SUBJECT: Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights Pilot Project Proposal
BOH07063 (a) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

a) That the Board of Health approve Walk and Bike for Life’s Community Led Action Plan for Life project proposed by the Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights Policy Sub-Committee.

b) That the issue of a report detailing options for an active community pilot project, which would include developing a methodology to measure the tangible health benefits be identified as complete and removed from the outstanding business list.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following the Healthy Communities report (BOH07063) presented in November 2007, the Policy Sub-Committee of Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights (HPHW) is respectfully asking that the Board of Health approve the proposed Community Led Action Plan for Life (CAP for Life) neighbourhood assessment initiative. CAP for Life is an initiative of Walk and Bike for Life. Its aim is to engage citizens and provide neighbourhoods with “the tools necessary to advocate for improved pedestrian and
bicycling facilities, including sidewalks, park space, bike lanes, and trails, in order to provide safe opportunities for people to be active every day and improve the overall quality of life in each of these communities”. The Policy Sub-Committee created criteria for the chosen neighbourhoods and requires grassroots buy-in to ensure success.

**BACKGROUND:**

At the November 26, 2007 Board of Health Meeting, Gil Penalosa, Executive Director of Walk and Bike for Life, spoke to Board of Health members about making Hamilton a great place for people to live, work, learn, and play. Mr. Penalosa’s message outlined the connection between the design of our city and our health, particularly in regards to healthy weights.

Consider:

- Each 10% increase in land-use mix is associated with a 25% reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obesity;
- Each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity, while each additional kilometre walked per day is associated with a 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity; and,
- Adding a decade to the average age of neighbourhood housing decreases women’s risk of obesity by roughly 8% and men’s by 13%.

The City of Hamilton’s vision is “to be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities”. Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights envisions Hamilton to be a city where “the healthy choice is the easy choice”. The HPHW Policy Sub-Committee thinks that engaging citizens in creating environments supportive of active transportation in our city contributes to both visions.

**Relationship to City of Hamilton Strategic Plan**

Recently, the City of Hamilton released benchmarks for their 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. Focus Area #7 of this document focuses on “Healthy Community”. Among the performance measures for this focus area are to: increase the percentage of residents who are moderately active (7.3), stop the rise in the percentage of residents who are overweight or obese (7.4), and to increase alternative transportation usage in areas such as transit ridership, walking, and cycling (7.7).

On April 1, 2008, City of Hamilton Council signed the *International Charter for Walking*, thereby stating:

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“We are committed to reducing the physical, social, and institutional barriers that limit walking activity. We will work with others to help create a culture where people choose to walk through our commitment to this charter and its strategic principles”.

There is great support in Hamilton for making active transportation a priority.

At the November 2007 Board of Health meeting, the recommendation was approved “that staff be directed to provide a report to the Board of Health detailing options for an active community pilot project, which would include developing a methodology to measure tangible health benefits.” The HPHW Policy Sub-Committee (comprised of City staff and community partners) began brainstorming pilot project ideas that support the City and HPHW visions and the City’s Strategic Plan to support active transportation. They soon realized that there are several great initiatives already underway within the City.

**Options Explored**

**Trim Town**- A project occurring in rural Scotland, United Kingdom, to develop a new town (Knockroon, nicknamed “Trim Town” by the media) due to concern over rising obesity levels. The development will ensure that every home is within a five-minute walk of workplaces and amenities. Streets will be designed and lighted to favour pedestrians over cars. The site will be laced with pedestrian walkways and biking trails linking homes, businesses, recreation facilities and potentially a new school. The City of Hamilton is already including many of these principles in their work, including Secondary Plans currently underway which emphasize mixed use development.

**Ciclovia/Cyclovia**- Mr. Penalosa talked about Cyclovia events he had initiated in his hometown of Bogotá, Columbia at the November 2007 Board of Health meeting. Cyclovia events involve shutting down streets to automobiles while allowing pedestrians, cyclists, inline skaters, and others to “take back” the roadway. The HPHW Policy Sub-Committee liked the concept of the Cyclovia, but did not feel that it fit with the original presentation that focused on urban design principles and changing *infrastructure* to promote sustainable change. Other groups (Environment Hamilton and Green Venture) are currently exploring this initiative. HPHW supports this initiative.

**Neighbourhood Assessments**- The HPHW Policy Sub-Committee believes that conducting an audit at the neighbourhood level will provide insight and concrete data on the pedestrian needs of the community. An initiative called *Community Led Action Plan for Life*, created by Walk and Bike for Life, was presented to the group.

**Proposed Initiative: Community Led Action Plan for Life**

Walk and Bike for Life is a Canadian based non-profit organization with a mission to promote healthy, active living, including walking and bicycling, in all types of
communities as both recreational activities and methods of transportation. Walk and Bike for Life was recently awarded funding by the Ministry of Health Promotion for their CAP for Life Initiative. CAP for Life seeks to work with neighbourhoods within Hamilton, Halton, and Peel to engage local citizens through a series of public meetings and workshops. These workshops will allow residents to address active transportation issues in their own neighbourhoods and create Community Led Action Plans identifying short and long-term recommendations. At the conclusion of the workshop, Walk and Bike for Life will compile, analyze, and distribute the information creating a comprehensive final report.

There are two major components of the CAP for Life project: The community public meeting and discussion, and the public workshop. The public meeting provides an overview of the environmental, economic and health benefits of walkable communities. Examples of where these have been successful are provided by Mr. Penalosa. A survey is given to individuals to determine how residents rate their neighbourhoods in terms of walk and bikability, and to identify barriers they perceive to active transportation.

The public workshop is a four hour hands-on workshop on improving the safety, walkability, bikability, and overall accessibility in the neighbourhood being looked at. The results of the workshop will inform a Community Action Plan that can be presented by Walk and Bike for Life at a future Board of Health meeting. The estimated value of Walk and Bike for Life’s CAP for Life project in each neighbourhood is roughly $10,000.

CAP for Life’s Project Plan is attached as Appendix A.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The CAP for Life proposal complements the work that Public Health Service’s Hamilton Walks committee is doing with the Ainslie Wood Westdale Walkability Committee, Environment Hamilton’s Kirkendall Neighbourhood project: “Shrinking Kirkendall’s Footprint”, Active and Safe Routes to School, and the proposed Canadian Walking Master Class Hamilton project (pending funding). Several neighbourhood associations have already expressed interest in participating in this initiative. It is important to include neighbourhoods that support the initiative in order to make the project successful.

Results will provide a measure of the existing support for active transportation at the neighbourhood level. The information from these audits will help generate discussion about how active transportation in neighbourhoods can be further improved to benefit the health of its residents. It will also increase residents’ awareness about the connection and importance of neighbourhood design and health.

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4 Walk and Bike for Life [www.walkandbikeforlife.org](http://www.walkandbikeforlife.org)
The HPHW Policy Sub-Committee recognizes that the City’s Planning and Economic Development Department, Public Works Department, and Public Health Services presently use various approaches to promote active communities and help ensure active neighbourhoods. These include:

- Secondary plans emphasizing mixed use development
- Increased residential densities and pedestrian enhancements
- Streetscape Master Plans for downtown streets
- Transportation Demand Management strategies to promote transit, walking and cycling
- Two-year contract position for a Project Manager - Alternative Transportation
- Development of the rapid transit network
- Approval of the QEW Gateway pedestrian bridge
- Hamilton Walks committee
- HPHW Policy Sub-Committee

Benefits of the proposed CAP for Life project includes a means to measure current support and progress on achieving neighbourhoods supportive of active transportation within Hamilton.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The Board of Health could choose not to approve the proposed initiative, however, valuable information at the neighbourhood level, and citizen engagement would not be gained, and the $10,000 value of the workshop in each neighbourhood would be lost.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The $1,500 required per neighbourhood will be covered through existing Public Health Service programming dollars. Staff time will be covered by existing Public Health Services complement.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

CAP for Life supports the City of Hamilton’s Vision to “be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities”

This initiative will contribute to the following components of the Strategic Plan for the City of Hamilton:
Focus Area #7: Healthy Community. Among the performance measures for this focus area is to: increase the percentage of residents who are moderately active (7.3), stop the rise in the percentage of residents who are overweight or obese (7.4), and to increase alternative transportation usage in areas such as transit ridership, walking, and cycling.

CAP for Life will contribute to the following components of the Strategic Plan for Hamilton Public Health Services:

Goal A: Implement public health initiatives to improve local air quality.

Goal C: Maximize impact on community health in two key areas of chronic disease prevention: nutrition and physical activity.
   C2. Identify best practices in chronic disease prevention and reorient chronic disease prevention activities to ensure optimal reach and effectiveness.
   C4. Advocate for environments that support healthy behaviours.

CAP for Life complements the Walk 21 International Charter for Walking.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights
Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights Policy Sub-Committee
Hamilton Walks
Planning and Economic Development, Community Planning and Design
Public Works Department, Operations and Maintenance

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Creating communities that support active transportation increases opportunities for safe physical activity, healthy weights, social and emotional well-being, and clean air which will lead to better health and wellness for Hamiltonians.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Creating environments that facilitate and support active transportation such as walking and biking in our neighbourhoods will reduce dependency on automobiles and their associated vehicular emissions.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Well designed neighbourhoods increase physical activity resulting in more productive and satisfied staff and less absenteeism. Pedestrian and bike friendly areas increase tourism and money being spent in the city.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

☑ Yes  □ No

Yes, as outlined above.

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

☑ Yes  □ No

Providing built environments that support and facilitate physical activity in our city enhances community, health, and environmental and economic well-being of Hamiltonians. It therefore helps to make Hamilton a city of choice to live, work, and play.
**Project Plan:** Community Action Plan for Life (2008-2009)

**Project Description**

Walk & Bike for Life’s Community Action Plan for Life (CAP-for-Life) initiative sets out to develop Community-Led Action Plans in 12 communities in the Hamilton, Halton and Peel regions. The project will engage local citizens through a series of public meetings and workshops with the purpose of creating local Community Action Groups (CAGs) who will take on the implementation of the action plan. The overall goal of CAP-for-Life is to provide communities with the tools necessary to advocate for improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities, including sidewalks, park space, bike lanes, and trails, in order to provide safe opportunities for people to be active every day and to improve the overall quality of life in each of these communities.

**Our Contributions**

**Expertise**

Gil Penalosa, is Executive Director of Walk & Bike for Life as well as a successful international speaker and consultant. In his presentations and workshops on creating better Communities, he develops strong linkages of Walking, Bicycling, Parks and Trails, with improving the Personal and Public Health, enhancing our Transportation systems, providing Recreation for ALL, a cleaner Environment and advancing Economic Development.

Gil earned a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from UCLA’s Management School. Following years of private and public sector senior managerial experience, the Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia (pop. 7 m), appointed him Commissioner of Parks, Sport and Recreation for the City. Gil led his team to design and build over 200 parks, and was also successful in opening 91 kilometers of car-free city roads on Sundays, the Ciclovia, where over 1.5 m. people come out weekly to walk, run, skate and bike.

Gil also works as Director of Healthy Places Initiatives with NYC’s Project for Public Spaces and as Senior Consultant for Gehl Architects. He serves on the Board of Directors of American Trails, City Parks Alliance, International Sport and Culture Association, as well as on Advisory Committees of America Walks, Green GTA and WalkON.

Gil will be facilitating the public meetings and workshops in each of the 12 participating communities in for the CAP-for-Life project.

Sarah Rotz is Project Manager for Walk & Bike for Life. She is a Graduate of the University of Toronto with a double major in Business Management and Environmental
Science. Sarah was involved in the overall development of the CAP-for-Life project and is actively involved in managing all new and ongoing projects of the organization. Amanda O’Rourke is Project Manager for Walk & Bike for Life. Amanda is a graduate of Queen’s University (Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology) and the University of Toronto (Master of Science in Planning). Amanda brings years of experience in the not-for-profit sector working on various environmental planning projects. Amanda will also be involved in managing the CAP-for-Life project. Juliana Berrio is Administrative Manager for Walk & Bike for Life. Juliana has an Honours Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from CESA University, Bogota. She has over 5 years of experience working in Strategic Planning and Personal Banking Management. She is responsible for the administrative operations of the organization including accounting, and budgets.

Resources
Walk & Bike for Life is providing staff time and organizational resources to develop partnerships, develop educational and promotional materials for the workshops, conduct research (develop citizen surveys/questionnaires, collect and analyse data), organize workshops, public meetings, write final reports, provide ongoing consultation services to Community Action Groups, as well as carry out the overall administration of the program. The CAP-for-Life project’s main funder is the Ministry of Health Promotion (Communities in Action Fund). The CIAF grant provides funding for approximately 60% of the total eligible project cost. Walk & Bike for Life must be able to raise the remaining 40% of the total project cost through other sources of funding.

Activities
Walk & Bike for Life’s project managers are initiating the CAP-for-Life project by developing strong relationships with local community groups, citizens, municipal officials, regional departments & programs, and all other interested stakeholders. We will also be developing a promotional campaign which is both eye-catching and informative. These communication tools include posters, flyers, a newsletter, e-marketing via our website, and/or brochures. Walk & Bike for Life will be gathering secondary mobility research data for each of the 12 CAP-For-Life communities. This includes, but is not limited to; daily transportation routes, average transportation distances and methods, perceived walkability and bikability of that area, and current active transportation programs. These questions are also strongly dependent on the physical area itself, i.e. size, demographics, and infrastructure, etc.

The next phase of the CAP-For-Life process is to perform the workshop. These sessions are quite flexible and can be customized by both content and format to meet the needs of that community. The workshop itself begins with an interesting and eye-opening presentation (1hour) led by Gil Penalosa. Armed with a mind full of ideas and industry best practices, all participants break into groups and use the activity cases and surveys provided to develop citizen-based activity plans (2-3 hours). The deliverables of these plans will be short term (12 months), cost effective, and doable changes as well as long term (2-5 years), larger scale improvements for all types of local infrastructure.

Additional 60-90 minute presentations to specific groups (councillors, municipal staff, school boards, public health boards, Board of Trade, Economic Development, BIAs etc.) can be arranged with the community. The purpose of a separate session is to encourage
the participation of key decision makers and individuals who may not be able to participate in a 3-4 hour workshop.

After the workshops our organization will collect, summarize, and analyze all pre-workshop and workshop data to generate a comprehensive, user-friendly, and visually appealing final report. This report is then dispersed to interested stakeholders, decision makers, and CAG’s to support the advocacy and implementation of improved active transportation facilities and smart growth development. We will also provide ongoing consultation, updates, and resources to each CAG who assumes the responsibility for the local actions.

Partner Contributions

The total monetary value of the CAP project is approximately $10,361 per community ($103,610 / 10 communities) This process includes a variety of services, such as; pre-workshop research, promotions, consultation services, a presentation session, an active participation session including all necessary tools, a comprehensive final report, and long-term support provided to Community Action Groups.

Given the grant from the Communities in Action Fund, and a major effort by Walk & Bike for Life to provide additional support, and other in-kind contributions, the total funds that must be raised to deliver the CAP project in each community is $1,500 (only 15% of the total cost of the project).

Additional presentation sessions (60-90 minutes) provided to a specific group(s) such as councillors, MP’s, municipal staff, the business community, Public Health Boards, School Boards can also be arranged with Walk & Bike for Life at a cost to be arranged, depending on the nature of the session.

Our priority is to work with enthusiastic communities, and facilitate an engagement process that remains sustainable in the long term. We are willing to work in collaboration with the community so that cost is not a barrier to participation.

We also welcome any other in-kind resources that the community is able to provide for the project, such as the project venue, local promotion for the workshops, and any other helpful resources.

Outputs

We feel it is essential to build a strong, constructive, and influential voice throughout the province. From our experience within this field, we find that creating citizen awareness, and building organized groups of informed, active supporters is an effective way to create change. Nevertheless this is not about criticizing what hasn’t or should have been done. It is about encouraging the awareness and analysis of important planning and development issues, while strengthening community engagement and collaboration. We feel it is important to work with current plans and utilize all opportunities for continuous improvement. We want our work to be a complement of both the municipality and local stakeholder groups. If we are able to bring community alignment and support to the government, financial priorities will be set and these issues will become much more visible within government sectors.

During the CAP-For-Life project we develop a variety of communication and informational tools, such as; flyers, posters, letterheads, registration forms, follow-up reports, questionnaires, surveys, and activity forms. This broad communication process is important because it raises awareness and improves workshop participation rates. Based on our previous workshop participation rates we expect 50-80 participants per
workshop. We also expect around 300 indirect participants (individuals who are informed/associated at some, but not all stages) involved. These numbers will vary slightly based on the workshop location. Lastly, at least 1 Community Action Group (CAG) will be formed by the time of workshop completion. Once numerous workshops have been completed, we aim to form a network of these CAG’s who will be able share information and resources amongst each other.

We feel that the final report and the support of a Community Action Group are the most essential and useful long-term deliverables. The final report will lay out a number of issues. Firstly, it will detail our organizations walkability, bikability, trails, and public spaces principals. Secondly, it will describe the particular workshop community, workshop results, and proposed changes. Lastly, it will describe how this community can move from talking to doing, including what actions need to be taken within the public sector and community.

This document, along with many others, will be a great resource to our CAG’s and decision makers alike.

Evaluation & Outcomes

The CAP-for-Life project will increase public awareness about the elements of walkable and bikeable communities, walking and cycling and its impact on the environment, economic development, recreation, transportation, and personal & public health, international best practices in active transportation, and how to effectively integrate walking and cycling into the local transportation system.

In addition, the project will result in an increase in physical activity levels in each of the communities in the long term. In order to track these trends we are utilizing the data supplied in municipal reports, monitoring our resource outputs, and including questions about the effectiveness of our promotional campaign in our workshop surveys.

In order to maintain influence in each community, we are creating a network of CAG’s. This will generate effective results within their municipal, regional, provincial and even federal government as well as open lines of communication within and amongst each government department. These CAG’s will be monitored regularly and receive ongoing consultation from Walk & Bike for Life.

Third, both children and adults will gain appropriate resources and personal networks to become more influential advocates for sustainable community development and improved opportunities for physical activity throughout their workshop area. This is difficult to measure but by monitoring relevant issues brought to local governments of each workshop community, and examining communication between parties, we can gain a strong understanding of how effective our CAG’s are working. Overall, our aim is to increase citizen influence within community development and program decisions, increase physical activity rates within participating communities, and, contribute to creating healthier communities where the residents live happier.

Contact:
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"...we may be raising the first generation of children who will not outlive their parents. Obesity is indeed a public health problem."

Ontario Medical Association, 2005
Consider:

- Each 10% increase in land-use mix is associated with a 25% reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obesity.

- Each additional hour spent in a car per day is associated with a 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity.

- Each additional kilometre walked per day is associated with a 4.8% reduction in the likelihood of obesity.


Consider:

- Adding a decade to the average age of a neighbourhood decreases women's risk of obesity by roughly 8% and men's by 13%.

Background

- Nov 26, 2007 Board of Health
  Healthy Communities report

Options Explored

- "Trim Town"
- Cyclovia
- Neighbourhood Assessments
Community Led Action Plan (CAP) for Life

- Initiative of Walk and Bike for Life
- CAP for Life seeks to engage local citizens through public meetings and workshops.

Recommendation

That the Board of Health approve Walk and Bike for Life's Community Led Action Plan for Life project proposed by the Hamilton Partners for Healthy Weights Policy Subcommittee.