

Community Well-being

15



RELATED GOALS

- › 15 (A). All Victorians have income and access to public services to be able to flourish and live with dignity.
- › 15 (B). Lifelong learning opportunities that are culturally appropriate are available for diverse learners of all ages and income levels.
- › 15 (C). High quality, affordable formal education is available and accessible for students of all ages.
- › 15 (D). Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest and have diverse opportunities for social interaction.
- › 15 (E). Victorians can support themselves and their neighbours in difficult times.
- › 15 (F). Victoria is a place where all people come to live, work and play, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, culture, income, sexual orientation, ability and family status.
- › 15 (G). Victorians are healthy and have a network of health related amenities, facilities and programs to promote wellness and meet the needs of all levels of mental and physical care.
- › 15 (H). Victoria is a safe city, where everyone feels secure in public, in their homes and workplaces.

OVERVIEW

Community well-being integrates both the physical and social environments. While physical features such as a walkable land use patterns, good quality housing and nearby green space can encourage people to make healthier choices that enhance the overall well-being of a community, a community is much more than its physical form. Community well-being also relies on the city's "soft" infrastructure, such as a range of community services that includes health, education, and social services, partnerships and other social relationships that support a community. The plan encourages continual evolution of those community resources that enable people to meet their basic needs, support each other, and develop their maximum potential.

The bi-annual Happiness Index indicates that most residents of Victoria experience a relatively high level of well-being, buoyed by strong social relationship, feelings of belonging to community and the ability to meet their basic needs. A wide network of organizations and groups deliver critical services and help build individual and community capacity. Yet the high cost of living in the city— particularly with respect to housing and childcare costs – make it challenging for many to make ends meet. According to 2006 Statistics Canada figures, 22% of all Victoria citizens, and 26% of children under the age of 18, live in poverty, as defined by Statistics Canada's [Low Income Cut-Off](#) for Victoria. Further, about 1,500 people live without homes in the Capital Region, about half of whom live with mental illness or addictions. Issues safety and security have been raised in several community studies, despite a crime rate generally in decline.

Over the next 30 years, the proportion of Victorians over the age of 65 is anticipated to increase dramatically, from 17% to 30% of the total population. At the same time, the proportion of children in the city is declining and the concept of the family is changing. This demographic shift presents a dual challenge for Victoria: meeting the shifting service, housing and mobility needs of an older population, while enhancing the housing, facilities and affordability needed to retain a younger workforce and their families.

The plan strives to build community capacity and address the needs of all citizens, particularly those that are most vulnerable or marginalized. Within its limited mandate, the City must continue to work in partnership with senior governments, the private sector, public agencies, community organizations and citizens to advance these policies. The plan aims to: enhance social inclusion for people of all socio-economic levels, cultural backgrounds and abilities; strengthen the multi-generational features of neighbourhoods; support effective community development; provide opportunities for public engagement; and, enhance the sense of personal and public safety.

BROAD OBJECTIVES

The community well-being policies of this plan address seven broad objectives:

- 15 (a) That a mix of housing, services, facilities and programs encourage and support a socio-economically and culturally inclusive community.
- 15 (b) That facilities, services, places of employment and housing are physically accessible to users.
- 15 (c) That planning, services and programs foster multigenerational neighbourhoods.
- 15 (d) That strong partnerships build the capacity of individuals and the community.
- 15 (e) That all citizens have the opportunity to participate in civic affairs.
- 15 (f) That citizens have an enhanced sense of personal and public safety.
- 15 (g) That citizens have the necessary skills and knowledge for more sustainable behaviours and lifestyles.

SOCIAL EQUITY

- 15.1 Encourage a fair distribution of community services, social services and facilities across the city, to support all sectors of the population.
- 15.2 Establish policies and fee structures to ensure that City programs and facilities are affordable and welcoming to people of all ages, incomes, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles.
- 15.3 Support the efforts of senior government, business and community organizations to reduce poverty through:
 - 15.3.1 Advocacy to senior levels of government for fair income assistance rates;
 - 15.3.2 Enabling stable housing with support services;
 - 15.3.3 Encouraging businesses to provide a household-sustaining wage for employees; and,
 - 15.3.4 Providing education and skills training programs to build individual capacity [SEE ALSO SECTION 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS].

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

- 15.4 Establish guidelines for full accessibility for people with mobility challenges in the design, construction and improvement of City property, including facilities, offices, parks and the pedestrian areas.
- 15.5 Encourage senior governments, community and business partners to improve the physical accessibility of public and private property, including places of employment, housing and other visitor-oriented sites [SEE ALSO SECTION 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS].

MULTIGENERATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 15.6 Consider the needs of children, youth and older adults in planning initiatives related to land use, residential development, transportation, parks, facilities and community services.
- 15.7 Work collaboratively with senior government, the health authority, and other public and private sector partners to plan for the housing, health, employment, recreational, educational, cultural and other needs of Victoria's population as it ages.
- 15.8 Work with the school district to retain existing schools as a key feature of complete neighbourhoods.

- 15.9 Seek to sustain a population base sufficient to maintain existing schools by encouraging housing, amenities and services suitable for families with children in all neighbourhoods through policies, local area plans, and zoning.
- 15.10 Encourage the development of quality, accessible, affordable daycare, including preschool, out-of-school care and elder daycare spaces, to support families and employers by:
 - 15.10.1 Considering the provision of non-profit daycare space as an amenity in new housing, mixed-use and commercial developments to be secured through agreement; and,
 - 15.10.2 Encouraging new childcare and elder daycare spaces throughout the city.
- 15.11 Seek opportunities to promote social interaction between different generations through the design and programming for public spaces, parks and facilities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 15.12 Develop and maintain partnerships with senior government, the health authority, neighbouring municipalities, community organizations, informal groups, the private sector and others to build community capacity generally, and to:
 - 15.12.1 Provide a range of facilities and community services to serve people throughout their lives, including:
 - 15.12.1.1 Social services to support attainment of basic needs;
 - 15.12.1.2 A range of local and regional health and wellness facilities and services;
 - 15.12.1.3 A network of regional recreational facilities and services;
 - 15.12.1.4 Regional library facilities and services;
 - 15.12.1.5 Opportunities and facilities for lifelong learning and skills training;
 - 15.12.1.6 Places of worship and other spaces for contemplation; and,
 - 15.12.2 Promote equitable access to services and facilities for all, including people of aboriginal ancestry and new Canadians;
 - 15.12.3 Encourage collaboration between community service

providers and community organizations across the city and at the local area level; and,

- 15.12.4 Promote a culture of volunteerism, community service and neighbourliness.
- 15.13 Incorporate community development objectives into citywide and local area planning processes.
- 15.14 Work closely with community centres, seniors centres, community organizations, citizens and other partners to seek innovative opportunities to sustain, enhance and deliver community-based recreation, education and social programs [SEE ALSO SECTION 9 - PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE].

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 15.15 Encourage effective public participation in City processes and service delivery by developing and maintaining a Civic Engagement Policy that:
 - 15.15.1 Provides opportunities for those who are affected by a decision to be involved in the decision-making process;
 - 15.15.2 Provides opportunities for the public's contribution to influence the decision;
 - 15.15.3 Promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers;
 - 15.15.4 Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision;
 - 15.15.5 Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate;
 - 15.15.6 Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and,
 - 15.15.7 Communicates the outcome of public engagement processes [SEE ALSO SECTION 18 – PLAN ADMINISTRATION].

PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- 15.16 Collaborate with the Victoria Police Department, the Fire Department, the health authority, community and social service agencies, businesses, neighbourhood groups and others to encourage a safe and thriving downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- 15.17 Support personal and public safety by considering opportunities for access, comfort, sociability and multiple uses and activities in the review of designs and plans for private developments and public spaces.
- 15.18 Collaborate with community organizations, neighbours and other stakeholders to address issues related to personal safety and security in parks and outdoor recreation facilities.
- 15.19 Seek to address addictions while balancing public order and public health by supporting the efforts of government, agencies, the health authority, Victoria Police Department, and non-profit, private and faith-based organizations to take a coordinated, comprehensive [Five Pillars](#) approach that:
 - 15.19.1 Prevents the harmful use of alcohol, tobacco, and both illegal and prescription drugs;
 - 15.19.2 Reduces harm to individuals and communities from the sale and use of both legal and illegal substances;
 - 15.19.3 Provides a range of support services, specialized care facilities and treatment programs for people who are addicted;
 - 15.19.4 Supports access to safe, affordable and quality housing; and,
 - 15.19.5 Delivers enforcement services to support community peace, public order and safety

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

- 15.20 Encourage the broad development of the knowledge and skills necessary for more sustainable behaviours and practices by supporting the efforts of senior government, public agencies, schools, non-profit and business organizations that:
 - 15.20.1 Promote more sustainable household practices and skills such as water conservation, food production, native landscaping, recycling and composting;
 - 15.20.2 Promote the interpretation and stewardship of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems on public and private lands; and
 - 15.20.3 Increase the knowledge and critical understanding of sustainability issues and processes [SEE ALSO SECTION 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT; SECTION 12 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY; AND, SECTION 16 – FOOD SYSTEMS].