

SURREY'S

VitalSigns
2015



YOUTH

**RELEVANT ISSUES FOR
SURREY YOUTH**

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



surreycares
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

WWW.SURREYCARES.ORG



SMART & CARING
COMMUNITIES



VITAL SIGNS IS a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and supports action on issues that are critical to our quality of life. Special thanks to the

Toronto Foundation for developing and sharing the Vital Signs concept and Community Foundations of Canada for supporting a coordinated national Vital Signs initiative. For more information visit vitalsignscanada.ca.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Coast Capital Savings	4
Message from the Chair	5
How Vital Signs Works: Our Methodology	6
SurreyCares Youth Vital Signs 2015: An Overview	7
Supporting Youth... Together	8
Youth In Surrey: A Profile	10
SurreyCares Vital Signs: Youth Survey 2015 Results	11
Arts and Culture	12
Culture, Identity, and Belonging	14
Education and Learning	16
Employment and Training	18
Environment	20
Getting Around	22
Housing and Homelessness	24
Making Ends Meet	26
Mental Wellness	28
Physical Health, Fitness and Nutrition	30
Safety	32
Youth Spaces	34
Youth Voice	36
Transitions: In Their Own Words	38
A CLOSER LOOK:	
Culture, Identity, and Belonging	40
Getting Around	41
Surrey Groups Collaborate to Combat Youth Homelessness	42
Making Ends Meet	43
Mental Health	44
Surrey Youth “LEAP” into Safety	45
Vital Signs Acknowledgments	46
About SurreyCares	47



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MESSAGE FROM COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS

COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS readily welcomed the opportunity to be the Premium Sponsor of Youth Vital Signs 2015. That's because we were confident this study would yield rich insights and shed light on issues important to our youth, providing valuable information to all stakeholders.

There are several other reasons for the decision to support this project. As one of the largest B.C. employers headquartered in Surrey, Coast Capital Savings is honoured to call this city home. In fact, our presence in Surrey goes as far back as the 1940s with the formation of Surrey Credit Union. More recently, the decision to locate our new Help Headquarters in Surrey affirms Coast Capital's continuing commitment to the future of this community.

Our involvement is also driven by Coast Capital's community purpose to help build a richer future for youth in our communities. To this end, we invested \$5.7 million into our communities last year—seven per cent of our pre-tax earnings—focusing on youth-oriented programs. Coast Capital targets programs that support the healthy mental development of youth, ensure youth live and grow in inclusive and positive environments, enable our young people to succeed in school, and provide youth with the knowledge and skills to achieve financial well-being. We do all this through our “for youth, by youth” community investment

model because we believe it's essential to empower and involve young people in envisioning and creating their future. Given this, we are especially pleased that this study gives voice to our city's youth.

As an organization, we will be examining this report closely, with special interest in what Surrey youth have to tell us about mental health, identity and belonging, and educational opportunities. We encourage other Surrey organizations, as well as community and government partners, to use these findings to incorporate the hopes and aspirations of our city's youth into their planning and policy decisions.

Congratulations to the SurreyCares Community Foundation for the excellent work on Youth Vital Signs 2015 and thank you to all the young people who shared their thoughts with us.

Don Coulter
President & CEO
Coast Capital Savings





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

SURREYCARES' YOUTH VITAL Signs 2015 focuses exclusively on discovering the experiences of youth aged 12 to 24 who live in Surrey.

In 2014, we had the honour of joining research conducted by dozens of community foundations from across Canada by releasing Surrey's very first Vital Signs report. In that report, we looked at the whole of Surrey's population, and unearthed some interesting—and even surprising—information about our community. The feedback we received on that first-time effort was both encouraging and educational. We are using that feedback to try to make this year's report even better.

With this report, we strive to provide information to philanthropists, grant-makers, leaders, program directors, and policy-makers in Surrey that helps them select, craft, and fund intelligent policy and program plans that meet the current and future needs of youth. We also aim to inform a community collective impact forum planned for November 2015 that will focus on how Surrey agencies, businesses, families, and organizations can engage and support youth seeking to thrive in Surrey. Thirdly, we use what we learn from this yearly research project to guide our own annual grant-making programs.

We do not believe that this report can stand in isolation. We encourage our readers to gain insights and inspiration from what they learn in this report, and then take a closer look at the topics we address by visiting our data sources (and others), conducting your own action-oriented research, and engaging in discussions with youth and youth leaders to test your knowledge and ideas.

Also, we could not have done this report on our own. We are very grateful to our sponsors, including our Premium Sponsor

Coast Capital, for their financial support. We are also very thankful for the help of many members of the community, including youth workers, parents and, most importantly, the youth themselves. Without your support, we never could have done this project.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that, with the release of this report, we are launching a campaign to raise new funds to support youth initiatives in Surrey. To that end, we offer several youth funds that support initiatives that benefit youth in Surrey. Another option is for you to create your own youth-oriented endowment fund over which you have control regarding which projects and programs you wish to fund.

I invite you to contact our office for more information on how these youth fund options might be a good fit for you and your business or organization to use as a way of supporting Surrey youth both now and in the future.

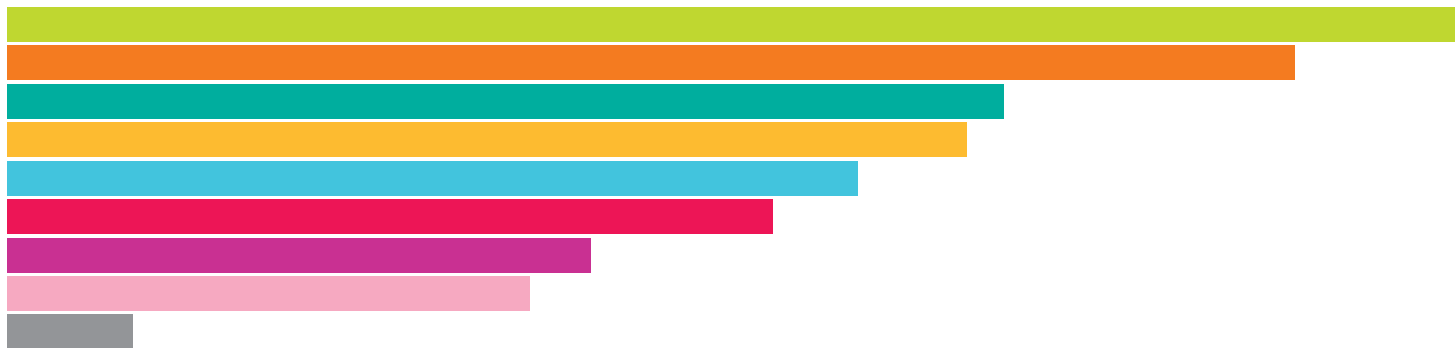
Let's work together to create a Surrey that is a great place to live for all our youth.

Jeff Hector, CPA, FEA

*Chair, Board of Directors
SurreyCares Community Foundation*



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HOW VITAL SIGNS WORKS

OUR METHODOLOGY

THE 2015 YOUTH Vital Signs Project presents a rich picture of life in Surrey as perceived by youth aged 12 to 24. Statistics are blended with viewpoints regarding life in Surrey as expressed first-hand by Surrey’s youth through a survey. Combining these two approaches allows for a fuller understanding of youth experiences in Surrey.

This report covers fourteen topics: thirteen statistics- and opinion-based “indicators” such as housing, safety, and education, plus one viewpoint-only section, “Transitions,” written exclusively by survey participants. Finally, we present six editorial-style pieces in which we take a closer look at six topics the youth responded to with the strongest opinions.

STATISTICAL DATA

Statistical data from respected sources, such as Statistics Canada, the City of Surrey, and the McCreary Centre Society, among many others, are used to form the foundation of the content in this report. All of this data is available publicly; readers wishing to further research the data presented here are invited to visit our sources, listed on our website, for a closer look into the specific topics that interest them.

YOUTH VIEWPOINT

Surrey youth aged 12 to 24 were invited to share their opinions via the 2015 Youth Vital Signs Survey, held in June 2015. The survey received 400 responses (320 online and 80 paper-copy versions). We constructed the survey with the support of a volunteer Research Leadership Team made up of Surrey youth, parents, community youth programmers, directors, and leadership staff. We also studied other Youth Vital Signs reports and surveys from across the country for additional insights into which questions to ask, and how.

We asked Surrey’s youth to choose from a list of options of where Surrey was doing well and where it could improve. We then asked them to grade Surrey in each subject area. The scale we used for grading was familiar to students: A (Excellent), B (Good), C (Average), D (Below Average) and F (Fail). We also provided an opportunity for free-form comments. Finally, we asked a series of demographic questions to help us get a sense of variations of opinions across neighbourhoods, backgrounds, and other characteristics.

With the help of the Research Leadership Team, we distributed the survey to the Surrey School District, local community centres, youth groups, and other places where youth congregate. We made a concerted effort to ensure that as many youth voices could be heard as possible. Due to limited time and budget, we only offered the survey in English; non-English-speaking youth may have had difficulty completing it, which concerns us. A deliberate design feature that didn’t require every question be answered, recommended by our youth focus group, meant that some questions didn’t receive a full complement of responses, particularly the demographics section. Instead, we relied on demographic data from other sources to present the information in that section of this report.

Interested readers can see the survey results by visiting our website.

EDITOR’S NOTE: THE Vital Signs Report is primarily a presentation of statistical data from many well-known, reputable sources, including The City of Surrey, Statistics Canada, ICBC, Fraser Health, Ministry of Education, and many others. Compiling information together that is usually presented separately is invaluable for the overall picture of our community that this exercise creates. Discovering how various indicators may correspond, whether coincidentally or in direct connection to each other, gives us insight into further areas to research as well as helps us imagine potential new solutions to community challenges.

HOWEVER, STATISTICS BY themselves are only academic until we hear the voices of the people who represent those data. This is where the survey comes into play, enriching the information and turning it into a story about life in our community as seen by the people who participate in it.

A large team of dedicated volunteers who are well-connected to the youth of Surrey, including a focus group made up of youth volunteers, worked hard to design an interesting and insightful survey of their peers. We hope you find it to be interesting, enlightening, and motivating.



SURREYCARES YOUTH VITAL SIGNS 2015

AN OVERVIEW

TRANSITIONING INTO LIFE as a young adult is both exhilarating and challenging. SurreyCares Youth Vital Signs gives the community a chance to learn facts and figures and hear youth opinions about the community we are launching our youth into here in Surrey.

Survey respondents had three key messages:

- Youth are just as passionate about their city as their adult counterparts
- Youth have worthwhile opinions about what works for them, and we need to listen
- Youth have aspirations that need to be supported, whether for education or employment or something else in their lives

Surrey youth love living in a city with a vibrant arts and culture scene, especially the many multicultural festivals and events hosted here. They appreciate our diversity of cultures and heritages, and enjoy a strong sense of belonging. Youth are glad we have all levels of education available locally and want to see more seats made available to them. They love our parks and recreation amenities, and many say they enjoy good physical and mental health.

That being said, Surrey also has areas in which it can improve. Although most of Surrey's youth crime statistics are below those of other parts of BC, youth in Surrey are still concerned about their safety, particularly bullying in school. They desperately need a transportation system that better meets their needs for getting to school or work, and our data strongly supports their frustration in this area. Finding good employment opportunities that generate a living wage ranks high on young people's worries, and youth unemployment and under-employment rates appear to be rising. Affordable housing and policies that provide

greater support for youth who are ready to live on their own are substantial issues for older youth in Surrey.

Overall, youth in Surrey say they feel unprepared for the transition into post-secondary education and/or the labour force, and are uncertain about their opportunities. Surrey youth want more lessons in secondary school to learn basic life skills, such as how to do taxes, pay off bills, save for the future, and find affordable housing. Many are worried about how to make ends meet, and our research supports the challenges they describe.

For those who struggle, the battle is real: an alarming 11 per cent of our young people have seriously considered or attempted suicide. Are they feeling despair? Is the strain of school and work harder than ever before? What is happening that would cause so many of our young people to consider harming themselves? We urge community experts to dig deeper into this topic to find out what is going on.

Many of the other topics we explore, like improving public transit or increasing affordable housing, may seem overwhelming because of the resources required to address them, but we believe that interested citizens can get involved and help find solutions that make a difference for Surrey's young people. Meanwhile, let's never give up on doing the things we are already doing right.

The youth of Surrey are our future. We play a huge role in creating their future.

What can we do to help?

Allison Nelson

*Research Project Manager
2015 Vital Signs Project*

Erin Anne Beirne

*Chair, Vital Signs
SurreyCares Community Foundation*

TEN THINGS WE CAN DO TO MAKE SURREY MORE YOUTH-FRIENDLY

1. HIRE A YOUNG PERSON

WE HEARD ABOUT the need for youth-friendly employers and more job opportunities. Whether youth are still in high school, pursuing their education, or supporting themselves, youth talk about the incredible challenge of finding that “first job.”

2. MENTOR A YOUNG PERSON

SHARE YOUR WISDOM. This doesn't have to be through a formal mentor arrangement (although there are good organizations that provide these opportunities and mentors are always needed); it can be as simple as letting your teenager become involved when doing your taxes, or including your child in discussions about preparing your child's sport's club's budget.



4. PROMOTE YOUTH AS LEADERS

TRUE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT is about more than giving youth a voice—it's about giving them an opportunity to voice an opinion and do something about it—like lead a change. Find tasks in your life that your youth can lead. Let them try. If they fail, then this is an opportunity for them to learn about overcoming failure—an important life lesson for everyone.



3. GIVE YOUTH A VOICE... AND THEN LISTEN

WHILE MANY VITAL Signs youth reported having a voice through school leadership councils and similar opportunities, having a voice that is listened to in the community is equally important. Provide youth with opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact them. This invests them in the decision and is how youth learn to be responsible.



5. RECOGNIZE YOUTH AS THE SOURCE OF SOLUTIONS

DISPEL THE MYTH that youth are the source of our problems. Media often portrays youth as the source of many of the crime and safety issues our community faces, but this isn't most youth. Most youth can be celebrated for all the things that they contribute to our community. We need adults to stop the dialogue of youth as the issue.



6. PAY A LIVING WAGE TO YOUNG WORKERS

MOST OLDER YOUTH need to work. They may be forced by circumstance to live on their own, they may be working to pay for school, or they may be working to help their family, yet most of these youth work at jobs that pay minimum wage. This leaves these youth living in poverty or incurring significant debt when they are just starting out in life. If you are an employer, pay your young workers a wage that will allow them to start their adult life with dignity.



7. RENT TO A YOUTH

MANY YOUTH FACE significant challenges finding a place to live. Not only is rent expensive, but many landlords won't rent to a young person. Most youth are very responsible—they just need a chance to prove it and to earn their first landlord reference.

8. GET INVOLVED/VOLUNTEER

SUPPORT YOUTH IN your community. Volunteer for a youth agency or at youth events. Become a coach or a youth leader in cadets or at your church, or offer opportunities for youth to become involved in organizations or endeavours that you are passionate about. If you have less time, become an advocate for youth in your neighbourhood, or send letters of support for better transit or more youth programming to government.

9. DONATE

PROVIDING THE SUPPORTS youth need—whether mental health or life skills programs—requires resources. Donate to agencies that support youth, or to organizations like SurreyCares that will, in turn, fund youth organizations.



10. RECOGNIZE YOUTH AS OUR FUTURE ADULTS

TOO OFTEN THERE is a barrier between youth and older generations. We rarely spend time together, and even more rarely talk to youth who are not associated with our families. Say hello to youth you meet on the street. Show them you see them as a person, not a threat. Even if you don't feel comfortable saying "Hi," make eye contact and—most of all—smile! They are just as uncertain of you as you are of them!

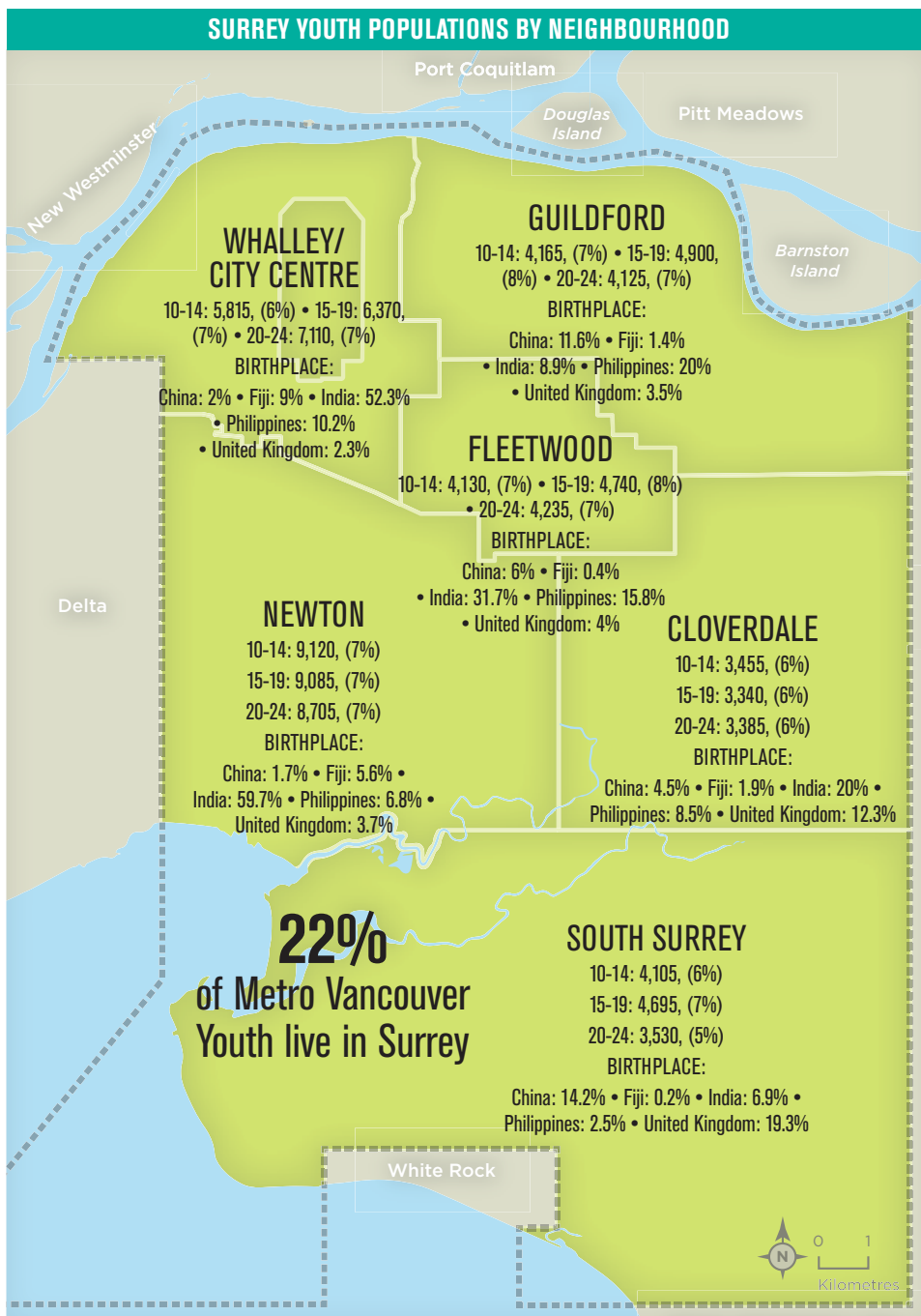
A PROFILE

SURREY IS A young city. With a higher percentage of youth aged 10-24 than the provincial average, it is also home to more children and youth than any other city in BC except Vancouver.

In each of our six major regions (Cloverdale, Fleetwood, Guildford, Newton, Whalley, and South Surrey) the proportion of youth as a share of the population is relatively similar. Numerically, Newton has the largest youth population, almost double that of any other area. Government agencies, businesses and not-for-profit organizations should therefore make this neighbourhood a high priority when it comes to allocating resources for youth services and programs.

In addition, consideration should be given to providing services, programming and information in languages other than English, since significant numbers of Surrey students speak Punjabi, Hindi, Tagalog or Mandarin at home. This is a reflection of Surrey's large immigrant population, which continues to expand.

The cultural diversity of our city is to be celebrated, but new arrivals can also present a challenge when it comes to integrating youth into Surrey's elementary and secondary school systems. As a result, particular attention should be paid to this demographic when designing youth programs and services. Get it right and we can ensure that, whatever their background, youth in our city are able to maximize their potential and contribute constructively to our community long into the future.



FIRST NATIONS YOUTH IN SURREY



- Aboriginal people represent 2% of the population of the City of Surrey
- The highest numbers live in Newton and Whalley
- 29% of the aboriginal population is under the age of 15
- 12% of the aboriginal population is between 15 and 19 years old
- More aboriginal youth attend school in Surrey than in any other school district in all of BC

LANGUAGES SURREY STUDENTS SPEAK AT HOME

Language	2008/9	2011/12
English	57%	50%
Punjabi	20%	22%
Hindi	3%	3%
Tagalog	2%	3%
Mandarin	2%	3%

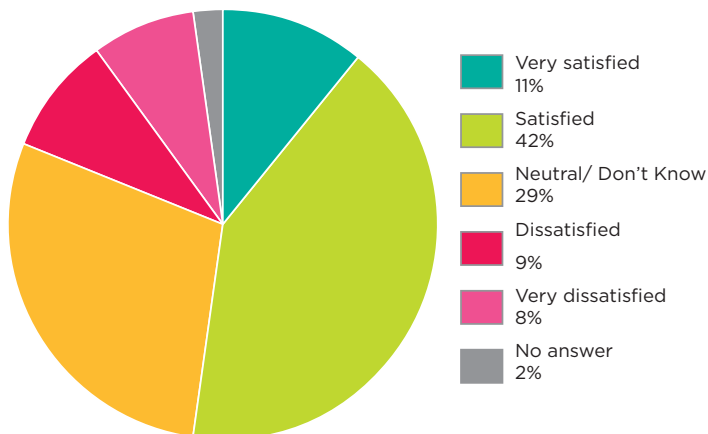
PRIMARY SOURCES: Statistics Canada; National Household Survey; BC Ministry of Education; City of Surrey; Children's Partnership Surrey - White Rock.

YOUTH SURVEY 2015 RESULTS

THIS PAGE SUMMARIZES what 400 respondents said in response to our questions about what's great and what needs work in Surrey. A full report on survey results may be downloaded from our website.

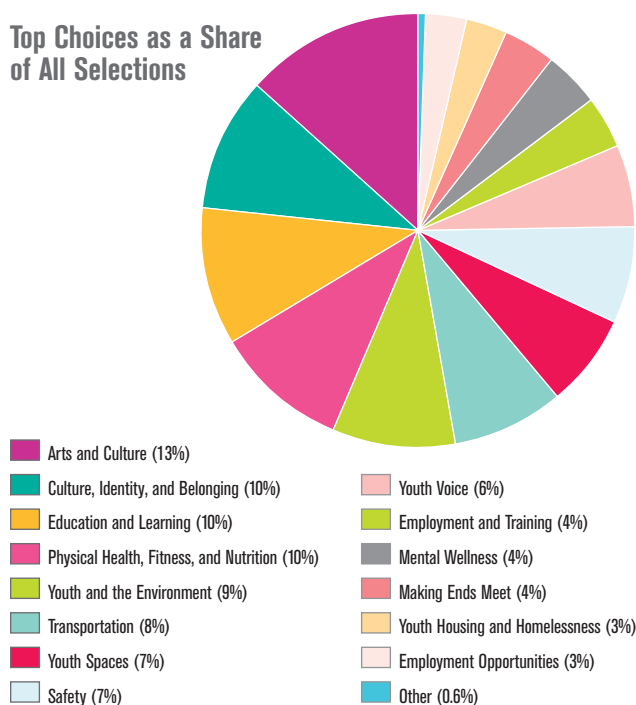
Survey respondents were invited to select which FOUR areas of interest they would choose to celebrate the most about life in Surrey. Here are the results, presented two different ways.

OVERALL, ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH LIVING IN SURREY?

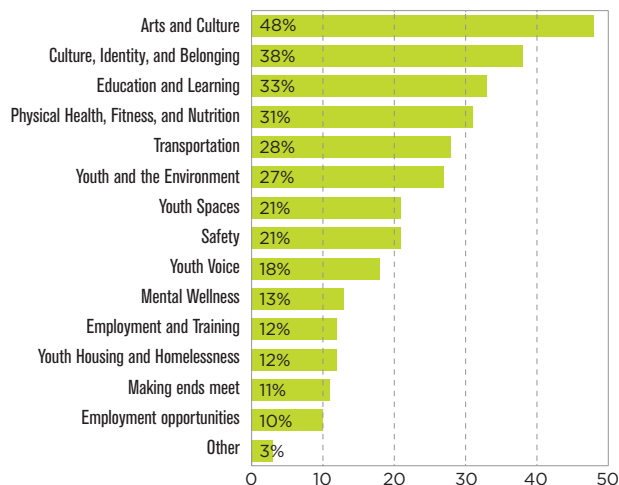


SURREY'S GREATEST ASSETS

Top Choices as a Share of All Selections

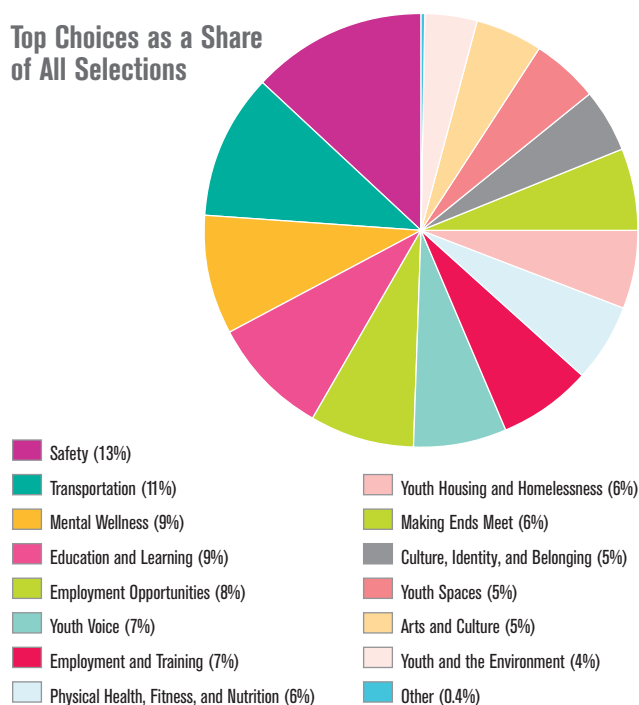


Percentage of Times a Topic was Selected in the Top Four

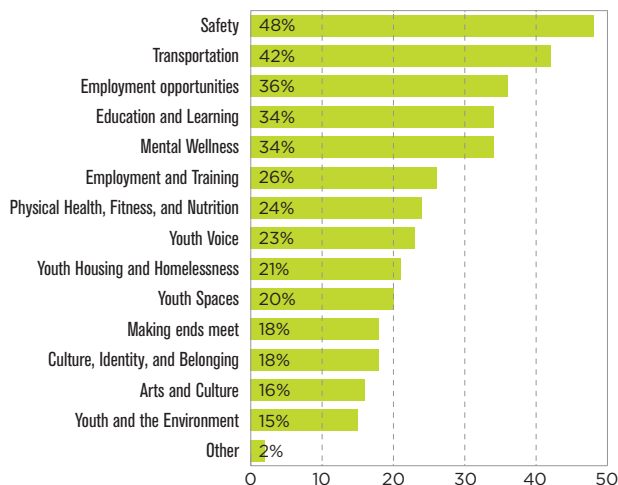


SURREY'S GREATEST CHALLENGES

Top Choices as a Share of All Selections



Percentage of Times a Topic was Selected in the Top Four





ARTS AND CULTURE

THE ARTS AND culture on offer in Surrey is a great advert for the city, which is home to an increasing number of festivals, concerts and events. The summer months see festivals such as Canada Day Celebrations, Surrey Fusion Festival, Surrey Pride Festival, and Youth Fest.

Music festivals such as the 2015 FVDED in the Park (a two-day electronic music festival in Surrey's Holland Park), the annual Winterfest, and Party for the Planet have all drawn major talent and huge crowds.

Surrey also has a number of public markets such as the Surrey Night Market and the Surrey Urban Farmers Market. The number of arts and culture groups is increasing rapidly and the city's public library has nine locations, with plenty of programs and services aimed at young adults.

All of this is good news and demonstrates that there are lots of opportunities for Surrey youth to showcase their talents, express themselves and learn about other cultures and values.

However, there are some areas for improvement, such as the decline in the number of youth participating in art performances. Many survey respondents also found that the cost of attending some events and activities was off-putting, and expressed a desire for more public entertainment in the parks. Better promotion of events using social media would also help to improve youth participation in Surrey's busy arts and culture scene.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Festivals that celebrate diverse cultures and nationalities (33%)
- ✓ Surrey public library written art events and contests (20%)
- ✓ Public art classes (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Lower costs to attend events and activities (31%)
- ✓ Need more youth-focused (aged 12-24) events (25%)
- ✓ More public entertainment in the parks, including youth entertainment (24%)

GRADE 3.4 OR C (AVERAGE)

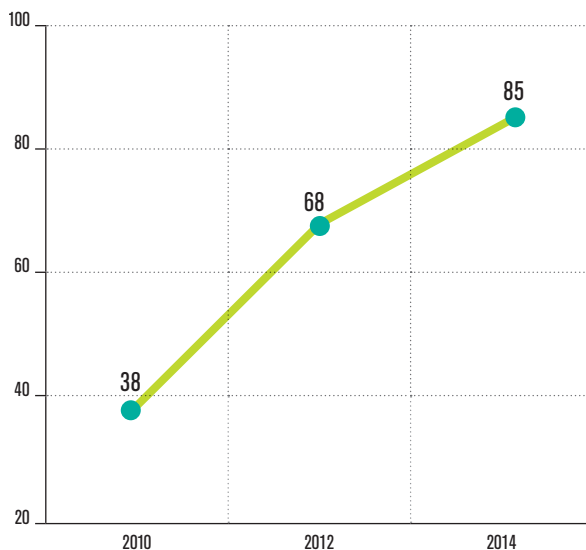
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS ATTENDANCE SO FAR THIS YEAR: JAN-JULY 2015

Event	Date	Attendance
Cloverdale Rodeo	May 15-18	85,000
Surrey Fusion Festival	July 18, 19	80,000
FVDED in the Park	July 3-4	26,000
Party for the Planet	April 25	15,000
Surrey Canada Day	July 1	Over 100,000



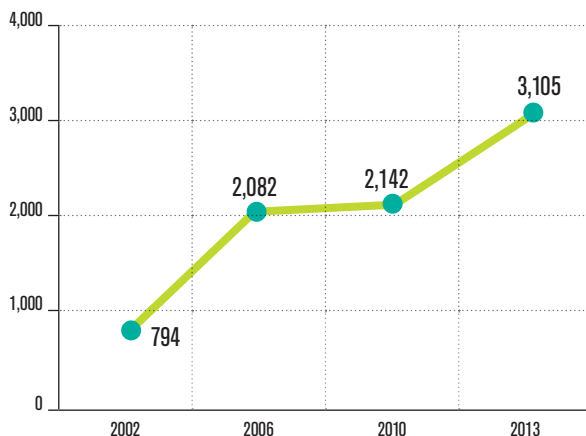
Surrey Public Library has nearly
tripled their youth programs
since 2002

NUMBER OF ARTS AND CULTURE GROUPS



Surrey youth voted **Arts and Culture** as a
top area to celebrate in Surrey

NUMBER OF YOUTH PROGRAMS IN SURREY'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES



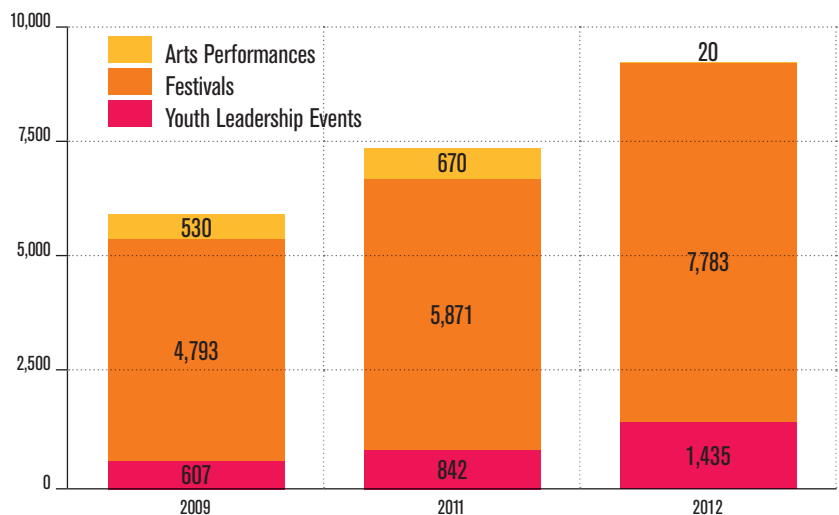
IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING YOUTH ART AND CULTURE?

Festivals that celebrate diverse cultures and nationalities	33%
Surrey Public Library written art events and contests	20%
Public Art Classes	18%
Spaces/events for youth music	17%
Surrey Youth Week (May 1-8)	16%
Many youth theatre groups	15%
Youth Arts Council of Surrey	11%
Support for street art	9%
Other	3%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS ABOUT YOUTH ARTS AND CULTURE IN SURREY WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Lower costs to attend events and activities	31%
Need more youth-focused events (aged 12-24)	20%
More public entertainment in the parks, including youth entertainment	18%
More events outside the downtown core	17%
More events promoting youth art (including street art)	16%
Improve awareness of and support for existing local youth arts and culture	15%
Increase support for arts and culture for youth	11%
More arts and culture programs and events that are inclusive, accessible, and supportive for people of varying capabilities	9%
Other	3%

PARTICIPATION IN SURREY YOUTH EVENTS



25% of the Youth Vital Signs respondents felt that there needed to be **more events** in Surrey that **focused primarily on youth aged 12 to 24.**



It is important to include not only **events for younger teens** but also **older youth and young adults.**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Are there enough safe and affordable events for older youth (aged 15 to 24)?
- 2 How can youth be included in the creation of such events?
- 3 How can events in Surrey be better promoted to reach more youth?



CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING

SURREY YOUTH, LIKE all youth, face the challenge of transitioning from high school to adulthood. This was an important theme in this section of the survey. Surrey youth surveyed felt unprepared for the future. They expressed stress and anxiety about their prospects, whether transitioning to university or to employment. Many worried about finding work that would interest them, and identified that they lacked the life skills they need to succeed.

While, in general, Surrey youth were satisfied with living in Surrey, older youth were generally less satisfied than their younger counterparts. This may relate to the challenges older youth experience when moving into adulthood. Volunteerism provides an opportunity to develop life skills and fosters a sense of belonging; however, while Surrey volunteer rates have increased, they are still lower than both the provincial and national average.

Culture, Identity, and Belonging are supportive factors during the transition process. In Surrey, many opportunities exist to explore cultural learning and diversity; however, youth noted the need to increase tolerance and understanding between cultural groups and to better educate the community about the challenges faced by newcomers, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, and Queer) youth, and youth with disabilities. The City, Surrey schools and other organizations promote and celebrate diversity, provide caring connections to staff and community, and offer access to cultural spaces as well as arts and culture events. While there is still room for improvement, survey respondents indicated that Culture, Identity, and Belonging is an area that Surrey should celebrate as a community.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

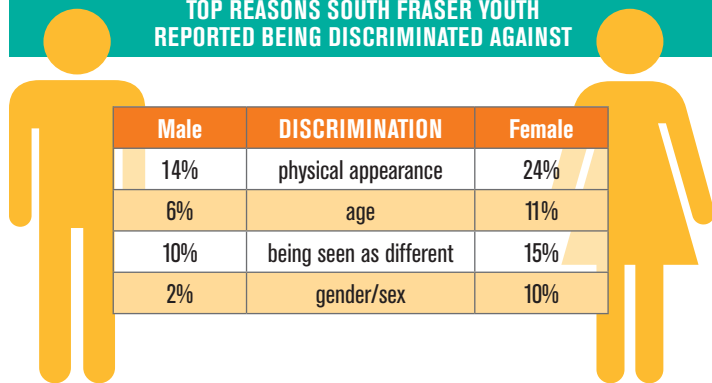
- ✓ Local events and festivals promoting cultural awareness (31%)
- ✓ Community organizations that are connected and care about the people they support (21%)
- ✓ Many organizations that support various communities in Surrey (e.g. LGBTQ, youth newcomers to Canada, etc.) (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

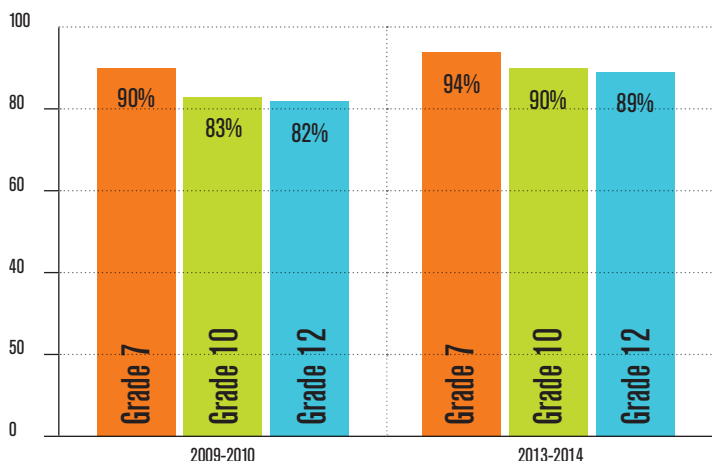
- ✓ Increase opportunities to build tolerance and understanding between cultural groups (28%)
- ✓ Educate communities about the issues facing youth (e.g. LGBTQ, youth newcomers to Canada, etc.) (27%)
- ✓ Reduce barriers faced by youth with disabilities (22%)

GRADE 3.4 OR C (AVERAGE)

TOP REASONS SOUTH FRASER YOUTH REPORTED BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST



PROPORTION OF SURREY STUDENTS WHO RESPECT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM THEM



32% plan and 18% might plan **to stay** in Surrey for the **next 5 years**

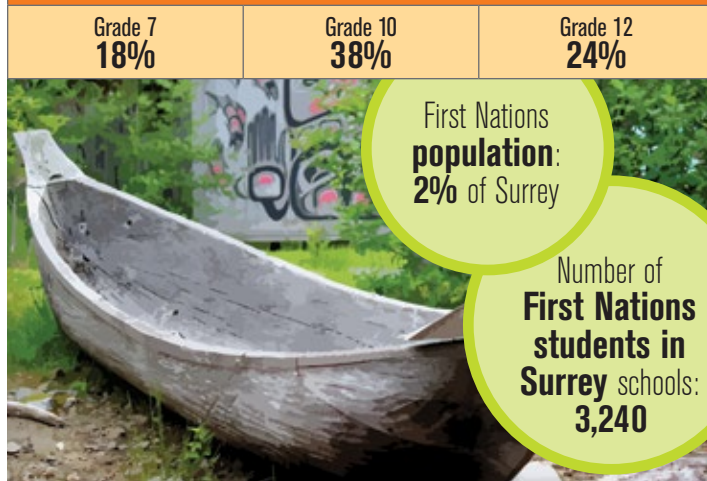
Number of **cultural celebrations** at City Hall in 2013: **20**



Cultural space provided by the City of Surrey is 135,510 sq. ft., an **increase of 9% since 2009**

FIRST NATIONS CULTURE AND HISTORY IN SURREY

Percentage of students who are taught about First Nations culture in school



Only 6% were **dissatisfied** with living in Surrey, which matches 2014 data from Stats Canada



44% of Surrey youth over age 15 **volunteer** in the community; the **BC rate is 50%**



Youth Vital Signs respondents chose **Culture, Identity, and Belonging** as one of the top areas that they felt **Surrey** could **celebrate**

SURREY FAMILY TYPES BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

	All	Cloverdale	Fleetwood	Guildford	Newton	South Surrey	Whalley /City Centre
Family Structure	Amount of People and Percentage						
Two-Parent Families (common law & married)	67,720 (78%)	8,050 (66%)	9,155 (66%)	8,605 (60%)	20,375 (66%)	8,805 (64%)	12,730 (58%)
Single-Parent families	19,535 (22%)	2,115 (17%)	2,350 (17%)	2,820 (20%)	5,265 (17%)	2,445 (18%)	4,540 (21%)
Female Lone-Parent	15,555 (80%)	1,670 (79%)	1,870 (80%)	2,240 (79%)	4,255 (81%)	1,955 (80%)	3,565 (79%)
Male Lone-Parent	3,980 (20%)	445 (21%)	480 (20%)	580 (21%)	1,010 (19%)	490 (20%)	975 (21%)
Totals	87,255	12,280 (14%)	13,855 (16%)	14,245 (16%)	30,905 (35%)	13,695 (16%)	21,810 (25%)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 What is the extent of discrimination faced by youth in Surrey, and how does discrimination impact sense of belonging?
- 2 Why does life satisfaction vary by age and neighbourhood? What kinds of programs and services could help increase life satisfaction for youth in the "less satisfied" neighbourhoods?
- 3 Further data on experiences of LGBTQ youth and youth newcomers to Canada experiences living in Surrey would be useful for future research.



EDUCATION AND LEARNING

OUR SCHOOLS ARE filled with passionate, motivated learners who are studying hard; a growing percentage are graduating from high school and entering post-secondary education every year. Even with the challenges of learning English and adapting to a different lifestyle, English Language Learners are performing better in school than all other groups.

In contrast, a lower percentage of students identifying as aboriginal or special needs graduate compared with their classmates. This is of great concern as these students, like their peers, want to transition to a place in our community and need the education and training to do so. Also significant, male students are taking more years to complete high school than female students.

Post-secondary options are improving in Surrey, although we still fall behind other large cities on a seat-per-capita basis. Our tuition rates are lower than in other parts of Canada, but affordability is a serious concern due to the combined costs of tuition, housing, transportation, and ancillary costs, and students are taking on substantial debt to complete their education.

Survey respondents want to be better prepared with the life and job skills they need as they transition into adulthood, and request training in personal finance, a broader course selection, and smaller class sizes. They also want more guidance about post-secondary programs that will lead to high-quality jobs after they graduate.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

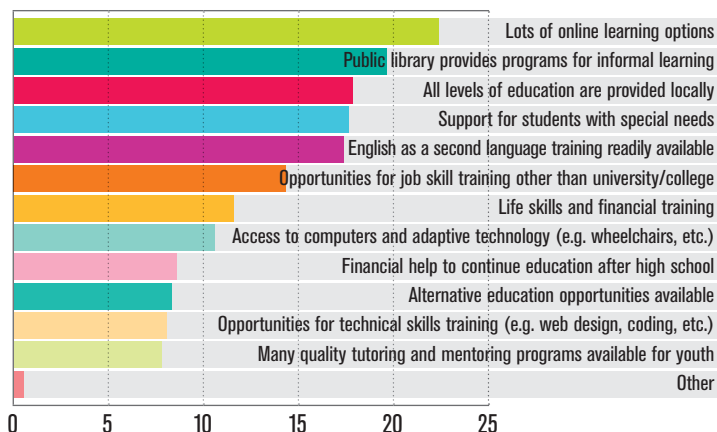
- ✓ Lots of online learning options (22%)
- ✓ Public library provides programs for informal learning (20%)
- ✓ All levels of education are provided locally (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

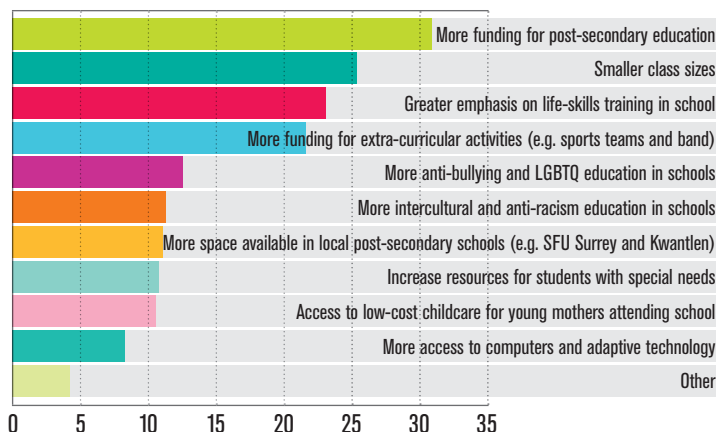
- ✓ More funding for post-secondary education (31%)
- ✓ Smaller class sizes (25%)
- ✓ Greater emphasis on life-skills training in school (23%)

GRADE 3.4 OR C (AVERAGE)

IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HELPING YOUTH GET AN EDUCATION?



IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS ABOUT EDUCATION AND LEARNING IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?



In BC, the **average student owes \$27,600** at the **end of a four-year degree**

RESULTS OF THE B.C. APPRENTICESHIP STUDENT OUTCOMES SURVEY*

Program Area	Very Satisfied or Satisfied with Education	Knowledge and Skills Gained Very Useful or Somewhat Useful in Performing Job	Unemployment Rate
Construction Trades	96%	95%	9%
Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	93%	96%	3%
Personal and Culinary Services	93%	91%	12%
Precision Production	96%	90%	13%

*Aggregate of 2011, 2012, and 2013 results

SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT COMPOSITION

Students	2014/15
Male	51%
Female	49%
Aboriginal	5%
ELL*	23%
French Immersion	5%
Non-Residents	1%

* ELL means "English Language Learner"

SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATES FOR SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT*

	2009/10	2013/14
All Students	82%	89%
Female	86%	91%
Male	79%	86%
Aboriginal	52%	61%
ELL	85%	93%
Special Needs	49%	61%

* Six-year completion rate means the student graduates within six years of entering Grade 8



Vital Signs respondents felt that they had **not received enough life-skills training** in elementary and secondary school; this is supported by data from the Ministry of Education

COST OF TUITION (SFU AND KPU) 2014-2015

	Canadian Students	International Students
Simon Fraser University	\$5217	\$19648
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	\$3932	\$15750



Surrey has **12.7 post-secondary spaces** for every **100 18-24 year olds** in the South Fraser Region; the **rest of BC** has **48.7 spaces**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Why is the percentage of Surrey aboriginal or special needs students who graduate increasing? Is there more we can do to support this trend?
- 2 Should life-skills training be a bigger part of Surrey school curriculum?
- 3 Is debt amongst Surrey university/college students a significant problem? What kinds of services or resources could help reduce student debt in Surrey?



Several respondents expressed **disappointment** at the **lack** of availability of **Advanced Placement courses** in high school



In 2013/2014, **only 52% of Grade 12 students** were happy with the range of **course options** available to them



Respondents thought that having **all levels of education available locally** was important



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

SURREY YOUTH ARE ready, willing, and able to work! They are actively looking for positions that lead to high-quality jobs with long-term career prospects. But, despite a modest increase in the number of local jobs, the unemployment rate among youth is still rising.

Though the majority of Surrey's post-secondary students with degrees and diplomas are employed, their unemployment rate has increased by 50% since 2006. Trades and apprenticeships are showing a slow-but-steady decrease in the unemployment rate, reflecting the need for skilled trade workers in Surrey.

Our survey respondents want more career planning and relevant job preparation in high school. School and community organizations programs help them get into services jobs, but respondents say administrative or office work would provide them with better work experience.

Students are balancing school with volunteering, athletics, and other extracurricular activities, all of which are important to improving their post-secondary school and scholarship applications as well as employment options. They tell us there are few "student-friendly" employment opportunities, so the majority are not able to find work that fits their schedule.

After completing school, finding a job is challenging—only 14 percent of the survey responders aged 20-to-24 are employed. After working hard to complete academic and training programs, it is discouraging not to be able to get a job. By not being in the labour force, our youth are losing out on opportunities to gain skills, develop a career, and benefit economically.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

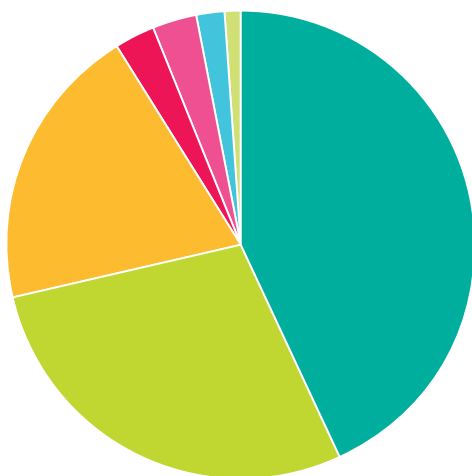
- ✓ Opportunities for Grade 11 and 12 students to participate in trade skills programs (32%)
- ✓ In-school career and life planning and preparation (21%)
- ✓ Potential for job growth in Surrey (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ More teen-friendly employers (38%)
- ✓ Increase number of local job opportunities (27%)
- ✓ Better training for jobs (21%)

GRADE 3.2 OR C (AVERAGE)

SHARE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED



Unemployed (44%) Seasonal (3%) Training Program (1%)
 Part-time (20%) Full-time (3%)
 No Answer (29%) Other (2%)



“I like how my school has work experience.”

It allows students to gain experience, grow, and have a higher chance of getting hired.”

(Respondent, SurreyCares Youth Vital Signs Survey 2015)



“As a grade 12 student, I have been STRUGGLING to find job support. I

have applied to many places for work and feel very much on my own. I have not been provided with the education I need to excel in interviews and find jobs that are in need.

Please change this!”

(Respondent, SurreyCares Youth Vital Signs Survey 2015)

SURREY STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CAREER PROGRAMS

Programs	2010/11	2014/15
Career Preparation Program	2065	2143
Career Technical Program	197	238
Co-operative Education Program	573	453
Secondary School Apprenticeship Program	42	23

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF GRADUATES FROM BC PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLS*

Degree/Certificate	2007	2009	2011	2013
Bachelor Degree Graduates	3%	6%	7%	7%
Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Graduates	6%	10%	11%	10%
Apprenticeship Graduates	N/A	N/A	11%	8%

* This data does not take into account employment in field of study; underemployment of post-graduates is not reported here

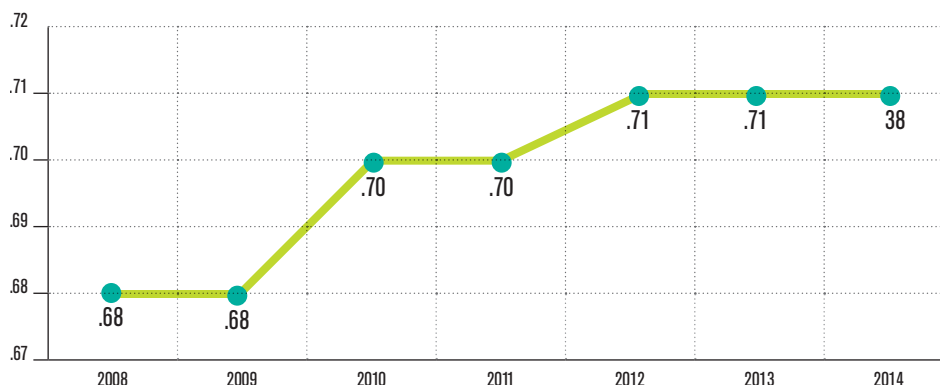
IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HELPING YOUTH GET EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING?

Opportunities for Grade 11 and 12 students to participate in trade skills programs	32%
In-school career and life planning and preparation	21%
Potential for job growth in Surrey	18%
Promotion of co-op programs offered by local colleges and universities	17%
Resources and information available for employment opportunities for youth	16%
Many youth job search support programs	13%
Available employment service programs	12%
Training and hiring programs for youth with barriers to employment	9%
Other	2%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AVAILABLE IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

More teen-friendly employers	38%
Increase number of local job opportunities	27%
Better training for jobs	21%
More paid intern positions in government and business	20%
More support for job searches	18%
More help with resume and interview preparation	16%
Improve in-school career and life planning and preparation	12%
Improved education on employees' rights and job safety	11%
Other	3%

JOBS PER RESIDENT WORKER 15+, BY YEAR



“‘Planning course’ in school should be grade 8 AND 9, 10 is too late.”

(Respondent, SurreyCares Youth Vital Signs Survey 2015)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR YOUTH 15 TO 24, BY AREA (2011)

Area	Unemployment Rate (15-24)
City of Surrey	10.1
Canada	14.3
British Columbia	14.4

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Why is the percentage of post-secondary graduates without employment increasing?
- 2 What is the underemployment rate of youth in Surrey?
- 3 Is there a need for more teen-friendly employers in Surrey? Why might youth in Surrey feel that local job opportunities are not available for youth?



ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF climate change and the impact on our environment has dramatically increased, reflecting a tectonic shift in public appreciation of the issue.

Surrey residents are keen about these issues, having previously identified the city's natural environment as one of the top reasons to celebrate the city. Our young people are pivotal to enhancing that perspective.

While the hectares devoted to park land are increasing in Surrey, there appears to be little progress in how that land is designed to be used or integrated into neighbourhoods. That perception may have influenced why youth see lack of planning as one of the top issues to improve.

Surrey has a large number of environmentally-focused programs and events, and overall the public is participating more often in these. At the same time, youth involvement in such programs at school and camps has dropped by half between 2010 and 2013. While that school district data is somewhat qualified—it doesn't account for other external sources of such programs—it does reveal a concerning trend. That same data also shows that students are not being exposed as often to information and discussion about climate change in their studies. It would serve us to understand why that is happening and if education ultimately leads to a change in youth behaviour.

Assuming education counts, information about Surrey's success at cutting water consumption, waste and greenhouse gases would appear to benefit not only youth but also the whole community. That could send and reinforce a message for youth, Surrey's future owners, and renters, business operators, and employees.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Recycling and food scrap collection for single family housing (32%)
- ✓ Many great parks (32%)
- ✓ Awareness of environmental issues in schools (26%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Maintain more trees and green space in new housing developments (30%)
- ✓ More walkable neighbourhoods (29%)
- ✓ More bike trails and lanes (22%)

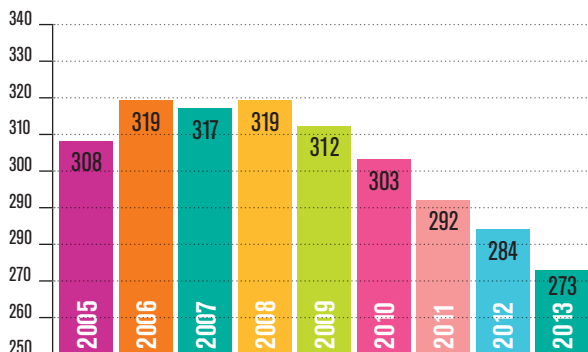
GRADE 3.4 OR C (AVERAGE)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION IN SURREY (2010-2013)

Types of Programs (All Ages)	2010	2011	2012	2013
School and Camp Programs	16,812	7,395	5,502	9,730
Public Programs and Events	27,910	32,390	48,325	54,715
Stewardship Programs	9,573	3,202	3,906	3,861
TOTAL	54,295	42,987	57,733	68,306

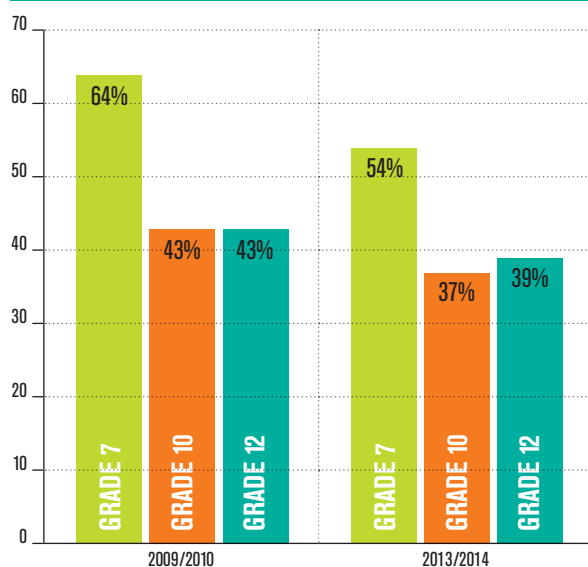
SURREY RESIDENTIAL WATER CONSUMPTION (2005-2013)

Residential Water Consumption (L/Capita/Day)



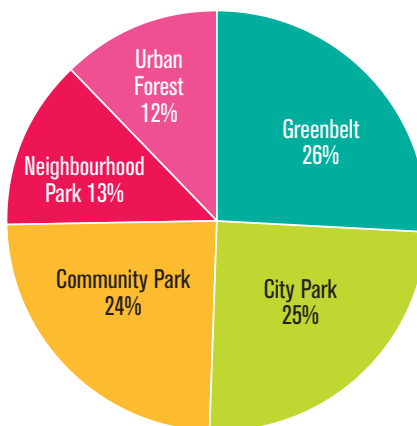
In 2013, Surrey sent 79% less residential waste to landfills than in 2007

STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING TO DO THINGS TO TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT (%)

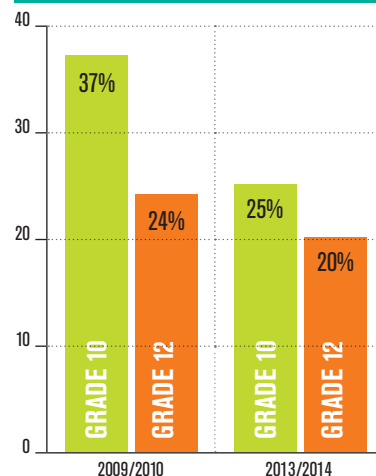


In 2013, Surrey had 68,306 programs that were environmentally-focused

TYPES OF PARKS IN SURREY (2013)



STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE (%)



Surrey reduced its residential water consumption by 11.4% between 2005 and 2013

IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING YOUTH AWARENESS OF AND ACTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

Recycling and food scrap collection for single family housing	32%
Many great parks	32%
Awareness of environmental issues in schools	26%
Promotes alternative transportation	22%
Programs and events to clean up the environment	17%
Protects trees and greenspaces	14%
Community gardens	9%
Youth-oriented environmental organizations	8%
Youth environmental education programs	6%
Protects agricultural land	3%
Other	2%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS ABOUT SURREY'S APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Maintain more trees and greenspace in new housing developments	30%
More walkable neighbourhoods	29%
More bike trails and lanes	22%
Further develop existing parks	19%
Improve recycling	16%
More community-based environmental events	16%
More environmental programs and events in schools	15%
Reduce the amount of garbage being disposed	13%
Reduce water consumption (e.g. shorten showers, turn off taps, etc.)	12%
More youth environmental education programs	10%
Other	4%



City of Surrey has **2626** hectares of park land. That is the equivalent of approximately **47 regulation American football fields!**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Does teaching youth about climate change and environmental issues actually result in a change in behaviour?
- Should the City of Surrey require new developments to include green spaces in their development plans?
- Why is youth participation in environmental programs decreasing?



GETTING AROUND

TRANSIT IS A hot topic for youth in Surrey, with many ranking it as the second most important issue needing improvement. The median commute to work or school in Surrey takes 30 minutes, a third longer than elsewhere in Canada. While those in high school are more likely to travel to school in cars, transit is the primary source of transportation for older youth; fewer of our youth, especially among the 16 to 19 age range, are getting a driver's licence before finishing high school.

To help our youth juggle school and work lives, we need more late-night bus and Skytrain service, as well as an expansion of current service, particularly in areas like Whalley. Cost is also a prohibitive factor for some, although Translink's U-Pass seems to be helping those who can get one.

The disabled among us are being better served by the increasing number of accessible bus stops. But those youth who are from lower-income homes—young people who are really dependent on transit—are being prevented from participating in school and community-based extra-curricular activities because of the costs and the level of service in some areas. Improvements to transit are critical to improving youth access to these opportunities.

We do have some good news: fewer youth are getting involved, injured, or killed in car accidents in the last few years. Also, the rates at which youth are consuming alcohol or marijuana before driving are also significantly lower. On the other hand, a quarter of those who do drive intoxicated are doing so without a licence, and almost a quarter of our youth have been in a car with an intoxicated driver.

Walking and biking also help us all get around affordably and safely, and our young people love our bike and recreational trails and paths. Expanding this system through programs such as the City's Cycling Program, which adds 12 km of new bike lanes and trails each year, certainly helps.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Good marked crosswalks for pedestrians (29%)
- ✓ Affordable public transportation (25%)
- ✓ Access to safe bike and walking trails to get around on (22%)

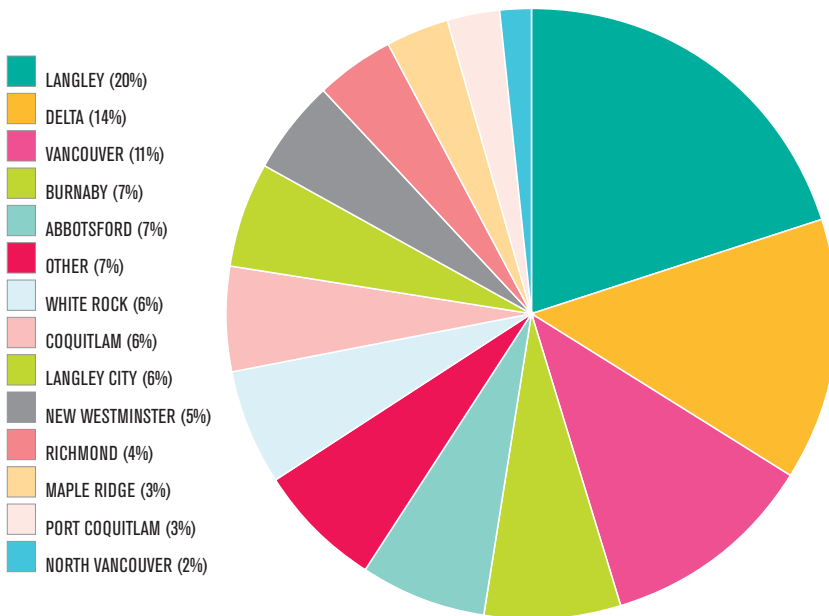
TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Reduced transit fares (31%)
- ✓ Late-night bus and Skytrain service times (30%)
- ✓ Increase areas receiving bus services (23%)

GRADE 3.2 OR C (AVERAGE)

62% OF SURREY RESIDENTS WORK IN SURREY WHERE DO THE REST WORK?

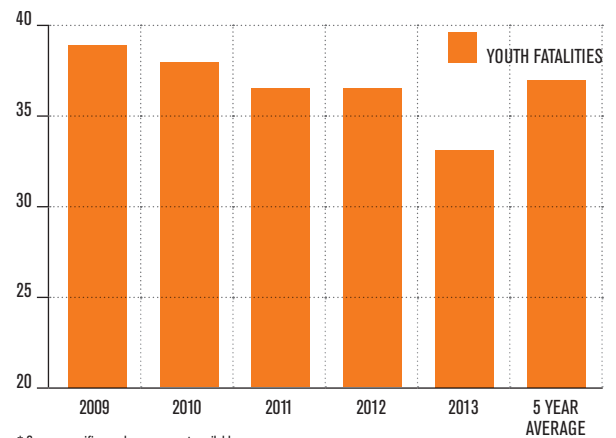
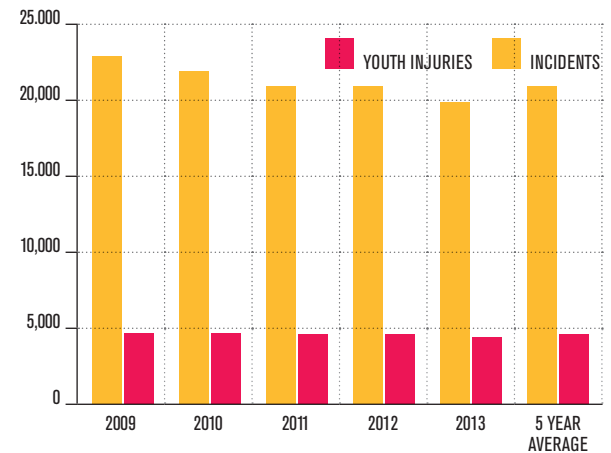
(People over 15 who are employed)



South Fraser youth who are **dependent on public transit**, such as low income individuals, aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and recent immigrants, are more likely than their peers to miss out on extra-curricular activities because they have **no way of getting there or no way of getting back home**

TRAFFIC INCIDENTS INVOLVING YOUTH AGES 16-21 ARE DECREASING

Crashes where at least one youth (age 16-21) was involved, Lower Mainland*



* Surrey-specific numbers were not available

TRAVEL BY THE NUMBERS



64% of South Fraser youth Grade 7-12 commute to school via car



Transit is the mode of transportation used most by youth aged 18-24.



Only 29% of the South Fraser AHS* respondents have some form of BC Driver's Licence



Only 5% of South Fraser youth had ever driven after drinking alcohol in 2013, a 58% decrease from 2008 (12% in 2008)

* Adolescent Health Survey

TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IN SURREY IS IMPROVING

Year	% of Accessible Bus Stops
2010	69
2013	76.2



75% of Fraser South youth report using transit as a means of transportation



Youth in Surrey **struggle to get around** the city using public transportation, sometimes facing commutes from **1 to 2 hours** to get from one part of the Surrey to the next

THE NUMBER OF KILOMETRES OF RECREATIONAL AND CYCLING TRAILS (2013)

Greenways	99
Off-Street and Separated Bike Lanes	236.9
Park Paths and Trails	304
Total	639.9

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Why are youth driving less in Metro Vancouver?
- 2 How can transit be improved to meet the needs of youth in Surrey?
- 3 How much does dependence on the transit system in Surrey affect certain groups of youth in BC? Does it prevent them from participating in extracurricular activities, employment, and or post-secondary education?



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

ACCESS TO SAFE, affordable housing is essential for the economic and social well-being of our communities. While housing in Surrey is more affordable than some other parts of Metro Vancouver, there are still too many families and individuals living here who are unable to find housing that they can afford.

Although rents in Surrey have stayed relatively stable, many residents have to allocate too much of their earnings on rent. There has also been a dramatic reduction in the availability of apartments in Surrey, meaning that it is becoming more difficult for Surrey youth to find safe and affordable apartments in the city. As a result, many are living with their parents longer.

Youth who are or have been in care are much more likely to move frequently, which can increase the risk of alienating them from their community.

When it comes to homelessness, much more research is needed on the situation in Surrey as it relates to youth. Existing data does not indicate the age of the 403 individuals officially identified as homeless in 2014. And of the 185 emergency shelter beds in Surrey, only six are devoted to youth.

Despite some troubling numbers, excellent work is already being done on youth housing and homelessness in our city. The Pacific Community Resources Society, Options BC, and Surrey Street Youth Services all provide young people with support around housing and homelessness.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Surrey offers a variety of different housing options (24%)
- ✓ Financial support for low income renters (20%)
- ✓ Youth housing outreach program (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Greater support for youth living on their own (29%)
- ✓ Greater funding for housing for single parent families (25%)
- ✓ More long term living arrangements for youth (23%)

2.9 OR D+ (BELOW AVERAGE)

SURREY HOUSEHOLD TYPES BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

	ALL	CLOVERDALE	FLEETWOOD	GUILDFORD	NEWTON	SOUTH SURREY	WHALLEY/CITY CENTRE
Single Family	93,780 (67%)	12,730 (73%)	11,350 (70%)	12,545 (69%)	22,390 (64%)	18,320 (71%)	16,445 (58%)
Multiple Family ¹	11,695 (8%)	735 (4%)	1,630 (10%)	1,005 (6%)	4,945 (14%)	545 (2%)	2,835 (10%)
Non-Family ²	35,345 (25%)	4,060 (23%)	3,215 (20%)	4,505 (25%)	7,425 (21%)	6,870 (27%)	9,270 (32%)
Totals	140,820	17,525 (12%)	16,195 (12%)	18,055 (13%)	34,760 (25%)	25,735 (18%)	28,550 (20%)

¹ Multiple family homes refers to homes in which more than one census family is living. ² Non-family homes refer to individuals living on their own, and groups of individuals who are not classified as census families

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT BY NEIGHBOURHOOD (\$)

	Cloverdale	Fleetwood	Guildford	Newton	South Surrey	Whalley
Average Monthly Shelter costs for rented dwellings	\$1,044	\$898	\$910	\$795	\$1,189	\$849

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENTAL PRICE* IN SURREY (\$)

Average Monthly Rental Price	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Bachelor	615	636	635	626	621	632
1 Bedroom	756	756	767	737	731	751
2 Bedroom	936	947	932	921	896	921
3+ Bedroom	1025	1063	1074	1008	1027	1080
Surrey Average	799	859	858	835	822	846
Metro Average	852	1042	1053	1054	1059	1067

*In 2013 Constant Dollars

RENTAL AVAILABILITY IS ON THE DECLINE (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Vacancy Rate	5	3.2	3	4.2	4.6	1.5
Availability Rate	5.5	3.6	3.9	4.8	5.2	2.8
Units	5,420	5,444	5,533	5,616	5,587	5,486

A YOUNG PERSON'S BUDGET

	Full Time	Part Time
Income	\$10.25/hr x 40 hrs x 4 weeks = \$1,640/month	\$10.25/hr x 24 hrs x 4 weeks = \$984/month
Rent based on average rent in 2013	\$846	\$846
Amount left for food, tuition, transportation	\$794	\$138
Rent as a % of income	52%	86%



29% of Youth Vital Signs respondents stated that more support was needed for youth living alone in Surrey. By supporting youth, especially those transitioning into adulthood (18-24), it will encourage youth to stay in Surrey and be a continuing part of the community

SURREY DOES HAVE MANY RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH TO HELP THEM WITH HOUSING ISSUES.

- Pacific Community Resources: provides housing search support for youth aged 16-19, as well as supported independent living.
- Subsidized Youth Independent Housing Program (Options BC): helps secure and sustain housing and provides support for job searches and educational pursuits (ages 16-24)
- Surrey Street Youth Services: Housing Outreach programs

SURREY YOUTH IN CARE: A FEW NUMBERS:

- 1% live in a group home
- 1% currently in government care
- Less than 2% in foster care
- 50% moved in the past year
- 20% moved three or more times in the past year
- 53% felt an adult in their community cared for them
- 8% of youth in care had attempted suicide in the past year

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN SURREY REMAINS A PROBLEM

- 20% of the Metro Vancouver homeless (includes Surrey) were under the age of 25.
- A higher proportion of youth under the age of 19 were considered sheltered homeless whereas a higher proportion of youth aged 19-24 were considered unsheltered homeless
- 32% of homeless youth identified as having a mental illness
- 47% of homeless youth say they have an addiction
- Youth had the lowest probability of being considered long-term homeless (1 year +)



In 2011, 86% of Surrey youth aged 15-24 were living at home

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 How can youth be better supported in finding safe and affordable housing in Surrey?
- 2 What are some of the difficulties that youth transitioning out of care face? Is there enough support (both financial and other resources) for these youth?
- 3 Is there a need for more youth shelter beds in Surrey? What impact would this have on youth homelessness in Surrey?
- 4 Are youth aware of the resources available to them in regards to housing? Is there a need for greater promotion of programs?

PRIMARY SOURCES: Bank of Canada; Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Children's Partnership Surrey-White Rock; City of Surrey; Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness; The Surrey North Delta Leader; Keys Housing & Health Solutions; McCreary Centre Society; The Province; Options Community Services; Pacific Community Resources; Vancouver Sun; Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition; SurreyCares Youth Survey 2015



MAKING ENDS MEET

EVERY GENERATION FACES challenges in transitioning to adulthood; however, our 18 to 24 year olds are facing numerous obstacles making it difficult to make ends meet. The cost of housing is high, education is expensive, and high quality jobs are hard to get. If we want our young people to stay here and build Surrey, they need our support.

Guildford and Whalley report the highest rate of low income youth, followed by Newton and Fleetwood, but even in affluent areas of Surrey, like Cloverdale or South Surrey where you might expect the rate to be low as the majority of youth seem to be thriving, poverty exists.

There is only seven percent difference in the rate of youth poverty between Newton and South Surrey.

The cost of housing is at a crisis point, and our young people are paying more than half of their income toward rent. Adding to the housing problem, the number of rental properties has declined. Our youth feel that being able to save for the future, much like the idea of home ownership, is a dream. After paying rent, the rest of their income goes toward paying student loans and paying the costs associated with a vehicle; access to better paying jobs means long transit times—when transit is an option—and the reality is that better opportunities are available if you have a vehicle.

Most of our survey respondents reported that they are food secure, but with over 40% of Surrey's Food Bank clients being under 18 years of age, we have one of the highest rates of food bank use by youth in all of Canada. Research has shown that not having enough to eat impacts performance at school and at work, and has serious health consequences.

How are our youth doing? The answer is that they are really having a tough time making ends meet.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ School programs (like free meals) that reduce the effects of poverty (36%)
- ✓ Providing affordable transportation (33%)
- ✓ Resources available to low income families (30%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Increase the minimum wage (46%)
- ✓ Increase access to healthy food at low or no cost (37%)
- ✓ Provide more programs for at-risk youth (23%)

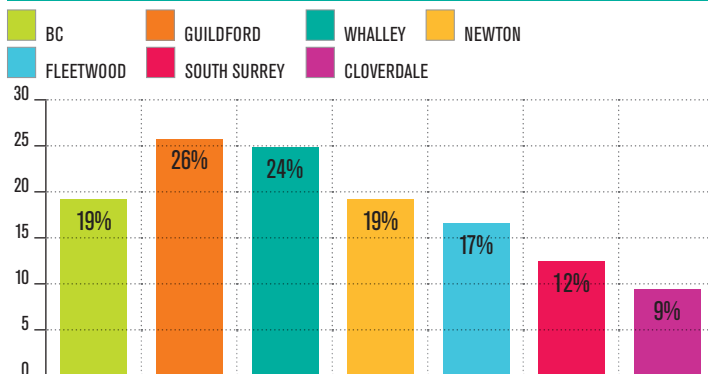
GRADE 3.0 OR C (AVERAGE)

YOUTH POVERTY COMPARED TO ADULTS IN SURREY*

	Under the age of 18			18 to 64		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Percentage	18.7%	18.4%	19%	14.9%	14.3%	15.5%
Numbers	20,355	10,460	9,895	44,840	21,110	23,735

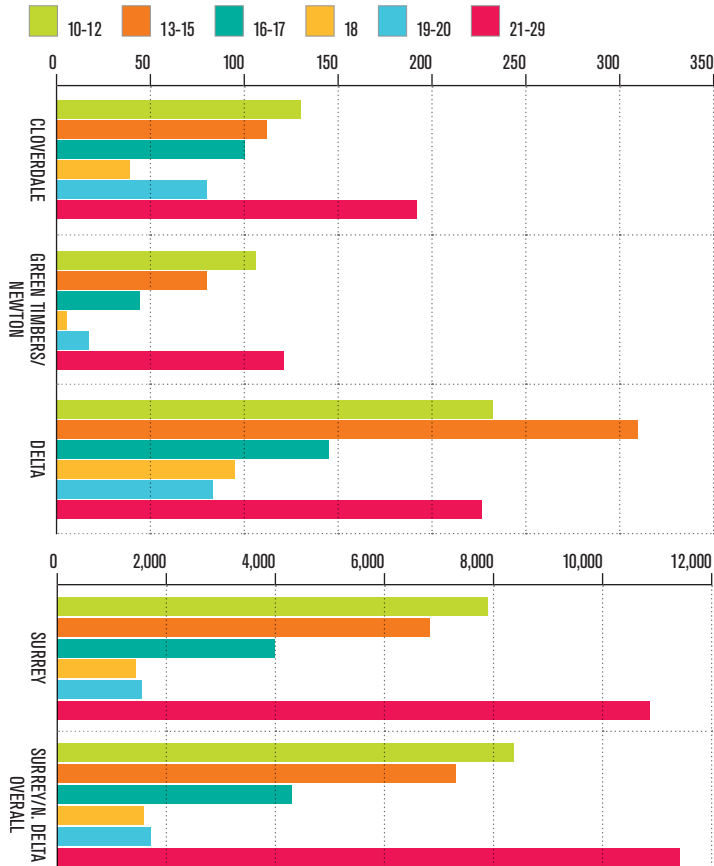
* Due to changes in survey method, Stats Canada has stated that data on low income individuals is NOT comparable to census data

YOUTH POVERTY IN SURREY BY NEIGHBOURHOOD (% OF LOW-INCOME YOUTH UNDER 18)



 Youth represent a large proportion of low income individuals

YOUTH SURREY FOOD BANK USAGE (2014)




PRIMARY SOURCES: City of Surrey; McCreary Centre Society; Statistics Canada; Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition; Surrey Food Bank; SurreyCares Vital Signs Youth Survey 2015


IN WHICH TWO AREAS IS SURREY SUCCESSFUL IN HELPING SURREY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS?

School programs that reduce the effects of poverty (e.g. free meals)	36%
Affordable transportation	33%
Resources available to low income families	30%
Awareness of youth homelessness and poverty	26%
More affordable housing (e.g. lower rent)	16%
Helping cover costs of everyday needs (food, clothing, etc.)	15%
Other	4%

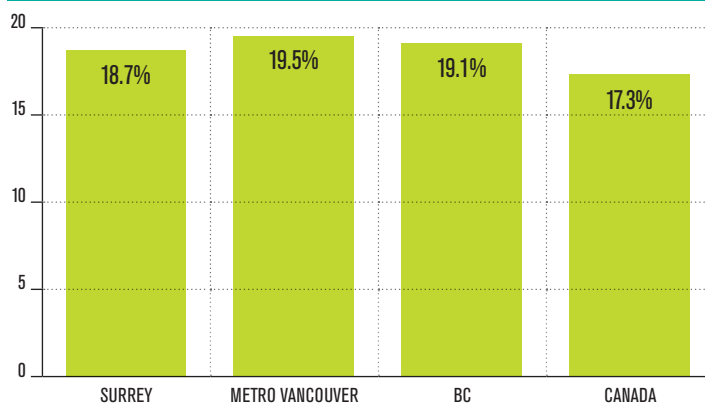
IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS TO BETTER HELP SURREY INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Increase the minimum wage	46%
Increase access to healthy food at low cost/no cost	37%
Provide more programs for at-risk youth	23%
Greater support for youth living on their own	19%
More government funding for low cost housing	19%
Greater access to discounted transit for low income individuals	17%
Increase funding for those in need (e.g. higher social assistance rates)	14%
Increase benefits to persons with disabilities	7%
Other	4%

 **18.7%** of youth under the age of 18 were considered low income after-tax, compared to 14.9% of those over 18

 Approximately **72,000** low income people live in Surrey, or about 16% of the entire Surrey population

THE CHILD POVERTY RATE IN SURREY COMPARED WITH METRO, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL RATES (2011)



OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Would increasing the minimum wage reduce youth poverty in Surrey?
- 2 How can programs and services be targeted so as to reduce income disparities between the neighbourhoods of Surrey?
- 3 Why are there age disparities when it comes to food bank usage? What can be learned from this? Should there be more funding and services available for youth transitioning into adulthood (age 21-30)?



MENTAL WELLNESS

GOOD MENTAL HEALTH is the foundation stone upon which productive, fulfilling lives are built. When we are mentally healthy, notes the Canadian Mental Health Association, we enjoy our life, our environment, and the people in it. It also allows us to be creative, learn and try new things, and cope better with difficult times.

By that definition, the majority of Surrey teens are well-positioned to enter adulthood. The 12-19 year-old age group were most likely to rate their mental health as very good or excellent, putting them above the provincial average for their age. This group also says there are many support systems and resources available to them within the city and school system, a point they celebrate about Surrey.

Unfortunately, youth over 20 are less positive about their mental health, especially on stress and despair indicators. Anxiety also appears to loom large in the lives of older Surrey youth who are transitioning into adulthood.

For those youth who do struggle, the news is alarming: 11 percent of Surrey youth, mostly female, say they have seriously considered committing suicide. Female suicide attempts and self-harm rates are also considerably higher than for young males. Females report more multiple conditions than males, especially anxiety and depression.

Surrey Youth Vital Signs Survey respondents chose access to mental wellness programs as both a top topic to celebrate and a top topic of concern in Surrey. Delving into these particular issues may yield specific strategies for alleviating the impact of stress, anxiety, despair, and depression, while understanding the differences between genders and age groups could lead to more effective programs targeted to those most needing them.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Many support systems and resources available for youth (e.g. LGBTQ, bullied youth, youth newcomers to Canada, etc.) (18%)
- ✓ Youth specific addictions counselling (18%)
- ✓ Awareness of mental wellness challenges faced by youth in schools (18%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ More programs to help manage stress and/or anxiety (37%)
- ✓ More discussion of mental wellness issues in the school system (28%)
- ✓ Greater access to mental wellness services for youth (26%)

GRADE 3.0 OR C (AVERAGE)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MCCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY'S 2013 ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY: FRASER SOUTH

- 11% of South Fraser students had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year
- Females are 86% more likely to have seriously thought about suicide than males, and 63% more likely to have attempted suicide
- Whether it is stress from school, work, or life, most youth (81%) in Surrey reported feeling some level of stress within the past month
- Youth aged 17 and 18 were 50% more likely to experience extreme stress and despair than youth aged 13 and under
- 10% of South Fraser youth reported not accessing mental health services when they thought they needed to, which is consistent with the provincial rates
- The most commonly cited reasons for youth not accessing mental services were that they did not want their parents to know and that they were hoping that the problem would go away

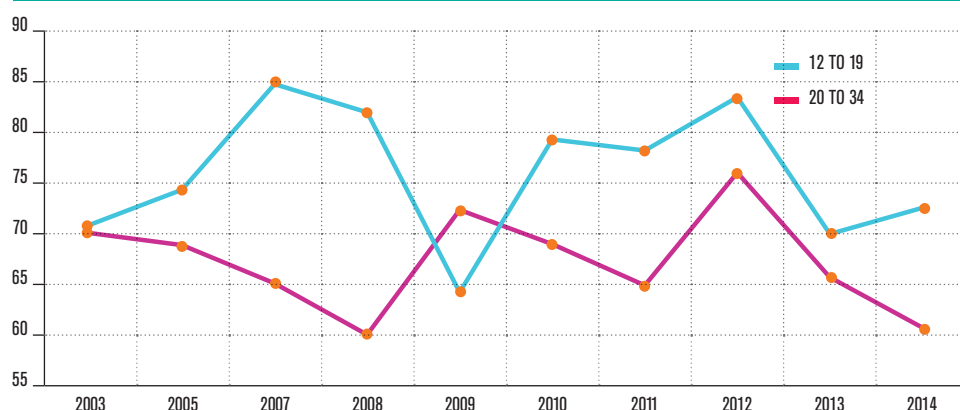
IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS TO PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR YOUR OVERALL YOUTH MENTAL WELLNESS IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

More programs to help manage stress and/or anxiety	36%
More discussion of mental wellness issues in the school system	34%
Greater access to mental wellness services for youth	26%
More programs to help manage anger	22%
Greater support for youth through targeted programs and services (e.g. LGBTQ, bullied youth, etc.)	18%
Greater access to addiction counselling	13%
Greater support for mental wellness clinics for youth newcomers to Canada	11%
Other	3%

IN WHICH AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN SUPPORTING YOUR OVERALL MENTAL WELLNESS?

Many support systems and resources available for youth (e.g. LGBTQ, bullied youth, youth newcomers, etc.)	18%
Youth-specific addictions counselling	18%
Awareness of mental wellness challenges faced by youth in schools	18%
Many support systems and resources available for youth with special needs	15%
Access to mental wellness and substance use clinics	15%
Programs that assist youth to deal with stress and anxiety	15%
Programs that support youth to help/support peers with mental wellness issues	14%
Mobile treatment and support programs	11%
Housing support for youth with mental health issues	8%
Increased funding for mental health treatment in Surrey	6%
Other	4%

PERCENTAGE OF SURREY YOUTH REPORTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH, BY AGE GROUP (2003-2014)



PERCENTAGES OF YOUTH WHO REPORT "QUITE A LOT OF LIFE STRESS," BY REGION AND AGE

Region	2005		2008		2014	
	12-19 years	20-34 years	12-19 years	20-34 years	12-19 years	20-34 years
South Fraser	14.4%	21.2%	31.2%	23.7%	27.6%	26.1%
BC	14.2%	23.3%	16.4%	21.9%	21.3%	22.7%
Canada	15.7%	24.3%	16.3%	22.7%	19.5%	23%



Providing greater discussion of mental health issues with youth is important to reduce much of the stigma that exists surrounding 'mental illness' today



Mental health issues are particularly hard to measure since, in many cases, **youth are less willing to report** that they have a mental health issue than a physical one



Although mental wellness was chosen by respondents as one of the top four areas in Surrey that need improvement, most youth in Surrey perceive their mental health as good or excellent



Surrey youth care about the mental well-being of their peers: Providing programs to help youth deal with stress and anxiety was chosen as a top priority by Surrey youth

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Why do a lower proportion of youth aged 20-34 perceive their mental health as good or excellent? How can programs and services be better targeted to older youth?
- 2 What role does gender play in determining mental health? What factors contribute to female youth reporting lower levels of mental well-being?
- 3 Are Surrey youth facing increasing levels of stress? How can programs and services help youth deal with their stress/ anxiety?
- 4 How can the stigma surrounding mental health be reduced in Surrey to reduce the amount of youth not seeking help for their mental health issues?



PHYSICAL HEALTH, FITNESS AND NUTRITION

THE MAJORITY OF youth in Surrey report good or excellent health, although data shows that a quarter of them deal with health conditions or disabilities. While many young people have access to a regular doctor, the overall access rate is declining. This might be connected to the ratio of doctors to patients in the South Fraser area which, although rising, is still only two-thirds of the provincial average. We need more doctors, and survey respondents say that free health care until the age of 25 would help older youths access the care they need.

Most of our youth maintain a healthy weight and consume the same amount of fruits and vegetables as their peers across BC. However, their consumption of fast food and soda pop is above average and making more of them overweight or obese every year. In fact, youth obesity rates now exceed both national and provincial rates. More school programs and education would help us slow or reverse those trends and guide Surrey youth towards a healthier diet and body weight.

Teenagers tend to be active, such as through school programs or sports leagues, and their participation rates are growing. But athletic participation drops significantly after high school, so opportunities for older youth to continue on in sports would help them stay physically active longer.

And, like youth everywhere, some are tempted to try smoking, drinking and sex. The rates at which our youth are experimenting with smoking and alcohol are below the provincial average, and dropping. Still, some are still choosing to consume drugs or alcohol and get behind the wheel. As for sex, our youth are older when they engage and more likely to use protection now than in the past. More education programs would support youth in making the best health, nutrition, and fitness choices for themselves.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Many outdoor recreation facilities are often available for free (e.g. tennis courts, water parks, etc.) (39%)
- ✓ Recreation centres are accessible and offer many programs at reasonable prices (26%)
- ✓ Many affordable recreation programs (22%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Provide free youth health services to the age of 25 (29%)
- ✓ Greater focus on nutrition and physical health in school (27%)
- ✓ Improve access to healthy food for low income families (27%)

GRADE 3.3 OR C (AVERAGE)

REASONS FOR NOT SEEKING MEDICAL ATTENTION

"Why I didn't go to the doctor..."

- I'm hoping the problem will go away (61%)
- Don't want my parents to know (39%)
- I'm too busy (36%)
- I'm afraid of what the doctor would say or do (31%)

AIMING FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Self-Reported Teen Obesity Rates

Surrey	BC	Canada
29%	18.5%	23%

WHAT THEY ATE "YESTERDAY" (THE DAY BEFORE THE AHS* SURVEY)

MALE	Adolescent Health Survey	FEMALE
98%	Water	96%
50%	Fast Food	45%
46%	Soda Pop	32%

* Adolescent Health Survey



Youth in Surrey say they are **concerned with nutrition** and the benefits that healthy eating can have for both mental and physical health, but their food choices don't reflect this

HOW MANY SURREY YOUTH EAT THEIR FRUITS AND VEGGIES?

% who eat five or more servings of fruit or vegetables per day	% who eat at least one serving of fruit or vegetables per day	% unknown
37.4	93 (includes column A)	1



Older youth aged 20-24 need more **active programs and services** to help them stay as active as they were as teens

PERCENTAGE OF SOUTH FRASER YOUTH WHO GET AT LEAST SOME EXERCISE

Age Group	2003	2014	12-Year Average
12 - 19 year olds	73.1	79.6	76.5
20 - 34 year olds	60.6	51.2	55.3

SMOKING AND DRINKING

% of Fraser South Students

Who Have Tried Smoking		Who Have Tried Alcohol	
Surrey	BC	Surrey	BC
16%	21%	37%	45%

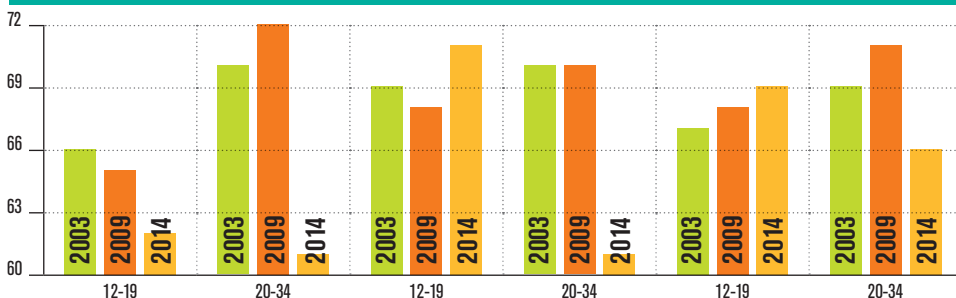
IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN KEEPING YOUTH ACTIVE AND PHYSICALLY HEALTHY?

Many outdoor recreation facilities are often available for free (e.g. tennis courts, water parks, etc.)	39%
Recreation centres are accessible and offer many programs at reasonable cost	26%
Many affordable recreation programs	22%
Healthy food and drink options provided in schools	20%
Drop-in health clinics available for youth	15%
Access to health information and resources	14%
Walkable neighbourhoods	14%
Good sex education in schools	10%
School lunch programs for low income youth	9%
Access to recreation facilities for people with physical disabilities	4%
Other	1%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS TO HELP YOUTH BE MORE ACTIVE AND PHYSICALLY HEALTHY IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Provide free youth health services to the age of 25	29%
Greater focus on nutrition and physical health in school	27%
Greater access to sports leagues for low income youth	27%
Improve access to healthy food for low income families	27%
Better sex education in schools	19%
Greater funding for school lunch programs in secondary schools	16%
Increase access to youth health clinics	13%
Increase funding for sports programs for youth with special needs	11%
Other	3%

PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH WHO SAY THEIR HEALTH IS GOOD OR EXCELLENT



At 82, the number of physicians per 100,000 in the Fraser South Region remains well below both the provincial (123) and national (111) rates (2013)

SAFE SEX BEHAVIOUR

	2008	2013	% change
Ever Been Pregnant	6%	1%	83% less
Used Condoms (Oral Sex)*	not available	12%	not available
Used Condoms (Intercourse)*	62%	71%	15% more
Intercourse Before Age 14	36%	29%	19% less

*Last time they had oral sex/intercourse

PRIMARY BC Stats Socioeconomic Profiles; Canadian Institute for Health Information; City of Surrey; Fraser Health Authority; McCreary Centre Society; Statistics Canada; SurreyCares Vital Signs Youth Survey 2015

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Would youth benefit from having greater access to free health care for youth up to the age of 24? Why do youth feel as if there is a need for greater access to youth health care?
- Why are youth aged 20-34 in the South Fraser less likely to have a regular doctor? Is access to regular doctors actually decreasing for youth aged 12-34? Are clinics becoming more popular with youth rather than having a regular doctor?
- Why do South Fraser Youth eat so much fast food? Is there a need for greater promotion and availability of healthy foods with the Surrey community?
- What role does age play in physical activity levels? Is there a need for physical health programs that target youth aged 20-24?



SAFETY

MEDIA COVERAGE IN Canada of high-profile cases of youth being bullied, both online and in-person, has vastly increased public awareness of this problem over the last five years. For that reason alone, it is gratifying to see that Surrey youth identify anti-bullying programs as the top issue to celebrate when rating safety in Surrey. Also encouraging is the fact that the crime rate for Surrey's youth (12-to-17 years of age) remains below the provincial crime rate, which is perhaps a consequence of crime prevention programs at schools.

But the cause for celebration is cut short by some emerging trends. While the provincial crime rate is declining, the overall youth crime rate in Surrey has been rising since 2012. Equally troubling is that while there has been a substantial decrease in youth-committed violent offences in the last six years, in 2014 that offence rate rose slightly above the provincial average. Most concerning of all is, while most major categories of youth crime have been decreasing, we see a continuing increase in the numbers of youth aged 12-to-17 charged with drug offences.

The result is that the overall "Safety" picture is a mixed one. The majority of students attending Surrey district schools, for instance, say they feel safe at school most of the time, more so than five years ago. This is an important development in that students who don't feel safe are more likely to skip school and less likely to have educational plans beyond high school. On the other hand, far too many students still say they have experienced bullying intense enough to scare or upset them.

On a positive note, many youth say they want a better relationship with the police, and support efforts to add more police officers to the community.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Anti-bullying programs (24%)
- ✓ Good lighting in parks (16%)
- ✓ More awareness of crime and personal safety (14%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Better relationship between police and youth (26%)
- ✓ Greater punishment for online and in-person bullying (25%)
- ✓ Increase programs to keep youth from being involved in crime (21%)

GRADE 3.0 OR C (AVERAGE)

REPORT CARD ON BULLYING

COMMON TYPES OF Bullying: Teasing, Social Exclusion, Assault, Cyber-bullying

34% OF SOUTH Fraser students had been teased at least once to a point where they felt bad or extremely uncomfortable

7% OF STUDENTS in 2014 were physically assaulted

STUDENTS SAY SURREY schools' anti-bullying programs are good, but still need greater punishment for in-person and online bullying

NOT FEELING SAFE in school leads to skipping out, which hurts grades, reduces post-secondary opportunities, and even causes health issues

"FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, schools don't respond to bullying (even those with '0 Tolerance' policies). Some students go to school only feeling 'physically' safe (bullies won't physically harm them, but will tease, vandalize their belongings, etc.)"

(SurreyCares Vital Signs Youth Survey Respondent)

IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN KEEPING YOUTH SAFE?

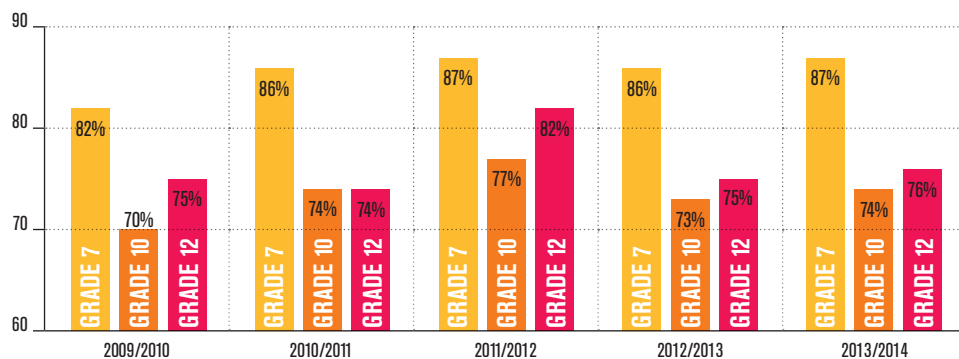
Anti-bullying programs	24%
Good lighting in parks	16%
More awareness of crime and personal safety	14%
Awareness programs regarding online safety	13%
In-school support and counselling programs	13%
Crime prevention initiatives in school	12%
More traffic controlled intersections around schools	12%
Enforcement and education for road safety	11%
Police are doing a great job	10%
More marked/dedicated cycling paths	8%
Anti-gang programs	7%
Crime prevention organizations have a positive impact	6%
Good communication between police and youth	4%
Other	2%

YOUTH CRIME RATES FOR 12 TO 17 YEAR OLDS (CHARGES PER 100,000 POPULATION)

	All Criminal Offences		Property Offences		Violent Offences		Drug Offences	
	BC	Surrey*	BC	Surrey*	BC	Surrey*	BC	Surrey
2009	2258.54	1495.15	720.23	326.07	628.95	556.7	148.17	156.41
2014	1191.25	1130.89	300.51	193.34	371.93	381.38	142.84	161.56

Legend: BC compared to Surrey = Higher = Lower * Note the drop in Surrey's numbers from 2009 to 2014

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL



OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 Why is there such a marked disparity between the perception of Surrey as an unsafe community versus real statistics from multiple sources that show otherwise, at least when compared with BC statistics?
- 2 Why has youth violent and property crime dropped so much since 2009? What's working?
- 3 How can youth trust in Surrey police be improved?



Safety is a bigger issue for older youth (17-24) than younger, which may be due to the increased probability of youth 15+ of being both the victims and perpetrators of crime



26% want a **better relationship** with the police



"I feel very strongly that more funding and time need to be spent on the mental health link with our crime in Surrey."

(SurreyCares Vital Signs Youth Survey Respondent)



YOUTH SPACES

BETWEEN THE AGES of 12 and 24, youth undergo massive changes in their relationships with each other and with the world around them. Providing safe spaces that connect youth with each other, with physical activity, the arts, and with supports adults is a critical task of every community. Safe youth spaces help prevent criminal activity, promotes positive, pro-social youth development and, through meaningfully involving youth in managing their space, also teaches them life skills.

In Surrey, the City provides outdoor spaces and facilities that serve all ages with access to arts, sports, heritage, and library services and programs. Specific youth programs are available at these locations. Other agencies in the community also provide youth-specific spaces, but these are not all universally accessible due to distance. Surrey's many shopping malls also provide locations for young people to congregate.

However, while the City provides excellent resources, these do not necessarily serve all youth equally well. In particular, youth over 18 years old lack services specifically for their age group. Younger youth who may not be interested in arts, sports, heritage and libraries, or those who might be deemed "higher risk" or more vulnerable, also lack youth spaces. Over a third of Youth Vital Signs respondents identified a need for additional youth-dedicated spaces, including spaces that are welcoming of LGBTQ, newcomers, and youth with varying levels of ability. Safe youth spaces are critical to ensuring that all youth can access the services and supports they require.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Outdoor spaces available (e.g. Parks, pools) (45%)
- ✓ Malls (41%)
- ✓ Adequate sports facilities (24%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ More free youth-dedicated hangout places for youth under 19 (33%)
- ✓ More space for youth recreation (26%)
- ✓ More affordable youth spaces (24%)

GRADE 3.4 OR C (AVERAGE)

The City of Surrey has created an innovative online tool called the “City of Surrey: Low Cost No Cost Map” to help youth find places nearby where they can go for low-cost/no-cost activities. It also includes information on locations for important amenities such as hospitals, legal services, etc., that many youth and newcomers to Surrey may not necessarily know about. The expansion of this application to include local events and festivals that may be available any time would also be very helpful.

Many youth spaces primarily serve youth under the age of 18, leaving youth ages 19-24 with fewer programs and services provided specifically for them. There needs to be more effort to ensure that youth age 19-24, who are at greater risk for criminal activity (see figure), also have spaces within the community where they can hang out and feel safe.

PERSONS ACCUSED OF CRIMES, BY AGE, CANADA, 2010

rate per 100,000 population

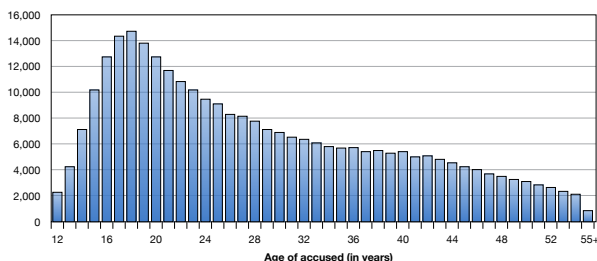


Image Taken from: Public Safety Canada (2012) A Statistical Snapshot of Youth at Risk and Youth Offending in Canada. Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2) Survey.



Survey respondents from South Surrey (23%) and Whalley (19%) had the highest proportions of youth in the Youth Vital Signs who felt that Surrey needs **more youth spaces**, whether it be for recreation, leisure, or just to hang out.

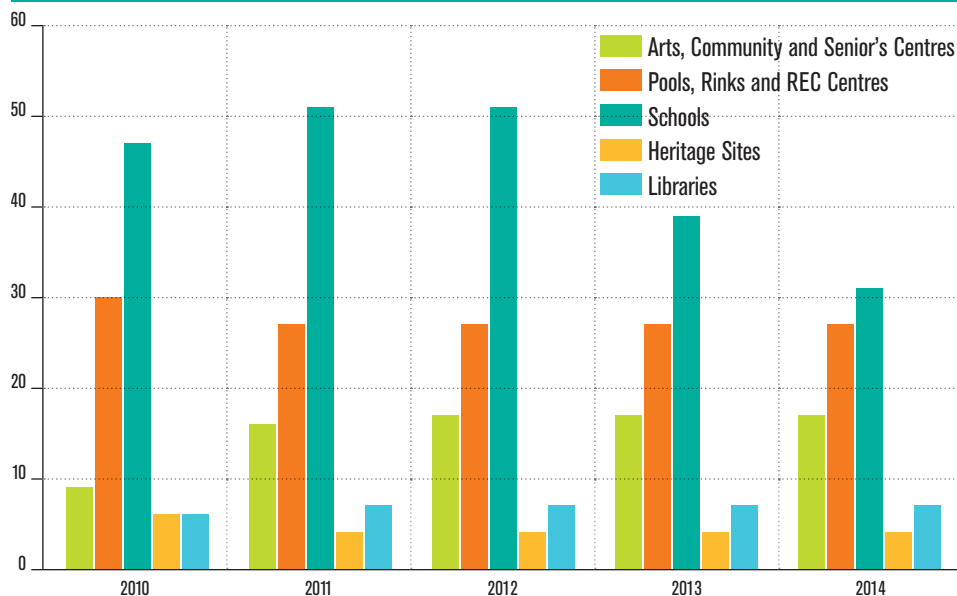
IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING FUN YOUTH SPACES?

Outdoor spaces available (e.g. Parks, pools)	45%
Malls	41%
Adequate sports facilities	24%
Youth-dedicated drop-in spaces	21%
Youth discounts at Community Centres	16%
Youth activity specific nights at community centres	13%
Youth spaces as part of multi-age group community spaces	8%
Community street celebrations	7%
Affordable youth spaces	6%
Other	3%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF YOUTH SPACES IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

More free youth-dedicated hangout places for youth under 19	32%
More space for youth recreation	26%
More affordable youth spaces	24%
More safe spaces available for youth (e.g. LGBTQ, disabled youth, etc.)	18%
More community center programs specifically for teens	18%
Have all-ages clubs	16%
More permanent youth-dedicated spaces	14%
More inclusive spaces for youth from different cultural backgrounds	10%
More inclusive spaces for youth with developmental disabilities	7%
More Skate Parks	6%
More adequate and appropriately trained staff in youth spaces for special needs youth	5%
Other	3%

PUBLIC FACILITIES THAT OFFER CITY OF SURREY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Are there enough safe and affordable youth spaces available for youth aged 12 to 24, especially those aged over 18, in Surrey?
- Do the youth spaces available meet the needs of all youth in Surrey, regardless of age, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, level of family income, etc?
- What kinds of spaces are youth most interested in having available to them?



The **many malls** in Surrey are a favourite multi-purpose space for youth to congregate and hang out on weeknights and weekends



Youth of different ages and interests need different youth spaces to meet their needs



Giving youth **space** to exercise, hangout with friends, or just relax is not only important for building a sense of community among youth but also gives youth a safe space to grow and develop



Youth want a say: Allowing youth to lead youth space projects will ensure that these spaces will be meeting the needs of the people that will **actually be using them** and will ensure that the spaces will be attractive to youth



YOUTH VOICE

YOUTH IN SURREY are keen to express themselves and participate in making decisions that affect their lives and community. Some youth are engaging through groups like the Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC), school councils, the Teen Library Council and in groups active around LGBTQ and mental or physical disability topics. They are also leading forums, such as the Surrey Leadership Action Conference and an upcoming forum hosted by the Surrey Child and Youth Committee. Even still, our youth would like their voices to feature even more prominently in the community, with new and better opportunities for decision-making, especially for those over 18 years old.

Surrey youth are getting more interested in electoral politics, with almost half of young, eligible members voting in the 2013 provincial election—a huge increase over the rate of participation in 2009. Credit for this must, to some degree, go to the Surrey School Board's elementary and secondary school Practice Voting Program. And more youth say they might be interested in voting if they saw more focus on youth and related issues, and if the voting age for municipal elections was dropped.

Those youth who engage in some form of community decision-making benefit from their participation, as they are more likely to rate their health as good or excellent than those who don't engage. They are also significantly more likely to feel good about themselves. That's why they need more opportunities to make decisions, because more than half of them still feel like they are not being listened to when it comes to suggestions and decisions concerning their lives and our community.

TOP TOPICS TO CELEBRATE

- ✓ Many Youth Leadership Councils and Groups (e.g. SLYC, school councils) (47%)
- ✓ Elementary and Secondary School Practice Voting Programs (29%)
- ✓ Many Activist Groups (e.g. LGBTQ, youth with mental and physical disabilities, etc.) (25%)

TOP TOPICS TO IMPROVE

- ✓ Make elections and politics more interesting and relevant and interesting for youth (35%)
- ✓ Raise importance of groups that represent youth voices (33%)
- ✓ Include youth in government decision making (26%)

GRADE 3.0 OR C (AVERAGE)

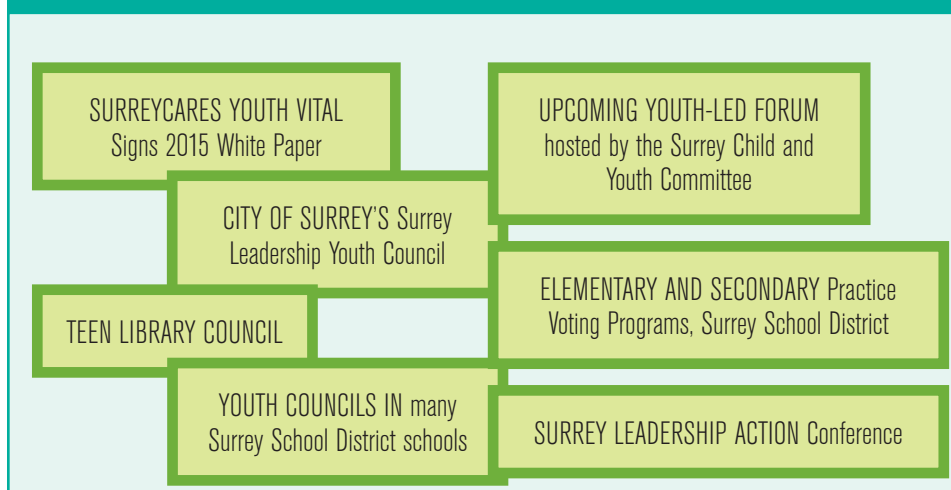
TEACHING SURREY YOUTH WHY VOTING MATTERS MAKES A DIFFERENCE

COMMENDATION	IDEA	WORTH A LOOK
Surrey School District's Elementary and Secondary Practice Voting Programs, particularly in Fleetwood, are doing a great job encouraging school-age youth to start thinking about the political world	The same Fleetwood youth who enjoyed the Elementary and Secondary Practice Voting Programs chose "Lower the Voting Age" as their Number One Choice of ways to improve giving Surrey Youth a voice	Scotland recently reduced their minimum voting age to 16 from 18, with great success at engaging younger voters (The Scottish Government: Who Can Vote in the Referendum)



This may mean not only giving youth a **voice through consultation**, but also actively allowing youth to take on more responsibility and to **be in charge** of the **decision making process** when it directly affects them

SOME PLACES SURREY YOUTH CAN EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS AND INFLUENCE DECISIONS



Surrey youth **desire a greater role** in decision making, especially when the decisions being made directly affect them



TOO OLD? Many youth councils and forums only allow youth under the age of 18 to participate; Youth aged 18-24 need to be given a voice in the community, too



Only **46%** of youth felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in the activities that these youth were participating in



In the **2013 BC election**, 48% of youth aged 18-24 voted, a 77% increase over 2009 when only 27% of youth aged 18-24 voted



Youth who felt as if they were meaningfully engaged were 21% more likely to rate their **health** as good or excellent, and were 32% more likely to feel good about themselves



COMPASSION: South Surrey youth celebrated the range of **activist groups** available for youth with varied interests, such as LGBTQ youth and youth with mental and physical disabilities

IN WHICH TWO AREAS HAS SURREY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING A YOUTH VOICE?

Many Youth Leadership Councils and Groups (e.g. SLVC, school councils)	47%
Elementary and Secondary School Practice Voting Programs	29%
Many Activist Groups (e.g. LGBTQ, youth with mental and physical disabilities, etc.)	25%
Discussions on youth crime	24%
Youth Forums (e.g. Youth Speak Up! Forum)	17%
Encouragement to vote	16%
Other	3%

IF YOU COULD CHANGE TWO THINGS ABOUT HOW YOUTH ARE ABLE TO INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING AND LOCAL PLANNING IN SURREY, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Make elections and politics more interesting and relevant for youth	35%
Raise importance of groups that represent youth voices	33%
Include youth in government decision making	26%
More youth input in various program options	23%
More youth groups (e.g. Surrey Youth Alliance)	22%
Lower the voting age	21%
More youth forums and youth councils (e.g. Our Future Voice Forum)	10%



There is a trend in youth **voting** participation that at the ages of 18 and 19, youth are keener to vote but as they turn 20-24, youth voter participation tends to decline

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 How can youth become more involved in local decision making processes?
- 2 Why do some youth feel that their "voice" is not being heard within the community?
- 3 Would lowering the voting age actually encourage greater youth participation in the democratic process?
- 4 What are the most effective ways for schools and the community to make elections more interesting for youth?
- 5 What are some of the reasons why youth voting declines from ages 20 to 24?



TRANSITIONS

WHILE MOST RESPONDENTS feel supported by family, friends, and teachers, the shift from high school into the work force and/or post-secondary education can still be a very difficult time for youth who face many important decisions. Whether it be applying to post-secondary school, finding employment, or just basic life skills, many survey respondents feel unprepared for the next step in their lives.

On a practical level, they want to know more about how to live on their own, pay bills, file taxes, and balance work and life before they transition into adulthood. They want more information about how to apply to universities and express worry about how they would afford their education even if they do get into the program they want. Older students who are already in college or university feel they were unprepared for the increased challenges posed by post-secondary education.

Emotionally, many respondents seem overwhelmed: some have no idea what they want to do in the future, which can be a frightening prospect for Grade 11 and 12 students; they are concerned about training for and finding a job that interests them; they report feeling stress related to their social situations, especially bullying, peer-pressure, and the desire to fit in.

Overall, youth desire more preparation to enter adulthood with confidence. We hope these insights will prompt discussion about how to implement programs and services that help smooth the transition to adulthood for Surrey youth.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Direct Quotes from the SurreyCares Vital Signs Youth Survey 2015

NOT BEING PREPARED for the workload or expectations of post-secondary

I ATTEND KWANTLEN and am a single mom.. I do not have AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE and no care at all when he is sick causing me to miss classes due to lack of funding and optimal places for him to be watched for a low price...

NOT ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES for youth without a clear career goal to experience career possibilities in schools.

BEING ABLE TO fund for post-secondary;
Need more information on relationships

FIGURING OUT HOW to pay rent with minimum wage while going to school; need for higher minimum wage/better knowledge of living on my own

UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS:
NEED more help understanding how uni works

DON'T KNOW WHAT to do in the future; not prepared to support myself; greater emphasis on teaching to be independent

DON'T KNOW ABOUT taxes, budgeting, anything financial/
More classes focussed on actual life skills

MORE INFO ABOUT scholarships and post-secondary tuition/
just more time in preparation with school work

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ex. latenight buses up to 9:30 pm or something. or more busses so wait time for the next bus is decreased and not 30 minutes at most bus stops.

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF MY SKILLS such as project management, budgeting, facilitation, public speaking

EDUCATION IS EXPENSIVE and I do not have enough time to maintain my grades as well as holding a job, which could be problematic for me in the future.



LACK OF INFORMATION on professional programs (medicine, law) considering the abundance of info on trades. More information on professional programs and pathways to medicine or law (M.D. Or J.D. Degrees).

WHAT I WANT to do and how, exactly, will I be able to do it.

I DON'T KNOW much about more life to life stuff like financing, mortgages, health, etc

HIGH GRADES, HIGH costs, part time non conflicting work and affordable transit

FINDING A CONNECTION between what I like and what I am good at

INSECURITY ABOUT THE future/
More job training

THERE ARE CERTAIN life skills that I have not been taught that would be very beneficial for myself and other youth in our transition, such as learning how to manage our time and money efficiently and choosing a career path. Also the fact that education is expensive and I do not have enough time to maintain my grades as well as holding a job, which could be problematic for me in the future.

BULLYING

FEELING LEFT OUT

What do I want to be?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

FINDING A POST-SECONDARY education and student debt

WE DON'T KNOW how to do basic adult things (taxes)

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IS expensive and I have limited options of where to study.

UNREADINESS FOR THE rest of the world

MONEY, WORK, TIME and just keeping everything together

NOT ENOUGH WORK experience

I DO NOT know what I want to do in the future

ITS REALLY HARD to find a job

NOT ENOUGH JOBS in my field of interest, not enough scholarships. . .

NEED MONEY TO pay for post-secondary

IT'S HARD TO get to school, not many options



CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING

Editor's Note: This editorial was written by a youth committee in the 18-24 age range, and we are grateful for the chance to hear their own words on this important topic.

AS THE WISE singer Katy Perry famously asked, “Do you ever feel like a plastic bag, drifting through the wind, wanting to start again?” Many youth in Surrey can share this sentiment because transitioning to adulthood can be difficult as it leaves us feeling disconnected and uncertain about who we are and where we belong. It’s challenging to figure out our identity, interests, and future aspirations when there is no clear manual for success. This is why it’s so important to listen to what youth identify as the greatest benefits and challenges of growing up in Surrey—which is exactly what resources like Surrey’s Vital Signs survey strives to do. Looking into Surrey’s youth culture and identity can provide a window into where youth are, what we need in order to thrive, and how to help us successfully become adults.

Jasmeen Bola is a fifteen year old student at Fleetwood Park Secondary, and her story is one that will sound familiar to many other Surrey youth. Having immigrated to Canada from India when she was nine years old, Jasmeen initially struggled with her cultural identity. “When I first came to Canada, I was constantly told to speak English and I eventually forgot how to converse in Punjabi, my native language.” Losing this part of her heritage made it challenging to connect with her community and led her to question her identity. Despite this, she has found ways to retain her culture in some of the most unexpected places. “Sometimes

I see English signs at the grocery store with Punjabi translation. It’s reassuring to see that my Punjabi background hasn’t been forgotten, and that Surrey continues to provide this kind of recognition to the diverse cultural groups that co-exist here.”

Jasmeen’s struggle may have been about culture, but her concerns about where she belongs and her identity is a common problem for many youth. The City of Surrey has tried to help facilitate an environment where all cultures are heard and valued. Indeed, Surrey has improved the environment for many by encouraging diversity and supporting multicultural festivals. In addition to supporting diverse cultures, Surrey has provided youth with a plethora of parks, programs and activities to engage in, and these things are extremely beneficial. But Surrey’s next step should be to show youth that you care and that you are willing to hear our voice. Reach out to youth and hear what we have to say! We are the leaders of tomorrow, so shouldn’t our opinion be taken into account?

Although Surrey has worked hard, the city still has a long way to go to improve its sense of belonging. The community needs to help youth feel as though we belong; that we matter! Additional programs that reach out to youth, connect with our interests, and make us feel vital will help shape Surrey’s future for the better. Perry’s sentiments resonate with youth. Surrey youth can feel useless, unimportant, and sometimes like garbage without a sense of purpose. Surrey adults should all reach out to youth, let us know that you hear us, and that you care.

We matter.

GETTING AROUND

WHILE SURREY'S CULTURAL diversity is renowned, a much lesser-known feature of the city is the relative youthfulness of its population. Fully 27% of its citizens are aged 19 and under. And this vibrant, busy sector of the community has its own set of needs and challenges when it comes to getting around.

According to UBC graduate Ren Thomas, now a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon, her research indicates that youth in Surrey are travelling further than many of their peers across the Lower Mainland. "Surrey is a more spread-out, more dispersed community," she says, "and there isn't a concentration of activities and workplaces where young people want to congregate, so they have to travel further." And like youth around the world, they're looking to transit, walking and cycling to get them there.

Most mornings, Gaven Sekhon, a Grade 12 student at L.A. Matheson High School, can depend on getting a ride from his mother to school. But he uses transit to get home, a system that presents its challenges. "School ends at 2:55," he says, "and my bus leaves at 3:41. If I have to do any activities after school and miss it, I have to wait another hour." On days when he volunteers at Central, he generally walks. "It would be too much of a hassle to see when the bus is going to come, and to work my schedule around it, so I walk the 30-minute walk."

While he uses the bus regularly, Sekhon cites the cost of transit as a deterrent for many of his fellow students. "A lot of kids, especially in high school, don't have money to spend on concession passes." He says the single-trip concession fare, which is \$1.75, is more than many can afford, particularly those in Grades 8, 9 and 10. "If it was a dollar, that would be good. That's just a loonie."

These issues come as no surprise to Thomas, who believes that transit planners are missing the mark when it comes to youth, who comprise 30% of transit users across Canada. "It's always been strange to me that transportation companies go after 50-year old business people with no interest in transit, rather than just trying to serve the group that already uses it. That would be youth, immigrants and older people. If we start planning better for the groups, who are already high transit users, then we'll have better options for youth."

Notwithstanding the ongoing issues of service levels and cost, Thomas does see some improvements. These include Translink's adoption of the U-Pass system, as well as the increased availability of online updates and real-time information about bus arrivals. Improvements are also apparent on the municipal level. "Surrey used to spend a lot of money on just expanding roads, but they've realized how important transit is and I think things are changing, but slowly."



SURREY GROUPS COLLABORATE TO COMBAT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

HOW DO YOU support vulnerable young people facing homelessness when you don't know exactly where they are or how many need your help? How do you provide effective programs and services that keep youth off the streets when you have only limited resources?

In Surrey, there are no easy answers to these seemingly intractable problems, but that doesn't mean nobody is working on them. One organization that is making a real difference in young people's lives is Options Community Services Society. It provides a wide range of programs to help youth with housing and homelessness issues, often in partnership with other not-for-profit and government agencies.

When it comes to the number of homeless people in Surrey, Options' Senior Manager of Youth Programs Joe Woodworth says that the most recent Metro Vancouver count of 403 is likely to be a big underestimation.

"There's a generally-accepted rule among people who work on the issue of homelessness that you need to triple the official figures to get somewhere close to the actual number," he says. "There's an initiative by the Surrey Urban Mission and supported by the Surrey Housing and Homelessness Taskforce to work on a more rurally-specific methodology for the count that would give us a better picture of the situation in Surrey."

Heather Lynch, manager of youth services at Options, says that when it comes to youth, much of the problem is hidden. "There are many people that we're not able to count at all," she says. "You have youth who are couch-surfing and are defined as homeless even if they're not physically on the streets."

With a growing youth population and resources that are stretched to the limit in Surrey, many at-risk young people travel to Vancouver to access shelters and support.

"What generally happens is that youth end up in the [Vancouver] Downtown Eastside, which is an area that has a lot of negative draws for them," Joe says. "They show up there, become entrenched, and often end up staying there. If they could access services here at an earlier stage, we would be much better able to help them."

One of the biggest gaps in support has been for young people aged 19-24, a demographic that Options is beginning to reach with its Supported Youth Independent Housing Program. A subsidized housing program developed with the Vancouver Foundation, a sister community foundation to SurreyCares and the only one in Canada with a provincial mandate, it is open to young people who still need support after government-mandated provision ends at the age of majority.

Joe and Heather agree that one of the most important goals when it comes to youth housing and homelessness is to provide a longer-lasting continuum of support to help vulnerable young people transition into adult life.

Heather mentions the story of one youth who had a history of homelessness. He would be in a shelter and then he would find a job and housing in the community. But soon he would lose his job, become homeless again and go back to a shelter.

"That was a cycle for him," says Heather. "He came to our program and we were able to provide subsidized housing and support for him. As a result he achieved the highest grades in high school and is now attending BCIT, pursuing his goal of becoming a pilot and working at the airport."

"We need to make sure that at-risk youth have easy access to information about their right to safe housing and what services are out there to help them," Heather adds. "With just a little support to help young people find stable housing, we can actually make a big difference."



MAKING ENDS MEET

THIS REPORT REVEALS that Surrey youth are under stress. Our youth are graduating at higher rates every year, but they report they lack the basic skills to live on their own. They want to be taught how to manage their finances, how to find a job that pays enough to cover expenses, and how to save for the future. They also want more help plotting a career path that will lead to a well-paying profession. They want to contribute to our city, and be part of its future.

Surrey youth know that to live here, they need to have jobs that will secure their current needs as well as help them get established for their future. They take service jobs as a stop-gap to pay living expenses, but without the financial ability to access education and training, there's no easy way to move up to a high-quality job. Even with the best budgeting advice, it's difficult to make ends meet let alone pay for school, even with support from family.

Jeff, a second-year university student, switched from residence at SFU Burnaby to the Surrey campus so that he could save money by attending school from home. Giving up his independent university experience isn't all bad: he is enjoying smaller class sizes, and likes that he knows his teachers and classmates by name. However, he no longer lives on campus and can't afford a car, so he takes the bus to school and work, spending three hours a day in transit. Though he tries to catch up on homework while commuting, it's usually not feasible. He barely makes enough in his restaurant job to cover tuition fees and books. He

takes any shift that he can get, but if there isn't enough work, he sits out, unpaid and waiting on standby until called. His schedule is busy, and he tends to eat too much cheap fast food—a common trend in his age group—though he does try to get some exercise a few times a week.

And yet, Jeff is lucky. He has parents who are able and willing to support him so that he doesn't have to pay for food or rent while he gets his education. Those who live on their own, especially young single parents or those with health or physical challenges, are not so fortunate. They can barely pay for basic needs and frequently turn to community food banks to get through the month. If rent swallows half—or more—of your paycheque, and paying for groceries drains off most of the rest, there's not much left for savings, getting a car to increase employment options, paying for tuition or clearing off student loans, or even “going out” with friends. Even something as simple as having affordable youth-oriented spaces to gather during downtime would help our young people feel more connected, reducing stress and anxiety.

If we want our young people to stay in Surrey, we need to give them jobs that pay them a living wage, transit that gets them where they need to go efficiently, housing that they can afford, and mentorships to help them get started in their careers: all elements that would make Surrey a place where they can thrive. Most of all, they need to be taught the skills and given the tools they need as they transition into adulthood, both now and for their future.

MENTAL HEALTH

IT MIGHT BE a student's anxiety attack over returning to school or a full-blown psychotic episode that requires physical restraint, heavy medication, and constant monitoring that triggers a hurried trip to the emergency room.

The Surrey Hospital and Outpatient Foundation knows all too well that such visits from Surrey youth are dramatically on the rise, says Jane Adams, the foundation's president and CEO. It's why the foundation is providing funding to help build a special 10-bed short stay stabilization unit for youth.

"In Fraser Health's 13 emergency wards, we are seeing quite a dramatic increase in the number of children and youth presenting with symptoms of acute mental illness," says Adams. The troubling rise comes against a background of woefully inadequate resources in B.C., which has just six youth mental health beds—all of them at B.C. Children's Hospital in Vancouver.

Adams says the number of children between six years and 17 years old appearing at Surrey ER has jumped from 916 in 2007 to more than 2,416 in 2014. There are theories about why the numbers have risen so quickly, says Adams, including increased "mental health literacy," meaning both the public and health professionals more readily recognize the symptoms at the ER, said Adams. There have not been, however, any research projects as yet to look into the reasons behind the rise.

"These are almost epidemic proportions that we are seeing," Adams said. "For someone to bring someone—a parent, a teacher, a counsellor because they are afraid for someone's mental health—gives you some idea of the problem."

The good news is that Surrey, with its high youth population, has been designated by Fraser Health as a regional centre with the critical mass and the expertise needed to deal with child and youth mental illness.

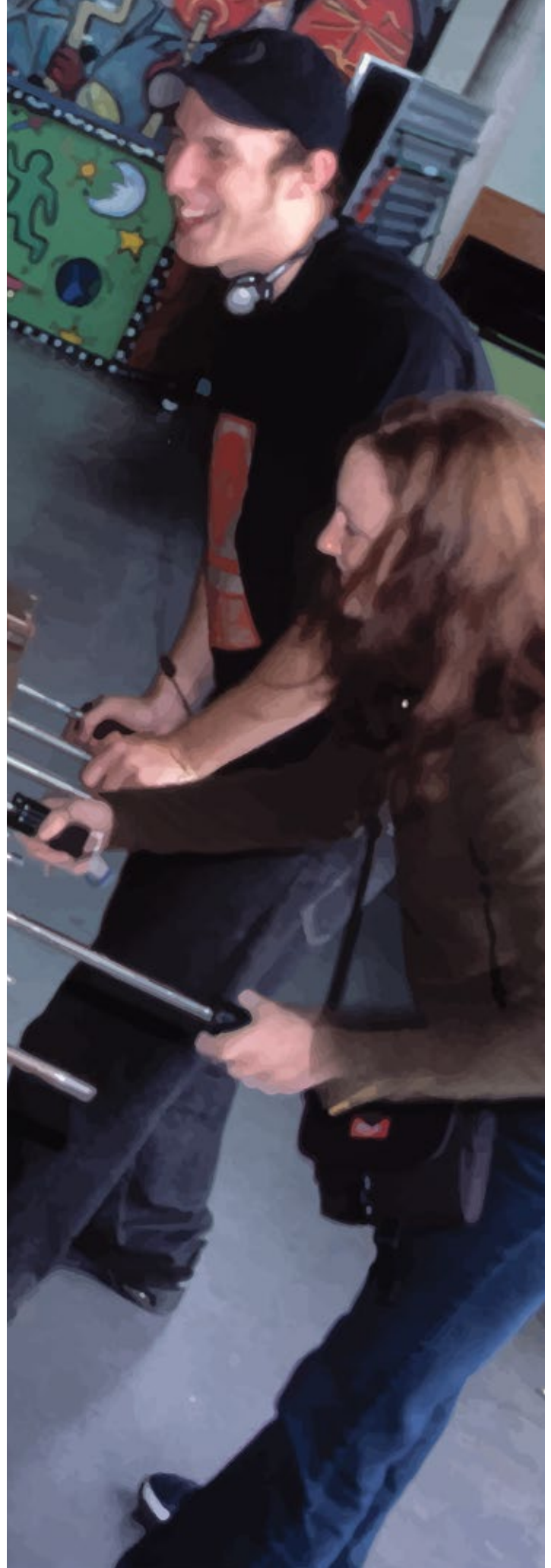
When Surrey Hospital's new emergency room opened in 2014, the hospital found itself with some unused space in the old ER, Adams said. Construction will start next year on the 10-bed ward, called the Child and Adolescent Short Stay Psychiatric Stabilization Unit, which will provide patients with a stay of five to seven days at a critical time in the patient's illness.

"As you can appreciate, we are going to have kids from six to 17 in the unit, so the emotional needs of these kids and their families are quite different," she said, noting there must be some differentiation in the services and care offered.

In the past, older teens could occasionally be put in adult mental health units for stabilization and diagnosis, but for young children it is just not appropriate, as indicated by Britain's protocols which make it illegal to mix adults and children in hospitals.

While Fraser Health has the money—about \$4.7 million—to build a "bare bones" facility, it has come to the foundation for another \$2 million to help in providing refinements in care, such as the construction of decompression rooms and "home-like bedrooms for kids while they are there."

For some kids and families in acute crisis, "It's what they need," Adams said.





SURREY YOUTH “LEAP” INTO SAFETY

SOMETIMES THE BEST strategy for dealing with a particular problem is to take on an entirely different one. At least that is what the Surrey Crime Prevention Society has done with its highly successful LEAP (Learn, Experience, Achieve, Participate) program for youth in the community.

“To be perfectly honest, Surrey Crime Prevention isn’t technically about crime prevention,” says Michelle Kumar, the Society’s manager of operations. “We are very ‘community safety-based.’

“If you look at the research out there for having youth participating in their community, you get the connection,” she said. “There is a lot of study that shows that when youth are positively engaged and feeling more connected with their community, they are less likely to be involved in criminal or delinquent behaviour.”

But LEAP is far more than just about keeping youth busy for busy’s sake. It’s about imparting skills that young people can concretely use when they make their way in the world of work.

The program was devised a few years ago to assist students in Grades 10 to 12 who are interested in a career working with the public. They are given training opportunities that include working in an office environment to participating in public awareness programs such as Traffic Safety, Community Safety Tours and Special Events.

Such programs are rare, says Kumar, noting there are no other programs offered where students receive comprehensive work experience in a diverse portfolio of community safety

programs. In fact, many school counsellors and teachers are frustrated that students are limited in pursuing a public safety career. The Society tries to overcome those limitations by encouraging students to continue volunteering after they have completed the program for which they receive a Certificate of Completion from the Society.

“Last year, we had 37 volunteers participating in the program,” she said. The challenge for students coming out of school or university is having the skills that make them employable. They have no real life experience which is a huge factor in what many employers are looking for. “We are hoping we can equip these youth with skills they can use when they apply for a job.”

For instance, the Society’s Annual Report proudly notes some of the wide-ranging activities its volunteers engage in, from speed watch and distracted driving initiatives to special events such as the Vaisakhi Parade and the Cloverdale Rodeo.

The testimonials provided by students are proof enough of the value of engagement and connection with the community.

“For a while I had been struggling with what I wanted to do with my future,” wrote Desiree Amaral, a Fraser Heights Secondary student. Then her career counsellor recommended volunteering for the Society. “I jumped at the chance but never would have imagined how much I learned and all the skills and connections I gained. This time with Surrey Crime not only helped me make up my mind to pursue a career in criminology but also helped me in many other aspects of my life.”



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SURREYCARES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION is a community resource which helps charitable organizations succeed in their service to the people of Surrey. We manage charitable gifts from donors, steward and grow those funds, and distribute grants to charitable activities, according to the wishes of the donor. In order to best inform and confirm to donors the areas of greatest local need, we undertake the Vital Signs report, which delves deeply into the true needs of the community through proven research and live surveys.

In addition to managing the funds of donors, we encourage and strive to assist donors to increase their managed funds using tools such as our website’s crowd funding tool, so that the donations to charities can be greater. We currently manage over \$6M, and have a goal to increase this to \$10M, so that the interest from those funds can grant greater benefit. We additionally provide an

opportunity for charitable service agencies to exchange ideas, to learn, and to encourage and support one another.

SurreyCares is a registered, not-for-profit charitable organization, serving Surrey since 1994. We belong to the Community Foundations of Canada. This network gives us strength, and gives our fundholders security.

If you have any questions about how we can support you in your philanthropic goals, please contact us and we’d be happy to explore the benefits and services we can provide you, your family, your organization, or your business.

Thank you for caring for Surrey.

Karen Young, *Executive Director*
SurreyCares Community Foundation

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Building stronger communities for our youth.

We are pleased to partner with SurreyCares on the Surrey 2015 Youth Vital Signs report. Vital Signs is creating a space for youth to make their voices heard and is helping to ensure decision-makers understand what youth in Surrey really think — and need. Together, we're building a better community.



How can we help you?



SURREY VITAL SIGNS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FREE AT WWW.SURREYCARES.ORG