

# Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Decisions made by municipal councils play an important role in influencing individual and community health and well-being.

The social determinants of health (e.g., income, housing, education, social inclusion) are impacted by policies and decisions made by municipal councils, who promote health equity by ensuring all have a fair chance to reach their full health potential without being disadvantaged by social, economic and environmental conditions beyond their control.

For municipal councils, the following questions can be used to ensure the impact on health is considered when making decisions about the issues our communities face.

# Public Health Considerations During Decision-Making

Does the program or policy...

## Natural Environment

- Protect parks, greenspace, and natural heritage systems while supporting biodiversity?
- Promote an energy conscious culture?
- Provide shade in urban play spaces, parks, yards and along streets?

## Food Systems

- Reflect the vision and values described by the Middlesex-London Food Policy Council?
- Increase accessibility to culturally-appropriate, healthy foods from local producers?
- Promote collaboration between different sectors within the local food system?

## Marginalized Populations

- Invest in public resources to support under-resourced families?
- Engage with vulnerable individuals and families to address the root causes of health disparities?
- Promote equity and diversity in economic and educational opportunities?

## Community Services and Programs

- Improve access to culturally-appropriate, equitable, and evidence-informed social and health services?
- Create opportunities for positive community involvement and participation in meaningful recreational activities?
- Promote positive mental health and well-being?

## Social Cohesion

- Promote community-wide arts and cultural events and recreational activities that bring people of all ages together?
- Celebrate diversity and promote feelings of belonging and community well-being?
- Create inclusive communities that welcome and support newcomers and marginalized populations?

## Substance Use

- Promote equitable and barrier-free access to health and substance use services?
- Use evidence and wise practices to prevent and reduce harms from tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, opioids and other drugs, using a four pillar approach?
- Recognize and address stigma as a barrier to wellness?

## Healthy Community Design and the Built Environment

- Support complete neighbourhood design where housing, employment, education, recreation, transportation options, healthy food, and public greenspaces are accessible to all?
- Create streets that are safe and accessible for all ages, abilities, incomes and modes of travel?
- Encourage walking, cycling and public transit use?

## Communities for All Ages

- Provide support for early childhood development, including affordable and high-quality child care, early learning resources, supports for parents, and opportunities for play?
- Consider the evidence and best practices to engage, attract and retain youth?
- Support older adults through neighbourhood design, transportation options, and in-home health supports?

Adapted and revised for local use with permission from the Huron County and Grey Bruce Health Units.