

NORTH OKANAGAN'S

**VitalSigns**<sup>®</sup>

**2011**

**One** snapshot of our community

**Eleven** key issues

**Over** one hundred citizen graders



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## NORTH OKANAGAN'S **VitalSigns**<sup>®</sup>

Intended as a long-term initiative, **VitalSigns** is a perceptual study which builds on partnerships with a broad range of community members who contributed their skills and expertise, along with hundreds of citizens who were actively engaged in the development and grading of the report.

### Community Engagement

#### Goals

- Highlight areas of need to encourage further dialogue with and response from institutions, public leaders, charitable organizations and citizens
- Encourage cross-sector, holistic thinking on the overall vitality of our city and provide impetus for cross-sector initiatives
- Build community capacity through shared knowledge for good decision-making

#### Community Leadership Group

Twenty-five representatives from key Vernon organizations provided high level advice and recommendations to ensure that Vernon's Vital Signs report is an effective vehicle for showing the perceived trends and priorities that are emerging in Vernon.

#### Citizen Graders

One hundred seventy-nine citizens signed up to be graders, assigning grades to the 11 key "issue areas" based on personal perceptions. The questions were ranked by the number of respondents x Value (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). These were then totaled and divided by the number of respondents. The result is a numerical value between 1 and 5 which was converted to a letter grade.

#### Index of Grading

- A** Very good: stay the course
- B** Good: but some improvements could be made
- C** Fair: suggest additional effort be made to address these issues
- D** Poor: substantial additional work is required
- E** Fail: immediate action is crucial

### Methodology

#### Research

Community Leaders and the Community Foundation of the North Okanagan (CFNO) Directors selected the Issue Areas and Indicators (benchmarks) for Vernon's Vital Signs, ensuring they were relevant, accurate and comprehensive. Community Foundations of Canada, which retained the Centre for the Study of Living Standards to undertake national research, provided additional expertise.

#### Survey

An online survey was available to all Vernon citizens, with more than one hundred fifty signing up to have their say. An additional 29 citizens attended a session at Schubert Centre to complete a paper-based version of the survey.

#### Indicator Selection

Indicators were selected and prioritized based on the following guidelines:

##### Indicator Characteristics:

- Perceived public interest
- Does the indicator inspire action?
- Does the indicator report on an issue or trend that individuals or communities can do something about?

##### Overall Indicator Set:

- Does it reveal both strengths and weaknesses of Vernon?
- Does it reflect a balance of focus on people, the economy and the environment?

#### Data Selection

- Understandability and measurability
- Ease and cost of collection
- How current the information is and frequency of collection for future use



## 2011 Report Highlights



### Learning

Early Childhood literacy has begun to improve in Vernon and the high school completion rate is nearing the provincial average. The City scores just above the national average on the Composite Learning Index which measures the ability of youth and adults to *learn to Do, learn to Know, learn to Live Together and learn to Be.*

### Seniors

Vernon's senior population continues with strong growth; however, poverty can be an issue for some, increasing dependence on government and local programs.

### Environment

In 2009 a total of 54,023 tonnes of solid waste were taken to Regional Disposal Facilities, an increase of 2% over 2008. The Regional Growth Strategy has set goals to reduce Green House Gas emissions to 15% by 2020 and 25% by 2030.

### Health & Wellness

Vernon citizens score highly in terms of eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily, and a high percentage of the population engages in moderately active or active leisure time activities.

### Housing

Housing in Vernon has become an important issue as property values have increased significantly, making home ownership and rentals unaffordable to many Vernon citizens. Community initiatives are under way to address this challenge.

### Arts & Culture

Arts and culture have the power to enrich, educate and inspire us. Events such as cultural/theatrical events, museums, art galleries and musical presentations are readily available in Vernon.

### Gap Between Rich & Poor

Since the last census, poverty rates have declined; however, some groups are still at risk. Single parent households and child poverty need attention. The gap between top earners and bottom earners continues to grow.

### Safety & Security

Crime reduction measures implemented through strategic policing priorities and government focus are achieving the desired results as shown by the reduction in the crime rate.

### Getting Around

In 2007, Cars/trucks (91.3%), transit (0.7%), bicycles (1%) and walking (7%) are the primary modes of transportation in Vernon. The target is to increase transit use, cycling and walking to 20% by 2031

### Belonging & Leadership

The volunteer hours donated in Vernon are high compared to those in other areas and philanthropic activity is increasing. The median charitable donation in 2009 was \$350, an increase of 40% over 2001.

### Work

Secure work and a livable wage are essential to Vernon's regional economy, but steady work does not necessarily mean livable wages. According to BC Stats, Vernon's wage rate is not doing as well as either the National or Provincial rates.

## VITAL SIGNS A Canadian Initiative with a North Okanagan Focus

Vital Signs is a snapshot of the City of Vernon and area that focuses on areas of concern and success. It's a perceptual study of our community, organized and graded by citizens, to provide an understanding of our challenges and successes and where to take action if required.

In the Spring of 2011 a broad cross-section of community leaders was asked to identify 11 key "Issue Areas" which would form the basis for the study. This group then identified four to six "Indicators" or benchmarks for each "Issue Area."

With the help of Community Foundations of Canada and the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., our team identified specific measurements for each indicator allowing comparison and interpretation of indicator statistics between Vernon and the province or, in some cases, Vernon and Canada.

We should observe that sometimes there is a wealth of Vernon-specific data while in other cases the data may be specific to the North Okanagan. This is due to city size and B.C. Stats and Statistics Canada research and measurement protocols.

In June, over 170 citizen graders volunteered to complete a perception survey for Vernon's Vital Signs. Their grading of each Issue Area on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (good) created the community view on these areas.

As well as providing a basis for discussion of these areas, Vernon's Vital Signs will also assist the Community Foundation's granting process by offering guidance to the Grants Committee and our donors regarding compelling funding needs requiring philanthropic support.

Volunteers were critical to this project, and the Community Foundation would like to thank our sponsors, the community leaders, the survey participants, the many local citizens and CFNO Board Members who volunteered their time and energy to bring the project to fruition. We anticipate a second Vital Signs study in 2013 and then every five years as fresh census data becomes available.



*Michael Tindall, President*



*Marty Armstrong, Project Leader*



# Learning

# C+

**On the Composite Learning Index Score, Vernon scored 77. The highest possible rank for smaller towns and cities is 99. Vernon scored 0.7% above the national average.**

## Literacy

Literacy measures not whether one can read but how well one reads. Skills are assessed in four achievement areas; prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem solving. Scores are grouped in five levels with only those individuals in levels three and above being able to fully understand and succeed in today's knowledge-based society.

Development of early literacy is a critical foundation upon which all future learning is based. In School District #22, 21.4% of all children entering kindergarten were considered "vulnerable" in at least one of five developmental areas (2009). In other words, 21.4% of five year olds arrived at school "not ready to learn" (B.C. - 21.5%).

## Composite Learning Index Score

On the Composite Learning Index Score, Vernon scored 77. The highest possible rank for smaller towns and cities is 99. Vernon scored 0.7% above the national average. The index measures the ability of youth and adults to *Learn to Know, Learn to Do, Learn to Live Together and Learn to Be*. Skills measured include: reading, math and problem solving, job training, volunteering, exposure to arts and culture and internet knowledge and ability.

## Six Year Completion

The number of students who entered grade eight and successfully completed graduation requirements six years later was 78.4% in 2010 (B.C. - 79.7%). 37.4% of graduates moved on to higher education (B.C. - 52.1%).

## Seniors

With the rapidly increasing literacy demands of daily life, seniors are at a disadvantage. For many, their schooling was cut short by war, poverty, lack of access to school or the lure of good jobs. Literacy B.C. estimates that up to "80% of Canadians over 65 are unable to cope with the literacy demands of everyday life and work." Literacy skills erode without further use and low literacy skills have been linked to health safety, independence and low self-esteem among seniors. In addition, seniors' needs are under-represented in literacy programs which focus more typically on youth.

## High School Non-Completion

Between 2007 and 2010 the average non-completion rate for 18 year olds in SD #22 was 26%. The provincial rate was 29%.

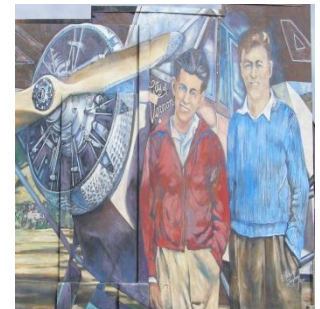


## How the Foundation is helping...

The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan granted \$7,500 to the Okanagan Science Centre, allowing them to purchase new equipment and add new programs for 10 year olds and older to keep them engaged in science. The Foundation also granted \$1,000 to the Literacy and Youth Initiatives Society which is focused on improving the literacy skills of children in grades two and three who are living in poverty

## How you can help...

- Volunteer to help someone learn to read
- Get a library card
- Go hear an interesting speaker at a local lecture



**Vernon's seniors' population is projected to grow to 24% by 2020. This warrants much attention from the community and will influence political, economic and social decisions.**

#### Population

In 2010 the population of Greater Vernon was 65,790 with 20% being 65 years of age or older. This is in sharp contrast to the province which had a population of 4.5 million with 15% being 65 years of age or older. Projections to 2020 estimate that Vernon's senior population will grow to 24% compared to 19% provincially.

If the age criterion of 65 was reduced to 55, 35% would be 55 years of age or older as compared to the province with 28% being 55 years of age or older.

#### Senior-Friendly Community

Greater Vernon is a desirable area in which to live and work. Our community leaders must plan for and support our aging population

A "report card" on an age-friendly community might include an assessment of Community Support & Health Services; Transportation; Housing; Respect & Social Inclusion; Getting Around in community spaces and the opportunities to participate in community decision-making.

#### Literacy

According to Literacy BC, 80% of seniors are working with low levels of literacy. According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), 48% of all Canadian adults fall into the two lowest reading levels. The majority of these are

seniors, 65 and older. Based on 1996 statistics, over 60% of seniors never completed high school, 37% had less than a Grade 9 education and 8% had a university degree. By the year 2041 it is anticipated that 23% of all Canadians will be seniors, a significant increase from 12% in 1999.

#### Pension Rates

In 2011, the top rate for Canada Pension Plan recipients is \$11,520 per annum with the average recipient receiving \$6,149. Add to this the Old Age Security top rate of \$6,404 with the average recipient receiving \$5,948. If there is no supplemental income the annual income of those seniors receiving only the CPP and the OAS would be between \$12,097 and \$17,924. This is below the low income line of \$18,421, after taxes, for an individual, as established by the Conference Board of Canada in 2009, or the low income line of \$18,178, after taxes, as established by Statistics Canada in 2007.

#### Poverty Rate Among Senior-Led Households

In 2005, the after tax elderly poverty rate was 4.2%. This is in contrast to the national rate of 6.9% and the provincial rate of 7.3%.

In 2008, 8.2% of Vernon seniors were considered living in a low income family, compared to the provincial rate of 13.4%



#### How you can help...

- Watch for seniors crossing roads, they need more time
- Support senior's programs
- Remember, you will be a senior one day

#### How the Foundation is helping...

The **Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$13,500 toward Senior focused projects including new appliances for the **Abbeyfield Houses of Vernon Society**, the **Community Recreational Initiatives Society's** Adaptive Outdoor Recreation Program, and the **Vernon Seniors choir** Sing-Out for Shut-Ins. Additionally, a grant to an elevator project at the **Community Arts Centre** helped provide access to second floor studios and resources.







# Environment

# C

**The North Okanagan is recognized as a great place to live and visit. In order to maintain this reputation, it's critical that we as citizens protect the environment for future generations.**

## Solid Waste Management

In 2009 a total of 54,023 tonnes of solid waste were taken to Regional Disposal Facilities, an increase of 2% over 2008:

- Residential – 20,919 tonnes representing 38.7% of the total
- Institutional / Commercial / Industrial – 27,857 representing 51.7%
- Demolition / Construction – 5,169 representing 9.6%

The overall disposal rate in 2009 was 0.64 tonnes per capita, identical to the previous year. The quantity of material recycled or reused by the Regional District was 29,291 tonnes in 2009, including the Blue Bag Recycling Program (up 5% from 2008).

## Green House Gas Emissions

Our economy is very dependent on fossil fuels, which release air pollutants that cause adverse health effects.

In 2007 the estimated GHG emissions in the Regional District were 615,149 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, representing 7.7 tonnes per person. To help reduce the impact on our environment, provincial legislation is now in place requiring the District to develop “Energy Use” and “GHG Emissions” policies. The Regional Growth Strategy has set goals to reduce emissions by 15% by 2020 and by 25% by 2030.

## Air Quality

The BC Ministry of Environment has concluded that the primary causes of air pollution in the region are *Road Dust* and *Open Burning*.

In order to help reduce the impact of smoke, the Regional District implemented a By-Law restricting the period of time and types of materials that could be burned and requiring citizens to acquire an “Open Burning” permit prior to burning.

Dust issues are best dealt with by road sweeping in the very early spring and late fall by individual jurisdictions using best management practices.

These periodic air quality issues can create health risks, ranging from minor irritations to serious health problems. To help monitor the situation, four Air Quality monitoring stations have been implemented by the Ministry of Environment in the Region to provide information which will lead to new policies and actions.

## Water Consumption –Daily Usage

Average Daily Usage	Litres	Gallons
Residential	662	145
(Summer)	(901)	(198)
(Winter)	(485)	(107)
Multi Family	4,840	1,065
Commercial	3,890	856
**OCL – Residential	20,474	4,504

\*\*OCL – Outside City Limits



## How the Foundation is helping...

The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan granted \$11,800 toward a variety of projects including the **Vernon School District** Waterways project, the **Bishop Wild Bird Foundation's** Sanctuary Garden renovation and the **Upper Room Mission's** Backyard Garden Project. Several **Allan Brooks Nature Centre** programs were also funded.

## How you can help...

- Recycle! Reduce! Reuse!
- Help keep our community clean
- Ride a bike instead of driving the car
- Conserve our water



# C Health & Wellness

**An individual's general physical and mental health plays an important role in his or her overall sense of vitality and well-being and also aids in making healthy lifestyle choices.**

An individual's general physical and mental health play an important role in his or her overall sense of vitality and well-being and also aids in making healthy lifestyle choices. The **Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area** scores higher than the province in certain health behaviours.

## **Eating Right and Exercise**

46.6% of residents over the age of 12 report consuming fruit and vegetables 5 or more times a day compared to B.C. at 43.8%.

64% of residents over 12 years were moderately active to active in their leisure time activities compared to B.C. at 59% and Canada at 51%.

Unfortunately this heightened physical participation is not reflected in annual work days lost of 9.6 compared to the B.C. average of 9.3.

## **Mental Health**

Self-rated perception of good or excellent mental health in the Okanagan Health Services Area was 66.9% versus B.C. at 71.6%.

## **Smoking**

15.7% reported they were daily or occasional smokers, compared to B.C. at 17.4%.

## **Obesity**

In 2010, 18.2% of the 18+ population rated themselves as obese which is a 25% increase between 2003 and 2010.

## **Family Doctor**

Among the 18+ population, 88.4% of this group reported having a regular doctor; compared with the provincial rate of 85.7% and the national rate of 84.8%.

## **Perceived Life Stress**

In 2010, 22.9% of the population aged 12+ reported experiencing a lot of stress on most days. This is 0.4% above the provincial level and 2.6% below the national level.

## **Seniors' Health**

From 2003 - 2007 seniors 75+ accounted for 75% of deaths from diseases of the circulatory system, 50% of deaths from malignant tumors and 80% of deaths from diseases of the respiratory system. An emphasis on clean air and water as well as enhanced seniors' exercise programs may prove beneficial.

It should be noted that there is a high proportion of seniors in the Okanagan, possibly accounting for these higher numbers



## **How you can help...**

- Eat healthy meals
- Be active - lose a few pounds
- Quit smoking or help someone else to quit
- Involve seniors in healthy activities

## **How the Foundation is helping...**

**The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$14,600 towards the **Vernon Jubilee Hospital's** acquisition of a bladder scanner and furnishings for an ICU room. In addition \$4,500 was granted to the **People in Need Crisis Intervention Society** to "Train the Trainers" in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Program.







# Housing

C-

**Housing in Vernon has become a significant issue as property values have increased significantly, making home ownership and rentals unaffordable to many Vernon citizens.**

## Housing Strategies

In 2006, Vernon City Council and the wider community identified the growing need to adequately address the issues of homelessness and affordable housing. A collaborative approach was developed to ensure that gaps along the complete housing spectrum were addressed. The Partners in Action Committee created and pursued the Homelessness Strategy and the City of Vernon's Affordable Housing Committee developed and implemented the Attainable Housing Strategy. The two groups work in conjunction to increase the number of non-market "affordable" housing units for the "Partners focus," low income and vulnerable populations, and market "attainable" housing for average to moderate income earners.

## Homelessness Strategy

Since its adoption in March of 2007, the majority of the strategies have been implemented. In particular, the opening of the Gateway Shelter and the provincial government's commitment to funding a variety of outreach workers has dramatically increased the nonprofit sector's capacity to assist the homeless. Another successful initiative under the strategy is the partnership between by-law officers and outreach workers resulting in a decline in homeless camps within City boundaries.

June 2009 – Evidence of 30 camps, 11 occupied, 31 Occupants  
 October 2010 – Evidence of 17 camps, 8 Occupied, 13 Occupants  
 March 2011 – Evidence of 3 Camps, 2 Occupied, 8 Occupants

Many nonprofit agencies use the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) as a qualifier for non-market affordable housing units. In 2009 the LICO before tax was:

1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons
\$19,026	\$23,685	\$29,118	\$35,354

In 2007, targets were set to create business plans for 200 affordable units over a five year period. 64 units are in various stages of construction.

## Attainable Housing Strategy

An attainable housing strategy was unanimously supported by Vernon City Council in January of 2008 focusing on policy changes that encourage the development of multi-family housing. Accelerating housing prices and high rental rates make it difficult for individuals, families and seniors to meet their housing costs and still maintain a good quality of life. Supporting multi-family housing can help to meet the demand for more attainable housing options for ordinary citizens. The document recognizes that while the city cannot build and manage affordable housing, it can negotiate partnerships with senior levels of government for funding to address the housing needs of people on low incomes and those at risk of homelessness.

Although most of the recommendations have been implemented there have been limited gains in affordable/attainable units. Developing partnerships and securing funding for attainable units is a slow process and requires multiple strategies. Community stakeholders need to continue to work together to create models for the development of attainable units.

## Rental Vacancy Rates in Vernon (Row and Apartment)

	2010	2011
Bachelor	2.3%	1.4%
1 Bedroom	5.2%	7.4%
2 Bedroom	6.4%	8.2%
3 Bedroom	4.2%	9.1%



## How the Foundation is helping...

The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan granted \$5,000 to Habitat for Humanity - Vernon to develop a 3 year action plan for the development of affordable / achievable housing for those in our community who have the greatest need. With the cost of housing in Vernon escalating, many citizens are not able to find an affordable place to live.

## How you can help...

- Support the housing strategy at City Council
- Contribute clothing and small appliances to local agencies
- Volunteer with a local agency targeting the needy





# B-

# Arts & Culture

**Arts and culture have the power to enrich, educate and inspire us. Events such as cultural/theatrical events, museums, art galleries and musical presentations are readily available in Vernon.**

## Scope

Arts & Culture covers a wide range of activities, not only in performing and visual arts such as dance, music, painting, photography and sculpture, but also in broadcasting, film / video production, cultural events and the preservation of our heritage. At last count there were approximately 9 art galleries, 1 museum, 3 heritage sites, 5 art studios, 2 performing arts facilities and 2 music schools. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it is intended to be a demonstration of the size of the Greater Vernon arts and cultural community.

## Employment Rate

Employment and earnings in this sector are indicators of the impact arts and culture have on our community. In Vernon, cultural industries employed 595 persons in 2006 which was 6.3% more than in 2001; it is expected that the same type of increase will be experienced with the 2011 Census due to be released shortly. This industry accounted for 2.2% of total employment in Vernon compared to 3.5% provincially and 3% nationally.

## Median Earnings

At \$40,234 in 2005, median earnings of full-time full-year workers in professional occupations in arts and culture

in Vernon were 8.6% below the national level of \$41,110 and 3.1% above the provincial level of \$39,007. Median earnings for this group were up 3.7% from \$38,794 in 2000.

## Per Capita Spending

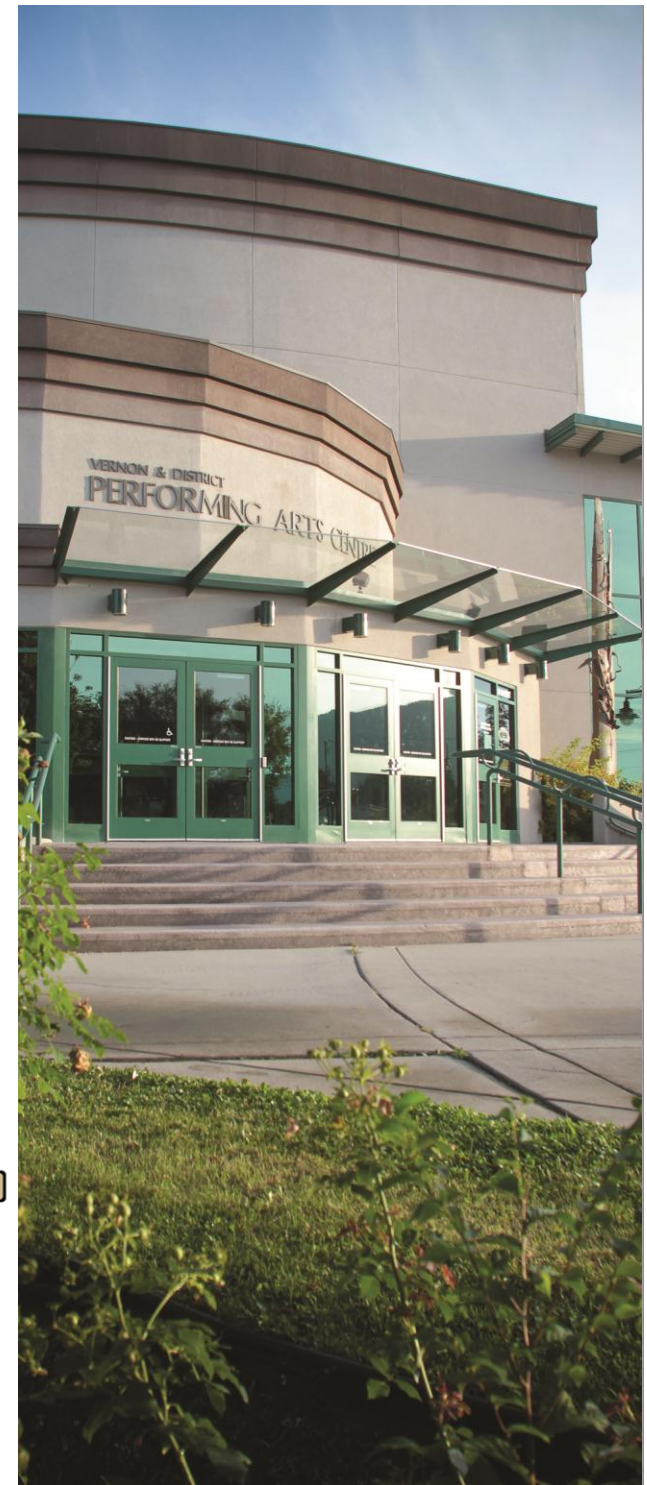
In 2009, the average per household spending on arts and culture in the Greater Vernon area was between \$988 and \$1,111. The national average was \$1,132 and the provincial average was \$1,059.

## Government Support

In 2011, support from all forms of government was \$942,953 of which BC Gaming grants totalled \$183,500.

## Volunteer Hours

Volunteers play a very significant role in Arts and Culture. In 2010 volunteers contributed in excess of 19,400 hours supporting the following facilities; Greater Vernon Museum (3,800), Vernon Community Arts Centre (4,040), Vernon Public Art Gallery (1,300), Mackie Lake House (1,400), Performing Arts Centre (6,392), O'Keefe Ranch (2,250) and Caetani House (290).



## How you can help...

- Learn a musical instrument
- Attend a symphony or ballet - try it - you might like it
- Go to a performance at the Performing Arts Centre, Powerhouse Theatre or Caravan Farm Theatre

## How the Foundation is helping...

**The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$15,000 toward the **Vernon Music School's** Sound Foundation Capital Campaign which will be used to repair the basement of the aging Smith House. Many organizations in the area are supporting this initiative in order to preserve the school and allow music students to continue to develop their skills and talents.





# Gap Between Rich & Poor C-

**Since the last census, poverty rates have declined; however, some groups are still at risk. Single parent households and child poverty needs attention. The gap between top earners and bottom earners continues to grow.**

## **Overall poverty rate**

In the 2005 census, Vernon and surrounding area had an overall poverty rate of 9.6%, below both the national average (15.8%) and BC average (13.1%).

More recent data showed a decline in the number of Vernon's low income families from 22.7% in 2002 to 19.4% in 2009. The provincial rate was 22.5%.

## **Child Poverty Rate:**

In 2005, the census reported 12.1% of children under the age of 18 years were considered to be living in poverty compared to 14.9% provincially.

By 2008, 22.5% of Vernon's children were living in a low income family, slightly lower than the provincial rate of 24.3%

## **Poverty Rate Single Parent Households**

In September 2010, 2.3% of Vernon's population was receiving income assistance. Of that, 29.1% were single-parent families.

## **Use of Food Banks**

In March 2010, food banks were accessed by 923 people.

## **"Minimum Wage" compared to "Living Wage"**

In 2005, 27% of Vernon households were spending more than 30% of wages on housing costs. In 2008, the average income in Vernon was \$37,393, below the BC average of \$40,736. Future data may place more emphasis on the "living wage" which for the Thompson-Okanagan region is considered to be in the range of \$16.98-\$17.56/hour.

## **Change in Distribution of Households at the Top and Bottom of Income Levels**

2005 census data indicates a 15.4% decrease in the number of families with incomes of less than \$25,000, while those with incomes over \$100,000 increased 12.3%.

## **Income assistance & other government transfers**

In 2009, 7% of Vernon's population was receiving BC Basic Income Assistance and EI Benefits as compared to 4.4% provincially.

This was a decline from the 2005 levels which were 13% in Vernon and 9.6% in BC.



## **How the Foundation is helping...**

**The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$5,000 to the **Community Dental Access Society**, whose purpose is to provide sustainable, accessible oral health services through assessment, health promotion, treatment and referrals for low-income residents of the North Okanagan. It will also provide educational opportunities and mentoring to graduates in medical and dental fields through the UBC Dental Residency Program.

## **How you can help...**

- Donate to your local food bank
- Donate clothing and home furnishings to local thrift stores
- Volunteer at food banks and thrift stores





# C+ Safety and Security

**Crime remains a priority in the city. Crime reduction measures implemented through strategic policing priorities and government focus are achieving the desired results as shown by the reduction in crime rates.**

In 2009, 65 RCMP Members were assigned to police the City of Vernon.

- 4,868 Criminal Code Offences were recorded in 2009, a 12% decrease from 2008.
  - 1,011 violent crimes (+1.5%)
  - 2,978 property crimes (-19%)
  - 879 other crimes (+8.9%)
- 251 drug crimes were recorded which is the same as in 2008.
- 437 assaults (+12%)
- 383 motor vehicle thefts (-11%)

Property crimes in Vernon have steadily decreased over the past 5 years.

Violent and other crimes rose slightly.

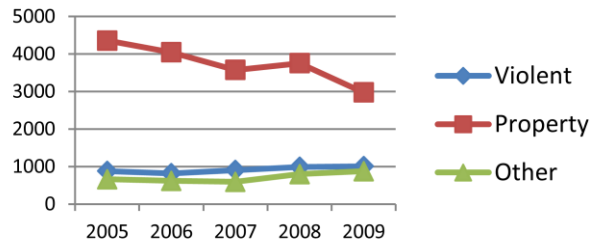
Motor vehicle theft spiked in 2008 but declined significantly in 2009.

Assaults grew over 2008.

### Criminal Code Traffic Violations

In 2010 the police issued 321 Criminal Code Traffic Violations, an increase of 1.7% from the previous year and almost double the provincial rate.

**Criminal Code Offences - Vernon**



**Violent Crimes** - homicide, attempted murder, sexual and non-sexual assault, sexual offences against children, etc.

**Property Crimes** include break and enter, theft, motor vehicle theft, possession of stolen property, etc.

**Other Crimes** include prostitution, gaming and betting, offensive weapons, offences related to currency, offences against the administration of justice, etc.

### 2010 Data

- Violent crimes decreased by 15% to 855
- Property crimes decreased by 12.4% to 2599
- Motor Vehicle thefts decreased by 38.9% to 234



### How you can help...

- Volunteer with Community Policing
- Start a Neighborhood Watch program in your area
- Mentor a child through Big Brothers or Big Sisters

### How the Foundation is helping...

The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan granted \$11,500 toward safety and security projects including the **Women's Transition House Society's** Healthy Balance Group Counseling program. At the **Upper Room Mission**, grants assisted with the installation of surveillance systems for the Thrift Store, parking lot and main building to ensure the safety and security of staff, volunteers and neighbouring businesses.



# Getting Around

# C-

**In 2007, Cars/trucks (91.3%), transit (0.7%), bicycles (1%) and walking (7%) are the primary modes of transportation in Vernon. The target is to increase transit use, cycling and walking to 20% by 2031**

## Goals

- Improve the liveability of the Community by increasing the use and awareness of alternative transportation modes including public transit, cycling and walking.
- Implement a transportation system which is safe, efficient, affordable and decreases reliance on single occupant vehicles.

## Public Transit

Vernon currently has a very low transit ridership rate with less than 1% using transit to get to and from work. On the other hand, Vernon enjoys a cycling and walking rate which is slightly higher than the BC average. In 2006, approximately 15% of employed persons reported walking and cycling as their primary modes of travel compared to the provincial average of 12%.

## Public Demand for Alternative Transportation

Demographic trends indicate that Vernon needs to provide greater access to alternative transportation, particularly for youth and seniors. Seniors need easy access to health services and social events while youth need access for employment, recreation and social activities.

## Vernon's Transportation Plan

The focus of the plan is to implement Public Transit, Cycling and Walking initiatives, and proposes to increase transit service frequency and coverage, accelerate sidewalk projects and enhance cycling and trail networks. The city has set a target for walking, cycling and transit use at 20% by 2031.

## Accessible Services

These include fixed-route service, handyDART service and the Taxi Saver Program.

## Conventional Transit Service

On the regular, fixed-route transit system a fleet of Low-floor buses provide wheelchair and scooter accessible service on transit routes throughout the region.

## handyDART

For people with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed-route transit system without assistance, handyDART provides door-to-door transportation to and from accessible building entrances.

## Taxi Saver Program

For those times when the handyDART system is unavailable, the Taxi Saver Program provides registered handyDART passengers with subsidized taxi service, giving them the flexibility to coordinate their own trips.

## Bike Paths

Vernon currently has 44 KMs of bike paths.



## How the Foundation is helping...

**The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** acknowledged that aging infrastructure of some community buildings means they are not accessible to individuals with mobility challenges and have assisted with over \$30,000 in grants towards two elevator projects. The **Vernon Curling Club** and the **Community Arts Centre** now offer access to their upper levels.

## How you can help...

- Take a bus instead of the car
- Try using the new bike paths in town
- Try the walking trails around town





# C+ Belonging & Leadership

**Vernon benefits from a dynamic core of volunteers, donating their time to operate, maintain and expand existing community facilities as well as construct new ones.**

## **Community Volunteerism**

Taking into account the population of Greater Vernon at approximately 45,000, the average annual volunteer donation per capita is at least 6 hours. These volunteers provide leadership in many areas; conceptualization, planning, construction of recreational facilities, educational programs, cultural events and most notably fund-raising for major new projects,

## **Philanthropic Activity**

Philanthropic activity in Vernon and the North Okanagan is more often behind the scenes and frequently not publicized. A conservative estimate of this activity is in excess of one million dollars annually with special projects greatly increasing this amount.

As an example, the Vernon Jubilee Hospital Foundation has raised \$7 million dollars in less than 36 months to furnish and equip the new Tower of Care being constructed at the hospital.

The Foundation estimates that about one quarter of this came from businesses and foundations, with the balance, about \$5 million dollars, being donated by citizens and private philanthropists.

This is in addition to their contributions toward the special projects mentioned earlier.

## **Charitable Donations**

In 2009, the median charitable donation for Vernon was \$350 which was a 40% increase over 2001 levels. The median levels for B.C. and Canada were \$360 and \$250 respectively.

## **Getting Out To Vote**

At 62.7%, participation in Federal general elections increased marginally between 2008 and 2011 (+2%) and remains above both the B.C. and Canadian averages.

Provincial general elections, however, have suffered a continuing decline in voter turnout over seven elections, dropping from 70.34% of eligible voters in 1983 to 50.99% in 2009. The Vernon-Monashee turnout in 2009 was 49.55%



## **How you can help...**

- Get out to vote
- Support the local charity of your choice
- Join and assist a local organization

## **How the Foundation is helping...**

**The Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$5,500 to the **Okanagan Landing Community Association** for their Heritage CPR Station project. The restoration of the original CPR station house will include a museum / archive to protect and display artifacts, memorabilia and photographs. This will become an educational tool and a point of interest for local residents and visitors.



# Work



**Secure work and a livable wage are essential to Vernon's regional economy, but steady work does not necessarily mean livable wages. According to BC Stats, the Vernon rate is not keeping up with the National or Provincial rates and has not made significant improvement since 1996.**

### Average Earnings

In 2005, real average earnings for full-time, full-year working persons in the Vernon Census Area were \$45,322, up 1.9% from 2000. This was 11.5% lower than the national average of \$51,221 and 10.9% lower than the provincial average of \$50,855.

In 2010 the average annual earnings for the Vernon Census Area were \$47,724, an increase of 5.3% over 2005.

### Employment Rate

According to BC Stats, the Vernon Census Area had an employment participation rate of 58.8% in 2010, 2.8% lower than the national rate of 61.6% and 1.7% lower than the provincial rate of 60.5%. The rate was unaltered from 1996.

### Unemployment Rate

In 2010, the Vernon Census Area had an unemployment rate of 6.5%, which contrasts with the highest rate of 8.9% in 2001 and the lowest rate of 3.7% in 2007.

### Youth Unemployment

In 2010 youth (15 - 24 years) unemployment in the Thompson Okanagan Region was 13.8% a decrease of 2.8% from 2009.

### Employment Growth

Between 2001 and 2006, the Vernon Census Area experienced a 15.9% increase in employment, 6.9% above the national rate of 9.0% and 4.9% above the provincial rate of 11.1%. The rate for 2010 has declined by 45.2% since 2006 due largely to the end of the building boom in 2006 and 2007.

### Actual Hours Worked

In 2000 the Labour Force Survey reported the average actual hours worked was 36.3 per week, in contrast to 2010 where the average actual hours worked were 35.4, a reduction of 2.5%.

### Involuntary Part Time Workers

In 2010, the proportion of total workers that were involuntary part-time workers in the Thompson-Okanagan economic region, which includes Vernon, was 2.1%. It was 0.1% higher than the national average of 2.0% and 0.1% below the provincial average of 2.2%.

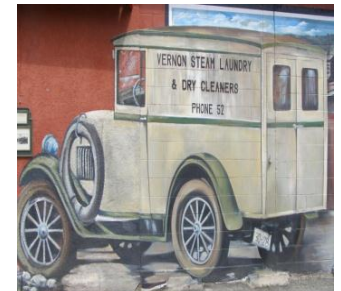


### How the Foundation is helping...

Community Foundations do not typically provide direct funding for employment however, in recognition of the affordable housing crisis in Vernon, the **Community Foundation of the North Okanagan** granted \$15,000 to the **Social Planning Council** and the **Vernon & District Community Land Trust** to research and develop affordable housing strategies.

### How you can help...

- Offer an apprenticeship program to new workers
- Support working families by offering flex hours for child or elder care
- Create a job





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Annette Sharkey  
*Social Planning Council*

Nicole Kohnert  
*Regional District of the North Okanagan*

Lorraine Copas  
*SPARC/BC*

Kyle Record  
*SPARC/BC*

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Jennifer Miles  
*Regional District of the North Okanagan*

Wendy Majewski  
*City of Vernon*

Amanda Watson  
*City of Vernon*

Tannis Nelson  
*Regional District of the North Okanagan*

Michael Tindall  
*CFNO*

Janice Mori  
*CFNO*

David Fletcher  
*CFNO*

Marty Armstrong  
*CFNO*

## Vital Signs Project Team

Marty Armstrong  
*Project Lead, Director CFNO*

Michael Tindall  
*President, CFNO*

Janice Mori  
*Vice President, CFNO*

David Fletcher  
*Executive Director, CFNO*

Sara Lyons  
*Community Foundations of Canada (Program Director)*

**Editor**– Sherri Field

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## Sponsors



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**Community Foundation  
of the North Okanagan**

#304 – 3402 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Vernon, BC V1T 1S1

Phone 250 542 8677  
Email [info@cfno.org](mailto:info@cfno.org)

[www.cfno.org](http://www.cfno.org)

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