

Health & Wellness



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Health and Wellness, while an economic sector in its own right, is also the back bone of an economically vibrant community. Individuals have to be healthy in order to participate in the local workforce and earn income to cover the cost of shelter, food and other necessities. Only once this is achieved can most individuals even begin to participate in their community as leaders and volunteers and in turn create an attractive community to live where businesses choose to locate.

Being healthy is not just about how we live, but also largely about where we live. A growing body of research shows that communities can be built in ways that encourage (or discourage) healthier living choices, such as walking, cycling, eating healthy foods, and connecting with neighbours.³

The Victoria Foundation’s public opinion survey asked respondents to list the most important issues facing Greater Victoria today. Seven of the top 10 issues were related to health and wellness: cost of living (#1), mental illness (#2), housing (#3), homelessness (#4), health care (#5), addictions (#9), and eldercare (#10)⁴ The survey also found that only 68% of people reported being satisfied or very satisfied with work-life balance.⁵

Definitions

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹

Wellness is the optimal state of health of the individuals and groups. There are two focal concerns; the realisation of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and economically, and the fulfillment of one’s role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, work place, and other setting.²

Key Facts

- The “Leisure Involvement for Everyone” (LIFE) program assists individuals and families with low income to access recreation programs and facilities - including the Esquimalt Recreation Centre. Individuals in Greater Victoria that are eligible and participating in the program have increased to 11,215 patrons in 2012 from 6,586 in 2005.^{6,7}
- In 2011, hospitals were ranked the sixth largest employment industry in Greater Victoria. Nursing and residential care facilities placed tenth. Together they account for a total of 5.1% of all employment in the region.⁸

- Approximately half of Esquimalt’s housing stock is owner-occupied with the other 50% being tenant occupied. More than 45% of tenant households spend 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs.⁹
- Rent continues to climb in the region with the average cost of a two bedroom apartment costing \$1,076 in 2013 from \$908 in 2007; however, during the same time period rental vacancy rate increased from 0.4% to 3.4%.^{10,11}
- Greater Victoria’s violent crimes severity index has consistently declined over the last 3 years. The violent crime severity index in 2012 was 63.7% in Greater Victoria compared to the 89.3% at the provincial and 81.4% at national levels.¹²

Township In Focus

Esquimalt already has many assets of a healthy community: a recreation centre with aquatic, fitness and recreational facilities, a sports centre with an arena and curling rink, 4.56 kilometres of bike lanes, and over 108 acres of parkland consisting of sport fields, trails, horticultural sites, and natural areas.

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This is one in a series of eight backgrounder documents available for public review as part of Esquimalt’s Economic Development Strategy. To provide your input, please visit our website to review information and take our online survey.



Local Service Providers

- Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria
- Capital Mental Health Association
- Churches and Faith-Based Organizations
- Dentist Offices
- Edgewood Victoria Addiction Services
- Esquimalt Emergency Social Services
- Esquimalt Fire Rescue
- Esquimalt Health Unit (Island Health)
- Esquimalt Parks & Recreation
- Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centre
- Esquimalt Neighbourhood House
- Medical Clinics
- Residents Associations
- Rock Solid Foundation
- Victoria Police West Division
- Victoria Rainbow Kitchen Society

Round Table Recommendations

The Esquimalt Economic Round Table on Health & Wellness identified the following as priority areas for action.

1. Improve Community Outreach

- Community partnerships to further emergency management preparedness education
- Examine possibility of a volunteer coordinator for the Township
- Provide some written information in French on Township materials

2. Partnerships with Victoria Police Department

- Identify “local community leaders” to work with children in bullying prevention (WITS)
- Mayor to convene meeting with new Police Chief and Youth Advocates in Esquimalt
- Re-connect with Victoria Police Department on Crime Free Multi-Housing Program
- Councillor report on provincial Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction Roundtable

3. Safe and Affordable Housing

- Review and expansion of zoning for secondary suites and compliance from unregistered owners
- Review of multi-family business licenses for bylaw complaints
- Convene a round table discussion on affordable housing in Esquimalt

4. Community Health Services

- Request that public health officer for Esquimalt present to Council on current and future operations and services
- Facilitate round table discussion on pre and post natal care with Island Health and community partners

Sources

¹World Health Organization.

²World Health Organization.

³Canadian Institute of Planners (2012). Health Equity and Community Design: What is the Canadian evidence saying?

⁴Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's 2013 Annual Check-up.

⁵Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's 2013 Annual Check-up.

⁶Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Youth Vital Signs 2013.

⁷Victoria Foundation (2007). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's Annual Check-up 2006.

⁸Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's 2013 Annual Check-up.

⁹Statistics Canada (2014). 2011 Census.

¹⁰Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's 2013 Annual Check-up.

¹¹Victoria Foundation (2010). Victoria's Vital Signs: Greater Victoria's 2009 Annual Check-up.

¹²Victoria Foundation (2014). Victoria's Youth Vital Signs 2013.

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