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ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DES PLANIFICATEURS PROFESSIONNELS DE L'ONTARIO

MEDIA RELEASE

Healthy Communities and Planning for a Sustainable Greater Toronto Area A Call to Action from the Ontario Professional Planners Institute

March 25, 2011

For immediate release

To achieve healthy communities and a sustainable city region there needs to be a balance between nature and human development. A truly functional, sustainable, livable and healthy city region integrates and complements the natural environment. This reduces the environmental impact while also helping to promote physical activity, psychological well-being and healthier outcomes for all community members.

According to The Living City® Report Card, a comprehensive assessment of the state of the environment across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) produced by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and CivicAction's Greening Greater Toronto, the GTA is breathing cleaner air, using less water and recycling more waste from homes in recent years. However, it's not all good news: we're struggling to manage stormwater and commercial waste, control sprawl and traffic congestion, and protect our forests and wetlands. Conditions are also worsening for the number of plants and animal species and their distribution across the region.

The report card looks at the factors behind the environmental successes and challenges in the GTA, and points out some priority opportunities to help the region flourish economically, socially, and environmentally. It also assigns short and long-term targets, and highlights opportunities for action by leaders, organizations and residents. Expert commentary reflects the collaboration and insights from leaders across the GTA. The Living City Report Card is the first in a series of periodic assessments of the GTA's environmental performance that provides a benchmark for measuring the results of our actions over time.

In response to The Living City Report Card, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) has prepared a Call to Action highlighting and focusing on the key issues and concerns in the report that need to be addressed by planners and other stakeholders in order to achieve healthy and sustainable communities in the GTA.

We are calling upon planners, public decision making bodies and the private sector to make healthy community planning a priority. Agencies have access to numerous tools that can be adapted to support strong, livable and healthy communities that enhance social wellbeing and are economically sound. These tools need to be better utilized and in more creative and innovative ways.

Sue Cumming, MCIP, RPP
President, OPPI

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession. Our more than 3,500 members work in government, private practice, universities, and non-profit agencies in the fields of urban and rural development, urban design, environmental planning, transportation, health and social services, heritage conservation, housing, and economic development. OPPI members are committed to creating and fostering healthy communities throughout Ontario.

For additional copies of this Call to Action or further information on OPPI's Healthy Communities initiative, please go to:

<http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Publications/innovativepolicypapers.aspx>

For more information on The Living City Report Card, please visit: www.thelivingcity.org

For more information on Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, please visit: www.trca.on.ca

For more information, please contact:

Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, CAE

Director, Public Affairs

416-668-8469

E-mail: policy@ontarioplanners.on.ca

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