

2014



AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVE DESIGN
Guidelines and Standards



Region of Peel Contacts

Peel Public Health
Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention
7120 Hurontario St.
Mississauga, ON L5M 2C1
Tel: 905-791-7800
Email: YourHealthyWorkplace@peelregion.ca
peelregion.ca/health

Real Property Asset Management
Corporate Services
10 Peel Centre Dr, Ste. B
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9
Tel: 905-791-7800
Email: rpam@regionofpeel.ca
peelregion.ca

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Finally, we recognize the hard work and continued support that will be necessary to implement the Region of Peel's Active Design – Guidelines and Standards in future affordable housing developments or retrofits; ultimately promoting improved health and well-being of Peel residents.

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FOREWORD



Message from Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services, Region of Peel

The development of the *Affordable Housing Active Design – Guidelines and Standards* is an excellent and creative example of collaboration across the Region of Peel. Such collaborations are critical to respond to the complex challenges facing Peel residents by leveraging our collective strengths and perspectives. These guidelines also illustrate that while we need to consider the Peel context, we can build upon the best available innovative work from other cities – in this instance, from New York City. We recognize that the planning and policy decisions being made every day potentially influence people’s health and the overall well-being of our community. With these guidelines, the Region of Peel will provide secure and affordable housing options to individuals and families, support their health and quality of life, and contribute to the development of active and healthy communities.



Message from Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services, and Dr. David L. Mowat, Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel

We are faced with a multitude of challenges to the health of Peel residents. Adult obesity rates have increased dramatically in recent decades, and among Peel school children, substantial proportions are overweight or obese. Currently it is estimated that one in 10 people living in Peel have been diagnosed with diabetes, and without intervention, this is projected to rise to an estimated one in six by 2025. While physical activity is extremely beneficial to people’s health, in recent decades, it has been largely removed from day-to-day life. These guidelines are an important example of seeking to create environments that support health by design by making it easier and more convenient for people to be active and healthy. The application of these guidelines not only support active play and building walking and cycling into daily life, but also foster social connectivity and equity by increasing transportation options for all.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The Region of Peel's *Affordable Housing Active Design – Guidelines and Standards* are a set of elements for consideration during the procurement, design and rehabilitation or retrofit phases that promote an active lifestyle among affordable housing residents. The impact of the built form on health has evolved to recognize that through the support of transit dependent, compact and walkable neighbourhoods and additional opportunities for physical activity close to home we can positively impact health behaviours. Implementation of the guidelines will aim to directly ensure opportunities and resources for physical activity are available to all residents. Although intended for use by the Region of Peel and Peel Living, the guidelines can also be used as a stand-alone reference for other non-Region of Peel groups (e.g. private landlords, non-profit groups, etc.).

1.2 The Importance of Health in Design

Obesity rates in Canada have increased dramatically over the past 30 years (from 14 per cent in 1978 to 23 per cent in 2004, using Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements).¹ In 2011/2012 approximately half of Peel adults aged 18 and over were classified as overweight (34 per cent) or obese (16 per cent).² According to the 2011 Student Health Survey, 7,500 students from Grades 7-12 were measured and results reported that 37 per cent of males and 27 per cent of females were classified as overweight/obese.³ In order to address this obesity epidemic and the current rate of diabetes, *Peel Public Health's 10-Year Strategic Plan* is committed to creating supportive environments where the healthy choice is the easy choice for both food and physical activity.

Changes to individual and societal behaviours over the last 20-30 years have created an obesogenic environment where weight gain can be attributed in part to external environmental factors. Changes to our physical and social environments have exerted powerful influences on people's overall caloric intake, the composition of their diets, and the frequency and intensity of physical activity at work or school, at home and during leisure time.⁴ Influencing the built environment is the most sustainable way to increase opportunities for physical activity for families, groups and communities. Creating or improving access to places for physical activity can result in increases in the frequency of physical activity and improvements in aerobic capacity and energy expenditure⁵ as well as decrease the incidence of several chronic diseases, including diabetes.

While using design to increase opportunities for physical activity and better health is relevant in any setting, it is particularly pertinent in the affordable housing context. Individuals with lower socio-economic status experience economic, transportation and other barriers to physical activity,⁶ and experience higher rates of diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases.⁷ Recent immigrants' risk of developing diabetes is significantly increased by a combination of low income and low neighbourhood walkability.⁸

1.3 Affordable Housing in Peel

A priority of the Region of Peel is to provide secure and affordable housing options to individuals and families. As a designated service manager, the Region of Peel is in a unique position to influence built form through the design, construction or rehabilitation of current and future affordable housing properties. Peel Living, the Region of Peel's non-profit housing company, is a recognized leader in creating innovative housing projects and developing housing policy. It is the largest landlord in Peel and the third largest social housing provider in Ontario. Peel Living provides homes at 70 sites to 7,100 residents and is one of Peel's 47 housing providers.

Strategic Action 1.5 of *Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan: A Community Strategy (2014-2024)* states that an implementation action is to "ensure housing development contributes to mixed income and land use that promotes safe, prosperous, active and healthy communities." These guidelines alongside the Housing and Homelessness Plan will more effectively advance this strategic action.

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1.4 How and When to Use the Guidelines

These guidelines focus on identifying design strategies that make physical activity an easy choice in daily life for both children and adults. Strategies are categorized as:

- Complete Communities
- Outdoor Active Play Areas
- Indoor Building Design
- Programming and Partnership Opportunities.

An objective and recommendations are included for the implementation of each element. A checklist at the end of the document provides a summary of all of the guidelines and organizes them by cost impact to assess the generalized resource implications of active design elements comparatively.

The guidelines will be used when the Region of Peel funds affordable housing through any of its current or future tenure arrangements. As a service provider, the Region of Peel can strategically influence the outcomes of affordable housing we own, operate, maintain or support through the allocation of funding. We believe that our responsibility to the health and well-being of our residents extends to the vulnerable populations housed through provincial support of affordable housing regardless of ultimate property ownership. For this reason, these guidelines will be included in all future Requests for Proposal (RFP) and as:

- a requirement for consideration during property acquisition;
- for inclusion during the design of new buildings; and
- for consideration during rehabilitation or retrofit of existing buildings.

Not all elements will be appropriate at each affordable housing property and the constraints of each site will need to be taken into consideration. However, it is the expectation and intent that every effort be made to incorporate as many low-cost elements as allowable per site and as many minor-cost elements as feasible under the provincial guidelines for affordable housing expenditures and the specific project budgetary allotment. A *Guideline Checklist and Cost Impact* (Section 7.0) is provided to assist with incorporating as many low/minor-cost active design elements as possible into the planning process. Through identification of alternative funding sources or contributions, additional elements may be included as appropriate.

By including the guidelines at the initial project stage as part of property acquisition and the procurement process and as part of the RFP, the Region of Peel will be in a position to ensure that the spirit of the guidelines are realized through the life of the property going forward.

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1.5 Background and Partners

In the fall of 2012, Peel Public Health organized the Healthy Peel by Design Symposium to launch its Supportive Environments for Healthy Living Strategy (*Changing Course: Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Living in Peel*). The symposium highlighted the active design work being done by the City of New York. Stakeholders were brought together to discuss strategic actions and, as a result, four work areas were identified. Of relevance to the guidelines is the Actively Designed Buildings work group. The momentum created from these discussions and work groups resulted in Public Health and Human Services identifying the opportunity to collaborate and influence the design of affordable housing buildings in the Region. A collaborative effort among the Region of Peel partners included: Real Property Asset Management (RPAM), Corporate Services – Integrated Planning, Human Services – Housing Operations & Management Services (Peel Living) and Strategic Planning, Policy and Partnerships (Program Design & Development), Public Works – Transportation Planning, and Public Health.

The City of New York’s *Active Design Supplement: Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing* served as the main guiding document in the development of Peel-specific guidelines. Also referenced is the City of New York’s *Active Design Guidelines: Promoting Physical Activity and Health in Design*. These guidelines were created by a partnership of City of New York departments, academics from Georgia Institute of Technology and OCAD University, and housing authorities and private-sector affordable housing developers in New York, Atlanta and San Antonio. Region of Peel was provided with technical supports from 2012 to 2014 from multiple professionals including: Dr. Karen Lee, David Burney, Skye Duncan, Jeffrey Shumaker, Alex Washburn and Wendy Feuer (who also worked for City of New York departments), Candace Young (The Food Trust), Andrew Stone (The Trust for Public Land). Region of Peel also received support through the Center for Active Design during the same time period.

The development of these guidelines is the first step in a multifaceted process. Given that the Region of Peel is developing or retrofitting affordable housing on an ongoing basis, it was decided that we would implement draft guidelines, gain the benefit immediately, and adjust them as necessary. The initial implementation would provide the opportunity for a broad cross-section of stakeholders to incorporate and refine the guidelines with in-house experience and knowledge relevant to affordable housing.



New York City’s Active Design Guidelines serves as main reference documents in the development of Peel’s *Affordable Housing Active Design – Guidelines and Standards*.

1.6 Guiding Documents

The *Affordable Housing Active Design – Guidelines and Standards* are aligned with key provincial and municipal planning guiding documents:

The Planning Act (1990) sets out matters for provincial interest, such as providing a full range of housing (including affordable housing) and the protection of public health and safety. Additionally, the Planning Act provides tools such as Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to manage growth and development.

The *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014* (PPS, 2014) contains clear, overall policy directions on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The intent of the PPS is to provide for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural environment.

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The Places to Grow Act (2005) is the Ontario government's program to plan for growth and development in a way that supports economic prosperity, protects the environment and helps communities achieve a high quality of life across the province. Places to Grow allows for the identification and designation of growth plan areas and the development of strategic growth plans for those communities, in discussion with local officials, stakeholders, residents and other public groups.

The Ontario government established the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) in 2005. Its goal is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 by providing a framework that outlines province-wide accessibility standards addressing key areas of daily living. The standards cover five areas:

- customer service
- employment
- information and communications
- transportation
- design of public spaces (most relevant to active design)

The primary objective of Region of Peel's *Regional Official Plan* is to create and maintain a system of viable, well-functioning environmental features to ensure a healthy, resilient and self-sustaining natural environment within Peel.

The *Region of Peel Term of Council Priorities* (2011-2014) provides strategic planning to the Region of Peel, supported by Peel Regional Council direction:

- Priority #18: Creating supportive environments for healthy living (supporting the themes of Environment and Community Health).
- Council Resolution – HE-B1. Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Living In Peel (November 8, 2012): The Region of Peel be committed to becoming a model employer for healthy living by considering design, facilities and service improvements in Regional buildings to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour among its workforce. Further to this, the Region of Peel advocates for local, provincial and federal policy changes that create supportive environments for healthy living.
- Council Resolution – HE-B2. New York City's Success in Creating Supportive Environments for Health (November 8, 2012): Individuals report that they want to be more active and that they want to live in neighbourhoods that promote active living. New York City has developed a variety of evidence-based programs and policies to promote the development of supportive environments for healthy living that can be adapted to the Peel context.

Peel Public Health's 10-Year Strategic Plan (2009-2019) and *Public Health's Changing Course: Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Living in Peel* (2012):

- The programming priority of Supportive Environments for Healthy Living focuses on improving the health of Peel residents by preventing and reducing the incidence of obesity.
- The effect of the built environment plays an important role in the development of an anti-obesity strategy.

Region of Peel's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan):

- Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan (September 2013), contributing to the Region of Peel's Term of Council Priority #7 to increase supply of appropriate housing options, builds on the Ontario government's *Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy*, and aims to transform the housing system and put people first.
- Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan aims to improve the availability of safe, affordable, accessible and appropriate housing in Peel, and provide a solid foundation on which to secure employment, raise families and build strong communities over the next 10 years.

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2.0 KEY ELEMENTS

2.1 Determining Suitability For Active Design Elements

When weighing elements for consideration at specific project locations, the following should be included as part of the decision making process to achieve the maximum benefit:

1. **Cost** – Depending on the type of modification selected, cost is an important factor that will determine the feasibility of each key element (e.g. low cost to minor cost and difficulty of implementation).
2. **Modifications** – When considering elements for inclusion in retrofit and rehabilitation projects, focus on the following key concepts to achieve maximum benefit:
 - a. Shift costs away from sedentary design elements to ones that promote activity
 - b. Enhance existing features to support activity
 - c. Include features that support physical activity across age groups
3. **Co-location** – Co-locating activity areas for adults and children will allow for family-oriented recreation time. When possible, co-locate elements across age groups.
4. **Visibility** – Designing centrally located and visible locations within the building increases awareness and use of the spaces, and improves safety. Providing views to the outdoors from indoor rooms may help to create a positive experience and increase use of the outdoor facilities.
5. **Site Constraints** – Lot size and shape may impact the feasibility and suitability of certain design elements and may also offer unique opportunities. For example, a creative solution such as roof-top gardens could be considered in certain circumstances to support the goal of promoting active lifestyles among affordable housing residents.
6. **Context** – Consider the surrounding context when designing a site. Context includes such amenities as adjacent parks, greenspaces and neighbourhood resources available to residents. It can also include more constraining elements such as budget and political climate. Taking all these elements into account during the early phases of the project will ensure that the project more effectively meets the needs of all stakeholders.
7. **Accessibility** – Designing for activity can assist with adhering to the latest version of the Region of Peel's *Accessibility Standards for Affordable Residential Properties* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005)*. Specific considerations for accessibility are incorporated throughout the active design recommendations.
8. **Comprehensive Health Approach** – Renovation or site construction may provide opportunity for the co-location of additional programs and health services, such as community gardens and culinary programs for healthy eating, promotion of smoke-free living, offering low-income dental care and other subsidized care.
9. **Regional Goals** – Incorporating elements into affordable housing supports other provincial, regional and municipal goals. Identifying those opportunities at the outset may provide added support for a project and assist in achieving multiple objectives.

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3.0 COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

Creating complete communities where residents can access employment, services, recreation and meet other daily needs over a lifetime will result in supportive environments where physical activity is encouraged. Development over the last 50 years has created a separation in the activities of daily living. As a result, distances between work, home and shopping increasingly requires greater dependence on car travel. Complete communities mix uses and provide a broader range of housing options and services, encouraging transit dependence and the creation of walkable neighbourhoods.

3.1 Site Selection

Objective:

Provide housing in a community where residents can meet their daily needs for living over a lifetime.

Recommendation:

1. When possible, **locate affordable housing where convenient and accessible access to a variety of local services and daily amenities is available**, such as: employment, health services, full-service grocery stores, educational institutions, recreation and greenspace, walking paths and cycling networks, and public transportation.
2. When ideal locations are not possible, **work with area municipalities and other levels of government to:**
 - **Expand nearby outdoor recreational facilities** to enable adolescents to engage in more diverse physical activities such as multipurpose hard-surface areas for basketball, volleyball, hockey or soccer in developments with large, grassy, open spaces.
 - **Improve connections to nearby greenspace networks or trails.**
 - **Improve local transit service.**



Nearby transit at the Creditvale Mills affordable housing site in Mississauga provides residents with accessible transportation as well as opportunities for daily physical activity.

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3.2 Planning for Affordable Housing

Objective:

When possible, support the development of affordable housing in our communities through the planning process.

Recommendation:

1. During the Official Plan review, local zoning review, secondary plan review and site plan pre-consultation processes, **consider opportunities to support the incorporation of affordable housing early in the development planning process.**
2. **Negotiate development expenditures to support nearby public physical activity facilities** that would benefit residents.

3.3 Ground Floor Space

Objective:

Partner with area municipalities to identify appropriate uses for floor level space/on-site commercial opportunities that promote healthy choices and seek to achieve complete communities.

Recommendation:

1. When possible, **identify appropriate commercial or service uses for the site with the applicable area municipality prior to procurement that encourages a mixed-use facility** and supports the health and well-being for residents (e.g. health services, full-service grocery stores, recreation services, employment services, educational institutions).
2. When possible, **support greater density, reduced parking requirements, and other considerations that support health and well-being** of residents and reduce the burden on the developer to provide additional active living elements.

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4.0 OUTDOOR ACTIVE PLAY AREAS


4.1 Outdoor Play Areas

Objective:

Provide outdoor playgrounds and play structures that promote physical literacy and allow pre-school and school-aged children, teenagers, adults and older adults to engage in daily physical activity.

Recommendations:

1. When considering outdoor play opportunities, **review existing play areas that, with improvements such as playground paint markings on or near play surfaces, could promote play and activity.**
2. **Design play spaces and outdoor active play areas for children, youth and adults of various ages and a broad range of abilities.** When possible, include shade structures to promote sun safety and drinking water fountains/refilling stations for access to fresh water. These play spaces might include but are not limited to: splash pads, outdoor exercise equipment, courtyards, meditative and greenspaces, community gardens, sensory stimulation activities such as chalk art spaces, picnic tables, sport courts, tetherball, jumping rope areas, and paint markings with contrasting, bold colours to support active play.
3. **Include structures that provide opportunities for activity using the full range of movement types:**⁹
 - **Manipulative Movement:** Develops fine-motor skills and coordination and involves controlled use of the hands and feet. Examples include grasping, throwing and catching and ball footwork.
 - **Non-Locomotor Movement:** Develops balance and coordination skills and focuses on the relationship of the body to a place or object. Examples include balancing, pushing and pulling, twisting, as well as sitting and rising.
 - **Locomotor Movement:** Develops gross motor skills and constitutes any movement of the body from place to place. Examples include crawling, walking, running, stepping, skipping, jumping and climbing.
4. When appropriate, **co-locate other outdoor elements**, such as soccer fields, benches, picnic areas, adult gym equipment, **with playgrounds or play structures to promote active play across age groups.**
5. **Preserve or create greenspace areas or sport courts that can be designated for outdoor sport and play** when site constraints allow.

 Using the selected landscape elements, such as street furniture, trees and berms, can create a buffer to enhance accessibility and safety by separating residents in the active play areas from moving vehicles.

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The Creditvale Mills affordable housing development in Mississauga offers a vibrant, colourful outdoor play area for children and their parents.



Colour-coded pavement markings, like this play area at a New York City affordable housing site, can stimulate gross motor play among children.

Photo credit: The Trust for Public Land, New York City.




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4.2 Outdoor Paths

Objective:

Increase the availability and visual appeal of paths to support recreational and utilitarian walking and cycling.

Recommendation:

1. When considering walking path opportunities, **review area context and use underutilized spaces that, with improvement, could serve an active purpose near or alongside pathways** (hydro parks, greenspaces, etc.).
 2. **Design visually appealing, accessible and well-lit environments along paths** in order to improve the walking experience.
 3. **Construct paths that connect to on-site and off-site destinations.** Use paths to connect the various on-site physical activity spaces and/or other functional spaces (e.g. laundry room, retail spaces, etc.) and to connect with off-site sidewalks and cycling paths connecting residents to nearby services and destinations.
 4. **Provide a variety of way-finding and instructional signage along outdoor paths**, including: health information, motivational messages and/or information of interest (e.g. community heritage). Signage could also dedicate areas for activity (e.g. provide instructions on how to use existing benches for activity; instructions for stand-alone activities, such as jumping-jacks) and/or provide instructions to use outdoor exercise equipment, if placed along pathways.
-  For accessibility, ensure that pathways are accessible to those with visual/auditory/mobility challenges and signage is placed at the appropriate height, uses suitable fonts/colours/patterns, and uses glare-reducing material.

For both active play areas and outdoor paths, it is recommended to **address climatic restrictions on physical activity within developments by maintaining the utility and accessibility of outdoor areas during snowy winter conditions.**

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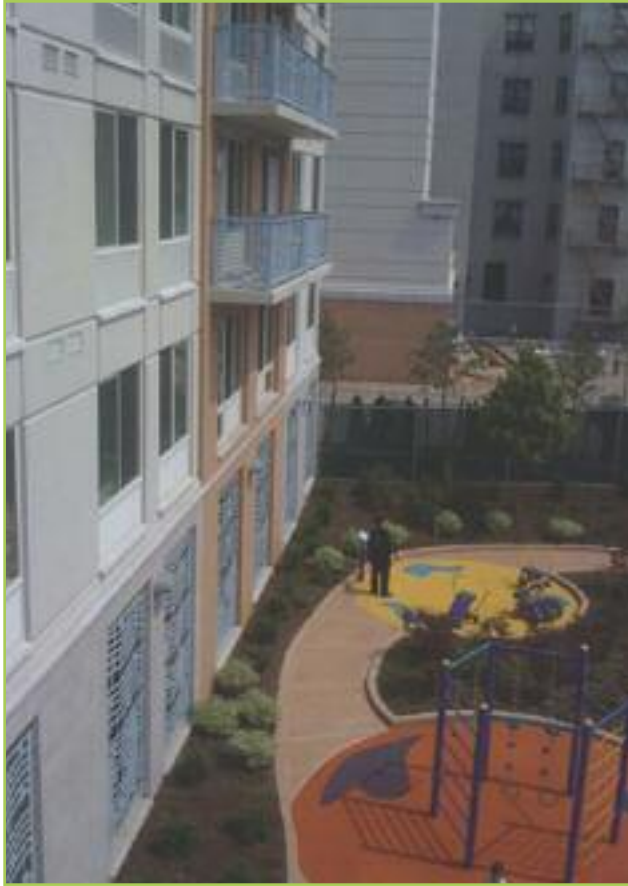


Photo credit: Reena Agarwal, New York City.



Photo credit: Bernstein Associates, New York City.

As featured on many of New York City's affordable housing sites, outdoor gym equipment along colourful walking paths provides additional exercise opportunities for residents.

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4.3 Outdoor Bike Racks

Objective:

Provide outdoor bicycle storage to encourage cycling for recreation and active transportation purposes.

Recommendation:

1. **Provide outdoor bike racks that are secure and visible for short-term visitors**, preferably sheltered, well-lit and centrally located.
2. **Provide outdoor bike storage for residents that are secure and visible, if indoor options are not available.** This objective is most applicable during the retrofit and rehabilitation process for buildings in which an indoor bike room cannot be accommodated. When possible, outdoor bike racks should be covered and well-lit to allow good bicycle security.



A covered, secure, and centrally located outdoor bike rack, like the one found at the Region of Peel's main service building, is ideal for visitors and for residents to use in the short-term.

4.4 Linear Parks

Objective:

Provide linear space for active play when the site constraints limit more traditionally shaped playground spaces.

Recommendation:

1. **Identify spaces that may be adjacent to, in front of, or could connect uses that alone would be underutilized for active play purposes.** Examples include front or rear set-back space, hydro parks, or green land systems. When possible, connect to municipally-owned greenspaces or paths.

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5.0 INDOOR BUILDING DESIGN

5.1 Stairs

Objective:

Increase the frequency of stair use by making them more visible and aesthetically appealing.

Recommendations:

1. **For new buildings, locate stairs in a prominent location near the building main entrance**, with direct, visual access from the lobby while still providing elevator access for people with disabilities. Design visually prominent stairwells to floors with shared facility rooms, including from the lobby to second floor and between floors in high-rise buildings. Organizing building lobbies to enable clear views of the active recreational and fitness-oriented spaces is also advisable.
2. **For existing buildings, open up existing underused fire-exit stairways** to serve as a primary means of travel.
3. **Replace solid doors at each lobby stair entrance with doors that have fire-rated glass windows.**
4. **Provide visible point-of-decision signage or markings to encourage and direct stair use at the elevators.** Use motivational messages that are appropriate for the resident population.
5. **Provide well-lit stairways** to encourage use and limit negative behaviours (crime, loitering, etc.).
6. **Provide visually appealing interior finishes in stairwells** (paint, art, paint markings, etc.).

♿ With any stairwell changes consider incorporating accessibility and safety features as required, such as: tactile signage, glare-reducing lighting/surfaces, contrasting colours on walls and step nosing, and slip-resistant floor finishes.



To promote use and assist with way-finding, Region of Peel service buildings in Brampton and Mississauga feature point-of-decision signage and interesting graphics leading to the stairwells.



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New York City Affordable Housing



Photo credit: Bernstein Associates, New York City.

Peel Service Buildings

Before



After



Simple and inexpensive renovations, such as wall paint, artwork, handrail coatings and step nosing, as seen in New York City affordable housing buildings and Region of Peel service buildings, transform underutilized fire-exits into appealing stairwells for everyday use.

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5.2 Indoor Bike Storage

Objective:

Provide secure, covered bike storage to encourage cycling for recreation and active transportation purposes.

Recommendations:

1. **Provide secure, sheltered and accessible indoor bicycle storage**, preferably in a central location on the ground floor with a separate, external entrance.



Indoor bike storage, like the ones found in Mississauga and Brampton affordable housing sites, provides residents with a secure, enclosed location to store their bikes.

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5.3 Common Room Design

Objective:

Increase activity during traditionally sedentary times.

Recommendations:

1. **When designing indoor common room areas**, such as laundry facilities, multi-purpose rooms or communal cooking areas, **consider central locations that provide visibility and access to indoor and/or outdoor play areas and the inclusion of fitness equipment** (see Section 6 for more information regarding partnerships and programming). This allows parents to exercise while doing household tasks and/or supervising children at play. Also consider designs that accommodate a variety of resident ages and abilities.



Laundry rooms should be designed to overlook and access children’s playgrounds so that parents can supervise children while doing household chores.



Gym equipment can be added indoors to create fitness rooms for adults and teenagers. This exercise room in an affordable housing site in New York City uniquely features a climbing wall. Fitness rooms with windows can be located near children’s playrooms to allow adults to watch over their children playing while exercising.

Photo credit: Bernstein Associates, New York City.

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6.0 PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Active design is the first step in increasing the physical activity levels of affordable housing residents. Once the indoor and outdoor design elements are in place, establishing and fostering community programming and partnerships will help support the long-term sustainability of daily active living. Promoting and facilitating tenant-led programming will increase communication among residents and with local community groups, build community cohesion, and ultimately encourage behaviour change.

6.1 Fitness and Recreation Areas

Objective:

Increase structured physical activity opportunities by providing multi-purpose rooms.

Recommendations:

1. **Identify and designate space that can be used for a variety of physical activity opportunities** (e.g. organized sports, fitness classes, gym equipment, bike-repair clinics, etc.) as well as for secure, onsite storage of equipment.
2. **Partner with community-based organizations**, such as local bicycle committees, **that can offer fitness and recreation programming** and be responsible for the communications, registration, operations and maintenance of equipment, and risks.



Residents of all ages living in affordable housing sites throughout Peel can access regular fitness programs in multi-purpose rooms; many with large, bright windows providing natural light from the outdoors.



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6.2 Community Gardens

Objective:

Provide plots for community gardens to encourage light physical activity for residents and to also act as a source of fresh, unprocessed vegetables and fruits.

Recommendations:

1. **Identify and designate plots to serve as gardens and promote light activity** for seniors and other residents. Create opportunities for children to garden with their parents, such as a children’s garden plot. Locate garden plots using planter boxes, container gardens, green roofs, or vacant spaces/lots. Consider walkways and raised beds or gardens that can accommodate residents with wheelchairs or other assist devices. Consider sensory gardens for those with hearing or vision disabilities.
2. **Partner with community-based organizations that can offer community gardening programs** to sponsor and/or maintain greenspaces and gardens on building sites.



The community garden at Creditvale Mills in Mississauga provides residents with access to fresh vegetables and opportunities for physical activity and to socialize.

6.3 Communal Cooking and Eating Areas

Objective:

Provide opportunities for residents to build food and culinary skills to promote healthy eating.

Recommendations:

1. **Identify and designate space that can be used for a variety of opportunities to teach food and culinary-skills**, such as multi-purpose rooms, common kitchen or eating areas and outdoor cooking/BBQ areas. Space should provide secure, onsite storage of equipment and cooking ingredients. Overhead or countertop tilt-mirrors can be added to enhance the teaching environment for cooking classes.
2. **Partner with community-based organizations that can offer community kitchen programming** and be responsible for the communications, registration, operations and maintenance of equipment/cooking ingredients, and risks.

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7.0 GUIDELINES CHECKLIST AND COST IMPACT

The following table¹⁰ has been created to provide housing and service designers and providers a checklist of all the *Affordable Housing Active Design – Guidelines and Standards* to consider for affordable housing. The guidelines are organized by cost impact to assess the generalized resource implications of active design elements comparatively. Incorporation of as many active design elements as possible early on in the design process, as appropriate, is more likely to result in more significant active design outcomes.

Neutral or low cost, immediately implementable requiring minimal change to building types	
4.1	Outdoor Play Areas
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Review existing play areas that, with improvements such as playground paint markings on or near play surfaces, could promote play and activity
4.2	Outdoor Paths
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Review area context and use underutilized spaces that, with improvement, could serve an active purpose near or alongside pathways <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Provide a variety of way-finding and instructional signage along outdoor paths
4.3	Outdoor Bike Racks
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Provide outdoor bike racks that are secure and visible for short-term visitors <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Provide outdoor bike storage for residents that are secure and visible, if indoor options are not available
4.4	Linear Parks
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Identify spaces that may be adjacent to, in front of, or could connect uses that alone would be underutilized for active play purposes
5.1	Stairs
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. For existing buildings, open up existing underused fire-exit stairways <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Provide visible point-of-decision signage or markings to encourage and direct stair use at the elevators
6.1	Fitness and Recreation Areas
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Identify and designate space that can be used for a variety of physical activity opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Partner with community-based organizations that can offer fitness and recreation programming
6.2	Community Gardens
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Identify and designate plots to serve as gardens and promote light activity <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Partner with community-based organizations that can offer community gardening programs
6.3	Communal Cooking and Eating Areas
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Identify and designate space that can be used for a variety of opportunities to teach food and culinary-skills <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Partner with community-based organizations that can offer community kitchen programming

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Neutral or low cost, needs advanced/up-front planning and/or requiring minimal change to building types

	Outdoor Play Areas
4.1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Design play spaces and outdoor active play areas for children, youth and adults of various ages and a broad range of abilities
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Include structures that provide opportunities for activity using the full range of movement types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulative Movement • Non-locomotor Movement • Locomotor Movement
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Co-locate other outdoor elements with playgrounds or play structures to promote active play across age groups
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Preserve or create greenspace areas or sport courts that can be designated for outdoor sport and play
	Outdoor Paths
4.2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Design visually appealing, accessible and well-lit environments along paths
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Construct paths that connect to on-site and off-site destinations
4.1 and 4.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Address climatic restrictions on physical activity within developments by maintaining the utility and accessibility of outdoor areas during snowy winter conditions
	Stairs
5.1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. For new buildings, locate stairs in a prominent location near the building main entrance
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Replace solid doors at each lobby stair entrance with doors that have fire-rated glass windows
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Provide well-lit stairways
	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Provide visually appealing interior finishes in stairwells
	Indoor Bike Storage
5.2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Provide secure, sheltered and accessible indoor bicycle storage
	Common Room Design
5.3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. When designing indoor common room areas, consider central locations that provide visibility and access to indoor and/or outdoor play areas and the inclusion of fitness equipment

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Moderate or more challenging cost, achievable with supportive policies in place

3.1	Site Selection
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Locate affordable housing where convenient and accessible access to a variety of local services and daily amenities is available <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Work with area municipalities and other levels of government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand nearby outdoor recreational facilities • Improve connections to nearby greenspace networks or trails • Improve local transit service
3.2	Planning for Affordable Housing
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Consider opportunities to support the incorporation of affordable housing early in the development planning process <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Negotiate development expenditures to support nearby public physical activity facilities
3.3	Ground Floor Space
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Identify appropriate commercial or service uses of the site with the applicable area municipality prior to procurement that encourages a mixed-use facility <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Support greater density, reduced parking requirements, and other considerations that support and health well-being

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8.0 REFERENCES

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⁸ Booth GL et al. (2013). Unwalkable Neighborhoods, Poverty, and the Risk of Diabetes Among Recent Immigrants to Canada Compared with Long-Term Residents. *Diabetes Care*, 36(2): 302-308.7

⁹ Adapted from: Nicoll G, OCAD University; Lee KK, New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene; Dubose J, Georgia Institute of Technology. (2013). *Active Design: Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing*. NY, NY: City of New York. Pg. 54. Available from: <http://herg.gatech.edu/Files/Publications/Affordable-Designs.pdf>

¹⁰ Adapted from: Nicoll G, OCAD University; Lee KK, New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene; Dubose J, Georgia Institute of Technology. (2013). *Active Design: Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing*. NY, NY: City of New York. Pg. 6. Available from: <http://herg.gatech.edu/Files/Publications/Affordable-Designs.pdf>

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