

Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Date: June 20, 2024

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report outlines the components of Toronto Public Health's new strategic plan and recommends its adoption by the Board of Health. The Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028 vision is a city where all people can be healthy and thrive.

A strategic plan is a requirement for the Board of Health as outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards](#). Toronto Public Health, through the leadership of the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee, developed its Strategic Plan 2024-2028 through jurisdictional and evidence scans, and extensive engagement with staff, community members, and partners. This included surveys, public consultations, and meetings, resulting in feedback from 1,419 individuals and approximately 62 organizations. This input shaped the strategic priorities and objectives for the next four years.

As Toronto Public Health emerges from the pandemic response, the new strategic plan will serve as the guiding blueprint to help navigate key priorities, ensuring continued delivery of high-quality programs and services to the diverse population of more than 3 million residents in Canada's most multicultural city.

The Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028 includes:

Vision: A city where all people can be healthy and thrive.

Mission: Toronto Public Health protects and improves health at a population level while reducing health inequities.

Values:

- Accountable and transparent
- Community engaged and connected
- Equitable and inclusive
- Credible and evidence-informed
- Innovative leadership

Priorities:

1. Strengthen health protection, disease prevention, and emergency preparedness.
2. Promote health and well-being across the lifespan.
3. Promote the conditions to support positive mental health and reduce the harms of substance use.
4. Advocate to advance health equity.
5. Nurture a positive workplace culture.

Supporting activities and measurement indicators will be implemented and monitored through operational workplans for annual report back to the Board of Health. Implementation will involve collaboration with partners and continuous engagement with TPH staff to ensure effective action and measurement of success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health adopt Toronto Public Health's Strategic Plan 2024-2028 as outlined in Attachment 1 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Any financial impacts resulting from the adoption of this report can be accommodated within approved operating or capital budgets.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 4, 2024, the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee (2022 - 2026) considered Item HX4.1 and recommended that the Board of Health support the emerging 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and corresponding implementation and monitoring mechanisms throughout the four years.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HX4.1>

At its meeting on April 29, 2024, the Board of Health considered Item HL12.7 and adopted the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee's emerging vision, mission, values and priorities for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and requested corresponding objectives be drafted.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HL12.7>

At its meeting on April 24, 2024, the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee (2022 - 2026) considered Item HX3.2 recommended that the Board of Health support the emerging vision, mission, values and priorities for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and requested corresponding objectives be drafted.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HX3.2>

At its meeting on February 14, 2024, the Board of Health considered Item HL10.1, HL10.3, and HL10.4, and requested that the strategic plan cover the years 2024-2028, be informed through an engagement process with community, partners, and staff, and to include a review of the vision, mission, and principles.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HL10.1>

At its meeting on February 5, 2024, the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee (2022 - 2026) considered Item HX2.1 and HX2.2 and recommended that the Board of Health request that the comments and suggestions made during public presentations be considered in the development of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and that staff develop a resource to facilitate community conversations as part of the engagement activities.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HX2.1>

At its meeting on January 15, 2024, the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee (2022 - 2026) considered Item HX1.3 and recommended that the Board of Health request that the strategic plan cover the years 2024-2028, be informed through an engagement process with community, partners, and staff, and to include a review of the vision, mission, and principles.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HX1.3>

At its meeting on October 23, 2023, the Board of Health considered Item HL7.4 "Toronto Public Health Strategic Planning" which outlined direction for the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee (2022 - 2026).

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.HL7.4>

COMMENTS

Overview of the Strategic Plan Development Process

As outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards](#) (OPHS), the Board of Health shall, "have a strategic plan that establishes strategic priorities over 3 to 5 years, includes input from staff, clients, and community partners, and is reviewed at least every other year." The strategic plan serves as the guiding blueprint for Toronto Public Health (TPH) as it navigates key priorities, ensuring continued delivery of high-quality programs and services.

For the development of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, TPH adapted the [Strategic Planning in Nonprofits \(SPiN\) framework](#) from the Nonprofit Association of Washington, which outlined the following steps: 1) Organize, 2) Imagine, and 3) Launch. In the first phase, best-practice research and jurisdictional scans were conducted, along with a review of TPH documents such as [Toronto's Population Health Profile](#). There was also engagement done with senior management, and one-on-one conversations with Board of Health directors on their goals for the next four years.

In the second phase, at its meeting on October 23, 2023, the Board of Health directed the creation of a Strategic Plan Development Committee, made up of members of the Board of Health with the direction to provide recommendations to:

- Determine the recommended priorities and objectives for TPH's new strategic plan.
- Identify issues of common concern and opportunities to advance community engagement.

From January-June 2024, the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee met four times and provided input and recommendations on the engagement plan and the draft components of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. Throughout their meeting series, the committee heard from 43 speakers and provided direction to staff on integrating feedback, such as the importance of TPH being a leader, communicating the value of public health, and highlighting the role of advocacy in the strategic plan.

Engagement Activities to Inform the Strategic Plan

As recommended by the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee, an engagement period for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan took place in February-March 2024. During this time, TPH provided a range of opportunities to receive input from the public, community members, partners, City divisions, and TPH staff to help shape TPH's new strategic plan:

- Online surveys tailored for the public, City divisions, and TPH staff
- Public email address for written comments to be submitted
- Community conversations resource
- Deputation opportunity to the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee
- Public consultation session
- TPH staff townhall and meetings
- Meetings with City divisions and staff as requested

Three surveys were developed for the engagement process tailored for members of the public or partners, City divisions, and TPH staff, respectively. All survey questions had open-text responses. The following questions were asked to the public, with City divisions and TPH staff having minorly adapted surveys to align with their audience:

- Are you responding to this survey as an individual, or are you representing an organization or group?
- What should be Toronto Public Health's top priority over the next four years?
- Where do you believe public health can make the most significant contribution to the population health of Toronto in the next four years?
- A vision statement is an organization's aim for the future. Toronto Public Health's current vision is "A healthy city for all." Are there improvements we can make to our vision for the next four years? What do you imagine Toronto will look like when we succeed in our vision?
- A mission statement is what an organization does to achieve its vision. Toronto Public Health's current mission is "Toronto Public Health reduces health inequities and improves the health of the whole population." Are there improvements we can make to our mission for the next four years?
- Foundational principles are a set of values that an organization uses to help guide decision-making. Toronto Public Health's current foundational principles are: Accountability and transparency; Community engagement; Inclusion; Health equity;

and Excellence. Are there changes or new foundational principles that we could add to help guide our work for the next four years?

- How can Toronto Public Health enhance its engagement with and better serve the diverse needs of our communities over the next four years?

From February 5-March 17, a public email was open for written feedback on the strategic plan. This email was also used to collect feedback from Community Conversations. A resource to help members of the public and other organizations guide a Community Conversation was developed by staff. On February 5, members of the public were invited to speak at the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee meeting or provide feedback to staff in an adjacent room. Staff also met with community partners as requested.

Toronto Public Health staff were further engaged through an all-staff townhall, which included interactive activities and a question-and-answer period with senior management. This was recorded and posted on the internal TPH intranet site along with the staff survey link. Several managers and people leaders also held team meetings and provided e-mail feedback. Several internal emails were sent to staff encouraging them to fill out the staff survey. Other City divisions were emailed with a link to the City division survey and invited to schedule a meeting to share further information if desired.

The landing page, www.toronto.ca/TPHstrategicplan, hosted information about engagement opportunities, the Community Conversation resource, and a link to the public survey. Engagement opportunities were also promoted on TPH's social media accounts. Over 300 partners were emailed an invitation to participate in the engagement opportunities with a link to the website, including health care centres, non-profit organizations, and other levels of government.

In addition to the engagement opportunities in February-March 2024, TPH senior management held community visits to 16 partner organizations throughout 2023. Organizations were prioritized that served North/West Toronto and Scarborough and/or served the following priority populations: Black individuals, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, seniors, women, people with disabilities, and the Eastern European community. These areas and populations were prioritized because during the pandemic it was highlighted that they were under-served and had greater need. The feedback shared during these community visits was considered during the strategic plan development.

The City of Toronto is committed to decolonization, reconciliation and collaboration with Indigenous service providers, community members and partners on policies and programs that impact Indigenous health. Toronto Public Health is actively engaging with Indigenous service providers on next steps to co-develop an Indigenous Wellness Action Plan, including the Indigenous Wellness Committee. It will also draw on lessons learned from the Toronto Indigenous Overdose Strategy 2019, the Toronto Indigenous Health Strategy 2016, and the City of Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032. Indigenous people are not excluded from achieving the benefits of the Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028. However, in recognition of the principles of Indigenous cultural safety and self-determination, we are working on an approach to

best honour the spirit of the principles and learnings from the co-developed and parallel process noted above.

Summary of Engagement Activities

In total, 1,419 individuals and approximately 62 organizations provided feedback to help develop the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, as outlined below:

Individuals	
Public survey	585
Staff survey	170
Emails	28
Community Conversations	154
Townhall	225
Deputations	43
Staff meetings	214
Total: 1,419	

Groups/organizations	
Public survey	32
City division survey	7
Emails	2
Community Conversations	3
Community visits	15
Community meetings	3
Total: 62	

Of the groups and organizations that participated, some submitted feedback through more than one channel, some did not disclose their name, and some were informal groups of people in Toronto that collectively submitted surveys, emails, or Community Conversations. The organizations and divisions that participated and disclosed their names in at least one channel of engagement, including those that we visited in the Community visits in 2023, are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services • AIDS Committee of Toronto • Addictions & Mental Health Ontario • Animal Rights Toronto • Black Creek Community Health Centre • Black Health Alliance • Centre for Addiction and Mental Health • Catalysts' Circle • Centre for Independent Living in Toronto • Community Health Centres of Greater Toronto • Covenant House Youth Led Harm Reduction Advisory Committee • Daily Bread Food Bank • Digital Quarantine Working Group • Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area • Elevate Community • Fleet Services • Gas Busters • Flemingdon Health Centre • Housing Secretariat • Humane Society International/Canada • Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services • JVS Toronto Youth Reach Program • Municipal Licensing & Standards • NoMoreNoise Toronto • Ontario School Safety • Park People • Parkdale Queen West Community Health • Centre Plant Based Treat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Place • Regent Park Community Health Centre • Rexdale Community Health centre • Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities • Second Harvest • Seniors Services and Long-Term Care • Sherbourne Health • Somali Immigrant Aid Organization • Summer Lunch Plus • TAIBU Community Health Centre • The 519 • The Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations • The Neighbourhood Group - Social Action Group • The Toronto Drop-In Network • Toronto Adult ADHD Support Group • Toronto District School Board • Toronto Employment & Social Services • Toronto Ontario Health Teams • Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership's Health & Wellbeing Work Group • Toronto Paramedic Services • Toronto Public Space Committee • Toronto Shelter and Support Services • Trans Pride Toronto • Unison Community Health Centre • Unity Health Toronto • Vegan Running • Yonge Street Mission Evergreen Health Centre
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Developing the Content of the Strategic Plan

Each question in the survey, meeting notes, email, and notes from Community Conversations and meetings were open text responses. Toronto Public Health staff read through each answer and submission, manually coded themes and analyzed the feedback to inform the components of the strategic plan. In total, there were approximately 4,900 text boxes coded. Feedback was integrated into the levels of the strategic plan:

Vision

A vision statement is the organization's aim for the future. The previous vision was "A healthy city for all." Feedback indicated that this phrase suggests a focus primarily on the city itself. While built environment is a significant area of TPH's work, there was a strong desire to shift the vision toward emphasizing people and population health. Additionally, there was a call for the vision to reflect the social determinants that influence health status. To address this feedback, the vision, "A city where all people can be healthy and thrive," was developed to prioritize people and communicate a more comprehensive vision of health.

Mission

A mission statement is what an organization does to achieve its vision. The previous mission was, "Toronto Public Health reduces health inequities and improves the health of the whole population." During consultations, feedback about the importance of TPH work on COVID-19 and infectious disease prevention were one of the top themes identified. Additionally, there was strong feedback highlighting TPH's role in addressing the social determinants of health and emphasizing health equity as central to public health efforts. To reflect this feedback, the mission, "Toronto Public Health protects and improves health at a population level while reducing health inequities," was developed. This revised mission reflects the valuable input received and underscores our commitment to health equity in all the work that we do.

Values

Values are a set of principles that guide an organization's decision-making. Toronto Public Health's previous foundational principles were accountability and transparency, community engagement, inclusion, health equity, and excellence. We received several key suggestions regarding our principles. Participants expressed a desire for our work to be influenced by evidence and for a demonstrated willingness to innovate and try new approaches. They emphasized the importance of not just engaging with the community but actively collaborating with community members and partners to extend our reach and effectiveness. Additionally, they noted that while excellence is important, it is often vague, difficult to measure, and hard to define.

In response, we recommended reframing the principles as values that guide all our work. We kept the values that were identified as consistently important and added new additions to reflect the engagement feedback. The values for the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan are:

- Accountable and transparent
- Community engaged and connected
- Equitable and inclusive
- Credible and evidence-informed
- Innovative leadership

Priorities and Objectives

Priorities are the focus of the organization for the period of the strategic plan. Each priority has a set of objectives that collectively advance the broader priority. Through the engagement phase, a wide range of feedback about what is important to participants was heard, including:

Participants shared the importance of protection and prevention in the work that Toronto Public Health does, often highlighting infectious diseases and the ongoing need to prevent their spread.

E.g., "The three P's! Prevent, promote, and protect. I think including the preventive work really distinguishes us from health care at other levels of government."

Participants emphasized that addressing health equity and the social determinants of health were critical in achieving health across the population.

E.g., "Building a healthy, equitable, and inclusive city by addressing social determinants of health, promoting health equity, and ensuring equitable access to healthcare services, including perinatal care, childhood health, and support for seniors."

Participants shared that they would like TPH to collaborate with community partners to expand their reach, and advocate to advance action in areas that impact population health.

E.g., "TPH would greatly benefit from improving partnership with other Toronto organizations that have similar values and vision as their own to help as many Torontonians as possible."

Participants shared a wide range of key topic areas that they would like to see Toronto Public Health address, collaborate, and advocate to advance, including noise monitoring, food security, indoor air quality, and promoting healthy behaviours and environments across the lifespan.

E.g., "Reducing barriers to good sleep - e.g., road vehicle noise, improving air quality and promoting outdoor activities."

Participants noted a desire to see TPH staff participating and being a leader in community, sharing memories and the impact of this work.

E.g., "Public Health Nurses were in my school all the time when I was a kid in the '70s and '80s. My respect and appreciation for the work you do can be directly traced back to those interactions."

Participants noted the need to improve mental health and reduce the negative impacts of substance use in Toronto.

E.g., "Need to improve access and equity for all, as well as resources for those who are underhoused, have addictions, and most importantly the mental health of individuals. But this cannot be done without hiring, training and retaining well trained health care providers."

Participants also noted the importance of having a strong, representative, and resilient workforce to lead our work.

E.g., "We must have TPH workforce healthy and engaged again. Highly qualified workforce we can tap into with as much autonomy as possible."

This feedback, along with the wide range of other comments shared, was reflected through the priorities and their corresponding objectives.

Priority 1: Strengthen health protection, disease prevention, and emergency preparedness.

- a. Prepare for and respond to outbreaks and public health emergencies informed by best evidence and lessons learned from previous responses.
- b. Enhance emergency preparedness and response infrastructure.
- c. Effectively communicate with the public about how they can protect their health.
- d. Monitor and prepare for climate change and collaborate with partners to address its impacts.

Priority 2: Promote health and well-being across the lifespan.

- a. Reduce the burden of chronic and infectious diseases across the lifespan.
- b. Prioritize effective interventions for children and youth to meet their changing needs.
- c. Advise on aging in place and age-friendly communities.
- d. Advocate for healthy social, natural, and built environments and collaborate with partners on initiatives that advance these goals.

Priority 3: Promote the conditions to support positive mental health and reduce the harms of substance use.

- a. Deliver public health interventions that respond to the drug toxicity epidemic.
- b. Reduce harms associated with the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vapour products use.
- c. Strengthen public health services that are trauma-informed and reduce stigma.
- d. Deliver public health interventions that promote mental health.

Priority 4: Advocate to advance health equity.

- a. Assess and report on health inequities and population health needs.
- b. Collaborate with partners across multiple sectors to address local health needs.
- c. Share evidence, advocate, and collaborate to influence actions that impact population health.

Priority 5: Nurture a positive workplace culture.

- a. Foster a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and learning.
- b. Develop and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.
- c. Foster a welcoming and inclusive work environment.
- d. Optimize collaboration across Toronto Public Health for greater impact.

Strategic Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Toronto Public Health will be communicating with partners to share the launch of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and work towards next steps for collaboration and partnerships to help achieve our collective goals.

Following the launch of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, Toronto Public Health is engaging with staff to identify outcomes for both short-term and longer-term measurements through operational workplans for monitoring and reporting. This process will utilize staff expertise in TPH program areas to help identify the specific tasks and performance indicators that will feed into each objective and measure success over the next four years.

Summary

Toronto Public Health, through the leadership of the Board of Health - Strategic Plan Development Committee, developed its 2024-2028 Strategic Plan through jurisdictional and evidence scans, and extensive engagement with staff, community members, and partners. This input shaped the strategic priorities and objectives for the next four years.

The Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028 aims to create a city where all people can be healthy and thrive. The plan emphasizes strengthening health protection, promoting well-being across the lifespan, supporting mental health and substance use work, advancing health equity, and fostering a positive workplace culture.

Implementation will involve collaboration with partners and continuous engagement with TPH staff and the Board of Health to ensure effective action and measurement of success.

CONTACT

Uppala Chandrasekera, Director of Strategy and Clinical Services, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-1308, Uppala.Chandrasekera@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 - Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028