

STAFF REPORT:

Planning & Building Services Department



REPORT TO: Planning & Building Committee
MEETING DATE: December 8, 2010
REPORT NO.: PL.10.110
SUBJECT: Extension of Memorandum of Understanding, Healthy Communities Initiative, Grey Bruce Health Unit
PREPARED BY: Cindy Welsh, MCIP, RPP
Senior Policy Planner

A. Recommendations

THAT Council does receive Planning Staff Report #PL.10.110, “Extension of Memorandum of Understanding, Healthy Communities Initiative (formerly Operation Safe, Strong and Clean), Grey Bruce Health Unit” for information purposes; and

THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Grey Bruce Health Unit upon the Director, Planning and Building Services and Town solicitor’s recommendation to do so.

B. Background

On June 1, 2009, the Town of The Blue Mountains and the Grey Bruce Health Unit entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pertaining to Operation Safe, Strong and Clean (currently called the Healthy Communities Initiative) and Land Use Plan Review of the Built Environment. The MOU is in force until December 31, 2009, and subject to renewal at the sole discretion of the Town of The Blue Mountains. Planning Staff are recommending that Council renew the MOU for an additional 24 months beginning on January 1, 2011, with an expiry date of December 31, 2013. Previously staff have recommended a renewal of 12 months, however, the success of the collaboration warrants the agreement being extend for an additional 24 months.

The Grey Bruce Health Unit (GBHU) has a dedicated staff person working directly with the Planning and Building Services Department in offering comments on planning applications related to healthy communities at the land use planning level. As part of the MOU, Planning Staff have been circulating notices of public meetings to the GBHU for review and comments while Health Unit Staff have been identifying and commenting on features of the built environment.

Health Unit staff are also available to consult and meet with the Town on all aspects that guide healthy land use planning and development as part of this process. The preconsultation process for development applications is also another venue for Health Unit staff to provide comments.

On November 19, 2009, Health Unit and Planning Staff met to assess the merits of the MOU. All staff reported on the positive merits of the MOU and indicated a willingness to continue with the evolution of this partnership. Staff concur that as this process was new for both agencies, there are areas where more positive collaboration between each agency can be explored.

With the extension of the MOU, each jurisdiction will have the continued opportunity to learn from each other and exchange information in terms of how policies relating to land use planning, health communities and public health are intertwined across disciplines.

Council should be aware of other collaborative opportunities that have evolved between the GBHU and the Town which include the following:

- the Grey Bruce Health Unit has been an active participant on four of the 15 working groups participating in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan; and
- in addition to presenting at the Spring 2010 Building Healthy Communities Conference, held in Owen Sound, Town staff provided planning assistance to the GBHU for the event.

As the Town moves forward with the new Comprehensive Zoning By-law, Official Plan five year review process and other Planning initiatives, there will be further opportunities for additional collaboration between the Grey Bruce Health Unit and the municipality.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

The Healthy Communities Initiative is in keeping with the Town's Strategic Plan, namely:

1. *Managing growth to ensure the ongoing health and prosperity of the community.*

D. Environmental Impacts

The Healthy Communities Initiative will support the concept of healthy communities by encouraging and promoting environmentally sound land use planning objectives when making recommendations.

E. Budget Impact

Staff time to meet with the GBHU dedicated staff liaison person and circulate planning applications to the Health Unit for comment and review time.

F. Attachments

1. Revised Memorandum of Understanding Between the Grey Bruce Health Unit and the Town of The Blue Mountains.

Submitted by:

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

THE GREY BRUCE HEALTH UNIT

and

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

**Pertaining to the Healthy Communities Initiative
and Land Use Plan Review of the
Built Environment**

June 1, 2009

Reviewed November 18, 2009

Reviewed November 16, 2010

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PREAMBLE

Healthy Community Development in Grey and Bruce Counties

The built environment is increasingly identified as an issue of emerging public health importance. Evidence confirms the built environment has direct impact on health and wellness. Changes and improvements to the built environment are proven to benefit individual and community health.

Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and realize aspirations, to satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the object of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy lifestyles to well-being. The Ottawa Charter for Health Protection (World Health Organization, 1986), the most widely and used health promotion document in the world, outlines five action strategies:

- building healthy public policy;
- creating environments for health;
- strengthening community actions;
- developing personal skills; and
- reorienting health services.

The Ottawa Charter asserts that building healthy public policy should be on the agenda of all sector policy makers, at all levels. Policy makers are directed to be aware of the health consequences of their decisions and to accept responsibility for health.

Evidence indicates that while medical and lifestyle choices do affect health, by far the greatest influences involve how communities and societies are organized to support health.

The layout of cities, towns and neighbourhoods, or the built environment, have a direct link to the level of physical activity of community members, air quality and social connectedness. Other indicators of healthy communities include access to affordable housing, healthcare, education, employment and nutritious food.

The health of individuals and communities is significantly influenced by complex interactions between social and economic factors, the physical environment and individual behaviours and conditions. These factors are referred to as the determinants of health, and together play a key role in determining the health status of the population as a whole.

The determinants of health include:

- income and social status;
- social support networks;
- education and literacy;
- employment/working conditions;
- social environments;
- physical environments;
- personal health practices and coping skills;
- healthy child development;
- biology and genetic endowment;
- health services;
- gender; and
- culture.

Research on the determinants of health indicates that how we live, work and play is linked to chronic diseases such as cancers, cardiovascular and diabetes.

The role of public health in addressing the determinants of health to impact the overall health of communities is reflected in the *Ontario Public Health Standards* (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2008). These standards are built upon a Foundational Standard that advises “public health not only acknowledges the impact of the determinants of health but also strives to influence broader societal changes that reduce health disparities and inequities by coordinating and aligning its programs and services with those of other partners” (p18).

Healthy Communities is a growing worldwide movement. *Healthy Communities* are based on the following principles:

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health and are interrelated.
- People cannot achieve their fullest potential unless they are able to take control of those things that determine their well-being.
- All sectors of the community are interrelated and share knowledge, expertise and perspectives, working together to create a healthy community.

A *Healthy Communities* process involves wide community participation, broad involvement of all sectors of the community, local government commitment and the creation of healthy public policies.

The role of municipalities in addressing community health is reflected in the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2005) PPS. The *Provincial Policy Statement* provides direction on matters related to land use planning and development and is built on the fundamental principle that “strong, liveable and healthy communities enhance social well-being and are economically sound” (p2).

The health unit proposes a collaborative partnership with each jurisdictional municipality and planning department in an effort to build strong and healthy communities. These partnerships can collectively address the *Provincial Policy Statement* and the *Ontario Public Health Standards* and enhance our shared commitment to excellence in protecting and promoting health and preventing disease and injury.

Through positive impact on the built, natural and social environments that affect the health of the population, the health unit strives to address epidemiological evidence and issues related to our populations at risk.

Statutory Framework

The following statutes, policies and information sources are directly relevant to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which came into effect on June 1, 2009:

- *Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O.1990, c.H.7 (HPPA)* and regulations made under that Act.
- *The 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and Protocols* (Boards of Health (BOH) and Medical Officers of Health (MOH), as cited in Table 1 of the OPHS 2008, have duties and responsibilities as specified in other applicable Ontario Laws).
- *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.*
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2005.*
- Scientific/academic and grey literature or in reviews of best practices evidence related to the built environment and the impacts to public health/determinants of health.

Purpose

- To incorporate health and wellness into municipal planning and operations.
- To influence a culture that supports community health and well-being.
- To support and facilitate initiatives to promote public health.

Definitions

Definitions per the Healthy Communities Initiative

“Built Environment” is defined by Health Canada as: “... part of the overall ecosystem of our earth. It encompasses all buildings, spaces and products that are created, or at least significantly modified by people. It includes our homes, schools and workplaces, parks, business areas and roads. It extends overhead in the form of electric transmission lines, underground in the form of waste disposal sites and subway trains and across the country in the form of highways.

The built environment contains ‘the basic services that are needed to keep a society running’, otherwise known as infrastructure. Infrastructure is seen as essential to health and includes services delivered physically (roads, communications, provision of drinking water mains, sewage systems and so on) and utilities such as electricity and gas. Furthermore, the built environment can include broad features of urban layout, such as cityscapes (building heights, shapes and overall density) and streetscapes (width, tree cover, housing density and the diversity of building uses). Provision of

transport facilities for road, rail, tram, bicycle, pedestrian, air and sea traffic forms a key component of infrastructure.” (*Health Canada website, 1997, as cited in Victoria State Government Department of Human Services, 2001*) (p26).

“Public Health Community Team” means multidisciplinary teams of health unit staff assigned to provide programs and services within eight defined geographic areas within Grey and Bruce Counties.

Definitions per the *Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)*

“Board of Health” means a Board of Health established or continued under the HPPA.

“Health Unit” means an area that, by or under any Act is the area of jurisdiction of a Board of Health.

Other Terms

For the purposes of this MOU, the following terms have the following meanings:

“Medical Officer of Health” (MOH) means a Medical Officer of Health of a Board of Health and includes an employee of the Board acting under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health.

Application

- Circulation of municipal land use plan and/or notice of public meetings and other circulations and documents shall be forwarded to the Grey Bruce Health Unit for review and commenting.
- Health Unit staff shall identify features of the built environment that will be commented on through a land use plan review process to meet the needs of priority population(s).
- The features of the built environment that will be commented on shall be chosen based upon evidence of the effectiveness of the intervention in scientific/academic and grey literature or in reviews of best practices.
- Reference to applicable provincial legislation, policies and scientific/academic and grey literature shall be quoted in public health commenting.
- The commenting process shall occur primarily in a checklist and form letter format with detailed site specific commenting provided on an as needed demand.
- Health Unit liaison staff shall be available to consult/meet with member municipalities, including key municipal staff and community partners, to complete the identification of relevant governmental and organizational policies and identify aspects that guide healthy land use planning and development.

- Health Unit staff shall be available to attend preconsultation meetings with planners and developers to discuss and implement healthy community development parameters prior to submission of applications.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

General

Issues of Mutual Support

Public Health Community Teams shall utilize dedicated staff in a liaison role to work directly with the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains Planning and Building Services Department staff or other municipal staff as required, and to ensure that together both the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains and the Grey Bruce Health Unit can build healthy, strong communities.

Assigned staff shall be available to work from the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains municipal office to enhance effective communication between both organizations.

EFFECTIVE DATE AND SIGNATURE

Signed on behalf of:

Dr. Hazel Lynn, Medical Officer of Health
Grey Bruce Health Unit

Dated at _____ this ___ day of _____, 2010, with effect as of the ___ day of _____, 2011.

Chris Munn, Director of Health Protection
Grey Bruce Health Unit

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Evidence indicates that while medical and lifestyle choices do affect health, by far the greatest influences involve how communities and societies are organized to support health.

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Chris Munn, Director of Health Protection
Grey Bruce Health Unit

Dated at _____ this ___ day of _____, 2010, with effect as of the ___ day of _____, 2011.

Ellen Anderson, Mayor
Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains

Dated at _____ this ___ day of _____, 2010, with effect as of the ___ day of _____,2011.

Corrina Giles, Town Clerk
Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains

Dated at _____ this ___ day of _____, 2010, with effect as of the ___ day of _____,2011.