



Because active kids are happier, sleep better, and do better in school...





## **Healthy Kids Community Challenge**

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is a province wide initiative, working in 45 communities in Ontario. The Challenge combines a community-led method with centralized provincial coordination to help develop and implement evidence-based policies, programs and promotion. Through this the Healthy Kids Community Challenge aims to increase the overall health of the community.

#### The Healthy Kids Community Challenge aims to create a community where children have:

- Access to better resources to live healthier lives
- Increased physical activity
- ✓ Increased availability of nutritious foods and increased knowledge of nutrition

## **Community Needs Assessment**

This Community Needs Assessment was designed to collect and compile demographic information about Aurora in order to set the priorities for the Healthy Kids Community Challenge in our community.

Research was undertaken into the current state of health and well-being in the Town of Aurora. This Community Needs Assessment includes demographic information about Aurora, health status data, plus current initiatives and policies that will have an impact on the present and future health and well-being of our children.

#### The Community Needs Assessment was designed to answer three questions:

- 1 To what extent are kids and families in Aurora experiencing healthy, active living?
- What supports or future opportunities exist for healthy, active living for kids and families in Aurora, specifically in the areas of physical activity and healthy eating?
- 3 What are the challenges and obstacles to achieving healthy active living for kids and families in Aurora?





# Aurora is a Community of Rapid Growth



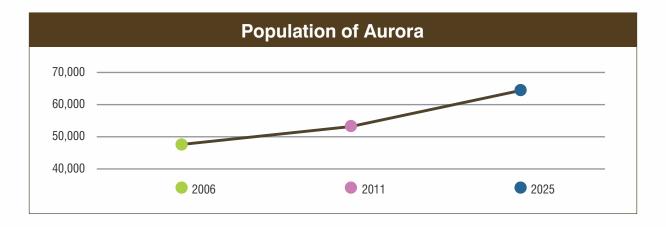


Population of Aurora: 59,358

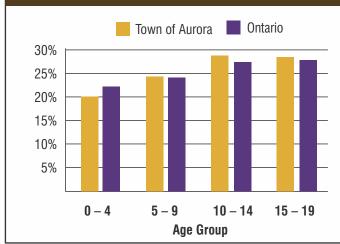
22% are under 14 years of age<sup>1</sup>

The population is quickly increasing and has increased by over 11% from 2006 to 2011<sup>2</sup>

It is projected to increase by another 21% by 2025<sup>3</sup>



#### Percentage of chilren by age group in the Town of Aurora and Ontario in 2006



Of the children and youth living in Aurora, 2,880 are aged 0-4 years (19.7 per cent), 3,505 are aged 5-9 years (24.0 per cent), 4,135 are aged 10-14 years (28.3 per cent), and 4,105 are aged 15-19 years (28.1 per cent).

The figure to the left shows how these percentages compare to Ontario, where 22.0 per cent of children and youth are aged 0-4 years, 23.7 per cent are aged 5-9 years, 26.9 per cent are aged 10-14 years, and 27.4 per cent are aged 15-19 years.

<sup>1.</sup> Statistics Canada. 2007. Aurora, Ontario (Code3519046) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.

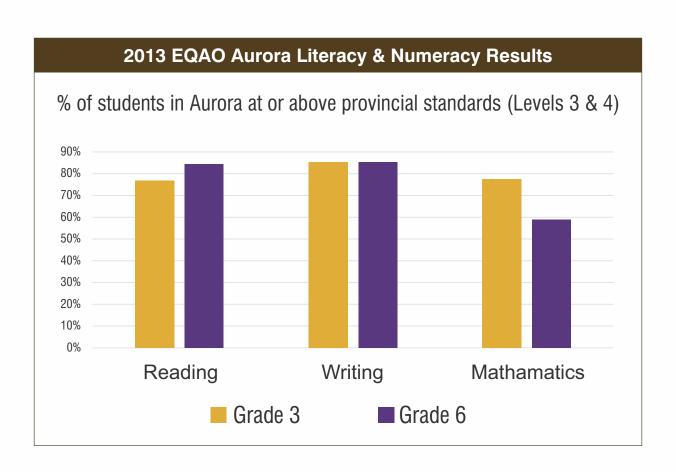
<sup>2.</sup> Statistics Canada. 2011. Focus on Geography Series, Census subdivision of Aurora, T - Ontario. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-csd-eng.cfm

<sup>3.</sup> Town of Aurora Economic Development. 2015. Demographics and Income. http://businessaurora.ca/demographicsc55.php

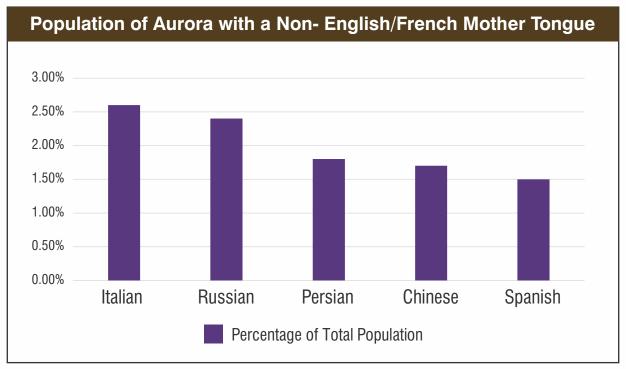
## 2 A High Percentage of Families with Children



## **Student Literacy Levels**



## **Spoken Language**

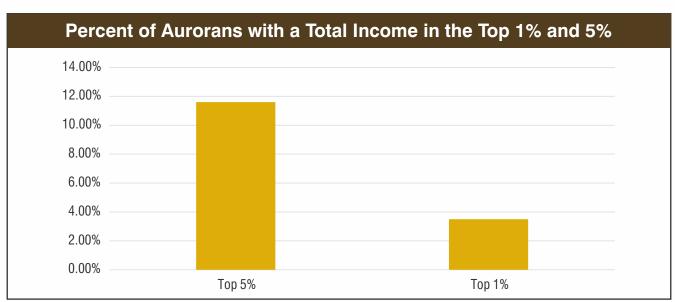


Statistics Canada, 2011, Focus on Geography Series, Census subdivision of Aurora, T - Ontario, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-csdeng.cfm

Note: Counts for mother tongue and home language include single response of a language as well as multiple responses of a language with English and/or French.

5

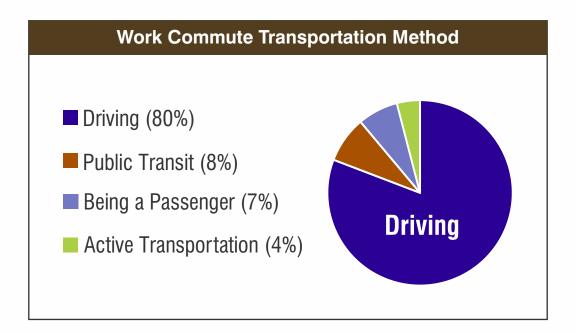
# **Income Levels Aged 15 Years and Older**



# 6 Employment

Employment Figures for 2010		
	Aurora	Ontario
Working Age Population	42,015	10,473,670
Labour Force	31,095	6,864,990
Employment	28,720	6,297,005
Unemployed	2,380	567,985
Not in the labour force	10,920	3,608,685
Participation Rate	74%	65.5%
Unemployment Rate	7.7%	8.3%

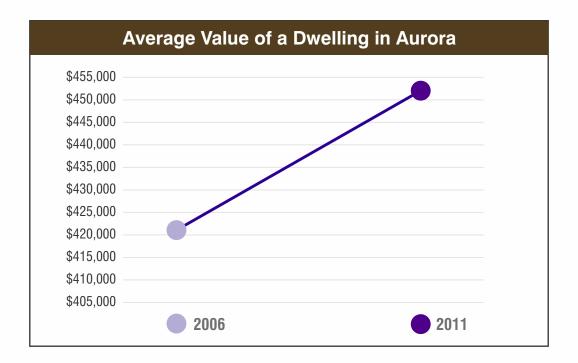
## **Work commute**



Median commute time is 30.4 minutes

## **Housing prices**

Housing prices are rising in Aurora, indicating the growing wealth of the community. The average value of a dwelling in Aurora was \$421,051 in 2006, yet it had increased to \$452,523 in 2011, a 7.4% increase.



In 2011 23% of home owners were spending more than 30% of their total household income on shelter costs

### **Food costs**

Average amount spent on food in York Region:

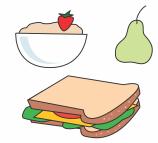


\$850.00

Family of four



\$1150.00



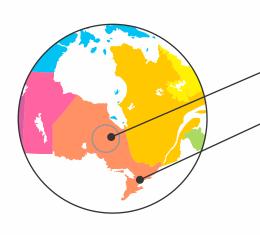
Family of six

Food costs are high in Canada with families having to spend 9.1% of their income on food

High housing costs coupled with high food costs leaves less income for spending on obesity reducing and preventing activities

10

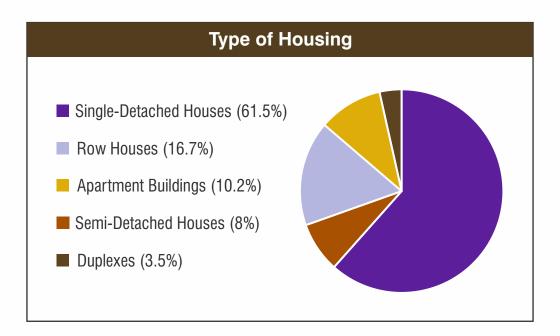
# **Population density**



- Ontario: 14.1 persons per square km.
  - Aurora 1068.8 persons per square km.

High population density in Aurora means there is less land available for recreational spaces and sports facilities and a higher demand on that land.

# 11 Housing types



### **Public transit**



Aurora's main public transit hub is its GO station for buses and trains. Train service is currently infrequent, however plans are in place to improve frequency by 2017.

There are many bus routes that travel through Aurora (98/98E, 84, 54, 33, 32, 31, 22A, VIVA Blue and GO 65/A/C/D), yet as with trains, they are often infrequent. Retail centres and grocery stores are on the bus routes and are under a 30 minute walk from the GO Station. The recreation centre is an 11 minute walk from the GO Station and is serviced by 2 bus routes.

There are no cab companies in Aurora, yet companies found in King City, Newmarket and Richmond Hill will service the area.

There is a large network of cycle lanes in Aurora, which can be viewed at: http://goo.gl/6BliY5.

## **Sports facilities**

Aurora boasts many locations with sport and recreation facilities. There are many classes in place already for all ages with age appropriate classes. The classes run on both the weekend and after school. There is an emerging trend and a concerted effort to include developing physical literacy skills into the classes and sport programming.

The average amount spent on Town of Aurora recreation programs is \$34 per person<sup>1</sup>. This does not include monies spent on private sports clubs or other private fitness organizations. On average, with a 3 person household in Aurora, \$102 is spent per month on fitness/organized sports. Approximately 17,000 individuals have been or are currently registered for Town of Aurora Recreation programs. Additionally, there are 1000 registered members frequenting town fitness centres<sup>1</sup>, indicating that 30% of the Town of Aurora has participated in or participate currently in some form of recreation.

All town owned recreation centres are AODA compliant.

#### **Publicly Owned Facilities**

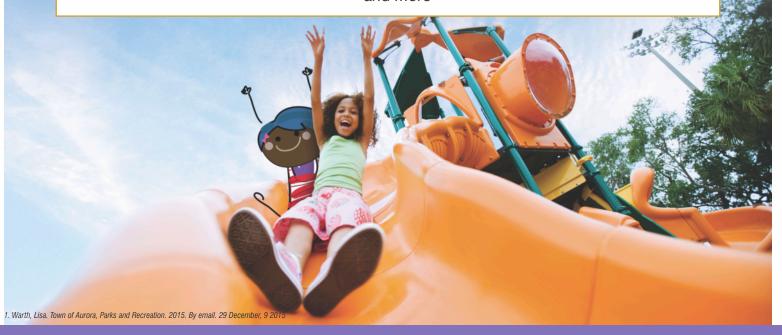
•Club Aurora Fitness Club •Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex •Aurora Family

Leisure Complex •Aurora Community Centre

#### **Privately Owned Facilities**

- •LA Fitness •Aurora Fitness Plus •Timberlane Athletic Club •Good Life Fitness
- •SomaFit Wellness •Curves •Spine Stretch Studios •GR Fitness •CrossFit Ark
  •Fitness Clubs of Canada

and more

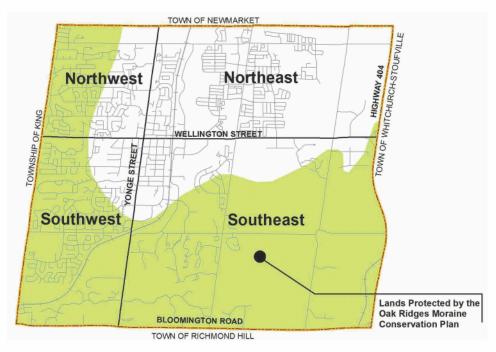


### **Vacant land**

There is vacant land for development into recreational facilities with 4 acres of parkland on Hartwell Way, an 83 acre Eco Park on Bayview Ave., new trails in the 2C West planning area, and new trails in Coutts development.

There may be other land available, but it would need to be rezoned, it is not currently zoned for recreation development<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, Aurora is located within the Green Belt and Oak Ridges Moraine and thus development and new builds are restricted and most vacant land in Aurora is protected under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, there are strict municipal zoning by-laws regarding green spaces.



Parks and Recreation Masterolan Update draft doc: http://www.aurora.ca/TownHall/Documents/Parks%20and%20Recreation%20Services/PRMaster%20Plan%20-%20Draft%20-Nov%2018.pdf

15

## **Community gardens**

There are also 56 community garden plots currently documented within Aurora, which are accessible for residents to join.

All local residents are invited to participate, however, priority is given to residents with little or no green space. No previous gardening experience is required.

Each participant receives an individual plot. Participants at the York Region Food Network are requested to volunteer at least five hours a season and everyone is encouraged to donate some of their produce to their local food bank.

## **York Region Food Network Survey**

#### 60% of patrons do not purchase food at recreation centres

A Survey was undertaken to review the availability of healthy food in recreation centres in Aurora. It was found that 60% of patrons do not purchase food at recreation centres. Reasons given for this are the lack of healthy options, cost and selection. 66% of respondents said that, yes they would be interested in buying food if there were healthier options available.

People usually purchase food for the age brackets of 7-14 and 35-49, presumably children and their caregivers indicating the importance of providing healthy foods to ensure our children get adequate nutrition.

#### **17**

### **Food Policies**

Products in Aurora, just like the rest of Canada, have nutrition information displayed on them and highlight healthy heart food.

There are many other initiatives in place across Canada that appear in Aurora such as *Kraft's Sensible Solution*, *General Mills' Goodness Corner*, *President's Choice Blue Menu*, and *Compliments balance-equilibre* that influence point of purchase decisions. These programs can build awareness of health and nutrition at point-of-purchase venues, thus helping make it easier for consumers to make healthy choices.

In Aurora there are many different nutrition education programs provided to children and teachers/childcare workers including the *Nutrition for Child Care Centres* run by *York Region Public Health*, *Nutrition for Schools* also run by *York Region Public Health* working to improve food provided in educational facilities, children's knowledge of nutrition and basic cooking skills.

80% of grocery purchasing decisions are made in the store, which makes grocery stores potentially an ideal environment for influencing the eating habits of Canadians

There are also a multitude of healthy food policies and nutrition standards in effect across Aurora, ranging from nationwide policies such as the *Ministry of Education's PPM 150 School Food & Beverage Policy* (applying to all food sold and used in schools) and the *New Ontario Menu Labelling Law* (applying to all large restaurant chains or food providers with twenty or more locations or contracts), which will take Effect in 2017 to regional policies such as the *York Region Food Charter* and the *York Region Mandatory Food Handler Certification Bylaw*.

#### **Other Policies**

Aurora has many policies in place to keep Aurora a safe and pleasant place to live in. York Region regulates the smoking of tobacco in public places and workplaces, ensures food safety, encourages healthy communities by emphasising the importance of physical activity and healthy eating through designing a community that promotes active lifestyles, human interaction, safety, accessibility and access to locally grown food.

The Town of Aurora itself has a strategic plan that focuses on "encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle", specifically in Aurora, "strengthening the fabric of our community" and "celebrating and promoting our culture".

The Town also protects its natural environment with its *Corporate Environmental Action Plan*.

The *School Travel Planning Initiative* promotes tips for safe walking and driving, enhancing Aurora's safe feel. Noise bylaws preventing all kinds of noise (events, instruments etc.) from 23:00 to 7:00 on weekdays and 9:00 on Sundays help keep Aurora calm and a pleasant place to live in. There are also safety rules around sports such as tobogganing, which is only permitted in four locations in Aurora.

19

## **Food Programs**

Aurora boasts multiple community food programs from school based programs such as the *School Gardens* program run by the *York Region Food Network* in conjunction with the *SFC* and the *Food for Learning* program run by *York Region Public Health* to community based programs such as the *Good Food Box* run by the *York Region Food Box* and the *Food Bank* run by the *Aurora Food Pantry*. All these programs rely heavily on grant funding. There is a lack, however of government nutrition assistance programs, and consequently the only response to food insecurity has been from the community. The local supermarkets are also very involved in healthy programming with *Sobeys* having an in house dietician and holistic nutritionist and running nutritional and cooking programming along with *Longos* and *Real Canadian Superstore* running cooking sessions at a cost. There are also community kitchens and gardens run by *Windfall Ecology Centre*, *Charles Darrow Cooperative*, *The Ripe Idea* and *York Region Food Network*.

Aurora has several emergency and supplemental food programs in place from the *Aurora Food Pantry*, which families in need can utilize once a month (though only 25% of those in need utilize this service). Services include a range of options from food supplies to feed a family for 3-4 days, community meals such as the *York Region Food Network drop in Breakfast*, which operates every Tuesday morning, the *Welcome Table*, operated by the *Trinity Anglican Church*, which offers dinner every Wednesday, *Martha's Table by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church* offering lunch every Thursday and *Rise and Shine by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church*, which offers Saturday lunch every week December through April. There are also breakfast or snack programs in 7 of the elementary schools in Aurora.

### **Social Media**

Aurora, healthy eating promotions have started in select town facilities, some grocery stores and children have access to several social media pages on food literacy and healthy eating to follow from national and provincial Twitter and Facebook to region specific accounts. It is important to note that most of the social media pages are not targeted at children specifically, just the community in general.





## **Community**

Aurora is a thriving community with an active social life. It holds many events for its residents year round from its *Haunted Forest Halloween* event to its *Arctic Adventure Family Day* event.

It has an active cultural centre with several thousand visitors a year  $^1$ . There is a large bank of volunteers, with 2,589 volunteers registered to the *Neighbourhood Network*  $^2$  and many more volunteering at over 35 sport teams, indicating a strong sense of community. Individuals volunteer in the PACT program to increase the sense of community safety, especially in parks and other recreational areas  $^3$ .

#### **Over 2500 volunteers**

There is support for low income families with the All Kids Can Play program (though the program would like to increase awareness of its activities within the community<sup>4</sup>) and the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program.



<sup>1.</sup> Aurora Cultural Centre. 2015. History. http://auroraculturalcentre.ca/about-us/history

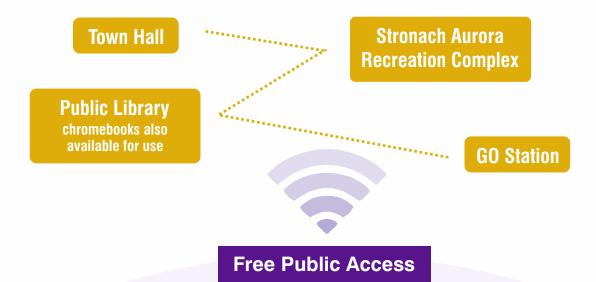
<sup>2.</sup> Cerenzia, Erin. Neighbourhood Network. 2015. by email.

<sup>3.</sup> Aurora PACT. 2015 Aurora PACT. http://www.aurorapact.ca

<sup>4.</sup> Mueller, Laurie. Sports Aurora, All Kids Can Play. 2015. By email.

### **Internet Access**

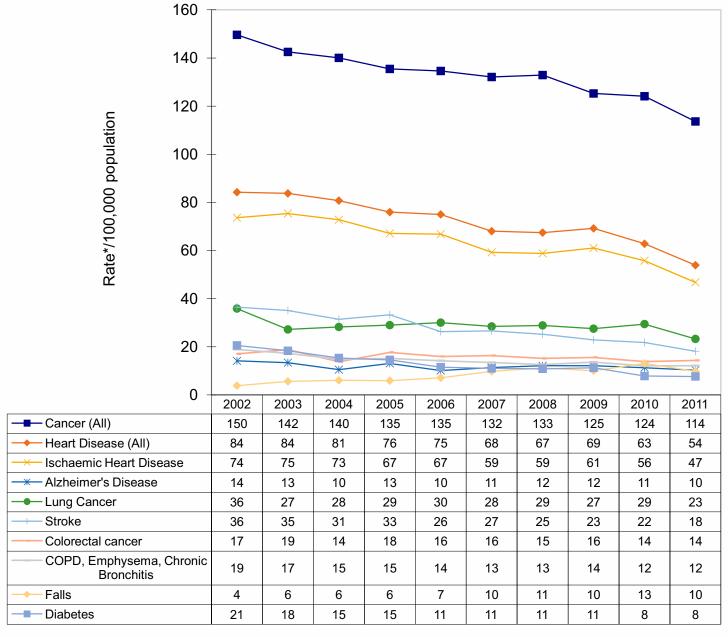
Aurorans have a wide range of options for connecting to Social Media and the Internet in general. The majority of families have internet access at home<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, residents can access free WiFi at the Town Hall, the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, the public library (Chromebooks available for use too) and the GO Station. Many cafes in Aurora also have WiFi available.





# **23** Mortality

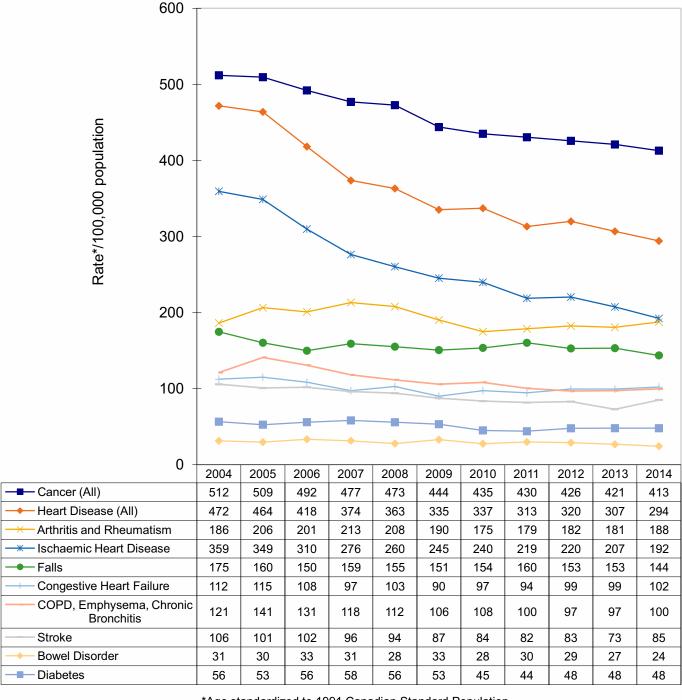
#### Death Rate, Selected Conditions, York Region, 2002-2011



\*Age-standardized to 1991 Canadian Standard Population
Deaths 2002-2011, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Intellihealth Ontario
Population Estimates, 2002-2011, Statistics Canada. Table 051-0062.

# **24** Morbidity

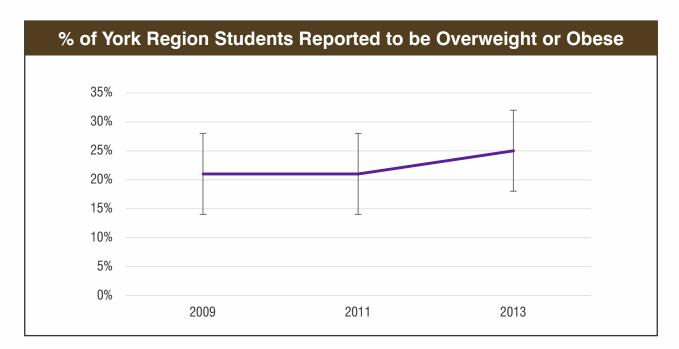
#### Hospitalization Rate, Selected Conditions, York Region, 2004-2014



\*Age standardized to 1991 Canadian Standard Population
Inpatient Discharges 2004-2014, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Intellihealth Ontario
Population Estimates, 2004-2014, Statistics Canada. Table 051-0062.

## **Obesity**

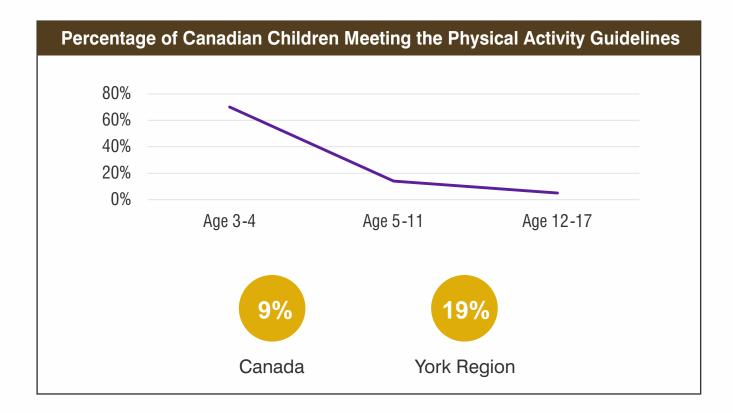
Obesity is a key concern to children's health in York Region with 25% of  $(\pm 4)$  of York Region students reported to be overweight or obese in 2013. This number is on the rise and has increased from 21%  $(\pm 7)$  in 2011 and in  $2009^{\circ}$  (Please Note: This data is calculated from self-reported height and weight statistics, from which Body Mass Indexes were calculated).





## **Participaction**

Research suggests fitness levels may affect academic performance in math and reading. Physical education may also have a positive impact on student academic achievement. The levels of physical activity in children in Canada are very low with just 9% (age 5-17) (an increase from 2007 where 7% met the guidelines) of young Canadians meeting new physical activity guidelines. The problem is even more severe when the female population is looked at. The problem develops as children grow. 70% of Canadian children aged 3-4 meet the guidelines, but by the time they get to 5-11 years of age just 14% of them do. Just 5% of youth aged 12-17 years meet the guidelines. Preschoolers in Canada spend 50% of their days being sedentary, but this number grows to 62% by the time they attend school.



The children who meet the guidelines and keep physically active are less prone to becoming overweight, have increased cognitive development and better motor skills. They also have better bone and muscle strength, and heart health.<sup>3</sup>

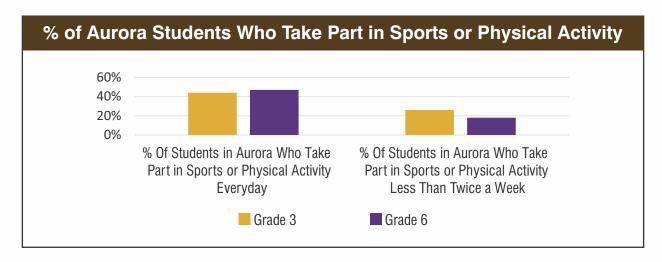
<sup>1.</sup> Kristjansson AL, Sigfusdottir ID, Allegrante JP. 2010. Health behavior and academic achievement among adolescents: the relative contribution of dietary habits, physical activity, body mass index, and self-esteem. Health Educ Behav.; 37(1): 51-64.

<sup>2.</sup> ParticipACTION. 2015. 2015 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Toronto: ParticipACTION.

<sup>3.</sup> Timmons, B. W., LeBlanc, A. G., Carson, V., Connor Gorber, S., Dillman, C., Janssen, I.,... Tremblay, M. S. 2012., 37(4), 773-792

## **EQAO**

Aurora Schools were surveyed as part of the EQAO testing and it was found that 44% of Grade 3 students and 47% of Grade 6 take part in sports or physical activity every day and just 26% of Grade 3 students and 18% of Grade 6 take part in sports or physical activity less than twice a week90 indicating that Aurora is ahead of the region and province in physical activity (please note that this data is self-reported and may be somewhat exaggerated).



Aurora is also one of the forerunners for active transportation in Canada with its Rick Hansen Public School being recognized in 2013 as one of the 10 schools in Canada that had embraced active travel programs. It celebrated 93% active travel participation from February to June 2013 on its Walking Wednesdays.

28

## **Breastfeeding**

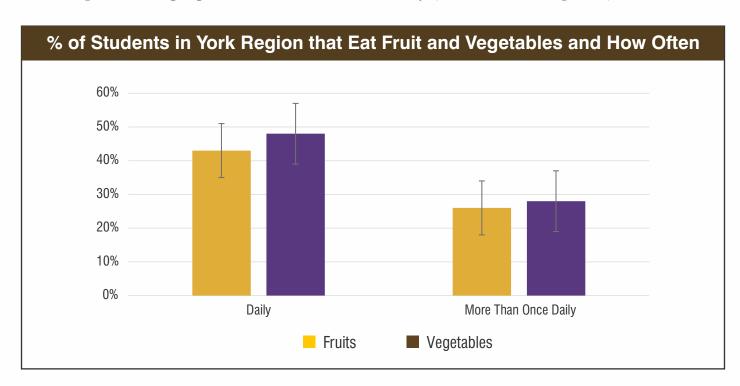
Healthy Eating starts at a very young age with breastfeeding being encouraged. There are many breastfeeding programs and tools in Aurora and as a result 93% of mothers intended to breastfeed at the time of birth, with 58% planning to exclusively breastfeed, a statistically similar percentage to that of York Region. These figures remained relatively steady from 2013-4, fluctuating by only 1-2%. The health units with the highest breastmilk-only rates at discharge from hospital were Halton (65.2%), Peel (65.0%), and York (63.2%) (26.9%) of the discharges fed with a combination of breastmilk and formula indicating that York Region residents are very aware of the benefits of breastfeeding.

#### **Mothers of Aurora Intending to Breastfeed**



## **Fruits and Vegetables**

Very few children in York Region meet the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables in Canada's food guide. In 2009 students were questioned on how often they ate fruits and vegetables in the last seven days. Just 43% ( $\pm 8$ ) of the students reported eating fruit daily and just 48% ( $\pm 9$ ) of students reported eating vegetables daily. When asked if they ate fruit and vegetables more than once each day this number decreased further to just 26% ( $\pm 9$ ) eating fruit more than once each day and just 28% ( $\pm 7$ ) reported eating vegetables more than once each day. (This data is self-reported).



30

### **Minerals and Sodium**

Nutrient intake paints a positive picture for Canada as a whole. Children start off with the majority receiving an adequate amount of most vitamins<sup>1</sup>, by age 9 the situation becomes slightly worse, but inadequacy in nutrient intake still only affects less than 10% of the population<sup>2</sup>. The picture of sodium intake is less positive with the median sodium intake of 1-8 year olds in Canada exceeding the recommended limits. 77% of 1-3 year olds and 93% of 4-8 year olds had daily intakes of sodium exceeding the upper limit for their age group (1500 mg and 1900 mg/d, respectively<sup>1</sup>).



of Canadian children over age 9 do not get adequate nutrient intake



of Canadian children 1 to 3 years of age exceed recommended limits of sodium



of Canadian children 4 to 8 years of age exceed recommended limits of sodium

# **31** Priority

It has been found that a person's health and well-being is affected by a healthy physical environment, social support networks and adequate nutrition<sup>1</sup>. A study was undertaken in York Region, do determine if there was a relationship between high marginalization and a person's health. High marginalization is defined as areas with high residential instability, high material deprivation, high dependency (population of unemployed, >65 years, <15 years) and high ethnic concentration (recent immigrants or minorities)<sup>2</sup>. York region has multiple pockets of high marginalization. The majority of Aurora is classified at level 1 or 2 of marginalization, meaning that most of Aurora experiences low levels of marginalization, however there are small pockets to the west of Yonge street, north of Henderson drive that display extremely high levels of marginalization defined as level 5. This shows that despite the majority of Aurora being very stable and high income, there are pockets with some of the most severe instability.

In York Region it was found that areas with higher material depravation (Level 5) experienced higher rates of premature death (190/100,000 compared with 92.7/100,000 average). Residents were more likely to perceive their level of health as fair or poor in areas with high residential instability, high material depravation and higher levels of dependency. It was found that areas with the most severe material depravation (Level 5) had more than double the percentage of the population of areas with the least severe material depravation (Level 1) perceiving their health as fair or poor (19% vs. 8%).

Areas experiencing the highest levels of material depravation and residential instability had higher rates of circulatory diseases, which could be because these areas were more likely to be physically inactive. According to *ParticiPaction*, physical activity levels are lower in the immigrant and ethnic minority populations than the general population<sup>3</sup>. It is interesting, however to note that there was a lower rate of people being overweight or obesity in our neighbourhoods with the highest ethnic concentration, however this data was self-reported and may therefore not be entirely reliable.

Some healthy lifestyle indicators were not affected by socioeconomic characteristics, for example the percentage of York Region residents who do not eat enough fruits and vegetables was not affected by residential instability, material depravation, dependency or ethnic concentration<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1.</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. 2013. What makes Canadians healthy or unhealthy? Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada

<sup>2.</sup> York Region Community and Health Services. 2015. Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Health in York Region. Newmarket: York Region Community and Health Services.

<sup>3.</sup> Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute in collaboration with ParticipACTION. 2012. The Research File. Issue 02-01/12

#### Aurora has Areas Experiencing Extremely High Levels of Marginalization



- More likely to be physically inactive
- Higher rates of circulatory diseases
- More likely to perceive level of health as fair or poor (19% vs. 8%)
- Higher rates of premature death (190 vs. 93 per 100,000)

Many indicators of health and well-being are affected by socio-economic status and a concerted effort will be made during the Healthy Kids Community Challenge to reach the lower socio-economic areas in Aurora.

# 32 Assets

- Healthy schools program from Public Health
- Programs already in existence
- High internet and device connectivity
- Beautiful outdoor areas, parks, Sheppard's Bush conservation area and trails network
- Leisure facilities
- Volunteer base
- Mayor is the champion
- Cooperation of school boards
- Public and private recreation programs available
- Highly trained sport and physical activity personnel
- Town council is supportive of health and wellness initiatives
- Motivated parents and youth
- Parents are engaged
- Multi-sectorial cooperation being developed
- Programs targeting low income groups
- Funding from local companies
- Funding from the HKCC grant
- Communications department

### **Barriers**

- · High consumption of unhealthy food
- Lack and infrequency of transit
- Fear of safety outdoors
- Overly protective parents
- Lack of spontaneous neighbourhood play
- People are overwhelmed with information
- Program sustainability / funding running out
- Competing programs, stakeholders cooperation and territorial issues
- Lack of standardized approach to communication
- · Lack of pick up games, casual drop in programs
- Lack of resources / trained personnel in schools
- · Lack of appropriate physical literacy facilities
- Funding / financial resources
- Lack of time
- Inclement weather
- Single parent families
- · Lack of equipment / aging equipment
- Lack of parent/child knowledge of nutrition
- Lack of parent/child participation in fitness activities
- Lack of healthy food in public facilities

## **Opportunities**

- Increase feelings of safety in parks and public places
- Health and Wellness Fair
- Improving the trails and linking the transit corridors
- Website and social media pages
- Social media competitions
- DPA seasonal newsletter
- Organized lunchtime play program
- Educational play days
- DPA mentor program
- Nature play program
- Food for Learning expansion and support
- Cooking classes for parents and children
- Physical activity plan
- Outreach All Kids Can Play
- Expanding and enhancing Active and Safe Routes to School programs
- Cycling programs to increase excitement surrounding cycling
- Healthy Beverage music video
- Community children sourced Kindle cook book
- Conservation kids camp
- Good Food Box expansion
- Increased healthy advertising
- Increase healthy food in community centres
- Increase collaboration between different health and fitness groups