

# Residential Preferences and Public Health in Metro Vancouver:

Promoting Health and Well Being by Meeting the Demand for Walkable Urban Environments

## There is strong preference for walkable neighbourhoods in Metro Vancouver

City of Vancouver residents:

64%

would *strongly prefer* to live within a 10 minute walk of shops & services

8%

would *strongly prefer* to live where housing & commercial areas are kept separate

52%

would *strongly prefer* to live where travel distances are <5 km, even if it means a smaller lot

7%

would *strongly prefer* to live on a larger lot, even if it means travel distances over 25 km

Residents outside the City of Vancouver:

40%

would *strongly prefer* to live in walking distance to a wide range of smaller food stores

15%

would *strongly prefer* to live where there are few food stores in walking distance, but several very large supermarkets accessible by car

"Well planned built environments are integral to sustainable communities...aligning consumer demand with principles of good neighbourhood design helps build healthier communities, which benefits everyone."

- Jack Wong, CEO, The Real Estate Foundation of BC

## The survey found considerable unmet demand for neighbourhoods with a wide range of smaller food stores within walking distance



...strong desire was expressed among:

30%

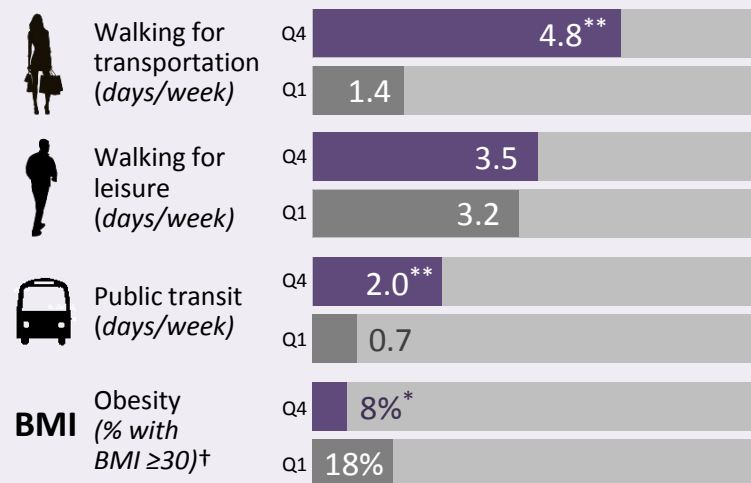
of City of Vancouver residents who feel their neighbourhood is very car-oriented

25%

of residents outside the City of Vancouver who feel their neighbourhood is very car-oriented

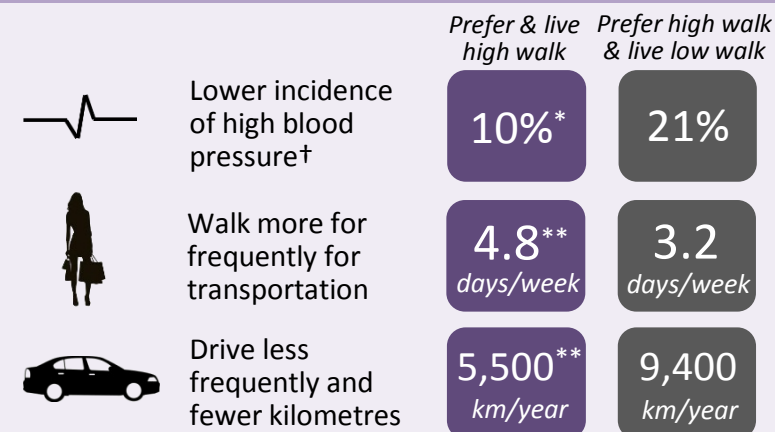
- Dr. Lawrence Frank, UBC (Study Lead)

People living in Metro Vancouver's most walkable neighbourhoods reported **walking more often for transportation**, using **public transit** more frequently, and **lower incidence of obesity**



Q4= highest quartile of neighbourhood walkability | Q1= lowest quartile of neighbourhood walkability

People who **prefer and live** in a walkable place reported healthier lifestyles than those who prefer a walkable neighbourhood, **but do not live in one**



\*\*significantly different than the reference group (p<0.01)  
\*significantly different than the reference group (p<0.05)

<sup>†</sup>statistically significant after adjusting for age, sex & income

## UBC Health & Community Design Lab

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

The survey polled 1,223 Metro Vancouver adults age 25 years and older in 2011. Participants indicated their preference for walkable *versus* auto-oriented neighbourhood design features in a series of illustrated "trade-off" scenarios while holding factors such as cost, job access and school quality equal.

Access the full report at: <http://health-design.spph.ubc.ca/publications/reports>  
Graphic: S. Kershaw | September 2014