

The Healthy City Stewardship Centre

# Better Health Matters Insight Report

## **Table of Contents**

3	Dear Future Residents
4	A Message From the Healthy City Stewardship Centre
5	A Human-Centred Approach to Design
7	What is Health?
8	Our Community Strengths
10	<b>Towards Better Health</b>
11	Equity and Access For All
13	Investing in Future Generations
14	Mental Health and Social Support Networks
16	Partnerships to Enable Success
	Appendix
19	10 Design Principles

## **Dear Future** Residents



#### **Dear Future Residents:**

Welcome to our region, a community where you will feel safe, happy and healthy. It's not by accident that you found yourself here. We've built an inclusive global region that is leading on every measure of quality of life. A place that makes you healthier just because you live here.

We know that better health includes physical, mental and spiritual health. This is the reason we are striving to build a region that has a strong "Quality of Place", an idea that spans more than just health care – it means a region that is safe, inclusive and supports people in mind, body and spirit. A place where every person, from all walks of life, is welcomed, encouraged and supported to live

Our diversity is a strength in so many ways. We know that this strength is built both by celebrating our diversity and by finding common ground to share our experiences. We hope that our region will their best life. be a community that fertilizes your capacity to make human connections through our cultures, experiences and a belief that you are free to live as you choose. We hope that in every way you feel

a boldness and conviction from the people around you that you belong in our region.

We envision places to find common ground can be found throughout the region. We've created places to support community health by making it easy to get outdoors and participate in the community. We hope our senior residents thrive in the residence of their choice and remain active and connected to our community. We've made the community more accessible by improving transit,

We hope that you go for walks, ride bikes and enjoy nature. We encourage you to make time to experience the community and share a meal in a place that has the healthiest, tastiest and most interesting food choices in the entire country. A joyful life is in part connected to the ways we share and connect with each other. Take the time to know your neighbours, to have friends who care

Our hope is that we deliver the quality of care you deserve and give caregivers all the supports they about you, and to care about others. need. We have worked hard to support a holistic approach to health and improve inclusion, mental health, well-being, gender equality and poverty. We've created a health care system that is an interconnected network of people and partnerships that is easy to access and enhances your quality

We hope our children continue to benefit from an education system that supports them, encourages them to be a part of their community and provides and instills a lifelong love of learning. We envision affordable post-secondary education that provides our youth with the knowledge, skills and training needed to land a job they love. Through emerging technologies, we have found ways to be both cutting edge and connected with our humanity. We are sure there is more work to do, however, due to our efforts, we hope you live in a region where every resident feels they have equitable access to health care, support services and education. Where people, regardless of age and income, know

We hope that you have found an ordinary happiness in a place that supports your health in all ways their needs are prioritized. - a beautiful place you call home. In turn, we hope that you are involved and give back to your community. We planted seeds in 2017 to create a community where better health matters – we're

excited for you to see what grew.

Sincerely,

Better Health Matters Forum 2017 Participants

### A Message from the Healthy City Stewardship Centre

On June 15, 2017, the Healthy City Stewardship Centre hosted the Better Health Matters Forum at the new Hazel McCallion Campus at Sheridan College. Over 200 residents and community partners across 92 organizations in the Region of Peel came together to talk about building a healthier future for our community. The Healthy City Stewardship Centre also reached out to the youngest members of our community by asking 260 elementary school children from the Peel District School Board what they need to stay healthy.

United by a sense of collective responsibility at the forum, participants defined what "health" means to our community. Participants identified three key priorities that our community must focus on in order to create a region that supports the health and wellbeing of every resident: Equity and Access for All, Investing in Future Generations, and Mental Health and Social Support Networks.

We heard that building a healthy region will require community-wide collaboration and partnership, and that we all need to play a role and work toward a shared vision for the future. The Letter to Future Residents that begins this report was written by participants on the day, and is a declaration of what our community believes we are capable of achieving together.

This report outlines what our community believes is required to create this future. It identifies three key areas of focus where participants said we can have the greatest impact if we work together.

This letter and report should act as a guide to every resident, organization and community partner across the region, providing alignment, focus and a collective approach to building better health in the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel. Action is key to making progress on this vision. The Healthy City Stewardship Centre is asking each of you to make the following **Better Health Matters Community Commitment** as a step toward building this future together:

- 1. We commit to adopting the Letter to Future Residents and will post it publicly on our website or in our offices to act as a beacon to guide our work.
- 2. We commit to adopting this report in principle and will use it to guide our organization as we continue to align, where appropriate, the three key priorities into our strategic plan and daily work.
- 3. We commit to sharing back on the collective progress we have made towards advancing the three key priorities.
- 4. We commit to working with others on the three key priorities.

The Healthy City Stewardship Centre will support a report back to demonstrate the collective progress we have made.

At the Better Health Matters Forum, participants challenged us to make a collective commitment to build and support better health in the Region of Peel. Participants shared their hopes for our future residents, asserted their belief in the strength of our community and provided us with a roadmap for action. As both leaders and members of our community, we must make this community commitment. It is time for all of us to take action as we work together to create a healthier future for the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel.

Sincerely, on behalf of the participants,

Bill MacLeod



Michelle

Michelle DiEmanuele Chair, Healthy City Stewardship Centre

### A Human-Centred Approach to Designing for Better Health

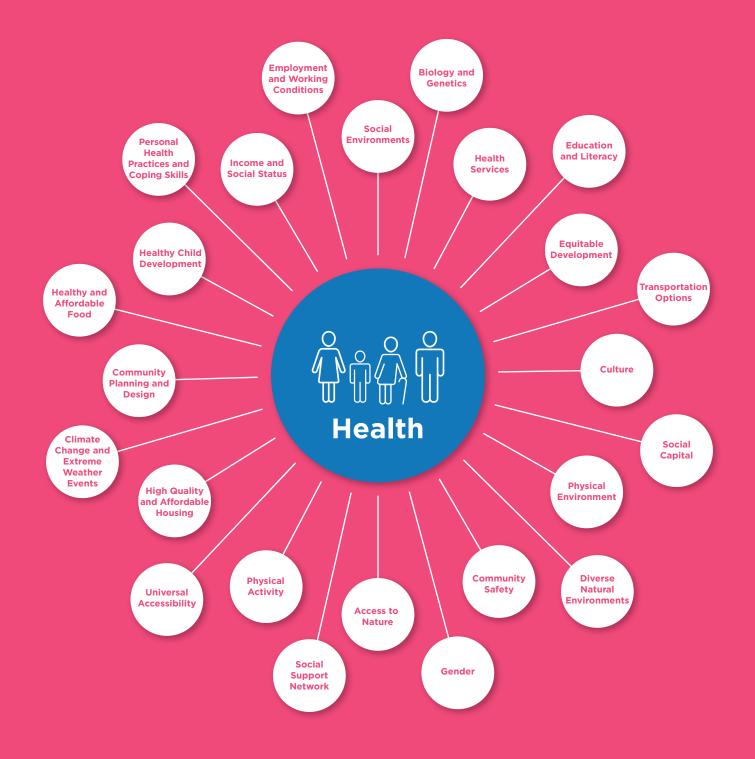
The Better Health Matters Forum was created using a human-centred design approach. Human-centred design prioritizes what is meaningful to the community, specifically addresses human need and mandates an approach that is respectful and accessible. As part of this approach, the forum featured

11 customized design workshops that addressed different aspects of health, as well as varied approaches and strategies that could be used to build better health in Mississauga and the Region of Peel.

The design workshops invited insights through thought-provoking questions and creative, hands-on response methods. Workshops were designed to allow for objective analysis, to provide opportunities to reflect, to foster thought and interaction and to gather data organically from the responses of participants. The structured participant flow and facilitation of the design workshops resulted in meaningful engagement and a fluid, comprehensive event experience that provided deep insight into what forum participants believe is central to creating a healthier future for residents of the Region of Peel.

The thousands of responses gathered over the course of the day also resulted in the creation of a set of 10 Design Principles that reflect what participants feel is important when building better community health. **Central among these principles is the belief that healthy communities are designed through engagement and partnership with residents, organizations and agencies across the community.**  The design principles are included as an appendix in this report to help facilitate a human-centred approach as organizations make the **Better Health Matters Community Commitment** to adopt the report and use the three key priorities to guide strategic plans and daily work.







Health is influenced by every aspect of our lives, from the work we do, how we feel about where we live, the food we eat, to the people we know. Health care, while important, is just a small part of what influences our health.

There are important social determinants that shape the health of individuals and communities. Social determinants are things like income, culture, transportation, housing, equitable access, gender, access to nature and healthy child development, among others.

Participants at the Better Health Matters Forum and children from our elementary schools told us that we need to think about health holistically in order to create a healthy community. Our residents, community partners and children collectively defined health as

"...a state of happiness and peace from a holistic balance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing which is supported by the people, places and services in our community."

Our community said that being healthy means wellness of body, spirit and mind and living with a sense of belonging and an absence of fear. Our community values green spaces, gathering places, nutritious food and physical activity. Our community believes better health happens when we live in a compassionate city, with safety nets when we need help, strong relationships and a supportive network.

The answers participants and children gave to the question "What is Health?" show that the people, services and places in our community connect and influence each other. Within this connectedness lies a powerful opportunity for our community to work together to co-create a vision and a plan to build better health in our region.

I need to eat, I need to plant trees, I need to play some gym games, I need to sleep and I need help.

- K, Grade 2



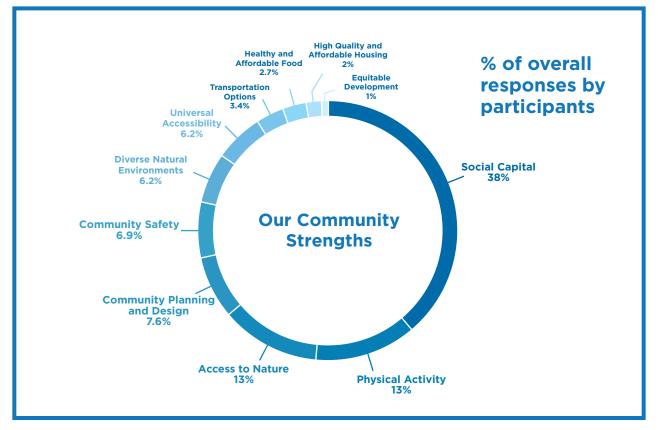
### Our Community Strengths

Social capital is about social connections, including how we work together to support each other and the sense of trust those interactions create. It is the richness of our culture, our public spaces, the strength of our connections and the belief that we must work together for the good of our community.

At the forum, participants said that the festivals, spaces, programs and networks that exist in our community provide a wide variety of opportunities to be engaged, socially active and to contribute regardless of age, income, race or skills. Participants spoke specifically of the projects and initiatives underway in our region that directly relate to the social determinants of health. "There is a willingness and movement towards working collaboratively across services, agencies and diverse groups to find common solutions."

- Forum Participant

Participants feel that the rich cultural diversity in our region has contributed to strong social capital that unites us. As a community, we have a sense of collective responsibility to care for each other across the social determinants of health.



### **Snapshot of Our Community Milestones\***







2009 receives Baby-Friendly community health service designation



2009 Youth In Policing Initiative



**February 1, 2012** Lakeview Waterfront Connection



Fall 2011 Opening of Sheridan's Hazel McCallion Campus



June 22, 2011 Celebration Square official opening



2011 Community Door, a shared-space



December 2011 Credit Valley Hospital and Trillium Health Centre merge to create



2013 Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre launches Health Lifestyle Program in partnership with the Mississauga Indoor Football Association



opens at U of T Mississauga





January 2017 Brampton Queen Street Youth Shelter opens



2017 One-Link single point of access referral tool to addiction and mental health service providers launched by MH LHIN



Summer 2016 MiWay affordable transportation



2017 City of Mississauga



May 2016 HCSC launches youth \$750,000 grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation's Youth Opportunities Fund



2016

## Towards Better Health

The focus at the Better Health Matters Forum centred around how we can create a community that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. At the forum, our residents, community partners and children defined health as "...a state of happiness and peace from a holistic balance of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being which is supported by the people, places, and services in our community."

One of the key outcomes of the day was an understanding of our collective view on what

is most important to our region for creating a healthy community. Specifically, we asked ourselves where our region should focus to build better health.

While we know all the social determinants of health are critical, our participants told us that we could make the greatest impact if we worked together to focus our attention in improving three key areas:





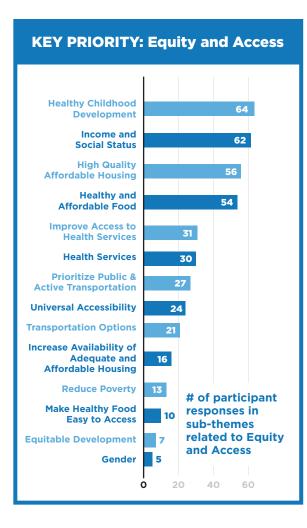
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## **Towards Better Health**

Equity and Access for All

Underscoring each conversation at the Better Health Matters Forum was the acknowledgment that every one of our community members should have equitable access to the services, opportunities and supports they need to achieve optimal health.

Participants acknowledged the work that is already happening in our region to address issues of equity and access. They indicated where we could support existing work, build on the positive progress that has been made, and identified where there is still work to be done.



"I hope that you do not experience any barriers to whatever kind of service you might need."

#### - Forum Participant

#### 🗿 HOUSING

- Ensure access to equitable and affordable housing for all income brackets.
- Build housing for seniors that is smaller, accessible and well-connected to transit and health care.

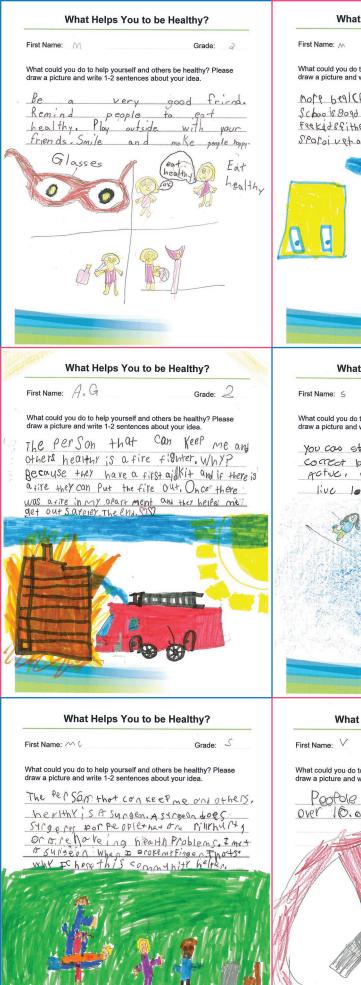
#### 🗐 TRANSIT

- Continue to increase accessibility and affordability of public transit.
- Create a multi-modal transit system that is not car-centric.
- Reduce commute times.

### ACCESS TO CARE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

- Reduce wait times.
- Improve home care to meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities.
- Make the system easier to navigate one stop for health services, supports and referrals.

Participants said that our region needs to create partnerships across sectors to design for inclusion, equity and access. Including residents in the consultation and planning process was cited by forum participants as the best way to improve equity and access and build a healthier future.



What Helps You to be Healthy?	What Helps You to be Healthy?
First Name: M Grade:	First Name: H Grade: 4
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# **Towards Better Health**

Investing in Future Generations

Participants strongly believe that part of our collective responsibility as a community lies in investing in children and youth and their families. To build a healthier and stronger future, we need to continue to teach children to make nutritious food choices, be physically active, embrace inclusivity, reject bullying, and destigmatize mental health. Improving the health of our children means supporting them as they learn and grow in every aspect of their lives.

#### **Physical Activity**

- Continue to promote an active lifestyle from an early age.
- Keep the DPA (Daily Physical Activity) curriculum in schools.
- Ensure we maintain green spaces where children can play outside.

#### "I could go outside more. I could go to the gym. I could participate in more sports and eat food in groups."

- J, Grade 4

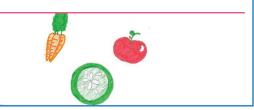


#### **Healthy Food**

- Continue to work towards eliminating access to junk food in schools.
- Keep educating kids about a healthy diet.
- Expand healthy breakfast and lunch programs in schools for all children.

"What I think we need to do is get breakfast programs and lunch programs in schools. Because some kids don't have breakfast or lunch. We should also have fresh and healthy foods like fruits and vegetables."

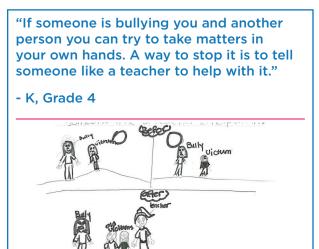
#### - N, Grade 4



#### Safety and Support

- Keep ongoing anti-bullying and anti-racism campaigns in schools.
- Continue to off-set the effects of poverty with early childhood education.
- Ensure we provide safe places to play and grow.

To ensure their future is bright, participants at the forum said we need to provide children, youth and families in our region with the support, resources and education they need to learn, thrive and grow.



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## **Towards Better Health**

Mental Health and Social Support Networks

The importance of mental health and social support networks was a key priority at the forum, one which participants cited as being central to the health of our residents.

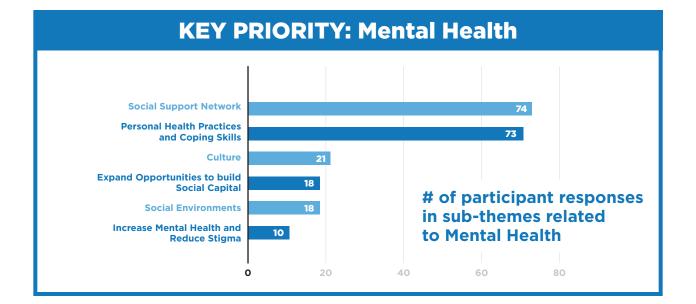
Diagnosable mental illness impacts one in five people, which means about 260,000 residents in the Region of Peel will be affected at some point in their lives. People who struggle with mental health issues often do not seek treatment or support in the same way they would if they were coping with a physical health ailment. At the forum, participants stated that stigma around mental illness remains a significant issue, causing feelings of shame and isolation and acting as a barrier to treatment. Those suffering often stay silent and do not seek support from family, friends or mental health professionals, resulting in increasingly profound isolation. In Peel, different cultural attitudes mean that Westernized concepts of mental health can be inconsistent with the cultural understandings of many groups, further deepening the stigma and resulting isolation.

"I want to be a part of a community where mental health is just as important and acceptable to discuss as physical health."

#### - Forum Participant

Because of this, mental health is often only addressed when residents come to the hospital emergency department in crisis. Leaving mental illness untreated can have dire consequences for affected individuals and those close to them. Statistics Canada states that mental illness is the most important risk factor for suicide, with over 90 per cent of people who die from suicide having a mental or addictive disorder.

Participants identified key areas of concern where more needs to be done to support mental health in our region.





#### **Prevention and support**

- Reducing stigma.
- Recognizing signs of mental health deterioration before an individual is in crisis.
- Decreasing wait times for mental health and addiction services/filling service gaps.
- Suicide prevention.

#### **Culturally sensitive approaches**

- Involving families in care.
- Improving access to supports for people with low English literacy.
- Improving the cultural competency of mental health agencies.

#### **Children's mental health**

- Building emotional literacy and resilience.
- Embedding mental health awareness programs in elementary school curriculum.
- Recognizing impact of cross-generational cultural conflict.

#### **Seniors mental health**

- Prevention of social isolation and loneliness.
- Remove barriers to care income, transit, accessing appropriate services.
- Proactive management of dementia and Alzheimer's healthy aging initiatives.

As part of a holistic approach to building better health, forum participants emphasized the importance of working on strategies and partnerships that will help residents and families proactively manage their mental health.

This is not an exhaustive list of all improvements needed in our region. However, participants at the Better Health Matters Forum told us that Equity and Access, Investing in Future Generations, and Mental Health and Social Support Networks were the key priorities most important to address in working to build better health in the Region of Peel.

While participants acknowledge the challenges we face, there is optimism and the belief that we have the social capital – services, people, and resources – to create a healthy future for our region.



### Partnerships to Enable Success

At the forum, we defined health as a holistic balance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being which is supported by the people, places and services in our community. In order to build better health, participants stated that residents, neighbours, organizations and associations must all work together in partnership to shape the future of our region.

At the forum, it was evident that the connections that currently exist in the Region of Peel have resulted in effective partnerships across sectors.

However, there are also opportunities to connect with new partners.

Most Connected Community Partners % of participants currently connected with these groups		
Hospital	23%	
<b>Regional/Municipal Government</b>	15%	
LHIN	11%	
<b>Community Living Organization</b>	10%	
Post Secondary Institution	9%	
Mental Health Association	7%	
<b>Provincial Government</b>	7%	
Police Department	7%	
Donors	7%	
Food Bank	5%	

#### Most Sought After Community Partners

% of participants seeking to connect with these groups		
LHIN	20%	
Hospital	15%	
Behavioural + Mental Health Service	15%	
Addiction Assessment and Referral Service	10%	
<b>Mental Health Association</b>	8%	
Newcomer Settlement Program	7%	
<b>Post-Secondary Institution</b>	7%	
<b>Regional/Municipal Government</b>	6%	
Senior Support Group	6%	
Family Health Team	6%	

At the Better Health Matters Forum, participants made it clear that it is important to acknowledge that we are a rapidly growing and diverse population with unique challenges and opportunities. We have a collective responsibility to be advocates and champions for change in our region. In this evolving landscape, we must embrace a new definition of health and work in partnership to shape a healthier future.

Every organization, neighbourhood and association is encouraged to adopt the Letter to Future Residents and this report. Share the letter and report with your stakeholders, partners and neighbours. Incorporate the words and priorities of our community and use them as a guide to help inform the work you do. Seize the opportunity to deepen existing partnerships and form new ones as you set your own strategic direction and goals. Commit to reporting back on the progress you have made towards advancing these priorities in your own work.

Together, we can adopt the priorities outlined in this report and make collective progress to ensure that health is at the centre of how we plan for the future of the Region of Peel.



"We need social connections and partnerships for better community health."

- Forum Participant

### Participants challenged us to make the Better Health Matters Comunity Commitment to build and support better health in the Region of Peel.

As both leaders and members of this community, we must accept this challenge.

- 1. We commit to adopting the Letter to Future Residents and will post it publicly on our website or in our offices to act as a beacon to guide our work.
- 2. We commit to adopting this report in principle and will use it to guide our organization as we continue to align, where appropriate, the three key priorities into our strategic plan and daily work.
- **3.** We commit to sharing back on the collective progress we have made towards advancing the three key priorities.
- 4. We commit to working with others on the three key priorities.

It is time for all of us to take action as we work together to create a healthier future for our community and its residents.

"We cannot change anything without knowing change is necessary. Be brave, be bold, be hopeful. The future is yours to create."

- Forum Participant





Dear Future Resident, May wayn In upor is to have an orthroposolical spatiality. I we litered that is chall nearble much that which as performing the house anothing descensing application the applicating decadered







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Car-Free Streets

As more residents began to drive, the main streads of Cogenhagen were becoming increasingly congested. In 1962, the City decided to change one of the City's main streets, Straget, to be car-free.

Increased opportunities for physical activity through active transportation. One year after the change, potentian traffic increased between 20% to 35% throughout the city floate, over 90% of https://coenhogens.city.cente.are made by float, beckle and cubit treast.

Local economic development, Opposite to initial concerns, the street ended up increasing revenue for local businesses, Outdoor cafée have grown from 2,970 seats in 1986 to 7,020 seats in 2006.

In the summer months, the streets are packed with residents enjoying performances, feativals, and each ether's company. In the writer, outdoor feativals and ice skating continue to bring residents, out into their community.

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### Appendix 10 Design Principles

#### **Celebrate Difference and Uniqueness**

Places that are different, unusual or unique can be helpful in promoting physical activity. Authentically celebrate the unique character of your places, spaces and community. Design safe and easily accessible opportunities for people to be near your community's unique natural public spaces, like parks, landmarks, or trails. Adopt this approach for developing new or existing spaces for schools, housing and businesses as well, so that residents are encouraged to be active no matter where they are.

#### **Design With People**

Engage and partner with residents, organizations and agencies across your community to develop a deep knowledge of who they are and what that means for the design of a healthy community. Residents are more likely to be healthy in a community designed around their needs. Ensure that the voices of residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are included.

#### **Leverage Local Champions**

Designing a healthy community is about reaching the hearts and minds of residents and creating a movement. Movements always need some great champions. Engage meaningfully with respected and passionate individuals to ignite others around building a healthy community.

#### Invigorate Shared Spaces and Mix Things Up Bit

Shared public spaces and gathering places have a direct positive impact on residents' health—social networks and a sense of belonging are key for mental, physical and emotional health. Mixed-use spaces and places make residents much more likely to walk or use transit to go shopping, run errands or go out with friends. Create spaces and places that mix people of different generations, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Get creative with public/private partnerships to make mixing things up possible.

#### Acknowledge the Economic Value

Residents of all ages increasingly want to live in walkable, transit-rich communities with vibrant shared spaces. Focusing on community health can also reduce the cost of health care, safety, education and operations for a city and its residents. Celebrate and share your healthy community assets to attract new residents and businesses to your community.

#### **Make Healthy Options Easy**

For most of us, being healthy is about daily individual choices. If it is easy for us to make a healthy choice, most of us will. Provide different types of healthy options in your community that are easy, safe, accessible, low-cost, or free and fun to do—and make sure your community knows they exist.

#### Emphasize Access to Affordable Healthy Food

Diet has a big impact on residents' health. Emphasize the importance of food in your community the same way you emphasize transit, housing or development. Design your community to offer everyone the same access to healthy and nutritious food and make it affordable and responsive to the dietary customs of diverse cultures. Create multiple access points to healthy food, including in schools, workspaces and public areas.

#### **Maximize Physical Activity**

Even small amounts of daily physical activity go a long way to improving residents' physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. Maximize opportunities for everyone to get physically active in public spaces as well as at work and school. Deliberately build different types of physical activity into the design of new and existing places and spaces with safety in mind. In addition to urban spaces that support activity, design with a special emphasis on access to nature and green space.

#### **Design For Diversity and Inclusion**

Many groups of residents could benefit from more inclusive access to healthy amenities, services and opportunities. Investing in access and inclusion now can reduce other costs later. Design services and experiences that work for diverse residents of all ages, abilities, income levels, sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds, education levels, faiths and gender identities.

#### Measure Impact and Share Progress Of Your Community's Health

Define what it means to be a "healthy community" and develop benchmarks that measure progress toward that goal. At certain stages of progress toward achieving optimal health, share those successes with the community so that everyone is involved and aware of building a healthy community together.



### What is the Healthy City Stewardship Centre?

Created in 2004, the Healthy City Stewardship Centre (HCSC) is a volunteer initiative that brings together key decision-makers in the City of Mississauga and Region of Peel. The HCSC's objective is to work together for the betterment of the people, community and environment by advancing a common vision which includes physical, mental, spiritual, social and environmental health.

Part of the HCSC mandate includes listening to the ideas of citizens and communicating their health concerns to local leaders, understanding the changes occurring in the local population that affect overall health, and making recommendations that would contribute to improved health.

Members of HCSC include the City of Mississauga, United Way of Peel Region, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, YMCA of Greater Toronto, Mississauga Board of Trade, Peel District School Board, ErinoakKids, Peel Regional Police, Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Region of Peel, Trillium Health Partners, Sheridan College, University of Toronto Mississauga, AstraZeneca, and the Mississauga Halton LHIN.

Please contact public.affairs@thp.ca with any requests or questions about this report.

