



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 June 20

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## HEALTH UNIT ENGAGEMENT WITH RETHINK LONDON

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Report No. 084-13 re Health Unit Engagement with Rethink London be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- The Official Plan is a comprehensive plan created by municipalities which dictates public policy in terms of transportation, recreation, use and management of land and infrastructure, protection of the environment and resources; and opportunities for employment and residential development.
- Healthy communities fundamentally contribute to the health and wellbeing of the residents in the community.
- Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU) continues to be actively engaged in the ReThink community conversation and to make recommendations that support a healthier City of London.

### **Background**

In January 2012, the City of London began a review of its Official Plan (OP) through ReThink London, the largest community engagement program in the City's history. In Canada, an official plan is a comprehensive plan created by a municipality which dictates public policy in terms of transportation, recreation, use and management of land and infrastructure, protection of the environment and resources; and ensuring appropriate opportunities for employment and residential development. ReThink London was launched on May 3, 2012 at the London Convention Centre, where approximately 1,300 people attended to hear *The National's* Peter Mansbridge speak about the importance of citizen engagement.

Following the public call to action, the City hosted "Discover your City", an evening organized around five ReThink London themes: How we Live; How we Grow; How we Green; How we Move; and How we Prosper. This event shared with Londoners the many City projects and initiatives that were recently approved or currently underway, and how they fit into ReThink London. These projects originated from the Community Services, Environmental and Engineering Services, Planning and Development Services, and Culture Office of the City of London, as well as from the Health Unit and London Transit Commission.

### **A Healthier Community**

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. WHO has defined healthy city/community as one that continually creates and improves its physical and social environments and expands the community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential. Healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders - where every person is free to make choices when provided a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.

The promotion of healthier communities has been one of the historical underpinnings of public health, and is reflected in such key documents as the 1986 Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion and the current Ontario Public Health Standards. The ReThink London process offers Health Unit staff an opportunity to provide evidence-informed recommendations that support a healthier community through the built environment including: active transportation; land use; recreation; complete streets; environmental health matters; social cohesion; and food security.

### **MLHU's Contribution to ReThink London**

- November 2011, letter sent to City Manager expressing Health Unit's interest in being involved in OP Review;
- January 2012, OP Terms of Reference staff recommended enhancement of health, air quality and land use; Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London, recommended physical activity (PA) opportunities be enhanced;
- June 2012, presented at the *How We Move*, focusing on active transportation (AT) and PA ;
- June 2012, staff attended *Your Vision, Your Future* to provide input into developing goals and strategies to help achieve vision recommendations on health, complete streets and AT;
- August 2012, media launch of evidence-based *Healthy City-Active London* position paper and video providing 19 recommendations on Active Transportation to ReThink London,
- October 2012, ReThink event *How to Make a City Awesome* attended by several staff and many other staff completed the online Virtual Preference Survey;
- December 2012, staff attended ReThink event *Building an Exciting, Exceptional, Connected City*;
- December 2012, submission of 15 evidence-based environmental health recommendations to ReThink London addressing natural and manmade hazards;
- March 2013, evidence-based internal Health Assessment process to assist with the review of land use planning and official plan amendment applications; and
- Ongoing, increased involvement in the evaluation of land use applications.

### **Next Steps**

From the consultations and submission of recommendations, the City of London has aggregated the information to develop eight key directions. These eight directions will be the basis for the policies in the new Official Plan. Each key direction is linked with the release of a discussion paper to which the community is invited to provide feedback by June 28, 2013. Health Unit staff from the Environmental Health and Chronic Disease Prevention Services will be examining each discussion paper. With the support of literature/research and previously submitted position paper/recommendations, staff will formulate an evidence-informed response to each of the eight discussion papers

This report was prepared by Ms. Marylou Albanese, Manager; Ms. Bernadette McCall, Public Health Nurse, Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention Team; Mr. Iqbal Kalsi, Manager; and Mr. Andrew Powell, Public Health Inspector, Environmental Health Team.

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**This report addresses** the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Diseases and Injuries Program Standards; Health Hazard Prevention and Management standards under the Environmental Health Program Standards; and the 2011 MLHU Strategic Direction: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for all.