Workshop Report

Creating Healthy and Safe Communities:

Focus on Climate Change & Health and Transportation &Health

February 13th & 28th, 2020

Background

The Regional Outcomes Monitoring Group – Community Health Network (ROM-CHN) identified Healthy and Safe Environments as a priority goal area for 2019 (in addition to Affordable and Accessible Housing, Economic Security, Food Security, and Thriving Children and Youth). Across the region there are a number of indicators being tracked by Vital Signs, CRD Regional Growth Strategy and others in relation to Healthy and Safe Environments and the Community Social Planning Council has compiled a report of existing and potential indicators that track healthy and safe environments (safety, climate, transportation and housing.)

On September 19, 2019 the ROM-CHN hosted a *Creating Healthy and Safe Communities* workshop with the purpose of educating and inspiring professionals working in local government across a variety of planning, design, and policy fields. One of the outcomes of this workshop was to prioritize a discussion on two themes in particular as they relate to Healthy & Safe Environments in the CRD: **1) Climate Change and 2) Transportation.**

Partners of the ROM-CHN (Island Health, CRD and the Community Social Planning Council) organized two follow-up workshops in February 2020 to further explore the themes of climate change and transportation as they relate to the health and wellbeing of communities in the CRD.

Purpose and Objectives

Two workshops[1] were held—one in **Central Victoria (February 13**) and one in **Westshore (February 28)**— to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop a shared understanding of the priorities for tracking and measuring the implications of i) climate change and ii) transportation on health and wellbeing in the CRD;

2. Share and explore what communities and partners in the region are already measuring and monitoring in relation to the implications of climate change and transportation on health and wellbeing;

3. Generate commitment and buy-in to continue the discussion and stay engaged (Healthy and Safe Environment subgroup and/or infographic); and

4. Provide space for networking and relationship building.

The primary audience for these workshops was local government staff and planners that contribute to healthy and safe environments as well as health authority staff (population health, environmental health officers, epidemiologists) and community partners.

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[1] A third workshop was planned in Saanich for February 6th, but was cancelled due to low registration.

Workshop Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Description
10:00AM – 10:20AM	Welcome & Introductions	Welcome & Territorial acknowledgement Purpose of workshop
10:20AM – 10:40AM	Overview of September 19th Workshop and Resources	**Presentation #1: Recap Sept 19th Workshop (Amanda Ng, CRD)** Amanda reviewed the highlights of the September 19th workshop and the role of the ROM-CHN. **Presentation #2: Overview of CSPC backgrounder (Diana Gibson, CSPC)** Diana oriented participants to the indicators backgrounder that has been developed on Healthy & Safe Environments and provided context on the role of indicators in supporting communication, engagement, planning and informed decision-making.
10:40AM – 11:20AM	Round 1: Impacts of Climate Change on Health and Wellbeing	**Presentation #3: Introduction to Health Impacts of Climate Change (Kerri Klein, SHIFT Collaborative)** Kerri provided a brief introduction to health impacts from Climate Change and introduced a framework developed by the Climate Action Secretariat and the BC Ministry of Health for considering some of the health impacts from climate change we will experience in BC. Round 1 Discussion: **Objective:** Explore priorities of communities and partners in the region in relation to health impacts of climate change; share stories and discuss regional priorities for measuring and communicating the implications of climate change for health and wellbeing. **Part 1**: How is your community already considering /addressing the health impacts of climate change? (10 min) **Part 2: Priorities for Measures** (15 min) Data / indicators help us to tell a story. What are the important narratives or stories we need to be telling together as a region in relation to the health impacts of climate change? What are the priorities to measure and track in relation to health impacts of climate change? • Are there priorities that are more strategically measured across the region (vs only locally)? • Are there certain priorities where health data could add value? **Report Back:** Each table share key takeaways or insights from the discussion
11:20AM – 11:55AM	Round 2 Discussion:	**Presentation #4: Introduction to Impacts of Transportation on Health and Wellbeing (Jade Yehia, Island Health)**

	Impacts of Transportation on Health and Wellbeing	Jade introduced the impact transportation behaviours, infrastructure, plans, and policies have on health and well-being. She also oriented participants to the Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit.
		Round 2 Discussion:
		Objective: Explore priorities of communities and partners in the region in relation to health impacts of transportation; share stories and discuss regional priorities for measuring and communicating the implications of transportation for health and wellbeing.
		Part 1: In relation to walkability, transit, cycling—what are you already measuring and what is <u>not</u> currently being measured, but needs to be? (i.e. What are the gaps?)
		Part 2: What could we be harvesting and measuring across the region to tell a <u>more impactful story</u> around health and transportation? • Are there priorities that are more strategically measured across the region (vs only locally)? **Report Back:** Key insights or takeaways from each table
11:55AM – 12:00PM	**Next Steps**	Amanda and Jade to share ways to stay involved and next steps.

Workshop Summary

The Central Victoria workshop took place from 10AM – Noon on February 13th 2020 and had 23 participants. The Westshore workshop took place from 10AM – Noon on February 28th, 2020 and had 11 participants.

The workshop was designed to provide opportunities for deeper discussion on the themes of climate change and transportation. With each round of discussion, participants were provided with discussion questions, resources and a template to capture key themes and insights.

Climate Change and Health

This round of discussion started by focussing on what is currently being measured by local governments, the CRD and Island Health in relation to health impacts of climate change. Admittedly, the 'health impacts of climate change' is a broad theme and significantly intersects with other climate change measures related to mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (preparing for future impacts from climate change). For the purpose of this workshop, participants were asked to address the co-benefits of mitigation measures from transportation (i.e. walking, cycling) in Round 2 on transportation.

Overall, there are a number of themes and indicators that are already being measured in relation to health and climate change. While this provides a strong starting place, currently these measures are not tracked, collected and analyzed in a way that creates a coherent narrative about the impact of climate change on the health and wellbeing in the CRD.

Generally, in relation to measuring the health impacts of climate change:

- The provincial government (and partners) are tracking climate data for the region, including past and future forecasted temperature, precipitation and sea level data for the Capital Region.
- Island health is tracking data in relation to the health impacts of climate change on populations within the CRD. For example, health impacts from extreme heat, air quality, water quality, water quantity, food quality, and vector borne illness.
- Local governments are tracking the impact of climate change on the natural environment (i.e. invasive species, ecosystem health, fallen trees from storms, etc.) and built environment (impact on infrastructure such as road, sewers). Local governments are also tracking data in relation to emergency preparedness and climate change adaptation such as clean air shelters, cooling shelters, etc. Furthermore, local governments are measuring community GHG emissions and tracking climate change mitigation strategies.

Table 1 (below) summarizes the specific themes and measures that were discussed as already being measured by various sectors in the region:

Table 1. What is currently being tracked in relation to health impacts of climate change?

Climate Change and Health Impact	Topic / Measures	Who is Measuring?
Extreme Heat (from rising temperatures)	# of extreme heat days - Heat-related illness and mortality - Hospital visits related to heat - Tree protection (canopy cover) and more space for trees, forest and green space - modifying activities (i.e. summer camps)	Island Health Saanich Parks, Esquimalt Esquimalt
Air Quality (from wildfires; extreme heat)	- Wildfire smoke - Respiratory health related to air quality (i.e. asthma)	Island Health, Ministry of Environment (air quality alerts)
Water / Food Quality	- Turbidity - Boil water notices (due to flooding, storms, heavy precipitation) - Blue-green algae blooms - Water borne diseases: E.Coli / total coliforms - Food-borne illness outbreaks	Island Health (drinking water officers are tracking this, but not comparing to previous years)
Water Quantity	Drought conditions	
Food Security	- Food availability / cost - Agriculture land and urban containment boundary	Esquimalt
Insect / Vector Borne Disease	Lyme disease, ticks, etc.	Island Health
Allergies	Allergies to pollen, etc.	Island Health
Sea Level Rise	- Sea level rise/municipality - anecdotal public concern on water quality (salt water intrusion of ground water)	Island Trust, Esquimalt

Impact of Extreme Weather on Built and Natural Environment	• Fallen trees • Soil erosion • Road, sewer repair, etc.	Local governments
Precipitation and Flooding	• Annual rainfall/snowfall • Storm-water / Drainage management	PICS / CAS Sooke
Population Sensitivity / Vulnerability	• Housing and homelessness data • Socially isolated • Population health / community health profiles track income level, elderly, First Nations	Local governments / CRD Health Authority
Emergency Preparedness	• People preparedness / emergency prep sessions	Esquimalt
Climate Adaptation Plans/policies	• # of policies to support adaptation to heat, precipitation and flooding, sea level rise, etc.	Saanich
Climate Change Mitigation Plans/policies	• Emissions by community • Energy efficiency of buildings (step code) • Mitigation strategies (lots of link to transportation)	Local Governments

Priorities to Track and Measure for the Region

The biggest priority identified was an opportunity to more intentionally coordinate and integrate data between Island Health and local governments to tell a clear and impactful story of the current and future impact of climate change on health and wellbeing for CRD communities and populations. For example, a lot of the data is already being tracked by various stakeholders, but it is not being analyzed with a climate change lens. Many participants felt there is an opportunity to more intentionally create a clear picture of how climate change is (and will) impact the people and communities in this region. Specifically, the following priorities were named:

- **Set the context using climate science:** Use existing climate data and models to create a snapshot of the current and future predicted climate impacts for this region in relation to rising temperatures, extreme weather, sea level rise;
- Establish a **baseline of measurable indicators** on the health impacts of climate change that can be compared (now vs future);
- Ensure indicators can actually be used to **track progress** (i.e. achieving goals, measuring effectiveness);
- Select measures that can be used as a **communication / education tool** about health impacts of climate change. Ensure they are simple, but meaningful. The creation of this tool (i.e. infographic) can be a further education and engagement opportunity to identify values;
- Balance collection and communication of the health **co-risks and co-benefits** from climate change actions. For example, there are many positive co-benefits resulting from climate change adaptation (i.e. enhanced social cohesion from community emergency preparedness) and mitigation (i.e. better air quality in more energy efficient buildings). Consider how a regional narrative on climate change and health can include both types of indicators;
- **Priority topics** for measurement that were identified include:
  - Heat

o Air quality (Wildfire Smoke)
o Water Quality/quantity
o Food Security
o Flooding / Extreme Weather
o Economic impacts of Climate change (links to economic determinants of health)

Transportation and Health

Round 2 of discussions in the workshop focused on transportation and health. It is clear that across the region, there is a lot of data being collected on mode-share and active transportation, mainly by local governments (see Table 2). More broadly, the health authority researches evidence for linkages between active transportation, the built environment and health and well-being. An overarching theme across both workshops was that while there is a lot of data being collected, there is a need for clarity on the narrative that the region wants to tell and integration of the health co-benefits into this narrative.

Table 2. What are we measuring in relation to transportation and health?

Transportation Theme	Measures / Indicators	Who is measuring?
Mode-share	• Mode for commuting to work • Split of biking/walking/transit/ driving	Local governments
Active Transportation Count / Usage Programs	• vehicle speed /volume • bicycle speed/volume • regional trail usage • Transit ridership	Local governments
Active Transportation Infrastructure	• Km's of facility / asset (bike lanes, sidewalks) • # cycling routes, sidewalks, cycling facilities • Walkability / Walk score • Bikemaps.org • Parking data	Local governments
Vehicular Crash Data	• BC Injury Prevention (vehicular crashes) • ICBC Crash data	ICBC BC Injury Prevention
Climate Mitigation Plans / Growth Strategies	• safe routes to school • sidewalks in key areas • walkable/complete village centres • GHG emissions	Saanich / CRD
Demographic Data	• Demographics and transport behaviours	Census data
One-off events	• Bike to work week • Anecdotal reporting	Non-profits

There were a number of areas identified that are not currently being measured, but would be of value to measure in the future:

- **Integrate transportation data with health outcomes:** Clearly present the health co-benefits of active transportation (i.e. cycling, walking, transit) and density alongside regional transportation data.
- Measure / illustrate the **economic and health co-benefits** of active transportation (i.e. cost of commuting time)
- Adopt a systems lens by creating a combined **transportation / housing / childcare index** by neighbourhood
- Bring an **equity lens to data collection:** collect more information about <u>who</u> is using different forms of transportation, where they live, and other demographic data (i.e. income, race, etc.). Analyze data with a health equity lens to see if there may be systemic barriers to active transportation.
- **Collect more qualitative data**: identify the rationale for transport mode (i.e. commute, recreational, etc.); identify motivations and barriers to active transportation; explore quality of life/happiness and mental health impacts as it relates to transportation; explore social connectedness /isolation as it relates to transportation. Collect impactful stories.
- **Standardize data collection** on transportation across the region: have a standardized data set that all communities collect which can then be collated across the region.
- **Measure and communicate progress** towards transportation goals and targets.

Next Steps

These two follow-up workshops reinforced there is interest in having more alignment and coordination to tell a meaningful and coherent story around health impacts from climate change and transportation in the CRD. The ROM CHN is well placed to convene a group of stakeholders across communities and sectors to continue to provide leadership and clarity to the Healthy and Safe Environments goal areas moving forward.