

Presentation by EcoHealth Ontario
Green City: Why Nature Matters to Health
Toronto Board of Health

EcoHealth Ontario's Co-Chairs:

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Our Purpose

- *Develop shared values among public health, medical, education, planning, and environmental sectors and **new collaborative relationships** between them.*
- *Share information to enhance systems thinking and improve health outcomes through **improved ecosystem quality and access to green spaces**.*
- *Encourage policies and programs to **advance the protection, restoration, and enhancement of ecosystem services** for the health and well-being of communities.*



Who We are

Steering Committee:

- **Public Health** – 4 Public Health Units (**incl. Toronto**) & Ont. Public Health Association
- **Watershed Management** – Conservation Ontario; Credit Valley & Toronto & Region CAs
- **NGOs** – David Suzuki Foundation, Forests Ontario
- **Academia** – Canadian Community of Practice in Ecosystem Approaches to Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health
- **Planning** – Ontario Professional Planners Institute

Plus a Growing Network:

- Friends of the Greenbelt, CAPE, Ontario EcoSchools, LEAF...
- Including over 160 agencies, groups and individuals

Supported by:



Our Focus

Reverse Disturbing Trends:

- The loss or deterioration of natural features and their functions in Ontario.
- Increasing prevalence of human health issues (e.g. respiratory disease, obesity and other chronic illnesses).
- Greater climate change impacts .

Capitalize on Opportunities:

- Growing evidence and awareness of the benefits the natural environment provides to our communities' health and well being.
- Realizing health benefits from environmental protection and restoration, at neighbourhood/urban scales .



Reasons for EcoHealth's Support

- **Adds to our understanding** of the relationship between green space and human health;
- Recognizes the **importance of** preserving, maintaining and **protecting green spaces**
- Supports **increasing Toronto's Canopy Cover**;
- Highlights the implications for **those** that are **most vulnerable**;
- Values **school sites as community assets** and the need to keep them accessible;



Reasons for Support (Cont'd)

- **Prioritizes** green space **investments** areas, including **creating parks** in high need neighborhoods;
- Calls for **strengthened policies** on green spaces **in provincial land-use planning**;
- Requires a **cross-city approach** (e.g. municipal planners, parks and rec and other divisions of the city).



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Thank You