

DEPUTATION REQUEST

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

JUNE 16, 2022

Subject: Regional Land Use Planning

Spokesperson: Dr David Rosen

Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable): Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

I am sure you all want to live in a city and world where you and your family can be safe and healthy. And so it is of paramount importance to consider the health effects of any planning decisions you make. Cities can be designed to enhance the health of its citizens. The climate emergency must be considered and we must do everything possible to prevent further warming of our planet.

Carbon is stored in forests, greenspaces, wetlands and healthy soils. Carbon emissions must be reduced. As we experience warmer temperatures people can suffer from heat illnesses. In B.C. last summer more than 500 people died during the heat dome. Insect borne diseases like Lyme Disease and West Nile virus are spreading further north in Ontario. Droughts and floods endanger food security So much of our food comes from California and the midwest. There they are running out of water. We must preserve farmland to ensure that we have a local secure supply of food which is affordable for low income families. Poor nutrition leads to heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and premature death.

The construction of highways leads to commuter communities with an increase in cars and trucks. Long commutes contribute to obesity, diabetes, hypertension, mental health stressors, accidents resulting in injuries and fatalities. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recognizes the link between urban sprawl and health. Increased vehicle use also creates more air pollution. These pollutants contribute to heart disease, respiratory illnesses like asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease and pneumonia. In 2016 it was estimated that air pollution prematurely killed 6600 Ontarians annually and cost the provincial economy \$49.2 billion dollars.

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In your plan you discuss the densification of communities. You agree that your families should live in communities where they can safely bike and walk, shop, work, have access to recreation facilities and greenspace and have access to public transport. For train service to be viable urban planners state that you need a minimum of 115 persons/hectare and for light public transport a minimum of 70/hectare. Your report underestimates that number.

The housing in York Region should be inclusionary, zoning which provides up to 30 % more affordable housing for low and middle income families. Housing is essential for mental health. It allows families to afford healthy food and to move ahead with their lives. It addresses racial equity.

Finally there is need for intersectorial communication. the Auditor General Report 2021 section 4.3.3 stressed that different ministries should be communicating with municipalities. Health consequences must be considered in any planning. There is an enormous cost to all levels of government if we ignore the detrimental health effects of urban sprawl, GHG emissions, and the climate crisis. Progressive evidence-based initiatives and decision-making have already begun in neighbouring regions like Halton and Hamilton which voted against urban sprawl in the best interest of their residents. Oakville has invested in a well-designed community energy plan (CEP) after documenting that nearly 50% of total GHG emissions stem from transportation and 40% from the built environment. A CEP, important in addressing climate change, requires integration with a coordinated land-use plan. This work can be built upon by focusing on the Public Health Agency of Canada's "building blocks for healthy living" and investing in "active neighbourhoods, access to healthy food and supportive environments." We need complete communities where people live, walk, bike, shop, work, play, have access to public transportation and raise children who are safe and healthy.