GOALS

15 (A) All Victorians have income and access to public services to be able to flourish and live with dignity.
15 (B) High quality, affordable formal education is available and accessible for students of all ages.
15 (C) Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest and have diverse opportunities for social interaction.
15 (D) Victorians can support themselves and their neighbours in difficult times.
15 (E) Victoria is a place where people come to live, work and play, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, culture, income, sexual orientation, ability and family status.
15 (F) Victorians are healthy and have a network of health-related amenities, facilities and programs to promote wellness and meet the needs of all levels of mental and physical care.
15 (G) Victoria is a safe city, where everyone feels secure in public, in their homes and workplaces.

OVERVIEW

A sustainable community provides both the physical and social infrastructure necessary to achieve community well-being. While physical features such as a walkable land use pattern, good quality housing and nearby recreational facilities can encourage people to make healthier choices, community well-being relies on more than just the city’s physical form. Community well-being also relies on the city’s “soft” infrastructure, such as the network of services, partnerships, resources, groups and other social relationships that collectively help people achieve their basic needs, support each other and reach their full potential.

The bi-annual Happiness Index indicates that most residents of Victoria experience a relatively high level of well-being, buoyed by strong social relationships, feelings of belonging to community and the ability to meet their basic needs. A wide network of institutions, organizations and groups deliver critical services and help build individual and community capacity. The high cost of living in the city—particularly with respect to housing and childcare costs—make it challenging for many to make ends meet, with approximately one quarter of residents living below the 2006 Low Income Cut Off for Victoria.

Stable housing and appropriate services are needed by a range of people, including those facing issues of mental health, addictions and homelessness. While the overall crime rate has been in decline over the past decade, concerns regarding safety and crime continue to be raised in community studies.
Over the next 30 years, the proportion of Victorians over the age of 65 is projected to increase dramatically, from 17% to 29% of the total population. At the same time, the proportion of children in the city is declining and the concept of the family is changing, as many of the City's households are made up of just one or two people. The policies in this section reflect this dual challenge for Victoria: meeting the shifting service, housing and mobility needs of an older population, while enhancing the housing, facilities and affordability needed to retain a younger workforce and their families.

The strength of a community relies on the well-being of all of its members. Collectively, the plan’s policies work towards a healthy community, one that takes a holistic approach to improving not only social and health conditions, but also the community’s economic and environmental assets. The plan strives to build community capacity and address the needs of Victoria’s diverse citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable or marginalized. The plan aims to enhance social inclusion for people of all socio-economic levels, cultural backgrounds and abilities; to strengthen the multi generational features of neighbourhoods; to provide opportunities for civic engagement; and, to enhance the sense of personal and public safety. The plan also commits the City to work in partnership to support the many social and community development objectives that fall outside the City’s traditional roles and responsibilities.

**SOCIAL EQUITY**

15.1 Encourage a fair distribution of community services, social services and facilities across the city, to support all parts of the population.

15.2 Establish policies and fee structures to ensure that City programs and facilities are affordable and welcoming to people of all ages, incomes, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles [SEE ALSO SECTION 16 – ARTS AND CULTURE].

15.3 Support the efforts of senior government, business and community organizations to reduce poverty through:

15.3.1 Advocating to senior levels of government for fair income assistance rates;

15.3.2 Enabling stable housing with support services;

15.3.3 Encouraging jobs that provide a household-sustaining wage for employees [SEE ALSO SECTION 14 – ECONOMY]; and,

15.3.4 Providing education and skills training programs to build individual capacity [SEE ALSO SECTION 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS].

**PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**

15.4 Establish guidelines for full accessibility for people with mobility challenges in the design, construction and improvement of City property, including facilities, offices, street right-of-ways, and parks.

15.5 Encourage senior governments, and community and business partners to improve the physical accessibility of public and private property, including places of employment, housing, transportation facilities, and visitor-oriented sites [SEE ALSO SECTION 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS].
MULTIGENERATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

15.6 Consider the needs of children, youth and older adults in planning initiatives related to land use, housing, transportation, parks, facilities and community services.

15.7 Work collaboratively with senior governments, the health authority, and other public and private sector partners to plan for the housing, health, employment, recreational, educational, cultural and other needs of Victoria’s population as it ages.

15.8 Encourage the development of quality, accessible, affordable daycare, including preschool, out-of-school care and elder daycare spaces, to support families and employers by:

15.8.1 Considering the provision of non-profit daycare space as an amenity in new residential, mixed-use and commercial developments to be secured through agreement; and,

15.8.2 Encouraging new childcare and elder daycare spaces throughout the city.

15.9 Seek opportunities to promote social interaction between different generations through the design and programming of public spaces, parks and public facilities.

SCHOOLS

15.10 Seek to sustain a population base sufficient to maintain existing public schools by encouraging housing, amenities and services suitable for families with children in all neighbourhoods through policies, local area plans, and zoning.

15.11 Advocate to the school district to keep existing schools open, as key features of complete neighbourhoods.

15.12 If the school district deems it necessary to close an existing school, work collaboratively with the school district to retain public school buildings and land in public ownership and available to provide education and a mix of community and recreational services and other uses suitable to the needs of the community they serve.

15.13 Encourage the school district to make facilities available for community use [SEE ALSO SECTION 9 – PARKS AND RECREATION].

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

15.14 Incorporate community development objectives into citywide and local area planning processes.

15.15 Work closely with community centres, seniors centres, community organizations, the public library, citizens and other partners to seek innovative opportunities to sustain, enhance and deliver community-based recreational, educational, cultural and social programs [SEE ALSO SECTION 9 – PARKS AND RECREATION].

15.16 Develop and maintain partnerships with senior governments, the health authority, neighbouring municipalities, community organizations, informal groups, the private sector and others to build community capacity, and to provide a range of facilities and community services to serve people throughout their lives, including:

15.16.1 Social services to support attainment of basic needs;

15.16.2 A range of local and regional health and wellness facilities and services;

15.16.3 A network of regional recreational facilities and services;

15.16.4 Regional public library facilities and services;

15.16.5 Opportunities and facilities for lifelong learning and skills training;

15.16.6 Places of worship and other spaces for contemplation; and,

15.16.7 Settlement services and cultural centres.

15.17 Encourage collaboration among community service providers and community organizations across the city and at the regional level.

15.18 Work with community partners to promote a culture of volunteerism, community service and neighbourliness.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

15.19 Encourage effective public participation in City processes and service delivery by maintaining and implementing a Civic Engagement Strategy that:

15.19.1 Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision;

15.19.2 Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate;

15.19.3 Provides opportunities for those who are affected by a decision to be involved in the decision-making process;

15.19.4 Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;

15.19.5 Promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers;

15.19.6 Provides opportunities for the public’s contribution to influence the decision; and,

15.19.7 Communicates the outcome of public engagement processes [SEE ALSO SECTION 19 – PLAN ADMINISTRATION].

COMMUNITY SAFETY

15.20 Collaborate with the Victoria Police Department, the Fire Department, the health authority, community and social service agencies, businesses, neighbourhood groups and others to encourage a safe and thriving Downtown and neighbourhoods.

15.21 Support personal and public safety by considering opportunities for access, comfort, sociability and multiple uses and activities in the review of designs and plans for private developments and public spaces [SEE ALSO SECTION 8 – PLACEMAKING].

15.22 Collaborate with community organizations, neighbours and other stakeholders to address issues related to personal safety and security in parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

15.23 Work collaboratively with community service providers and other partners in the design of facilities and delivery of services to meet the needs of clients and those of surrounding residents, businesses and the different users of public space.

15.24 Seek to address problematic substance use in a coordinated way that considers public health and public order by supporting the efforts of government, agencies, the health authority, Victoria Police Department, business and community organizations to take a coordinated, comprehensive Five Pillars approach that:

15.24.1 Prevents problematic substance use;

15.24.2 Reduces harm to individuals and communities from the sale and use of both legal and illegal substances;

15.24.3 Provides a range of support services, specialized care facilities and treatment programs for people who have addictions;

15.24.4 Supports access to safe, affordable and quality housing; and,

15.24.5 Delivers enforcement services to support community peace, public order and safety.