

## Request for Decision

### Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool

Presented To:	Community Services Committee
Presented:	Monday, Jun 16, 2014
Report Date	Tuesday, Jun 03, 2014
Type:	Managers' Reports

### Recommendation

WHEREAS the City of Greater Sudbury adopted the Healthy Community Strategy in 2005;

AND WHEREAS the Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-2014 "Shaping our City's Future" identified a Healthy Community as a priority of the City of Greater Sudbury;

AND WHEREAS the incorporation of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) screening tool into City decision making was identified as an action item within the Healthy Community Strategy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury incorporate the HIA screening tool into the Agendas Online report writing system for reports going forward to Operations and/or Community Services Standing Committees in order to take into consideration the impacts that a program, initiative or policy may have on the health and sustainability of the community;

AND THAT this initiative be implemented by Fall 2014.

#### Signed By

**Report Prepared By**

Cindi Briscoe  
Community Development Co-ordinator  
*Digitally Signed Jun 3, 14*

**Division Review**

Real Carre  
Director of Leisure Services  
*Digitally Signed Jun 3, 14*

**Recommended by the Department**

Catherine Matheson  
General Manager of Community Development  
*Digitally Signed Jun 3, 14*

**Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Doug Nadorozny  
Chief Administrative Officer  
*Digitally Signed Jun 4, 14*

## Background

In February 2013, Community Services Standing committee requested that staff research and develop a screening tool that would assist Council in recognizing the impacts that a program, initiative, or new policy could have on the health and sustainability of the community. Information provided through this tool would add value to the decision-making process resulting in the best possible outcome for the community. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) (Appendix A) screening tool falls within the scope of the Healthy Community Strategy, which has been a priority of City Council since 2005. The four strategic priority areas within the Healthy Community Strategy are Human Health & Well-being, Economic Vitality, Environmental Sustainability, and Civic Engagement/Social Capital.

## **Health & Well-being**

The World Health Organization has stated that many factors combined together affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined mainly by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as: where we live, the state of the environment, genetics, income, education level, and relationships with family and friends all have a considerable impact on an individual's health. The more commonly considered factors such as access to and use of health care services often have less impact.

The context of people's lives also determines one's health. Individuals are often unable to directly control many of the determinants of health. These determinants are things that make people healthy/unhealthy and include the following: income, social status, education, physical environment, social support networks, genetics, access to health services, and gender.

The City of Greater Sudbury Council has identified creating a healthy community as a priority. Many decisions made by Council can affect the determinants of health. A Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool will help guide Council by providing information to assist in the decision making process regarding programs, initiatives, and/or policies.

The Health Impact Assessment looks not only for negative impacts (to prevent or reduce), but also for impacts favourable to health. This provides Council with options to strengthen and extend the positive features of a program, initiative or policy with a view to improving the health of the community.

## **Values**

A Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool is based on four values that link the HIA to the policy environment.

1. Democracy – allowing citizens to participate in the development and implementation of policies, programs or projects that may impact their lives through community engagement.
2. Equity – HIA assesses the distribution of impacts from a proposal on the community, with a particular reference on how the proposal will affect vulnerable people (in terms of age, gender, ethnic background, and socio-economic status).
3. Sustainable development – that both short and long term impacts are considered.
4. Corporate review - that all departments have an opportunity to comment on potential impacts that a program, initiative, or policy may have on the community.

Reasons to use a Health Impact Assessment:

1. to build a healthy and sustainable community,
2. to promote cross-sectoral strategies and policies,
3. to develop a participatory approach that values the views of the community.

Internal utilization of the HIA screening tool for a new program, initiative or policy can assist in detecting the impact on individuals and groups, and identify potential barriers and appropriate accommodations to address elimination. It will also identify strengths, areas for improvement and equitable solutions by encouraging interdepartmental conversations to take place prior to the report going forward to Operations and/or Community Services Standing Committees.

## **Review**

A review was undertaken with the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa. The following information has been garnered from the above mentioned municipalities:

### ***City of Toronto***

The City of Toronto implemented a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) through the use of an 'Equity Lens' in 2006 based on a directive from Council. A working group was established to focus on the development of the lens as a tool to be used by staff to: identify, remove barriers, and reinforce best practices in planning, development, and evaluation of policies, services, and programs. The equity lens provided a stronger emphasis in identifying barriers and barrier removal and was used for new, developing and existing policies and programs.

Orientation and staff education were considered an essential component of its effectiveness as a tool.

A concern was raised that if the HIA screening tool was not implemented as a mandatory tool that all departments utilize, it would be very difficult to ensure consistent use.

The introduction of an 'Equity Impact Statement' based on the application of the equity lens provided a mechanism for including health impact considerations in the decision-making process of City Council. The application of the equity lens provided an assessment mechanism that led to the inclusion of an 'Equity Impact Statement' in the reports to Council and Committees. Once the screening was completed an Equity Impact Statement was included in the report that explained how the recommendations have taken into consideration any issues resulting from the application of the equity lens.

Examples:

1. This new policy/program addresses barriers faced by youth from diverse backgrounds and is intended to enhance/extend services to this target group. Service data will be collected to monitor the results.
2. This existing policy/program has been reviewed and proposed changes will remove identified barriers faced by low-income families from diverse backgrounds. The results will be reported in the annual reports to Council.

### ***City of Ottawa***

The City of Ottawa developed a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) screening tool called an 'Equity and Inclusion Lens'. Staff believe that the benefits from using the lens included: generating better solutions by incorporating a diversity of perspectives; taking positive steps to remove systemic barriers and promote

inclusion; creating a more positive and respectful work environment, and achieving greater resident satisfaction.

Staff felt that by using the equity and inclusion lens, report writers were better prepared to align programs, initiatives and policies within organizational goals and strategic plans. Staff training and awareness programs were seen as an integral part of the process. Once training was completed, there was an expectation from the Senior Management Team that staff would utilize the process when preparing reports. As well, evaluation of the lens to ensure that clear measurement and accountability was also taken into consideration.

The main objectives of the equity and inclusion lens were: to eliminate barriers within policies and programs; to contribute to the achievement of the City of Ottawa's business goals and customer service delivery; to establish a framework that requires all departments within the City to embrace the spirit of equality and diversity in the development of policies and programs that impact the delivery of city services, the use of city facilities, grants to external agencies, and other outwardly focused activities.

### **Next steps**

An inter-departmental staff meeting was conducted in April 2013 to discuss the concept of developing a Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool. Discussion has since taken place regarding the most effective method of integrating this tool into the current system of report writing that will create a minimal amount of work for the user. Feedback was received regarding other assessments that were already being completed due to established regulations by various divisions within the City (i.e. environmental assessment – Roads, Planning, and Social Services).

After considerable review, it was determined that the best approach for inclusion and development of the Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool would be the implementation within the Agendas Online report writing system. Consideration would then be given regarding the impacts that a program, initiative or policy might have prior to finalizing the report and recommendations to Council. Staff who prepare reports for the Operations and Community Services Standing Committees will be assigned the task of reviewing the reports that affect their areas of expertise. A Health Impact Statement will be included in the report identifying how the HIA was considered.

Orientation and staff training on how to apply the HIA screening tool is an essential component of its effectiveness and success. Additional resource materials and dedicated experts on the utilization of the tool may be required.

Integrating the four strategic priority areas of the Healthy Community Strategy within the HIA screening tool allows all information to be assessed from a sustainable development perspective.

An interdepartmental meeting will be held to further discuss the implementation of the screening tool.

**City of Greater Sudbury**  
**Health Impact Assessment Screening Tool**

Many factors affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by one's life circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as: where we live, the state of the environment, genetics, income, education level, and relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health; whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access to and use of health care services often have less of an impact.

The determinants of health include:

- The social and economic environment
- The physical environment, and
- The person's individual characteristics and behaviours.

These determinants align with the four pillars within the Healthy Community Strategy.

The purpose of a Health Impact Assessment is to provide City Council with a set of evidence based considerations about the proposed program, initiative or policy.

City Council has the option to accept, reject, or amend the proposed program, initiative or policy based on the information provided in the report.

The following statement would appear as part of the Agendas Online checklist:

"The Health Impact Assessment has been considered."    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_