

## HealthYork: York Region's Healthy Communities Partnership York Region Community Picture Summary

Over 50 community stakeholders from various sectors including health, education, government, non-government and community groups were involved in the development of the York Region Community Picture.

### York Region at a Glance

- Two tiered local government: Region and nine municipalities
- Urban and suburban sprawl characterizes the south part of the Region, in contrast to the rest of York Region consisting mostly of farmlands, forests and protected ecosystems
- Fastest growing Region in Ontario, 3<sup>rd</sup> largest growing municipality in Canada
- Significant portion of growth is expected to continue to be driven by immigration
- While York Region enjoys a higher average standard of living than residents in the rest of the province, poverty exists.

### By 2031:

- Population growth is expected to surpass 1.5 million residents
- The Region's aging population will increase more than 3 times over 2006 levels
- There will be slower growth among the younger generation

Community stakeholders were engaged in a number of ways to capture their input to develop the **York Region Community Picture**:

- Two *community consultation meetings* were held that provided a forum for 43 community stakeholders representing 26 organizations to provide local knowledge about the issues faced in their communities;
- 44 community stakeholders participated in an *on-line survey in English* to build upon the vision of creating a healthy community and to share their view point on the physical, social, and health priorities resident's face in York Region;
- 23 community stakeholders participated in an *on-line survey in French* to capture input from the Francophone community in York Region;
- 42 community stakeholders representing 26 organizations in York Region participated in the *Regional Priority Setting Meeting*;
- 10 *Community Leader Interviews* were conducted with key decision-makers to collect their thoughts related to the priority policy options identified from the priority setting process.

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The **York Region Community Picture** provides a broad overview of the social, economic, political and environmental context related to the six Healthy Communities priority areas. It includes a comprehensive profile of the community, including demographic make-up, health status data, current environment, strengths, opportunities and priority issues related to the six Healthy Communities priority areas.

Broad findings include:

- There is some policy work already happening in York Region.
- More policy efforts are needed.
- Along with community settings, workplaces and schools provide an opportunity to create policies to support healthy living choices.
- There is an opportunity to change local community design through policy development.



# Top Two Recommended Policy Actions for HealthYork Healthy Communities Initiative 2011

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## Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation

1. Policies that support the collaboration between recreation/sports providers, community groups, and school boards to ensure that all children and their families have access and opportunities to participate in a wide range of physical activity programs throughout the year.
2. Policies that ensure affordable and accessible recreation activities and reduce barriers in participation.

## Injury Prevention

1. Policies to ensure 'safe community' surroundings and built form, including injury prevention measures through proper community design.
2. Policies to modify road design and plans to encourage safe road function for all road users (e.g. motorists; pedestrians; cyclists).

## Healthy Eating

1. Policies at the school board that promote and support healthy eating through increased access to healthy, local foods (beyond the Ontario's PPM 150 School Food and Beverage Policy) and increased opportunity for students to develop nutrition and cooking skills.
2. Policies that support community or urban agriculture such as community or rooftop gardens.

## Tobacco Use and Exposure

1. Policies to limit the number of tobacco retail outlets through zoning and licensing throughout the community including proximity to schools.
2. Policies to support persons with limited income to have access at no cost to cessation counselling; Nicotine Replacement Therapy; and pharmacotherapy.

## Alcohol and Substance Misuse

1. Policies to eliminate alcohol marketing and promotion to children and youth.
2. Policies for health care providers, designed to support the identification and treatment of substance misuse.

## Mental Health Promotion

1. Policies to increase access to affordable and safe housing.
2. Policies that address the socioeconomic conditions which promote positive mental health, social inclusion, freedom from discrimination/violence, and access to economic resources.

To learn more about HealthYork's Healthy Communities Initiatives [visit www.healthYork.com](http://www.healthYork.com)