

Chronic Disease, Injury Prevention and Substance Misuse

Built Environment Report – Health Promotion

2016

Area of Focus <i>(check all that apply)</i>	
Strategic Plan Direction/Goal	✓
Ontario Public Health Standard, 2008 (OPHS)	✓

Manager: Jennifer McCorrison

Director: Rita Sethi

Division: Community Health and Wellness



Summary of Strategic Plan Goal and Operational Plan Objective(s):

Strategic Direction:	Building Healthy Communities - We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.
Strategic Goal(s):	We will promote healthy environments that support physical and mental health and well-being.
	We will engage communities with more opportunities for collaboration.
Program Operational Objective:	Work with municipalities to support healthy public policies and the creation or enhancement of supportive environments in recreational settings and the built environment.
Is this a new initiative or update of existing initiative?	Existing Initiative/Program Update

Summary of OPHS Program Requirement(s):

OPHS Program:	Chronic Disease Prevention	
	Prevention of Injury and Substance Misuse	
	Health Hazard Prevention and Management	
Goal:	To reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases of public health importance.	
	To reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury and substance misuse.	
	To prevent or reduce the burden of illness from health hazards in the physical environment.	
Strategy:	Health Promotion and Policy Development	
Requirement(s):	<i>Chronic Disease Prevention #3,6,7,11</i> <i>Prevention of Injury & Substance Misuse #2,3,4</i> <i>Health Hazard Prevention & Management #3,4</i>	
Accountability Indicator(s):	N/A	
	N/A	
Has a performance variance or discrepancy been identified?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Highlights:

Municipal Reviews, Consultations & Committees

In order to encourage local counties and municipalities to create and sustain healthy communities through built and natural environment elements, it was a necessity for built environment staff to feel comfortable providing evidence-informed policy and infrastructure suggestions to county and municipal staff. Many external documents exist to support reviews. However, most documents focus on urban-level recommendations. WDGPH required a document that was more specific to the realities of the local context. To build staff's capacity for these opportunities, a consultant was hired to develop a WDGPH specific evidence-informed guiding document and a hands-on training session.² The training occurred in August 2016 and drastically increased staff's knowledge level and confidence to competently provide feasible recommendations as requests arise.

Additionally, various reviews, consultations and advocacy letters have been completed (see Table 1). These opportunities reaffirm the value that local municipalities put on building and sustaining healthy communities. For example, 27 of the 30 healthy community suggestions made by WDGPH for Shelburne's Official Plan Amendments 34 & 36, were adopted.

Table 1: Review requests completed in 2016 by type

Type of Request	Completed
Official Plan Review/Official Plan Amendment Review	3
Statutory Plan Review	1
Subdivision Plan Review	3
Consultations	4
Advocacy Letters	2

In order to facilitate efficient reviews, a review request process was developed which includes: a direct email address (planning@wdgpublichealth.ca); a streamlined process to efficiently provide evidence-informed recommendations to counties/municipalities in a timely manner; and mechanisms included for constant improvement, capacity building and follow-up. In winter 2017, the BE Committee will aim to further their expertise and input by requesting counties and municipalities add WDGPH to circulation lists for all review, consultation and open forum requests. This would include requests for Official Plan, By-Law, Statutory Plan, Design Guidelines, Subdivision Plan and Site Plan reviews. As influx in requests is expected, reviews will occur as they are pertinent to the Ontario Public Health Standards and WDGPH's current staff capacity.

Based on conversations with planners about building strong collaborative relationships, WDGPH has also been invited to sit on certain municipal growth management steering committees. WDGPH currently has representation on Orangeville's Official Plan Review Steering Committee and on Centre Wellington's Growth Management Strategy Technical Advisory Committee, since August 2015 and March 2016, respectively.

Orangeville Food Environment Survey

With Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA) in the process of developing a local food charter³ and Orangeville identified as a priority area for action in Dufferin County,⁴ a more detailed assessment of Orangeville's food environment was needed. In September 2016, low income neighbourhoods were targeted in Orangeville with an online survey and door-to-door data collection by University of Guelph-Humber students. Preliminary findings are currently being explored to further support strategy development and potential advocacy efforts in the area.

WDG Active and Safe Routes to Schools Committee

As co-chair of the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Active and Safe Routes to School committee (WDG ASRTS), built environment staff work collaboratively with local stakeholders to increase the number of school-aged children actively traveling to and from school by promoting active travel and facilitating safety improvements to the built environment around schools. In 2016, Walk to School Day in October was widely celebrated amongst local schools with active travel challenges, walking school buses and school celebrations.

Between 2014 and 2016, six WDG schools were involved in an Ontario-based feasibility study as an urban-suburban-rural geography to assess the implementation⁵ and the benefit-cost ratio of school travel planning (STP).⁶ STP support is a main activity of WDG ASRTS. Through the STP process, school specific data collection about travel behavior and existing barriers are collected and an action plan is implemented based on the findings. Feasibility study results indicated an increase in active travel and a decrease in car travel. A benefit-cost ratio represents the amount of benefit returned for every dollar invested. For the WDG region, there was significant benefit returned for every dollar invested in STP (i.e., 4.0, 7.3, and 10.1 times each dollar over one-, three- and five-years). These findings strongly support STP as a cost-effective intervention at the school-community level.

"Building Up" communications campaign

To accommodate the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe⁷, the Towns of Orangeville, Shelburne and Grand Valley are planning for intensification, with the highest target growth rates allotted in Dufferin County. Since planning staff anticipated some resistance from community members, WDGPH collaborated with these three municipalities in February 2016 to implement the *Building Up* communications campaign. The campaign aimed to increase community awareness of four evidence-based health benefits associated with intensification: active living; air quality; safe and social neighbourhoods; and local economic investment.⁸

Social media messages were created, a promotional handout was distributed at municipal events, all partners' websites included aligned messaging, and a Stay Well WDG blog was published.⁹ Although not all municipalities were able to provide social media statistics, it is estimated that *Building Up's* Tweets and Facebook posts reached just over 39,000 and 3,100 people, respectively. A different themed newspaper advertisement was distributed to approximately 16,700 Dufferin County residences each week of the campaign.

Overall, municipal staff were satisfied with the campaign, felt it began to educate the community and helped to discuss intensification with community members. Municipalities also stated they would recommend a similar WDGPH campaign collaboration to another municipality and partner with WDGPH on future healthy community development initiatives. The campaign was noted as a significant action in the development of a collaborative relationship between municipal planning staff in these three communities and WDGPH.

Related Board or WDGPH reports:

1. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Board of Health. BOH report – BH.01.SEP0915.R28 Built Environment [Internet]. 2015 September 9. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/wdgphfiles/BH_01_SEP0915_R28%20-%20Built%20Environment.pdf

References

1. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Liem Strategic Integration. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health: Built environment and land use planning checklists. Guelph, ON; 2016.
2. Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance. Food Charter [Internet]. 2016. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <http://headwatersfoodandfarming.ca/food-charter-food-policy/>
3. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Addressing social determinants of health in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph. 2013. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/wdgphfiles/sdoh-wdg-report-2013-for-web.pdf>
4. Green Communities Canada. School travel planning in the City of Toronto & Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph. 2016. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/sites/default/files/Min%20of%20Ed%20Feasibility%20Study-Final%20Report-Feb26%2016%20website%20version.pdf>
5. Green Communities Canada. School travel planning benefit-cost report for Toronto & Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph. 2016. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/sites/default/files/Benefit-Cost-Final%20Report-Feb22%2016-Final%20website%20version.pdf>
6. Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure. Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. 2013. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <https://www.placestogrow.ca/content/ggh/2013-06-10-Growth-Plan-for-the-GGH-EN.pdf>
7. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Building up to healthier communities. [Internet]. 2016. [cited 2016 Dec 8] Available from: <https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/?q=news-building-up-2016>
8. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Building up to a happier and healthier community [Internet]. Stay Well WDG. 2016 [cited 2016 Dec 8]. Available from: <http://www.staywellwdg.ca/building-up-to-a-happier-and-healthier-community/>