New Tools and Approaches to Promoting Healthy Communities

WORLD CONGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Vancouver, BC, September 8, 2010
Public health officials across Canada have taken notice of the links between health and the built environment, and have started to take action.

However, there have been few attempts to unite these efforts under a strategic, integrated network of analysis and action.
In summer, 2009 we came together to address this gap.

About Us

HEALTHY CANADA by design

CLASP
COALITIONS LINKING ACTION & SCIENCE FOR PREVENTION

An initiative of:
CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST CANCER
Together, we are:

1) **Piloting different approaches** to translating the latest research in this field into state-of-the-art tools to support policy-makers and practitioners in creating healthier built environments.

2) **Exchanging knowledge**, lessons learned and looking for opportunities to adapt practices from one city or region to another.

3) **Cultivating the building of a cross-sectoral community of practice.**
Description of **Projects** under our CLASP initiative
Developing the content and criteria for a **health background study** to be implemented at the municipal and/or regional levels:

The framework will be developed with input from:

- Municipal planners
- Regional planners
- Local developers
- Public health staff
Activities in the Region of Peel

Potential areas for policy change include:

• Municipal and Regional Official Plans
• Municipal and Regional Master Plans
• Selected Secondary Plans
• Zoning bylaw standards
• Traffic bylaws
• Urban design guidelines

Working with municipal and regional planning departments to develop processes and policies that would facilitate the implementation of a Healthy Development Index tool:
Regional Official Plan amendment 24 (adopted April 2010):  
**The Region will work with the area municipalities to:**  
1) Raise *awareness* of the public health issues related to planning through public and private partnerships; and  
2) Prepare an *assessment tool* to evaluate the public health impacts of developments as part of the approval process.

Regional Official Plan amendment 25 (adopted February 2010):  
**The Region may:**  
1) Require *health impact studies* as part of the development application process; and  
2) Develop *public health indicators* to analyze the effectiveness of the Official Plan’s policies and serve as a basis for policy adjustments.
Activities in Montreal

Inventorying, mapping and evaluating community-based interventions to promote greener, more walkable neighbourhoods:

- Produce a map of the location of the different interventions
- Conduct a survey of citizen and community groups;
- Administate environmental walkability audits of the different neighbourhoods;
- Conduct interviews with key informants;
- Examine the associations between the extent of implementation of different interventions and citizen and community mobilisation around green neighbourhoods.
The Toronto Specific Report will:

• Explore relationships between socio-economic status, health outcomes, and the urban built environment in the City of Toronto

• Complement initiative already being undertaken by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)

• Provide new information about how socio-economic and health relationships are modified by the urban physical environment
Software Tool

• Dr. Lawrence Frank of Urban Design 4 Health, LTD. (UD4H) will enhance a publicly accessible, already developed software tool (I-PLACE3S)

• Software tool can be used to evaluate the extent to which proposed land use and transportation options promote or hinder health

• “Enhanced” software tool will be built on Toronto-specific geo-coded data

• Pilot tests will take place in Greater Toronto and Metro Vancouver.
Residential Preferences Survey

**Purpose:** to document demand for various types of residential community environments ranging from walkable to more auto-oriented environments in Greater Toronto and Vancouver regions.
Activities in BC

Working with local governments to support them in integrating a health lens to their community planning projects and policies.

Internal capacity building, organizational learning and strategic planning.
Responsibility for healthy built environment work shared between Health Protection and Primary Care (Healthy Living/Healthy Community) with the support of the Office of the Medical Health Officer

- **Healthy Living/Health Protection**
  - Healthier Community Partnerships
  - Population Health Focus
  - Community Development Approach

- **Health Protection**
  - Recent Healthy Built Environment core program review → HBE strategy development
  - Review of community plans, neighbourhood concept plans

✓ Healthy Canada by Design is supporting this transition
Activities in BC:
Fraser Health Authority

1) Building Internal Capacity

- Create info briefs on key issues for health & built environment – for municipalities & Fraser Health reference library for future HBE work
- Develop & implement an internal workshop to build Health Authorities’s skills, capacity and roles in healthy built environment
2) Developing Capacity to work with Municipalities

- Develop a map that indicates which departments, when, and how Fraser Health can become involved in planning and decision-making processes, to contribute to policy development and decision making that supports positive health outcomes and rationale.

- Participate in the current Official Community Plan and Neighbourhood Community Plan update process, (a) working relationship, (b) gain expertise, (c) inform development of the plans.
Activities in BC:
Fraser Health Authority

Collaboration with Vancouver Coastal Health and Metro Vancouver
✓ knowledge exchange project that will link researchers, planners, health authorities and others

Vision: To enable, support, and maintain the development of healthy, low-carbon, and equitable communities across British Columbia’s Lower Mainland.

Objectives:
• Encourage the development of multi-scale tools and policies around healthy, sustainable land use and transportation planning.
• Enable knowledge translation and exchange between cross-disciplinary stakeholders.
• Identify opportunities, constraints, and gaps within related and pertinent research, practice and resources and provide support for collaborative work and projects.
Activities in BC:
Fraser Health Authority

Structure
• Healthy Community Partnerships
• Health Protection

Expertise
• Content
• Process

Core Program
• Ongoing programmatic development and review

Sustainability
Activities in BC:
Fraser Health Authority

Lessons Learned

Barriers
• Municipalities
  • Downloading of responsibility to municipalities
  • Potentially increased costs of development
• Health Authorities
  • Resources
  • Unclear role of HA in HBE

Facilitators
• Education/advocacy
• Supportive structures
  • Human resources
  • Tools
  • Cross ministerial coordination and support
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Coastal Health

Population Health Team:

• Reports to the Chief Medical Health Officer

• Works with a variety of partner organizations to influence the creation of healthy public policies that support the health and well-being of our communities.
Activities in BC: Vancouver Coastal Health

Population Health Team in context:

Senior Executive Team & Board

Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer
Dr. Patricia Daly
VP Public Health & Chief Medical Health Officer
Executive Assistant – Mavis Chu

Communicable Disease Control
Dr. Réka Gustafson
Medical Health Officer & Medical Director

Environmental Health
Domenic Losito
Regional Director

Public Health Surveillance
Dr. Jat Sandhu
Regional Director

Population Health
Ted Bruce
Executive Director

Health Emergency Management
Jody Sydor Jones
Regional Director

Medical Health Officers
Dr. John Carsley, Vancouver
Dr. Meena Dhar, Vancouver
Dr. Réka Gustafson, CDC
Dr. James Lu, Richmond
Dr. Paul Martiquet, Coastal Rural
Dr. Brian O’Connor, Coastal Urban

Prevention
Chris Buchner
Director

Aboriginal Health Strategic Initiatives
Linda Day
Regional Director

Olympic Planning
Rob Stewart
Director

VCH Travel Clinic
Dr. Suni Boraston
Medical Director
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Coastal Health

1) District of North Vancouver Official Community Plan

- Memorandum of Understanding with District of North Vancouver
- Health input and influence in each step of the plan-making process
- Involvement with different audiences - municipal staff, community

Health info and relevance was included in planning context papers & discussions with stakeholder groups

Further involvement to come as the process unfolds!
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Coastal Health

2) Supporting Richmond’s review of the City’s Official Community Plan …

- Medical Health Officer ‘call to participation’ in the planning process (news article, etc.)
- Public health perspective on public input and key issues in the plan - for reference on the City’s website discussion forum for the plan: LetsTALKrichmond.ca
- Co – facilitated a planning policy session with local social service agencies
- Our participation is evolving with the planning process
• Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health have provided advice on the Regional Growth Strategy

  *land use ➔ health outcomes*

• Knowledge exchange project that will link researchers, planners, health authorities and others (mentioned by Fraser Health earlier)
How to sustain over the longer-term?

4 strategies…

1. Leadership
2. Partnership
3. Advocacy
4. Policy development
Activities in BC: Vancouver Coastal Health

Lessons Learned

- Different audiences: elected, public and professional staff (planners). We need to strategically determine ‘the time’ for each.

- The scope of feedback is challenging. What are our most important key messages?

- Communities are using environmental lens. We are adding health and equity.

- The Public values health. How to best work with that?
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Structure

British Columbia Health Authorities and Health Service Delivery Areas:

1. Interior
2. Fraser
3. Vancouver Coastal
4. Vancouver Island
5. Northern
6. Provincial Health Service (province-wide)

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)

Health Service Delivery Areas:
- North Island
- Central Island
- South Island

Note: The Native Health Council is an independent health authority.
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Structure

Vancouver Island Health Authority Executive Team

- Board Liaison: Janet Shute
- Director, CEO Office: Ann Bozoian
- Director, Internal Audit Services: John Shenton
- President and Chief Executive Officer: Howard Waldner
- Chief Medical Health Officer: Dr. Richard Starnwick
- Chief Project Officer & General Manager Special Projects: Rudi van den Broek

- Vice President & Chief Financial Officer: Bill Boomer
- Integrated Health Services: Executive Vice President & Chief Medical Officer: Dr. Richard Crow, Acting Vice President & Chief Information Officer: Dr. Mary-Lyn Fyfe, Vice President Planning: Georgina MacDonald
- Integrated Health Services: Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer: Catherine Mackay
- Vice President, Operations & Support Services: Joe Murphy
- Executive Vice President, People, Organizational Development, Practice & Chief Nurse: Dr. Lynn Stevenson
- Vice President & Chief, Communications & External Relations: Neil Sweeney
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Meeting with Municipal Planners – March 24, 2010:

- Planners already have a good understanding of healthy built environments
- Planners need help finding/interpreting scientific evidence
- Planners were interested in learning more about air quality and health
- Planners were interested in exploring opportunities to improve the built environment through the Hospital Campus Master Plan.
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Project #1: Putting “health” back into Health Care Facility Planning

Main Objective:
- To document successes and challenges of the Patient Care Centre and Hospital Campus Master Plan.

Method:
- Semi-structured interviews of stakeholders.

Outputs:
- A set of considerations for future health care facility and campus development.
- Strengthened relationships with municipal/regional government staff and community partners.
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Project #2: Incorporating Air Quality and Health into Transportation Planning & Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategies

Objectives:
- Teach planners how to incorporate air quality and health evidence into transportation planning and GHG management.
- Build and strengthen relationships with planners, air quality experts, and others.

Method:
- “Air Pollution, Greenhouse Gases, and Population Health: Local Planning Implications and Actions” Workshop
- Propose a method for on-going collaboration between health and planning
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Project #2 cont’d

Outputs:

- Workshop presentations and discussion notes
- Greater understanding and depth of knowledge about intersection between air quality, transportation planning, GHG reduction strategies, and health.
- Terms of reference for collaborative group of planners and health professionals.
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

• Build/strengthen relationships for ongoing collaboration with municipal and regional planning staff.

• Formalize mode/structure for collaborative work between planning and health.

• Continue to support regional government where necessary and when possible (e.g., Feedback on Regional Sustainability Strategy)
Many planners understand healthy built environment principles. Health could help by providing the evidence to help them rationalize and strengthen their policy recommendations to politicians and the public.

Planners have a strong interest in working with health on healthy built environment issues, but are unsure about how we can work together.

External groups find it difficult to navigate the health authority, and don’t know what services or expertise are available. Likewise, health doesn’t always know how to navigate regional governments or what expertise is available.

Provincial and federal government staff are interested in opportunities to work with the health authorities as well as local and regional governments on healthy built environment issues.
Activities in BC:
Vancouver Island Health Authority

Lessons Learned

• The acute care culture, which drives the development of acute health care facilities, is not always respectful of the general community development approaches often used to create healthy built environments.

• Health has tended to approach healthy built environment issues as an expert instead of a participant – we sometimes forget that we also help shape the built environment.

• In general, health authorities aren’t used to mitigating the diverse demands of the many external groups which is a central part of healthy built environment.
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Alice Miro
Project Manager, CLASP Initiative, Built Environment and Health
| Responsable de projet, initiative CPAS, environnement bâti et santé

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada | Fondation des maladies du cœur du Canada
Cel: 604.340.6828
amiro@hsf.ca

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