

February 19, 2010



The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier and Minister of Research and Innovation
Hepburn Block
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Re: Building Healthy Communities Together: Active and Alternative Transportation to Support Healthy Living in Grey Bruce

On February 19, 2010, at a regular Board of Health meeting for the Grey Bruce Health Unit, the Board passed the following resolution:

Resolution 2010-13

WHEREAS Health Canada recognizes that physical activity is essential for the health of all people at all life stages however only 53% of Grey Bruce residents are physically active; and

WHEREAS 62% of Grey Bruce residents are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS cardiovascular disease and cancer are preventable and are the leading causes of death in residents of Grey and Bruce Counties; and

WHEREAS motorized vehicle crashes are a preventable cause of injury and death and are the number one preventable cause of injury and death among children and youth in Grey Bruce; and

WHEREAS the number of falls in Grey Bruce is nearly double the provincial rate. Falls were significantly higher in number for all ages, but adults 65 and older represent a prominent difference between Grey Bruce and Ontario; and

WHEREAS over 3000 families in Grey and Bruce are considered low income (live below the poverty line) which may preclude them from owning a car thus negatively affecting a person's ability to find work, access public services or educational institutions and limit consumer and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS vehicle dependency is consistently identified as a major contributor to ill health in low density areas, due to poor air quality and reduced motivation for physical activity; and

WHEREAS the Ontario Medical Association's *Illness Cost of Air Pollution Model* estimates 93 premature smog related deaths occurred in 2005 within Grey Bruce; and

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WHEREAS vehicles and roadways contribute to water pollution through contaminants and chemicals that collect and wash away into ground or surface water; and

WHEREAS carpooling, cycling, walking or taking public transit can help improve mental health and counteract the negative effects of driving according to the Ontario College of Physicians; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health urge upper and lower tier municipalities to incorporate healthy public policy into official and master plans, bylaws, and land use planning approvals which supports increasing active and alternative transportation while reducing motor vehicle dependency

THAT policy decisions are made with special attention paid to creating access and equity for all residents, especially children, youth, and older adults, people with low or limited income and others who may normally be at a disadvantage

THAT an increase in active and alternative transportation and decrease in motor vehicle dependency may be accomplished by, but not limited to:

- Providing opportunities for and promoting intensification of residential and employment areas
- Providing opportunities for a mix of land uses where homes are in proximity to workplaces, shopping, entertainment and daily amenities
- Increasing the connectivity of and options for alternative transportation including public/mass transit, car pooling, walking, cycling, etc., both within and between municipalities and regions; and, where appropriate, provide and improve the necessary amenities to support alternative transportation (e.g. bicycle racks and storage in safe well-lit areas, benches for resting)
- Increasing walking and cycling opportunities through the development of a connected trail network and improving existing trail accessibility
- Improving sidewalk quality and connectivity throughout communities
- Improving safety and providing aesthetically pleasing built and natural environments for alternative transportation. This might be accomplished by creating or modifying playgrounds and green space, implementing traffic calming measures, creating bike lanes and retro-fitting existing infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian safety by requiring sidewalks in all development areas including residential, commercial, and industrial, creating raised pedestrian islands to ease street crossings, using pedestrian friendly traffic signals, reducing the widths of roads, driveways, and intersections, separating pedestrians from vehicles with curbs and street trees, and reducing vehicle speed

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Grey Bruce Health Unit will work with upper and lower tier municipalities to support the development of healthy public policy and will provide information to encourage individuals and organizations to use the infrastructure and services available.

FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario; Ontario Minister of Transportation; Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Ontario Minister of Health Promotion; Ontario Boards of Health; all Ontario Medical Officers of Health; Grey and Bruce County MP's and MPP's; Bruce County Council; Grey County Council; Bruce County Planning Department; Grey County Planning Department; Bruce County Transportation Department; Grey County Transportation Department; and Councils, Planning, and Works Departments of the Municipalities of Arran-Elderslie, Brockton, Kincardine, Northern Bruce Peninsula, South Bruce, Meaford, Grey Highlands, West Grey, Townships of Huron Kinloss, Georgian Bluffs, Chatsworth, Southgate, Towns of Saugeen Shores, South Bruce Peninsula, Blue Mountains, Hanover and City of Owen Sound.

Building Healthy Communities Together,

Original Signed by

Hazel Lynn, MD, FCFP, MHSc
Medical Officer of Health

HL/cf

Copies to:

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation
The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion
Larry J. Miller, MP Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound
Ben Lobb, MP Huron-Bruce
Helena Guergis, MP Simcoe-Grey
Bill Murdoch, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Carol Mitchell, MPP Huron-Bruce
Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey
Ontario Boards of Health
Ontario Medical Officers of Health
Bruce County Council, Planning Department and Transportation Department
Grey County Council, Planning Department and Transportation Department
Councils, Planning and Works Departments for All Grey and Bruce County
Municipalities

Attachment:

Backgrounder: Building Healthy Communities Together; Active And Alternative Transportation To Support Healthy Living In Grey Bruce