

## **Request for Regional Support of a Charter for Physical Activity**

**Request:** THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo support the *Toronto Charter for Physical Activity: A Global Call for Action* (see attached) and adopt its guiding principles for a population based approach to physical activity;

AND THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo encourage the Waterloo Region Active Living Network (WRALN) to develop a blueprint for action specific to the needs of the region.

### **How do we define physical activity and what are the benefits?**

‘Physical activity’ is an umbrella term that describes a number of specific activities (e.g., sport, exercise, leisure time activities, work, and activities of daily living) that require energy expenditures above what is normal when the body is at rest. Physical activity promotes wellbeing, physical and mental health, prevents disease, improves social connectedness and quality of life, provides economic benefits, and contributes to environmental sustainability.

### **What is a charter for physical activity?**

The physical activity charter is a call for action and an advocacy tool to create sustainable opportunities for physically active lifestyles for all. Organisations and individuals interested in promoting physical activity can use this charter to influence and unite decision makers at regional and local levels to achieve a shared goal.

### **Why a charter for physical activity in our region?**

According to a 2009 Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute report, only 22.3% of youth and 49.1% of adults in the Region of Waterloo are sufficiently active to achieve health benefits. Our region is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of 34 regions within Ontario with respect to physical activity. Canada and Ontario-wide reports indicating a general lack of physical activity are also available (e.g., <http://www.activehealthykids.ca>).

### **What are the recommended guidelines for physical activity?**

January 2011 physical activity guidelines from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology suggest minimums for (a) children/youth (5-17 years) = 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity daily physical activity, (b) adults (18-64 years) = 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity weekly, and (c) older adults (> 65 years) = 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity weekly. Furthermore, these guidelines emphasize the added benefit of activities that strengthen muscle and bone and that greater health benefits accrue with more physical activity.

### **What are the costs associated with supporting the charter and adopting its principles?**

There is no specific budget attached to this request. The Charter provides a set of guidelines to consider when developing policies and initiatives at our local level. In sum, it is an overt statement of the importance of physical activity for our citizens.

### **How does the charter complement existing initiatives?**

This charter is intended to link with existing, well-designed tools promoting active living within the Region including the Pedestrian Charter, Pedestrian Master Plan, Active Transportation Master Plan, Regional Cycling Master Plan, Active and Safe Routes to School Charter, and the Cambridge Charter for Physical Activity. However, the guiding principles of the proposed charter address a broader set of activities, issues, and challenges associated with an active lifestyle. Furthermore, this Charter links directly with strategic objectives 4.2 and 4.7 Health and Inclusive Communities, and 3.2 Sustainable Transportation, contained within the Region of Waterloo’s 2011-2014 Strategic Focus document.

### **Why the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity?**

This is an international advocacy document developed by the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (see [www.globalpa.org.uk](http://www.globalpa.org.uk)) and is the result of contributions from over 450 individuals/organizations from 55 countries representing all regions of the world.

### **What are the next steps?**

WRALN will develop a blueprint for action specific to the region through community consultations.