Influencing Changes to the Built Environment

Paul Young public space workshop and Brian Dick Region of Niagara
supports community engagement in creating healthy communities

Government & non-profits can request a service

www.hclinkontario.ca
Two-part series

1. Today: *Influencing Changes to the Built Environment*

2. Thursday, Oct 31, 2013, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: *Evaluating Impacts of Development Proposals*

www.hclinkontario.ca
Consultant
Landscape architect & Planner

Health Promoter
South Riverdale Community Health Centre
Discussion after

Hear a cool idea?

Have a question?

Please . . . write it down!

Overview

1. Paul Young, public space workshop
   a) How the built environment affects health
   b) Characteristics of a Healthy, Sustainable Built Environment
   c) Influencing Change Through Engagement in Planning

2. Brian Dick, planner, Region of Niagara
   Planning tools to create healthier built environments

3. Paul, wrap up / discussion
Which context is most relevant to your work?

Rural  Suburban  Urban
Which context is most relevant to your work?

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

Often all three Growth?
Research + Observations
Influencing change in the built environment Oct 22, 2013
Qualities of a Healthy Community include:

- Clean and safe physical environment
- Peace, equity and social justice
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all
- Adequate access to health care services
- Opportunities for learning and skill development
- Strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks
- Workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being
- Wide participation of residents in decision-making
- Strong local cultural and spiritual heritage
- Diverse and vital economy
- Protection of the natural environment
- Responsible use of resources to ensure long term sustainability

These principles have been adapted from the work of Trevor Hancock and Leonard Duhl.
Research + Observations

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des Communautés en santé de l’Ontario

Help Create a Healthy Community...

Healthy Communities and the Built Environment

Between April 2007 and September 2009, OHCC led a project entitled “Healthy Communities and the Built Environment”, which examined the links between health and the built environment and engaged communities in integrating health promotion, chronic disease prevention and community planning strategies to create healthier communities.

A need had been identified for greater understanding within the general public of the links between health, land-use planning/design and the environment. In our efforts to provide information and raise awareness of the health impacts of the built environment, we found few examples of relevant and local research and a fragmentation of the work of public health professionals, land-use planners, environment groups and community and business associations.

To optimize human health and prevent chronic diseases, we need healthy communities that are:

- safe, compact and walkable;
- readily available options for active transportation;
- efficient public transportation systems;
- preservation of natural surroundings and wildlife;
- easily accessible services;
- social gathering areas; and
- greenspaces that are easily accessible by foot, bicycle, wheelchair or buggy.

Research + Observations

1. Recent Workshops
2. Case Examples
The built environment affects health

(a quick overview)
We are now making the connections

Health Characteristics Strategies

Policy Decisions
Parks, Urban Form, Transportation System, and Land Use

Built Environment
Access to Goods and Services
Travel Choices
Street Design

Health Indicators
Physical Activity Levels, Time spent driving, Access to Nutrition and Healthcare
Pollution, Stress

Health Outcomes
Diabetes, Obesity
Traffic Accidents, Respiratory Illness
Crime, Mental Health Issues

Raimi and Associates and others.
Our communities

100 years ago we built this

now we build car dependence

Photos: Paul Young
Is car-dependency connected to health?

Obesity falls sharply with increased walking, cycling, and transit use.

Inactivity and obesity linked to:

- **Diabetes (increased 70% over last 10 years*)**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Heart, Kidney and Vascular disease**
- **Strokes**
- **Blindness**

*2007, *The Lancet Medical Journal*, Dr. Lorraine Lipscombe, a research fellow with Toronto's Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and the lead author.
Pedestrian and cyclist safety

In Canada over 400 pedestrian and cyclist fatalities a year (since 1992) Statistics Canada

A CHILD PEDESTRIAN IS KILLED BY A VEHICLE IN CANADA 60 TIMES A YEAR.

Source: Safe Kids Canada
www.safekidscanada.ca
Community Design & Equity

About 1/3 of North Americans do not drive

*Those hit hardest hit . . .*

- Elderly
- People under 16
- Low income
- Cost of a car: $7,000 / year
- Young are driving less
Inclusive communities have:

• a range of housing types for a range of incomes, life stages and needs. Supports social capital

By-laws:

• Parking = $,
• prohibit conversions
Development patterns **Equity**

Affordability drops with car dependent communities - especially in rural areas

Housing + Transportation Costs 45%+ of household income

http://htaindex.cnt.org/
Climate Change

Transportation causes 1/3 of total GHG in Canada and they’re rising. Sprawl = more greenhouse gas emissions.


“Canada has more km of roads per person than almost any other nation.”  Stats Can Stats Can 2006
Development patterns: Food security

- Loss of farmland
- Access to food / food production
Mental Health – “The Geography of Nowhere”  

Health  
Characteristics  
Strategies  

Where are we?  
Who are we?  
Loss Culture & Loss of Control

book: James Howard Kunstler

Photos: Paul Young

Influencing change in the built environment Oct 22, 2013
Paul Young, public space workshop
Access to recreation and nature
Characteristics of healthy built communities
Characteristics of healthy built communities

- Complete communities
- Complete streets
- Connectivity
- Built form / urban design
Density

- “Compact Development”
- Infill Development, e.g., (Brown and Grey)
- Preserve farmland
- Make transit possible
- Reduce infrastructure costs
- Pay for libraries, parks, recreation amenities, etc.

Mixed Use

- Places to work, play, live
- Minimize travel distances
- Have walkable destinations
Mixed use

- Mix of housing types
- Retail, groceries, Food
- Restaurants
- Transit
- Work
- Public services (schools, parks, recreation, trails, library, within 5 – 10 minutes walk/bike
### Density & transit

**Bridgeport, CT**

**Density:** 17.7 units / acre (43 u.p.h.)

- **Good bus service**

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**Source:** the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy [http://www.lincolninst.edu/index-high.asp](http://www.lincolninst.edu/index-high.asp)
Health

Complete communities ~ **Complete streets** ~ Connectivity ~ Built form & urban design

Characteristics

Safety!

Strategies

Carrall St. Vancouver

Saguenay Region, Quebec
The good news on injuries and deaths . . .

In 25 years,

- 80% reduction in Germany,
- 70% in Netherlands
Connectivity street patterns and short blocks

Image from: New Date for a New Era, SMARTRAQ Findings, Dr. Lawrence Frank, Univ. British Columbia
## Health

Complete communities ~ Complete streets ~ **Connectivity** ~ Built form & urban design

### Characteristics

- Health Characteristics

### Strategies

- Health Strategies

*Photo: Paul Young*
**Characteristics**

Complete communities ~ Complete streets ~ **Connectivity** ~ Built form & urban design

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**Health**

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**Connect trails . . .**

not just for recreation - for every days trips as well
How do the buildings contribute?
Preserving a sense of place

Map/preserve cultural assets
Reconnect to “place”
- Through arts
- Natural heritage
- Cultural heritage
Parks & Open Space

- Linked to physical activity
- Linked to mental health

Image: Toronto Community Housing via National Post article
Many context-specific ideas

**Rural**
- Paved shoulders
- Trails connecting towns
- Preserve farmland / natural features
- Cluster Development
- Protect farmland / natural areas
- Transit oriented development

**Suburban**
- Decide on big box strategy
- Smart Growth / Grey / Brown Field development
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Bike lanes
- Reduced lane widths / sidewalks
- Mix uses / infill
- Transit
- Create town gateways
- Speed controls

**Urban**
- Infill / intensify development
- Sidewalks / bike lanes
- Safety downtown - activity
- Enhance public spaces
- Streetscaping
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Create town gateways
Retro-fit for mixed use and density

How do we foster the will to move forward?

Source: Dwell competition “Re-burbia” Designs by Galina Tahchieva
Who / what shapes our communities now?

Need to collectively shape our communities
Influencing change

Promoting engagement in shaping the built environment
How can communities influence change re: what we build?

A “Healthy Communities Approach”

1. Wide community participation
2. Multi-sectoral partnerships
3. Healthy public policy

Source: OHCC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typically concerns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Entry Points”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Environment / children’s future</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preservation of farmland &amp; rural character</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want affordable recreation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safe streets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commute time 63 minutes and growing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want options (transportation, housing, work)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Want independence / age in place</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Re-connecting communities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Change – often opposed to redevelopment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ** NOT always** “sustainable healthy communities”</td>
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</tbody>
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Typical Engagement Options

1. Confront / Challenge

2. Use Existing Opportunities

3. Create a vision and plan
Example 1. Confrontation
East Toronto Community Coalition Vs. Big Box Retail
# O.M.B. Decision

- Provided health impact evidence
- Board looked at “employment lands” policy
- Concern about “Retail contagion”
- Not mentioned: Good jobs, health & safety, car dependant land use, OPPI Healthy Community handbook (smart growth)

## Considerations in hind sight

- Importance of “employment lands” policies – get them right
- Incorporated coalition of partners (with some $ and a lawyer) - costly
- Lots of media coverage, events
- Access to experts
- Political opposition to the project
Example 2.
Use Existing opportunities (Environmental Assessment)
Consulting Landscape Architect – trees, walks, trails, crossings

Started as a “maintenance” discussion.

Opposition to demolition! Needed more public / political support.

Enhanced the existing E.A. process (facilitated by 3rd party)
Make it easy to participate

Where would you rather be?
Build an understanding
Tools: to understand the context: forums, tours, walk-abouts
Help people understand health impacts
Facilitated workshops and an advisory group.

Public demanded the scope be expanded to include “active transportation”. Staff supported.
Make the opportunities we have better, meaningful

- Accessible (go to people if needed, interpret)
- Facilitate, record & demonstrate how input is used
- Outline possible health impacts
- Inspire
## Example: Identify engagement opportunities

### 1. Status of Municipal Plans and Policies (* indicates opportunity for engagement) – All information is current as of October 2012

- **Official Plan**
  - Updated, Being Amended, Adopted
    - Underwent consolidation in 2010 and currently contains all text and maps approved as of December 31, 2010
    - Regional Niagara Approval November 18, 2011; in full force and effect except for 2 areas under appeal
    - Adopted in 2006
  - New plan approved by OMB May 12, 2012
  - Approved by Region October 2011, Adopted by local Council November 16, 2009
  - Updated in 2010
  - Approved October 6, 1993; Amended to May 2011
  - Underwent office consolidation in 2004; undergoing visioning and consultation for new plan
  - New OP adopted April 2, 2012 by local Council; currently undergoing Regional review

- **Transportation Plans**
  - **Transportation Master Plan**
    - Developing AT Secondary Plan – October 2012
  - **A.T. Plan (Trails Plan, Cycling Plan, Pedestrian Plan)**
    - Regional Bicycle Plan

Source: Healthy Living Niagara & Integrated Community Planning (Region of Niagara)
Proactive Engagement
public health / health centre / planning / recreation / works / community
working together
Example 3.
Proactive - Workshops on health & built environment

1. research & survey – Identify barriers, priorities

**Figure 11: Knowledge of a Walkable Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>Familiar with the term &quot;walkable community&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Familiar with walkON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>Heard of term and correctly identified at least 1 of 5 components</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey: Haldiman Norfolk

2. Workshops to:
   - educate
   - partner
   - plan
   - mobilize

3. Promote walkable communities + engage in planning decisions

[Promotional photos and graphs]

Photo: Healthy Living Niagara
Active Transportation Workshops

• Bring stakeholders together
• Learn & share info (assets)
• Identify common goals & strategy (a plan)
• Commitments - action
• Outcome: establish ongoing committees
Healthy Living Niagara now has 7 A.T. committees active out of 12 municipalities

The committees:

- Conduct outreach and education
- Advise on plans & policy
- Advise on accessibility issues
- Identify upcoming policy and capital projects . . .

Source: Healthy Living Niagara
Health as planning partner

Public Health great at:

- Heath impacts of planning decisions
- Engagement
- Community capacity building (support for groups)
- Fostering partnerships
- Healthy public policy / Equity issues

- Understand **community development** & **determinants of health** (including environment)
Healthy Community process

- Wide community participation
- Multi-sectoral partnerships
- Healthy public policy
- Government commitment

Source: Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Planning tools to create healthier built environments

Brian Dick
planner, Region of Niagara
Summary & Discussion

1. Paul Young, public space workshop
   a) What we build affects health
   b) Characteristics of a Healthy Built Environment are Known
   c) Engagement in Planning - examples

2. Brian Dick, planner, Region of Niagara
   Planning tools to create healthier built environments

3. Discussion
Discussion

• Planning issues that would bring participants to the table in your community?

• Policy Gaps

• Examples of engagement in planning?
Information Resources

- Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute [www.cflri.ca](http://www.cflri.ca)
- Provincial Planning Policy [www.placestogrow.ca](http://www.placestogrow.ca)
- Toronto Centre for Active Transportation – Complete Streets research and annual conference [http://www.torontocat.ca](http://www.torontocat.ca)
- Ontario Association of Landscape Architects [www.oala.ca](http://www.oala.ca)
- Ontario Professional Planners Association [www.ontarioplanners.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca)
Resources

- **Health** (what are the costs of not doing anything?)

- **Road re-construction** (develop Complete Streets policy that require space for pedestrians and cyclists on all new and re-built roads, **allocate 7%** of municipal transportation budget to AT)

- **Development** (parkland dedications – linked openspace system, urban design guidelines and requirements for r.o.w. improvements)

- **Recreation and leisure resources** (trails master plan for recreation and “a bag of milk”, active living, promoting health, “unscheduled informal and inexpensive” recreation opportunities are growing in popularity) typically outlined in recreation surveys.
RESOURCES: People and Partnerships
Committed people are a critical resource. Look for leadership and support in the municipal offices, private sector, N.G.O.’s and in other stakeholder groups.

Other Potential Resources
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund for municipal governments (for plans, feasibility studies and capital projects).
www.sustainablecommunities.fcm.ca

The Provincial Municipal Investment Initiative (revenue from the gas tax)

Upper tier regional “partnership plan” funds for transportation infrastructure.

Bicycle Trade Association of Canada – provides grants for advocacy initiatives.
http://www.btac.org/grant_program.html

Transport Canada’s Moving on Sustainable Transportation grants program
http://www.tc.gc.ca/programs/environment/most/aboutmost.htm