Healthy Built Environments - Province of British Columbia

The built environment includes our homes, communities, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas, roads and green spaces, and varies in size from large-scale urban areas to smaller rural developments. How communities are planned and built, and the services and resources provided within them, directly impacts our physical, mental, and social health. These impacts are reflected in levels of social connectedness, mental and physical fitness, chronic disease, obesity, and injury.

Community planners in British Columbia have paid increasing attention to the relationship between the built environment and the well-being of citizens. People are supported to be more physically active, socially connected and healthier when they live in communities that have:

- mixed land use and compactness (e.g. stores within walking distance of homes)
- higher residential density
- well-connected streets and trail networks (e.g. linking neighborhoods, commercial areas and parks)
- opportunities for active transport (e.g. walking, cycling and use of public transit)
- acceptable air and water quality, and
- visually pleasing features. (e.g. natural areas, gardens, public gathering places, heritage buildings)

Projects

We partner with many provincial and national organizations to inform and enable local governments, community planners and design professionals to create and maintain healthier built environments.
Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit

The Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit is a project of the Provincial Health Services Authority under the guidance of the Healthy Built Environment Alliance, a voluntary network that provides leadership and action for healthier, more livable communities. The toolkit provides consistent evidence-based and expert-informed messages for use in communications and discussion around health and the built environment. It features best practices in planning, policies and practices related to the five physical features of the built environment: neighbourhood design; housing; transportation networks; natural environments; and food systems.

Onsite Sewage Systems

The Ministry of Health provides policy support for land use management, which includes both onsite sewage disposal and subdivision activities. The fundamental goal is to minimize, mitigate and/or prevent potential risks to human health. This is achieved through legislative requirements, supporting policies and guidelines.

- Onsite Sewage Systems

Water Quality

Clean, healthy water is vital for life to survive and thrive. Both human and natural disturbance can impact water quality, putting at risk the plants, animals, and humans that rely on that water. The Province regularly monitors the water quality of many water bodies across B.C. to ensure they are safe and clean.

- Water Quality

Learn More

By supporting land use planning, transportation and development decisions that promote these attributes, communities can be healthier, more livable, inclusive, safe and sustainable. Here are some healthy links:

Healthy Canada by Design (Coalition Linking Action and Science for Prevention)
This partnership of national health, planning and transportation organizations, region and local health authorities, non-governmental organizations and university researchers collaborates to bring health considerations into land use and transportation planning processes with the goal of creating healthy communities that support active transportation and physical activity.

- **Healthy Canada by Design**

**Smart Growth BC**

A non-governmental organization devoted to fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible land use and development works throughout the province with community groups, businesses, developers, planners, municipalities and the public to create more livable communities in British Columbia.

- **Smart Growth BC**

**Becoming an Age-Friendly Community**

This guide has been created to help communities in British Columbia continue or initiate work on becoming age-friendly. It is primarily aimed at local governments but provides guidance to individuals, community and voluntary organizations, or anyone interested in championing the age-friendly initiative in their community.

- **Becoming an Age-Friendly Community: Local Government Guide (PDF, 4.9MB)**

**Local Government Leadership**

How do local governments improve community health and wellbeing? It's all here in the Action Guide.

- **A resource guide for local governments (PDF, 23.0MB)**

**Local Governments & Healthy Communities**
This video illustrates how local governments can have a positive effect on the health of their communities.

- PlanH - Local governments and Healthy Communities