Region of Peel

Health Background Study

DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTH BACKGROUND STUDY FRAMEWORK

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Prepared by The Planning Partnership

In Association With:

Region of Peel
Toronto Public Health
CLASP
Healthy Canada by design
Preface

1.0 What is the Health Background Study Framework?
The following compilation of documents comprehensively details the key deliverables produced as part of joint initiative between Region of Peel Public Health and Toronto Public Health to develop a framework for municipalities to establish a mechanism to integrate considerations of health impacts into the land use development approvals process. Building on the extensive work undertaken by the Region of Peel to develop the Healthy Development Index, the primary outcomes of this initiative include a stakeholder-tested Health Background Study Terms of Reference/User Guide, and a corresponding Implementation Strategy that provides recommendations on implementation responsibilities and how/where in the planning process the Health Background Study requirement best fits.

2.0 Study Structure
The Terms of Reference and supporting User Guide are the product of an exceptionally collaborative working relationship between the Region of Peel Public Health and Toronto Public Health Departments, working with a team of professional planning consultants. In order to get a broader perspective on the local context and professional practices of those who would be implementing such a planning requirement and its impact, dozens of interviews were conducted with local and regional municipal public health and planning staff, private development interests and private planning consultants. The stakeholder consultation process included:

- **Key informant interviews**: to establish a local and professional knowledge base from which to scope the framework for the Terms of Reference.

- **Workshop 1 (Nov./Dec. 2011)**: to review the draft Terms of Reference and provide a forum for discussion to further its development.

- **Workshop 2 (March 2011) – Feasibility Workshop**: to test the revised Terms of Reference and User Guide in the evaluation of actual/hypothetical development scenarios and to discuss overall feasibility/usability and potential modifications to the draft Terms of Reference.

The complete Health Background Study Framework ensures that this complex process is done in a way that ensures that healthy design is integrated throughout the evolution of a project. From major area regeneration schemes or extensions to small applications for infill development, individual buildings or spaces, the Health Background Study Framework can provide both private developers and the evaluating team with the triggers it requires to ensure that the core elements/criteria are understood and that a comprehensive assessment of a project’s healthy design potential can occur. Building on the Region of Peel’s
Health Development Index, this package of documents includes the following:

- **Situational Assessment** – provides an overview of the current policy context in Ontario in relation to the linkage between public health and land use planning, while examining current work at the municipal level to implement Health Impact Assessments. It examines existing municipal studies required as part of the development process. It also reviews how health-related initiatives are being implemented by other municipal jurisdictions, to inform the development of the health background studies framework and the identification of its core elements.

- **Health Background Study Terms of Reference and User Guide** – the Health Background Study (HBS) Terms of Reference is intended to serve as a 'checklist' to evaluate the success of new developments in achieving minimum standards of community health and a forum to encourage applicants to justify their development decisions. The aim of the User Guide is to support the HBS Terms of Reference by giving additional information corresponding to each of the key healthy community design elements that promote higher development standards for practical application in new development and re-development within existing communities.

- **Evaluation Report** – provides an overview of the feedback received and lessons learned from the Feasibility Workshop, held on March 4, 2011 to pilot test the applicability, usability and application of the new Health Background Study (HBS) User Guide in the context of different development typologies.

- **Implementation Strategy** – builds on the User Guide by providing the Region of Peel a game plan for implementing the Health Background Study, should it chose to do so. It presents the requirements for a supportive legislative environment, specific procedural details such as who does what and when, and a plan for monitoring the implementation and success of the Health Background Study.

### 3.0 How to use this document

The Health Background Study Framework has been constructed in such a way that it can be read as a single coherent narrative, tracing the healthy design qualities of a project from first principles to specific features, but at the same time it can be dipped into on a topic-by-topic basis and used as an education tool, or to inform and augment current and future planning practices. Thus, throughout the report, there are many criteria and guideline values that should be considered in drawing up development proposals, as well as by the reviewer, evaluating these proposals. Different sections of the Terms of Reference and User Guide will be relevant to different types and scales of projects. In recognition of this, both of these documents provide direction on what aspects are applicable in different development typologies. In respect of significant area regeneration schemes, city extensions or new settlements, most of the material contained in this document package will be relevant. For smaller infill schemes, it is the case of extracting those items that are applicable in any given case. Remember, even the most straightforward infill scheme must have due respect for its site context and its overall contribution to the neighbouring urban structure.
Finally, this report could not have been written without the significant effort of both the Region of Peel and Toronto Public Health Project Teams. Their contribution has been invaluable and is greatly appreciated. We encourage everyone to carefully review this document. It is our intention, that the criteria and supporting information in this framework will serve as a road map that will lead to the development of communities that integrate a concern for health and sustainable living at their core.

In the preparation of the Health Background Study Framework, sincere gratitude is extended to the following dedicated individuals, who were vital in its development:

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