



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

UBC Public Affairs

310 – 6251 Cecil Green Park Rd.
Vancouver B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca

Tel: 604.822.3131
Fax: 604.822.2684
E-mail: public.affairs@ubc.ca

UBC News Line:
604.UBC.NEWS (822.6397)

Contact:

Larry Frank
UBC Public Affairs
Cell: 604-290-4260 ?
Email: Lawrence.frank@ubc.ca

Heather Amos
UBC Public Affairs
Tel: 604.822.3213
Email: heather.amos@ubc.ca

MEDIA RELEASE | September 29, 2014

Walkable neighbourhoods more desirable, produce better health outcomes

People who prefer to walk and who live in neighbourhoods that promote walking report healthier lifestyles and better health outcomes than those who want to walk but who live in more car-friendly neighbourhoods, according to new research from the University of British Columbia.

The study goes on to say that Metro Vancouver residents prefer neighbourhoods where they can walk to shops, services, green space and transit and the unmet demand for pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods could be impacting our health.

“We found that people who prefer and live in walkable neighbourhoods walk about five days per week – compared to one or two days a week for those who want to walk but do not live in a walkable neighbourhood,” says Larry Frank, professor and director of the Health and Community Design Lab, based at UBC’s School of Population and Public Health, and the lead researcher for the project.

Nearly two-thirds of City of Vancouver residents and 40 per cent of residents living in other areas of Metro Vancouver reported a strong desire to live in a neighbourhood that encourages foot traffic.

The researchers found that while many people prefer to walk, neighbourhood design influences their choice of transportation. People who prefer and live in walkable neighbourhoods reported significantly lower incidence of high blood pressure (10 per cent) than those who prefer to walk but do not live in areas that make it easy to travel on foot (21 per cent).

The findings have implications for a region like Metro Vancouver where housing affordability forces people out of the walkable urban core to more auto-oriented areas.

“We’re pricing people out of the neighbourhoods they want and that costs us as a society through increasing health care costs,” says Frank.

BACKGROUND

The report, which was funded by the Real Estate Foundation of BC, was prepared in partnership with Healthy Canada by Design, an initiative led by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and funded by the Health Canada through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer’s CLASP program.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

UBC Public Affairs

310 – 6251 Cecil Green Park Rd.
Vancouver B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca

Tel: 604.822.3131
Fax: 604.822.2684
E-mail: public.affairs@ubc.ca

UBC News Line:
604.UBC.NEWS (822.6397)

The report and background information are available through the Health and Community Design Lab: Residential Preferences and Public Health in Metro Vancouver: Promoting Health and Well Being by Meeting the Demand for Walkable Urban Environments: <http://health-design.spph.ubc.ca/publications/reports/>

Quotes

Jack Wong, CEO, the Real Estate Foundation of BC

“Well-planned built environments are integral to sustainable communities. These findings will be useful for planners, developers and others involved in designing the places we live, aligning consumer demand with principles of good neighbourhood design helps build healthier communities, which benefits everyone.”

*Media contact: Celina Owen, Real Estate Foundation of BC
Tel: 604.343.2623; E-mail: celina@refbc.com*

Dr. John Carsley, Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health

“Residents who live in highly walkable neighbourhoods walk five times a week for transportation, compared to one to two times per week for those in auto-oriented neighbourhoods. This is an impressive finding for everyone who wants residents to reduce their risk of chronic diseases by being more physically active.”

Media contact: Viola Kaminski, Vancouver Coastal Health
Tel: 604.708.5338 ; E-mail: viola.kaminski@vch.ca

Dr. Helena Swinkels, Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority

The good news is that residents who live in less walkable neighbourhoods in the Metro Vancouver Region are getting out and walking for recreational purposes as often as residents in more walkable ones, though there is untapped potential to increase walking and physical activity in Metro Vancouver by ensuring that more people have the option to walk, cycle or take public transit to work and school. This study not only shows that neighbourhoods that encourage walking to work and school are good for health, but also that people want to live in these neighbourhoods.”

Media contact: Fraser Health: 604.450.7881