

Board of Health

Meeting No.	10	Contact	Candy Davidovits, Committee Administrator
Meeting Date	Tuesday, December 4, 2007	Phone	416-392-8032
Start Time	1:00 PM	E-mail	boh@toronto.ca
Location	Committee Room 1, City Hall		

Attendance

Members of the Board of Health were present for some or all of the time periods indicated under the section “Meeting Sessions”, which appears at the end of the Minutes.

Councillor John Filion, Chair	X
Councillor Raymond Cho	X
Councillor Janet Davis, Vice-Chair	X
Councillor Paula Fletcher	R
Councillor Chin Lee	X
Councillor Gord Perks	X
Trustee Soo Wong	X
Alejandra Bravo	X
Vaijyanthi Chari	R
Wangari Muriuki	X
Fiona Nelson	X
Lisa O'Brien	X
Valerie Sterling	X

Confirmation of Minutes

On motion by Fiona Nelson, the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Health held on November 12, 2007, were confirmed.

HL10.1	ACTION	Amended		
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Review of City of Toronto Pandemic Planning and Preparedness

(November 16, 2007) Report from Auditor General

Recommendations

The Auditor General recommends to City Council that:

1. the City Manager define in writing the lines of authority and roles of the Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee, and establish a regular reporting relationship for the Steering Committee to report to the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee on pandemic planning and preparedness;
2. the City Manager amend the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59 “Emergency Planning” to reflect the replacement of the former Community Services Committee with the Executive Committee;
3. the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee consider providing periodic reports on the progress of emergency management activities and/or emerging issues to City Council;
4. the City Manager ensure that the operational support functions listed in the City of Toronto Emergency Plan are finalized and authorized by responsible agencies before December 2008;
5. Toronto Public Health develop timelines for completion of specific pandemic planning and preparedness activities, monitor the completion of these activities, and report progress to the Board of Health;
6. the City Manager undertake a detailed review of the proposed actions to sustain critical City functions in a pandemic emergency to ensure that the proposed actions represent the most effective and appropriate options. Such a review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of the viability, effectiveness, and resource requirements of the proposed preparedness actions;
7. the City Manager take the necessary steps to ensure a coordinated corporate process to prioritize and implement the proposed preparatory actions to sustain critical City services in a pandemic emergency;
8. the City Manager take the necessary steps to develop a corporate procurement policy and plan for infection control supplies, personal protective equipment, and critical operational supplies, in preparation for a pandemic emergency. Such steps should include, but not be limited to, a review, prioritization, and alignment of purchasing requirements with the World Health Organization pandemic alert phases;

9. the City Manager set a timeline for completion of the corporate pandemic response plan and the corporate pandemic communications strategy, and ensure that both documents contain essential details facilitating a timely and effective City response to the World Health Organization's pandemic alert phases;
10. the City Manager undertake a review of the City's Human Resources related pandemic planning assumptions and preparedness actions to ensure they are adequate and sufficient. Such a review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of Human Resources related pandemic planning issues and criteria, a review of other cities' employee support actions in preparation for a pandemic, and consultation with employee unions and management association; and
11. the City Manager take the necessary steps to develop and implement a process to systematically track and monitor costs associated with pandemic preparedness.

Financial Impact

The implementation of Recommendation number 7, 8 and 11 in this report will improve financial controls over spending related to pandemic planning and preparedness. The extent of any resources required or potential cost savings resulting from implementing the recommendations in this report is not determinable at this time.

Summary

Because the City's pandemic planning is still in progress, the purpose of the audit was to provide a snapshot of what the City has accomplished and what work remains to be completed in preparing for a pandemic emergency. The overall audit question is: "To the extent possible, how prepared is the City for a potentially severe pandemic?" We are cognizant that this should only be answered within the context of what the City can realistically achieve as a municipal government in pandemic planning, in particular considering the City's current fiscal constraints and the need for provincial and federal guidance and coordination. In addition, the substantial degree of uncertainty surrounding a possible pandemic influenza makes planning for a pandemic emergency a complex and difficult task.

The City has undertaken a number of planning activities, and is working towards implementing key actions such as stockpiling personal protective equipment and essential operational supplies. Certain important pandemic public health measures remain to be completed, some of which are dependent upon federal or provincial guidance. The City has established a framework for pandemic planning and preparedness in which public health related planning is led by Toronto Public Health, and corporate planning for continuity of operations is led by the Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee. Our audit noted certain challenges and gaps in the pandemic planning and preparedness process, and as a result our report includes a number of recommendations to help strengthen the existing accountability framework and corporate coordination, as well as enhancing the completion of pandemic public health planning.

Communications

(December 4, 2007) Submission from Jeff Griffiths, City Auditor, City of Toronto (HL.New.HL10.1.1)

(December 4, 2007) Submission from Shirley Hoy, City Manager, City of Toronto (HL.New.HL10.1.2)

Speakers

Jeff Griffiths, Auditor General, City of Toronto (Submission Filed)

Alan Ash, Director, Auditor General's Office

Jane Ying, Audit Manager, Auditor General's Office

Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health

Shirley Hoy, City Manager, City of Toronto (Submission Filed)

Board Recommendations

On motion by Councillor Filion, the Board of Health recommended to City Council that:

1. the City Manager be requested to define in writing the lines of authority and roles of the Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee, and establish a regular reporting relationship for the Steering Committee to report to the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee on pandemic planning and preparedness;
2. the City Manager be requested to amend the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59 "Emergency Planning" to reflect the replacement of the former Community Services Committee with the Executive Committee;
3. the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee be requested to consider providing periodic reports on the progress of emergency management activities and/or emerging issues to City Council;
4. the City Manager be requested to ensure that the operational support functions listed in the City of Toronto Emergency Plan are finalized and authorized by responsible agencies before December 2008;
5. Toronto Public Health be requested to develop timelines for completion of specific pandemic planning and preparedness activities, monitor the completion of these activities, and report progress to the Board of Health;
6. the City Manager be requested to undertake a detailed review of the proposed actions to sustain critical City functions in a pandemic emergency to ensure that the proposed actions represent the most effective and appropriate options. Such a review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of the viability, effectiveness, and resource requirements of the proposed preparedness actions;
7. the City Manager be requested to take necessary steps to ensure a coordinated corporate process to prioritize and implement the proposed preparatory actions to sustain critical City services in a pandemic emergency;
8. the City Manager be requested to take necessary steps to develop a corporate procurement policy and plan for infection control supplies, personal protective equipment, and critical operational supplies, in preparation for a pandemic emergency. Such steps should include, but not be limited to, a review, prioritization, and alignment of purchasing requirements with the World Health Organization pandemic alert phases;

9. the City Manager be requested to set a timeline for completion of the corporate pandemic response plan and the corporate pandemic communications strategy, and ensure that both documents contain essential details facilitating a timely and effective City response to the World Health Organization's pandemic alert phases;
10. the City Manager be requested to undertake a review of the City's Human Resources related pandemic planning assumptions and preparedness actions to ensure they are adequate and sufficient. Such a review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of Human Resources related pandemic planning issues and criteria, a review of other cities' employee support actions in preparation for a pandemic, and consultation with employee unions and management association;
11. the City Manager be requested to take necessary steps to develop and implement a process to systematically track and monitor costs associated with pandemic preparedness; and
12. the City Manager be requested to develop a corporate pandemic implementation plan outlining goals, specific short-term objectives and targeted timelines, as well as assignment of responsibilities.

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Board of Health requested the Medical Officer of Health to:

1. to include information on jurisdictional issues which are barriers to pandemic influenza planning and preparedness in his next written report to the Board of Health on pandemic influenza planning (**Motion by Councillor Davis**); and
2. report to the Board of Health within the next six months on the role general health promotion strategies could have in pandemic preparation, including an analysis of cost and which populations would benefit (**Motion by Councillor Perks**).

Links to Background Information

Review of City of Toronto Pandemic Planning and Preparedness

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8892.pdf>)

Review of City of Toronto Pandemic Planning and Preparedness - Appendix 1

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8893.pdf>)

Review of City of Toronto Pandemic Planning and Preparedness - Appendix 2

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8894.pdf>)

Review of City of Toronto Pandemic Planning and Preparedness - Appendix 3

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8895.pdf>)

HL10.2	Information	Received		
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Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Update

Summary

Verbal update by the Medical Officer of Health

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Board of Health received the verbal update on pandemic influenza for information.

HL10.3	ACTION	Amended		
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Prudent Avoidance Policy on Siting Telecommunication Towers and Antennas

(November 20, 2007) Report from Medical Officer of Health

Recommendations

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. the Board of Health reaffirm the Prudent Avoidance Policy approach for radiofrequencies (RF) that would keep levels in areas where people normally spend time at least 100 times lower than Health Canada's Safety Code 6 limits when siting new telecommunication towers and antennas in the City of Toronto;
2. the Board of Health recommend that City Council endorse a Prudent Avoidance Policy and use the new City of Toronto Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Protocol as a mechanism for collecting information on the estimated levels of radiofrequencies around cell phone towers and antennas in areas where people normally spend time;
3. the Board of Health recommend to Health Canada that public exposure limits for radiofrequency fields under Safety Code 6 be made 100 times more strict as previously recommended by the Board of Health;
4. the Board of Health recommend to cell phone carrier proponents to consider voluntary adoption of the Prudent Avoidance Policy when proposing sites for new telecommunication towers and antennas, including considering proposed alternative sites when the City's review identifies potential concerns; and
5. the Board of Health encourage Industry Canada to conduct regular monitoring for radiofrequencies arising from telecommunications structures in Toronto, and to make that information publicly available.

Financial Impact

These recommendations will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

Summary

This report responds to the Board of Health's request to include its Prudent Avoidance Policy for cell phone base stations into the City's proposed harmonized Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Protocol. The Board of Health also asked for comments on health risks arising from the concentration of telecommunication towers.

Many telecommunication devices use radiofrequency (RF) waves. Health Canada's guidelines for exposure to RFs (known as Safety Code 6) protect the public from short-term, high exposure effects of RFs. Citing concerns that existing guidelines may not be health protective for continuous lifetime exposures, several jurisdictions have adopted stricter limits than those in Canada. In 1999, the Board of Health recommended a prudent avoidance policy that RF waves from telecommunication towers and antennas be 100 times below Safety Code 6 in areas where people normally spend time. Industry Canada monitoring data shows that this level is readily met.

Recent scientific literature indicates that uncertainties in the science remain. Health Canada has not revised its guidelines to address the concerns raised in 1999. Authority for regulating telecommunications towers rests with Industry Canada, whose "Client Procedure Circular" allows local planning authorities, such as the City of Toronto to comment. The Medical Officer of Health recommends that the City continue with a prudent avoidance approach and use its harmonized Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Protocol to collect data from cell phone carriers on predicted RF levels of proposed towers and antennas. This will allow the City to monitor the potential impact of proposed telecommunications facilities in Toronto and to encourage voluntary adoption of the Prudent Avoidance Policy.

Communications

(December 4, 2007) Submission from Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health (HL.New.HL10.3.1)

Speakers

Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health (Submission Filed)

Board Recommendations

On motion by Fiona Nelson, the Board of Health recommended to City Council that:

1. City Council endorse a Prudent Avoidance Policy and use the new City of Toronto Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Protocol as a mechanism for collecting information on the estimated levels of radiofrequencies around cell phone towers and antennas in areas where people normally spend time.

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Board of Health:

1. reaffirmed the Prudent Avoidance Policy approach for radiofrequencies (RF) that would keep levels in areas where people normally spend time at least 100 times lower than Health Canada's Safety Code 6 limits when siting new telecommunication towers and antennas in the City of Toronto; **(Motion by Fiona Nelson)**
2. recommended to Health Canada that public exposure limits for radiofrequency fields under Safety Code 6 be made 100 times more strict as previously recommended by the Board of Health; **(Motion by Fiona Nelson)**
3. recommended to cell phone carrier proponents to consider voluntary adoption of the Prudent Avoidance Policy when proposing sites for new telecommunication towers and antennas, including considering proposed alternative sites when the City's review identifies potential concerns; **(Motion by Fiona Nelson)**
4. encouraged Industry Canada to conduct regular monitoring for radiofrequencies arising from telecommunications structures in Toronto, and to make that information publicly available; **(Motion by Fiona Nelson)**
5. forwarded a copy of this report to the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest, and the Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud; and strongly encouraged the Boards of Education to support and adopt the Board of Health's Prudent Avoidance Policy; **(Motion by Trustee Soo Wong)**
6. forwarded a copy of the Board of Health's recommendations to the Planning and Growth Management Committee and the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director for their information; **(Motion by Councillor Filion)** and
7. requested the Medical Officer of Health to report to the Board of Health:
 - a. on the impact of cell phone usage on the health of children and youth **(Motion by Alejandra Bravo)**; and
 - b. early in 2009 on the implementation and effectiveness of the new City of Toronto Telecommunication Tower and Antenna Protocol. **(Motion by Valerie Sterling)**

Links to Background Information

Prudent Avoidance Policy on Siting Telecommunication Towers and Antennas
(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8919.pdf>)

HL10.4	Information	Received		
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Hot Weather Response Plan Update

(November 20, 2007) Report from Medical Officer of Health

Summary

This report provides an update on the City of Toronto's Hot Weather Response Plan, including the experience of Summer 2007.

The primary challenge in implementing the Hot Weather Response Plan continues to be reaching those who are most vulnerable and at-risk. In 2008, Toronto Public Health will intensify its public education campaign that encourages family, friends and neighbours to check on isolated adults and seniors. Toronto Public Health will continue to work collaboratively with community agencies and organizations serving vulnerable populations, educate landlords that provide housing to at-risk groups and provide outreach to vulnerable clients through the collective efforts of the Hot Weather Response partnership during alerts.

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Board of Health received the report (November 20, 2007) from the Medical Officer of Health for information.

Links to Background Information

Hot Weather Response Plan Update

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8918.pdf>

HL10.5	Information	Received		Ward: 36
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Recreational Water Quality at Bluffer's Park Beach

(November 20, 2007) Report from Medical Officer of Health

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on recreational water quality improvements at Bluffer's Park Beach and the measures taken in achieving these improvements.

Decision Advice and Other Information

On motion by Valerie Sterling, the Board of Health received the report (November 20, 2007) from the Medical Officer of Health for information.

Links to Background Information

Recreational Water Quality at Bluffer's Park Beach

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8917.pdf>

HL10.6	ACTION	Amended		
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Diabetes in Toronto

(November 26, 2007) Letter from Councillor John Filion, Chair, Board of Health

Summary

Diabetes is a major health problem for an ever-increasing number of Toronto residents. While rates for some chronic diseases are going down, those for diabetes continue to rise.

Toronto Public Health currently delivers a number of programs and services which address diabetes risk factors, including obesity, lack of physical activity and poor nutrition. However, increasing diabetes rates, particularly in some neighbourhoods with lower socio-economic status, points to a need to examine whether we could be doing more to reverse these trends.

Accordingly, I am asking the Toronto Board of Health to adopt the following motions:

1. That the Chair of the Board of Health and the Medical Officer of Health meet with the Ontario Minister of Health Promotion to explore collaborative strategies to address the risk factors for diabetes in Toronto; and
2. That the Medical Officer of Health report to the Board on the current status of diabetes and its risk factors in Toronto, current public health programs and services which address these risk factors, and further opportunities for prevention.

Decision Advice and Other Information

On motion by Valerie Sterling, the Board of Health requested:

1. the Chair of the Board of Health and the Medical Officer of Health to meet with the Ontario Minister of Health Promotion to explore collaborative strategies to address the risk factors for diabetes in Toronto; and
2. the Medical Officer of Health to:
 - a. report to the Board on the current status of diabetes and its risk factors in Toronto, current public health programs and services which address these risk factors, and further opportunities for prevention; and
 - b. meet and consult with the Greater Toronto Area Canadian Diabetes Association and with other community stakeholders.

Links to Background Information

Diabetes in Toronto

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-9033.pdf>)

HL10.7	Information	Received		
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Etobicoke/York Local Health Committee Minutes

Summary

Minutes of the Etobicoke/York Local Health Committee meeting held on October 11, 2007.

Decision Advice and Other Information

On motion by Valerie Sterling, the Board of Health received the Minutes of the Etobicoke/York Local Health Committee meeting held on October 11, 2007, for information.

Links to Background Information

Etobicoke/York Local Health Committee Minutes
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-8916.pdf>

HL10.8	Information	Received		
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New Toronto Street Food

Summary

Verbal update by the Chair, Board of Health.

Decision Advice and Other Information

On motion by Councillor Filion, the Board of Health received the Chair's verbal update on the new Toronto street food initiative for information.

Motions

Introduce Item moved by Councillor John Filion (Carried)

Meeting Sessions

Session Date	Session Type	Start Time	End Time	Public or Closed Session
2007-12-04	Afternoon	1:05 PM	4:20 PM	Public