Social Cohesion & Well-Being

Goal Statement: **Create a physical form within communities that encourages social interaction, promotes social capital, and sustains the well-being of all residents.**

Rationale: The physical environment is one determinant of a person's overall health. Health is described by the World Health Organization as: "…a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."[47] Community design impacts physical and mental health and well-being through the role it plays on a person's sense of belonging to their community, their connection to nature, their social networks and their feelings of safety and security. Planning and design decisions can influence the social and economic characteristics of a neighbourhood, which can disproportionately impact individuals who are disadvantaged because of their age, socioeconomic status, education, gender, culture or other qualities.[41]

Objectives

SC 1   Create complete neighbourhoods that include mixed densities and affordable housing options for people of all ages and socioeconomic status.

SC 2   Provide public spaces, parks and greenspaces where residents can meet, connect and congregate for social interaction.

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Objective 1

SC 1 - Create complete neighbourhoods that include mixed densities and affordable housing options for people of all ages and socioeconomic status.

Rationale: Feeling connected to one's community is associated with lower stress, improved overall health status and lower mortality rates.[6] Complete communities that provide proximity to neighbours, workplaces, schools and services can promote neighbourhood cohesion and increase social capital.[48;49] Mixed housing communities that integrate affordable housing can provide opportunities for those with lower incomes and for aging in place as people move through their life cycle.[50]

1.4.3 Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate-income households…

b) permitting and facilitating:

1. all forms of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements; and

2. all forms of residential intensification, including second units, and redevelopment in accordance with policy 1.1.3.3;

c) directing the development of new housing towards locations where appropriate levels of infrastructure and public service facilities are or will

Planning Policies

SC 1.1 The zoning bylaw shall facilitate and support implementation of recommendations in the municipal housing strategy and shall allow for mixed and non-traditional housing arrangements to support residents of all ages (e.g. universal design, granny flats, multiple housing types within neighborhoods, etc.) and shall consider the needs of lower income neighbourhoods and vulnerable populations as a priority.

SC 1.2 Land uses shall be arranged to facilitate the development of compact, pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use neighbourhoods that fulfill most ordinary human needs including those of transportation; as well as, reflecting unique characteristic and qualities of a place, such as its history, physical traits, natural environments, patterns of human behavior and seasonal variations.

SC 1.3 Municipalities shall actively seek opportunities to increase public knowledge and provide opportunities for public participation in planning processes from all segments of the population, particularly vulnerable populations and those living on lower income.

Implementation Activities

Short term

i) Hold consultations, focus groups and/or key informant interviews with residents, stakeholders and vulnerable populations to identify the housing needs within the community and then develop a strategy to address the identified needs.

Medium Term

i) Work with the economic development department and/or local business associations to develop strategies that match jobs to existing residents' skills and employment needs.

simcoe muskoka
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

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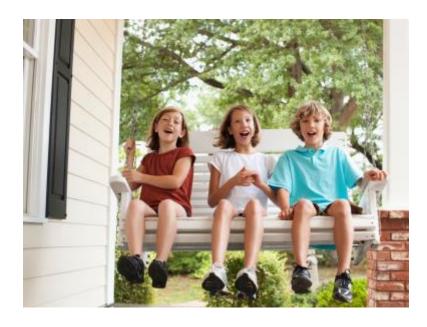*be available to support current and projected needs;*

d) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed; and

e) establishing development standards for residential intensification, redevelopment and new residential development which minimize the cost of housing and facilitate compact form, while maintaining appropriate levels of public health and safety.

(Provincial Policy Statement 2014, 1.4.3)

Long Term

i) Develop an economic development plan that includes strategies to make business growth and expansion more attractive and feasible, such as zoning for mixed-use and live-work areas.

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Objective 2

SC 2 - Provide public spaces, parks and greenspaces where residents can meet, connect and congregate for social interaction.

Rationale: Creating indoor and outdoor public spaces within a community that enables individuals to meet and congregate provides opportunities for social integration. Research shows that people with strong social networks live longer.[6] It also shows that exposure to the natural environment is associated with feelings of well-being in individuals.[36] Designing communities where residents have access to greenspace can result in physical and mental health benefits.

Healthy, active communities should be promoted by:

a) planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity;

b) planning and providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources;

(Provincial Policy Statement 2014, 1.5.1)

Planning Policies

SC 2.1   Open space and park areas shall be provided within the built environment that are easily accessible to all residents and that are particularly located near schools, seniors' centres, workplaces and residential developments, with priority given to lower income neighbourhoods.

SC 2.2   Neighbourhoods shall be designed to include municipally managed meeting spaces and common areas that address the needs of all residents and consider health equity and access issues in the design of these spaces.

SC 2.3   Community security and safety features that impact social interaction and increase physical activity shall be considered through design review processes, and shall include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

SC 2.4   The parks system shall be designed and developed to provide opportunities and programming for a range of uses for all ages.

Implementation Activities

Short term

i)   Engage residents in a community mapping exercise to identify common meeting locations in the community and develop a plan to address areas without safe common spaces.

ii)   Develop recreation, cultural and community-based programming in public park areas, particularly in lower income neighbourhoods, to make parks more actively used by all community members and to foster a sense of belonging and community cohesion.

Medium Term

i)   Work with police and community groups to review and implement design strategies to increase safety in public areas to facilitate greater use and opportunities for social interaction, particularly in lower income neighbourhoods.

Long Term

i)   Conduct a health equity impact assessment on new development proposals to better understand health equity issues related to land use and utilize this information to mitigate unintended health equity impacts.

simcoe muskoka
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT