

CHAPTER 14

STRONG AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY POLICIES

Building strong and healthy communities is vital to the township's economic success and overall quality of life. Achieving this goal requires investments and careful planning for *public services facilities*, such as libraries, schools, and social assistance and health facilities. Although the provision of such facilities rests primarily with senior levels of government, the Township can play an important supportive role by planning to ensure that *public service facilities* are located in strategic areas that best meet the needs of the community.

Achieving strong and healthy communities also requires supporting a high standard of air quality; promoting energy conservation measures; facilitating access to locally grown and other healthy foods; and reducing the impact of outdoor lighting on the night sky.

The Township adopts the following policies relative to support the development of strong and healthy communities:

14.1 PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES

- 14.1.1 The Township will continue to monitor the health and social services provided and will make representation and recommendation to the supplying agency of any addition, amendment or improvement, which would improve the service provided to Township residents.
- 14.1.2 The Township will continually strive through its representation on Regional Council and its Boards and Commissions to maintain a high standard of Health and Social Services available to Township residents.
- 14.1.3 The Township will attempt through its representation on Regional Council to assure that adequate budgets are made available to support necessary Health and Social Services within reasonable budget constraints and at the same time carefully examine and evaluate budget requests to assure that maximum benefit is derived from monies spent.
- 14.1.4 The Township will co-ordinate planning for *public service facilities*, land use planning and investment in *public service facilities*.
- 14.1.5 The Township will, where appropriate, co-locate and integrate *public service facilities* and public services in *community hubs* to promote cost-effectiveness.
- 14.1.6 The Township will, where appropriate, give priority to maintaining and adapting existing *public service facilities* and spaces as community hubs to meet the needs of the community and optimize the long-term viability of public investments.

- 14.1.7 Existing *public service facilities* in the Township that are located in or near strategic growth areas and are easily accessible by *active transportation* and transit, where that service is available, should be the preferred location for *community hubs*.
- 14.1.8 The Township will collaborate and consult with service planning, funding, and delivery sectors to facilitate the co-ordination and planning of *community hubs* and other *public service facilities*.

14.2 AIR QUALITY

Clean air is a prerequisite to a strong and healthy community. Provincial legislation and Regional strategic directions strongly promote efforts to help reduce the potential for climate change and associated poor air quality through the land use planning process. As a result, the policies in this Plan seek to improve air quality in the region through a variety of measures to support building strong and healthy communities.

- 14.2.1 The Township in conjunction with the Region will support improved air quality through the policies in this Plan that support a more compact, transit-supportive urban form and will:
- a) Consult with the Region on assessing the feasibility of developing a community-wide air quality monitoring and modeling program;
 - b) Consider initiatives to operate the Township's fleet of vehicles in an environmentally *sustainable* manner;
 - c) Support and work with the Region on any developed an anti-idling campaign to encourage drivers to avoid idling their engines; and
 - d) Investigate opportunities for increasing forest cover throughout the Township to assist in achieving the Region's overall target of 30 per cent forest cover or more of the region's total land area.

14.3 ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy conservation is beneficial for the environment as it reduces the demand on resources to create energy and the *infrastructure* resources required for its distribution. Energy conservation can also help reduce greenhouse gases and other air emissions from combustion of fossil fuels, which can affect climate change and air quality. Policies resulting in a reduction in energy consumption can be integrated into land use planning regulations by promoting the development of compact, *mixed-use*, *pedestrian* and bicycle friendly, and transit-oriented communities. When coupled with the use of environmentally responsible materials and alternative fuels, trips by walking, cycling and transit can significantly reduce energy consumption levels in the region.

- 14.3.1 The Township will support energy conservation through policies in this Plan that:
- a) Promote compact, *mixed-use* development;
 - b) Promote walking, cycling and the use of transit;

- c) Maximize, wherever appropriate, the use and production of *alternative and/or renewable energy systems*;
- d) Maximize the protection of existing natural areas and, wherever appropriate, promote the use of newly planted vegetation including green roofs to reduce the urban heat island effect;
- e) Optimize the use of existing physical *infrastructure* and *community infrastructure* to support *reurbanization*;
- f) Support water efficiency measures that reduce the demand for energy to pump and treat water resources;
- g) Support the designs of development that consistent with the principles of LEED-ND® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Canada).
- h) Promote building designs and orientations that incorporate energy conservation features, and the use of alternative or renewable energy.

14.3.2 The Township, in collaboration with Region, will continue to support initiatives that promote the benefits of reducing energy use, car dependence and idling times, and other initiatives that encourage public agencies, private industries and individuals to participate in energy conservation programs.

14.3.3 The Township will permit *alternative and/or renewable energy systems* in all designations, subject to the following:

- a) The development and use of *alternative energy and/or renewable energy systems* will be in accordance with *Provincial and Federal requirements*, including appropriate separation distances to address land use compatibility;
- b) Conformity with other policies in this plan and Chapter 8 of the Regional Official Plan;
- c) In *Rural Lands* and the Prime Agricultural Area, *alternative and/or renewable energy systems* will be in conformity with the provisions in this plan and Chapter 6 of the Regional Official Plan; and
- d) *Alternative and/or renewable energy systems* will not be permitted within designated Core Environmental Features as shown on Map 13.1 of this plan.

14.4 ACCESS TO LOCALLY GROWN AND OTHER HEALTHY FOODS

The local food system consists of the chain of activities related to the production, processing, distribution, consumption and eventual disposal of food. A strong and diverse local food system provides many benefits to the community. It facilitates peoples' access to locally grown and other healthy foods, which contributes to healthier eating choices and the achievement of broader public health objectives. It also encourages a range of food destinations within easy walking distance of where people live and work. As well, a strong local food system supports area farmers and contributes to the vitality and economic strength of the township as a whole.

- 14.4.1 The Township will support *development* of a strong local food system through the policies of this Plan by:
- a) Protecting the *Countryside* for long-term agricultural uses;
 - b) Permitting a range of agricultural uses, farm related uses and secondary uses to support the economic viability of local farms;
 - c) Providing Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations, when and where appropriate;
 - d) Consideration to permit temporary farmer’s markets, where appropriate; and
 - e) Support accessory gardens, rooftop gardens, and where appropriate community gardens.

14.5 LIGHTING FOR DARK SKY

- 14.5.1 The Township will review and encourage commercial, industrial and institutional *development* to provide lighting plans, and details that prevent or minimize the impact of outdoor lighting on the night sky.
- 14.5.2 The Township will review existing street lighting and look to use technology that supports dark-sky lighting in all new street lighting along Township Roads.