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To: "[Direct to Mayor and Council - DL](#)"

Date: 9/10/2024 11:29:24 AM

Subject: Memo: Launch of the UN-Habitat Vancouver Quality of Life Survey (2024-09-10)

Attachments: ACCS - GM - Memo (Council) - UN Quality of Life Survey (2024-09-10).pdf

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

Attached please find a memo from Margaret Wittgens, GM, Arts Culture and Community Services regarding the Launch of the UN-Habitat Vancouver Quality of Life Survey. Key Points:

- Staff are launching a public survey on quality of life in Vancouver from September 12 to October 1, as part of the City's partnership with UN-Habitat approved by Council last November.
- The survey will be used to benchmark Vancouver and other participating pilot cities on a number of global quality of life indicators. Topics include services and infrastructure managed by other agencies. Staff have engaged with partners to localize these questions and are making sure they are aware of the survey.
- The UN plans to report on the high-level quality of life indicators in November, and staff will also incorporate the data in the Healthy City Strategy refresh work underway.
- Staff are making efforts to make sure the survey is accessible and promoted to communities that have historically been less likely to engage with the City and would appreciate support from Council to share it through your networks.

Should Council have any further questions please contact Margaret directly at margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca and she will ensure questions are addressed through the weekly Q&A.

Thank you,
Sandra

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x m k y m (Musqueam), S w w w ú 7 mesh (Squamish), and Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.



Arts, Culture & Community Services
General Manager's Office

MEMORANDUM

September 10, 2024

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy & Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Margaret Wittgens, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Launch of UN-Habitat Vancouver Quality of Life Survey

RTS #: N/A

PURPOSE

This memo provides an update on Vancouver's participation as a pilot city in UN-Habitat's Quality of Life Initiative, approved by Council in November 2023 ([RTS 16064](#)). In order to collect data for this pilot, Vancouver will be launching a public survey on September 12 that will be used to benchmark Vancouver on global quality of life indicators across a range of topics, to meet our commitments as a UN pilot city and advance the refresh of the Healthy City Strategy.

BACKGROUND

Quality of Life Initiative, indicators, and index

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) created the [Quality of Life Initiative](#) in 2023 with the goal of advancing a holistic, human-centric understanding of quality of life as a primary urban development objective. Based on its existing reputation for high quality of life and the breadth of social development goals expressed in the existing Healthy City Strategy, Vancouver was invited to participate as a pilot city. Following Council approval in November 2023, the City and UN-Habitat signed a letter of intent in January 2024 to pilot test a new Quality of Life index as a measurement tool. There is no cost to the City to participate.

Operationally, the index consists of both global benchmark indicators (that are being collected in all pilot cities) and local indicators (specific to Vancouver). Indicators fit into nine domains identified by the UN-Habitat team: housing, economy, education, health, basic services and

mobility, environment, culture and recreation, social cohesion, and governance. UN-Habitat engaged experts in local government, academic researchers, national statistical agencies, and global indicator frameworks to develop the global layer of the quality of life index. In Vancouver, staff convened workshops in spring 2024, inviting internal staff and external partners with research, data analysis, and policy expertise in these areas to identify and prioritize local indicators.

UN-Habitat plan to launch the Quality of Life index in November. They are working with public and private data providers to explore innovative data collection methods, such as using mobile phone data to measure access and use of different spaces. However, many indicators reflect perceptions of quality of life that can only be captured through a direct survey.

DISCUSSION

Alignment with Healthy City Strategy Refresh

Although the Quality of Life index is a standalone pilot project, it advances work to refresh the Healthy City Strategy as Vancouver's social sustainability framework, as directed by Council in May 2024 ([RTS 16138](#)). The domains used by the Quality of Life Initiative align with Vancouver's Healthy City goals, and the pilot project also advances specific Council direction to explore alignment with the global Sustainable Development Goals ([motion](#), January 2020).

As reported to Council in a recent memo, staff are engaging key internal and external partners in three stages, with the second focusing on the role of data and indicators in the refreshed Healthy City Strategy. The UN Quality of Life pilot enables concrete testing of tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting, and testing of specific indicators. The pilot will help inform recommendations for Healthy City data and indicators that will be brought to Council in 2025.

Vancouver Quality of Life Survey development

Staff have worked with UN-Habitat to develop a survey to collect new data on people's perceptions of quality of life. A consistent approach is being taken across UN-Habitat pilot cities to ensure data collection methodologies are comparable. Data will be collected using a hybrid of voluntary completion open to all City of Vancouver residents, and targeted sampling by a market research company in areas that have historically been less likely to take part in engagement processes. The survey will be hosted within the City's existing public engagement platforms, and staff are planning measures to maximize accessibility and participation, such as translation, promotion, and community outreach. Staff time is being managed within existing work programs.

Recognizing that quality of life in Vancouver may vary among different communities and neighbourhoods, the survey includes demographic questions designed to enable disaggregation of the results, provided a sufficient sample is collected.

A majority of the questions in the survey collect data for global indicators that are being collected in all cities. This includes perceived level of satisfaction with a range of urban services, including those that are delivered by other agencies, boards, or levels of government. These services include health care services, schools, public transit, policing, parks and recreation. Staff have worked with partner agencies to localize these questions. The survey questions are designed to benchmark the impact of all of these services on quality of life, not to solicit specific feedback on the performance of other agencies.

NEXT STEPS

The survey will be open from September 12 until October 1, and the City will be encouraging partners to promote it to ensure participation across different communities. Staff can provide Mayor and Council with digital or physical resources if they would like to help promote it through their networks. The main portal will be at <https://shapeyourcity.ca/quality-of-life-survey>.

The UN will be publishing the results of the pilot index in November, which will benchmark Vancouver across different domains of quality of life. The City of Vancouver will retain ownership and responsibility for the raw data collected.

Staff will incorporate the findings of this pilot project into the ongoing Healthy City Strategy refresh work and report back to Council in 2025.

FINAL REMARKS

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact me directly at margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'margaret.wittgens', is positioned above the typed name and title.

Margaret Wittgens, General Manager
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca