A photograph of two people riding bicycles away from the camera on a paved path. The path is covered with fallen yellow and orange leaves. The trees lining the path have vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The right side of the image is overlaid with a solid blue shape that contains the title and date.

Victoria County Active Living Strategy 2021

JANUARY 2021

Strategy purpose

To develop and sustain a municipal-wide approach to active living that continues to evolve based on the needs and interests of our communities.

Need:

Physical inactivity is a major issue facing our communities. Not meeting recommended daily activity levels can lead to an increase in chronic disease, disability, and death. Inactivity is a leading cause of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes. To address the health risks associated with physical inactivity, our communities need proper support and resources.



Physical activity is a preventative measure that we as a county can take to reduce the factors that are impacting the health of our communities. Inequitable access to physical activity opportunities require added attention from local governments, non-governmental organizations, and community-based groups.

To address the range of issues associated with physical inactivity we must focus on the social, physical, and economic environments where our residents live, learn, work, and play.





A message from the warden

Many of us are aware of the benefits of physical activity, especially in regards to health. However, we also know that active lifestyles contribute to healthier communities overall. We want to acknowledge how strong our communities are while addressing the fact that it is not always easy for all residents to remain active on a regular basis.

Keep in mind that most of you are being active and just don't know it! Celebrate the shorter moments of activity throughout your day even if it is ten minutes worth. Also, keep in mind your abilities, some of us may be capable of more or less activity and that is okay.

Our goal is to decrease the amount of time spent sitting, and increase our overall active time. Victoria County is blessed with an abundance of pristine open spaces that have been and continue to be developed and utilized for outdoor physical activities. Whether you wish to hike in the fall, go skiing in winter, cycle in spring, or kayak during summer, it's all here for you. As an active participant in these activities I have personally experienced the immeasurable mental and physical benefits. I invite you to experience what our county has to offer.

Keep it up Victoria County!

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "B. Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

A person wearing a black puffer jacket, a yellow beanie, and red ski boots is skiing down a snowy slope. In the background, there is a body of water and a rocky coastline under a blue sky with light clouds. The right side of the image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent shape containing text.

Vision

To support and promote active living opportunities for all residents of Victoria County. Our overall goal is to connect residents with nature, increase social connectedness, and focus on the physical and mental well-being of our communities.

We understand each individual is unique with different skill sets, interests, and abilities.

We hope to embrace this uniqueness by aiming to understand the social, cultural, economic, and environmental diversity within our communities.

Gaining this understanding can help to provide new opportunities while breaking down barriers to participation. Our vision of a healthy county sees equal opportunities for all.

Goals

1. Awareness & Information
2. Partnerships & Collaboration
3. Access & Inclusion
4. Infrastructure
5. Policies & Procedures

1

Awareness & Information

Community Engagement & Social Marketing

Goal:

To facilitate a culture of learning through a participatory approach while enhancing community understanding of the life-long benefits of active lifestyles.

Actions:

Engage community members to learn about barriers to physical activity.

Provide residents with up to date evidence based on physical activity levels across the county.

Obtain locally sourced evidence through a citizens' survey. Data results will be utilized to create awareness, evaluate existing programming, identify any gaps that should be addressed, and celebrate activity levels of residents through a county wide initiative.

Develop leadership roles and support active community champions to lead and educate their peers.

Equip people with the knowledge they need to understand how being physically active can improve their overall health and wellness.

Market and promote local trails, public spaces, and community organizations that provide opportunities focused on improving the health and well-being of residents.

2

Partnerships & Collaboration

Community Development

Goal:

To maintain and develop relationships with key community stakeholders, organizations, and individuals to implement a range of programs focused on both structured and unstructured forms of physical activity.

Actions:

Partner with other local governments, sectors and community organizations to support active living strategies and initiatives.

Support the development and implementation of a wide range of programs and activities, targeting all ages, abilities, and interests.

Work towards incorporating more daily activity into environments where residents spend the majority of their time.

Strengthen community access to school facilities.

Work closely with other municipal departments to align priorities when suitable.

Strengthen and assist community based programs and services to expand physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.

3

Access & Inclusion

Equal Opportunities

Goal:

To create inclusive social and physical environments by strengthening and supporting community programs and services.

Actions:

Create a broader definition of active living in the hopes of providing more opportunities for residents to incorporate activity into their daily lives.

Aim to distribute opportunities and resources fairly, to meet the needs of all residents, regardless of ability, age, gender, or background.

Present a clear understanding of how rural isolation can create an increased need for social inclusion in our communities.

Equip people with the knowledge they need to feel safe and secure when participating in physical activities.

Prioritize the implementation of activities that are more accessible by removing barriers such as transportation and cost when possible.

Evaluate the accessibility of community facilities and work together with organizations to make access for all a priority.

4

Infrastructure

Built & Natural Environment

Goal:

To ensure that physical organizational structures and natural environments are being developed and maintained to support the health and safety of residents.

Actions:

Connect community-based trail groups with the proper supports to continue their work in trail-planning and trail-building.

Consider all-weather and all-season use when designing or supporting the design of recreational facilities.

Support the development and maintenance of new and existing trails and public spaces.

Evaluate communities to determine where the environment does not safely allow for active transportation.

Ensure facilities are maintained and easily accessible.

Work together with relevant municipal departments to communicate the needs of residents and any barriers they may face in regards to active transportation.

5

Policies & Procedures

Planning & Action

Goal:

Work closely with public and private sectors to adopt policies and procedures supporting the delivery of services and programs that encourage physical activity and healthy eating.

Actions:

Work together with partners, key-stakeholders, and community members to adopt policies and procedures that assist in delivering active opportunities for all.

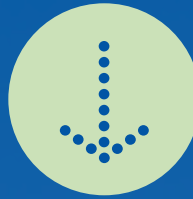
Develop planning processes and methods of data collection to assess community physical activity levels, better understand community needs, and track progress towards active living goals.

Leverage provincial support and secure necessary resources to improve upon and develop policies aimed at increasing activity levels.

Prioritize community capacity building and program sustainability.

Regularly assess the relevance of physical activity strategy goals.





Conclusion

Our continued goal with this strategy is to encourage and support community through all levels of development, implementation, and evaluation of recreation and active living activities throughout the municipality. We will work together to utilize our proximity to nature, the uniqueness of our residents, and the growing strength of our communities.

Through access and inclusion, collaboration and partnerships, awareness and education, policy and infrastructure development, we hope to touch upon the most important factors that make recreation possible and keep our communities active and healthy. We will leverage provincial support and work in unison with other municipal departments to ensure that safety is our top priority. We cannot do this work effectively without our residents. Their voice will be heard and considered throughout this process. This will continue to be a living document that will evolve along with any social, economic, and physical changes taking place within our municipality.

