Evaluating Impacts of Development Proposals

Paul Young public space workshop & Heidi Matthews Transition Town Erin
supports community engagement in creating healthy communities

Government & non-profits can request a service

www.hclinkontario.ca
Two-part series

Part 1: *Influencing Changes to the Built Environment*

Part 2. Today: *Evaluating Impacts of Development Proposals*

www.hclinkontario.ca
Objectives

• To increase participants understanding of
  – various planning polices designed to create a healthier built environment
  – other development evaluation tools

• Share Transition Erin’s experience

• Provide opportunities to discuss participants experience with evaluating developments
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) Recap from Part 1:
      • Health and built environment
      • Engagement opportunities
      • Planning tools for healthy communities
   b) Evaluating development proposals

2. Heidi Matthews, Transition Erin

3. Paul & Heidi wrap up / discussion
How many people participated in

Part 1: Influencing Changes to the Built Environment?

SURVEY
- Built environment affects health
- People want to bike and walk more
- Need to waken dormant support for active transportation amongst stakeholders and public
- Evaluation is one way to do that
Growing body of research
see resources

Need for a healthier built environment?

• Rising cost of chronic disease: “Today, health care sector spending accounts for 46 cents of every program dollar and could consume nearly 70 cents in 12 years” Ont. Med. Assoc’n.

• Sustainability: We rank near the top in per capita use of fossil fuels” Stats Can 2006

• Safety: in Canada over 400 pedestrian and cyclist fatalities / year (since 1992) Statistics Canada

• Quality of life for all: (housing affordability, people want to walk and bike more)

• Economic development: (attracting retaining populations)
Characteristics of a healthy built community
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
Inclusive communities provide a range of housing types for a range of incomes, life stages and needs.
Density & transit

Bridgeport, CT
Density: 17.7 units / acre (43 u.p.h.)

Good bus service

Review

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

Saguenay Region, Quebec

Safety!

Carrall St. Vancouver
We know what to do, retro-fit for healthier populations

How do we foster the will to move forward?

Source: Dwell competition “Re-burbia” Designs by Galina Tahchieva
SURVEY: Think about who/what shapes our communities now. Who is typically missing from the discussion?

Need to collectively shape our communities
How can a wide range of stakeholders influence what we build?
Typical Engagement Options

1. Confront / Challenge
2. Use Existing Opportunities
3. Create a vision and plan
Create partnership opportunities

1. Land use planning
2. Transportation infrastructure

VISION
Health
Sustainable

Public Health
Recreation
Parks
Planning
Works
Economic Development
Local Business
Development Industry
Schools
Non-profits
Healthy Communities Approach

• Community/citizen engagement
• Multi-sectoral collaboration
• Political Commitment
• Healthy public policy
• Asset-based Community Development

Source: Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition [www.ohcc-ccso.ca]
Evaluating Development Proposals

1. Using Policy
2. Emerging Tools
• Healthy? Not so healthy?

• Planners do this everyday – “healthy community” increasingly important

• Provincial and Council endorsed policies - public process
Measure proposal against existing policy

- Planners will write report using policy, consult & make recommendation to council

- Developers will examine policy (and market demographics) – need certainty & clarity

- In disputes, OMB will use too!
Planning policy

Planning tools for healthy communities

See also Webinar Series Part 1. Brian Dick – Planner with the Region of Niagara

(posted on OHCC Website)
Municipal Strategic Plan
• Often with new council
• Sets goals and actions
• Monitors implementation

Vibrant Neighbourhoods
Neighbourhoods are at the heart of what makes a city great. They are where we live. Where children play. Where we return after a long day. Where we connect most closely with other citizens.

Burlington will create and improve neighbourhoods in harmony with the natural environment. Neighbourhoods can be new or established surveys, condos, rural communities and everything in between. It’s about making our neighbourhoods as self-contained and “people friendly” as possible.

The future we’re striving for:
1. Ensure that neighbourhoods and commercial areas, including the downtown, are safe and accessible places to live and gather for activities
2. Increase the number of people who cycle, walk and use public transit for recreation and transportation
3. Protect rural communities from urban development, including the intrusion of new highways or quarries

How will we measure success?
• Residents are actively involved in community life
• Our natural heritage and urban-rural boundaries are protected

What will it look like?
• Burlington is seen as one of the best places to live
• We’re known as a safe community
• Burlington’s downtown and neighbourhoods are very “livable”
• There are fewer cars on the roads because more people are using public transit, walking or cycling
• Walking or cycling to public places is easily done
• Our parks are inviting and people-friendly
Sustainability Plan
- a public visioning process
- use global indicators
- gas tax

Sustainable Niagara Vision: 8 Goals
Priority Indicators

- Indicator Species Abundance
- Average Daily Vehicular Travel Distance
- Walkability
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Annual Gross Farm Receipts
- Access to Nutritious Food Basket
- Economic Diversification
- Living Wage
- Participation in Community Activities
- Volunteerism
- Voter Turnout in Municipal Elections
- Physical and Mental Health

How do you measure it?

There are several methods for measuring walkability. One way of calculating walkability is by measuring the percentage of dwelling units that have comfortable or convenient walking access to services and amenities within 400 metres.

Secondary Indicators

- Reasonable access to public transit (reasonable access is considered 400 metres or approximately a 10-minute walk)
- Ratio of the total length of roads to the total length of sidewalks
- Number/length of trails and paths
Official Plans

• Must conform to provincial policy: e.g., Places to Grow
  
  – Density – 40% Infill “brown fields” (former industrial) and “grey fields” (strip malls, parking lots)

• Support Downtowns, Transit, Walking and Cycling
Transportation Plans

Healthy Communities

- Promote cycling and walking and support transit services in residential neighbourhoods and employment areas
- Provide a transportation system that supports a healthy and active lifestyle and addresses user safety and security
- Support a more compact urban form with land use intensification and transit - supportive nodes and corridor development

The Road to Change Halton Region Transportation Master Plan 2031
Transportation Plans  Municipal “complete streets” policy

All new and reconstructed roads will accommodate active transportation SO THAT even the most vulnerable - children, elderly, and persons with disabilities - can travel safely within the public right of way. Adapted from: City of Chicago Complete Streets Policy
Trails Plan
Active Transportation Plan
Recreation Master Plan
Secondary Plans & Community Improvement Plans (community scale)

• E.g., Waterfronts, brownfields/industrial lands
  – Vision for revitalizing older areas
  – Identify improvements
  – Incentives for private investment
Secondary Plans

Mixed Use, Denser, Connected, Walkable

“Transit oriented development”

“Smart growth”
Green Development Standards

Low use of:

Energy
Water
Sewage
Land
Infrastructure

Developers say “We need supportive by-laws”

Neptis Foundation
Urban Design Guidelines

- Public realm & open space
- Streetscaping, sidewalk, trees, parking (bikes and cars)

Source: City of Toronto
Sustainable Open Space Guidelines

Habitat & Biodiversity

Groundwater re-charge

Permeable paving
May be out of date. Developers say “We need supportive by-laws”
Neptis Foundation

http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=7024
Environmental Assessments

Gardiner East / Lakeshore Blvd.: before

Large Infrastructure / roads

Typically evaluate options - impacts
High level of participation enhanced the existing E.A. process

Explored health impacts
Facilitated “walk-shops” to review / evaluate options

Public demanded the scope be expanded to include “active transportation”. Staff supported.

Important to show what’s possible & get people involved
Municipal Planning Policy

- Your Municipality may have some or all of these
- May have outdated policy or by-laws
- Engagement opportunity – policy updates

- May deter engagement – overwhelming
- May not attract participants
- You may want to start an evaluation process to engage your community
Emerging tools

To support community engagement
Starting the conversation . . .

1. Land developments
   - Is proposed / existing land use car-dependent?

2. Road Improvements
   - Is road design “complete”

Look at:
- Density / Mix
- Proximity to transit
- Parking (Ratio)
- Trip generation & mode
- Urban Design (the street edge)

Look at:
- Sidewalk widths
- Bike lanes (separated?)
- Traffic lane width (minimize)
- Speed, volume of road
- General comfort for all users
- Parking (bikes and cars)
A Citizen’s Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development: How to Tell if Development is Smart and Green

Community assessment tools

- Various checklists and tools (West Coast Environmental Law http://wcel.org/checklists)
Healthy Development Index

Complex quantitative evaluation

“Needs qualitative as well as quantitative analysis”

HDI Indicators

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Secondary Plans</th>
<th>Plans of Subdivision</th>
<th>Site Plans</th>
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<td>2 Service Proximity</td>
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<td>Transit Provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity to Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Land Use Mix</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Ground Floor Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mix of Housing Types</td>
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</tbody>
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Starting the conversation . . .

- Evaluate existing conditions
- Can be component of larger process
- Checklists, score cards
- Accessible
How walkable is your community?

Take a 15 minute walk along a road. Walk on the sidewalk or path to visit a store, business, school or person. Then fill out this checklist.

Step 1: Write about your walk
City ____________________________
Postal Code ______________________
Where did you walk? I walked from ____________________________
to ____________________________
along ____________________________
When was your walk? The date was __dd/mm/yyyy__ □ AM □ PM
What were the conditions during your walk?
☐ Daylight ☐ Rain ☐ Snow ☐ Extreme cold or heat

Step 2: Think about your walk
Now, please think about your walk. Please put a check in each box that you agree with.
How easy was your walk?
☐ I could use sidewalks, trails or paths to get where I was going
☐ There were sidewalks on both sides of the street
☐ Nothing blocked the sidewalks, like bushes or garbage
☐ The sidewalks were wide enough so I could walk beside another person
☐ I could easily use the sidewalks if I was in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller
☐ The sidewalks were well maintained
If the sidewalks need to be fixed, please tell us what is wrong, and where to find the problem:

How safe did you feel?
☐ It was very clear where I could walk and where cars or bikes were supposed to be
☐ It was easy to read the signs
☐ Crosswalks were well marked
☐ At crosswalks, I had enough time to cross the street
☐ Cars stopped at crosswalks and signal lights
☐ Cars were driving at a safe speed
☐ At night, the sidewalks, trails and paths were well lit
If you did not check any of these boxes, please explain why:

Was your walk enjoyable?
☐ The route I took was pleasant and inviting
☐ I saw plants, trees and gardens on my walk
☐ If I needed to stop, there were benches or other places
☐ I enjoyed the walk because there were interesting things
☐ It was easy to get to the shops and businesses
☐ The shops and businesses were neat and tidy, and worth
If you did not check any of these boxes, please explain why:

What people and places did you see?
☐ I saw a mix of homes, businesses, stores and schools
☐ I passed a mix of apartments, attached houses and single family homes
☐ I passed windows, not just walls and fences
☐ I met people on the street
If you did not check any of these boxes, please explain why:
Starting the conversation . . .

Community based research

- Traffic counts
- Learning about design standards
- Check lists, walkabouts

Dave Meslin
Mez Dispenser blog
meslin.wordpress.com
Community based research
Use local research
How does plan meet local needs?
“Community Pictures”

Trent Hills - Community Consultations - Question: What are the TOP 3 ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE ADDRESSED?

- Transportation: 36.2%
- Youth Issues: 21.3%
- Affordable Housing: 17.0%
- Communication: 17.0%
- Drug Abuse: 8.5%
Pre and post construction evaluation
Pilot Projects
Community works with professionals to try out ideas
Example

Transition Erin - Heidi Matthews
Discussion

Has YOUR community engaged on evaluating development or road designs?

Any tools or techniques?
Thanks!

PaulYoung@PublicSpaceWorkshop.ca
Information Resources

- Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition: *What makes a healthy community?*
- Heart and Stroke Foundation Canada / CLASP and Urban Public Health Network
- Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute [www.cflri.ca](http://www.cflri.ca)
- Residential Intensification Case Studies, Canada Mortgage and Housing
- Provincial Planning Policy [www.placestogrow.ca](http://www.placestogrow.ca)
- Canada Walks – portal for ASRTS, Walk Friendly Ontario and much more
  [http://www.canadawalks.ca/](http://www.canadawalks.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 Institute [www.ontarioplanners.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca)
Health and the Built Environment


- See also references and links on slide images
Finding funding 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
Ontario Planning Policy

Land Use Planning

Communities that are well-designed and planned attract jobs and investment. Ontario’s simple and streamlined land use planning system gives municipalities the major role in planning decisions. The ministry identifies and protects provincial interests, as well as promoting sound infrastructure planning, environmental protection, economic development and safe communities.