



The "[built environment](#)" encompasses human-made or modified physical surroundings in which people live, work, and play. It includes our homes, schools, workplaces, parks, business areas, electric transmission lines, waste disposal sites, and includes transportation and food systems.

The built environment is shaped by land-use policies and regulations, planners, developers, elected officials and engaged community members.

How neighbourhoods are planned and built has a direct [impact on the physical, mental, and social health of its residents](#). For example, making active transportation convenient and safe has been linked to improved healthy weights and mental health, as well as to increased physical activity and social connectivity. OHCC provides workshops and consultations on health and the built environment, and promotes the engagement of communities in integrating health promotion, chronic disease prevention and community planning strategies to create healthier communities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Infrastructure for walking and cycling
- Safe streets
- Compact mixed-use development
- Affordable, accessible housing
- Access to and availability of healthy foods for all
- Efficient, safe, interconnected transit systems
- Rural and community transportation options
- Neighbourhoods where people can easily connect with each other and day-to-day services
- Natural environments are protected and incorporated

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Health Impacts

The Canadian Medical Association. Policy on the Built Environment and Health http://bit.ly/cma_built_env

Media Policy Centre. Designing Healthy Communities http://mediapolicycenter.org/mpc_initiative/designing-healthy-communities/

Active Transportation

Toronto Centre for Active Transportation www.tcat.ca

Share the Road Cycling Coalition www.sharetheroad.ca Advocating for safer cycling conditions in Ontario, conference

Canada Walks <http://canadawalks.ca/>

Active and Safe Routes to School <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>

Streetfilms <http://www.streetfilms.org/> A wide range of short films on transportation improvements

Canadian Best Practices Portal. Built Environment and Active Transportation. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1Aiq9vH>

Land-Use Planning

Complete Streets Canada <http://completestreetsforcanada.ca/> A showcase of complete streets in Canada

Neptis Foundation <http://www.neptis.org/> research and advocacy regarding smart growth in Ontario

The Green Belt Foundation <http://www.greenbelt.ca/> advocates for preservation of Ontario's green belt

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs <https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php> Growth plans and resources

HC Link Resources. Built Environment. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2ouAh63>

Canadian Institute of Planners. Annotated Bibliography. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2EW9g5v>



Established in 1992, OHCC is a registered charity whose mission is to create innovative solutions to meet community challenges and build strong, equitable, and sustainable communities through education, engagement, and collaboration. OHCC provides consulting services, learning activities, project management and knowledge transfer and exchange services to organizations, partnerships and networks working to create healthier communities.