

THE HOUSTON WAY: HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHARTER

District of Houston, BC – April, 2016

Contents

- 1. Summary 1
 - 1.1 Vision:..... 1
 - 1.2. Purpose: 1
 - 1.3. Overall Goals: 1
 - 1.4. Principles:..... 1
- 2. Background: 2
 - 2.1 What is Community Health? 2
 - 2.2 Local Governments and Community Health:..... 2
 - 2.3 Local Governments and the Social Determinants of Health..... 3
 - 2.4 District of Houston Priority Issues..... 4
 - 2.4 Role and Responsibilities of the Community Health, Education and Social Services Committee .. 5
 - 2.5 Possible Indicators Related to Health and Well-being..... 5
- 3. Goals, Objectives and Activities 7
 - Appendix A: CHESS Committee Terms of Reference 8
 - Appendix B: Resources..... 10

THE HOUSTON WAY HEALTH & WELLNESS CHARTER

District of Houston, BC

April, 2016

1. Summary

1.1 Vision:

All residents of the District of Houston are able to make choices that support the highest level of health and wellness possible.

1.2. Purpose:

The Houston Way Health and Wellness Charter is intended to describe the approach taken by the District of Houston in working toward the development of a healthy community. The charter will articulate an overall vision for health and wellness in the community as well as a description of concrete goals needed to work towards that vision. The Charter will also be a living document that describes specific actions need to implement the vision, goals and principles of the Charter.

The Charter is intended to:

1. Recognize and honour existing community strengths;
2. Strengthen existing foundations and develop new infrastructure to support future development; and,
3. Develop opportunities based on existing natural and recreational opportunities in the area.

1.3. Overall Goals:

The goals of the Health and Wellness Charter are:

- Articulate an overall vision for “Health and Wellness” in Houston;
- Define the role of the District of Houston government in implementing that vision;
- Outline the role of the Houston Health, Safety, Community Services and Education Committee in implementing activities aimed at promoting that vision;
- Establish a set of concrete health and wellness goals and objectives for the District of Houston;
- Outline activities, timeline and commitments for implementing goals and objectives; and,
- Confirm how success will be assessed and celebrated.

1.4. Principles:

- Recognition that the natural setting of District of Houston as an important asset;
- Recognition of the culture and history of the area as an important asset;
- Recognition of Wet’suwet’en traditional territory and of the underlying strengths and culture of the Wet’suwet’en people;
- Recognition of the wisdom, experience and common sense of the people living in Houston as an important asset; and,

- Recognition of the important role played by organizations (formal and informal) in creating the conditions for a healthy Houston;

2. Background:

2.1 What is Community Health?

HEALTH: “A complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”¹

WELLNESS: “An active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.”²

HEALTHY COMMUNITY: “One in which multiple sectors collaborate to **improve the conditions** that influence our health and well-being.”³

Health is sometimes seen as the responsibility of hospitals, doctors and other elements of the formal medical system. While not ignoring the important contributions made by our medical system, it is also becoming more and more apparent that where we live, work, learn and play has a significant impact on how long and well we live. Our overall health and wellbeing is determined as much by our postal code as by our genetic code.

2.2 Local Governments and Community Health:

Local governments have played a leading role in the great public health achievements of the last century. Basic services such sanitation, water treatment and regulations (e.g., roads, food services, tobacco, etc.) have been a crucial element in the increases in live expectancy that have been seen.

Local governments have important responsibilities that have direct relationship to health and wellbeing. Examples include:

- **Built Environment** – Providing safe roads and walkways, safe water, etc.
- **Parks and Recreation** – Developing and maintaining parks and leisure infrastructure
- **Reporting** – Monitoring and reporting on the ongoing development of the community and ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the community.

In addition to these direct responsibilities, local governments can also play an important role in promoting conditions that lead to healthy communities as:

- **Convener** – Local government can support the community in coming together to discuss and define important community issues.
- **Spokesperson and advocate** – Officials can represent the voice of the community to senior levels of government
- **Service Provider and model employer** – As an important organization in the community the local government can provide leadership around issues such as hiring practices, wages, working conditions, etc.

¹ World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/about/en/>

² National Wellness Institute: <http://www.nationalwellness.org/?page=AboutWellness>

³ PlanH Program (BC Healthy Communities): <http://planh.ca/big-picture/what-healthy-community>

- **Social Equity and Social Inclusion** – Local governments can promote equity and inclusion in community life through education, policy development and discussion.

2.3 Local Governments and the Social Determinants of Health⁴

The Social Determinants of Health are described this way:

The primary factors that shape the health of Canadians are not medical treatments or lifestyle choices but rather the living conditions they experience. These conditions have come to be known as the social determinants of health. This information – based on decades of research and hundreds of studies in Canada and elsewhere – is unfamiliar to most Canadians.

Canadians are largely unaware that our health is shaped by how income and wealth is distributed, whether or not we are employed and if so, the working conditions we experience. Our health is also determined by the health and social services we receive, and our ability to obtain quality education, food and housing, among other factors. And contrary to the assumption that Canadians have personal control over these factors, in most cases these living conditions are – for better or worse – imposed upon us by the quality of the communities, housing situations, work settings, health and social service agencies, and educational institutions with which we interact. (Mikkonen & Raphael (2010).

The chart below provides examples of the role and responsibilities of local governments with regard to factors that are regarded as determinants of health.

Social Determinant of Health	Local Government Role	Local Government Responsibility
Income and Income Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and retain employers • Support community entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Economic Development • Infrastructure support
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with educational institutions (Community colleges, school districts, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with School District
Unemployment and Job Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract employers, small business • Develop youth retention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Economic Development
Employment and Working Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as model employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain Employment Policies
Early Childhood Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support social service development and partnership building 	

⁴ Source: Mikkonen, J & Raphael, D. (2010) Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.

Food Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with community programs (community gardens, food banks, etc.) Identify service locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review policies concerning land use
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with developers, builders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Standards and zoning bylaws Infrastructure Support
Social Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop model policies to support full participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation policies to ensure access for all
Social Safety Net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with senior levels of government about impacts of policies on the local level. 	
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with local health providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with Health District
Aboriginal Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with Aboriginal communities and governance bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community to Community Forums
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support full participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop model policies to support full participation
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support full participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop model policies to support full participation
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support full participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible communities bylaw

2.4 District of Houston Priority Issues⁵

Some issues that the District of Houston has identified include:

- 1) Assets
 - Positive feeling about Houston as a place to live and work;
 - Recreation opportunities (active groups, leisure facility);
 - Social service agencies (support for vulnerable community members);
 - Health Care (Medical Centre);
 - Education (Northwest Community College);
 - Housing (low-cost housing and affordable lifestyle); and,
 - Business (small entrepreneurs).
- 2) Challenges:

⁵ Adapted from: District of Houston, Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1001, 2010

- Celebration of heritage and the arts;
- Youth activities;
- Youth retention;
- Ongoing communication among community organizations;
- Isolation due to location; and,
- Maintain and enhance support by senior governments for social services and education services and facilities located in Houston.

2.4 Role and Responsibilities of the Community Health, Education and Social Services Committee⁶

The goals of the Community Health, Education and Social Services Committee (Chess Committee) are:

- Provide a forum for collaborative efforts to maintain and enhance services in the community.
- Foster networking and partnerships to share challenges, opportunities, successes and problem solving approaches.
- Support priority project or initiatives
- Shared development towards improving health, safety, community services and education.
- Respond to requests, concerns and suggestions from local residents with respect to health, safety, community services and education.
- Report on the delivery of services and programs in Houston with a view to identify opportunities to acknowledge and enhance services.
- Make recommendations to Council on issues related to health, safety, community services, education and the wellbeing of the community.

2.5 Possible Indicators Related to Health and Well-being⁷

Local governments can identify indicators related to health and well-being as part of their planning processes. Some sample indicators include:

Topics	Indicators
1) Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Distribution • Housing Affordability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Median Multiple Affordability Index ○ Rental Vacancy Rate ○ Residential Land Supply
2) Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Walking, Hiking and Cycling • Participation in Walking, Hiking and Cycling • Access to Transportation Options (e.g., bus, automobiles, etc.)

⁶ Adapted from Committee Terms of Reference

⁷ Adapted from: City of Kelowna, Official Community Plan Indicators Report, 2014

3) Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient Energy Use • Protected sensitive eco-systems
4) Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Well-Paying Jobs • Growing businesses • Access to education opportunities
5) Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to parks and recreation areas • Access to recreational opportunities
6) Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to fresh, healthy food • Access to Community Gardens • Access to Food Programs (food bank, food box, etc.)
7) Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assaults ○ Break and Enter ○ Thefts – Over/Under ○ Failure to Comply ○ Other • Substance Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drug Related ○ Liquor Related • Charges / Warnings • Assistance Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MCFD ○ DFO ○ BC Sheriffs ○ BC Ambulance ○ Conservation Officers ○ Assistance – General Public
8) Cultural Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of arts organizations, working artists, etc. • Participation in Cultural Activities • Number of festivals, parades, celebrations, and fairs • Expenditures on Arts and Culture

3. Goals, Objectives and Activities

Over the last year, many discussions have taken place that have included the identification of priority issues and actions aimed at the developing and sustaining health and wellness within the District of Houston. Some of the priority issues identified include:

- 1) Access to Education;
- 2) Food Security;
- 3) Sense of Belonging;
- 4) Transportation;
- 5) Access to Health Care;
- 6) Environmental Quality;
- 7) Housing;
- 8) Employment opportunities for Youth;
- 9) Support services for low-income families; and
- 10) Access to Information.

Appendix A: CHES Committee Terms of Reference

HOUSTON HEALTH, SAFETY, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE [OR COMMUNITY HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES (CHES)]

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved by Committee: January 23, 2015

The District of Houston Health, Safety, and Community Services and Education Committee is a Select Committee of Council that is appointed by Council.

Purpose:

- Provide a forum for collaborative efforts to maintain and enhance services in the community.
- Foster networking and partnerships to share challenges, opportunities, successes and problem solving approaches.
- Support priority project or initiatives
- Shared development towards improving health, safety, community services and education.
- Respond to requests, concerns and suggestions from local residents with respect to health, safety, community services and education.
- Report on the delivery of services and programs in Houston with a view to identify opportunities to acknowledge and enhance services.
- Make recommendations to Council on issues related to health, safety, community services, education and the wellbeing of the community.

Members:

- Committee members will be appointed by Council in accordance with the requirements of the ***Community Charter***;
- One member of council will be appointed to the Committee as Chair of the Committee;
- Up to 21 members of the Committee will be appointed by members of Council,
 - may include representatives from the community at large:
 - Youth
 - Seniors
 - Business/industry
 - Multidenominational faith based
 - and Council invites representation from the following member organizations:
 - District of Houston
 - Houston and District Chamber of Commerce
 - Houston Community Services Association
 - Houston Friendship Centre
 - Houston Link to Learning
 - Houston Ambulance Services
 - Houston Fire Department

- Houston RCMP
- Houston Soup Kitchen
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ministry of Advanced Education
- Northern Health
- Northern Society of Domestic Peace
- Northwest Community College
- School District #54
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
- United Way
- Work BC

Procedures:

- The Committee will meet bi-monthly in Council Chambers;
- Meetings will be open to the public;
- Regular and Special meetings of the Committee will be conducted and recorded in accordance with the District of Houston Procedures Bylaw No. 364;
- Approved minutes of the Committee will be forwarded to Council and will be considered at the next Regular Meeting of Council with recommendations made separately;
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually;
- An annual schedule will be provided to Council for approval.
 - January/March/May/August/October/November

Create: November 24, 2014

Updated: January 23, 2015

Approved: January 23, 2015

Appendix B: Resources

Written Sources:

- Improvement and Development Agency Healthy Communities Programme (2010). *Social Determinants of Health and the Role of Local Government*. London, UK: Author. <http://bit.ly/1ICLlt6>.
- Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management. <http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/>
- National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2014). *Let's talk: Moving upstream*. Antigonish, NS: National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, St. Francis Xavier University. <http://bit.ly/1RZvvHA>.
- Sudbury & District Health Unit. (2011). *10 promising practices to guide local public health practice to reduce social inequities in health: Technical briefing*. Sudbury, ON: Author. <http://bit.ly/1S7BvcS>
- Wong, E. and Gardner, B (2013). *Driving Local Action: The Potential of City and Regional Health Equity Strategies*. Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute. <http://bit.ly/1qlrs7h>

Websites:

- National Wellness Institute: <http://www.nationalwellness.org/>
- PlanH (BC Healthy Communities): <http://planh.ca/>
- Strengthening the Determinants of Health: The Toronto Charter for a Healthy Canada: <http://bit.ly/1T4LfH7>
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/about/en/>