

# YOUTH.HOOD

## EXPLORING NEIGHBOURHOOD BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS FOR YOUTH IN SOUTH VANCOUVER

### Principal Investigator:

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### Co-investigator:

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### Why are we doing this study?

We want to learn how the design of neighbourhoods in South Vancouver is impacting social connectedness for local youth. We are particularly focused on the neighbourhoods of South Hill, Moberly, Gordon Park, Nanaimo Park, Fraserview East, and Fraserview West. We are inviting people like you (youth between 15 and 19 years of age and living in South Vancouver) to help us.

### Who is conducting the study?

The study is led by Dr. Meghan Winters and Dr. Meg Holden at Simon Fraser University (SFU), in collaboration with the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House. Meridith Sones, PhD Candidate, is conducting this research as part of her graduate thesis.

### Who is funding the study?

The study is being funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Community-Engaged Research Funding Program at SFU.

### Who can participate?

You are eligible to participate in this study if:

- You are 15 to 19 years of age;
- You live west of Boundary Rd, east of Main St, south of 41st Ave, and north of the Fraser River;
- You are able to walk or move through your community for 60 minutes;
- You can read and speak English.

### What will your participation involve?

Participation in this study involves gathering information about your local environment using a smartphone app and working together with other youth to share your ideas for neighbourhood improvement. If you decide to participate, after completing a short online eligibility survey, you may participate in up to 3 parts:

1. Using a mobile app (downloaded for free to your smartphone), we will ask you to take photos and record audio descriptions about features in your neighbourhood that help you connect with others and your community, and things that make social connectedness difficult. You will be asked to do this during a 30-60 minute walk in your local neighbourhood. We have smartphones available to borrow for those who want to participate but do not own or have

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access to one. The app will map your walking route and the location of your photos and audio narratives using Global Positioning System (GPS) data. We will also ask you to complete a short online survey at the beginning of the study about your demographics, social connectedness, health, community engagement, and neighbourhood perceptions. You will be asked to complete the same survey again at the end of the project to see if anything has changed over time.

2. You can participate in a 2-hour workshop with other local youth to discuss what you found and work together on ways that your neighbourhood environment can be improved to promote social connectedness.
3. As an option, we will invite you to take a role as a youth leader, who will be asked to participate in a 2-hour meeting with community partners and urban planners from the City of Vancouver. In this meeting, youth leaders will share the collective findings from the project and present solutions for neighbourhood improvement on behalf of the youth participants. Before this meeting, youth leaders will receive training (1 hour) in civic engagement to better understand how decisions in cities are made and how to advocate for positive change.

## **How will results from the study be shared?**

You will receive a summary of your anonymous walk data (including photos, audio narratives and walking routes) during the data workshop. Collective findings from the project will be shared at the community meeting (involving youth participants, partners, and urban planners) and more broadly through scientific papers and meetings, community reports, popular media, and tools like neighbourhood asset maps. You will receive copies of the final community report and other knowledge products stemming from the project. We will also invite all participants to share and engage in creative ways for sharing results of the project with a wide audience, such as a photo exhibit. There is no obligation to participate in these communication activities.

## **Will you be paid for participating?**

You will receive \$25/hour for the time you spend participating in the study even if you choose to withdraw before completion. The study will take between 1.5 and 6.5 hours of your time, depending on your participation. You will be compensated through an e-gift card of your choosing (e.g. grocery store, coffee shop, electronics). You will have an opportunity to share your e-gift card preference with the research team at the beginning of the study, during the eligibility process.

## **Can anything bad happen to me?**

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you. The risks involved are the same as taking a walk in your neighbourhood. When you use the app to take pictures and audio narratives of your local environment, you will have the option to walk in pairs or small groups of your choosing so that you can look out for each other. You will also have the option of being accompanied by an adult from the project team to help ensure your safety, should you wish.

## **Can anything good happen to me?**

There may or may not be direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. The study may help you by increasing your knowledge about how neighbourhood design can impact the social

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connectedness of people who live there, and how to advocate for community changes you would like to see. If changes to the community occur because of what you and others share and do as part of this project, those changes could help improve the connectedness, health, and wellbeing of the broader community.

## How will we protect your identity?

The study investigators respect your privacy and will do several things to protect it:

- We will ask for your name, email address, and phone number during the eligibility survey in order to contact you to coordinate study activities. We will also ask for your email address in the pre and post survey in order to link your responses and assess for any changes in outcomes over the course of the study. This information will be stored separately from your survey answers and any data you collect using the smartphone app.
- Participants will be explicitly instructed not to collect or otherwise provide any personal data while gathering photos and audio narratives about their neighbourhood. Participants will be instructed not to take photographs with identifiable people or any kind of personal information. Researchers will delete or blur data that are inadvertently collected or in any way identifiable.
- All raw data—including de-identified survey data, de-identified photos and audio narratives, workshop notes, and consent forms—will be stored on a password-protected, shared drive on SFU Vault for 5 years after the study ends. Only members of the research team will have the access password.
- Confidentiality of your identity is assured in the reporting of research results. Your data may be shared in community reports and maps, scientific meetings, presentations in professional settings, scholarly articles, popular media, blog posts, and graduate theses. The information collected from you will be de-identified and survey data will be aggregated with that of other participants in all reports. Your name will never be revealed in any reporting of results.

Photos, audio narratives, and GPS data about your neighbourhood will be gathered using a smartphone app called the Discovery Tool, which is owned by Stanford University in the United States (US). Data collected using the smartphone app will be uploaded to a secure Stanford server. This may increase the risk of disclosure of information because of the information and privacy laws in the US may not be as strict as Canada. The information held on the Stanford server will not be connected to your identity and will be grouped with the information that other participants collect. The anonymous data are being saved so that researchers can compare Discovery Tool data from communities across the world.

Full confidentiality cannot be maintained in a public or group setting. People may see you using the smartphone app in the community, and they may also see the kinds of changes that you and others work to make. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the workshops to people outside the group; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed.

Please note that posting to comments sections, liking, or sharing on social media or other forums about this study may identify you as a participant. We therefore suggest that if this study

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was made available to you via a social media site or other online forums, you refrain from posting comments to protect your anonymity.

## **What if I do not want to do this?**

You can participate or not. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to stop at any time and request to have your data removed without giving reason. You will still receive compensation for activities that you have completed. To leave the study at any point, send an email to Meridith Sones ([msones@sfu.ca](mailto:msones@sfu.ca)) or any of our research team members.

## **Who can I talk to about the study?**

If you have any questions about the study, or if you would like to receive copies of the final results and/or published articles of the study, you may contact Dr. Meghan Winters by phone at 604-315-0484, or Meridith Sones at 778-846-4304. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University, at [jtoward@sfu.ca](mailto:jtoward@sfu.ca) or 778-782-6593.

If you are willing to participate, you will be directed to a brief online survey to complete before the project begins. This survey will make sure you're eligible to join the study and ask you to choose which research activities you want to participate in. We will also ask you to share your name, email, and phone number so that we can contact you to share instructions for participating in the study.

This consent form will serve for the entire study, but you may leave the study at any time. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.