

Greater Victoria's Annual Check-up 2006



Victoria's Vital Signs®

VICTORIA  FOUNDATION

CONNECTING PEOPLE
WHO CARE WITH CAUSES
THAT MATTER®



The Foundation

This year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Victoria Foundation and since our beginning we have focused on the well being of our community and on leaving a legacy for generations to come. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for everyone in our community by carefully preserving and managing permanent funds and other gifts, and providing grants to charitable organizations on southern Vancouver Island and beyond.

We pool charitable gifts – large and small – from many donors, to create permanent, income-earning funds that will benefit the community in perpetuity. We distribute the earnings as efficiently as we can, carefully respecting the wishes of our donors, so we can support our community, help charitable organizations succeed, and improve the lives of as many people as possible in our community.

VICTORIA'S **VitalSigns**®*

Vital Signs is an annual community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our cities, identifies significant trends, and assigns grades in at least ten areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is based on a project of the Toronto Community Foundation and is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

The Victoria Foundation has launched Victoria's Vital Signs as a way of fulfilling our motto "connecting people who care with causes that matter." It will help our organization, our donors, and other community groups to address our needs and opportunities.

Vital Signs will help us better understand the social, economic, environmental and cultural factors that contribute to the quality of our lives. Each indicator shows what is happening in a particular area; combined, they provide an important picture of the well-being of our community.

Key highlights of this first Victoria's Vital Signs report show that there are many things to celebrate about living in Greater Victoria, however low income families, youth and people who are homeless are disadvantaged. The cost of living and housing are a huge challenge for many people in our community, and literacy is key to people's long-term success and quality of life.

The data used in Victoria's Vital Signs was collected from a variety of existing sources, and points to a lack of statistical information on arts and culture in our community. This report, as well as an expanded version with additional indicators and full source information and links, is available on our web site at:

www.victoriavitalsigns.bc.ca

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Message from the Chair & CEO

A check-up on our community

We are pleased to release the first annual Victoria's Vital Signs report. Just like an annual physical, this national initiative looks at many different aspects of our community and provides an overall picture of what we're doing well, and what we need to do better.

Those of us who are lucky enough to live on southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands know what a wonderful area it is. This report captures many of the factors that make this a great place to live, learn, work and grow. It tells us whether we're on the right track, and where changes need to be made.

We would like to thank the many community leaders, residents and workshop participants who helped us identify and prioritize the most important community indicators in each of Vital Signs' 11 key areas. They have helped produce a report that is uniquely suited to our community. We would also like to thank the numerous organizations and individuals who helped provide the information included in the report. We've tried to present it in a way that is simple and easy to understand, so that we all get a clearer picture of our community's strengths and needs.

One of the most valuable aspects of Victoria's Vital Signs is that it points to areas needing attention. By working together, it will help us deal with the community's most urgent needs, directing our efforts where they will do the most good. The Victoria Foundation has an endowment of over \$70 million, and last year, gave over \$3.8 million in grants to charitable organizations. Vital Signs will help us make better funding decisions.

Vital Signs is also an invaluable tool for our donors and grant recipients. It will give donors a better understanding of what is happening in our community and help them decide how best to direct their gifts. Grant recipients will have up-to-date information so they can tailor their programs to meet the community's most pressing needs. We hope it will also help organizations work together to identify opportunities and address problems.

We're proud to have brought this initiative to our region, and look forward to the positive changes it will help us make for everyone who lives here.



Sandra Richardson

Executive Director/CEO



R. Thomas Burley

Chair, Board of Directors

Measuring the Vitality of Our Community in 2006

With the help of community graders, the following
grades have been assigned to the indicators in this report.

In dire need of corrective action	★
Of concern, needs attention	★★
Progress is being made	★★★
We're doing well and headed in the right direction	★★★★
Awesome! Victoria's tops!	★★★★★

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The people in our region



Demographic Context

The Capital Region's population continues to grow, however at a slower rate than the rest of BC .

The total population of the Capital Region in 2005 was 351,022. This is a 1% growth over the previous year – 2004. Over the past 5 years the Region has had an annual average population growth of 0.8%, and over the past 10 years of 0.7%. This is a smaller population growth rate than in BC overall at 1.3% over the past ten years.

The number of people 17 and under in the Capital Region was 17.5% of our total population in 2005, compared to 20.2% in BC overall. Projections are that the number of people in the 17 and under age group will continue to fall as a percentage of our total population.

Of the 90,510 families living in the Capital Region in 2001, 53.7% had children at home. Of those families with children, 29.5% were single parents.

People who live in Greater Victoria have ethnic origins in over 90 countries from around the world.

Capital Region Population, 2005

	Number	% of Total
0 – 17 years	61,370	17.5
18 – 24 years	33,847	9.6
25 – 64 years	195,100	55.6
65+ years	60,705	17.3
Total	351,022	100.0

Source: BC Stats

Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation supports people of all ages and cultures from birth to end of life care through programs and organizations such as the Young Parents Support Network, Inter-Cultural Association and Victoria Hospice & Palliative Care Society.

Lots of interests

Arts, Culture & Recreation

Art, culture and recreation are significant drivers of our local economy and help make our community healthy, creative and vibrant.

In 2003, Greater Victoria residents spent an average of \$920 on cultural goods and services, compared to \$787 per resident in BC overall. Total cultural spending in Victoria in 2003 was \$270 million. Victoria ranked second among 15 metropolitan areas in Canada for cultural spending and was designated a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2005. ★★★★★

More than a million people pass through the Royal BC Museum's public spaces each year. In 2004/05 there were 484,909 paid visitors to the Museum. ★★★★★^{1/2}

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has the largest public collection of works of art in BC at almost 16,000.

★★★★^{1/2}

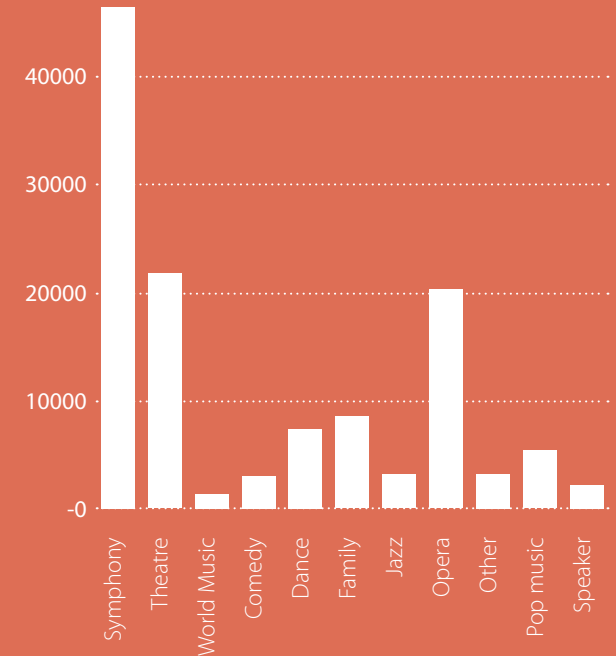
First Nations culture brings a rich history and artistic legacy unique to our community. With 10 bands and tribal councils throughout the region, the two predominant languages are Wakashan and Coast Salish.

★★★★

A recent report states that close to 20% of Canada's Olympic team members live and train in Victoria, where hosting national and international sporting events is a legacy of the region. ★★★★★

In 2005, 6,586 people participated in the LIFE (Leisure Involvement for Everyone) program. The program assists individuals and families with low income to access recreation programs and services.

Royal & McPherson Theatre Attendance
(2005 Events by Entertainment Type)



Source: Royal & McPherson Theatres Society

Vital Link

Building the capacity and long-term sustainability for arts, cultural and recreational organizations is supported and encouraged by the Victoria Foundation through initiatives such as BC Arts Renaissance, Arts Sustainability Victoria and more.

Giving back



Belonging and Leadership

Victorians care about their community and give generously of their time and money.

In 2004, almost 30% of the people who filed tax returns in Greater Victoria reported making donations to charitable organizations. The median amount donated was \$290. This compares favourably with BC donors overall, where 24% of tax filers made donations, and their median donation was the same at \$290.

★★★★^{1/2}

Voter turnout in the 2006 federal election for the Greater Victoria ridings was 70.7% compared to a 63.7% turnout in BC overall.

★★★★^{1/2}

In a 2005 study on health indicators, 69.3% of residents on South Vancouver Island reported having a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their local community. This ranks slightly above BC overall at 67.1%.

★★★★^{1/2}

Volunteer work makes a significant contribution to our local economy and the non-profit sector. Economic studies have shown that the value of time donated by volunteers is worth more than double the value of donations from individuals. In 2005, Volunteer Victoria recruited 16,100 volunteers for community organizations, a 34% increase over the previous year.

★★★★★

Victorians' Plans for
Canada Day, 2006

43%

It's Canada's birthday,
so we'll celebrate
with all the National
pride we can muster

6%

It's the start of our
vacation, we're getting
out of town

6%

A great
excuse for
a party

45%

It's just an
extra day off,
no big deal

Source: CFA 1070 Web Poll, June 23, 2006

Average Donations

(Made by Greater Victoria Tax Filers in 2004 by Age)

0 to 24 years	\$500
25 to 34 years	\$680
35 to 44 years	\$940
45 to 54 years	\$1,100
55 to 64 years	\$1,300
65 years and over	\$1,800

Source: Statistics Canada



Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation provides support for developing community leaders through organizations and initiatives such as Leadership Victoria, the Stanford Leadership program and the Foundation's own Youth in Philanthropy program.

Living green



Environment

Leadership is being taken and shown in caring for and improving our rich natural environment, however work must continue to protect our natural resources and heritage.

From 1995 to 2004, the average water consumption per person for residential use in the Capital Region was 312 litres/day, considerably less than the BC average of 425 litres/day. ★★ ★^{1/2}

About 90% of households in the Capital Region participate in curbside recycling programs. This rate of participation is among the highest in North America. ★★★★★

Approximately 130 million litres of screened sewage are discharged daily into the marine environment of the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the combined outputs of Clover and Macaulay Points. ★★

Between 1973 and 2003, Capital Region lands have been removed at a rate of about 65 hectares per year from the Agricultural Land Reserve – land protected for agricultural use. ★^{1/2}

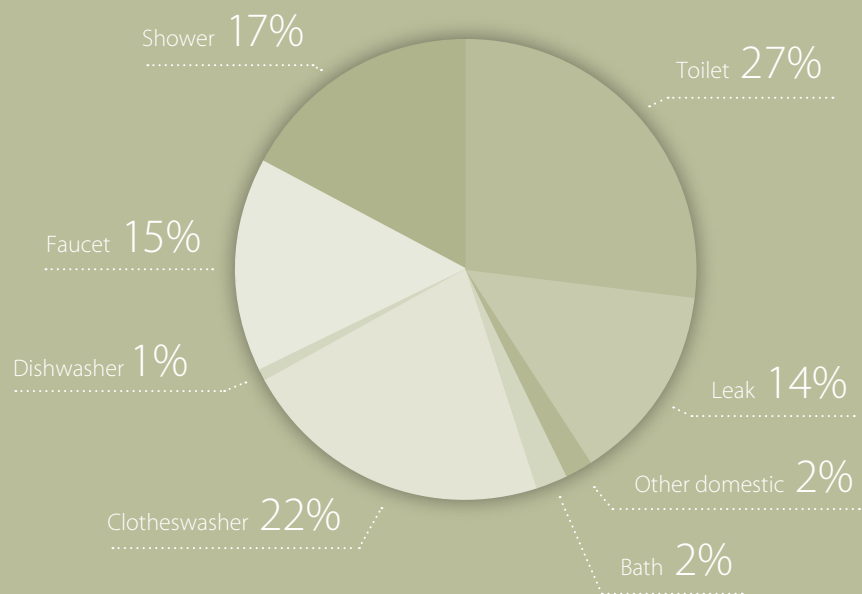
Residential electricity use increased by over 13% between 1995 and 2004, while the population increased by less than 5% in the same period. This suggests that the per capita use of electricity is increasing. ★★

Vital Link

Three priority areas: air and water quality, ecosystem awareness and protection, and sustainable communities are the focus of the Victoria Foundation's work with organizations such as Habitat Acquisition Trust, Georgia Strait Alliance, Smart Growth BC and the McConnell Foundation.

Indoor Residential Water Use

Source: CRD Water Services





Growing apart

Gap Between Rich and Poor

Long-term trends show that the gap between the highest and lowest income earners in the Capital Region is widening.

Employment income for the top 10% of income earners in Greater Victoria averaged \$69,000 in 2000, a 5.6% increase since 1980. However, for the bottom 10% the average employment income in 2000 was \$14,600, a 20.2% drop since 1980. ★^{1/2}

A family of four with a pre-tax household income of less than \$33,251 in 2005 is considered to be living in difficult circumstances – below the low-income cut-off line.

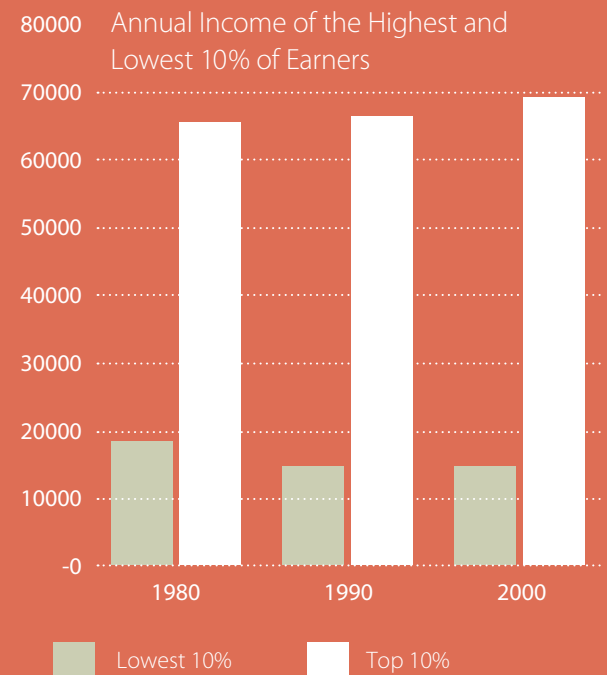
In 2005, 3.2% of residents in the Capital Region (7319 people) were dependent on the social safety net – employment insurance or basic income assistance – compared with 4.2% in BC overall. ★★

A family of 4 (2 parents and 2 children) living a basic modest existence in the Capital Region has monthly costs of \$3,480. To achieve this income on minimum wage, the income earners need to work a combined total of 111.5 hours/week. ★^{1/2}

Top 5 Household Expenditures (in Greater Victoria, 2004)

Commodity	Average Expenditure /Household	% of Total Expenditure
Shelter (principal accommodation)	\$13,472	21.6%
Personal Taxes	\$11,333	18.2%
Food	\$6,498	10.4%
Transportation	\$6,442	10.3%
Recreation	\$4,104	6.6%

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Household Spending, 2004



Source: Census of Canada, 1981, 1991, 2001

Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation has a long history of addressing social inequities along with organizations such as Together Against Poverty, Burnside Gorge Community Association, United Way and the Community Social Planning Council.

Starting strong

Getting Started in our Community

Comparatively, Victoria does not receive many newcomers, however many of the children and youth in our region need help in getting started.

From 1996 to 2003, 5,606 people moved to Victoria from outside of Canada. This represents 0.4% of Canada's total immigration in that period. However, the Capital Region had the highest in-flow of all BC regional districts of people from other provinces in Canada in 2003/04 – approximately 2,400 people.

★★★

In 2001 the Capital Region had 43,560 children under the age of 13, and 177 licensed child care spaces for every 1,000 children, compared to 116 spaces for every 1,000 children in BC overall. The

Capital Region had an 11% increase in the number of child care spaces between 1997 and 2001.

★★ 1/2

In the Greater Victoria Health Area, there are 14.8 children in government care for every 1,000 children under the age of seven. This is considerably higher than the BC average of 10.6 children for every 1,000. ★ 1/2

Unemployment amongst our youth (age 15 – 24) has been dropping consistently over the past five years, however is still considerably higher than the unemployment rate for the employable population overall on South Vancouver Island. ★★

Unemployment Rate by Age Group



Source: Statistics Canada

Vital Link

Whether new to the world or new to the country, the Victoria Foundation supports giving everyone a good start in life through initiatives and organizations such as the Youth Education Assistance Fund, BC Adoption and Permanency Fund, Immigrant & Refugee Society and Kids Klub.

Staying healthy

Health and Wellness

The Capital Region is one of the healthiest places to live in BC and Canada.

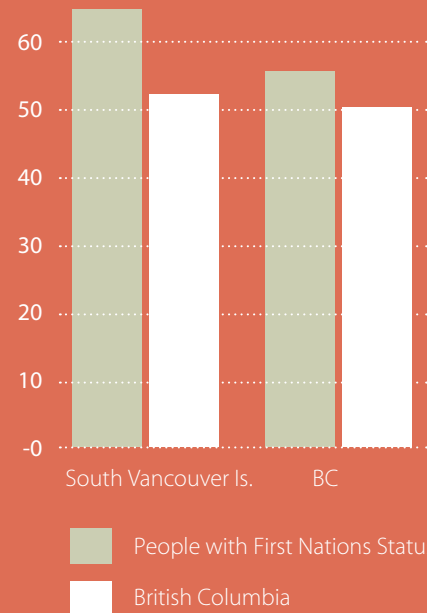
In 2005, South Vancouver Island residents reported lower levels of obesity – 12.5% compared to 13.2% in BC overall. ★★

Of the babies born on South Vancouver Island in 2001, 5.1% were considered to have a low birth weight. Of these, 64.6 out of every 1,000 were babies with First Nations status compared to 47.8 out of every 1,000 for other residents of the region. ★★

In 2005, 66.1% of the residents of South Vancouver Island reported that they were physically or moderately active compared to 57.7% for BC overall. Despite having higher activity rates, 38.4% of South Vancouver Island residents report having more limitations to their participation and activity, than BC residents overall at 31.1%. ★★ ★^{1/2}

A higher percentage of South Vancouver Island residents reported very good or excellent mental health (73.0%) in 2005 compared to BC overall (71.1%). ★★ ★

Low Birth Weight Babies
(per 1,000 live births)



Source: BC Ministry of Health, Vital Statistics, 2002



Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation supports healthy families and a lifetime of care through organizations and programs such as the YM/YWCA, KidSport and Best Babies.

Having a home

Housing

Housing in the Capital Region is expensive and affordable housing is scarce.

In 2000, 28.4% of the households in Greater Victoria spent 30% or more of their income on shelter. ★★

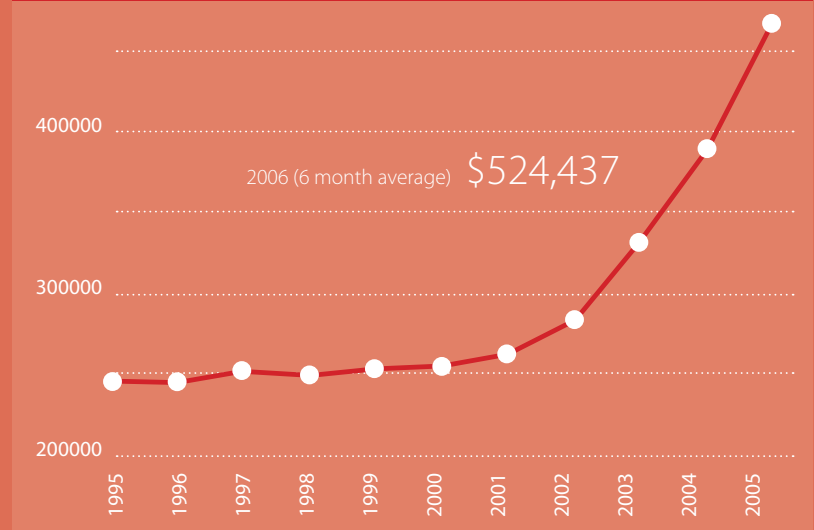
Approximately 700 people were homeless – sleeping in shelters or on the street – in Greater Victoria in January 2005. Their average age was 34 and they ranged from 16 to 67 years. The majority came from within the region and their time on the street ranged between two weeks to 24 years. More than 60% of them were men. ★^{1/2}

In 2001, the Capital Region had 22,000 families in core housing need in that their housing was not affordable, adequate or safe. ★^{1/2}

To serve 32,153 seniors age 75 and over living in the Capital Region, there were 1,772 independent living units for seniors in Greater Victoria in 2005. ★^{1/2}

As of March 31, 2006, there were 6,347 subsidized housing units in Greater Victoria. Of these, 1,495 were for families, 3,760 for seniors and 1,092 for people with special needs. ★★

Average Residential Prices in Greater Victoria
(Single Family Dwellings)

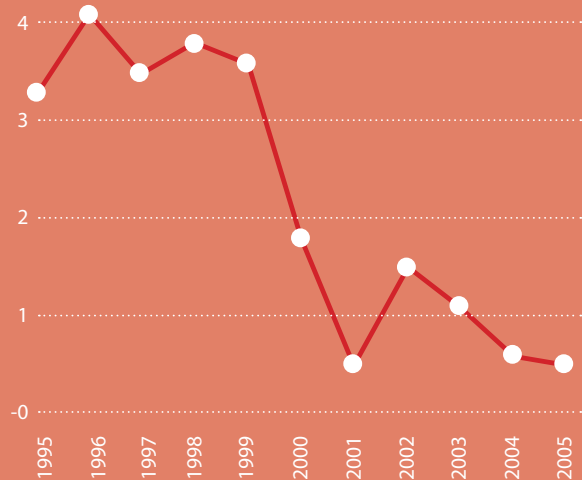


Source: Victoria Real Estate Board Multiple Listing Service®

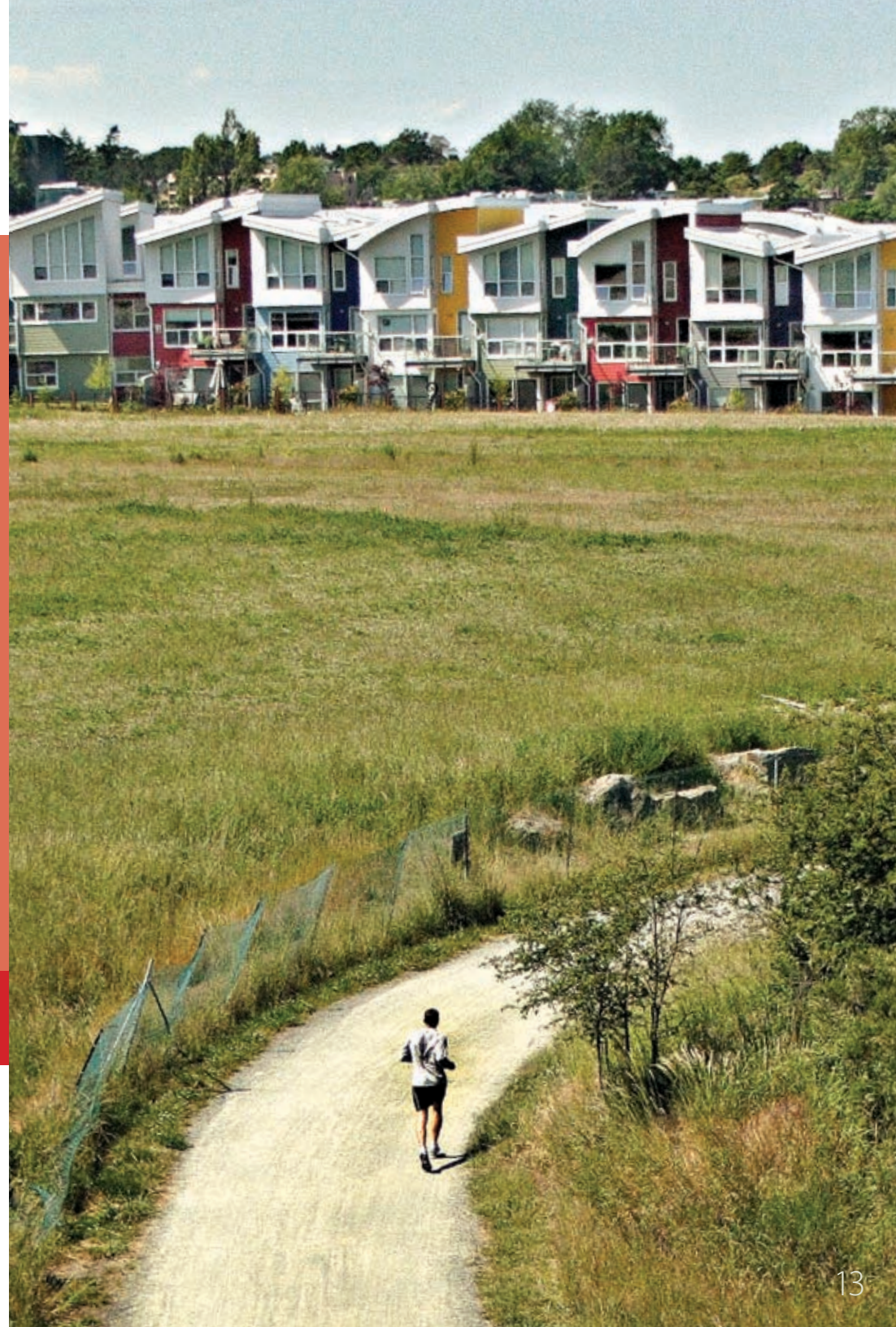
Vital Link

To support sustainable and affordable housing projects in the region, the Victoria Foundation works with organizations such as the Gorge View Housing Society, Habitat for Humanity, Our Place, Abbeyfield Housing Society, Casa Mara Housing Society and Victoria Cool Aid.

Rental Vacancy Rate in Greater Victoria



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation





Gaining knowledge

Learning

Residents of the Capital Region are highly educated but challenges continue to face our young people in graduating from high school.

A new national learning index that combines data from a number of areas to determine the state of lifelong learning in a community scores Greater Victoria at 80.7 out of 100 compared to 76.6 for the province overall. Of the 11 communities scored in BC, the capital region scored the highest. A high score means that the area has lifelong learning conditions favourable to economic and social success. ★★☆☆^{1/2}

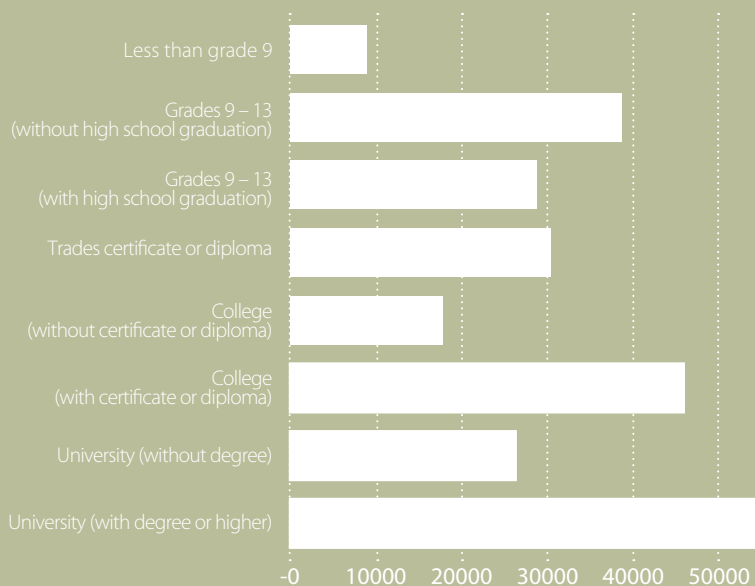
In 2003 - 2005, an average of 28.2% of the 18 year olds in the Capital Region did not graduate from high school. This is higher than the 24.4% average for BC. ★^{1/2}

Studies have shown that young people who are proficient readers are more likely to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. This year's Times Colonist Raise-a-Reader book sale had a record 425,000 books. The sale raised \$154,073 that was given back to the community to support education and literacy projects. ★★★★★

Internet use in the Capital Region continues to rise from 59.1% of households in 2000 to 73.2% in 2003. ★★★★★

Highest Level of Schooling in the Capital Region

(Population 20 years & over, 2001)



Source: 2001 Census of Canada



Average Costs for BC Post-Secondary Students

(for a single student living away from home)

Shelter	\$650/month
Food	\$200/month
Miscellaneous (personal & health care, clothing, household items, communications)	\$225/month
Local public transportation	\$70/month
Total monthly living expenses	\$1,145/MONTH
Multiplied by 8 months (1 academic year)	\$9,160/year
Plus the average cost of tuition for university	\$4,214/year
Plus the average cost of books & supplies	\$1,500/year
Total average student costs	\$14,874/year

Source: British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer

Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation supports lifelong learning and access to continuing education through scholarships and bursary funds held for the University of Victoria, Camosun College, Victoria READ Society, Greater Victoria Public Library, Oak Bay Senior Secondary and Victoria High.

Feeling secure



Safety

Greater Victoria is a safe place to live, but efforts to prepare for a disaster need to continue.

In 2005, Greater Victoria's crime rate dropped by 2.9%, compared with a 2.3% drop in 2004. There were less murders, break-ins, assaults and motor vehicle thefts last year, however there was an increase in impaired driving offences. ★★ ★

The NEED crisis and information line offers emotional support, crisis intervention and information on community resources. In 2005/06, the 24-hour line took over 13,000 calls. The top three caller concerns were: mental or emotional health (e.g. mental

illness, depression, bereavement/loss, loneliness), requests for information and relationships. ★★ ★^{1/2}

Nothing can be done to prevent disasters such as earthquakes or floods, but families that are prepared before a disaster strikes are more likely to cope during the event and recover more quickly after it. In a May 2006 CFX web poll, only 45% of voters said they were prepared to survive on their own for three days in the aftermath of a disaster. ★★ ★^{1/2}

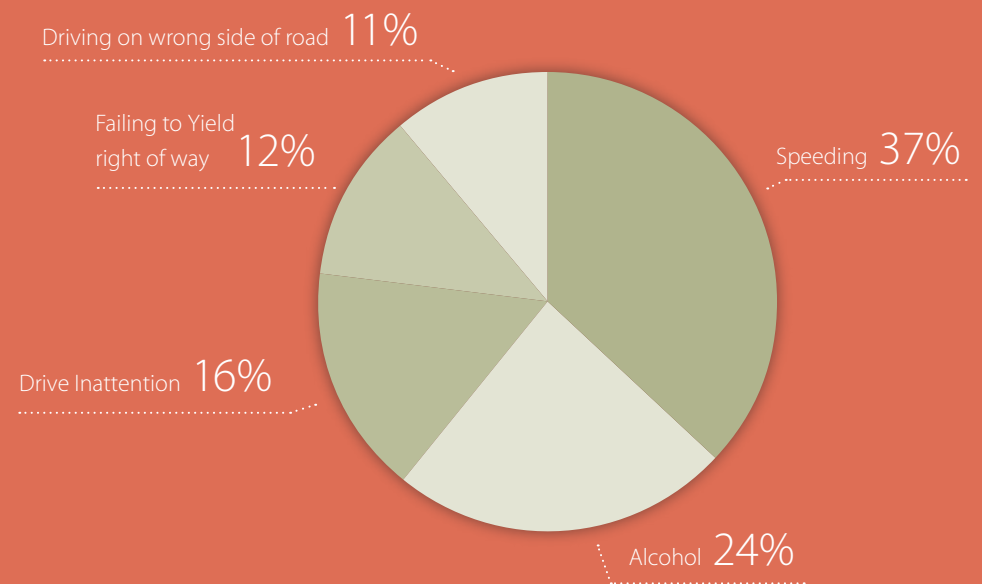
Greater Victoria Crime Rates by Offence (per 100,000 population)

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Murder	1.0	1.5	1.5	0.6
Break-ins	730	749	930	804
Motor Vehicle Theft	287	304	337	260
Impaired Driving	241	292	283	290

Source: Statistics Canada

Causes of Fatal Collisions in BC

Source: ICBC - BC Traffic Collision Statistics, 2004



Vital Link

To help support people who are victims of crime and in need of emotional support, the Victoria Foundation supports organizations such as NEED Crisis and Information, MADD, Greater Victoria Police Victim Services, Women's Sexual Assault Centre and Women's Transition House.

Getting around

Transportation

Alternative transportation use increases, however the most popular way to get around in the Capital Region continues to be the car.

As of May 2006, there were 2,924 km. of roads in the Capital Region, including highways, arterials, and local streets that are shared between cars, buses, cyclists, horses and pedestrians. These roads are supplemented by 84 km. of trails that intersect 10 municipalities. ★★^{1/2}

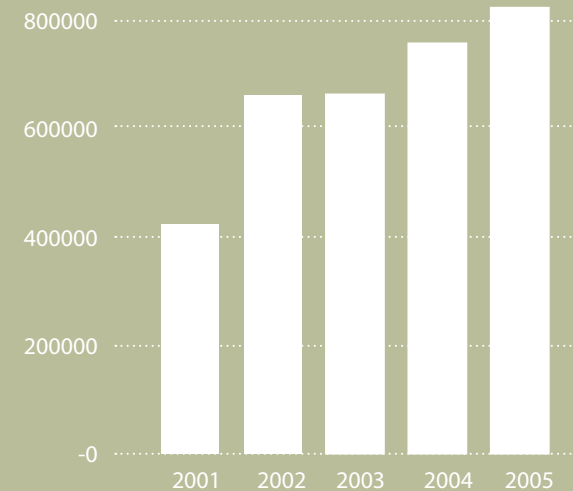
The median distance to work in Greater Victoria in 2001 was 4.7 km. with over 77% of residents living within less than 10 km. of their usual place of work. ★★^{1/2}

Over 80% of Greater Victoria residents live within 400 m. of a bus stop. On a typical weekday, the Victoria Regional Transit System carries 80,000 passengers. In 2005/06 they provided 21.1 million rides, a 7% increase over the previous year. ★★★^{1/2}

Float plane traffic in the inner harbour set a record 30,665 arrivals and departures in 2005, compared to 27,505 in 2004. ★★★^{1/2}

More than 5,250 people participated in the 2006 Bike to Work Week. As part of the week's events, 17 teams participated in a race between a bike and a car. Out of the 17 teams, 12 bikes finished ahead of their car partner, 3 teams tied and 2 cars finished ahead of their biking counterparts.

Regional Trail Use
(# of people using the Galloping Goose
and Lochside Trails)



Source: CRD Parks, Visitor Use Reports



Vital Link

Recognizing the importance of individual mobility and having alternative transportation, the Victoria Foundation supports programs and organizations such as the Community Living Restructuring Fund, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Kludahk Outdoor Club and SmartGrowth BC.

Earning a living

Work

Employment opportunities continue to grow in the region.

In 2005, Greater Victoria had 133,900 people employed full-time, and 35,300 part-time. For full-time work, this represents a 5% increase over 2004 and four consecutive years of full-time job growth. ★★ ★^{1/2}

Recent research shows that a family of 4 living in the Capital Region needs to earn \$46,410 annually for a basic, modest existence. ★★

The top three industries by labour force size in Greater Victoria in 2003 were: retail & wholesale trade (15.0%), health care & social assistance (13.3%), and accommodation & food services (10.0%). ★★ ★

There were 2,261 businesses incorporated in the Capital Region in 2005, a 27.9% increase over the previous year. Comparatively, there were 776 consumer and business bankruptcies in the region in 2005, a 9.3% increase over the previous year. ★★ ★^{1/2}

As a major driver of employment in the region, tourism revenues hit \$1.15 billion in 2005 as a result of 3.65 million tourists. Revenue from tourism has grown consistently over the past ten years. ★★ ★^{1/2}

Top 20 Largest Employers in the Capital Region, 2003

	# of Jobs
Provincial Government Departments	11,481
Vancouver Island Health Authority	6,950
Department of National Defence – CFB Esquimalt	6,000
University of Victoria	5,000
Federal Government Departments (except DND)	3,255
School District #61 (Victoria)	2,648
Thrifty Foods	2,213
Coast Capital Savings Credit Union	2,000
School District #63 (Saanich)	1,550
District of Saanich	1,474
BC Ferries	1,127
West Corporation	1,110
School District #62 (Sooke)	990
Camosun College	925
Capital Regional District	912
McDonald's Restaurants	900
Wal-Mart Department Store	752
The Bay	645
BC Transit	628
Butchart Gardens	550
Source: CRD Regional Planning Services	

Vital Link

The Victoria Foundation supports job opportunities and training through organizations such as the Entrepreneurial Learning Foundation, Transition Youth Employment Services and Wear 2 Start.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the individuals and organizations who provided information and statistics or in any way helped in creating this report. We are grateful to the community leaders who provided the initial base of indicators, those that attended our workshop to prioritize them, and to all the people who went on-line to grade them. All in all, over 200 people have contributed to the contents of this report.

The use of indicators and report cards to assess community needs and opportunities is a growing trend in Canada among policy makers, community organizations and citizens wanting to make a difference. Throughout this process, the Victoria Foundation has worked with a group of

organizations doing indicator work. Special mention must go to the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria for the leadership they have shown in Canada and locally with the production of a series of reports on the Quality of Life in the Capital Region. As well, to the CRD Round Table on the Environment for publishing a comprehensive report on the State of Environment Indicators earlier this year.

As part of a national initiative, we have worked with other community foundations from across Canada to coordinate our efforts and report on a common set of core indicators. And, lastly our thanks to the board and staff of the Victoria Foundation for their guidance and continuing support.



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Victoria Symphony Orchestra

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Volunteer Victoria

Winnie Lee

Western Economic Diversification

John Briggs

Women's Transition House

Carolyn Fast

Other Participants

Laura Acton
Leah Burley
Ruth Derrick
Ron Faris
Geri Hinton
Bill Huzar
Vicki Kuhl
Gord Miller
Flo-Elle Watson

*Plus all those who
anonymously completed
our on-line grading survey.*

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**With thanks from the
Vital Signs Project Team**

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Louise MacDonald
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VICTORIA'S **VitalSigns®**

This report as well as an expanded version with additional indicators and source information and links, is available at www.victoriavitalsigns.bc.ca

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