

PERCEPTION

vancouver
foundation

VANCOUVER FOUNDATION'S

VitalSigns
For Metro Vancouver

2008

REALITY



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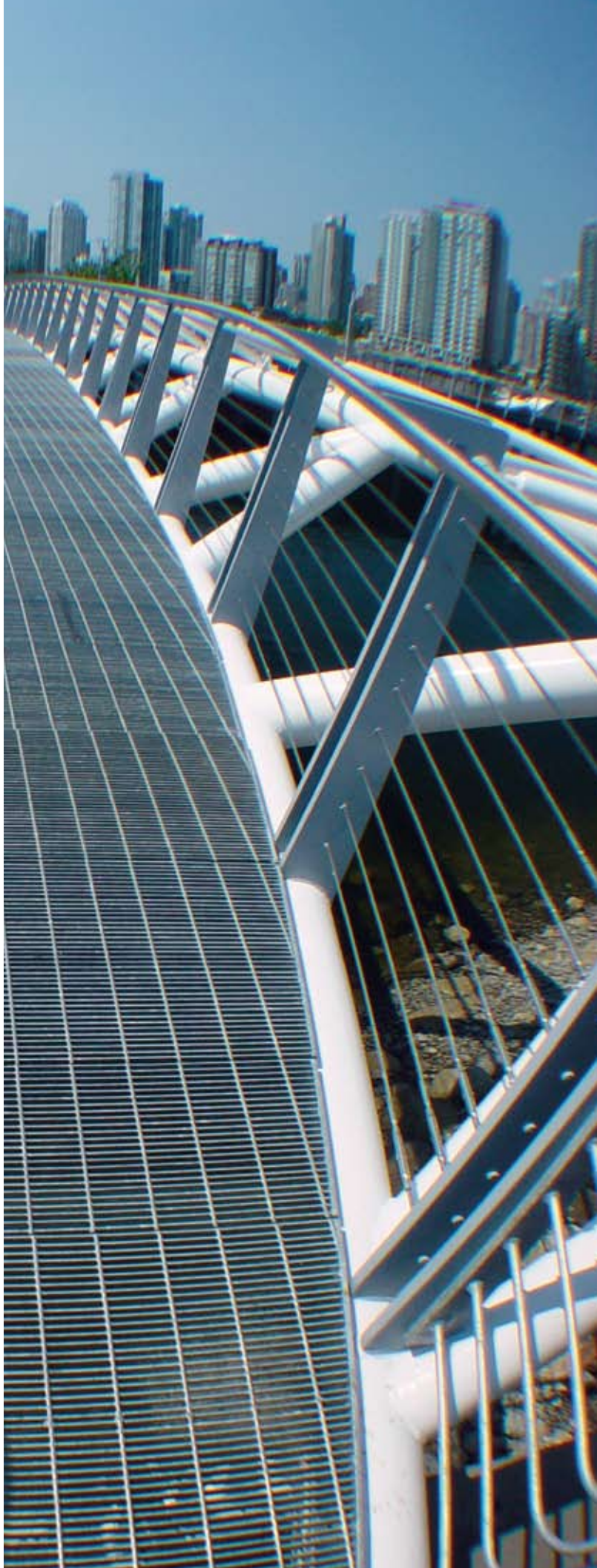
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Visit our website where you'll find more comprehensive information and links to data sources.

www.vancouverfoundation.ca



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

How do we perceive our community?

And how do our perceptions compare with reality?

What are the people of metropolitan Vancouver most concerned about? What are we doing well and where do we need to improve? And where should we collectively put our energy if we want to ensure our community is as healthy, prosperous and equitable as it can be?

These are the questions Vancouver Foundation attempts to answer through our *Vital Signs for Metro Vancouver* report. As a community foundation, we want to understand the community we serve. For the last three years, our *Vital Signs* report has delved into the perceptions and the realities behind the issues shaping our region.

We are proud to say this report does not sit on the shelf. The results of our 2006 and 2007 *Vital Signs* have shaped Vancouver Foundation's work profoundly. Those reports highlighted community concerns in two major areas: homelessness, and the need to help immigrants integrate successfully, particularly through employment. As a result of those findings, the Foundation launched a major new initiative last year to tackle homelessness and its root causes. We are also part of another major project designed to reduce employment barriers to new Canadians.

What becomes clearer with each *Vital Signs* report is how many issues in our community are interconnected. For example, finding affordable housing is a major challenge for many citizens. Some are forced to move further away from

where they work so they can afford to live. That, in turn, makes transportation a larger concern. If most people use their automobile to commute, that impacts our environment and our health. Long commutes also affect the amount of free time people have in which they can volunteer, enjoy the arts, engage in recreation or visit family and friends. If you are working for minimum wage, as many new Canadians do, then the need for an effective and affordable public transportation system becomes even more crucial to your quality of life. This one example demonstrates how housing, work, transportation, environment, health and civic engagement are all intertwined.

Recognizing and understanding these interconnections is vital to Vancouver Foundation. To fully address any issue, we need to be able to understand how the threads of a problem connect to other aspects of life in our community. Only then can we, along with our donors and the agencies we fund, tackle these challenges in a meaningful way.

We would like to thank the many organizations and individuals who gave their time and insight to this report, as well as the 1,070 citizen graders who completed our online survey and the 854 people who participated in our telephone poll. We would also like to thank our generous sponsors – Vancity and the Vancouver Sun – two remarkable organizations that care deeply about the communities they serve.

CALL US AT 604.688.2204 IF...

- You would like copies of this report or the summary document (available in English and Chinese).
- You have questions about the report.
- You want us to talk to your organization about *Vital Signs* and how it relates to your work.

A comprehensive version of *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs*, with links to data sources, is online at:
www.vancouverfoundation.ca



Jake Kerr, CM, OBC, LL.D.
CHAIR

Faye Wightman
PRESIDENT AND CEO

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The highlights of this year's *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs* pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and challenges faced by approximately two million people who call metro Vancouver "home".

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TRANSPORTATION is still the top concern. While there is applause for new initiatives that are addressing transit needs, demand continues to be strong for increased service, more affordable public transit and other initiatives that would improve our ability to get around the region.

EMPLOYMENT rates are high and a wide range of occupations and industries keep us employed. At the same time, more people are working for less pay.

HOUSING and particularly the need for affordable housing across the region, both rental and owned, continues to be a challenge, and the number of homeless continues to grow.

Overall, we are a **HEALTHY** community. Our life expectancy rates are high and we give positive ratings to our general health. However, worrisome trends are

emerging: we are an aging population, and our physical activity levels are decreasing, while our obesity rates are rising, particularly among some groups of citizens.

We live in an incredibly **DIVERSE** region – today 40% of us are immigrants. In a five-year period, the immigrant population increased by 13%, while the Canadian-born population grew by only 2%.

Our actions on the **ENVIRONMENT** are mixed. On one hand, we are taking individual steps to recycle and compost more, and lower the temperature in our houses. On the other hand, we are creating more garbage and putting more cars on the road.

The **POVERTY** rate remains stubbornly high. One quarter of our children are raised in poverty, versus the national average of 16%. As well, 35% of households led by single mothers live below the poverty line.

This year's *Vital Signs* suggests the glass is both half full, and half empty. There are many good things about our region, and we are making progress in some areas such as creating more public transit and bike lanes, increasing recycling, and having healthy and engaged citizens. At the same time, our communities face persistent challenges. We need to create more affordable housing, better integrate new Canadians, reduce poverty levels and decrease our reliance on the automobile.

There are implications for us as a community if we do not tackle these challenges, or if we address them in a half-hearted way. On the surface, some of these issues may not seem like problems for the average citizen, but there is both a ripple and domino effect that will touch each of us if nothing is done to address these challenges.

Our claim to "most livable region" will be slowly undermined by a lack of affordable housing, long commutes and traffic congestion, an expanding number of families living below the poverty

line, poor air quality, not enough well-paying jobs, and fewer opportunities for our young people and new Canadians. These issues will make it difficult for us to attract diverse newcomers with valuable skills and talents to our communities. These challenges can create division and tension between those who have and those who cannot have.

No one person, organization or level of government alone can address the challenges facing metro Vancouver. The various governments (municipal, regional, provincial and federal) each have different scopes of responsibility and authority to address the issues. Not-for-profits, businesses and other organizations need to play a role and get involved in solving these problems. Individuals also have a role to play in changing our own behaviours. Elections over the coming year will give citizens an opportunity to inquire, engage and educate themselves about the issues facing our region, and debate about what should be done to make this an even better place to live... for all citizens.

OUR SENSE OF PLACE

Metro Vancouver is surrounded by restless ocean,
spectacular mountains and open floodplain.
This setting shapes our communities in countless ways.

Our ocean access makes us a port city, a transportation gateway, and an entry point for immigrants, many of whom now call this place home. Together, the mountains and ocean offer uplifting beauty and abundant recreational opportunities, which make the region a desirable place to live and work. They have helped contain sprawl and create the dense downtown core admired by urban planners worldwide. And the Fraser River's fertile delta offers us abundant local foods, a strong agricultural base, and pastoral landscapes.

Metro Vancouver is also shaped by our region's history. First Nations peoples lived in harmony with the abundant natural resources for millennia and continue to have a strong presence. Immigration, resource extraction, agriculture and industrialization have also helped create the complex metropolitan area we live in.

Today, over two million of us call this region home.

We share the positive aspects of our region such as mild weather, beautiful scenery, celebrations, and high-quality food, as well as the less pleasant elements of large city life like traffic congestion, poverty, and the scarcity of affordable housing.

We are not homogeneous. Our 21 municipalities have different assets and needs. We have many mother tongues, occupations, lifestyles, family structures and cultures. And we each have our own

priorities and approaches when it comes to addressing issues and problems.

We may not always see eye-to-eye. However, *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs* underscores that most of us share the same concerns and have the same aspirations to live in a community that is healthy, prosperous, welcoming and equitable for all of its citizens.

As the saying goes: If we don't know who and where we are, it's hard to figure out who we want to be and where we want to go. By combining facts, opinions and perceptions, *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs* provides a realistic look at our strengths and weaknesses in metro Vancouver today, so we can effectively move toward the metro Vancouver we want to create for ourselves and our children.

Geographic Reference

Most of the facts and data in *Vital Signs* pertain to the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of metro Vancouver, which is the same geographic configuration as the Metro Vancouver Regional District (see map below). Data that is not specific to the CMA is noted in the report.



A Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is a metropolitan statistical area's geographic area, consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a CMA, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000. The boundaries of the Vancouver CMA are identical to those of metro Vancouver.

For definitions of other technical terms used in *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs*, visit: www.vancouverfoundation.ca

OUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Vancouver Foundation worked with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure *Vital Signs* reflects our region by combining facts with the opinions and perceptions of residents.

2-3

Primary Research

Primary research is “fresh” data, generated directly from the source, usually for a particular research project. Ipsos Reid conducted the primary research segments of this report, which consist of the public opinion survey and the citizen grading exercise.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

This survey consisted of two waves of telephone surveys in June and July 2008, each with a randomly-selected sample, for a total of 854 metro Vancouver residents. See survey results and methodology on pages 16 and 17.

CITIZEN GRADING AND PRIORITY SETTING

Hundreds of civic, non-profit, and business leaders and other informed citizens of our region were invited to participate in an online grading exercise. Over 1,000 citizens completed the survey. Without knowing the 2008 *Vital Signs* research findings, they gave 12 key areas a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F, and identified top priority issues in each key area that require attention over the next year.

GRADER PROFILE

Of the 1,070 residents who participated as citizen graders for 2008 *Vital Signs*:

- 66% are female and 34% are male
- 25% are between age 18 and 34; 51% are between 35 and 54; and 24% are 55 years of age or older
- 36% live outside the city of Vancouver in other parts of metro Vancouver
- 82% have volunteered within the past 12 months
- 11% participated as graders for *Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs* in 2006 or 2007.

Secondary Research

Secondary research examines data originally produced for a different purpose, usually by a different organization. For this report, secondary research sources provided indicators about the state of metro Vancouver in 12 key areas. Criteria for selecting indicators included: the availability of recent data for the Vancouver CMA and the expense of collecting it; perceived public interest; the possibility of future updates; and the relationship of the indicators to one another and the key area.

Vancouver Foundation worked with four organizations on secondary research for this 2008 report.

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) and the Regional Vancouver Urban Observatory (RVu) were retained by the Foundation to identify, research, and analyze secondary data sources for the printed report and the more comprehensive online version. They worked closely with Vancouver Foundation staff and a committee of volunteer experts from the community, known as the Expert Resource Group, to identify potential data sources and select indicators.

The Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) was retained by Community Foundations of Canada to undertake research for indicators being used by all 15 *Vital Signs* projects across Canada in 2008.

The SPARC/RVu research team, in collaboration with CSLS, sought out the most current information possible, and collected data from sources including Statistics Canada, BC Stats, regional data sources, libraries, TransLink, school boards, and various government ministries. Data was obtained through online searches, phone calls, and custom-run data requests.

The indicators rely as much as possible on data at the regional level. In some cases, data was only available at the municipal, local health area or provincial level. The research team made an effort to ensure the geographical context for each indicator is clear.



GETTING AROUND

4-5

GETTING AROUND

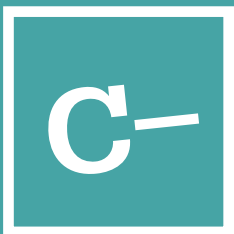
The more time we spend stuck in traffic or waiting for the bus, the less free time we have to volunteer, get fit, or enjoy family and friends. We might not take that great job, sign up for that evening class, or visit grandparents as often as we would like if it's too difficult to get there.

Good transportation systems are important for the environment and for the economic and social life of our community.

The indicators in this area give mixed signals on the state of metro Vancouver's transportation systems. Trips on transit surged 34% in 2007, but the number of vehicles in our region is still growing faster than our population. Metro Vancouverites are also paying more to get around; transportation accounted for nearly 20% of household expenses in 2006.

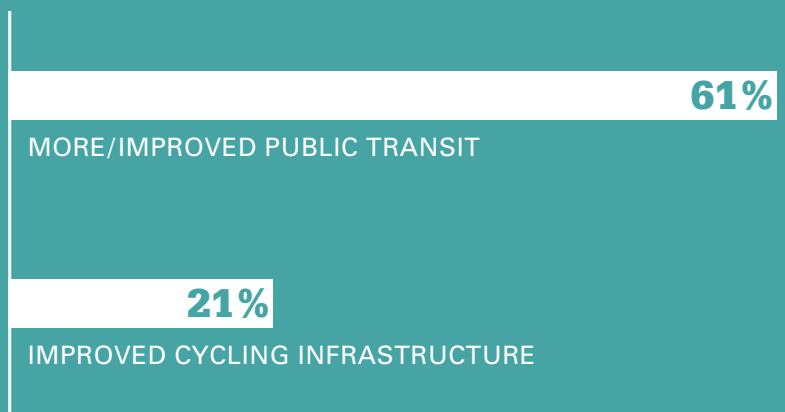
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for getting around and transporting people and goods through the region, including factors such as traffic congestion, transit capacity, traffic calming measures, ridership, accessibility, household spending on transportation, bike safety and routes, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Bike routes increased 10%

Designated cycling routes increase the safety and appeal of cycling for a greater number of residents. Metro Vancouver had 2,760 km of designated cycling routes in 2008, expanded 10% from 2007, and 33% since 2004. Work is underway to expand this network further.

Gas prices climb 38%

Gas prices in metro Vancouver increased 38% over the last four years. Rising gas prices can mean less driving, which is good for the environment. However, high fuel prices make private transportation less accessible for low-income households. This is even more problematic if public transportation is not a viable alternative.

The average retail price of gas in metro Vancouver was \$1.32 per litre in May 2008, up 6% from \$1.25/litre at the same time in 2007 and up from \$0.96/litre in 2004.

Households spend more on transportation

Transportation accounted for 19% of household expenses in 2006, up 12% from 2005. In 2006, transportation and shelter together accounted for close to 50% of total expenses for the average metro Vancouver household.

Driving still dominates

Whether we drive, bike, walk, or take the bus affects both our individual health and our environment. In metro Vancouver, 75% of residents either drove or were passengers in a vehicle as their primary mode of transportation to work or school in 2006, while 17% took public transit, 6% walked and 2% bicycled.

Transportation choices varied by age and by gender. For example, 20% of women took public transit compared to 13% of men, while 15 to 24-year olds and those over 75 were the most likely to walk.

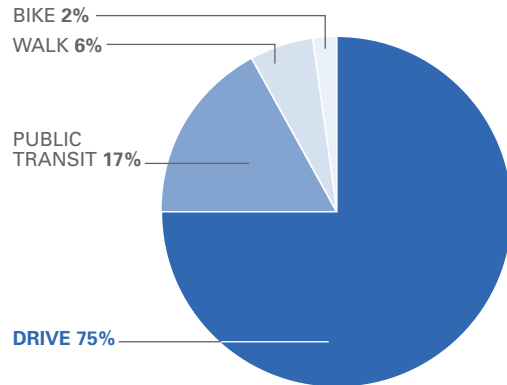
More cars on the road

Motor vehicles are a major source of air pollution in metro Vancouver, and are a primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. More cars on the road means more traffic and longer commuting times.

In metro Vancouver, the number of registered vehicles rose 16% between 2001 and 2007, while the population only grew 9%. Registered vehicles increased more than 5% between 2005 and 2007, while the population grew 3%.

GETTING TO SCHOOL AND WORK IN METRO VANCOUVER

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CENSUS 2006.





GRANT STORY

THE GIFT OF TRANSPORTATION

In sprawling urban areas like metro Vancouver, people live where they can afford to live, often far from where they need to go to work or school. The price of a bus pass can be prohibitive. Vancouver Foundation granted \$83,000 to five organizations in the Lower Mainland to fund basic transportation costs for refugees and immigrants, and at-risk and homeless youth. Some of this money was granted to the Immigrant Services Society of BC, providing bus passes and transportation funding for refugees and immigrants. For these citizens, transportation can be the ticket that makes everything else possible: learning English, getting to work, and establishing a new life.

ENVIRONMENT

6-7

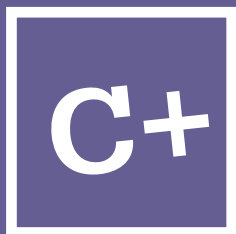
ENVIRONMENT

We all know we can't survive without clean air and water and uncontaminated soil. We also know the way we are living today is undermining our planet's life support systems. Climate change is already causing problems ranging from the pine beetle infestation to crop damage, and threatens to create more serious challenges for the future.

Environmental indicators for our region underscore how many more lifestyle changes we still have to make to address the ecological reality. Motor vehicles produce 36% of greenhouse gases in metro Vancouver and the number of vehicles on the road continues to increase. We now recycle more material than we send to the landfill but our waste production continues to grow.

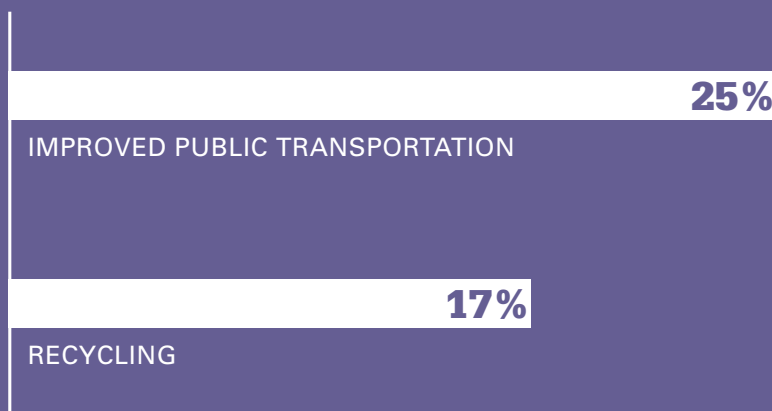
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for the environment, including factors such as initiatives to reduce the impacts of climate change, carbon dioxide emissions, and waste production, recycling, air and water quality, agricultural, species diversity, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Contaminants in our air

Air contaminants, such as ground-level ozone and air particulates, negatively affect our immediate and long-term health. In 2006, ground-level ozone in metro Vancouver exceeded the daily maximum threshold on three days, while the average from 2001 to 2006 was one day per year. Air particulate concentrations exceeded maximum threshold levels on one day in 2006, consistent with the annual average from 2001 to 2006.

More recycling but more waste

The good news is our region now recycles more waste than we send to the landfill. However, we are still generating more total waste. We can't blame it only on population growth. The fact is we are generating more waste per capita. In 2006, we generated 1.5 tonnes of waste per person, an amount that has been on the rise since 2000.

Vehicles and buildings major contributors to greenhouse gases

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change and affect our air quality. In 2005, metro Vancouver emitted 15.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gases. Motor vehicles emitted the largest proportion (36%), while buildings contributed 30%. Emissions from cement plants accounted for 13%, and aircraft, marine, rail, and non-road equipment made up 10%.

Individual steps for the environment

Each of us can take individual steps that collectively have a positive environmental impact. For example, 37% of households in metro Vancouver said they had a programmable thermostat and 72% of them used it to lower the temperature overnight, according to a Statistics Canada 2006 survey. In the same survey, 60% of metro Vancouver households said they used compact fluorescent light bulbs (the national rate was 56%).

The survey also found 23% of households in the region (not counting apartment dwellers) composted in 2006, while the rates in Toronto, Victoria and Saint John were 33%, 40%, and 62%, respectively.

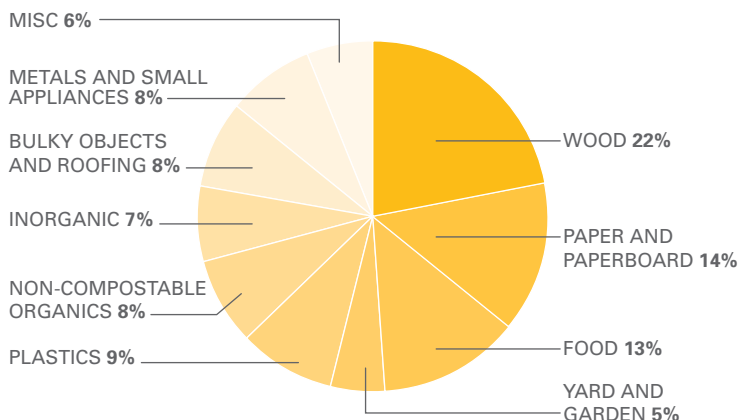
Tap water preferred

There is currently a debate about the use of bottled versus tap water. While some people are concerned about the quality of water that comes from the tap, others worry about the quality of bottled water and contaminants from plastic containers. Bottled drinking water also increases waste (from the bottles) and greenhouse gas emissions (from transporting it).

In 2006, 67% of households surveyed in metro Vancouver used the tap as their primary source of drinking water and another 10% used both tap and bottled water. Bottled water was the main source of drinking water for 23% of households.

COMPOSITION OF WASTE DISPOSED IN METRO VANCOUVER, 2006

SOURCE: METRO VANCOUVER, 2006.





GRANT STORY

GREENING SACRED SPACES

The Multifaith Action Society believes healing the planet is one of the greatest spiritual challenges of our time. However, it is not easy to know how to go green. Their Greening Sacred Spaces Program received a \$15,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation to create a toolkit on how to “green” religious buildings and the surrounding land, as well as individual homes. From lighting, to what people plant in the garden, to solar panels, they provide the know-how that helps everyone go green. Working across all denominations, Greening Sacred Spaces forges the connection between spirituality and the earth, aiming to make the kind of changes that help reduce greenhouse gases and the environmental footprint of their congregations. Because ultimately everywhere on earth is a sacred space.

GETTING STARTED

8-9

GETTING STARTED

Getting on the right path from the outset can save us a lot of missteps and detours. Everyone needs a hand from time to time, whether it is kids being ready to learn, high school students searching for their first job or new immigrants getting settled. The earlier we get that help, the sooner we thrive.

In our region, getting started is difficult for some of us.

Child-care costs are increasingly expensive. The high school graduation rate for ESL students is lower than that of the overall Grade 12 population, and immigrant incomes continue to trail behind those of the Canadian-born population.

CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for how easy it is for newcomers, youth and children to get "a good start" in our community, including such factors as immigrant employment opportunities, youth employment, childcare and early childhood education, availability of English as a Second Language courses, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Graduation rate lower for ESL students

The high school graduation rate for ESL students was 83% in 2006/07, below the 93% graduation rate for the overall Grade 12 population. This declined from previous years when the graduation rate for ESL students ranged from 89% to 94%.

Immigrant incomes lag

Immigrant incomes in metro Vancouver continue to fall behind those of the Canadian-born population. Recent immigrants to metro Vancouver (arriving between 2000 and 2004), with or without degrees, earn less than half of people born in Canada. Immigrants that have been here longer fare a little better, earning about 68% of the median income of a Canadian-born person.

Child care costs increase

The cost of child care can be a barrier for parents wishing to enter the labour force. While government programs make child care more accessible for some, families still pay the majority of child care costs.

Child care expenses in the city of Vancouver continued to rise between 2005 and 2007. The cost for out-of-school care (before and after school) for 6 to 12-year olds increased nearly 50%, while licensed family care for infants, toddlers, and 3 to 5-year olds increased 13%, 14% and 17% respectively.

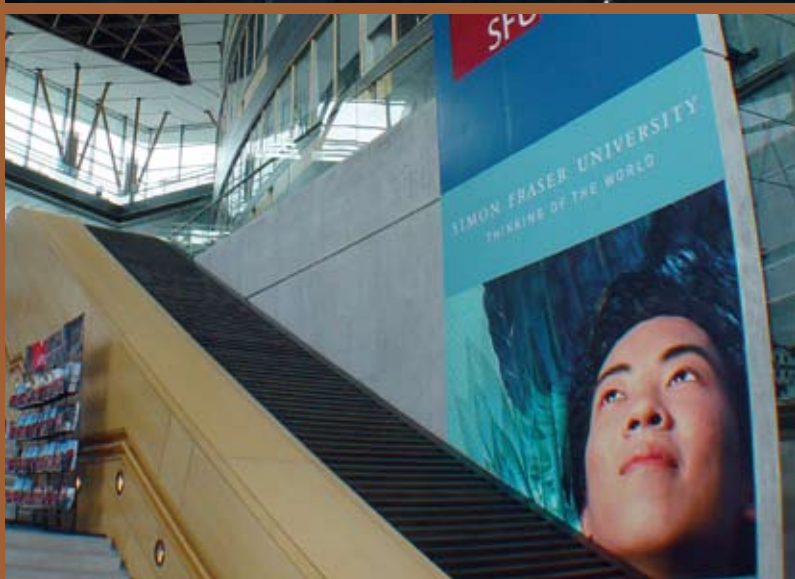
Immigrants face higher unemployment

In metro Vancouver, the unemployment rate for immigrants who entered the country in the last five years is twice that of the Canadian-born population. As immigrants become more established, the gap in unemployment rates diminishes but is never eliminated.

In 2006, the unemployment rate for immigrants arriving to Canada between 2001 and 2006 was 11%; the rate for immigrants who had been in Canada more than five years was 7%, while the unemployment rate for the non-immigrant population was 5%.

Youth employment improves

Transitioning from school to work can be pivotal for youth. Jobs can provide financial support for further study. On the other hand, when the job market is strong, youth may choose work over further education. Metro Vancouver youth age 15-24 had an unemployment rate of 7% in 2007, down from a high of 17% in 1987.





GRANT STORY

SOMETIMES YOU NEED HELP TO START OVER

Starting something new can be daunting. A little help goes a long way, whether you are starting kindergarten, a career, or life in a new country. The Canadian Red Cross Society's First Contact Program helps refugees get on the right track in metro Vancouver. Many refugees are starting over with nothing. They can arrive with their former lives in tatters, sometimes distressed or demoralized from transient years in refugee camps. Getting the information they need, when they need it, can be a lifesaver. First Contact, with the support of a \$40,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation, is creating a 24-hour multilingual helpline for refugees. Information about housing, filing refugee claims, finding work and more is only a phone call away, and it will make a world of difference in their new lives.

HOUSING

10-11

HOUSING

Housing is one of our most basic necessities. However, if we spend too much of our income on housing, we don't have enough for food, clothing, transportation, education, recreation, or other key parts of life. If we can't afford to live near where we work, we spend a lot of time commuting, which gives us less time for other vital activities and can negatively impact the environment. If employers can't find employees because the housing market is too tight, they take their business, and those jobs elsewhere.

The rental housing market remains tight, and affordable housing for low-income residents is particularly scarce.

In 2008, the number of homeless people increased 22% in a 24-hour "point-in-time" count from a previous count in 2005. Buying a home here still costs eight times the local median annual income as of 2006. Only recently has the housing market shown signs of cooling.

CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for housing, including such factors as housing affordability, levels of homelessness, shelter occupancy, rental vacancies and rates, number of people sharing living accommodations, housing starts, secondary suites, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Housing scarce for low-income residents

People with lower incomes have limited funds for housing. The maximum shelter allowance for single adults receiving welfare in BC is \$375 per month. A person earning minimum wage would have \$384 per month for housing, if they used 30% of their income for rent, the reasonable measure for housing expenses.

In December 2007, less than 1% of available bachelor rental units in metro Vancouver were priced under \$400 per month. One third of the bachelor units were going for \$800 per month or more, and over half of the one-bedroom units had rents of \$800 or more.

To put it in perspective, only 6% of vacant two-bedroom apartments would be considered affordable for a couple working full-time in minimum wage jobs, who have one child and spend 30% of their income on shelter.

Homelessness up 22%

Metro Vancouver's 2008 Homeless Count found 2,660 homeless people in the region, with 41% staying in emergency shelters, transition homes and safe houses, and 59% sleeping outside or in a car, parking garage, or couch surfing.

Between 2005 and 2008, the region's overall homeless population increased 22%. There were no major changes in the number of beds available in emergency shelters, transition homes, and safe houses, so the number of homeless people living in shelters was stable. On the other hand, the number of homeless people living in the street increased 40% from 2005 to 2008.

Housing market slows

While housing sales have generally declined since 2005 in metro Vancouver, the number of listings increased 8% from 2005 to 2007 and is expected to continue to rise. The sales-to-listings ratio decreased from 0.8 in 2005 to 0.68 in 2007, indicating conditions are becoming more favourable to buyers.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation suggests decreased sales are due to lower consumer confidence in the housing market and higher carrying costs for mortgages, which especially affects first-time buyers.

Homes cost more relative to income

Affordability can be measured by comparing house prices to household income.

Buying a home in metro Vancouver costs eight times the median annual income in 2006, compared to seven times the median annual income in 2005 and six times the median annual income in 2000.

The ratio of housing costs to median incomes increased 13% between 2005 and 2006, while nationally it only increased 7%.

Rental housing market very tight

A 2.5% vacancy rate is considered healthy as it offers consumers a reasonable degree of choice, and landlords a reasonable return on their investments.

The 2007 vacancy rate of 1% for two-bedroom apartments in metro Vancouver suggests residents are having difficulty finding rental housing. The rate is virtually unchanged from 2006, and down nearly one percentage point since 2005.





GRANT STORY

MAKING OUR CITY LIVABLE FOR EVERYONE

Vancouver is often hailed as one of the world's most livable cities. Today, the question is: for whom? *Vital Signs* identified homelessness as a crucial issue for the third year in a row. With a scarcity of affordable rental housing in the city, finding a home is increasingly difficult, especially for those on the margins. Vancouver Foundation's new Youth Homelessness Initiative was created to address this issue. As part of this initiative, a \$114,000 grant was made to the Broadway Youth Resource Centre to obtain private market housing units that can give youth a home while they get on their feet. The stability of a home can enable youth to finish high school, develop new skills and find a job, ultimately breaking the cycle of homelessness and starting young people on a new path.

RICH AND POOR

12-13

GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

When there is a large gap between the rich and poor in our community, we are all affected. A large gap creates social divisions ('us' versus 'them'), fear and resentment. It can lead to other social problems in our community, such as health disparities and crime.

The fact is any one of us can find ourselves suddenly at the bottom of the income scale. A crippling accident, a market downturn, or a divorce can sometimes result in unexpected poverty.

Without effective programs to address the root causes and consequences of poverty, we limit opportunities for all types of citizens to make meaningful contributions and feel like members of our community.

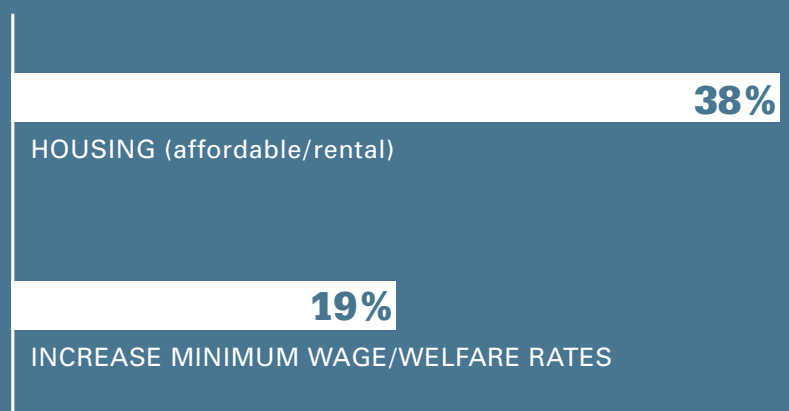
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for economic equality, including factors such as income distribution, number of residents below the poverty line, overall child and elderly poverty rates, the cost of healthy eating, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Child poverty rate 24%

Children living in families with household incomes below the pre-tax Low Income Cut-Off (a level determined by Statistics Canada) are considered to be living in poverty.

In 2006, 24% of children in metro Vancouver were living in poverty, while the national rate was 16%. The child poverty rate in metro Vancouver has declined slightly from 27% in 2002.

Educated earn more; women earn less than men

People who complete higher levels of education tend to earn more money.

In 2005, residents with a bachelors degree had a 49% higher median annual income than those with a certificate or diploma below a bachelor level. A certificate, diploma, or degree above a bachelor degree increased median annual income by 31%.

Despite having similar levels of education, women had lower median annual incomes than men.

Most income from employment, especially for men

Income can be earned through employment or obtained through government transfers, such as income assistance or the child tax credit, or through other sources, such as investments.

In 2005, employment was the source of 78% of income received by metro Vancouver residents, while 9% came from government transfers and 13% came from other sources. Women received a larger proportion of their income (13%) from government transfers than men (6%).

Poverty and household type

Some types of households are more vulnerable to poverty than others. In 2005, 54% of people in households with non-relatives were living in poverty, as were 43% of seniors and 36% of individuals living alone.

Over one-third (35%) of households led by single mothers fell under the poverty line in 2005, while 22% of single father households and 14% of those run by couples were in the same situation. Couples with children between the ages of 6 and 17 years had a poverty rate of 19%, while couples without children had a poverty rate of only 11%.

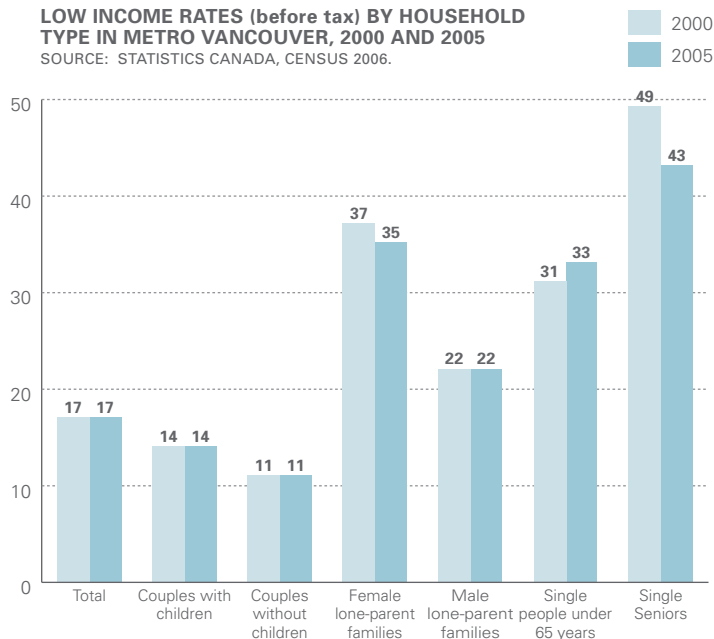
Source of seniors' income

Examining the sources of seniors' incomes helps determine which policies can effectively minimize poverty for our oldest citizens.

In 2006, 98% of metro Vancouver seniors received at least some income through government transfers: 92% through Old Age Security and 82% through the Canadian Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan. Over half received some income from private pension plans, 61% received income from investments, and nearly a quarter reported employment income.

LOW INCOME RATES (before tax) BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE IN METRO VANCOUVER, 2000 AND 2005

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CENSUS 2006.





GRANT STORY

PLANTING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

With global food prices on the rise, affordable nutritious food is becoming a challenge. Fostering the ability to grow nutritious food and cook healthy meals is vital. Vancouver Foundation gave a \$63,600 grant to build capacity in the Renfrew/Collingwood Food Security Institute. This grant plants seeds for the future by developing leadership teams of neighbourhood residents to carry out projects and ultimately, enhance food security in the area. From a roof-top garden to over 20 community garden plots, to seed swaps and food-sharing programs, the focus is on training and building partnerships. If the cost of eating continues to escalate, projects like these will be vital to ensuring access to healthy, affordable food for everyone.

DEMOGRAPHICS

14-15

OUR CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

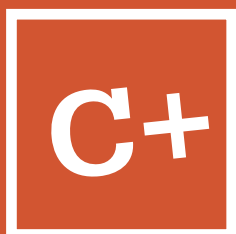
Our population is undergoing unprecedented change. Aging baby boomers will increasingly need more social services at a time when there are fewer workers to pay for and provide those services. How will we meet growing needs with fewer resources?

At the same time, we are becoming more ethnically diverse. How can we integrate and welcome citizens of varied cultures and languages to metro Vancouver?

If we plan and develop solutions to these changes now, we can smoothly transition to these new realities.

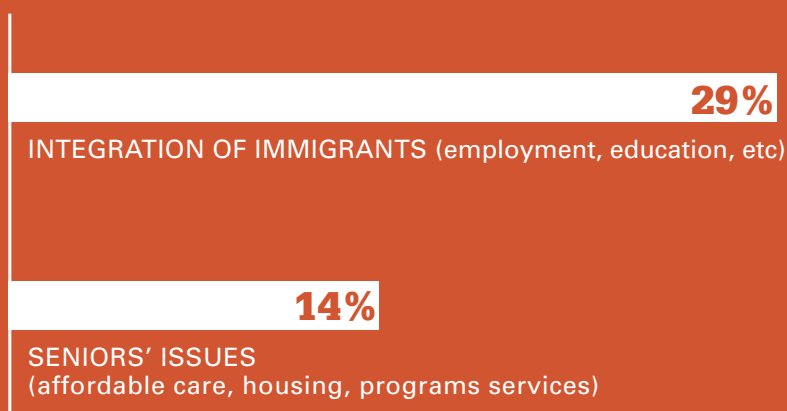
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for the changing composition of our region's demographics, including such factors as growth rates of immigrant and non-immigrant populations, changing age demographics and family structures, workforce participation, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the citizen grading panel...



Fewer kids, seniors boom

The proportion of our population age 55 and over increased 20% between 1996 and 2006, while the proportion of our population under 15 decreased 11%. Metro Vancouver's declining birth rate and aging population affect everything from family structures to the need for services to the economy. Astute planning for this demographic change could minimize the challenges this will pose.

Aboriginal population younger

The Aboriginal population tends to be much younger than the total metro Vancouver population. In 2006, 24% of the Aboriginal population was under age 15, while only 16% of metro Vancouver's total population fell into the same category. Also, the proportion of Aboriginal seniors is lower than the population overall. In 2006, 4% of the Aboriginal population was age 65 and over, compared to 13% of the overall population.

More seniors working

As the number of young workers decreases and older workers begin to retire, there will be fewer people to fill positions. Youth age 15 to 24 made up 15% of metro Vancouver's labour force in 2006, while 70% of workers were 25 to 54 years of age. Citizens age 55 and over comprise an increasing proportion of the workforce, up from 12% of the region's labour force in 2001 to 15% in 2006.

Immigrants fuel population growth

As birth rates decline in Canada, we become more dependent on immigrants for the population growth needed to support economic expansion. Between 2001 and 2006, the immigrant population climbed 13%, while the Canadian-born population edged up 2%.

Language of work changing

The languages we use at work are shifting. In metro Vancouver, 6% of residents aged 15 years and over primarily spoke a non-official language (neither English nor French) at work in 2006. Only 0.2% primarily spoke French at work, while 93% primarily spoke English.





GRANT STORY

ESL WITH PARENTING SKILLS

Our demographics are changing but we aren't always keeping pace. We need immigration to address labour needs, and yet when immigrants land on our doorstep, society doesn't make it easy for them. One of the biggest barriers is language. Pacific Immigrant Resources Society takes on this challenge with their Enhanced Parenting and Family Literacy Program. Immigrant and refugee mothers and their young children attend the program together. The mothers learn ESL and parenting skills, while focused play time promotes family literacy. With a \$69,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation, the Program creates a community for mothers, helping them deal with culture shock while giving them the language skills they need to plant roots in their new country.

2008 Public Opinion Survey

Making a difference starts with our own region, and our own lives.

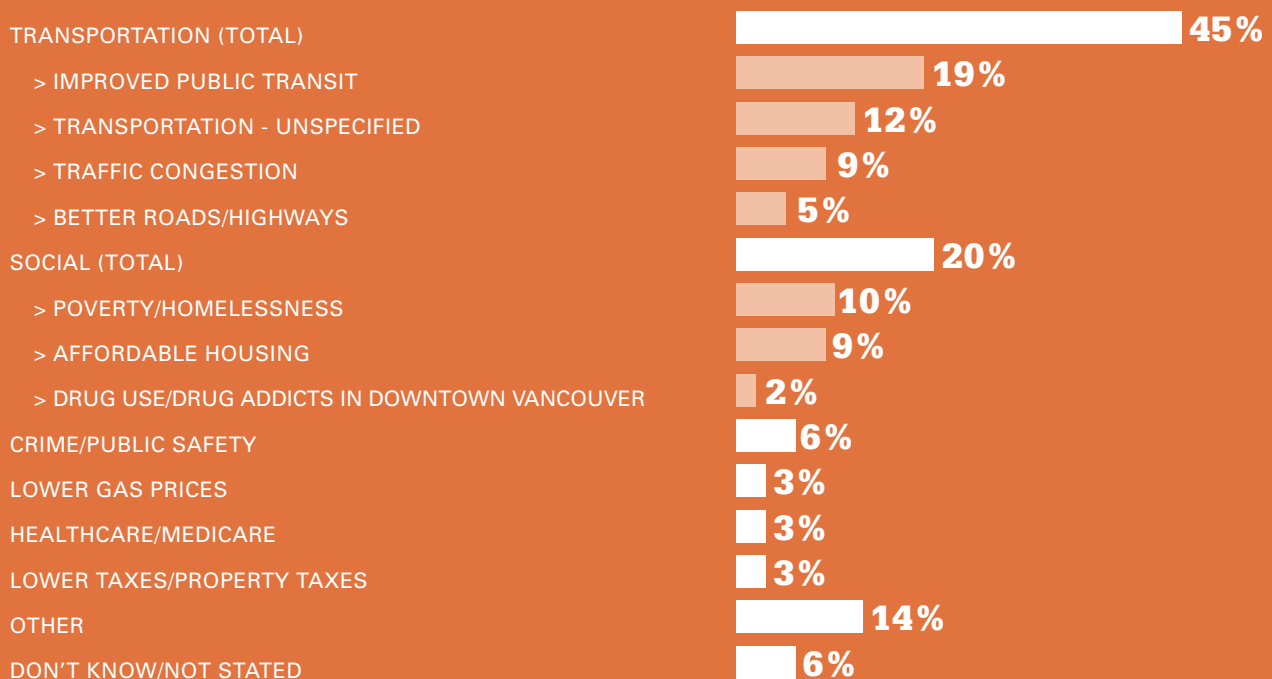
Vancouver Foundation, with help from Ipsos Reid, asked metro Vancouver citizens three pivotal questions in a telephone survey:

1. What is the most important issue facing our region?
2. What specific event or action improved the quality of life in metro Vancouver?
3. What did you do to make a difference in your community?

The results of this survey can help serve as a compass for our decisions and ideas as our region continues to evolve.

1. What is the single most important issue you would like to see addressed to improve the overall quality of life in metro Vancouver?

n=854



SUMMARY: Transportation is a critical issue for our region

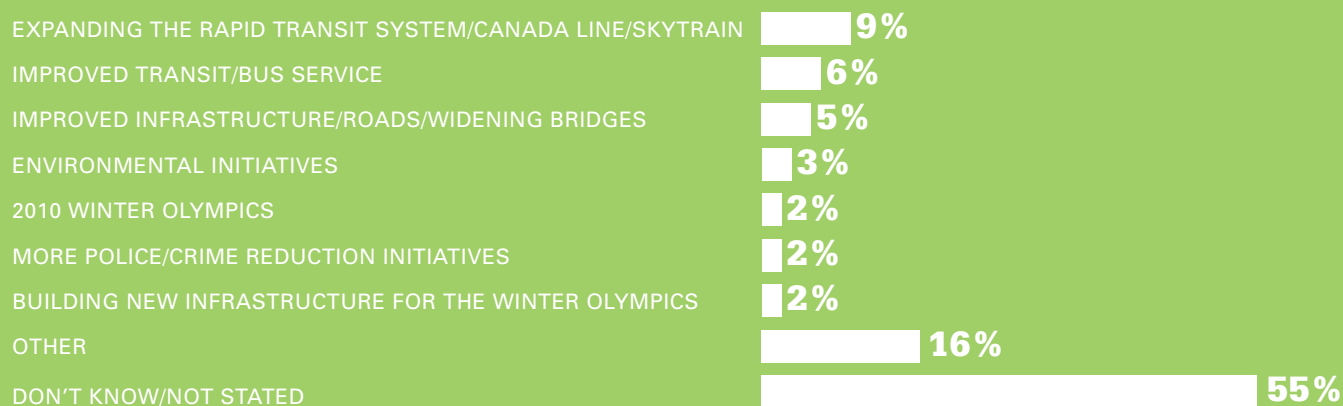
According to nearly half of those surveyed, metro Vancouver's most urgent quality of life issue is transportation. And 19% of citizens said better public transit is their number one issue. Social issues ranked high on the public agenda, cited by 20%, with poverty/homelessness and affordable housing being key concerns.

Methodology

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between June and July 2008. The poll is based on a randomly selected representative sample of 854 adult metro Vancouver residents. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult metro Vancouver population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual metro Vancouver population according to the 2006 Census data. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

2. Give an example of a specific event, action, or other thing that has improved the quality of life in metro Vancouver over the past 12 months.

n=854



SUMMARY: Kudos for transit improvements

Improvements to the rapid transit system, including the Canada Line construction, are the number one change people mention when asked what action in the last 12 months has made the biggest difference to improve the quality of life in our region. Improved bus service, roads, and environmental initiatives also received credit. However, more than half the people surveyed did not or could not name one particular change that stood out over the rest as having improved quality of life in our region.

16-17

3. Over the last 12 months, what actions, if any, have you taken in your own life to make a positive difference in your community?

n=854



SUMMARY: Making a difference where you live

Citizens found many ways to make a difference in their community, from recycling to driving less to donating to charity. Volunteering is still the number one action people mention when asked what they've done to make a difference. However the number of people who mentioned volunteer work dropped from the 2007 survey, from 30% to 16%.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Imagine life without music, film, dance, galleries, books, or photography.

It would certainly be a bleaker existence. Arts and culture entertain and inspire us. They help fuel innovation and design, from furniture to clothing. They are how we commemorate our past, understand our present, and imagine our future.

In 2006, households in metro Vancouver spent more on arts and culture-related goods and services than the national average. The number of our residents employed in the cultural services sector has increased 12% over the past decade, and ethnic media sources are plentiful.

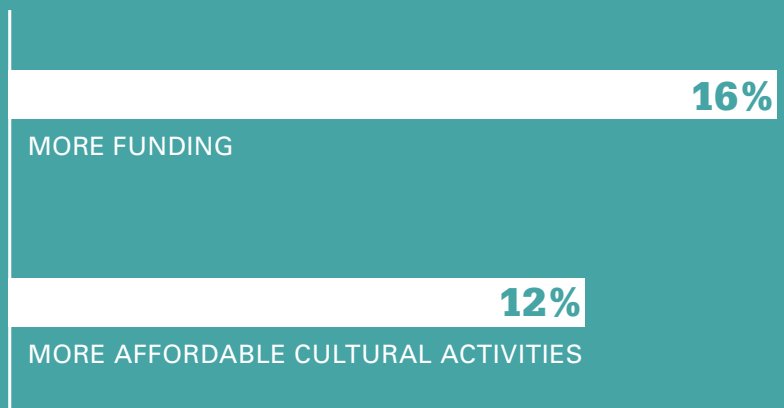
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for the arts and cultural environment, including factors such as celebrations for diverse cultures, employment in cultural industries, funding and facilities for arts and culture, availability and attendance at cultural events, multicultural and multilingual media...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Cultural sector employs 78,000

Metro Vancouver is home to 66% of the province's cultural labour force. The number of metro Vancouver residents employed by the cultural sector increased 12% over the past decade, from 55,500 in 1997 to 78,000 in 2007.

We spend more on arts and culture

In 2006, households in metro Vancouver spent, on average, \$2,533 on arts and culture, down from \$2,561 in 2005, but still more than the national 2006 average of \$2,390.

Plentiful ethnic media

The number of ethnic media outlets is an indicator of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

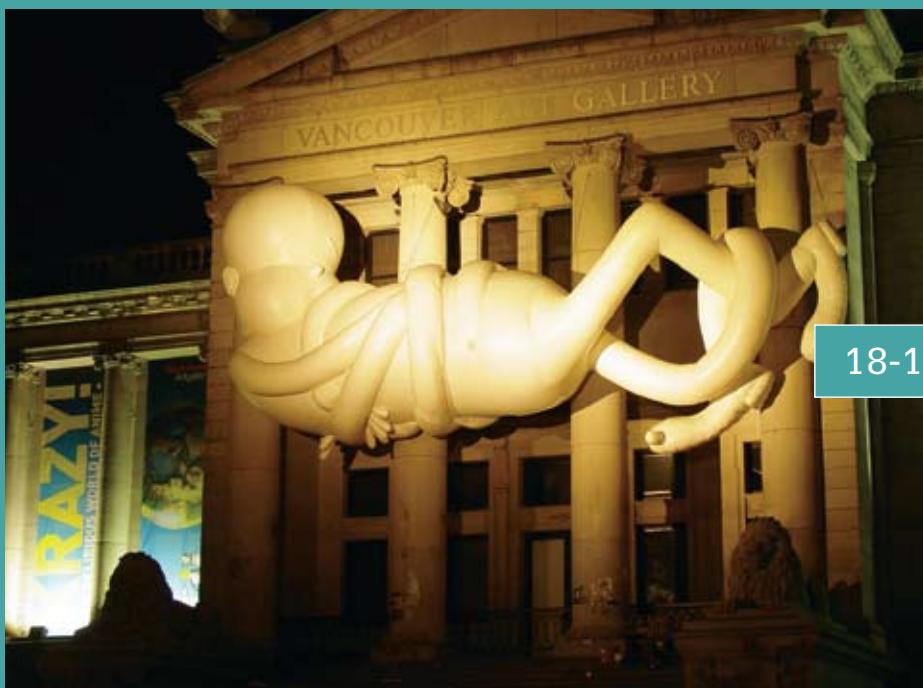
In 2007, there were 144 ethnic media sources serving the multicultural community in BC. Of these, 55% were newspapers. There were also 15 ethnic TV channels and 15 ethnic radio stations.

Arts spending pays for itself

Arts and culture spending is often justified by its social rather than its economic impact. However, a 2006 study of 357 arts and culture organizations in BC showed every dollar these organizations spent was worth \$0.83 to \$1 in direct and spin-off value to the provincial economy, from jobs to tax revenue.

Film industry spent \$1.2 billion in BC

Most films shot in BC are produced in metro Vancouver, and the film industry is a significant economic contributor to our region. In 2006, the film industry spent \$1.2 billion in this province and filmed 230 productions, up from only 25 in 1986. The industry generates over 13,000 full-time jobs locally, with wages nearly double the provincial average.



18-19

GRANT STORY

WHAT ENDURES IS THE ART

When a society becomes ancient history, what survives is not the business deals or the politics, but the art and architecture, the literature and the music.

Remember the gum under the schoolroom chair? The stale aroma of the gymnasium? These memories came back to life at the Vancouver School Installation Project, supported by a \$20,000 Vancouver Foundation grant to the Artists for Kids Trust. With "artifacts" like gym equipment, film projectors and chalkboards, this 2006 collaboration by Douglas Coupland, Angela Grossmann, Attila Richard Lukacs, Graham Gillmore and Derek Root created an elaborate meditation on the rituals and places that mould a person's sense of self. In a former elementary school gymnasium, the project provided educational experiences to over 2,000 Grade 1-12 students and hopefully inspired more young artists to follow in their footsteps.

BELONGING AND LEADERSHIP

People are social animals; we need to feel we belong. When we feel connected to others, we flourish. We have greater incentives to care about others and about our surroundings. We have increased opportunities to contribute our unique talents, including becoming community leaders. The more we belong, the more vibrant and resilient we are, individually and collectively.

When it comes to encouraging a sense of belonging, metro Vancouver needs to work hard: 40% of metro Vancouverites are immigrants, well above the national average, and 25% of our seniors live alone. Our residents are generous donors who are invested in our community. Overall, 63% of us say we feel we belong.

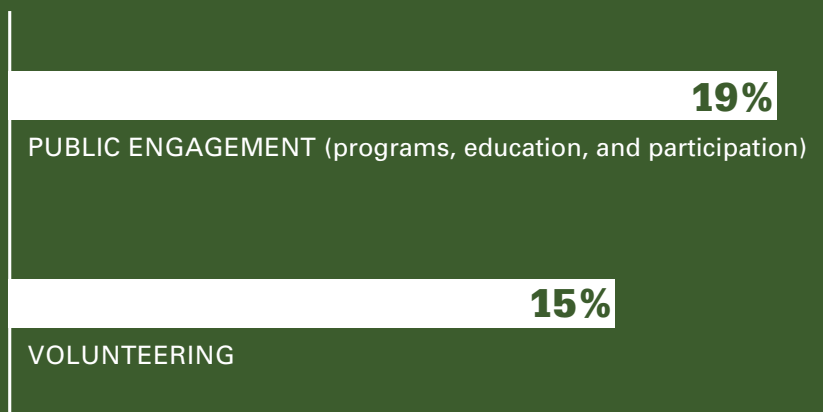
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for having citizens who are civically, economically, and socially engaged, including factors such as volunteerism, charitable donations, corporate philanthropy, voter turnout, inclusion of aboriginal people, people with disabilities, immigrants, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Metro Vancouverites give more

Charitable donations are one way in which people support and demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community.

In 2006, the annual median charitable donation made by metro Vancouverites was among the highest of all Canadian urban centres – \$340, compared to \$250 nationally and up from \$310 in 2005. Annual median donations from metro Vancouver residents rose 31% between 2001 and 2006, compared to 25% in Canada as a whole.

Moving rates steady

In 2006, 17% of metro Vancouver residents said they had moved in the last year and nearly half (48%) had moved in the previous five years. One quarter of residents had changed addresses within the same municipality. Another 12% moved within BC, 3% moved from outside the province and 8% came from outside Canada. These figures have been relatively consistent since 2001.

Recent immigrants come from China, India, and the Philippines

Understanding our immigrant population helps us create a welcoming environment for them. This is especially vital for metro Vancouver, as 40% of our residents are immigrants, which is well above the Canadian average.

According to 2006 statistics, 47% of metro Vancouver's immigrants arrived before 1991, 17% arrived between 1991 and 1995, 18% arrived between 1996 and 2000 and another 18% arrived between 2001 and 2006. Immigrants arriving between 2001 and 2006 were most often from China (26%), India (12%), the Philippines (11%) and South Korea (8%).

One quarter of seniors live alone

Only 9% of metro Vancouverites under 65 live alone, in comparison to more than 25% of our seniors. While some seniors living on their own feel connected to their communities, others find it isolating. As our population ages, this will be an issue of increasing importance.

A sense of belonging

Nearly two thirds (63%) of metro Vancouver residents said they felt a "somewhat" or "very strong" sense of belonging to their community, according to the 2007 Canadian Community Health Survey. Our sense of belonging has increased slightly over the past few years and is on par with national and provincial rates.



20-21

GRANT STORY

GET YOUR VOTE ON!

Voting is an important way to engage in and become a part of your community. You are electing the people who will represent you and make decisions on your behalf. In Canada, voter participation is a challenge, particularly among 18 to 30 year olds. Vancouver Foundation granted \$30,000 to Get Your Vote On, a campaign run by Check Your Head, a youth organization that encourages teens to get involved with global issues. The message was simple: voting can be fun, interesting... even worthwhile. Organized by young people, for young people, Get Your Vote On made it easier for young adults to understand how politics affects them: their ability to find work, their tuition, the future of their environment. The campaign created a community of young voters, and most importantly, gave them a reason to vote. Yes, voting can be fun!

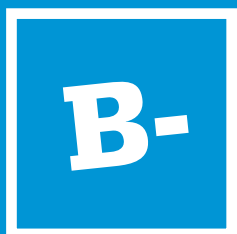
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

When we think of health, many of us think about overflowing emergency rooms and long wait lists. We sometimes forget that mental health issues are as important as our physical health when we talk about overall health and well-being. Lifestyle choices, such as how much we exercise and what we eat, can have a greater effect on our physical and mental health than the availability of doctors or expensive technology. This means we can do a great deal to improve our own health.

Life expectancy is up for metro Vancouverites, and our stress levels are stable. In 2007, only half of us reported being physically active during our leisure time.

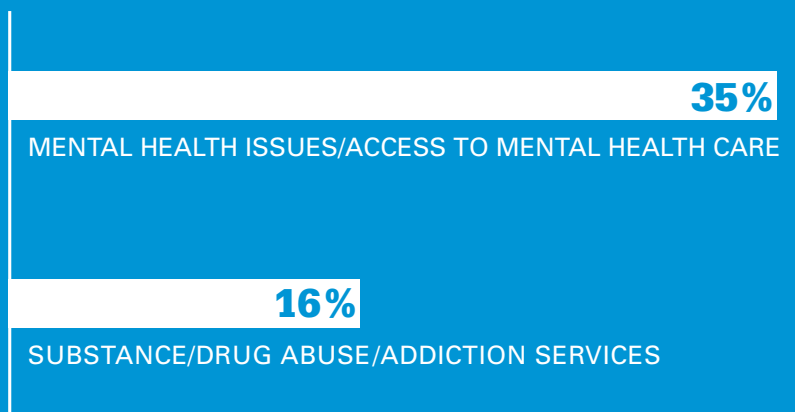
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for the health and wellness of its citizens, including factors such as infant deaths, life expectancy, deaths due to medically treatable diseases, mental health and addictions services, health literacy, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Life expectancy up, especially for men

Life expectancy at birth measures a population's general state of well-being, and is affected by lifestyle, diet, income, the environment and access to health care. Life expectancies in metro Vancouver increased over the past decade, and ranged between 79 and 84 years in the 2002 to 2006 period, depending on where people live within the region. Life expectancies for men rose by between 2% and 8% between 1996 and 2006, and between 1% and 3% for women.

Stress levels stable

Stress affects our mental well-being and our capacity to enjoy life. High, sustained stress levels are a factor in many diseases and chronic conditions, often leading to unhealthy behaviours such as smoking or overeating. The proportion of metro Vancouver residents reporting high levels of life stress has stayed essentially the same since 2003, and is marginally above that for Canada overall.

Physical activity down

We know physical activity is important for health. Nonetheless, only half of metro Vancouverites reported being physically active in 2007 during their leisure time, down from 56% in 2003. In 2007, 56% of Calgarians, 49% of Torontonians, and 44% of Montréalers reported being physically active.

Most residents have a regular doctor

Establishing an ongoing relationship with a general practitioner is believed to be important in maintaining health and ensuring appropriate access to health services.

Some 88% of metro Vancouver residents report having a regular medical doctor, greater than the national average of 85%, and a figure relatively unchanged since 2003.

Not everyone is health literate

Health literacy rates show how well we can find and apply health information, from understanding how to follow a prescription to making healthy lifestyle choices.

A 2003 survey indicates that most metro Vancouverites can get and use health information at a "minimum" level. However, some of our residents lack the minimum level of health literacy, and would have difficulty following directions on medical labels, for example.



22-23

GRANT STORY

KNOW YOUR TOXINS

Good health is just as much about personal choices as it is about doctors and hospitals. Every day we use products that can damage the environment – and ourselves. And sometimes we don't even know it. CancerSmart, a project of the Labour Environmental Alliance Society, wants labels to identify toxins in common household products. Vancouver Foundation helped fund their work with a \$20,000 grant. Because knowledge is the first step to protecting ourselves from harmful toxins.

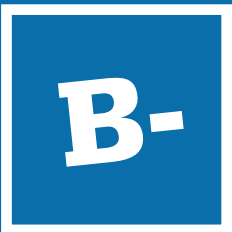
LEARNING

The more we learn throughout our lives, the more innovative, productive and adaptable we are. This is especially crucial in a time of rapid economic and social change. Successful communities offer their citizens abundant, affordable and flexible opportunities to learn, in formal school settings and also at work or online.

Indicators suggest metro Vancouver is generally on par with or doing better than other Canadian cities in nurturing citizens who are life-long learners. However, we are slipping on several indicators, so we shouldn't become complacent.

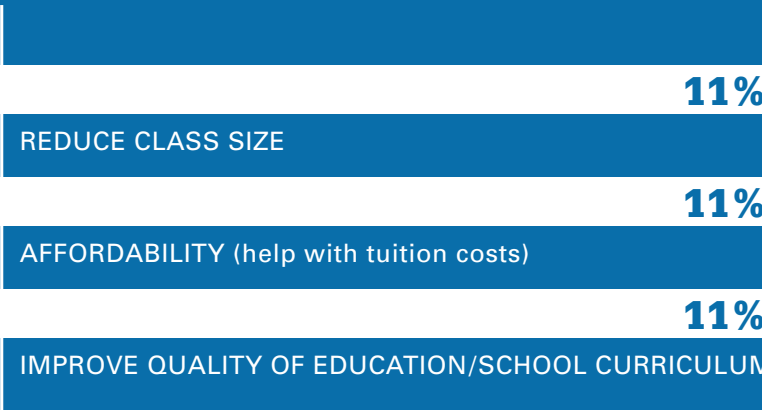
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for learning and education, including factors such as literacy, educational attainment, high school graduation, class sizes, opportunities for special needs students, community perceptions of the education system, newspaper readership, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Nearly 80% of residents are online

The Internet is a fundamental tool for learning. In metro Vancouver, 78% of residents were able to access the Internet in 2007, up 11% from 2005, and 74% had Internet access from their home.

More people completing high school

Historically, the proportion of metro Vancouver residents who have not completed high school has been decreasing. Between 2001 and 2006, that rate dropped from 19% to 17% and is below the national average of 23%.

Over half of residents read the paper

Reading the newspaper is one form of informal, life-long learning. A 2007 study found 52% of metro Vancouver adults read a newspaper on the average weekday and 73% read one issue between Monday and Friday. More (78%) said they had read an online or printed edition of a daily newspaper in the past week. While long-term metro Vancouver data was not available, weekly newspaper readership nationally has remained relatively constant since 2003.

Over half have higher education

In 2006, 56% of metro Vancouverites 15 years and over had completed some kind of post-secondary education, which includes apprenticeships, college and university. This rate increased from 49% in 2001, and was 10% higher than the national average. The rates in Calgary, Toronto, and Montréal were similar.

Business and engineering most commonly studied

We need to know what residents of metro Vancouver are studying in order to assess whether our graduates will meet the current and future economic needs of employers.

In 2005, 22% of our residents with post-secondary education studied business, including management and public administration. Another 20% studied engineering, which includes architecture and related technologies, while 13% had backgrounds in health and fitness, and 12% studied social and behavioural sciences and law.

Significant gender imbalances remained: 36% of men with post-secondary education had studied engineering, compared to 4% of women. Only 3% of men studied education, compared to 10% of women.

Kids beat the odds in some neighbourhoods

Early childhood development is often tied to a neighbourhood's socio-economic status. The higher this status, the better children usually learn. However, this prediction does not hold true in 15 of metro Vancouver's 184 neighbourhoods.

Nine neighbourhoods report that their kindergarten students are doing better than expected when considering their socio-economic status. On the flip side, six higher socio-economic neighbourhoods are reporting that their children are struggling more than would be predicted. Understanding the reasons behind these differences could help all metro Vancouver kids learn better.

Overall learning on par

The Composite Learning Index (CLI) is a national index that combines a number of indicators that measure the state of learning in our schools, homes, workplaces and other places in our communities. A high CLI score means the city has learning conditions that support social and economic success.

Our region's score dropped to 78 in 2008 from 82 in 2007, after a seven point increase from 2006 to 2007. However, metro Vancouver is on par with the national average of 77.



24-25

GRANT STORY

THE ART OF LEARNING

The learning never has to stop from the day you are born to the day you die. Creating opportunities to learn in school, on the job or just to satisfy our curiosity enhances the quality of our lives, and can also stimulate the economy. And who knows where new knowledge and skills will take you? For four weeks this summer, First Nations teens with artistic inclinations had the opportunity to participate in Emily Carr's Summer Institute for Aboriginal Teens, thanks in part to a \$13,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation. Getting in the door is the first step to removing cultural and financial barriers. The idea is that once Aboriginal teens have a taste of art, media or design, they come back for more, and who knows where that will lead?

SAFETY

How safe are we in metro Vancouver? Issues like gang violence and property crime get a lot of attention. In a 2007 poll, 95% of metro Vancouver respondents said they believed gang violence was a serious problem here.

In reality, gang violence affects a relatively small number of residents, and property crime fell 71% between 1992 to 2006. Meanwhile, Criminal Code traffic offences – which suggest how safe we are on the road – increased after a period of significant decline in the 1990s.

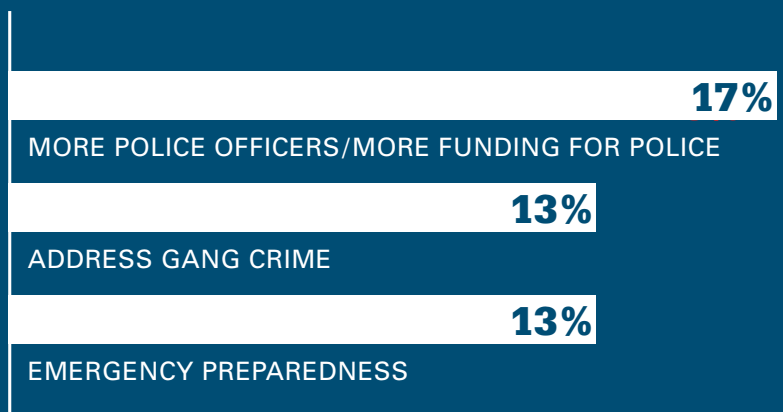
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver’s grade for safety, including factors such as levels of crime, level of policing, community perceptions of crime, emergency preparedness, workplace safety and accident prevention, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Dangerous driving on the rise

Criminal Code traffic offences include impaired and dangerous operation of motor vehicles, boats and aircraft, driving a motor vehicle while prohibited, and failing to stop or remain at the scene after an accident.

In 2006, there were 364 Criminal Code Traffic Offences for every 100,000 people in metro Vancouver. Although the number of Criminal Code traffic offences dropped 81% from 1992 to 1998, they increased 50% between 2000 and 2006.

Search and rescue, environmental incidents increase

Emergency incidents refer to dangerous goods, search and rescue, environmental, natural and other incidents. The Provincial Emergency Program responded to 1,904 emergency incidents in the southwest region of British Columbia between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008. Over the 2000/01-2007/08 period, search and rescue incidents increased 26% and the number of environmental incidents increased from 3 to 40. The number of incidents in other areas remained constant.

Workplace injury claims stable

The number of claims and costs of work injuries is an important indicator of workplace safety. The number of claims in metro Vancouver remained relatively consistent from 2002 to 2007. Over the same period, the cost of claims decreased by about 10%.

Gang violence perceived as serious

In a 2007 poll, 95% of metro Vancouver respondents said they believed gang violence is a serious problem in the region. Overall, women were more likely than men to consider the problem "very serious" rather than "somewhat serious". Likewise for people over 45 compared to people age 18-44.

Property crime rate down 71% since 1992

Property crimes include breaking and entering, theft, possession of stolen goods and fraud. The per capita property crime rate in metro Vancouver declined 71% between 1992 and 2006, when the rate was 5,874 per 100,000 people. While the rate has declined over time, it is higher than rates in Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary.



26-27

GRANT STORY

SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

Strong support in a crisis can make the difference between vulnerability and security, between taking a stand against domestic violence or continuing the cycle of abuse. Vancouver Foundation granted \$60,000 to the Surrey Women's Centre Society to provide two counsellors to help with domestic violence cases. By partnering with the RCMP and coordinating other services in the community, they made the community safer for women. By providing support to vulnerable women, they decreased the risk of serious physical injury from domestic violence, and successfully prosecuted more high-risk offenders, making home a safer place for these women.

WORK

Work is central to our lives. Having a job not only helps to put food on the table and a roof over our heads, it can provide a sense of identity and a feeling we are contributing to our families and community.

Life is more stressful if we don't have work that is safe, enjoyable, easy to get to, and pays reasonably well, especially if prospects for another job are slim.

We know that strong and vibrant communities have a wide variety of opportunities for enjoyable, secure, well-paid work.

Employment opportunities have been increasing in our region and some sectors of the economy are experiencing labour shortages. At the same time, as of 2005, more people were working at lower paid jobs. In 2006, 43% of our labour force worked outside of the municipality where they live, suggesting substantial commutes for some of us.

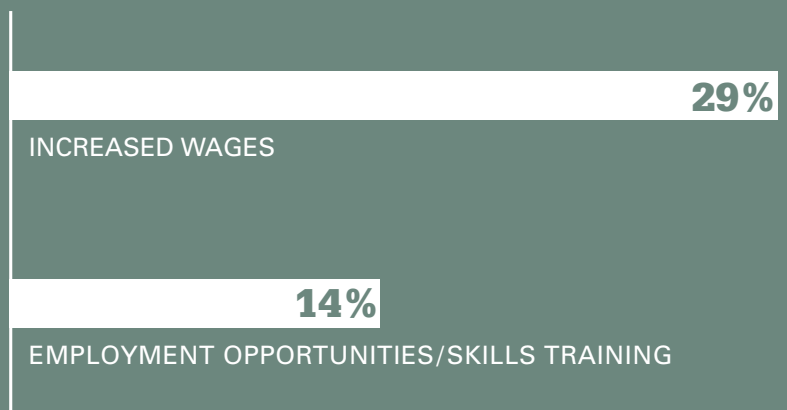
CITIZEN GRADE

Metro Vancouver's grade for overall employment and economic environment, including factors such as participation in the labour force, occupational patterns, unemployment rates, wages, self-employment and part-time workers, our region's competitive capacity, etc...



CITIZEN PRIORITIES

The top two priorities that need to be addressed in the next year, in the opinion of the *Vital Signs* citizen grading panel...



Employment up

Employment growth is an indicator of a strong economy and opportunities for secure work. From 2006 to 2007, employment grew 3% in metro Vancouver compared to a national employment growth rate of 2%.

More people working for less pay

High employment rates don't always mean everyone has high-quality, well-paid jobs. Median annual earnings of metro Vancouver residents decreased 4% from 2000 to 2005, meaning more people in our region had lower paying jobs.

Business services, retail and healthcare dominate

Metro Vancouver has a diversified economy, which helps create long-term economic stability.

In 2006, more metro Vancouverites worked in business services than any other industry. They made up 24% of the region's workforce, while 11% worked in retail. Another 9% worked in healthcare and social services, where 81% of our region's

workers in this industry were female. Construction is booming, however only 6% of our workforce was employed by the industry in 2006. Of those workers, 88% were men.

Commuting impact

People who commute to work spend more time in transit and less time on other priorities, such as family, exercise or recreation. Commuting also affects the environment and our transit system.

In 2006, 43% of metro Vancouver's labour force worked outside of the municipality where they lived, while 34% worked and lived in the same municipality.

Rate of self-employment steady

In 2006, as in 2001, 13% of metro Vancouver's labour force was self-employed. A larger proportion of men were self-employed compared to women. Almost half of the self-employed had some paid help.



28-2

GRANT STORY

HELPING OTHERS CAN HELP YOURSELF

The BC labour market is strong. Our province is abundant with opportunity, but not for everyone. For those who are marginalized – like the mentally ill – cracking the labour market remains difficult. Vancouver Foundation recognizes this and is granting \$150,000 to the Peer Support Program at the Coast Foundation Society. The Program trains people recovering from mental illness as peer support workers, so they can help others in the same situation develop essential life skills. After one month of training, they work one-on-one with new clients for six months, developing employment skills and ultimately promoting their own recovery as well as that of the clients they serve.

DATA BY POPULATION GROUPS

Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs for Metro Vancouver can also tell the story of what it is like to live here through the lens of different population groups in our region. This section focuses on how four population groups are doing: children and youth, seniors, immigrants, and First Nations and Aboriginal people.

Children and Youth

Metro Vancouver is home to 482,925 youth and children under the age of 20, according to 2006 data. Their numbers grew 7% since 1996. However, as the population as a whole ages, children and youth proportionally make up a smaller percentage, from 25% in 1996 to 23% in 2006.

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

- Almost a quarter of metro Vancouver's children age 17 and under lived in poverty in 2006.
- Metro Vancouver's child poverty rate of 24% exceeded the national rate of 16% and provincial rate of 22% in 2006. BC also had the highest child poverty rate of all provinces for the fifth year in a row.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

- Metro Vancouver's infant mortality rate in 2006 – 4 deaths per 1,000 live births – rose slightly from the rate between 2001 and 2005. However, the rate varied widely throughout the region.

LICENSED CHILD CARE

Finding and paying for child care is a major challenge for families, and hinders women from participating in the workforce.

- Demand exceeds availability: only 14% of estimated child care needs in Vancouver were met by existing services in 2005. For children aged 1 to 3, only 6% of estimated child care needs were met.
- The cost of child care increased 50% for ages 6 to 12 from 2005 to 2007, while the cost for younger children rose 13% to 17%, depending on the age group.

GAPS IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

- A higher proportion of special needs students graduated from high school over the past five years, narrowing the graduation rate gap between special needs and other students.
- The gap in graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students widened. Only 57% of Aboriginal students graduated in 2006/07, compared to 79% of non-Aboriginals. Graduation rates for Aboriginal students also varied widely throughout the region.

EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH

Youth employment prospects are improving as the boomers age and more workers retire.

- Over half of metro Vancouver youth age 15 to 24 were employed in 2007. The youth unemployment rate was 7%, down from 17% twenty years ago.

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

- Commuting patterns varied significantly by age. Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 were most likely to take public transit (25%), bike (2%) and walk (9%).

Seniors

In 2006, there were 271,460 people age 65 and older in metro Vancouver, making up 13% of the total population.

As the baby boomer generation ages, senior population growth outpaces that of the Canadian population as a whole. The number of seniors increased 25% in metro Vancouver between 1996 and 2006, while the entire region's population only grew 16%.

PROPORTION OF SENIORS LIVING ALONE

More seniors live on their own compared to the rest of the population and this can be isolating.

- In 2006, 27% of seniors over age 65 in metro Vancouver lived alone. This compares to 9% of the population under 65.

SOURCE OF SENIORS' INCOME

Understanding where seniors get their income helps society design and assess policies to ensure their economic security.

- In 2006, 98% of metro Vancouver seniors received income from the government: 92% from Old Age Security and 82% from the Canadian Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan.
- Over half received income from private pension plans, 61% had income from investments, and nearly a quarter reported employment income.

ELDERLY POVERTY RATE

- The proportion of seniors living in poverty has decreased dramatically in metro Vancouver, and as of 2006 was at the lowest rate in 30 years. From 1976 to 2006, it fell 70%. Now 15% of seniors fall below the poverty line.

- The region's rate is still higher than the provincial average of 11% and the national average of 13%.

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION:

- Metro Vancouver seniors were less likely than the average resident to use public transit as their main mode of transportation to work, but were the second most likely age group after youth to walk.

Immigrants

Immigrants are an increasingly critical part of the labour force in metro Vancouver. They also contribute to the cultural richness and vitality of our region.

As of 2006, four out of ten metro Vancouver residents were born outside of Canada. Over the last five years, the immigrant population increased 13% while the Canadian-born population only increased 2%.

NEW IMMIGRANTS

- Over 18% of immigrants living in metro Vancouver in 2006 arrived since 2001. Another 18% arrived between 1996 and 2000.
- Since 2001, the majority of immigrants to metro Vancouver came from China (26%), India (12%), the Philippines (11%) and South Korea (8%).

IMMIGRANT INCOMES

- Immigrants who arrived in metro Vancouver between 2000 and 2004 earn less than half of their Canadian-born counterparts. The gap is even greater for those without degrees. However, the discrepancy appears to diminish over time.
- The median income for all immigrants was notably lower than the median income for Canadian-born residents in 2005.

IMMIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT

- The unemployment rate for immigrants in metro Vancouver who entered the country in the last five years was double that of people born in Canada.
- In 2006, the unemployment rate for immigrants arriving to Canada between 2001 and 2006 was 11%. The rate for immigrants here more than five years was 7% while the rate for the non-immigrant population was 5%.

ETHNIC MEDIA OUTLETS

- In 2007, there were 144 different media sources in languages other than English in BC. More than half were newspapers; there were also 15 TV channels and 15 radio stations.

LANGUAGE USED MOST OFTEN AT WORK

- As of 2006, a language other than English or French was the main language used at work by 6% of Vancouver's labour force. English was the main language at work for 93% of people, compared to 95% in BC overall. Less than 1% used French.

First Nations and Aboriginal People

First Nations peoples are an essential part of metro Vancouver's culture and heritage. With almost one quarter of their population under age 15, they are a growing part of this region's future and emerging labour force.

BREAKDOWN BY AGE

- As of 2006, Aboriginal people made up 2% of metro Vancouver's population. The median age of the Aboriginal population was 30.6 years, compared to 39.1 years for the total metro Vancouver population.

HOMELESSNESS

- Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the region's homeless population. While only 2% of the overall population is First Nations, 32% of respondents in the 2008 regional Homeless Count said they were First Nations.



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Vital Signs® is based on a project originated by the Toronto Community Foundation and is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC).

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Citizen Grading Panel

Thanks to the 1,070 Metro Vancouver
residents who responded to our invitation
to participate as citizen graders.

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Vancouver Foundation acknowledges
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foundations releasing *Vital Signs* reports in
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ABOUT VANCOUVER FOUNDATION

Vancouver Foundation helps people give back to the communities they care about, and give in a way that is lasting.

We are the largest of Canada's 164 community foundations, and we've been working in British Columbia for 65 years. We focus on improving our communities – the places where we all live, work, play and raise our kids. The place we call home.

While some foundations or charities specialize in one particular area of interest, Vancouver Foundation knows there are many factors that help create a healthy, vibrant, livable and equitable community for all residents. We recognize the complexity of communities and that is one of the reasons why we support a variety of issues.

So how does Vancouver Foundation improve communities?

We work with individual donors, families, organizations and corporations and help them set aside or save money that will be dedicated to long-term philanthropy. Currently, Vancouver Foundation is the custodian of over 1,100 endowment funds with a total market value of approximately \$800 million.

Then we help our donors to easily and conveniently give to all types of charities and innovative initiatives in their

community. Many of these worthy initiatives would not have come to their attention without Vancouver Foundation's knowledge and connections to hundreds of charities.

In 2007, Vancouver Foundation, in partnership with our donors, distributed almost \$60 million to BC charities and communities across Canada.

It is the generous gifts from our donors that help support the many projects Vancouver Foundation funds each year, including this year's *Vital Signs for Metro Vancouver*. Their support of this important research project, which examines the perceptions and the reality of life in our community, underscores our donors' desire to further enhance the Foundation's knowledge and understanding of the community we serve.

To find out more about our work, our granting areas, or how you can make a donation to support important community initiatives, go to our website: www.vancouverfoundation.ca or call 604.688.2204.

THREE YEARS OF VITAL SIGNS

This is the third year Vancouver Foundation has produced its *Vital Signs* report. The first report of 2006 covered only the city of Vancouver. In 2007, we broadened the report's scope to the metro Vancouver region. To see data from previous years, please visit our website: www.vancouverfoundation.ca

GRADING COMPARISON BY YEAR

KEY AREA	2006	2007	2008	CHANGE
Arts and Culture	B	B	B	–
Belonging and Leadership	B-	B-	B-	–
Environment	B	C+	C+	–
Gap Between Rich and Poor	C-	D	D	–
Getting Started	C+	C	C	–
Health and Wellness	B	B	B-	↓
Housing	D+	D	D-	↓
Learning	B	B	B-	↓
Safety	B-	B-	B-	–
Work	B	B	B-	↓

* 2006 report was for city of Vancouver only

* The total number and composition of graders changes from year to year.

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7	5680	1168	3863	602	7690



Vancouver Foundation, 2016

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