussed very early on in the process to determine what would make the strategy meaningful and successful within Halton Hills. Specific direction centred on ensuring that the strategy:

- Is developed in **plain language** so that all members of the public can understand what the strategy is setting about to achieve;
- Builds on what is **working well** already within the community;
- Develops new and strengthens existing **partnerships**;
- Identifies **gaps** to achieving greater activity within Halton Hills;
- **Builds greater focus and momentum** around active living within the community;

- Ensures that **marginalized populations** (low income, persons with disabilities) have greater access to becoming more active; and
- Offers recommendations that are **meaningful within Halton Hills, that are achievable and measurable** over the lifespan of the strategy.

Community On-line Survey

The Community On-line Survey was administered throughout December and January (2015 – 2016) with over 200 respondents participating in the survey. The results provide some consistent guidance when combined with the results of the other community engagement mechanisms.

- Respondents are well aware of the benefits of active living and report.
- An overall 79% satisfaction level was reported for the active living opportunities in Halton Hills.
- 75% of male respondents and 78% of female respondents reported satisfaction with active living opportunities.
- 25% of respondents reported that a lack of time was a key barrier to active living and 16% of respondents reported that cost was a barrier.
- Opportunities identified to motivate greater active living include: more casual opportunities (20%) and more affordable choices (19%).
- Approximately one third of the respondents indicated that they use parks, conservation areas, trails and community centres a few times per week.
- Respondents reported that trails and cycling lanes are highly desirable facilities to encourage active living and active modes of transportation.

The full summary of key findings of the Community On-line Survey is available at the conclusion of this report in Appendix A.

Input from Key Opinion Leader Interviews

15 interviews were held with key members of the community, senior staff and members of Halton Hills Council. Each participant was asked a standard set of questions to gain an understanding of current and potential community practises surrounding active living. The backgrounds of the participants included expertise in planning, parks, leadership positions in other communities, senior staff, residents who have undergone the development of active living plans in surrounding municipalities, libraries, physical activity, health and education. It was evident that the key opinion leaders have a commitment to a healthier and more active community. Key summary points include:

- The Active Living Strategy is seen as an integral plan in positioning the Town as an **active, caring and attractive community to live in**.
- Key Opinion Leaders felt that the following should change as a result of the plan:
 - Halton Hills is increasingly viewed as a **walkable community**;
 - Halton Hills is increasingly viewed as an **active and engaging community**;
 - Halton Hills is increasing the percentage of the population considered **active enough to improve health outcomes**;
 - One can **see active residents everywhere**; and
 - Efforts are in place to **promote active living** and recognize successes.

- Key findings from interviewees as the Active Living Strategy is developed:
 - Build on **current programs and successes** (safe routes to schools, active transportation, recreation and parks programs and sports, cycling programs – Bike to the Moon initiative, the Trails Strategy and Bike Friendly initiatives etc.);
 - Make special efforts to **include marginalized populations**;
 - **Quantify** goals where possible;
 - Ensure that stakeholders and groups are supported to **work better together** (Boards of Education, Public Health, the medical and health related professions and the Town of Halton Hills);
 - Use **evidenced-based** strategies where possible;
 - Develop **a single point of data and information** for Halton Hills residents to find all active living opportunities;
 - Focus on **back to nature and casual play** opportunities; and
 - **Use technology** to increase and measure physical activity.
- Ensure that encouraging **Work-Place** Active Living strategies is included.
- Consider the **urban/rural mix** in Halton Hills.
- Ensure that **communications** are consistent, use varying methods to promote active living opportunities and are visible.
- **Measure** the results of the plan implementation and report out to the community.

Halton Hills Community Open House Input

Staff and the Consulting Team attended a Community Open House in late February 2016 to gain further input on the development of the Active Living Strategy. Over the course of the event, it is estimated that over fifty people dropped by the booth to discuss the Active Living Strategy (although an actual count of people was not undertaken due to the drop-in format of the event) along with other inquiries regarding the services and facilities offered through the Town's Recreation and Parks Department. The strategy was described on story boards and the following two questions were posed for input:

1. Do you and members of your household meet Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines?
2. What would make you more active?

Of persons that chose to provide written responses to the questions posed, a total of 19 reported that they met the physical activity guidelines while 6 did not. Suggestions to increase physical activity are grouped into the following themes:

- Improving Awareness: Use social media to create awareness and promote opportunities;
- Providing More Active Programming: Examples given included mall walking programs, more programs and camps for teens, sports such as slo-pitch and speed skating, and trail-related programming.
- Providing More Active Infrastructure: Examples included more and better sidewalks and bike paths, indoor tracks, better geographic distribution of facilities, and access to the Credit River for picnics, swimming and canoeing.

Public Open Houses

Two Public Open Houses were hosted at library branches in Georgetown and Acton to answer questions and receive comments regarding the Draft Active Living Strategy. Held on May 7, 2016, the following is a summary of input received at the Open Houses.

- Providing more face-to-face opportunities to register for programs and find information by making use of kiosks, offices, and longer program registration periods.
- Creating better awareness of opportunities to be active by leveraging high schools and social media as cited examples.
- Working with private sector to facilitate low to no cost opportunities for residents to be active such as mall-walking
- Continuing to invest in active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks, trails, bicycle paths, indoor walking tracks, etc.
- Making facilities and programs more accessible and affordable through better geographic distribution, provision of no to low cost opportunities, barrier-free designs, etc.
- Specific programs that were mentioned included seniors slo-pitch, speed skating for adults, Programs/camps for 13+ year olds and more aquafit classes
- Facilitating access to the Credit River for swimming, picnics, and canoeing.

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

A summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats is provided to recap the input that has been received through the community engagement process to support the development of the Strategy.

Strengths

- Online survey respondents self-report being an active population, with an average of 62% being active 3 three or more times per week for 40-59 minutes.
- Residents recognise that active living has a positive impact on their lives.
- There is the greatest level of satisfaction with active opportunities for children followed by a notable level of satisfaction by the general public.
- There are adequate opportunities for residents to embrace active living in Halton Hills.
- Both males and females are satisfied with the active opportunities within Halton Hills.
- Consideration to encourage active living through community design is well addressed in Halton Hills.
- Nearly one third of survey respondents visit a public park or facility a few times per week.
- The most active pursuits enjoyed by respondents are unstructured, self-scheduled pursuits.
- Halton Hills embraces community design to encourage active living on trails, through walkable communities and programs to encourage children to walk to school.

Challenges

- In most cases, survey respondents generally over-report their frequency, duration and intensity of activity while Canadian statistics indicate that only 9% of children, 14% of women and 17% of men attain the recommended minutes of physical activity per week.
- Persons with disabilities reported the lowest level of satisfaction with active living opportunities within Halton Hills (community online survey).
- Barriers to participation include lack of time and cost to participate.
- Persons living in the Town's rural areas have a challenge accessing active opportunities as readily as the residents living in more urbanized areas.
- Many residents commented on continued commitment in funding to complete the trails and active transportation systems.
- Entrance features, signage and parking were identified as current gaps that need addressing within the trails system.
- Many residents felt that more could be done to inform the community about all of the active opportunities as well as the benefits of active living.
- Youth and especially female youth tend to reduce their active pursuits compared to earlier in their childhood.
- Older adults will increase in population and require greater interventions to become more active.
- Halton Hills population will increase requiring greater efforts to inform residents about active living.
- The Town's cultural makeup will begin to be more diverse within the lifespan of the strategy.
- Community agencies could work better together toward increased active living through physical activity pursuits in Halton Hills.
- 6% of the population (3,305 residents) come from lower income backgrounds and do not necessarily have the ability to access active opportunities of their choice.
- There are a significant number of businesses in the Town of Halton Hills that are not generally engaged in the discussion about active living.

Opportunities

- Continue to ensure that there is a wide range of opportunities for active living that meet the needs of the broader population.
- Build on what is working effectively to support active lifestyles (sport system, active transportation networks and mobility corridors, cycling, recreational opportunities, special events etc.).
- Promote active living and provide universal opportunities while making special efforts to include marginalized populations (e.g. persons with disabilities/low income backgrounds).
- Provide more casual and low cost opportunities to increase participation.
- Promote the benefits of an active lifestyle and active opportunities consistently.
- Use a range of methods to communicate the importance of active living.

- Work better with community active living partners within the community.

Threats

- Changing social behaviours requires continued commitment utilizing multi-levelled interventions over decades.
- Implementation of the Active Living Strategy will require continued allocation of resources that must compete against other community priorities.

Section 3: Promising Practices

Overview

The development of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy centres on identifying gaps within the community as well as opportunities to address these identified gaps. Developing a meaningful strategy involves strengthening what exists and developing new approaches to address gaps. These interventions should have a positive impact on the ability of residents to lead active and healthier lives. The work to implement and measure the effectiveness of the Active Living Strategy will require dedication and a collective effort to execute a number of interventions over time.

This Section offers a number of promising practises that have been introduced in other jurisdictions and within Halton Hills. This is not an exhaustive list but provides some food for thought and applicability within this community. These practises are offered as opportunities that may be considered as part of the recommended actions for Halton Hills and as well to prompt the development of “made in Halton Hills” interventions surrounding active living.



Promising Practices

Gaining Community Commitment

Active Living Charter – Major community wide initiatives have been launched with a “Charter” signing. Representatives from allied organizations commit time and resources to the call to action. Durham Region developed a charter and signing launch event centred on access to affordable recreation for all residents. (Durham Region).

National/Provincial Recognition Days and Months – The first Saturday in June marks National Health and Fitness Day. Numerous cities and towns across Canada have proclaimed that day and celebrate the many active amenities within the community through nature walks, free access to facilities, “try it” days for sports etc. June is Recreation and Parks Month, and the Town of Halton Hills participates in many ways to engage the community.

Community Champions – Halton Hills is fortunate to have many high profile residents who already champion an active lifestyle and support an active community. Ensuring that these champions are aligned with the goals and actions of the strategy will assist in promoting its value and getting more residents active.

Active Living Awards and Community Grants – Many communities are recognizing the efforts of community groups and individuals who develop programs and opportunities for residents and businesses to become more active and provide grants to assist groups in offering active opportunities.

Age and Family Specific Interventions

Pre-School

Physical Literacy – The Turn 20 Acton Early Years initiative identified that Kindergarten students were vulnerable in the area of physical health and well-being specific to gross and fine motor skills. A collaborative group, led by Our Kids Network Halton, committed to an action plan with specific activities, resources and tools focused on addressing gross and fine motor skills. One specific activity was securing funding so students could participate in the Monkeynastix movement education program at school to help improve gross motor skills. By making this program available in school the students experienced the benefits of movement education and development without the challenges of accessibility (e.g. financial limitations or parent engagement).

Toys in Playgrounds – Municipalities are placing toys (buckets, trucks, sand toys, figurines) and play units (kitchens, workshops) in playgrounds to encourage children to stay outside longer, use their imagination and meet other toddlers while visiting the playgrounds. (Toronto)

The design of playgrounds must also be considered in providing safe environments for children to play in and include shade, trees and access to water. Natural playscapes with physical challenging environments for children also contribute to increased time outside and an increase in physical activity.

Children

Grade Five Fit Pass – Grade 5 students in Durham Region are offered a pass for free access to public swimming, skating and drop-in programs through a partnership with Public Health. Active participation of this age group typically witnesses decline (especially females) and the pass offers opportunities to be active and go with friends to active opportunities at no cost.

Make Room for Play – ParticipACTION – According to ParticipACTION 63% of children’s free time afterschool and on weekends is spent being sedentary. The Make Room for Play encourage parents and caregivers to get their families outside for walks and active play opportunities.

Make Room for Play Mobile App – ParticipACTION has developed a mobile App in concert with the BC Government to list active living opportunities for families; the app has been activated in Ontario as well.

Unplug and Play Challenge – ParticipACTION – Log physical activity for one week in March to gain certificates and obtain active ideas through the website.

Youth

Goodlife offers youth free access to their fitness centres in the summer time to get them interested in regular exercise, volunteerism and future employment.

Open Gym Times for Youth - Many municipalities promote open gym times for youth to engage in physical activity. Youth workers facilitate and provide support during these times to help organize games such as basketball, dodgeball and other activities to ensure that youth have a caring adult to assist.

Fitness Equipment in Parks- The Town of Whitby amongst other municipalities has installed fitness equipment in its waterfront park. The equipment is situated in a circle and residents of all ages can be seen leaving the waterfront trail to access and utilize the apparatus.

Adults

Self-Directed Walking Clubs – The Town of Ajax developed a resource tool to encourage neighbourhoods to develop walking clubs. The resource describes how to set up a club, keep communications active and the setting of routes. The distribution and promotion of the resource has been successful in initiating a network of walking clubs throughout the community.

Televised and Live Streaming Yoga and Exercise Opportunities – Rogers Cable in Durham televises “Lifestyle with Carol Gracie: Yoga Yourself” and exercise classes to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to be active daily within the comfort of their own home at their own pace and ability. (Durham Region Rogers Cable).

Families

Sunday Family Opportunities – The Town of Ajax has designated specific neighbourhood ball diamonds on Sundays from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. for family play. Neighbours are encouraged to come to the parks to play a friendly game of baseball with local families.

Open Streets – The concept of closing a length of road for active pursuits (walking, running, biking, rolling etc.) began in Bogota, Columbia and is gaining momentum in many North American cities such as New York, Toronto, Waterloo and Hamilton. Toronto has named their route a “paved park” to provide Canada’s largest recreation experience. The road closure for a specific day or duration over the summer encourages residents to come out and be with other families and residents. Often facilitators are set up to provide yoga, massages and promote active living messages. Food and refreshments are provided by businesses along the route.

Orienteering and Geocaching - Orienteering and Geocaching are active opportunities for the whole family that are done locally and could be enhanced. Better promotion and special events highlighting these opportunities could increase the number of families who are actively engaged.

Pollinator Pathway Project- The Pollinator Pathway Project is an international challenge to connect existing greenspaces by growing native plant species along boulevards, public and private greenspaces to support pollinators (bees, beetles, ants, birds, moths, butterflies, flies, gnats, and small mammals such as bats). Active living is a positive spinoff of this initiative.

Community partners are provided guidance, plans and guidelines to ensure efforts are successful. Further information on the Pollinator Pathway Project can be found at www.pollinatorpathwayproject.com.

Pop Up Opportunities – staging active opportunities in well attended places could encourage residents to become more active. Providing active opportunities for parents and caregivers in facilities who are there watching children will provide one stop active opportunities for all.

“Try It” Opportunities - The Town’s Recreation and Parks Department offers no-cost “Try It” classes in selected programs to provide residents with opportunity to experience a program before making a financial commitment.

Promotion and Communications

Use of Technology - Activity Tracking Devices - Activity tracking devices are proving to be very popular in monitoring steps per day and other related activities (sleep time, time it takes to fall asleep, food intake, etc.). The opportunity to create groups to compare weekly results with also may motivate residents to maintain and improve on levels of activity. The library system could play a role in lending out these devices as well as to assist residents in learning how to use the devices most effectively.

MeetUp is a software application that allows any provider of an active living/physical activity to promote the opportunity on the App. One becomes a member and indicates which active opportunities appeal to them as a member of MeetUp. Each Monday a list of opportunities is offered to the member and the member is invited to “join in”. The member indicates whether they are able to join and the organizer is given an indication of the numbers of people who will be attending.

Social Media is utilized to promote events and activities within Halton Hills. Monitoring the use of social media will provide insights into successful methodologies of communicating with the public and creating a conversation about opportunities and improvements toward more active lifestyles.

Active Living in the Work Place

Work Place Active Living Programs promote active living pursuits to and from the work place as well as during the work day. The goal of the Active Living Strategy is to provide information to workplace leaders to encourage wellness in the workplace but also to recognize excellent practises.

Some tactical elements of workplace active living programs include:

- mapping out walking routes for breaks and lunch time activity;
- encouraging active transportation to and from work (bike racks, showers storage etc.);
- subsidization of wearable technology to track activity;
- promotion of connected groups with similar active goals;
- provision of yoga and stretch classes; and/or
- promotion of walking meetings.

Active living programs are developed through engaging employees and developing meaningful programs. The benefits are:

- a caring and supportive culture;
- a healthier and knowledgeable workforce;
- resultant active families;
- increased morale and engagement;
- decreased absenteeism; and
- lower turnover and insurance claims.

Evidence-based Approaches

A Wide Variety of Accessible Active Programs – A full range of active programs and services for all ages is critical to the success of an engaged and active community. The analysis to date of the available opportunities in Halton Hills demonstrates that the community is quick to respond to emerging trends and offers active opportunities for all ages.

Community Design – Walkable Cities through Community Design Standards are in place in Halton Hills through the Official Plan, major Plans of Subdivision and through Trails and Cycling plans and strategies.

Community Signage – There is evidence that suggests that people will follow signage such as “Take the Stairs”, “Walk 1 km to the next bus stop” and signage that captures distances on trails and sidewalks etc.

A Guide for Population Based Approaches to Increasing Levels of Physical Activity - The World Health Organization has developed a guide that captures best practises and evidenced based approaches for increasing active living through physical activity. The document, entitled “A Guide for Population Based Approaches to Increasing Levels of Physical Activity”, is versatile and can be utilized for national, provincial and local strategy development. The following table captures the relevant principles and can be utilized as a checklist for the formation of Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Intervention Type	Halton Hills Active Living Strategy
High Level Political Commitment	The Halton Hills Active Living Strategy must call for the commitment from Town Council and leading organizations engaged in the goal to increase active living through physical activity.
Alignment with National Policies and Initiatives	Canada’s Active 20/20 developed by ParticipACTION, Canada’s Sport Policy, Canada’s Sport for Life Movement and the National Recreation framework are all opportunities to create an aligned Active Policy for Halton Hills.
Identification of National Health Goals and Objectives	Canada’s health goals call for the achievement of optimal health outcomes for its citizens and the Physical Activity Guidelines and Sedentary Guidelines call for specific levels of activity for all age groups.
Specific Objectives	The specific objectives of Halton Hills Active Living Strategy will be based on the local conditions determined through research, strengthening successful programs and initiatives and addressing gaps.
Funding	Funding requirements will be identified in the implementation plan as part of the Active Living Strategy. Staff will continue to seek alternate funding and reduce costs through partnerships.

Intervention Type	Halton Hills Active Living Strategy
Support from Stakeholders	Stakeholder engagement has been a strong part of the development of the Active Living Strategy and will be a critical element in its implementation.
Cultural Sensitivity	The Active Living Strategy will identify demographic and socio-economic conditions within Halton Hills that require specific tactics to be more inclusive.
Relationship with Other Related Sectors	The development of the Active Living Strategy has since its inception included a steering committee team with relevant and varied backgrounds to include diverse thinking and knowledge of local conditions.
A Coordinating Team	The Active Living Strategy recommends the development of a steering committee of the required skills and competencies to implement the specific tactics.
Multiple Interventions Strategy	The Active Living Strategy will include the consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public Policy surrounding active living; – The Physical Environments including community design, active assets such as trails, cycling routes, community centres, parks, natural environments etc. – Supportive Social Environments to ensure that residents and businesses feel included in the call to increase active living; – Public Awareness and Communications; – Performance Measurement and Strategy Evaluation.
Target the Whole Population as well as Specific Target Groups	Halton Hills population will be targeted as a whole with specific considerations for marginalized populations and age groups.
Clear Identity for the Strategy	A visual identity and branding will be associated with the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy to ensure that residents and employees associate the continuous promotion of active living
Interventions at Different Levels within the Local Reality	Varying interventions include strengthening existing opportunities, creating partnerships to broaden the reach of active living, communicating opportunities and measuring the effectiveness of the strategy
Build Leadership	While it is anticipated that varying skills will need to be developed to implement the Active Living Strategy, annual forums for learning and specific education will be required to fully implement and sustain the strategy.
Dissemination	The strategy will be distributed to key stakeholders and organizations, available on-line and communications around its various components and successes will be part of the implementation plan. Annual reporting and forums will keep the strategy alive and active.
Monitoring and Evaluation	The strategy will call for an evaluation of the success of each of the interventions and an assessment as to whether the strategy continues to be relevant or requires changes.

Section 4:

Halton Hills **Active** Living Strategy (2016-2021)

The development of this Strategy relied on varying inputs including current research on active living, existing and projected demographics and socio-economics, significant community engagement efforts and practises that are effective locally and in other jurisdictions. All recommended actions are grounded in a combination of these inputs to ensure that the actions are meaningful to Halton Hills. Based on the information that has been gathered and analyzed, key themes are presented on which to build the strategy.

Universal Access to Active Living Opportunities with Inclusion of Marginalized Residents

Active living programs and initiatives must reach the greatest number of residents and are therefore planned to meet the needs of all ages and abilities. Special efforts must be made to include marginalized populations such as persons with disabilities and those who have lower than average incomes.

Outdoor Play

Research has shown that going outdoors increases one's opportunity to be more active. The strategy must build on the natural resources already in existence in Halton Hills. A significant amount of input showed support for outdoor activities such as walking, animating parks and trails, and cycling. Support is also very evident for trail completion, connections and signage at entrances to the trail system.

Active Living in the Workplace

There are over 4,000 workplaces in Halton Hills; 91% have less than 10 employees while 8% have over 200 employees. A significant number of residents live and work within the community. Promoting an active workforce will serve to increase healthy outcomes in employees. ¹⁴

Communications/Partnerships

There are many organizations and stakeholder that have a keen interest in ensuring that the residents of Halton Hills are visibly active and reap the health benefits as a result. Promoting active opportunities within Halton Hills will serve to inform and encourage greater levels of activity and hopefully engage those who have not been active previously. Working better together with community partners will serve to reduce duplication of efforts, share resources and leverage greater outputs.

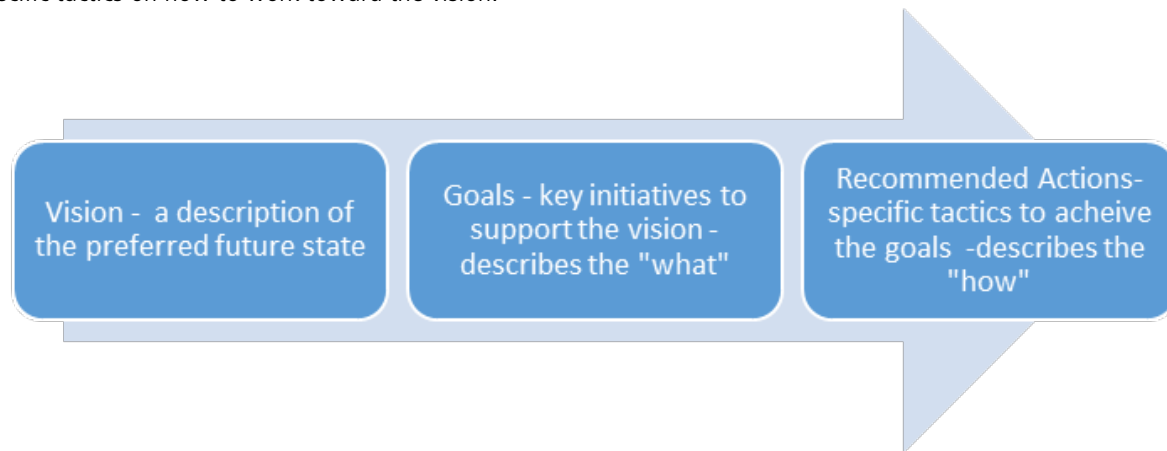


Active Living Strategy Vision

Residents of Halton Hills are
visibly more active and
community partners are
engaged to make it happen

Active Living Strategy Framework

The Active Living Strategy is presented in a clear and logical format. A vision is presented to outline how active living will change in the future as a result of the actions that are recommended to be taken. Goals will break the vision into key themes and areas requiring action and recommendations will provide specific tactics on how to work toward the vision.



Vision

"Residents of Halton Hills are visibly more **active** and community partners are engaged to make it happen."

Guiding Principles and Four Priority Goals

Guiding principles consider what will be most effective in the development and implementation of the Active Living Strategy. They describe what should be considered as the strategy is created and reflect what is valued by the community.

- **Community Engagement** – Commitment to increasing active living pursuits will be achieved through partnerships of like-minded groups and individuals.
- **Build on Success** – Building on what is already successful in the community will enhance active living and use existing resources.
- **Increase Access** – Barriers to participation such as low income, cost of activities, disabilities and lack of personal time must be considered in increasing participation.
- **Communicate** – Continued and meaningful communications will require commitment beyond the five-year span of the Active Living Strategy.
- **Long Term Commitment** – Recognize that social change takes decades to achieve and will not be achieved in the 5-year span of the strategy.
- **Do What Works** – Evidenced based initiatives will be important considerations as they have a proven track record – community design, physical infrastructure of trails and bike paths, community signage "take the stairs", community programs and events.

The Active Living Strategy suggests four key areas of focused activity to work toward the vision of greater participation in active living and physical activity in Halton Hills. Energy and resources will be directed to make the necessary changes to work collectively toward improved conditions.



Goal One: Active Opportunities for All Residents

Goal Statement: To increase the frequency, intensity and duration of active living/physical activity in all age groups, abilities and backgrounds. Utilize specific tactics to include marginalized residents.

Strategy Considerations

Active Living Policy

- The development of an Active Living Policy (including sports) will cement the Town of Halton Hills and related partners’ commitment to supporting an active community. The policy would outline the purpose, roles and deliverables of each of the allied organizations and stakeholder groups.

Children

- 9% of Canadian children are actually achieving Canada’s Physical Activity Guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day. Families and the education system along with other partners should be working together to increase the frequency, intensity and duration of physical activity in children.
- Only 5% of girls meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, suggesting that specific interventions are needed to include young girls in embracing an active lifestyle. The Canadian Association for Advancement for Women in Sport (CAAWS) is dedicated to ensuring that girls and women are engaged in sport and physical activity as participants and leaders. Their programs and initiatives will assist Halton Hills in creating a level playing field.
- According to ParticipACTION, 63% of children and youth time after school and on weekends is sedentary.

- According to the Active Healthy Kids report card – 2015, only 37% of parents play actively with their children.

Youth

- Youth tend to drop out of organized sports and activities and enjoy regularly scheduled no cost and low cost active opportunities.
- Young women drop out of organized sports and activities sooner and at a greater rate. Consideration for female-based and self-directed opportunities will address this specific challenge.

Adults and Older Adults

- The Halton Hills Service Satisfaction Survey completed by Ipsos Reid in 2015 indicated that more should be done to provide older adult recreational programming. This is especially relevant as this segment of the population is increasing.
- 70% of working adults in Halton Hills commute outside of the community (Halton Hills Economic Development Strategy). The barrier of time should be addressed through regularly scheduled casual drop in opportunities for adults, access to activity through technology and/or family based activities on the week-ends.

Low Income Residents

- 6% of the Halton Hills residents (over 3,000 residents) are considered low income and require specific interventions to include them in active opportunities. Free programs and opportunities within close proximity to low income areas will address the barriers of cost, time and possibly transportation. Before and after school programming on school sites has proven successful.

Persons with Disabilities

- The Community On-line Survey conducted as part of the development of the Active Living Strategy indicated a need for greater emphasis on coordination, support and awareness of active opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- It is estimated that 15.5% of the Canadian population has some form of disability; translating this percentage to Halton Hills approximately 9,100 persons are living with a disability and may require specific interventions to include them in active opportunities

Rural Residents

- Halton Hills enjoys an urban and rural mix of neighbourhoods and while the access to greenspace is a positive asset, access to physical activity opportunities for rural residents is a challenge. Barriers may include isolation, lack of transportation, readily available social networks, lack of sidewalks and safety on roads. Improvements to the built environment may affect a small number of residents and is difficult to justify from an overall investment perspective.
- Schools, churches and community halls may be the only locations for rural children to be physically active other than travelling to community centres, sport fields and outdoor spaces for active choices.
- Bringing together rural community members and stakeholders (churches, education, public health and recreation at a minimum) can assist in developing local solutions to active living.

Cultural Diversity

- While the diversity in Halton Hills is lower than most communities in the GTA; the impending growth will most likely increase the cultural diversity of the community. This is a positive and timely opportunity for staff and stakeholder groups to learn more about being culturally inclusive in order to be welcoming and proactive.

Evidenced Based Initiatives

- It is important to include active interventions that are evidence-based with research to demonstrate that these approaches are effective. Evidence-based interventions include a full range of active choices for all ages and abilities, identification and approaches to address barriers to participation (cost, time, awareness), promotion of opportunities, and community signage to prompt further activity such as “take the stairs” or distance markers and/or “1 kilometre to the next bus stop” etc.

Recommendations

Active Living Policy

1. Develop an Active Living Policy to demonstrate a commitment by the municipality in ensuring that relevant departments play a coordinated role in ensuring that active living through physical activity is supported through their work.
 - a) Create and solidify the role and commitment of an Alliance of community partners to implement the Active Living Strategy.
2. Expand the Community Grant Program to provide start-up funds to community organizations and alliances that would like to initiate active programs in alignment with the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Active Choices for All

3. Continue to ensure that there is a wide variety of active choices for residents of all age and abilities within Halton Hills and build on existing successes such as the Halton Hills Community Cycling Challenge.
4. Introduce the “Open Streets” concept whereby a major street is closed to automobiles and is made fully accessible for active transportation with the potential of activities to promote healthy living and community opportunities;
 - a) Develop a “Play Streets” policy and implementation plan that prompts neighbourhoods and organizations to temporarily designate a street for active play.
5. Explore the opportunity to develop live-streamed active lifestyle programming such as yoga and fitness classes. Utilize the Town’s website to provide these active programs utilizing technology.

Recommendations (continued)

Pre-school and Children

6. Provide Physical Literacy training for community providers through the Canadian Sport for Life movement to ensure that all pre-school and school age children have the basic skills to become more active (running, jumping, throwing etc.).
7. Introduce a pass that allows free access to drop in programs for one year for all grade 5 students.
8. Work to broaden the " Safe and Active Routes to School" program to encourage more children and youth to walk to school.

Youth

9. Partner with local fitness providers to promote free access to youth in the summer months to receive access to fitness.
10. Schedule regular times for youth drop-in activities that are sponsored or low cost to make regular activity part of the active opportunities for youth and ensure that there are adequate youth centric amenities (bike parks, skateboard parks etc.).

Adults

11. Consider the provision of fitness stations in parks and along active transportation routes to promote casual access to active opportunities.
12. Develop hard copy and virtual tool kits that enable residents to undertake starting up walking and physical activity clubs within their neighbourhoods.
13. Train active living providers for older adults in Physical Literacy to ensure that all interested older adults are introduced to the basic skills for physical activity.
14. Host a forum with all providers of activities for older adults to discuss the strengths, gaps and potential opportunities to improve active living opportunities for older adults and ensure all programs are "age friendly" .

Low Income Residents

15. Partner with local organizations to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation in active opportunities for low income residents.
16. Partner with the Boards of Education to provide active opportunities before and after school for all students. Initial start-up programs are recommended in low income areas of Halton Hills.

Persons with Disabilities

17. Provide training to sport and active service providers on including persons with disabilities in programming.
18. Support the development of an Active Alliance for organizations that support persons with disabilities to ensure that there is cross promotion, sharing of resources and focus on common issues.

Recommendations (continued)

Rural Residents

19. Host Active Living Forums in rural communities within Halton Hills to develop location specific solutions to engaging more rural residents in active lifestyles.

Cultural Diversity

20. Provide training to all active and sport stakeholders on inclusion, reducing barriers and serving a culturally diverse community.
21. Prepare to introduce non-traditional sport opportunities into the mix of active choices available for residents (reflective of the cultural make-up of Halton Hills).
22. Provide introduction and skill development for traditional Canadian sports to new Canadians.

Goal Two: **Active** Living in the Workplace

Goal Statement: To create greater awareness of the **benefits of active living in the workplace.**

Strategy Considerations

Profile of Workplaces in Halton Hills

- According to the recent Halton Hills Economic Development Strategy (Matthew Fisher & Associates and Murray Consulting), there are 4,048 businesses in Halton Hills. 91% have fewer than 10 employees and 8% have greater than 200 employees.
- 45% of local jobs are filled by non-residents
- 70% of residents commute out of town for employment

Benefits of a Healthy Workforce

- An active workforce benefits both the employer and the employee. Supporting an active workforce can reduce absenteeism, create a better work environment and culture, and better engage employees.

Business Attraction and Retention

- There is significant support for efforts to increase active living within the workplaces within Halton Hills. From an economic development perspective, the Town would be well positioned for attracting businesses to an active and caring community. Employers often analyze a community from a liveability standpoint to ensure that their employees would want to raise their families and become engaged in the community.

The Role of Halton Hills in Promoting Workplace Active Living

- The Town of Halton Hills sets an example in active living in the workplace. The Town's Wellness Committee addresses active and healthy behaviours within the employee base and organizes events, supports physical activity and healthy eating.

- The role of the municipality in supporting active living in the workplace is to work with its partners (Business Improvement Areas, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development etc.) to educate, promote the benefits of wellness in the workplace, provide supports and monitor the number of workplaces who have an active living program in place.
- Recognition for Active Living Programs in the Workplace could be developed and awarded through the most appropriate body.

Recommendations

23. Work with the Economic Development Department and the Business Community to survey businesses in order to better understand the number of businesses that have active living programs in place for employees, barriers they face and resources that could assist.
24. Equip Economic Development staff with materials that will provide businesses with the merits and best practices of active living programs in the workplace.
25. Develop a webinar that would promote the benefits and assist smaller business in developing active living programs for their employees.
26. Measure the number of businesses that develop active living programs over the life of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy (5 years).

Goal Three: Foster an **Active** Love for the Outdoors

Goal Statement: To build on the use of Halton Hills' natural resources by fostering a love of the outdoors.

Strategy Considerations

Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD)

- Nature Deficit Disorder is becoming increasingly evident in people who do not get outdoors often enough. It is a health issue with possible symptoms of anxiety and depression. People need outdoor and unstructured play to master new skills, be active, learn new things and become in awe of their natural environment. To this end, the Lawson Foundation has launched an Outdoor Play Strategy that will provide 2.7M in funding to support outdoor play initiatives in Ontario.

Research Supports Outdoor Activity

- ParticipACTION has recently released a position statement on Outdoor Play in increasing physical activity in children. The report highlights how children are less active when they are indoors and exposed to sedentary behaviours. The key statement reads: **Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children's opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.**
- The use of active transportation infrastructure (such as trails), natural settings and parks must be an integral part of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Gardening is a Popular Activity

- Supporting gardening keeps residents outside and fosters a love for beautification and learning. There is an initiative called the Pollinator Pathway Project which is an international challenge to connect greenspaces by growing native species along boulevards, public and private greenspaces to support pollinators (bees, beetles, ants, moths, butterflies, flies, gnats and small mammals). Active living is a positive spin off of this initiative. Community partners are provided with guidance, plans and guidelines to ensure efforts are successful and sustainable. This greening project appeals to those who may not choose to participate in sports or high intensity physical activity and ensures that there is a broad range of active choices for all residents.

Recommendations

27. Recommend to Halton Hills Council: consistent and adequate funding to address gaps and improved entrance features (signage, parking, access) to the active transportation system within Halton Hills.
28. Implement a community signage program that will prompt residents to be more active, including, but not limited to, "take the stairs" signs, distance markings on trails, sidewalks and cycling routes. (Evidenced-based).
29. Provide toys (buckets, trucks, sand toys, play kitchens, workshops etc.) in playgrounds to encourage children to engage in imaginative play, stay outside and be active for a longer period.
30. Develop active events and opportunities along trails and active transportation systems to attract residents to use the trail system more often.
31. Implement a program for persons interested in horticulture and gardening that prompts active living. The Pollinator Project is recommended as it will engage all residents from both urban and rural settings.
32. Support and promote outdoor programming by other organizations such as Geocaching, Naturalists Clubs, Trails and Walking Clubs.

Goal Four: **Actively** Promote Community Awareness and Partnerships

Goal Statement: Create greater awareness about active living and **strengthen community partnerships** in implementing the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Strategy Considerations

Key Partners and their Contributions to Active Living

Developing the Active Living Strategy has involved the participation and commitment of a number of important organizations and leaders from varying disciplines within the community. To implement the Strategy effectively, a steering group should guide the prioritization and phasing of recommendations. Partnerships can be strengthened by identifying roles and responsibilities and making a commitment to active living in Halton Hills. These partnerships can reduce duplication and maximize existing resources. It is evident by the scope of the Active Living Strategy that partners will be necessary in sharing the work that is required to implement the strategy and sustain the momentum needed.

Agency/Partner	Role
Town of Halton Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Play a leadership role in organizing meetings and ensuring continued commitment of the Steering Committee; – Provide technical expertise and access external expertise as required; – Continue delivery of programs and initiatives; – Monitor funding opportunities and develop an annual budget in concert with the committee; and – Develop an annual report in concert with the committee that speaks to the successful results of the strategy and any recommended changes.
Halton Region – Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide a connection to Halton Region departments, resources and communications; – Provide public health guidance, resources and expertise; – Assist with the development of programs and initiatives; and – Assist with the measurement of active residents in Halton Hills.
Boards of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Report on results of daily physical activity mandate; – Provide communication mechanisms to parents and students; – Continue to strengthen “Safe Routes to Schools” programs; – Work with partners to provide afterschool programming to reduce sedentary behaviours; and – Provide curriculum on active living to students.
Medical Profession and Health Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide medical advice and expertise on the Active Living Steering Committee; and – Work with other health and medical practitioners to develop a monitoring tool for patients and report on results.
Our Kids Network Halton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue to promote and teach Physical Literacy to pre-school and school age children; – Provide expertise and best practices related to children; and – Provide local data through online data portal.
Library System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engage New Canadians in active opportunities for their families as part of their supports; – Loan out activity tracking devices, teach residents how to use and monitor their use; and – Feature literature and displays on active living to library users.
Trails Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Report out on trail use; – Animate active transportation and mobility corridors with partners; and – Address trails connections and gaps through the Trail Strategy.
Cycling Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote cycling events; and – Work with partners to engage a greater number of cyclists.
Naturalist and Horticultural Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote outdoor activities and address identified gaps (access for low income residents, persons with disabilities etc.).
Organizations Serving Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide guidance on increasing accessible programs and active opportunities for persons with disabilities.
Youth and Older Adult Centred Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide a voice for youth and older adults to strengthen active living.
Active and Sport Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify how sport users can better engage participants in active lifestyles; – Provide active opportunities while families are viewing sports; and – Promote active living to the community.

Communication and Awareness

- Communication and awareness of opportunities are integral components of the Active Living Strategy. Residents are generally aware that active living will improve their health over time. Addressing barriers such as time, commitment and cost will need to be communicated to encourage greater participation.
- Cross-promotion and providing a single source of all active opportunities in Halton Hills either through a portal on the Town's website and/or utilization of the Make Room for Play Mobile App will assist in informing residents of ongoing active opportunities.
- Social media will promote opportunities on a real-time basis and grow the conversation about active living in Halton Hills.

Recommendations

Partnerships

33. Develop and support an Active Living Steering Committee of organizations and residents with respective backgrounds, skills and competencies to contribute to its implementation.
34. Gain commitment from key leaders and organizations within the community to work together to implement the Active Living Strategy through:
 - a) Identifying key organizations such as the school boards, Halton Region Health Department, the medical professions, economic development, active transportation network, the Library system, private providers of active opportunities etc.;
 - b) Sharing the Strategy's goals and actions to identify roles and responsibilities;
 - c) Developing an "Active Living Charter" and a public event launch to demonstrate the importance of active living and the role that each organization will play;
 - d) Ensuring that the committee reflects the community it serves (gender, diversity, persons representing low income residents, persons with disabilities, youth, etc.;
 - e) Developing a launch event that creates awareness for and demonstrates commitment to the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy; and
 - f) Reporting annually on the achievements to date.
35. Implement and promote the Make Room for Play Mobile App or the Meetup App which captures all active opportunities for families with the Halton Region.
36. Promote the Unplug and Play Challenge through ParticipACTION which prompts participants to log physical activity for a week to gain recognition.
37. Identify potential sponsorship and funding opportunities for various elements of the strategy and address portions of the strategy where possible utilizing alternate funding streams where possible.

Recommendations (continued)

Communications and Awareness

38. Develop a Communications Strategy that includes the following actions at a minimum:
 - a) Create a brand for the Active Living Strategy with a visual identity that can be used to remind residents and local employees that active living through physical is important;
 - b) Identify Community Champions who will lead initiatives, offer testimonials and speak to the merits of being active;
 - c) Launch an "Active Living" portal on the Town's website that promotes active living and opportunities offered by community partners;
 - d) Identify "active choices" with the same logo; and
 - e) Utilize social media to increase interest and participation in active living opportunities and maximize impressions by linking to related websites and social media sites.
39. Host an annual forum with partners and potential partners to address the status of the Active Living Strategy and learn from experts in active living through physical activity.
40. Support and communicate existing campaigns that encourage residents to be more active such as, but not limited to, Recreation and Parks Month, World Walk Day, Healthy Workplace Week, World Physical Activity Day, and Heart and Stroke Month.
41. Denote programs, sports and active opportunities with a consistent logo that identifies the opportunity as one that supports active living.
42. Work with the Halton Hills Library system to support and promote active living opportunities.
43. Explore opportunities to work with health service providers to support patients being more active.
44. Recognize excellence in active living by adding a category to the Halton Hills annual recognition and awards program.
45. Consider the creation of a Coordinator Position to implement the strategy and the allocation of an annual operating budget to fund the implementation of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.
46. Report annually on the performance measures and achievements against the targets housed in the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Section 5: Implementation and Measuring Performance

Implementation Plan

The table shown in this Section proposes timing as to when the recommended actions should be implemented. Timing is suggested in short (1 year), mid (2-3 years) and longer (4-5 years) terms over the five-year span of the strategy.

The suggested timing considers positioning activities such as setting of policy and creating an oversight committee of partners as projects that will bring notice to the initiative and programs that are already in existence. The Active Living Steering Committee would serve to create an annual plan to ensure that the available resources can implement the recommended actions and achieve the intended results.



Table 2: Active Living Strategy Implementation Plan of Recommendations

Recommended Actions	Short term (First Year)	Mid-term (Years Two & Three)	Long-term Years Four & Five)
Goal One: Active Opportunities for All Residents			
1. Develop an Active Living Policy to demonstrate a commitment by the municipality in ensuring that relevant departments play a coordinated role in ensuring that active living through physical activity is supported through their work. a) Create and solidify the role and commitment of an Alliance of community partners to implement the Active Living Strategy.	•		
2. Expand the Community Grant Program to provide start-up funds to community organizations and alliances that would like to initiate active programs in alignment with the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.		•	
3. Continue to ensure that there is a wide variety of active choices for residents of all ages and abilities within Halton Hills and build on existing successes such as the Halton Hills Community Cycling Challenge.		•	•
4. Introduce the "Open Streets" concept where a major street is closed to automobiles and made fully accessible for active transportation with the potential of activities to promote healthy living and community opportunities. a) Develop a "Play Streets" policy and implementation plan that prompts neighbourhoods and organizations to temporarily designate a street for active play.		•	•
5. Explore the opportunity to develop live-streamed active lifestyle programming such as yoga and fitness classes. Utilize the Town's website to provide these active programs utilizing technology.		•	•
6. Provide Physical Literacy training for community providers through the Canadian Sport for Life movement to ensure that all pre-school and school age children have the basic skills to become more active (running, jumping, throwing, etc.).		•	•
7. Introduce a pass that allows free access to drop in programs for one year for all grade 5 students.		•	•
8. Work to broaden the "Safe and Active Routes to School" program to encourage more children and youth to walk to school.	•		
9. Partner with local fitness providers to promote free access to youth in the summer months to receive access to fitness.	•		
10. Schedule regular times for youth drop-in activities that are sponsored or low cost to make regular activity part of the active opportunities for youth and ensure that there are adequate youth centric amenities (bike parks, skateboard parks etc.).	•	•	
11. Consider the provision of fitness stations in parks and along active transportation routes to promote casual access to active opportunities.			•
12. Develop hard copy and virtual tool kits that enable residents to undertake starting up walking and physical activity clubs within their neighbourhoods.		•	•

Recommended Actions	Short term (First Year)	Mid-term (Years Two & Three)	Long-term Years Four & Five)
13. Train active living providers for older adults in Physical Literacy to ensure that all interested older adults are introduced to the basic skills for physical activity.		•	•
14. Host a forum with all providers of activities for older adults to discuss the strengths, gaps and potential opportunities to improve active living opportunities for older adults and ensure all programs are "age friendly."		•	•
15. Partner with local organizations to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation in active opportunities for low income residents.	•	•	
16. Partner with the Boards of Education to provide active opportunities before and after school for all students. Initial start-up programs are recommended in low income areas of Halton Hills.		•	•
17. Provide training to sport and active service providers on including persons with disabilities in programming.		•	•
18. Support the development of an Active Alliance for organizations that support persons with disabilities to ensure that there is cross promotion, sharing of resources and focus on common issues.	•		
19. Host Active Living Forums in rural communities within Halton Hills to develop location specific solutions to engaging more rural residents in active lifestyles.		•	•
20. Provide training to all active and sport stakeholders on inclusion, reducing barriers and serving a culturally diverse community.		•	•
21. Prepare to introduce non-traditional sport active opportunities into the mix of active choices available for residents (reflective of the cultural make-up of Halton Hills).			•
22. Provide introduction and skill development for traditional Canadian sports for new Canadians.			•
Goal Two: Active Living in the Workplace			
23. Work with the Economic Development Department and the Business Community to survey the businesses in order to better understand the number of businesses that have active living programs in place for employees, barriers they face and resources that could assist.		•	
24. Equip Economic Development staff with materials that will provide businesses with the merits and best practices of active living programs in the workplace.		•	
25. Develop a webinar that would promote the benefits and assist smaller business in developing active living programs for their employees.		•	•

Recommended Actions	Short term (First Year)	Mid-term (Years Two & Three)	Long-term Years Four & Five)
26. Measure the number of businesses that develop active living programs over the life of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy (5 years).			•
Goal Three: Foster an Active Love for the Outdoors			
27. Recommend to Halton Hills Council: consistent and adequate funding to address gaps and improved entrance features (signage, parking, access) to the active transportation system within Halton Hills.	•		
28. Implement a community signage program that will prompt residents to be more active including but not limited to “take the stairs” signs, distance markings on trails, sidewalks and cycling routes. (Evidenced-based).		•	•
29. Provide toys (buckets, trucks, sand toys, play kitchens, workshops etc.) in playgrounds to encourage children to engage in imaginative play, stay outside and be active for a longer period.	•	•	•
30. Develop active events and opportunities along trails and active transportation systems to attract residents to use the trail system more often.			•
31. Implement a program for persons interested in horticulture and gardening that prompts active living. The Pollinator Project is recommended as it will engage all residents from both urban and rural settings.		•	•
32. Support and promote outdoor programming by other organizations such as Geocaching, Naturalists Clubs, Trails and Walking Clubs.		•	•

Recommended Actions	Short term (First Year)	Mid-term (Years Two & Three)	Long-term Years Four & Five)
Goal Four: <i>Actively</i> Promote Community Awareness and Partnerships			
33. Develop and support an Active Living Steering Committee of organizations and residents with respective backgrounds, skills and competencies to contribute to its implementation.	•		
34. Gain commitment from key leaders and organizations within the community to work together to implement the Active Living Strategy through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identifying key organizations such as the school boards, Halton Region Health Department, the medical professions, economic development, active transportation network, the Library system, private providers of active opportunities, etc.; b) Sharing the Strategy's goals and actions to identify roles and responsibilities; c) Developing an "Active Living Charter" and a public event launch to demonstrate the importance of active living and the role that each organization will play; d) Ensuring that the committee reflects the community it serves (gender, diversity, persons representing low income residents, persons with disabilities, youth, etc.; e) Developing a launch event that creates awareness for and demonstrates commitment to the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy; and f) Reporting annually on the achievements to date. 	•		
35. Implement and promote the Make Room for Play Mobile App or the Meetup App which captures all active opportunities for families with the Halton Region.		•	•
36. Promote the Unplug and Play Challenge through ParticipACTION which prompts participants to log physical activity for a week to gain recognition.	•		
37. Identify potential sponsorship and funding opportunities for various elements of the strategy and address portions of the strategy utilizing alternate funding streams where possible.	•	•	

Recommended Actions	Short term (First Year)	Mid-term (Years Two & Three)	Long-term Years Four & Five)
38. Develop a Communications Strategy that includes the following actions at a minimum: a) Create a brand for the Active Living Strategy with a visual identity that can be used to remind residents and local employees that active living through physical activity is important; b) Identify Community Champions who will lead initiatives, offer testimonials and speak to the merits of being active; c) Launch an “Active Living” portal on the Town’s website that promotes active living and opportunities offered by community partners; d) Identify “active choices” with the same logo; and e) Utilize social media to increase interest and participation in active living opportunities and maximize impressions by linking to related websites and social media sites.	•		
39. Host an annual forum with partners and potential partners to address the status of the Active Living Strategy and learn from experts in active living through physical activity.		•	•
40. Support and communicate existing campaigns that prompt residents to be more active such as but not limited to Parks and Recreation Month, World Walk Day, Healthy Workplace Week, World Physical Activity Day, and Heart and Stroke Month.		•	•
41. Denote programs, sports and active opportunities with a consistent logo that identifies the opportunity as one that supports active living.		•	
42. Work with the Halton Hills Library system to support and promote active living opportunities.		•	
43. Explore opportunities to work with health service providers to support patients being more active.		•	•
44. Recognize excellence in active living by adding a category to the Halton Hills annual recognition and awards program.		•	
45. Consider the creation of a Coordinator Position to implement the strategy and the allocation of an annual operating budget to fund the implementation of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.		•	•
46. Report annually on the performance measures and achievements against the targets housed in the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy		•	•

Resourcing the Active Living Strategy

The Active Living Strategy is an ambitious plan that will require dedicated resources to oversee and support the recommended actions. Funding will be leveraged from many granting agencies and sponsors; however, base funding is required to ensure that the strategy gains momentum and is sustained over its lifespan. From a human resources perspective, it is recommended that a 24 hour per week Coordinator position – be supported in the 2017 budget deliberations as well as base funding over the lifespan of the strategy. A high level order estimate to implement all of the recommended actions would equal an annual investment of approximately \$115,000. This amount does not include contributions from partners, stakeholders, services in kind, funding from foundations and the government nor sponsorships. Assuming that 35% of the required funding can be obtained through alternate revenues and partnerships; an annual funding request of \$75,000 is recommended for the lifespan of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy.

Measuring Performance against the Plan's Goals and Actions

To be successful the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy must gain commitment from a number of community partners and stakeholders. Each organization / stakeholder must work as part of the collective and be accountable for the actions they have agreed to undertake or be a part of. The strategy must remain nimble and respond to changing conditions or emerging opportunities. An annual review of the strategy will reflect the short-term outcomes related to the actions taken within each goal area.

Measuring the long-term, cumulative effects of the Active Living Strategy actions on the health and well-being of the community is much more difficult. The application of evidence-based actions increases the opportunity for positive outcomes. Monitoring indicators will be utilized to demonstrate population changes over time, such as the results of the Region of Halton's Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System.

The following table suggests a list of measures that will assist in evaluating the Strategy's intended results. Annual reporting to Council, the public, stakeholders and partners will ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and hold the Steering Committee accountable for its work.

Goal	Progress Indicator	Outcome Indicators
Goal One: Active Opportunities for All Residents (Recommendations 1-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of policies developed supporting active living – Number of trends and evidence-based active living initiatives researched – Number and type of new initiatives and programs implemented encouraging active living across all sectors – Amount of funding invested in active living across all sectors – Number of training events and forums delivered – Number of service providers and community members in attendance – Number of new partnerships developed 	Number of participants impacted, by population: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool/Children • Youth • Adults • Low Income Residents • Persons with Disabilities • Rural Residents • New Canadians
Goal Two: Active Living in the Workplace (Recommendations 23-26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of businesses that implemented new active living plans for employees – Number of communication impressions distributed to local businesses 	

Goal	Progress Indicator	Outcome Indicators
Goal Three: Foster an Active Love for the Outdoors (Recommendations 27-32)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of new initiatives and features implemented encouraging outdoor activity – Amount of new funding invested toward outdoor activity 	<p>Number of participants impacted, by population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool/Children • Youth • Adults • Low Income Residents • Persons with Disabilities • Rural Residents • New Canadians
Goal Four: Actively Promote Community Awareness and Partnerships (Recommendations 33-46)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Number of active partners, stakeholders and community champions dedicated to the implementation of the Active Living Strategy – Amount of funding provided or leveraged through sponsors and partners – Number of communication impressions dedicated to promoting and creating awareness about active living in Halton Hills 	

ACTIVE LIVING STRATEGY COMMUNITY SURVEY

key findings report

January 2016

Introduction

The Community On-line Survey was undertaken between November 25, 2015 and January 8, 2016 to solicit public opinion, preferences, and priorities with respect to participation in active living and physical activities. The survey was available through a link on the Town of Halton Hills website and advertised using municipal social media pages, leveraging Steering Committee members to spread the message via their community contacts, and having Town Staff encourage community centre patrons to fill out the survey. In total, 194 surveys were completed and analyzed. The following is a high level summary of survey responses.

Positive Influences in Active Living

Early in the survey, a simple question was asked: “How has participating in physical activities or active lifestyles positively impacted your life?” Engaging in physical activities has benefited the lives of most respondents with several testimonials noting that physical activity made respondents feel “better” about themselves from a physical and psychological perspective. Some also noted that being physically active has trickled down to other household members as some enjoy active living as a family while others articulated that active living has improved their social lives as they are able to meet new people and participate in activities together as a group. Figure 3 illustrates the most common terms used to describe how active living has positively influenced their lives – the size of the font correlates with how often the word was mentioned.

I am a very active person and have found that physical activity has helped me bounce back from my recent pregnancy. I also feel that I will pass on good lifestyle choices and habits to my children since it is a way of life for me.

- Testimonial From Survey Respondent

Figure 3: How Active Living and Physical Activity has Positively Influenced Lives



Satisfaction in Active Living Opportunities

Survey respondents were generally satisfied with the availability of active living opportunities in Halton Hills. Satisfaction with active living opportunities was highest for children between the ages of 5 and 11 and similar levels of satisfaction were expressed for both males and females. The lowest levels of satisfaction were attributable to opportunities for persons with disabilities or special needs, youth ages 12 to 17, and adults between 18 and 64.

Figure 4: Satisfaction in Active Living Opportunities, by Demographic Segment

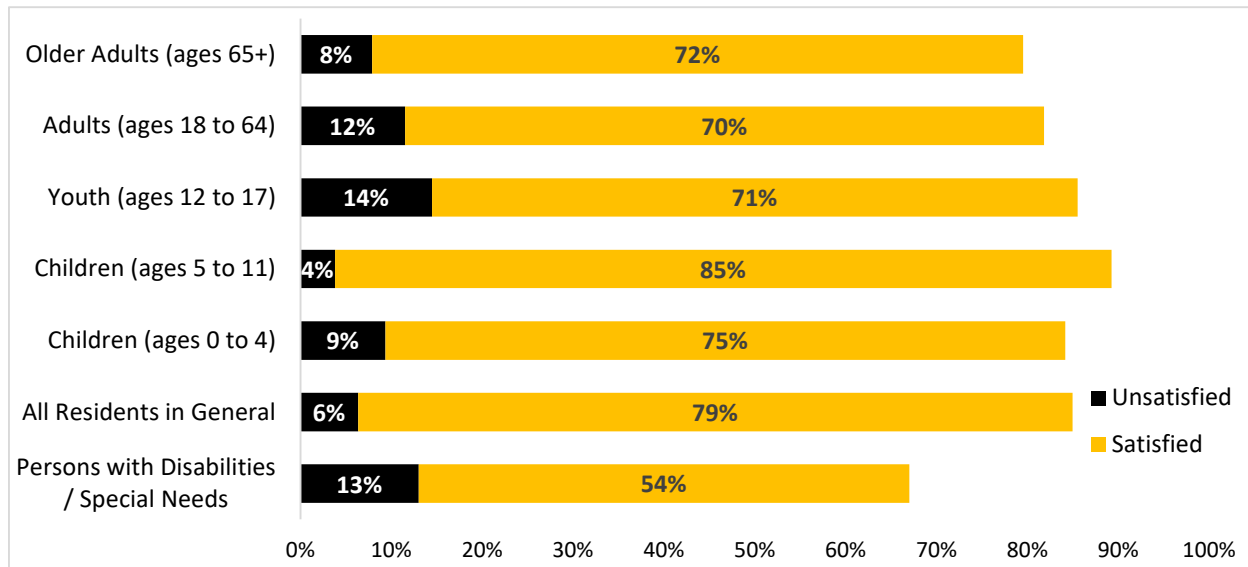
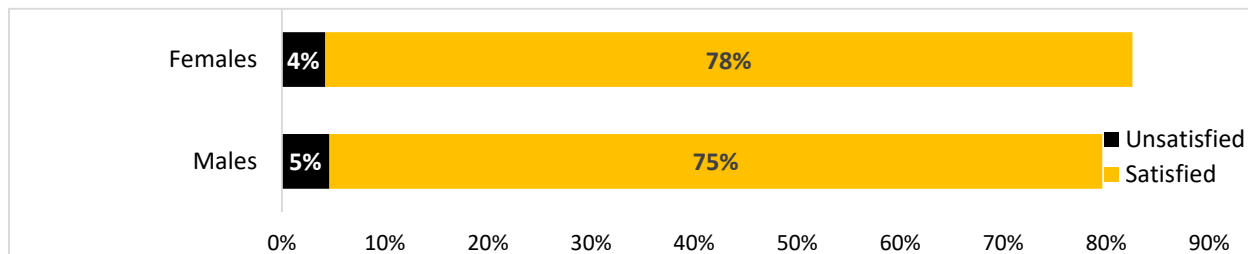


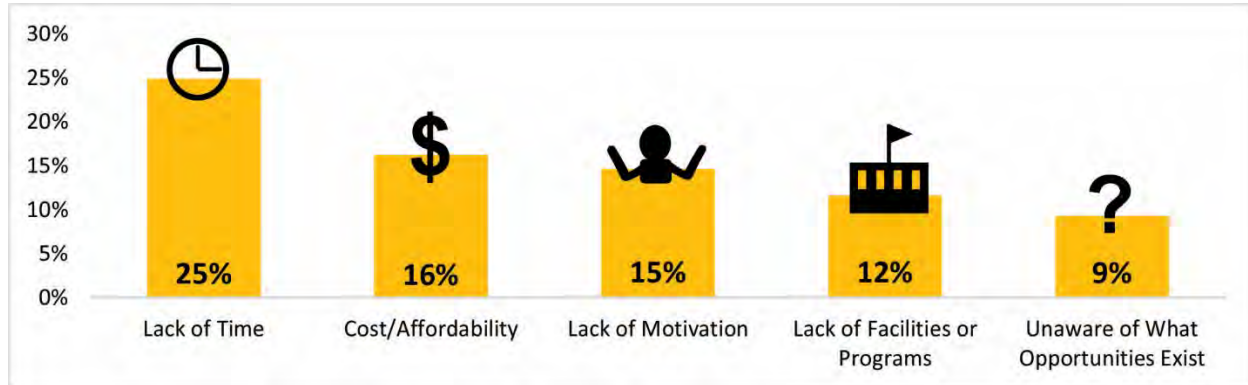
Figure 5: Satisfaction in Active Living Opportunities, by Gender Identity



Barriers to Active Lifestyles

A lack of time was the most common barrier preventing respondents from fully participating in active living opportunities. Increasingly busy lifestyles and competing interests have resulted in fewer opportunities to participate in active living pursuits. Other common barriers are described in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Barriers to Participation in Active Living



To increase their ability to engage in active lifestyles, respondents reported that they would be more likely to participate if more casual opportunities were offered where they can opt in and out of. In other words, activities that are drop-in and/or have flexible schedules would encourage a greater level of participation. Providing more affordable choices would also improve the likelihood of active living (cost/affordability was the second most stated barrier). Distance to reach facilities and services was a much lower barrier; however, respondents reported living primarily in urban settlements (5% of respondents live in rural areas).

Figure 7: Opportunities to Motivate Active Living



Active Living Opportunities

Nearly one-third of survey respondents visit local indoor recreation centres (e.g., arenas, pools, etc.) a few times per week, followed by visits to parks and conservation areas and use of the local trails system (Figure 8). Respondents are most likely to use these facilities once a month or less.

Figure 8: Percentage of Respondents Using Municipal Parks, Trails and Facilities a Few Times per Week



The top five most popular activities undertaken by surveyed households can generally be described as unstructured, self-scheduled pursuits such as walking and swimming. Notable organized activities that are undertaken at any life stage included sports/recreational sports and fitness pursuits as illustrated in Figure 9. Conversely, popular activities that are solely participated in at specific age segments include dance for children (ages 5 to 11) and gardening/yard work and cycling among seniors (age 65+). Physical activity at work was also a common response among adults age 18 to 64.

Figure 9: Top 5 Most Common Activities by Age Group

Top 5 Most Common Activities by Age Group	Ages 0 – 4 Years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking to Work / School / Run Errands 2. Walking for Pleasure / Exercise 3. Sports / Recreational Sports 4. Fitness Classes 5. Swimming
Ages 5 – 11 Years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking to Work / School / Run Errands 2. Sports / Recreational Sports 3. Walking for Pleasure / Exercise 4. Dance 5. Swimming 	Ages 12 – 17 Years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sports / Recreational Sports 2. Walking to Work / School / Run Errands 3. Walking for Pleasure / Exercise 4. Equipment-Based Strengthen Training 5. Swimming
Ages 18 – 64 Years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sports / Recreational Sports 2. Walking to Work / School / Run Errands 3. Equipment-based Strength Training 4. Physical Activity at Work 5. Walking for Pleasure / Exercise 	Ages 65+ Years <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking for Pleasure / Exercise 2. Gardening / Yard Work 3. Cycling for Pleasure / Exercise 4. Walking to Work / School / Run Errands 5. Sports / Recreational Sports

On a weekly basis, responding households indicated that their family members are fairly active in moderate to vigorous physical activities (**Figure 10**). Moderate to vigorous activities include any pursuits that cause sweating, rapid breathing, and breathlessness. Children between the ages of 5 and 11 years participate in these types of activities more frequently compared to other age groups, while children under the age of four participate to a lesser degree. Adults between the ages of 18 and 64 are more likely to participate in moderate to vigorous activities once a week or less, which may be the result of more time-constrained adults who are unable to participate in active living activities as often as they would like.

Looking closely at the duration of participation in active living pursuits on a daily basis (**Figure 9**), each age group generally engages in less than one hour of physical activities per day. Based on these findings, together with the preceding data, household residents that were surveyed participate in short, but frequent, bursts of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week.

Figure 10: Frequency of Participation in Active Living

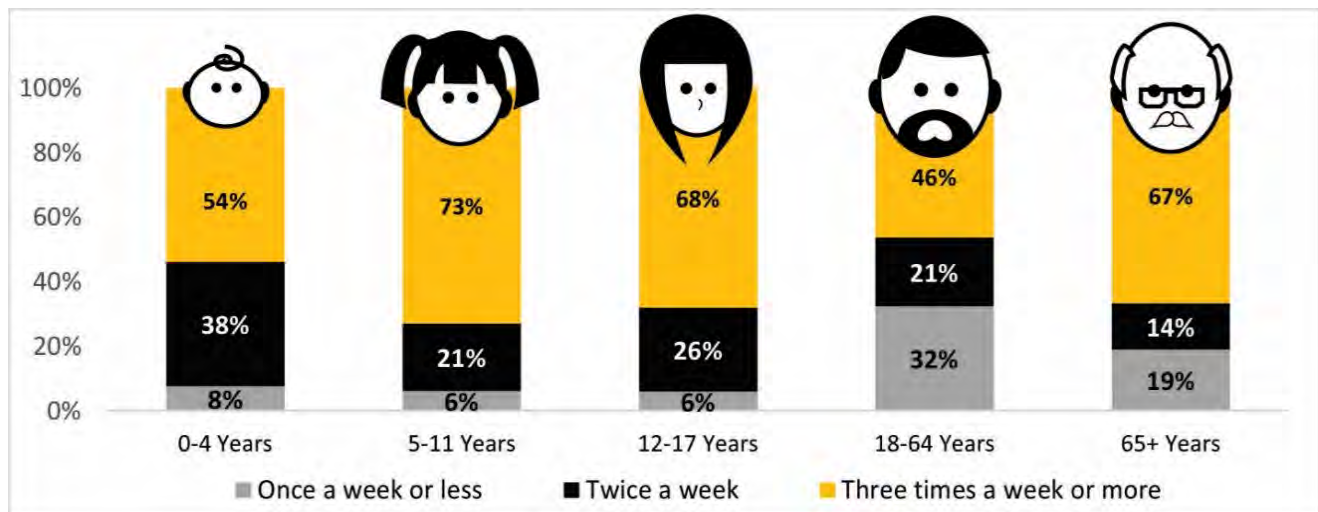
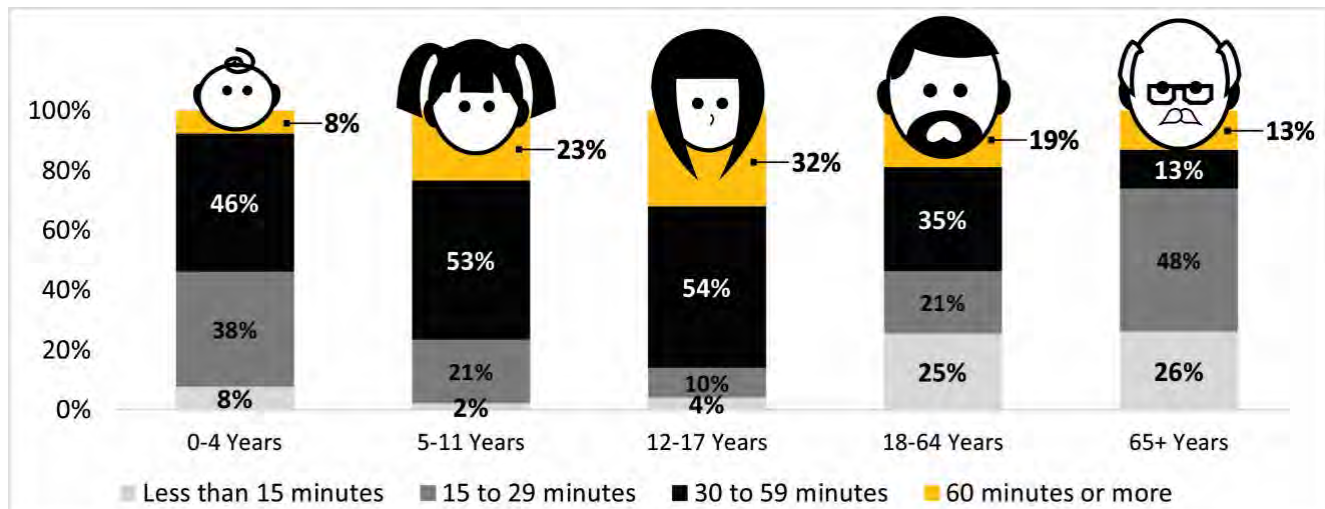


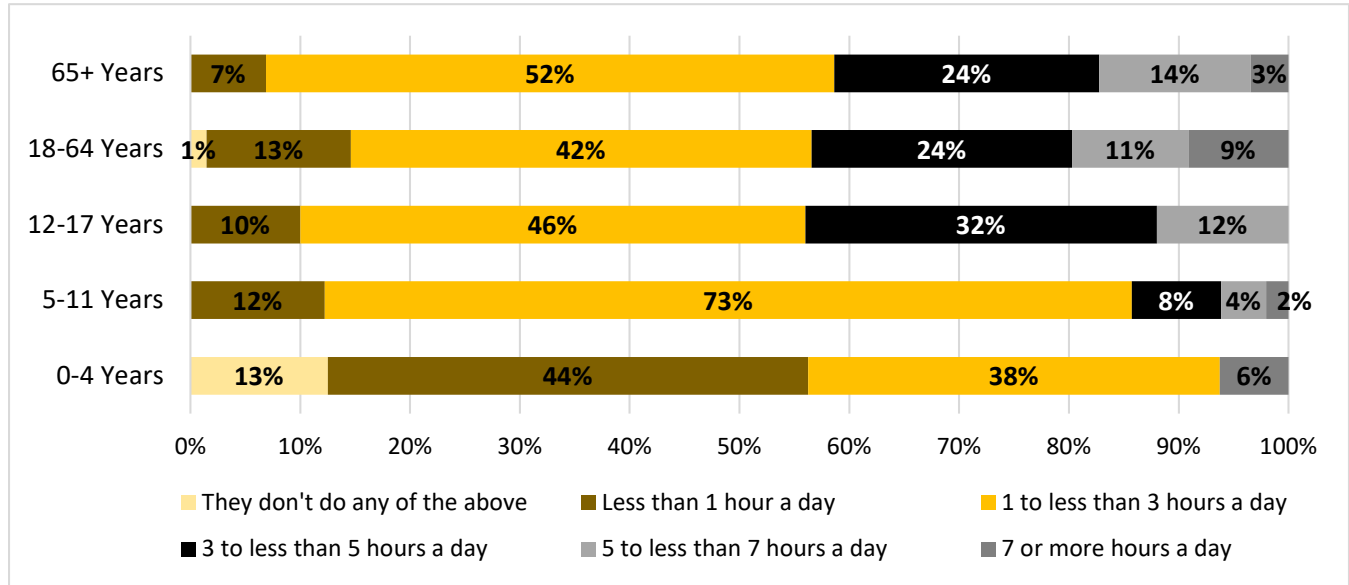
Figure 11: Duration of Participation in Active Living



Participation in Sedentary Activities

Survey participants generally spent between one and three hours a day engaged in sedentary activities such as watching television, browsing the internet, playing games, and other leisure pursuits that do not require physical activity. Children under the age of four were most likely to spend less than one hour a day engaged in these types of activities.

Figure 12: Time Spent Participating in Sedentary Activities



Enhancing Active Living Opportunities in Rural Areas

When survey respondents were asked to identify potential solutions to enhance active living opportunities for residents living in Halton Hill's rural areas, a wide range of ideas were generated. Several options pertained to improving general awareness and promotion of the opportunities that are available. Other suggestions related to services such as public transportation or shuttle services in rural areas to enhance access to community facilities, particularly for those without access to a vehicle. The provision of active living facilities in rural areas was also articulated, with specific requests for walking and cycling trails that connect residents throughout Halton Hills and to adjacent municipalities.

Leadership from the Town to provide support, encouragement, information, policies, and programs that facilitate full participation in recreation for all abilities and areas [in Halton Hills].

- Testimonial From Survey Respondent

Bolstering Active Transportation

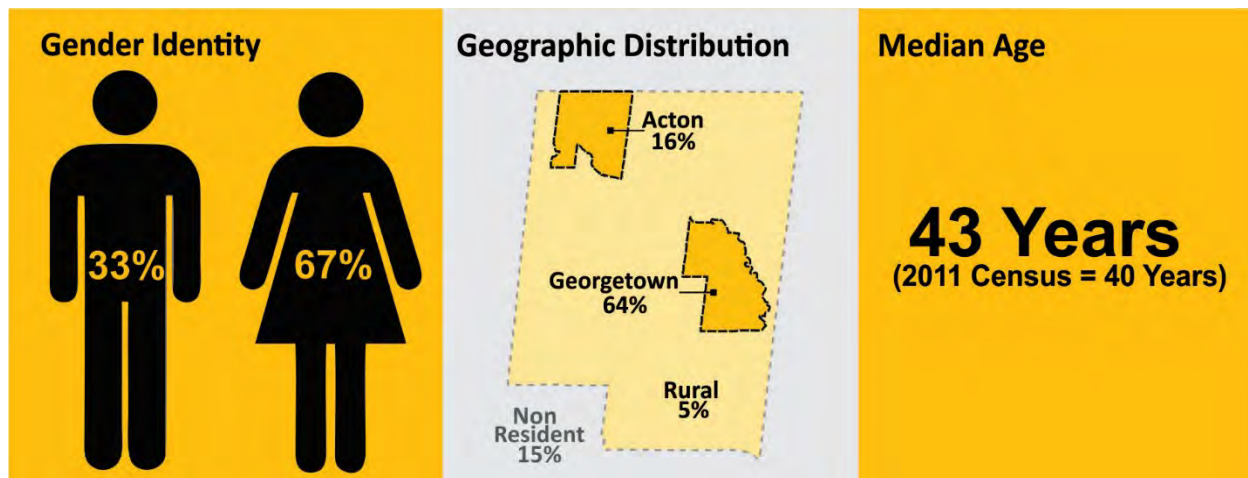
With respect to encouraging the use of active transportation modes of travel such as walking or cycling, survey respondents reiterated the desire for a connected trail network. Respondents felt that there must be an “incentive” or motivation to use active transportation modes and, as such, Halton Hill’s active transportation network must connect users to desirable destinations such as schools and places of work. In addition, a number of respondents expressed that active transportation routes must be safe to encourage them to be used. As a result, several respondents identified the desire for improved active transportation maintenance and cycling lanes, particularly along busy roads. Walking and cycling trails that connect municipalities and bike lanes in the downtown core and along Maple Avenue and Mill Street are some of the desired trails expressed by respondents.

Trails and cycling lanes were highly desirable facilities to encourage active living and active modes of transportation.



Respondent Characteristics

The following are the primary demographic characteristics of survey respondents.



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