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5 year public health impacts of an urban greenway, Belfast, Northern Ireland: Causal Loop Diagram

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Background:
The development of large scale urban green space infrastructure, such as a new urban greenway, provokes a cascade of changes abating a series of public health impacts, in the realms of: health, society, economy and the environment. The relationships between these factors sustain reciprocal and dynamic influence with potential to generate a virtuous cycle. However, such long-term impacts and their inter-relationships are poorly understood.
Methods:
We aimed to co-develop a shared understanding of the public health impacts of the Connswater Community Greenway with

multi-sectoral stakeholders 5 years post-implementation. Objectives were to (a) build shared understanding of the complex system influencing the public health impact of the Connswater Community Greenway, and (b) identify and explore priorities, opportunities, and actions to improve future impacts. We undertook Group Model Building workshops with people representing relevant stakeholders involved in the development and/or maintenance of the Connswater Community Greenway, and local residents living on or along the greenway.

Results:

23 participants were involved in the workshop included local governmental agencies, local residents, advocacy groups, private sector, and researchers. Stakeholders produced a systems map detailing the public health impacts of the Connswater Community Greenway 5 years post-implementation. Key impacts included increased in mental wellbeing, sense of community pride, increased biodiversity, increased economic investment in the local area. Participants identified a range of priority actions that, in their view, could impact and help reshape the system and influence the future impacts of the greenway.

Conclusions:

The CLD was reflective of the various stakeholders' experience, knowledge, perceptions, and views about the factors, and the inter-relationships between these factors, of the public health impact of the Connswater Community Greenway at 5 years post-implementation.

Key messages:

- Systems thinking approaches can help identify the public health impacts and plausible causal pathways of green space interventions.
- 5 year impacts of an urban greenway included improvements in the realms of health, wellbeing, the environment, the economy and society.



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