

# Creating Supportive Environments:

## Health and Planning in the Region of Peel



**David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC, FFPH**  
Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel

**November 7, 2013**

# Historical Relationship between Urban Planning and Health

- City planning was originally driven by the need for sanitation systems and to keep noxious land uses separate
- These practices led to vast improvements in public health



# Current Relationship between Urban Planning and Health

Since that time, the fields of planning and public health have **diverged**

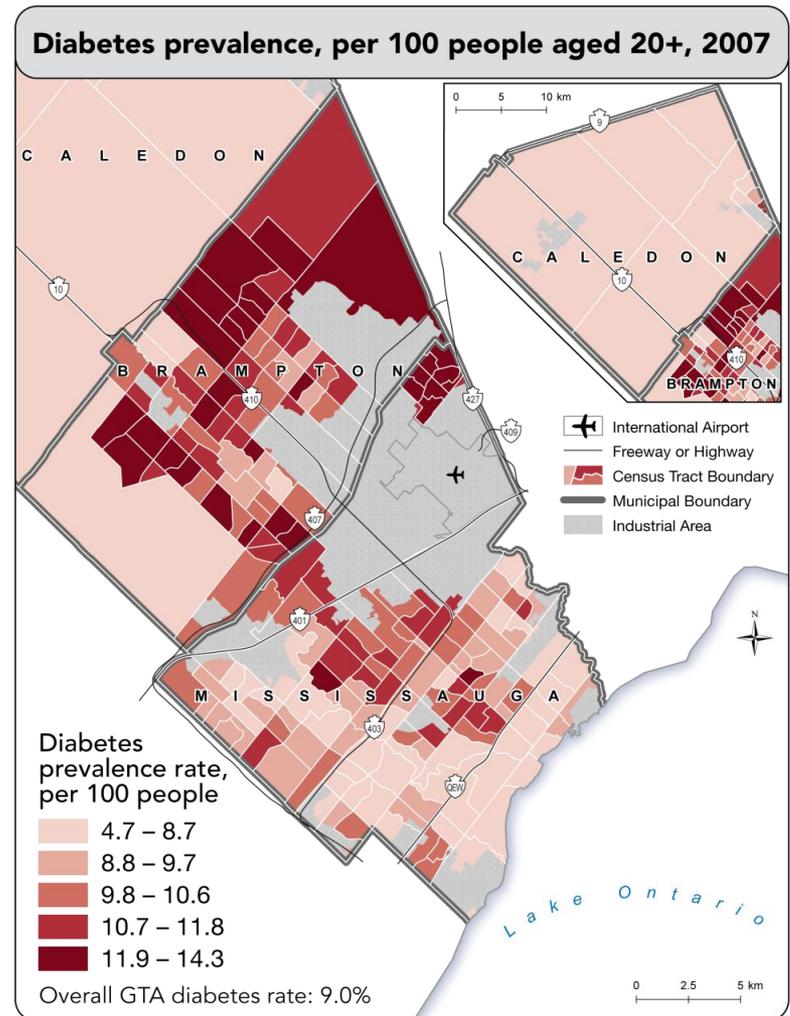
- Economic freedom and a desire for space led to the creation of **suburbs**, where **large lot sizes** and **auto-dependency** contribute to:
  - Low levels of physical activity
  - Decreased use and availability of public transit
- Lead to an **obesogenic environment**
  - Increased rates of chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes



# Diabetes in Peel

- Diabetes prevalence rates:
  - Peel Region 9.8
    - Mississauga 9.46
    - **Brampton 11.34**
    - Caledon 7.67
  - Greater Toronto 9.04
  - Ontario 8.28

Source: Ontario Diabetes Database 2007  
(Age and Sex standardized)

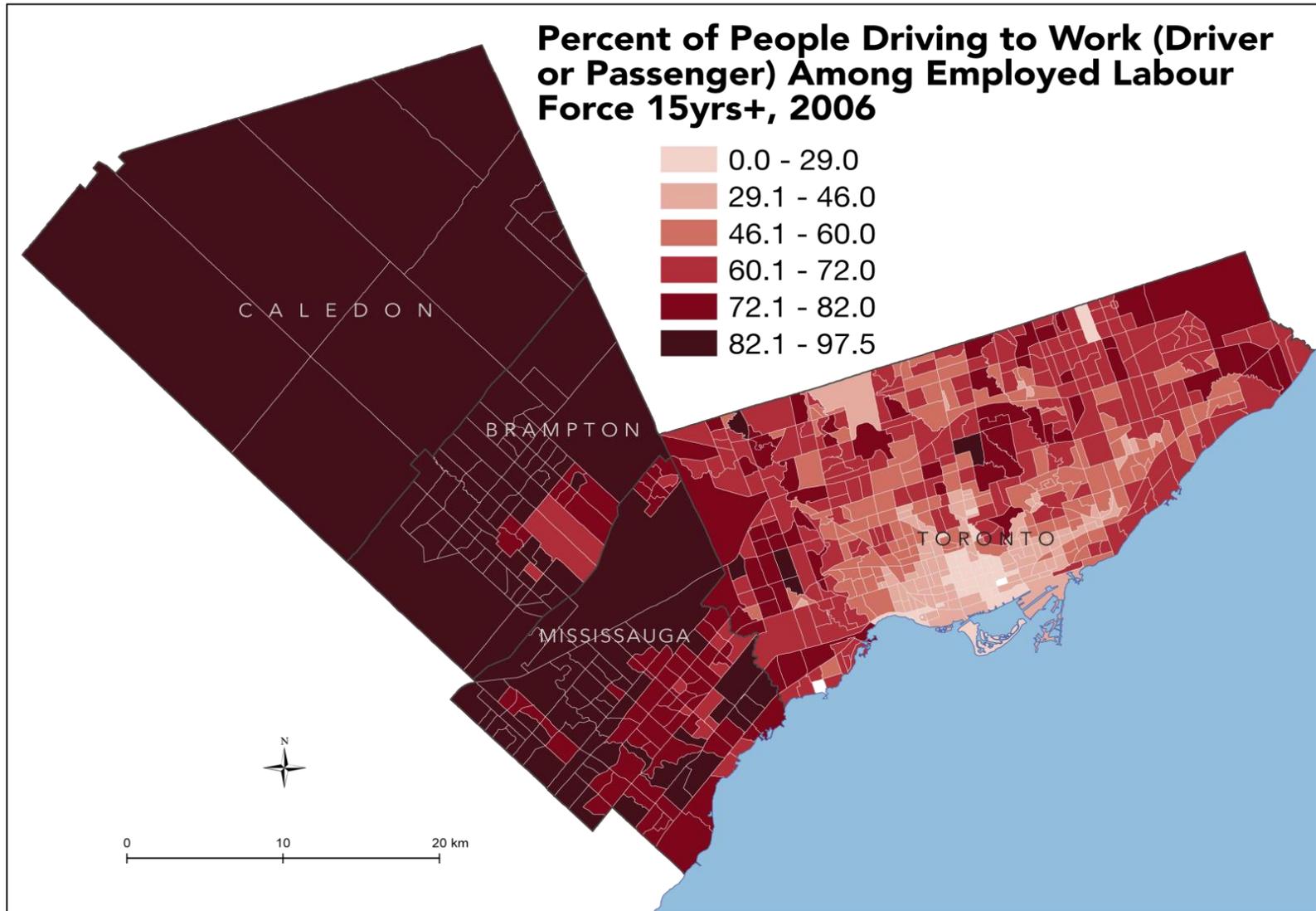




# Increased risk of Diabetes

South Asians 3 to 5 times the risk

# Sedentary Behaviour in Peel

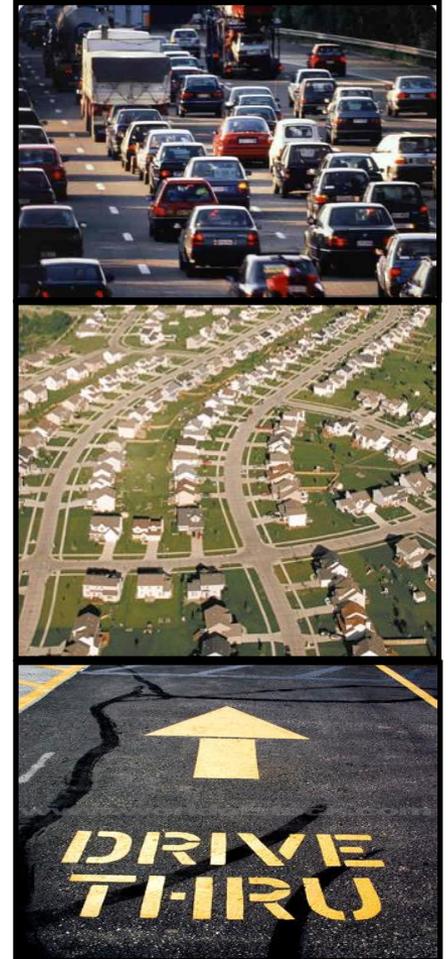


$1/10 \rightarrow 1/6$



# Planning and Health

- Increasing evidence to demonstrate the link between **health and built environment**
- Live in **auto-dependent, 'obesogenic'** environments
- Aware that **supportive environments** are key to maintaining healthy lifestyles
- Importance of **utilitarian walking**, not just structured, leisure-time physical activity



# Evidence to Support Health Promoting Built Environments

A growing body of evidence demonstrates a link between health and the built environment



## Example:

A recent study found that for every **5% improvement in the walkability** of a neighbourhood, adults who reside there tend to:

- Walk and cycle 32% more,
- Have a lower body mass index, and
- Enjoy reduced pollution from automobiles.

# Health Promoting Built Environments – What People Want

- Access to recreation
- Trails and bike paths
- Pedestrian areas
- Tree cover
- Public open space

- Active transportation
- Proximity of amenities
- Human scale
- Age-friendly design

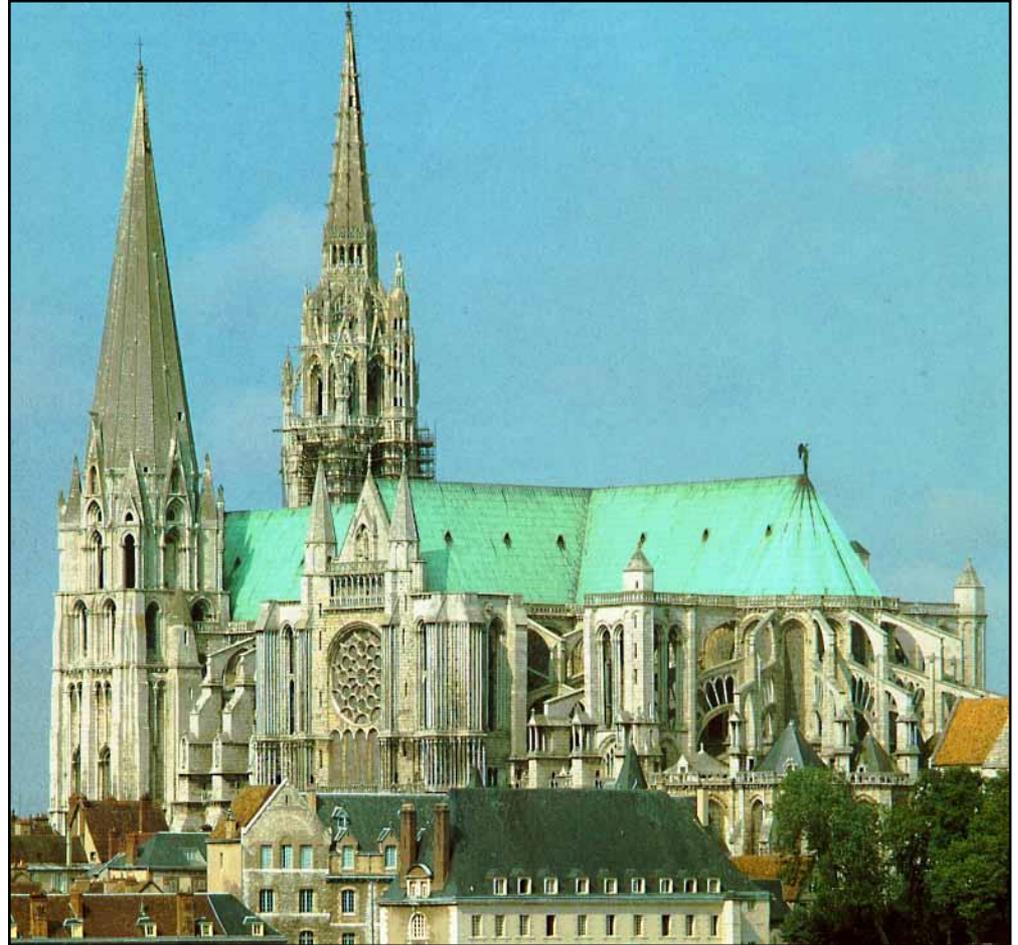


# Partnerships with Planning

- Develop 'rules and tools' to:
  - Better define healthy development standards
  - Encourage better integrated land use and transportation planning decisions within our jurisdictions.
- Work with municipal and regional planning departments to develop processes and policies that facilitate the application of healthy development standards



# Creating Supportive Environments



**When we build, let us think that we build for ever.**

- John Ruskin