

Health & Wellbeing

COMPONENT GOALS

01

UBC will enhance the mental, physical social dimensions of wellbeing by making them integral to building and landscape design decisions.

02

UBC researchers, community stakeholders and building occupants will be engaged in a meaningful and ongoing way to inform building and landscape design decisions around health and wellbeing.

03

UBC will become a leader in enhancing wellbeing through the built environment within the context of higher education in Canada.

CONTEXT

UBC's campus environments, both built and natural, play a vital role in the physical, mental and social wellbeing of all students, staff and faculty.

Well-designed spaces can: work to promote physical activity; enable social connections; improve productivity, learning, and overall health; foster equity and inclusion; and promote accessibility and ease of use. Since the Okanagan Charter¹⁵ was adopted, UBC has committed to incorporating health and wellbeing into all aspects of campus culture and operations.

Pathway to Net Positive

Prioritizing health and wellbeing is foundational to the success of individuals and the overall community at UBC, and it is closely linked to biodiversity and place and experience component areas. A system-wide holistic and proactive approach that champions wellbeing is currently in development through UBC Wellbeing, a collaborative effort that aims to make the University a better place to live, work and learn.

Key Directions

The GBAP will provide guidance for how building and landscape design can nurture the mental, physical and social dimensions of well-being. Wellbeing principles, objectives and metrics that will inform site-specific building and landscape requirements will be integrated into the GBAP in full coordination with the development of the UBC Wellbeing Strategy.

Foundational work in this emerging component area will include review of best practices, particularly the WELL Building Standard (through a pilot study to identify specific WELL Building Standard guidance that is aligned with UBC priorities).

¹⁵ Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015).

FIVE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - SHORT-TERM PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Review research and best practices for physical, mental and social health and wellbeing in buildings.
- Develop health and wellbeing guiding principles for building design that promote physical, mental and social wellbeing (e.g., incorporating social or contemplative space, designing spaces that allow inclusion, incorporating universal design principles, promoting ease of use, incorporating ergonomic principles, developing daylighting requirements, considering acoustic requirements, etc.).
- Identify metrics for health and wellbeing (e.g., temperature, indoor air quality, daylight levels, acoustic levels, views to exterior, number of indoor plants, healthy working postures, etc.) and develop targets and performance measures.
- Develop a strategy for all projects to include considerations of ergonomics, universal access requirements, and how users of different sizes and abilities will interact with the environment (e.g., conduct table-top drawing simulations or mock-ups, analyze risks, and engage building occupants for feedback).
- Test the WELL Building Standard against existing buildings (e.g., Earth Sciences Building) in a pilot study and identify WELL Building Standard credits and best practices that are aligned with UBC priorities.
- Coordinate with UBC's Wellbeing Strategy in collaboration with UBC Wellbeing to guide how building and landscape design can nurture physical, mental and social dimensions of health and wellbeing.
- Incorporate health and wellbeing strategies into policies and design briefs for building and landscape projects.
- Establish relationships with off-campus partners to advance the connection between research and practice for health and wellbeing in buildings.

TARGETS AND INDICATORS

Targets and indicators will be developed based on foundational studies and data gathering identified in the GBAP.

Above: Move Stairs in CIRS encourage us inhabitants to take the stairs

PHOTOGRAPHER: PHILIP BERTOGG

Right: Cantilevered wood stairs at the Earth Sciences Building make taking the stairs pleasurable

PHOTOGRAPHER: PHILIP BERTOGG

