

Figure 1. Villages Planning Program



Note. From City of Vancouver, 2026.
(<https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/villages>). Copyright 2026 by
City of Vancouver

Designing for Livability:

Special District Design Guidelines for the Vancouver Villages Planning Program.

Shaunee Katili, B. Env., REM Planning
Sebastian Coxell, B. Env., REM Planning
Rowan Koenig, B. Env., REM Planning
Mihai Aneculaesei, B. Env., REM Planning

Introduction: Vancouver's Villages Planning Program & Barriers to Livability

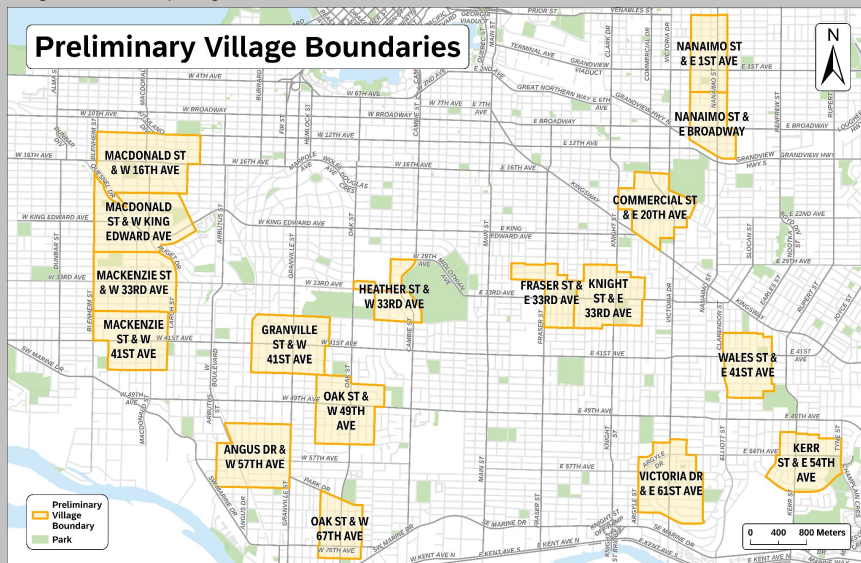
Vancouver Villages Planning Program (2026)

- New housing options up to six storeys
- More shops and services within walking distance
- Creating safer, greener, walkable streets and public spaces

Barriers to Livability

- Housing is not meeting citizen's perceived livability standards
- Design Guideline recommendations are disproportionately implemented

Figure 2. Preliminary Village Boundaries



Note: From *Villages included in planning program*, by City of Vancouver, 2024, (https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/villages/news_feed/villages-included-in-planning-program). Copyright 2024 by City of Vancouver.

The Problem

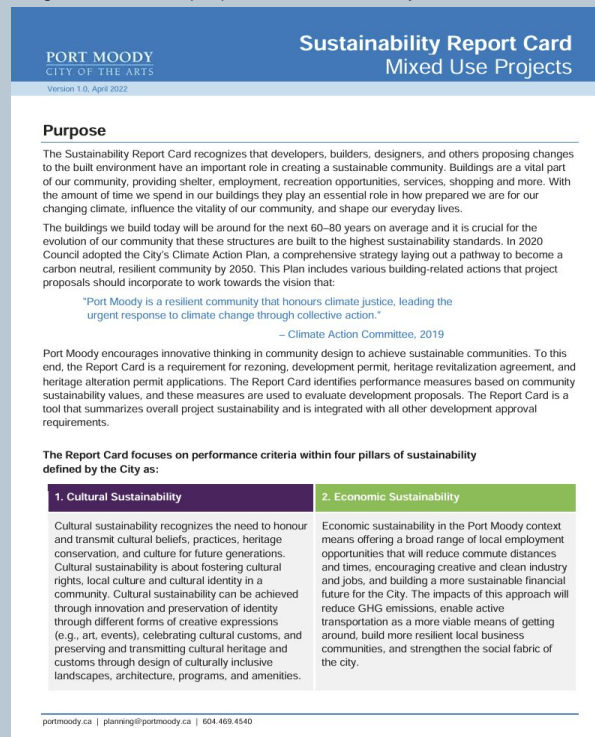
Need for Better, More Efficient, and Transparent System

- Rezoning applications have a 2–3 year approval timeline
- Design Guidelines are limited in their enforceability and are broad
- Project by project decision making
- Does not require public consultation if aligned with ODP

City of Port Moody Sustainability Report Card (2026)

- Report card system supplemental to the development application process
- Livability criteria with point values
- Developers must meet minimum point score for permit approval

Figure 3. Sustainability Report Card: Mixed-Use Projects



Note. One of five sustainability report cards. From City of Port Moody, 2026, (<https://www.portmoody.ca/business-development-and-planning/development/sustainable-development/sustainability-report-card/>). Copyright 2026 by City of Port Moody.

Addressing Gaps in VVP Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report (2025)

Street survey data analysis results:

n=29

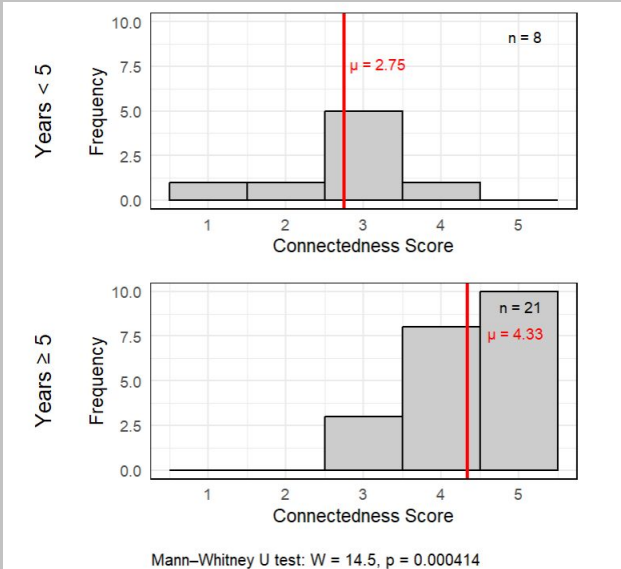
Shared Spaces: New residents feel less socially connected, highlighting the need for social-supportive design

- 59% of respondents want more shared spaces

Livable Units: Each new unit must be assessed for adequate and efficient space use

Environment and Nature: Residents prioritize design that works with natural systems and suits local setting

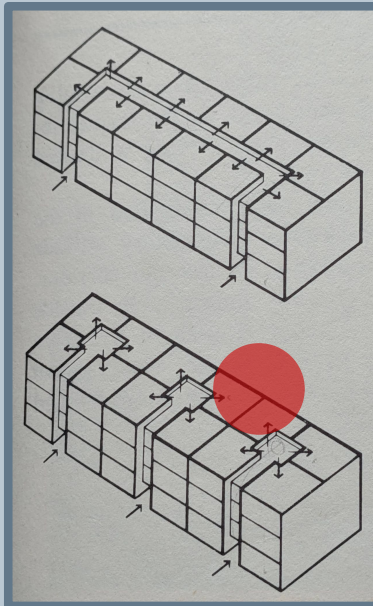
Figure 4. Sense of Social Connectedness Between New and Old Residents



Note. From *Designing for Livability: Special District Design Guidelines for the Vancouver Villages Planning Program*, by Katili, S., Coxell, S., Koenig, R., & Aneculaesei, M., 2026.

Proposed Design Guideline Examples

Figure 5. Building Entrances



Note. From *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention Through Urban Design*, By Newman, O., 1972. Copyright 1972 by Oscar Newman.

Figure 6. Shared Semi-Private Balcony Space



Note. The photo was taken by Rowan Koenig, 2025.

Recommendation:

Implement a **Villages Report Card** based on City of Port Moody (2026), which **includes the following design guidelines:**

Shared Spaces

- Fewer than 12 units per entrance
- Semi private gathering spaces
- Customization of public space

Livable Units

- Ground level entrances
- Room sizes above city average

Environmental Components

- Include at least one of the following:
 - Absorbent Green Spaces
 - Trees
 - Gardens

References.

City of Port Moody. (2026). *Sustainability Report Card Mixed Use Projects*.

<https://www.portmoody.ca/business-development-and-planning/development/sustainable-development/sustainability-report-card/>

City of Vancouver. (2024). *Villages included in planning program*. Shape Your City Vancouver.

https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/villages/news_feed/villages-included-in-planning-program

City of Vancouver. (2025). *Emerging Ideas and Directions for the Villages Summary*.

<https://syc.vancouver.ca/projects/villages/villages-planning-program-open-house-board-summary-phase-2.pdf>

City of Vancouver. (2026). *Villages Planning Program*. Vancouver. Shape Your City Vancouver.

<https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/villages>