

For Immediate Release

PLANNING BY DESIGN: a healthy communities handbook

TORONTO (November 5, 2009) – The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute released today **PLANNING BY DESIGN: a healthy communities handbook**. Release of the handbook comes in advance of World Town Planning Day, an annual event celebrated on November 8th in more than 30 countries around the world. Planners from across the province will be highlighting the importance of community planning in Ontario and the release of this handbook is a key part of these activities.

The purpose of the handbook is to share and generate ideas on how places can be planned and designed more sustainably for healthy, active living and to retain and attract residents, investors and visitors. Rural and urban planning and design strategies, including land-use patterns, transportation networks, public spaces and natural systems, are all factors that can promote increased physical activity, psychological well being and healthier outcomes for all community members. Heart disease, asthma, diabetes, obesity, stroke, cancer, stress and depression are some of the serious health issues that are reducing community vitality and resiliency through productivity loss and increasing demands on public and private sector resources. For example, the cost of physical inactivity is evident by how cardiovascular disease claims the lives of 79,000 Canadians each year and costs the health-care system over \$7.3 billion in direct costs and \$12.4 billion in indirect costs.

“The Ontario government is committed to developing planning tools and policies that support healthy and sustainable communities. We are working with OPPI to strengthen the links between community planning and public health,” said Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister, Jim Watson.

“The creation of healthy sustainable communities is a top priority for Ontario's Planning Profession. PLANNING BY DESIGN is a hands-on tool with practical examples for inspiring communities throughout Ontario to implement initiatives,” said OPPI President, Susan Cumming, MCIP, RPP.

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One of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's goals is to develop strong and sustainable urban and rural communities. The ministry works to develop a better planning system that promotes dynamic local economies, protects greenspace and important natural resources, and builds better communities where people want to live, work and invest.

Established in 1986, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession and provides vision and leadership on key planning issues. The Institute's more than 3,000 members are employed by governments, private industry, agencies, and academic institutions. Planners work in a wide variety of fields, including urban and rural community development, urban design, environment, transportation, health and social services, housing, and economic development.

To read the handbook or for further information on World Town Planning Day, please visit www.ontarioplanners.on.ca

Copies of the handbook can also be obtained through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at www.ontario.ca/mah

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