



Mississippi
Mills

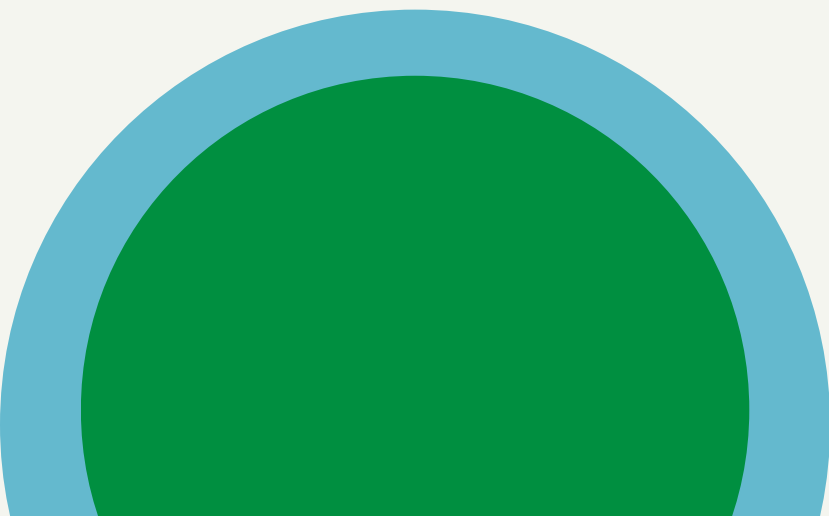
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

February 2025

FINAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proactive communications plays an integral role in the dissemination of information to priority audiences.

Mississippi Mills, like many other communities in Ontario, has consistently identified communications as a key priority area with the creation of the previous Communications Plan in 2018. Feeding this need is the ongoing public appetite for greater transparency, accountability and access to information in municipal government.

This report builds on achievements since the 2018 plan, highlights existing practices, updated vision and objectives, strategies, etc.

Working in partnership with the Communications Plan are the following:

- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Mississippi Mills Style Guide](#)
- [Community Engagement Strategy](#)


Enhanced management of proactive communications activities

A strong focus on enhanced communications practices has continued to be a key focus in the Municipality.

The addition in 2022 of a full-time Communications Coordinator position, reporting to the Clerks Department, has assisted in enhancing the management of communications strategies and liaising with departments on their communications needs. A part-time Communications Assistant role, created in 2024, provides further support.

Ongoing improvements to community engagement and transparency

Based on research and surveys when developing the 2018 plan, the Communications Coordinator and Communications Assistant positions have allowed the Municipality to maintain a consistent and informative presence on social media.



The newsfeed feature on the municipal website has been revamped and is updated on a nearly daily basis. Subscribers to municipal newsletters (Information, Public Notices, Community & Cultural Updates, Public Information and Meetings, Emergency Alerts, Service Disruptions & Facility Closures) receive information daily and weekly with news and community events recaps.

The realization of a Community Engagement Strategy in September 2023 outlines a process for when and how the Municipality engages with the public, as well as Indigenous communities. A Community Engagement Toolkit and training was also conducted with staff.

A subsequent Community Engagement section on the municipal website provides the public with information on current engagement opportunities, as well as campaigns and spotlights on municipal projects, including public information activities, budget process, surveys, etc.

Mississippi Mills brand consistency and messaging

Consistent messaging, as well as clear Mississippi Mills branding, ensures a familiarity with the public that certain content is being delivered by the Municipality. The Communications team has developed templates for public notices and job postings that are easy to understand and promote the Municipality's brand.

The updated Social Media Policy also sets out principles for posting to the Municipality's social media channels and for municipal staff developing content.

The creation of the Mississippi Mills Style Guide is a step toward improvement in this area. This document, established for staff, sets standards for tone when writing reports, guidelines for the use of the municipal logo, and provides templates for policies, PowerPoint presentations and email signatures in order to ensure the Municipality is putting forth a consistent approach.

The following strategy details revised communications goals and objectives for Mississippi Mills. This plan also acts as the basis for future communications policies and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

As part of the 2017 Strategic Plan process, Council elected to pursue the development of a comprehensive Communications Plan.

The resulting plan, developed in 2018, was informed by a communications survey conducted by Brand Clarity, as well as an analysis of existing practices and policies within the Municipality.

In 2024, an update to the Communications Plan and Social Media Policy (last updated in 2022) was identified by Council as part of the Mid-Term Governance Review. In an effort to be consistent with messaging and branding, a Mississippi Mills Style Guide has been created.

REPORT CARD

The following objectives were identified in the 2018 plan. This section revisits those objectives and the achievements made in each area.

OBJECTIVE 1:

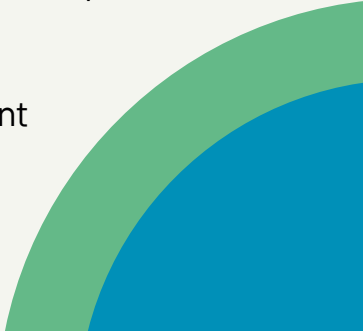
To engage in effective dialogue with taxpayers, priority audiences and decision makers through public engagement (meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc.)

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Municipality holds statutory public meetings as required, as well as Public Information Centres on major projects and initiatives.

The Municipality does publish surveys for public input periodically.

Creation of the 2023 Community Engagement Strategy outlining when the Municipality should engage and the level of engagement.



All public engagement opportunities are listed under the Community Engagement section of the website, created in 2024.

Community engagement is now a section on all staff reports and the MM2048 planning initiative has been a robust approach to community engagement for multiple master plans.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To listen, as an organization, to the needs and priorities of the community. This involves taking the input received from public meetings, questionnaires, etc. and incorporating it into policies and programs developed by Council.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Public input is taken into consideration during public meetings, Public Information Centres, open houses and is reviewed by staff and Council before a final decision is made.

Results from surveys and questionnaires are reflected in policy changes and recommendations.

OBJECTIVE 3:

To inform taxpayers, priority audiences and decision makers of the organization programs and services of the Municipality and how they can participate.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Municipality updates the website regularly, promotes programs on social media channels and advertises in local media (where applicable).

The addition of the Community Engagement section on the website is another mechanism that has been successful for the Municipality.

The quarterly municipal newsletter, MM Messenger, is another mechanism to further reach residents.

OBJECTIVE 4:

To celebrate the spirit and success of the community and its community members and to communicate when exciting opportunities present themselves. For example, receiving grant funding for a project.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Municipality issues press releases and statements from the Mayor for significant events and achievements. These are also shared on the Municipality's social media channels.

A press release calendar has also streamlined this process.

OBJECTIVE 5:

To increase the transparency of decision making and strengthening public accountability by informing the public of meetings where items will be discussed. Provide background information in advance of meetings so that the public can inform themselves and advising of Council decisions as they are made.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The eScribe software for Council meetings provides easier access for the public to reports. Once agendas are published, the municipal newsfeed is updated with links on where the public can access agendas.

On the morning of Council meeting days, a rundown of items of interest for that evening's meeting and links to agendas and livestream is published on municipal social media channels.

Council Highlights are circulated on the newsfeed, social media and to local media the following day. The Communications team has also broken the highlights into spotlights on particular issues to encourage more engagement.

POLICIES

Social Media Policy

The goal of the Social Media Policy is to ensure that the Municipality presents matters relating to emergency information, local events, important updates and items of general public interest to residents, businesses, visitors and other interested parties on our social media channels. The policy will continue to be updated to reflect the current social media landscape as well as make recommended updates and changes to ensure that it is reflective of all municipal business.

Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Strategy aims at developing a consistent approach to community engagement, providing guidance on when and how to undertake engagement activities and what steps and processes should be considered.

It outlines the Municipality's goals and guiding principles for community engagement, providing staff with tools and templates to ensure consistent and active participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services. It also includes an Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol.



COMMUNICATIONS ANALYSIS

The goal of the Communications Plan is to support the effective management of the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills through clear, concise and effective communication of the Municipality's programs, services, goals and objectives.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

External communications is any form of outreach to anyone, be it an individual, group or business or outside Municipality or government organization that is not an internal partner like staff or Council. The Municipality uses press releases and public notices, distributed to local media and circulated on the municipal newsfeed as well as social media as a means to communicate with priority audiences.


The local media landscape changed in 2023 with the closure of the local newspaper. The Municipality previously purchased a weekly block ad, titled Municipal Matters, which included information such as meeting notices, tenders, Request for Proposals/quotes, municipal events, etc. This practice ceased following the paper's closure.

Since that time, other media have established in the area but the Municipality does not regularly advertise municipal updates in traditional print media, other than the occasional municipal event.

MEDIA RELATIONS / PUBLICATIONS

In the last two years, the Municipality has taken a more proactive approach to media relations compared to what was done previously.

Media releases are issued on a more regular basis and include Council Highlights, grant or funding announcements, municipal events and department initiatives such as training exercises conducted by the Mississippi Mills Fire Department.



Due to the closure of the local newspaper in 2023, Council directed a portion of that advertising budget to the creation of a part-time Communications Assistant position to focus on establishing a quarterly newsletter, MM Messenger, as well as support the Communications Coordinator in engagement efforts. It is available on the website and paper copies are made available at the two library branches and other community spaces, where requested. This has allowed the Municipality to be proactive when communicating programs, services and updates to the community.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In a survey done over a five-year period by Redbrick Communications, an Ontario-based communications consulting firm, 92 per cent of Ontario municipalities with populations over 10,000 people are using social media. The two most used platforms remain Facebook and Twitter.

According to Govstack, software developers of the municipal website, nearly 65 per cent of people learn better through visuals and infographics on social media. By using visual content, municipalities can relay important information and attract more attention to posts, increasing engagement.

The Municipality currently does a good job of utilizing Facebook with a high level of engagement. More emphasis on being active on Instagram began in 2023 has shown positive results. Moving forward, more emphasis will be put on expanding the Instagram audience to engage with the youth in the community.

The Twitter (X) account has not consistently over the past year due to the volatility of the platform. Previous engagement on Twitter has not been as strong as Facebook and Instagram.

The Municipality has a YouTube channel linked on the website; however it does not contain any municipal information/branding by the Municipality. It is used as more of a promotional tool for tourism and culture.

It is recommended that concentration be focused on Facebook, Instagram and using the Mississippi Mills' LinkedIn account to assist with sharing news, promotions and job opportunities within the Municipality.

On the following page is a list of existing accounts currently managed by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

Account	Platform	Purpose	Managed By	Audience
Mississippi Mills	Facebook	Main corporate account	Communications department	8,446
@Mississippi Mills	Instagram	News, tourism and culture	Communications department	2,377
@OurMissMills	Twitter	News, events	Communications department	290

WEBSITE

The current municipal website recently underwent an upgrade and transition to the modernized Govstack platform in January 2025. The previous version was updated in 2020. The new site not only has an updated look and feel, but there is a user-friendly emphasis. It also allows departments more individuality and flexibility when updating pages on the website.

There are additional community engagement tools to take advantage of with this platform, which will continue to be explored.

The Communications Coordinator, with support from the Communications Assistant, is responsible for adding new material, updating material and reviewing material prior to publishing. The Recreation and Culture, Development Services and Engineering departments have access to update their respective sections of the website. A workflow has also been integrated to maintain consistency and messaging on the website. Currently, users with access can make updates to respective pages, but final approval and publishing is the responsibility of the Communications team.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

With a Communications Coordinator in place, there has been an increase in internal communications but remains a large area of focus in this plan.

Department heads liaise with the Communications Coordinator regularly if they require support or messaging.

Sharing information is important so that municipal employees are apprised of what's happening within the municipality. Council Highlights are shared internally and going forward, Sharepoint and the ADP payroll system will be used to a greater degree to share information with staff on a more consistent basis.

A tool for departments to request assistance with promotions is in development as well, with the goal of being proactive rather than reactive.

Further improvements are planned to enhance internal communications, including the development of a response protocol strategy.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Official updates provided to Mississippi Mills Council are circulated by the senior management team and department heads to update them on existing municipal projects and initiatives.

Enhancing protocols and processes for Council communications is an important aspect of this plan.

An improved process will be developed for who and how Council responds to inquiries from the public - electronic and in person. All inquiries should be directed to the appropriate staff member for response.

In addition, the Communications department will develop a timeline protocol for how staff will respond to members of Council.

FUTURE OBJECTIVES

There has been a heavy focus on improving external communications, maintaining a unified voice and growing the Municipality's audience. While that will continue, new objectives will focus on enhancing internal communications and Council communications.


VISION

The following vision and objectives for the Communications Plan will serve as the guiding principles for the development of strategies and processes.

To promote the Municipality of Mississippi Mills and encourage more interactive and transparent communications with external and internal audiences.

This Communications Plan provides best practice guidelines for staff and Council Members to assist in communications materials, including the updated Social Media Policy and introduction of the Mississippi Mills Style Guide. Strategies and tactics will also be developed with the goal of creating a more engaged and informed community, Council and staff team.

PRINCIPLES

- Communicate in an efficient and professional manner
 - Be open, transparent and accountable
 - Value public input and two-way communication
 - Share information in a proactive and timely manner
 - Communicate in plain language, using diverse and accessible formats
 - Consistent customer service approach
- 

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

The identification of priority audience groups is integral to a successful Communications Plan. Consideration must be given to how groups wish to receive communications. The 2023 Community Engagement Strategy has guidelines to assist with this.

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratepayers • Neighbouring municipalities • Lanark County • Provincial and Federal Government • Boards and agencies • Health Unit/hospitals • Local clubs and groups • Youth • Indigenous community • Recreation/sports clubs • Associations or foundations • Local businesses • Developers

New objectives, current practices and recommendations for improvements are listed below.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Explore further engagement opportunities through the addition of community engagement and citizen relationship management (CRM) software solutions.

CURRENT PRACTICE:

The communications department currently manages a Community Engagement webpage on the municipal website where current and past engagement opportunities are listed. These opportunities are promoted through social media channels as well.

There is currently no citizen relationship management software in use and CRM protocols are managed internally by staff.

**RECOMMENDED
UPDATE:**

Research software options for consideration in 2026 budget deliberations. It would offer a dedicated platform for the Municipality to share information with residents and gather feedback on important projects and initiatives.

CRM platforms assist small to medium municipalities improve citizen interactions, assist with issues management with the goal of bridging the gaps between local government and residents.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Review the the Municipality's Social Media Policy to ensure best practices and consider the development of a Mississippi Mills Style Guide to guide staff and Council in consistent messaging and branding.

CURRENT PRACTICE:

The Social Media Policy has been updated in 2025 and a Mississippi Mills Style Guide was created as part of the 2025 Communications Plan review.

**RECOMMENDED
UPDATE:**

The Social Media Policy shall be reviewed at least once each term of Council. The Mississippi Mills Style Guide should be updated as required.

Training opportunities to be given for staff on updated Communications Plan, Social Media Policy and style guide.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Strengthen internal communications processes with staff and Council and response protocols.

CURRENT PRACTICE:

The Communications Coordinator liaises with members of the senior management team to circulate internal communications.

**RECOMMENDED
UPDATE:**

Explore the addition of CRM software platform. Create more robust communications response protocol strategy, as well as share more information internally, leveraging Sharepoint and ADP.

Provide additional communications training for Council and staff.

OBJECTIVE 4:

Continue to grow consistent branding and message of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

CURRENT PRACTICE:

In 2024, a refinement of the Mississippi Mills logo was done, providing an accurate brand guide and high-resolution versions of the logo. The Communications department has built a bank of notice and infographic templates for use on the website and social media. This is regularly updated.

The new style guide also contains templates for email signatures, policies and PowerPoint presentations.

**RECOMMENDED
UPDATE:**

Continue the creation of consistent branding materials and messaging. In the future, consideration may be given to a rebranding exercise, but is not planned at this time.

OBJECTIVE 5:

Enhance Indigenous communications, engagement and protocols.

CURRENT PRACTICE:

The Municipality follows the Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol outlined in the Indigenous relations, acceptable terminology and terminology to avoid is also highlighted in the Mississippi Mills Style Guide.

**RECOMMENDED
UPDATE:**

Continue following the Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol while researching ways to strengthen communications with the local Indigenous community.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

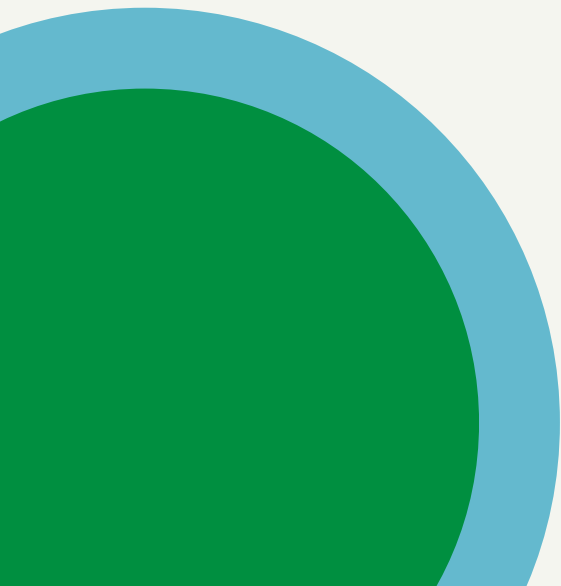
The last communications survey was conducted in 2017. As the Municipality issues an annual Budget Survey, the Communications team used the 2025 Budget Survey to determine how the public wishes to receive information on the budget and municipal news. The top preferred method was email.

- Email: 47%
- Social media: 36%
- Mailouts: 16%
- Other: 1% (Newspaper, municipal website, town hall meeting, newsletter)

According to a report by Bridging Generations – Age-Friendly Pakenham ([Aging in Pakenham: Report and Recommendations, 2023](#)) also showed that the majority of the senior population surveyed prefer to receive information via email.

- Email: 40%
- Phone tree: 20%
- Social media: 15%
- Radio: 10%

This information will inform how the Municipality continues to engage with the public and further emphasis could be placed on boosting subscription to newsletters.



COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

Currently, the Municipality manages three social media accounts – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Of the three platforms, Facebook is the most updated and has the greatest number of followers.

The social media audit, conducted internally by the Communications team, looked into detailed analytics of the Mississippi Mills Facebook account from the period of November 2, 2024 to November 30, 2024, and provide a high-level overview of both Twitter and Instagram.

It should be noted that the Communications team monitors analytics for Facebook and Instagram accounts on a quarterly basis, highlights of which are included as part of the quarterly departments of the Clerks Department.

Some findings:

- Mississippi Mills' Facebook page has the highest performing page when compared to other similar-sized municipalities
- The majority of Facebook users are female aged 35-44 (75.9%)
- Twitter (X) account is updated infrequently
- More emphasis placed on Instagram posting has gained steady followers
- Instagram content could focus on more tourism-related, photo and video posts

Facebook Audit

Overall, the Municipality does a good job managing the Facebook account, updating the page multiple times a day with new content and sharing information from other relevant users (community organizations and agencies, Lanark County).

In the past, Facebook posts tended to focus on events happening in Mississippi Mills and while these types of posts still make up a large number of the posts, there has been more emphasis placed on ensuring there is a balance of municipal branded content with community content.

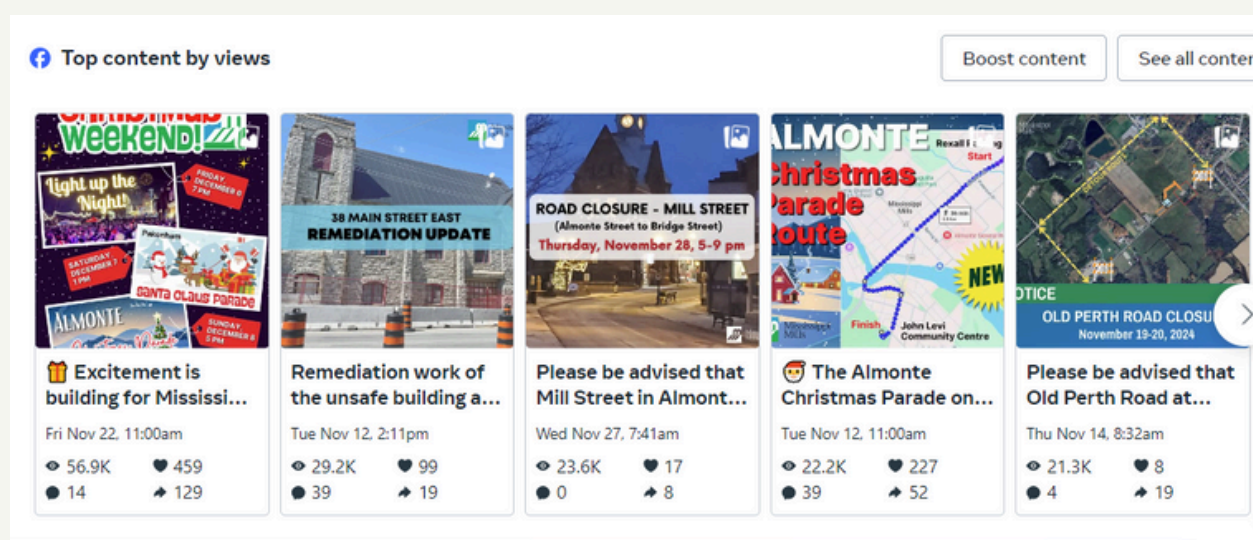
Regular information and updates from Recreation and Culture, Development Services and Engineering, Roads and Public Works, Mississippi Mills Fire Department and Corporate Services are included which make the page information more well-rounded than in the past.

This audit looked at a four-week period of the Municipality's Facebook activity – November 2, 2024 to November 30, 2024. Specifically, analytics looked at demographics, publishing breakdown, audience engagement, audience growth.

Audience Growth

Over the course of the four weeks, the total number of followers increased by 102.

The posts garnering the most likes during this time were all municipal communications, including capital project updates, road closures and Christmas events.



The Communications team regularly tracks which posts resonate with the public the most in order to tailor our engagement and promotion methods. Monitoring this kind of information that resonates with our audience will help shape how we craft content going forward.

Publishing Breakdown

Overall, the Municipality does a good job of posting to Facebook on a daily basis with 4-5 posts a day. This has increased with the addition of the Communications Coordinator. The ability to schedule posts in advance is an asset so when the Communications Coordinator is on vacation or sick, there is less pressure on other staff to post.

Having the Communications Coordinator managing all social media accounts has been beneficial in maintaining consistent and regular messaging.

The Communications team is exploring utilizing Canva, a program used to create graphics, to develop a social media calendar that will allow further scheduling of posts. Currently, Meta (which owns Facebook and Instagram) only permits scheduled posts up to a month in advance. Having more flexibility would allow more pre-planning for campaigns and promotions.

Audience Engagement

There are a number of factors that go into measuring audience engagement. The three main ones are views, reach and content interactions. Views refers to the number of times content was played or displayed (including videos, posts, stories and ads), and reach refers the number of people who see the content. Content interactions refers to the number of likes or reactions, saves, comments, shares and replies on content, including ads, posts, stories, reels, videos and more.

During the four-week time frame, the following is a high-level breakdown of views, reach and content interactions:

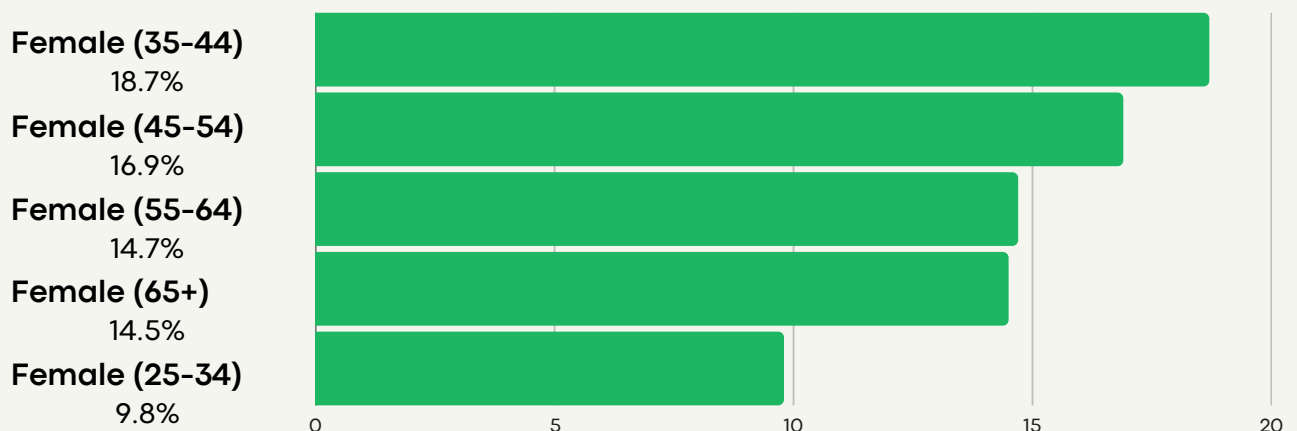
- Views – 484,000
- Reach – 104,900
- Content interactions – 3,700

Monthly monitoring is important to track growth and post engagement.

Demographics

Women make up the largest majority of Mississippi Mills Facebook page followers - 75.7%. Men represent 24.7% of followers.

Facebook Followers by Age and Gender



Competitive Analysis

To see how the Mississippi Mills Facebook page compares with other similar-sized municipalities, the following municipal Facebook pages were looked at:

- Town of Carleton Place
- Town of Arnprior
- Town of Perth
- Town of Smiths Falls
- Municipality of North Grenville

The pages were analyzed during the January 11, 2025 to February 7, 2025 time frame.

The table below outlines the number of followers per municipality's Facebook page:

Municipality	Facebook Followers (January 11, 2025 - February 7, 2025)
Mississippi Mills	8,425
Town of Perth	7,900
Town of Carleton Place	7,700
Municipality of North Grenville	6,700
Town of Smiths Falls	6,100
Town of Arnprior	5,800

In addition to the number of fans, Mississippi Mills out performed all other municipalities in terms of number of posts over that four-week period - January 11, 2025 to February 7, 2025.

Municipality	Number of Facebook Posts (January 11, 2025 - February 7, 2025)
Mississippi Mills	121
Municipality of North Grenville	119
Town of Arnprior	59
Town of Perth	54
Town of Smiths Falls	54
Town of Carleton Place	23

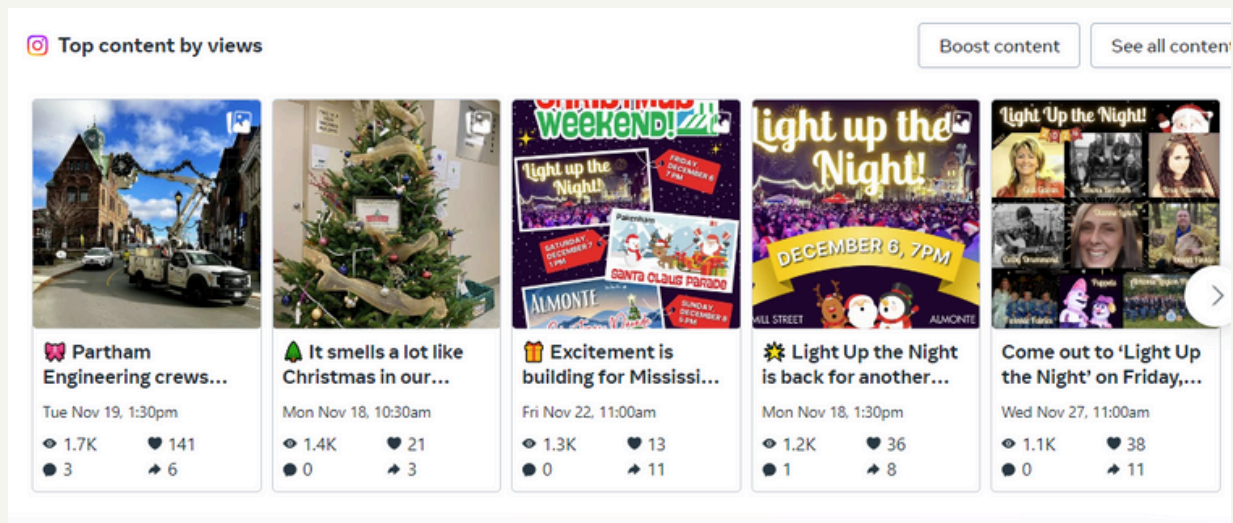
Instagram

The Instagram profile was created in June 2013 and was previously primarily used by the Recreation and Culture Department for tourism and marketing promotions. Since 2022, the Communications Coordinator has taken over the page and focused on more engagement. Much of the posts are duplications of what is posted on the Municipality's Facebook page.

Below are some high-level analytics of the Instagram account over a four-week period – November 2, 2024 to November 30, 2024.

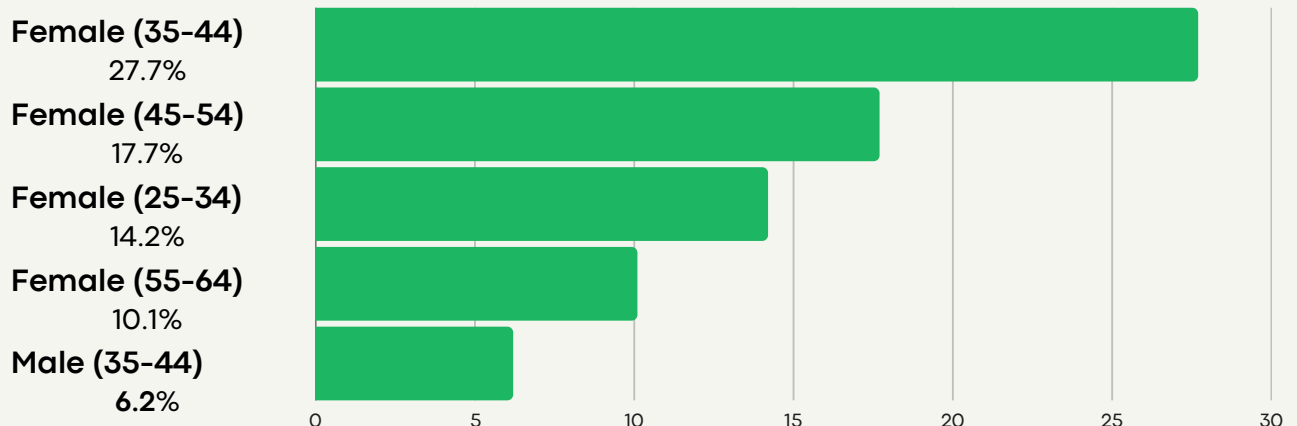
Audience Engagement

- Views – 52,700
- Reach – 5,100
- Content interactions – 1,200



Women make up the largest demographic of followers on the Municipality's Instagram account – 78.1%. Men account for 21.9%

Instagram Followers by Age and Gender



Competitive Analysis

To see how the Mississippi Mills Instagram account compares with other similar-sized municipalities, the following municipal Instagram accounts were looked at:

- Town of Carleton Place
- Town of Arnprior
- Town of Perth
- Town of Smiths Falls
- Municipality of North Grenville

The pages were analyzed during the January 11, 2025 to February 7, 2025 time frame.

The table below outlines the number of followers per municipality's Instagram account:

Municipality	Number of Instagram Followers (January 11, 2025 - February 7, 2025)
Mississippi Mills	2,363
Town of Perth	3,711
Town of Smiths Falls (Tourism Information Centre)	3,325
Town of Carleton Place	1,966
Municipality of North Grenville	1,689
Town of Arnprior	1,163

In addition to the number of fans, Mississippi Mills out performed all other municipalities in terms of number of posts over that four-week period.

Municipality	Number of Instagram Posts (January 11, 2025 - February 7, 2025)
Mississippi Mills	97
Town of Perth	76
Town of Arnprior	55
Municipality of North Grenville	48
Town of Smiths Falls (Tourism Information Centre)	36
Town of Carleton Place	0

Twitter (X)

Due to the limited amount of use and data available, a detailed analytic report of the Municipality's Twitter (X) profile would not be useful. It is infrequently updated.

Website Audit

Due to the recent transition of the Municipality's new website, an audit at this time would not provide accurate numbers as the site has been live for just over a month.

Staff will continue to review features of the site, focusing on content, ease of use, consistency and accessibility features.

STRATEGIES

Media Relations

The changing media landscape across the country has also been felt locally with the closure of the local newspaper in 2023 and a shift in coverage of regular Council activities for issue-based stories.

As a result, it's important for the Municipality to tell their own story without reliance on media. However, the Communications Coordinator acts as a centralized contact for media. A list of local and Ottawa media is retained and updated periodically. The Communications Coordinator also proactively distributes story ideas and media advisories to encourage coverage of Mississippi Mills stories.

Municipal Spokespeople

Traditionally, the Head of Council and CAO are identified as the spokespeople for the Municipality. This doesn't preclude department heads from serving as municipal spokespeople, where applicable.

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for arranging the interview as well as preparing the spokespeople for potential questions and providing relevant talking points and background information to ensure that the message is consistent and accurate. This may involve the Communications Coordinator consulting with other department heads for background information or obtaining questions in advance from the media.

Media Training

Learning how to effectively communicate and to strengthen how the Municipality engages with the media can be enhanced through media training. It is recommended that designated municipal spokespeople, senior staff and Council Members partake in media training. This is already part of the Council orientation package.

Media training increases the confidence and effectiveness of media relations and training can be updated on an as-needed basis.

Additional Social Media Accounts

The Communications Coordinator currently manages three social media accounts for the Municipality – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (X). It's not recommended to add additional accounts at this time. The fewer accounts the easier it will be for followers to find relevant and accurate information.

The Municipality does have a LinkedIn account and there are plans to use it more to communicate municipal notices, job postings, etc.

Graphics

The Municipality pays an annual subscription fee for a Canva Pro account, which is used to create branded content and infographics used in municipal communications and social media. The Pro account provides access to more templates and features.

Other departments also use the account, which is another way for departments to connect, keep up to date on activities and enhances collaboration. Current departments utilizing the account in addition to Communications: Recreation and Culture, Development Services and Engineering, Administration and Mississippi Mills Fire Department.

Infographics and photographs remain a key way to illustrate and convey municipal messaging.

Content Calendars

A monthly social media content calendar is currently in use by the Communications team. There are plans to create three-month calendars to continue the proactive approach that's been taken with municipal social media accounts.

The Communications Coordinator also distributes a weekly 'Comms at a Glance' snapshot of what's planned on social media for that week, the products and projects the Communications department is working on, as well as an upcoming events list. This is provided to the Mayor and relevant departments.

Response Protocol

Successful social media platforms are interactive and the Municipality responds to comments and questions in a timely manner.

Messages, comments and questions are monitored on a daily basis (excluding weekends). The Communications team commits to providing a response or obtaining an answer to the concern within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays).

For members of the public who send private messages, an automated note is generated acknowledging receipt of the message and commitment to respond during business hours – Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Promotion of Accounts

The Municipality makes use of sponsored Facebook posts regularly. Through a pre-determined target area and budget, the sponsored post will appear more often in followers' newsfeeds. This has been quite successful for initiatives including budget surveys, municipal events, new programs, etc.

Users who like a post or make a comment are monitored and the Communications team may encourage them to follow the Municipality's social media accounts.

Consideration of cross-promotion of pages should be made to increase followers. The Communications team has used social media to encourage subscribers to municipal newsletters, which has proved beneficial.

Community Engagement

Considerable work has been done in the area of community engagement. This was a key takeaway from the 2017 community surveys and a strategic priority of Council. To maintain and develop strong relationships within the Municipality, it is important to create effective two-way communications with residents.

The strategy includes an Indigenous Protocol, with specific recommendations on how to engage with the Indigenous community to achieve meaningful engagement.

Community engagement opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Workshops/community roundtables
- Focus groups
- Open houses
- Education series
- Public Information Centres
- Surveys or questionnaires

For example, the process to develop the Community Services Master Plan involved extensive community engagement with focus groups from priority audiences.

The strategy shall be updated as needed.

Issues Management

The CAO leads the Project Management Office, where the status of projects and any issues that arise are monitored.

The Communications Coordinator is also responsible for monitoring media coverage and social media, flagging possible issues.

The creation of an Issues Management Strategy is recommended to consider the development of proactive procedures for emerging issues.