

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VIBRANT, ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Better connectivity helps create active, healthy, social communities with a high quality of life.

Open spaces promote wellness by supporting active transportation, mental health and wellbeing, and opportunities to learn, celebrate, play and recreate. According to a 2019 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, spending just 20 minutes in nature or in a park—even if you do not exercise while you are there—is enough to improve wellbeing.

Parks and community centres do not exist in isolation. Stronger connections between them can build a healthier, resilient and more adaptive system. By moving beyond simple standards for the amount of open space, this Bold Move calls for a well-connected set of multifunctional open spaces.

The City's greenway network is envisioned to provide access to safe and green active transportation and recreation paths throughout the city. City Council has set ambitious goals through *Transportation 2040*, *Greenest City Action Plan*, *the Healthy City Strategy*, and the *Climate Emergency Response* to continue to work towards the goal of a sustainable, healthy city. By enhancing the urban forest, providing connected trails to, and through desirable destinations (parks and community centres), the Park Board contributes to making

active transportation more appealing and reducing trips made by car. Currently 63% of parks and 58% of community centres are fronted by a bikeway or greenway on at least one side.¹ By working together to make these destinations more accessible, and creating a connected system, we can achieve multiple goals.

Opportunities to play, run and connect increase our collective quality of life and ease the journey from home to work and other activities. Connectivity, access to the water, proximity to a park and attractive streets support better health and wellbeing. For example, you are more likely to walk to a school, community centre or workplace if your journey is through a park or along a well-lit, tree-lined street. The *UBC Cycling in Cities* study found that popular cycling routes were those well away from traffic, and associated noise and air pollution, and provided beautiful scenery (such as a park).

The network connects people by providing places for communities to gather and thrive. From parks and plazas to greenways and community event spaces, the network provides residents and visitors the opportunity to experience a wide range of amenities and activities.



A 2017 study found that where residents feel that they have access to a large park, the beach, or a beautiful neighbourhood, with high street connectivity, they were increasingly more likely to walk for recreation — 9 minutes per week or 12% more often, for each of those four factors (so, 36 minutes more per week or 48% more frequently if you combine all four).

Christian, Knuiman, Divitini et al., 2017, A longitudinal analysis of the influence of the neighborhood environment on recreational walking within the neighborhood, Environmental Health Perspectives 125:7, University of Western Australia

¹ Vancouver Park Board & Design Workshop Consultants. *VanPlay Report 1: Inventory and Analysis, Vancouver, BC 2018*