A Health Perspective on the City of North Vancouver’s Draft Official Community Plan
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PURPOSE
The purpose of this paper is to describe how the City of North Vancouver’s draft OCP matters to people’s health and why we should speak up for health!

A body of research and evidence links the places people live with health outcomes. Vancouver Coastal Health and the City of North Vancouver have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to ensure health is considered in their Official community Plan update.

VCH is interested in long-term community planning, land use, and growth management. A community that is intentionally built to support a community that is healthy will positively affect well-being and health outcomes, and can also be expected to result in more affordable health care services for a growing population.

The City of North Vancouver’s CityShaping process is currently in Stage 4 of its OCP development. A series of input opportunities are underway for this stage, which is concluding with a series of Town Hall meetings in the month of April. This is an important opportunity to speak up for health, to ensure that the OCP is adopted in a form that creates a healthy future community.

We used the following framework as a guide to provide a health perspective on key issues of the draft OCP:

Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit
Available at www.phsa.ca/populationhealth

The Linkages document is a BC-developed toolkit that provides consistent and evidence-based and expert-informed messages around health and the built environment.

The toolkit content is grouped by five physical features of the built environment: neighbourhood design, transportation networks, natural environments, housing, and food systems. For each physical feature, there is supporting health evidence.

We will also cover off a sixth area on ‘healthy communities.’

SIX KEY AREAS:
1. Healthy Neighbourhood Design
2. Healthy Transportation Networks
3. Healthy Natural Environments
4. Healthy Housing
5. Healthy Food Systems
6. Healthy Communities
**Planning Principle 1: Healthy Neighbourhood Design**

**Guiding principles:**
1. Enhance neighbourhood walkability
2. Create mixed land use
3. Build complete and compact neighbourhoods
4. Enhance connectivity with efficient and safe networks
5. Prioritize new developments within or beside existing communities

**DOES THE DRAFT OCP ADDRESS THESE PRINCIPLES?**

One of the key guiding principles of the draft OCP is a complete and compact urban community with easy access to a variety of housing choices, transit, employment, recreation and culture, and that sensitively balances growth with its impacts on livability and the environment.

**OCP Goal 2.4.1** Develop a compact and compact community that meets the needs of its diverse residents and businesses

**OCP Goal 2.4.4** Provision of amenities to enhance quality of life

**OCP Goal 6.4.1** Expand the integrated system of parks and greenways throughout the City

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**Planning Principle 2: Healthy Transportation Networks**

**Guiding principles:**
1. Enable mobility for all ages and abilities
2. Make active transportation convenient and safe
3. Prioritize safety
4. Encourage use of public transit
5. Enable attractive road, rail, and waterway networks

**DOES THE DRAFT OCP ADDRESS THESE PRINCIPLES?**

The City is committed to serving the transportation needs of all residents and visitors, including those with disabilities or limited mobility, through a variety of transportation choices, with priority given to walking, cycling, and transit.

**OCP Goal 3.4.1** Planning directed at prioritizing walking, cycling and transit over single occupancy vehicles

**OCP Goal 3.4.2** Integrate land use and transportation to reduce the need for car travel

**OCP Goal 3.4.3** Safe, accessible, resilient and affordable transit system

**OCP Goal 2.4.3** High quality design & maintenance of urban form

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**EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH IMPACTS**

- Increased physical activity
- Increased productivity at work
- Improved mental health
- Improved social cohesion
- Improved quality of life
- Decreased obesity
- Decreased premature mortality
Planning Principle 3: Healthy Natural Environments

Guiding principles:
1. Reduce urban air pollution
2. Mitigate urban island heat effect
3. Expand natural elements across the landscape
4. Preserve and connect open space and environmentally sensitive areas
5. Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment

Does the Draft OCP address these principles?
The draft OCP includes climate adaptation measures to adjust decision-making and activities in response to climate change. The City acknowledges that both natural systems and human potential for resiliency must be addressed in adapting to climate change and ensuring a healthy natural environment.

OCP Goal 2.4.2 Plan with a long-term perspective to address the challenges associated with climate change
OCP Goal 5.4.1 Develop, promote and implement strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change
OCP Goal 5.4.3 Engage the community to promote more sustainable behaviours

Evidence-based health impacts
• Improved physical health
• Improved cognitive health
• Improved exposure to vitamin D
• Improved social wellbeing
• Improved spiritual wellbeing
• Decreased heat related illness and mortality
• Decreased cardiovascular and respiratory illness and mortality

Planning Principle 4: Healthy Food Systems

Guiding principles:
1. Enhance agricultural capacity
2. Increase access to healthy foods in all neighbourhoods
3. Improve community-scale food infrastructure and services

Does the Draft OCP address these principles?
The OCP recognizes the importance of safe and nutritious foods and the City played a leadership role in the development and adoption of the North Shore Food Charter. The City acknowledges that as the population grows and trends towards multi-family residential buildings in an increasingly urban area, the provision of opportunities for urban agriculture are vital.

OCP Goal 4.4.4 Increase access to nutritious, safe, healthy local food and opportunities for residents to grow food
OCP Goal 5.4.2 Measure, maintain and improve long-term ecosystem health

Evidence-based health impacts
• Improved diet quality
• Improved food and coping skills
• Increased social skills and social supports
• Increased enjoyment of food
• Increased community empowerment
• Decreased obesity
• Decreased diet-related illness
Planning Principle 5: Healthy Housing

Guiding principles:
1. Ensure adequate housing quality for all segments of society
2. Increase access to affordable housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types
1. Prioritize housing for the homeless, elderly, low income groups, and people with disabilities
2. Site and zone housing developments to minimize exposure to environmental hazards

DOES THE DRAFT OCP ADDRESS THESE PRINCIPLES?
The City will assist in providing diverse, affordable housing to help attract and retain young families and provide housing options for an aging population. As well, the City has a commitment to fostering a safe, socially inclusive and supportive community that considers the housing needs of the most vulnerable.

OCP Goal 2.4.5 Purse attainable housing that meets the needs of its diverse community.
OCP Goal 4.4.1 Enhance well-being and quality of life for ALL community members, like people that are homeless or those at risk of homelessness

EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH IMPACTS
• Improved general health
• Improved food security
• Improved mental health
• Improved quality of life
• Decreased stress & depression
• Decreased exposure to environmental hazards
• Decreased mortality

Planning Principle 6: Healthy Communities

Guiding principles:
1. Apply an equity and inclusion lens to all planning
2. Consider and address the social determinants of health, such as education, income, social supports, health services, among many others
3. Support capacity building in individuals, organizations, and sectors
4. Work collaboratively on activities that lead to the integration of efforts to strengthen community health, well-being and development

DOES THE DRAFT OCP ADDRESS THESE PRINCIPLES?
The City is committed to building its capacity to support community initiatives and services that will help enhance the wellbeing of the City’s diverse community members across a range of issues and ages.

OCP Goal 4.4.1 Enhance well-being and quality of life for ALL community members (e.g. homeless or at-risk of homelessness)
OCP Goal 8.4.1 Diversify the local economy
OCP Goal 7.4.1 Support a wide range of arts and cultural activities
OCP Goal 2.4.4 Provision of amenities to enhance quality of life

EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH IMPACTS
• Improved general health
• Improved mental health
• Improved community engagement
• Improved social cohesion and social connectedness
• Improved quality of life for all
• Decreased illness and mortality
Call to Action

Speak Up for Health!

Consider speaking up by coming in person to the Town Hall events or by submitting a feedback form online www.cityshaping.cnv.org. We are all experts in our community and our voices are important. Consider the impact on your health, your children’s opportunities and the environment.

WE NEED YOUR VOICES IN THE CITYSHAPING PROCESS!

• Throughout the CityShaping process, the City of North Vancouver has invested in engaging residents to create the plan and seek input.
• Before the final OCP is prepared and brought forward to Council, we need to rely on the input, intentions and work that have created the plan.
• We want to ensure that the voices of residents are heard and represented throughout this process, particularly the ‘silent majority’ that often go unheard.
• If you care about these issues and want to create a healthier community, please participate in the process and speak up for health!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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