

# Transforming The

# FOOD ENVIRONMENT

Capacity Building Series



## Strategies and Resources

This handout was created by Kim Bergeron, PhD, Health Promotion Consultant, Health Promotion Capacity Building Team, Public Health Ontario as supplement material on the topic of creating healthier community food environments. Kim works with public health units, their partners and others interested in increasing their knowledge and skills related to healthy public policy and municipal by-law development by providing training, resources and support services.

The purpose of this handout is to share strategies and resources for working with local, municipal decision makers (e.g., municipal staff in the planning, parks, recreation, public works, and economic development departments; elected officials) to influence the development and implementation of municipal policies (e.g., Official Plans, Master Plans, Strategic Plans) to create healthier community food environments. The strategies and resources listed are based on a recent literature review on healthy public policy and working with public health units in Ontario. This handout highlights a selection of relevant resources that cover a range of topics, but is not intended to be exhaustive. The resources included have been found to be useful and practical and were also freely accessible. This is supplementary material for a presentation by Kim at the Nutrition Resource Centre: Taking Action to Create a Healthier Food Environment workshop held on October 30, 2015 and at the Sustain Ontario: Bring Food Home 2015 Conference.

### Key messages:

- 1. Reach out and engage with appropriate municipal staff.**
  - Identify appropriate departments and staff and develop partnerships to align efforts to create healthy communities.
  - Push traditional planning boundaries (e.g., zoning by-laws to limit fast food outlets in specific areas such as near schools, low income neighborhoods) and municipal practices (e.g., limiting community gardens, farmers' markets) in order to put health on their agenda (e.g., model a [Health in All Policies](#) approach).
- 2. Align your objectives with what is happening at the municipality.**
  - Review municipal minutes and reports to understand the municipal position on topics that influence the community food environment (e.g., Official Plan reviews, Master Plan development, Committee meetings).
  - Understand whether municipal decision makers are an innovator or a late adopter (e.g., use [Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory](#)).
- 3. Weigh in on zoning by-law discussions, decisions and enactments.**
  - Ensure that your organization is on the municipal distribution list when seeking input into zoning and development changes.

## Resources and tools to influence municipal policy development:

- **Hastings Prince Edward Health Unit has developed the following resources:**
  - *Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans*, available [here](#).
  - *Rural Area Checklist*, available [here](#) and *Urban Area Checklist*, available [here](#).
  - *Situational Assessment on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* available [here](#).
  - *Community Assessments and Workshop Proceedings* available [here](#).
- **Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region hosts a website with a range of community garden policy resources available [here](#).**
- **CDC has compiled resources to support healthy food environments** (e.g. zoning, land-use planning, food policy councils, retail food stores, community agriculture, community food assessment resources), available [here](#).
- **Association pour la santé publique du Québec has developed the following resource:** *The School Zone and Nutrition: Courses of Action for the Municipal Sector* available [here](#).
- **Nutrition Resource Centre's webinar:** *Healthy Food Zones: Assessing Food Outlet Density and Purchasing Behaviour of Students* available [here](#)
- **Ontario Professional Planners Institute - Healthy Communities and Planning for Food: Planning for Food Systems for Ontario- A Call to Action** available [here](#):

## Understanding municipal decision makers:

- **Healthy Living Niagara has developed a number of templates to track municipal decisions.** The information gathered from using the templates can help public health professionals better understand local decision making, local priorities and competing demands and help identify potential opportunities for collaboration and alignment. The templates are available [here](#).
- **Public Health Ontario has developed the following webinars:**
  - *Understanding Municipal Decision Makers and Influencers*, available [here](#).
  - *Assessing Readiness for Municipal Policies: A Case Study*, available [here](#).
  - *Health in All Policies: Overview and Case Example*, available [here](#).
  - *Health in All Policies: Ways to Facilitate and Model Intersectoral Collaboration*, available [here](#).

## Municipal by-law development:

- **Public Health Ontario has developed resources on municipal by-law development**, available [here](#).
  - *Municipal By-law Development and Public Health: A Primer*
  - *Defining Municipal Resolutions, Policies and By-laws*
  - *Webinar Q & A: Understanding municipal decision makers and influencers*
  - *Municipal Zoning By-laws: A Role for Public Health Professionals*, available [here](#)
- **Ontario Professional Planners Institute released the following journal edition on zoning:** *Getting Municipal Zoning in Line with Provincial Policy*, available [here](#).

This handout can be found in the Nutrition Resource Centre's Navigator at <http://ow.ly/TDQhs>

NRC Navigator is the one-stop shop for evidenced-based healthy eating and nutrition resources!