



A-Z OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF ONTARIO HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COALITION & BC HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SOCIETY

O - OFFICIAL PLAN

Official Plans can support healthy communities by including policies that address health-related issues such as the environment, safety, physical activity, sun safety, smoke-free spaces, healthy foods, and social cohesion and well-being.³

In 2018 Peterborough Public Health called for collaboration with planning professionals on OP recommendations to in areas such as:

- Healthy, complete, compact, and equitable communities
- Walkability
- Well-connected and safe active transportation network
- Affordable, high quality housing
- Agricultural capacity and agri-food sector
- Equitable access to healthy, local foods
- Infrastructure to support the local food system
- Accessibility and quality of green and open spaces
- Air quality and mitigations against heat⁴

What is an Official Plan?

In Canada, land use planning is governed by provincial legislation, such as Ontario's [Planning Act](#), which describes how land uses may be controlled, and provincial policies, such as Ontario's [Provincial Policy Statement](#) and the [Growth Plans](#). However, each municipality is required to have its own [Official Plan](#) (OP), which sets local planning policies that conform to the provincial policy and plans. An OP includes policies relating to infrastructure and services (e.g. roads, watermains, sewers, garbage dumps, parks). It also provides the framework for municipal zoning bylaws that set local regulations and standards. In Ontario, OPs must be updated at least every five years, and must have public input.¹

Local Food and Official Plans

Supporting local food addresses broader social, economic and environmental goals related to health, employment, climate change and greenhouse gases. In 2015 the Community Food Assessment Partners in Haliburton County commissioned research to determine how Official Plans might be amended in order to support the local food system, which consists of production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management. They found that OPs can influence all elements of the food system and recommended that OPs include support of local food and the food systems, food education, urban agriculture and the retention of agricultural lands.²

REFERENCES

¹Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. **Citizen's guide to land use planning.** <https://www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/official-plans>

²Haliburton County: The Food System and Official Plans, 2015. <https://bit.ly/2uBppG9>

³Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. **Healthy Community Design Policy for Official Plans.** <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/BuiltEnvironment/Healthydesign.aspx>

⁴Peterborough Public Health (2018). **Health in Official Plans: A Toolkit 2018 Submission to the County of Peterborough Official Plan Review.** <https://bit.ly/2I60MZT>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Healthy Communities by Design.

<https://www.healthycommunitiesbydesign.org/>

Ontario Professional Planners Institute. **Planning By Design: a healthy communities handbook.** <https://bit.ly/2uEWvow>

Medical Officers of Health In the GTHA. **Improving Health by Design in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area**

<https://bit.ly/2FivAx9>

Canadian Institute of Planners. Policy On Healthy Communities Planning. <https://bit.ly/2Bu6gJl>



Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des communautés en santé de l'Ontario



BC Healthy Communities
People. Place. Potential.



OHCC enables communities to create and sustain positive change through equitable community engagement, intersectoral partnerships, political commitment, healthy public policy, and asset-based community development.

BC Healthy Communities supports multi-sectoral groups to build their capacity to create healthy communities.