

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

QUARTERLY UPDATE

DATE: February 25, 2025

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Tiffany MacLaren, Manager, Community & Economic Development

SUBJECT: Community Economic Development Quarterly Report – Q#4 2024

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

In 2024, the Community & Economic Development department had a bustling year, organizing and hosting 27 special events, both large and small, including five new in 2024. The Mississippi Mills Long Term Service Awards made a comeback for the first time since the pandemic, and we opened facilities across the Municipality as part of Doors Open Ontario for the first time in over a decade.

The Municipality assisted more than 30 community groups with events and initiatives through funding, promotion, event equipment, and staff support. A total of \$71,333.00 was awarded directly to community organizations to support local community and culture. This funding was provided through Municipal Grants, Community Safety and Wellbeing Funding, Neighbourhood Micro Grants, and Ramsay Facility Operation Grants.

Throughout 2024 we continued to support our local museums with annual funding for their operations and free promotion of their activities. New this year, we created and launched a Museum Passport that encourages visitors and residents to visit each museum and collect stamps towards prizes. We also lent our support hosting a venue during "Paranormal along the Mississippi" by Phantom of Lore. This ghost hunting fun night took place in six venues across Mississippi Mills, including Almonte Old Town Hall, with all proceeds shared by the three museums.

The Ron Caron Auditorium at Almonte Old Town Hall had an exceptionally busy year, with the calendar showing fewer and fewer open days. The venue hosted a variety of events, including three unique theater performances (each with multiple shows), two art and craft shows, 15 concerts, nine dances, 30 private functions (such as weddings, funerals, and private parties), and 14 municipal events (ranging from staff functions to public meetings). Throughout the week, the venue is heavily utilized for recreational and fitness activities, offering dance, fitness, and yoga classes during both the day and evening.

Activity continues in the Mississippi Mills Business Park Phase 3 throughout 2024. The opening of 341 Frank Davis has provided space for five local businesses and organizations. Additionally, four more lots have been sold, with the owners currently navigating the planning and building process with support from the Development Services Department. Both projects are intended to be multi-unit commercial properties available for lease, fulfilling a significant need in Mississippi Mills. Upon completion, these projects will not only make efficient use of land but also create future employment opportunities as the spaces are filled with new and expanding businesses.

2024 PROJECT UPDATES/PENDING ITEMS:

The Community Services Plan is in its final stages as staff hand off two years of data collected to Stantec who will be compiling the final report.

As a key step in data collection for our Economic Development Strategic Plan, we launched a business survey in the fall. We received 77 individual responses from across the Municipality, with 68% from Almonte, 9% from Ramsay, and 23% from Pakenham. The survey results will support our economic development needs and goals and will inform our Economic Development Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. The data collected will be used to educate decision-makers, identify trends that require attention, and plan for the future by informing economic development strategies and programs.

Responses came from a wide range of industries represented in Mississippi Mills. The top sectors included Agriculture (10), Construction (4), Manufacturing (4), Retail Trade (16), Information and Cultural Industries (4), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (6), Health Care and Social Assistance (7), Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (5), and Accommodation and Food Services (7). Full survey results will be shared at the April 2025 Public Information Event.

A couple of interesting questions:

Economic development (encouraging jobs, prosperity and business activity in a community) means different things in different places. When we talk about intentionally supporting economic development, what does it mean to you?

Three most popular responses:

- Supporting local business owners (58)
- Growing in a way that fits our community (47)
- Improving the local economy (35)
- Attracting the kinds of businesses and jobs residents want (25)

What three words best describe your vision for the economic future of Mississippi Mills?"

The four most popular answers were:

Creative/Innovative (40) Prosperous (36) Historically/culturally connected (34)
 Unique/ authentic (32)

KPIs:

In 2024 staff dedicated time to updating and refining our booking procedures and policies for Almonte Old Town Hall to ensure the best allocation of time and space for all users and the community. Our priority is to host public performance-based events, as they foster recreation, encourage tourism, stimulate secondary economic development, and support our user groups. In the short term, we allocate space for weekly recreation, fitness, and yoga classes, which provide additional revenue and create opportunities for residents. Additionally, we welcome weddings and other private bookings because they generate revenue, fill empty dates, and introduce the venue to new audiences. By managing the allocation effectively, we aim to accommodate everyone's needs and maximize the benefits for the community. When the venue is in full use, our casual part-time event staff receive more shifts, and the facility costs for maintenance, utilities are better distributed.

AOTH Booking Revenues by Booking Type and Quarter

| BOOKING TYPE | Q1 | | Q2 | | Q3 | | Q4 | | ANNUAL TOTALS |
|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------|
| | Ticket Surcharge | Total Revenue (incl. ticket surcharge) | Ticket Surcharge | Total Revenue (incl. ticket surcharge) | Ticket Surcharge | Total Revenue (incl. ticket surcharge) | Ticket Surcharge | Total Revenue (incl. ticket surcharge) | |
| Live Music, (Concerts and Tea Dances) | \$2355.00 | \$4512.12 | \$808.00 | \$1723.30 | \$272.00 | \$904.00 | \$2098.00 | \$4075.50 | |
| Private Functions, (Weddings, Funerals, Parties) | \$365.00 | \$3331.25 | \$410.00 | \$4946.25 | \$112.50 | \$4659.00 | \$502.50 | \$1835.90 | |
| Misc. Bookings, Yoga Retreats, Fundraisers, etc. | \$95.00 | \$290.15 | \$292.00 | 647.95 | \$20.00 | \$1902.74 | \$324.00 | \$1035.90 | |
| Theater Productions | | | \$802.00 | \$3491.40 | \$1742.00 | \$3437.00 | \$2052.00 | \$5432.90 | |
| Arts and Craft Shows | | | \$100.00 | \$574.60 | | | \$200.00 | \$970.60 | |
| Weekly Bookings (Dance Yoga Fitness) | \$90.00 | \$6372.90 | \$366.00 | \$5052.00 | | \$2317.44 | | \$5469.20 | |
| Municipal Events (staff events, public meetings) | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Revenue | | \$14,606.32 | | \$16,435.60 | | \$13,221.43 | | \$18,820.00 | \$62,983.25 |
| Total Ticket Surcharge | \$2095.00 | | \$2778.00 | | \$2146.50 | | \$5176.50 | | \$12,946.00 |

LOOKING AHEAD:

In Q1 & Q2 we will be finalizing and sharing the Community Services Master Plan and the Economic Development Strategic Plan, a major milestone for our municipality. These plans will provide a clear vision and direction for enhancing community services and fostering economic growth. By using comprehensive data and stakeholder input, Council will be able to make informed decisions that meet the community's needs sustainably. This process has involved considerable community engagement, to ensure residents and businesses feel involved and supported.

For department staff, these plans will offer clear guidelines and priorities, helping to keep work focused and efficient. They may also present opportunities for professional development. For stakeholders, these vital plans will be designed to increase transparency and build trust, offering future opportunities for collaboration on various initiatives. Overall, these plans will set the stage for an organized, engaged, and forward-thinking community and economic development department, aligning local data, ideas and efforts towards common goals.

Our annual event calendar is below. After their initial successes staff will continue with new events launched in 2024: Community Organization Luncheons (2/annual) Almonte Beer Fest and Doors Open Ontario (returning). New this June we are partnering with Home Hospice to host a 55+ Expo at the John Levi Community Centre. This initiative came up through the Community Safety and Wellbeing project list and fills a need left when Carebridge discontinued the event. Hope Hospice reached out to partner and will be applying for funding under the provincial seniors grant program. The plan is to rotate this expo by sharing hosting responsibilities with the Town of Carleton Place, Year 1 Almonte, Year 2 Carleton Place, Year 3 Pakenham. This event is designed to provide valuable resources, information, and activities tailored to the needs and interests of seniors and their caregivers.

2025 Mississippi Mills Municipal Community Events

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>*NEW</i> | |
| Family Day Movie & Skating | February 17 |
| Business Breakfast | February 19 |
| March Break Movie & Skate | March 12 |
| March Break Movie & Skate | March 13 |
| St. Patrick's Day Dance | March 17 |
| MM Community Open House | March 27 |
| Community Organization Luncheon | April 10 |
| Arbour Week | April 22-25 |
| Volunteer Appreciation Event | May 1 |
| *Youth Week Promotion | May 5-10 |
| Business Breakfast | May 14 |

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| Community Builder Awards | May 22 |
| *Participaction Promotion/Events | June |
| Bicycle Month & Silver Chain Challenge | June |
| 55+ Expo | June 5 |
| National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration | June 21 |
| Canadian Multicultural Day Potluck | June 27 |
| Canada Day Eve Parade and Celebration Pakenham | June 30 |
| Canada Day Almonte | July 1 |
| Craft Beer Fest | July 25 |
| Community Movie Nights | August |
| MM Community Open House | September 10 |
| Business Breakfast | September 25 |
| Doors Open | September 28 |
| Truth & Reconciliation | September 30 |
| *Harvest/Pumpkin Fest Events TBD | October |
| Community Organization Luncheon | October 16 |
| Trick or Treat at MM | October 31 |
| Long Term Business Awards | November 6 |
| Business Breakfast | November 19 |
| Light Up the Night | December 5 |
| Santa Claus Parade Pakenham | December 6 |
| Christmas Night Parade Almonte | December 7 |

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany MacLaren,
Manager, Community & Economic Development