Khabarovsk Report
Best Practices for Preserving Public Health

BACKGROUND

The City of Victoria’s Twin City of Khabarovsk has requested a report on best practices for preserving public health. More specifically:

“Experience in motivating people to lead a healthy lifestyle in the following areas: physical activity, good nutrition, bad habits, preventive care”

The following report summarizes a number of initiatives and programs that are underway at the City of Victoria promoting health, wellness, recreation and active living.

REPORT

The City of Victoria places a strong emphasis on promoting health, wellness, recreation and active living in our community. Through initiatives like our Active Living Guide we offer a diverse range of activities to assist residents with their health and wellness goals. Through the Active Living Guide residents are able to learn about exciting opportunities available to them in areas such as: recreation, sport, arts, education and more. The City of Victoria is committed to providing accessible, inclusive, and meaningful recreation opportunities for everyone. This commitment is reflected through our programs and services, which aim to eliminate barriers and create a welcoming environment for all.

Victoria is also renowned for it’s dynamic, vibrant, playful, sustainable, inclusive, and diverse parks and open spaces system. It engages residents and visitors with the unique ecosystems, culture, and character of the city, supports health and wellness for all, and protects natural areas as a vital resource. With over 100 parks and open spaces serving residents and visitors alike, these areas offer opportunities for socializing, recreation, relaxation, play, learning, and connecting with nature.

As part of Council’s 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan, “Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City” was outlined as a key strategic objective. Along with a host of year-by-year actions, the measurable outcomes for this objective are as follows:

- Increase sense of belonging and participation in civic life among all demographic groups
- Increase in number of people who feel safe and part of the community
- Increase in number of people who have a family doctor and overall increase in the number of people working in the health and well-being professions
- Increase in availability of free recreation options
- Increase in people accessing nature
- Increase in number of people who are more active, including increase in registrations in the City’s recreational programs
- Clear improvement on mental health and addictions
- Increased local food security
- Fewer people are living below the poverty line and more people have access to a living wage
- Increase in cultural literacy, deepening understanding and welcoming of diversity

Another area where the City of Victoria has prioritized investment is in active and accessible transportation infrastructure.
Active transportation refers to a number of options our residents have to move throughout our city in a sustainable and physically health way. Walking, wheeling, rolling, and taking public transit are all examples of sustainable transportation choices that contribute to happier, healthier, and more vibrant communities.

**Walking:**

The City’s [Official Community Plan](#) prioritizes pedestrians over all other travel modes. Each year the City continues to focus on improvements that make our streets safer and more enjoyable for walking.

Annual investments include new sidewalk construction, replacement and widening of existing sidewalks, new crosswalks, crosswalk safety upgrades, public seating, as well as changes to improve the built environment for people with disabilities. These investments advance priorities of the [Official Community Plan](#), [Climate Leadership Plan](#), [Pedestrian Master Plan](#), and [GOVictoria – the City’s Mobility Strategy](#).

The City has more than 466 kms of sidewalks – they connect neighbourhoods and key destinations for Victoria’s residents and visitors. A variety of trails and pathways also provide great opportunities for pedestrians to explore the City.

**Cycling:**

Victoria’s compact urban environment and relatively flat topography makes riding a bike for transportation or recreation a great option. Cycling facilities in the City include signed bike routes, painted bike lanes, buffered painted bike lanes, and a growing number of [All Ages and Abilities (AAA) facilities](#). AAA Facilities include off-street pathways, protected bike lanes, and traffic-calmed neighbourhood streets.

**Accessibility:**

Accessible mobility refers to the ability for people with disabilities to move through the community and access destinations without barriers. People with disabilities can live more freely when the built environment, including parking stalls, sidewalks, roadways, and curb space, is designed and/or adapted to support diverse needs.

By prioritizing accessible mobility, we can directly improve the health, well-being and personal outcomes for residents and visitors, creating a more connected and inclusive community.

In the context of transportation, objectives are focused on promoting accessibility in policy, design, planning, operations, and capital projects. As a part of our commitment to accessibility, we incorporate universal design principles and apply design standards that align with industry and other municipal best practices.

Some steps towards improving accessibility that the City is already taking include:

- accessible features at intersections (tactile domes, accessible audible signals, curb let-downs)
- sidewalk and pathway widening to better accommodate mobility scooters/aids
- updating accessible parking requirements for new construction and modifying our design guidelines for public accessible stalls
- upgrading transit shelters and dedicating loading zones for accessibility support vehicles, such as handiDART buses

**CONCLUSION**

The City of Victoria values and prioritizes health, wellbeing, recreation and active living in our community. Through a host of programs and initiatives we are working to ensure our city is accessible, inclusive and thriving for all who live and visit the region.