

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 21, 2023
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Calvin Murphy, Recreation Manager
SUBJECT: Community Services Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Committee of the Whole recommends Council approve the directional plan for the completion of the Community Services Master Plan.
AND THAT the following members of Council be appointed to the Community Services Master Plan Steering Committee; _____ & _____.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the strategic plan process that took place in 2020, Council agreed to complete a Community Services Master Plan to help guide the delivery of recreation and culture services/events, childcare services for the Municipality. This plan would include reviewing all Recreation and Culture and Childcare services and would establish the strategic direction and help shape and lead the delivery over the next 10 years. A steering committee was appointed to help direct the project.

In April, 2021 Council discussed conducting a Joint Recreation Cost Sharing Agreement Public Survey to gather information from the public on recreation services offered in the community.

At the April 6, 2021 Council meeting the following resolution was carried.

Resolution No 060-21
Moved by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Councillor Guerard

WHEREAS recreation facilities, programs and services play a vital role in our community and in the lives of our residents;

AND WHEREAS, it is deemed important to Council to make an informed decision on the level of recreation services offered in our community;

AND FURTHERMORE THAT Council appoint a Steering Committee to oversee the project;

AND THAT Staff be directed to engage a consulting company to develop, conduct and analyze the survey results under the direction of the Steering Committee;

AND THAT the process and price for the public survey be brought to Council for approval.

CARRIED (Recorded Vote 4 to 3)

The Steering Committee met in May 2021 and it was decided at this time to incorporate this into the survey portion of the Community Services Master Plan. After much review and discussion, the RFP was put together and advertised accordingly with a closing date of July 29th, 2021, for submissions. At the closing only one (1) submission was received. The Steering group met in August 2021 to review and discuss and the consensus was that the one proposal lacked in certain areas and seeing that it was the only proposal received, the feeling was that the RFP should be sent out a second time in the fall with the intention of generating more interest from additional firms. In early November 2021 the RFP was released a second time with a closing date of December 13th, 2021. At the deadline three (3) proposals were received. In January 2022 the Steering Committee met to review the proposals. The Steering Committee once again felt the proposals lacked in different areas in particular the area of public relations, experience with public surveys and consulting with Community Organizations.

After two unsuccessful attempts to receive bids for this RFP the Steering Committee directed The Recreation Manager to reach out to different municipalities who had recently completed Community Services Master Plans over the last few years and see which consulting firms they used and if they were happy with the quality of work that was completed. The Recreation Manager was advised to forward the RFP directly to these firms to see if there was any interest in the project. The Recreation Manager did receive a list of reputable firms that had recently completed Recreation Master Plans in surrounding municipalities and forwarded the RFP to these firms. Unfortunately, no response was received from any of the firms.

The Recreation Manager did follow up with one of the firms that the proposal was forwarded to and investigated reasons why no proposal was received from them. The main reason that the firm provided was the fact that due to COVID, completing any in person (face to face) consulting with individuals was not possible on their end. Staff from the firm were still working from their own residence with no indication of returning to the office. All consultation with groups, staff and members of the public would have to be completed through zoom meetings etc. When forming the RFP the steering committee did feel the need for some in person consulting as part of the project to ensure all parties/groups had a chance to participate accordingly.

On March 22nd, 2022, the Steering Committee met to review and discuss the project in more detail. At this time CAO Kelly provided information on a more local management consulting firm (Goss Gilroy Inc.) that could complete the public consultation component of the project. This firm would focus solely on a survey type approach to the project that would include gathering of information from the Municipality from a Recreation, Culture and Daycare perspective, developing and conducting a survey that members of the public could take part in through either an online survey or telephone interview. In discussions with Goss Gilroy, they did indicate that most of the interviews and discussions would be conducted through online methods but there could be some in person discussion with staff, council and small working groups if required. All information gathered from the public would be received through online survey or paper surveys. The Steering Committee agreed that after two unsuccessful attempts to try to solicit a reputable firm to complete the project this was the best alternative to proceed with.

At the June 21st 2022 Committee of The Whole meeting, Council passed a motion awarding Goss Gilroy Inc the work to proceed with a Public Consultation online survey for residents including Workshop Facilitation to develop a Framework for the Community Services Master Plan and Inclusion of paper surveys in the amount of \$67,637.50 plus H.S.T.

In the fall of 2022 Public Consultation including an online survey and paper copies for residents occurred and this was followed by a Workshop Facilitation with Senior Staff to develop a Framework for the Community Services Master Plan. This information is being brought forward to you today for review.

DISCUSSION:

The Municipality delivers several community focused services including Childcare, Library, Culture and Recreation. These services, that involve the social interaction of people, are the fabric of the community. This project will develop a shared understanding of the services and the future direction they will take in conjunction with the changes and growth of the Municipality.

Project Scope:

This Master Plan will include reviewing all recreation parks, facilities, programming, culture, public art, heritage, staffing components of the Recreation and Culture department, as well as Childcare services. The Library's Strategic Plan will also be consulted and inform this review.

The final community services plan will incorporate age friendly planning principles and all services/programs will be considered using a lens of to ensure equality, diversity and inclusivity. The report will include input from municipal departments including Public Works, Building and Planning as these departments work closely with Recreation and Culture, Libraries and Childcare.

Input will also be obtained from local groups who provide valuable community and recreational services including but not limited to the Almonte Curling Club, Almonte Tennis Club, Almonte / Pakenham Minor Hockey Association, Pakenham Curling Club, Mississippi Mills Youth Centre, Carebridge Community Support, Bridging Generations Pakenham, Almonte Learning and Lectures, Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, Almonte Lawn Bowling, Mississippi Mills Museums, Community Hall Committees (Union Hall, Clayton hall and Friends of the Cedar Hill School House).

Mississippi Mills festival and event organizing committees will be consulted, this group includes but is not limited to Naismith 3 on 3, Celtfest, North Lanark Agricultural Society, Folkus, Almonte in Concert, and Puppets Up.

Service Clubs provide vital community services in Mississippi Mills. Targeted discussions will be had with the Almonte and Pakenham Civitan Clubs, The Almonte Legion, The Lions Club and The Masons.

The examples above of clubs, associations, organizations, societies etc.. is not intended to be an exhaustive list and also includes entities that are not operated or under the management of the Municipality. The list of those to be consulted will be approved by the Steering Committee.

The process will include consultation with outside organizations whose activities contribute the quality of life for residents of Mississippi Mills. These organizations include Almonte and Pakenham schools, Almonte General Hospital, the Leeds Lanark and Grenville Health Unit and the Ottawa Valley Health Team.

Project Goal/Objective:

Upon completion of the Community Services Master Plan we should have established a strategic document to guide the future planning and development of parks, facilities, recreation services, cultural assets, museums, festivals and events, libraries, childcare services for the next 10 years. Goals will be shared with the Library Board to ensure library service is aligned with the Master Plan. It is also a goal of the CSMP that Municipal partners and stakeholders will have an understanding of the direction that the Municipality will be implementing over the next 10 years.

The Municipality is dedicated to strengthening its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion through the creation of our Community Services Master Plan. Equity, diversity, and inclusion is defined as the ability to embrace and celebrate difference among our population in ways that provide equity of opportunity and that contribute to inclusive and safe community spaces. In addition, particular attention will be paid to developing and maintaining accessible age-friendly programs and facilities. Age-friendly communities help create more accessible environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Approach:

Staff recommends a Steering Committee be created to guide the overall work of the project as well as review recommendations at key steps in the project to ensure that the recommendations align with Council and Corporate direction. We suggest the Steering Committee be comprised of two members of Council, CAO and key departmental staff Recreation Manager, Manager of Community & Economic Development, and Childcare Manager.

The Steering Committee will meet at key times in the project to review deliverables and provide overall strategic guidance.

Building on the broad consultation that has been completed and key findings presented to Council as part of this report we will continue this work with focus groups of key stakeholders in each business line (recreation, culture, childcare, museums and events) and a deep dive into key themes for these services.

Key themes that could be explored include:

- the level of capital cost recovery for users.
- measurement to consider facility operational cost vs. value of programs and services.
- Review of current pricing model for various facility and users and establishment of an overall objective for rental fees. (is the goal programming or profit or both)
- objectives for facility user groups to be age friendly (seniors and youth), diversity/equality/inclusivity, adopting a code of conduct if one is not in place for an umbrella association, allowing public access to facilities and reporting on these objectives annually;
- approach to program delivery – facilitate or deliver with municipal staff or volunteers;
- museum network cooperation and collaboration including a review of museum municipal funding structure and process;
- review of municipal support for festivals and cultural events; including municipality funded and organized events, as well as events organized by arm's length volunteer committees, in municipal facilities.
- future approach to early childhood education programming; and
- any other themes that the Steering Committee recommends to be developed.

A report capturing "What We Heard" will be developed as a deliverable for the project.

Staff will also complete a review and analysis of comparable municipalities community master plans including their approach to service delivery for policies, metrics, comparable programming, facilities, capacity, partner funding, third party support, as well capital and operational budgets. Childcare services will also be incorporating information such as strategic plans for the Province and Lanark County for childcare program delivery as well as Leeds Grenville Lanark District Health Unit. Previous reports of the Municipality will also be used as input to project.

A report capturing the “Municipal Comparison” will be developed as a deliverable for the project.

Using the broad consultation, focus group input, comparison to other municipalities we will develop three potential scenarios for the future service delivery approach, future capital needs and supporting policy framework. These scenarios will be high level for feedback and seek direction on a preferred option for further development. The scenarios will be published for feedback.

Council will be provided with the three scenarios and the feedback on these scenarios in order to provide direction on the preferred option to be developed as the Master Plan. Staff will take this direction and further refine and develop the direction into a Master Plan for presentation to Council for consideration.

The key steps in our suggested process are elaborated in more detail below.

Phase 1 (Timeline – Spring/Summer 2023)

1. Information Gathering on the socio-demographic profile(population and age) of Mississippi Mills. Coming from the MM 2048(umbrella project).
2. Presentation April 13 as part of the MM 2048 Public Information Center.
3. Consult with stakeholders/focus groups on issues and opportunities. (discussion will include cost recovery contributions/programming opportunities etc...
4. Benchmark approach, programs, services and policies from other neighbouring communities.
5. Draft a Mission Statement and Guiding Principles to direct the delivery of parks, facilities, childcare, cultural programming, events delivery/promotion and recreation services. Principles will be shared with the Library Board.
6. Draft options based on each service.
7. Consult with stakeholders/focus groups on the options.

Stake holders/focus groups that will be consulted as part of this next phase will include the following and others as suggested by the Steering Committee:

1. Service Groups (Legions, Lions Club etc..)
2. Community Partner Organizations (MMYC, All My Relations, Bridging Generations, MM Pride, Carebridge, Health Unit, MM Library)
3. Recreation Park User groups (Disc Golf, Almonte Soccer Club, Almonte Tennis Club)
4. Recreation Facility User groups (APMHA, Almonte Curling Club, Almonte Lawn Bowling Club etc..)
5. Festival User Groups (Highland games, Celtfest, Puppets Up, Claytonfest etc..)
6. AOTH Performance Groups (Folkus, Almonte in Concert etc.)
7. Community Halls (Union Hall, Clayton Hall, Friends of Cedar Hill School House)
8. Organizations that offer recreation programs (Judo, Yoga Programs, Naismith Basketball, Almonte Lectures, Almonte Dance Academy, Senior Shuffleboard, Recreation Department lead programming, Naismith Basketball)
9. Childcare groups include:

- (Current Parents, Parents on waiting list, Past parents, RECE, Public Health)
10. Mississippi Mills Museums (mix of users and organizations)
 11. Organizations whose activities contribute to quality of life for Mississippi Mills residents: MM public and secondary schools, Almonte General Hospital, Leeds, Lanark and Grenville Health Unit, Ottawa Valley Health Team.
 12. Organizations offering unique expertise in accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion including Bridging Generations, MMYC, Carebridge Community Support, All My Relations, Interval House, We All Belong, Lanark County Support Service, Lanark Community Support and Pride Mississippi Mills.

Develop a “What We Heard” report to capture the input..

Develop the “Municipal Comparison” report to capture the findings of the municipal analysis.

Phase 2 (Timeline Fall-Winter 2023)

This phase will bring the research and public feedback together to formulate the Community Services Master Plan.

1. Develop Options report for consultation and feedback.
2. The Steering Committee will decide upon the mechanism for consultation. One option could be to test options with focus groups – happens at the Fall PIC for MM 2048
3. Council presentation of options for decision.
4. Develop preferred options report to present to Council.
5. Draft Master Plan with recommendations for facilities, programs, services and staffing etc.. including a supporting implementation plan.
6. Development of a fulsome public facing document(Community Services Guide) to identify community services, recreation programs and activities. This communication document could be used to educate residents on events, programs and activities that are available and could be contributing to their enjoyment and quality of life. This document would include all recreational programs and events, those organized by the Municipality or by outside organizations.
7. Finalize the Master Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

At this point in time there are no financial implications associated with the report. However, there maybe funds required to bring together the information gathered during this next phase of the project.

SUMMARY:

In order for the Community Services Master Plan to proceed in a timely fashion, it is highly recommended that Council approve the recommendation above.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed by:

Calvin Murphy,
Recreation Manager

Ken Kelly,
CAO

Tiffany Maclaren
Manager of Community &
Economic Development

Anita Legault
Director of Childcare Services