

## REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Chair and Members of the Community and Corporate Affairs Committee

**REPORT FROM:** Margaret Taylor, Active Living Coordinator

**DATE:** April 27, 2018

**REPORT NO.:** RP-2018-0017

**RE:** Active Living Strategy Update

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. RP-2018-0017 dated April 27, 2018 regarding Active Living Strategy Update be received for information;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to pursue potential funding such as the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to continue implementation of the Active Living Strategy;

AND FURTHER THAT ongoing funding and operating budget impacts to support the work plan be referred to 2019 Budget Committee for consideration.

### BACKGROUND:

On September 26, 2016, through Resolution No. 2016-0177, Council adopted in principle the Town's Active Living Strategy, outlining forty-six (46) recommendations designed to engage the community in the process of supporting and fostering a healthy, active lifestyle for all residents and in creating environments where the healthy choices are the easy choices. The project was branded *ActiveEasy*.

In May 10, 2017 notice was received from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport confirming that the two-year *ActiveEasy Community Development and Partnership Project* initiative was approved in the requested amount of \$96,444.00 through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Community Fund. Staff committed to report back to Council regarding key milestones and successes achieved through implementation.

The purpose of this Report is to provide Committee with an update regarding the year one accomplishments of the *ActiveEasy* project, and to provide an overview of next steps and upcoming events.

## COMMENTS:

A two-year implementation plan (see Appendix A) was created from the forty-six (46) recommendations identified across (4) categories in the Strategy. Sixteen (16) of the forty-six (46) recommended actions, or twenty-eight percent (28%), have been completed, with a number ongoing, to date.



This Report provides an update on the following three (3) project areas:

1. Actively Promote Awareness and Partnerships:
  - (a) Partnership Development
  - (b) Community Presentation (soft launch)
2. Active Opportunities for All Residents:
  - (a) *ActiveEasy* Launch – First Open Streets Event
  - (b) Caught Being Active Campaign
  - (c) #ActiveEasyRocks
3. Year Two Initiatives

### **1. (a) Partnership Development**

The solution to the physical inactivity crisis is complex and crosses many systems. The development of a strong, cross-sector collaborative to support and implement the workplan along with a dedicated staff lead were identified as central to achieving lasting, positive changes across the community.

Following the Ministry announcement of funding, staff developed a recruitment plan to hire a Community Activator to support the implementation of the of the two-year plan. In

July 2017, the incumbent, supervised by the Active Living Coordinator, started work on the *ActiveEasy* initiative. The Community Activator provides back-bone support and technical expertise to the collaborative, called the *ActiveEasy* Alliance.

The Alliance partners meet bi-monthly, collaborate, share best practices, discuss, promote and support the implementation of the *ActiveEasy* work plan. The partners have demonstrated commitment to the project through consistent attendance at, and contributions to, the working Alliance meetings, support to sub-committee initiatives, and attendance at various events. The partners are committed to information sharing with their networks.

Through dedicated recruitment efforts, the *ActiveEasy* Alliance has grown to a membership of seventeen (17) and includes representation from:

- Downtown Georgetown Business Improvement Area
- Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Hillview Active Living Centre
- Halton District School Board
- Halton Catholic District School Board
- Halton Region Public Health Department (2 representatives: one from the children's team and one from the workplace health team)
- Credit Valley Conservation
- Upper Canada College's Norval Outdoor School
- Halton Hills Special Olympics
- Halton Active Sustainable School Transportation HUB
- Halton Hills Public Library
- Six (6) community members at large who live in Halton Hills

Sub-committee partners include:

- Halton Hills Jumpstart Chapter
- Early ON Family Centres
- Links2Care

Next Steps: As staff continue to build the network and Alliance, recruiting representatives from the youth population is a high priority.

### **1. (b) Community Presentation (soft launch)**

The Town celebrated the kick-off of the *ActiveEasy* initiative with an educational event for the community titled "Is Sitting the New Smoking?", outlining the current status of health across Canada and the benefits of physical literacy. On June 15, 2017, Exercise Physiologist Dr. Patricia Longmuir, PhD, RKin, Research Scientist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute spoke to an audience of 45 at the John Elliott Theatre in Halton Hills. The *ActiveEasy* Alliance partners and Halton Hills community members in attendance were educated on the current health status of Canadian, how physical inactivity has created a health crisis, and how physical literacy may contribute to lifelong enjoyment of physical activity. Dr Longmuir also shared a number of examples from other communities demonstrating success. The written copy

of the presentation continues to act as a resource for the Alliance and planning of projects.

## **2. (a) ActiveEasy Launch – First Open Streets event**

On June 17, 2017, *ActiveEasy* partnered with the Bicycle Friendly Committee and joined forces on Bike It to Market day in Georgetown. Considered a 'best practice', Open Streets is an initiative dedicated to promoting active, healthy and inclusive lifestyles by temporarily transforming streets into a shared space for everyone to experience. By closing the road to motorized vehicles, Open Streets "opens" the street to pedestrians, cyclists and all forms of active transportation (including wheelchairs) to walk, ride or roll down. Along the route, fun, active, healthy, family-based activities are available to engage passers-by.

Activities and booths were set up along the closed stretch of Main Street where residents were invited to participate in a variety of free-flow and structured activities which incorporated the fundamental movement skills of jumping, throwing, catching, running, balancing, and cycling to promote physical literacy development. The activity areas were available from 8:00AM-12:00PM with participant engagement throughout the duration.

The local Yoga studio provided yoga classes and fitness instructors led fitness sessions on the street.

Approximately two-hundred (200) people participated in the first Open Streets event. Opportunities exist to expand the number and type of activities that are offered.

Anecdotal feedback provided by attendees was used to inform the planning of future events. A few of the key lessons learned include:

- People love to play in the streets; the attendees expressed excitement and enthusiasm over the opportunity to utilize the street for activity. No negative feedback related to the event was provided.
- Keeping the activities simple attracts and engages attention: the hula hoop station, foam football toss and Frisbee toss areas were extremely popular and easy for all ages to participate.
- Pick-up road hockey is a hit: the road hockey area was utilized non-stop for the entire event duration.

Next Steps: Six (6) Open Streets events are planned for the spring/summer of 2018 in collaboration with the Bike It to Market initiative, Georgetown Farmer's Market, Georgetown BIA and the Acton BIA.

## **2. (b) Caught Being Active**

*ActiveEasy* staffed a pop-up booth at the Acton Arena and Community Centre and Mold-Masters SportsPlex over the Christmas break to provide information and distribute free branded toques in recognition of individuals "Caught Being Active". The goal of this initiative is to praise the efforts of those getting active and to provide encouragement. The promotional items distributed act as incentive, and also display the *ActiveEasy* logo, building brand identity.

Next Steps: Staff and *ActiveEasy* Ambassador volunteers will be present at six (6) events in the spring and summer of 2018 in collaboration with the Bicycle Friendly Committee, recognizing individuals “Caught Being Active” with promotional swag. Pictures and stories of active individuals will be profiled on the Town’s various social media platforms.

## **2. (c) #ActiveEasyRocks**

In 2018, Recreation and Parks re-branded its Family Day to align with *ActiveEasy*. A new family craft was introduced at Family Day to encourage outdoor family participation and enjoyment of parks and trails. The activity, called #ActiveEasyRocks, offered children the opportunity to paint a rock that was then tagged with the ActiveEasy logo. The 300 creatively painted rocks will be distributed by *ActiveEasy* volunteer Ambassadors across local parks and trails in June. The families are encouraged to go out looking for the painted rocks, to photograph them, and to post the picture on twitter or instagram with the hashtag #ActiveEasyRocks. This initiative encourages family fun and activity, utilization of local trails and parks, and resident engagement through the use of twitter and instagram pictures.

## **3. Year Two Initiatives**

The community will be invited to provide input on a number of year-two projects via surveys, social media, and the *ActiveEasy* page of the Let’s Talk Halton Hills platform. The following projects are in the planning phase and will be completed by March 31, 2019:

- Purchase and distribute active toys in two community parks, such as dump trucks and play kitchens, to encourage children to stay and play longer;
- Research, purchase and install trail features that offer different and interesting fitness conditioning options.

Also scheduled for year two is the creation and distribution of 150 Family Activity Kits, containing easy-to-use items such as balls, Frisbees and skipping ropes to low income families across the community in an effort to remove barriers and encourage low organized activity. Links2Care, Food4Kids, Early ON Family Centres, Halton Region Public Health and the school boards are providing assistance with this initiative as part of the existing support services they provide to local families.

Year two will wrap up with an evaluation summary including process indicators and outcome indicators. An assessment of Alliance member satisfaction and commitment will be included.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This report aligns with the following corporate strategic plan objectives:

- A.3** To provide a broad range of educational, recreational and cultural services that meet the needs of residents.
- A.4** To provide accessibility throughout the community.
- A.8** To recognize that a healthy community is made up of an interconnected system of open spaces & natural heritage features.
- A.11** To promote & recognize local excellence in Arts, Sports, Culture, Recreation, Community, and Business Activities.
- F.9** To ensure that new population growth takes place by way of identifiable, healthy and complete communities and neighbourhoods that reflect excellence in urban design.
- H.1** To provide leadership and advocacy on issues of importance to our community.
- H.4** To encourage community participation in municipal decision-making.
- H.5** To provide opportunities for communication with our community.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct financial impact related to this report as the two-year project is funded through a combination of the Town's operating resources, capital funding and in-kind contributions and the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund grant.

Staff will apply again to the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund to support ongoing implementation of the Active Living Strategy beyond the two-year initial project.

Further funding requests will be referred to the 2019 Budget Committee for consideration as part of the operating budget review.

## **CONSULTATION:**

The Manager of Accounting and Town Treasurer has reviewed and supports the recommendations set out in this report.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

“Let’s Talk Halton Hills” *ActiveEasy* page was set up to provide residents an opportunity to voice opinions on the overall direction of the Active Living Strategy and to provide feedback on specific projects. To date, there have been three-hundred sixty (360) visits to the site with minimal commentary provided. This platform will continue to be utilized going forward particularly to garner feedback on the toys in parks initiative and the trail feature initiative.

Social media has been key in promoting *ActiveEasy*, including the Town of Halton Hills’ Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. Posts provide information on different events, activity tips and suggestions, and volunteer opportunities. Residents are free to add comments on the Facebook page.

*ActiveEasy* has been present at numerous community events including “At Home in the Hills”, the Norval Park Community Engagement Workshop, and two local school events sharing information and receiving feedback from the public.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

This report supports the Cultural Vibrancy, Environmental Health, Social Well-being pillar(s) of Sustainability and in summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is Good.

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

An interim report and financial update were submitted to the funder as per the requirements of the OSRCF grant. The interim report and financial update will be provided to the members of the Alliance at the May 9, 2018 meeting.

**CONCLUSION:**

The *ActiveEasy* project has been successfully launched, is meeting estimated timelines and budget, and is on track to fulfill identified goals and objectives. While it is recognized that measuring the long-term, cumulative effects of the Active Living Strategy actions on the health and wellbeing of the community is difficult, the project is building momentum and brand identity, while creating partnerships to sustain the movement.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Howard", written in a cursive style.

Samantha Howard, Manager of Recreation Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Harris", written in a cursive style.

Warren Harris, Commissioner of Recreation and Parks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Marshall", written in a cursive style.

Brent Marshall, CAO