



**STAFF REPORT
INFORMATION ONLY**

Healthy Toronto by Design: 2012 Update

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| Date: | November 1, 2012 |
| To: | Board of Health |
| From: | Medical Officer of Health |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | |

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the implementation of Toronto Public Health's (TPH) efforts to foster a prosperous, liveable and healthy city.

Toronto Public Health has worked with staff from a number of City Agencies, Boards and divisions to support the development of healthy public policy. Staff have also engaged with various community partners. In the past year one particular area of focus has been the built environment and its impact on health. In partnership with City staff and community partners, TPH has highlighted opportunities to improve health, proposed policy approaches, and presented reports to the Board of Health.

Toronto Public Health will continue to engage with community partners and City Agencies, Boards and divisions to work towards the vision of a prosperous, liveable and healthy city as described in the 2011 report *Healthy Toronto by Design*.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of October 17, 2011, the Board of Health requested that the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) work with the heads of relevant City Agencies, Boards, and divisions to identify and promote measures to protect and promote population health and to report back to the Board in the fall of 2012.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.HL8.1>

The Board also requested that the MOH present a public engagement plan to accompany the staff report as part of a broader public engagement effort. At its meeting of November

21, 2011, the Board adopted a civic engagement framework that utilizes a variety of engagement strategies.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.HL9.6>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Health is affected by many factors including income, education, employment, food security, quality of housing, transportation services, and access to health services. People who live on low incomes have a greater chance of developing a chronic disease or being injured. They are also more likely to live in neighbourhoods with greater exposure to traffic, and less access to healthy foods, parks, trails, green space, and good transit service. All these factors increase their risk of illness and injury.

The Ontario Public Health Standards outline the roles and responsibilities of boards of health. It emphasizes that addressing the factors that influence health (determinants of health) and reducing health inequities are fundamental to the work of public health in Ontario. Every board of health in Ontario must comply with these standards.

The 2011 *Healthy Toronto by Design* report was a reminder of the importance of the City government's role in promoting health. The City is in a unique position of leadership to promote health for all and reduce inequalities. This report highlights Toronto Public Health efforts in promoting a healthy and prosperous Toronto through collaboration with City government.

COMMENTS

Public policy sets the direction and allocates resources for action for the common good. Because many factors influence health, all sectors of society and government can be involved in the creation of healthy public policy, policies that promote health and well being for all.

Advancing Health through Increased Collaboration

It is important to leverage the power of partnerships to address the complexity of our health issues. Over the past year, TPH has continued to identify opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across the City to enhance health and equity. As opportunities arose, staff connected with various partners across the City to discuss areas of common interest. The MOH is scheduled to make a presentation to all Division Heads on *Healthy Toronto by Design* and is connecting with counterparts in other City Agencies, Boards and divisions on an on-going basis.

In the past year, TPH has worked with City Planning, Economic Development and Culture, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Tower Renewal Office and Transportation Services, among others. Staff have also collaborated with various community and academic partners such as the Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Centre for Active Transportation, and United Way. Examples of initiatives where TPH was involved are found in Attachment 1 *Selected Healthy Public Policy Initiatives in Toronto*.

Participation in Policy Development

Toronto Public Health has also provided input into different plans and policies, such as the review of the Economic Growth Plan, Official Plan, Parks Plan, and Strategic Forest Management Plan. TPH highlighted the need to focus interventions and programming to enhance equity, for example, when planting trees, or creating and improving parks in underserved, low income areas with poorer health and when developing and implementing programs to increase employment and improve job quality. Staff are also working with partners across the City to review and update the municipal alcohol policy and strengthen controls on smoking. TPH will continue to collaborate with the relevant City divisions to implement recommendations to improve health and equity.

Building the Evidence Base

Health evidence is needed to guide healthy public policy. In the past year, one area of focus has been the built environment and its impact on health. Staff have worked in partnership with others to highlight issues of concern and propose approaches to address them. This has resulted in a series of reports, *The Walkable City*, *Road to Health*, and *Toward Healthier Apartment Neighbourhoods*, which were adopted by the Board. Ongoing work in this area is the review and assessment of planning and design guidelines to foster active living.

Toronto Public Health has also examined health issues related to gambling. A report providing information on the health impacts of gambling expansion will be available to City Council when the issue is before them. As part of its work on better understanding the social determinants of health, staff are reviewing the evidence and best practice on equitable access to transit services.

Civic Engagement

Toronto Public Health has looked into the best practices for civic engagement. Civic engagement will be integrated into the healthy public policy development process, recognising that different approaches are required for different initiatives. For example: TPH will work with City Planning to host a second Round Table on aspects of the Official Plan; and broad public and stakeholder consultation is planned to identify ways to enhance protection from second hand tobacco smoke.

Moving Forward

There are many factors and challenges in ensuring healthy public policy. TPH will continue to build the evidence base to support action, engage with the community, strengthen and build new relationships with various City Agencies, Boards and Divisions to work towards the vision of a prosperous, liveable and healthy city for everyone as described in *Healthy Toronto by Design*.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT 1: Selected Healthy Public Policy Initiatives in Toronto