

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - MARCH 7, 2005 – NEW BUSINESS

REPORT ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SPRAWL IN ONTARIO

Recommendation

Councillor Carella recommends that staff be directed to acquire a copy of the Ontario College of Family Physicians' "Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl", and that this report be added to the agenda of the upcoming strategic planning retreat.

Purpose

To improve council's understanding of the implications of planning decisions for the future health of Vaughan's citizens.

Background - Analysis and Options

The "Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl" summarizes existing research, concluding that living in car-dependent, sprawling urban communities increases risk factors for a number of illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease.

In addition, increased driving and thus higher vehicle emissions, contribute to air pollution, with attendant negative impacts on our health.

Evidence indicates that car-dependence leads to excess body weight, obesity, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. As well: the lack of safe pedestrian corridors and diminished natural settings lead to a decline of social capital. Sprawl also impacts heavily on the elderly and disabled who are often isolated and unable to access social or medical services.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

The recent report of the Ontario College of Family Physicians raises issues which should be considered by the city in light of its control of local planning. It is appropriate that these issues be the topic of discussion as part of our strategic planning process.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

Tony Carella

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Tony Carella