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Surrey Newcomers Vital Signs 2016

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Surrey Newcomers Vital Signs 2016

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Vital Signs® is a national program led by community foundations and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and support action towards improving our collective quality of life.

More than 65 communities in Canada and around the world are using Vital Signs to mobilize the power of community knowledge for greater local impact. For more information, visit www.vitalsignscanada.ca.

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About SurreyCares

SurreyCares Community Foundation works to improve the quality of life for all area residents through the growth and stewardship of permanent endowment funds and the distribution of income to a broad range of eligible organizations and activities.

Our vision is to lead a stronger, more meaningful, inclusive community connection into the future, and to build a resilient and resourceful community. For more information about who we are and what we do, plus access to previous Vital Signs reports, please visit www.surreycares.org.

Acknowledgements

Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

Doctors of BC

Government of BC

Options Community Services Society

Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society

Simon Fraser University

Stats Services BC

Surrey Board of Trade

Surrey International Children's Festival

Surrey Libraries

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

Surrey Schools

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Executive Summary

SurreyCares Community Foundation, established in 1994, is a community resource that helps charitable organizations succeed in their service to the people of Surrey. Since 2014, our registered non-profit charity, in partnership with Community Foundations of Canada, has annually surveyed a sector of the community to provide up-to-date information useful to funders, policy-makers, and service providers.

Surrey Newcomer Vital Signs® 2016 investigates the lives of newcomers to Surrey. For this study, we defined “newcomers” as anyone who had newly moved to Surrey, specifically anytime since 2011. This group included new residents from other parts of Canada, BC, and the Lower Mainland, as well as newcomers from other countries.

Where our data comes from

Vital Signs analyzes secondary data from respected sources including Statistics Canada, Data BC, the City of Surrey, Fraser Health, the BC Ministry of Education, the Surrey School District, and Doctors of BC. The paper’s primary data was collected through a survey of Surrey newcomers, providing interesting supportive narrative.

The Vital Signs survey asked respondents to evaluate nine key areas of their life in Surrey. These indicators and their average grades were as follows: Employment (C), Education (C+), Health & Wellness (C), Housing (C), Safety (D), Environment & Sustainability (B–), Arts & Culture (C+), Belonging & Community Participation (B–), and Overall Quality of Life (B–).

The survey was conducted between May 9 and June 21, 2016, in both online and print formats, and received 117 complete responses. Because of the small sample size, caution should be taken when interpreting the survey data. However, it does provide a window into the lives of newcomers, and it suggests numerous avenues for further research.

Survey findings

- **Newcomers to Surrey are realists.** They enjoy the good things about their new home, while recognizing the challenges. This is reflected in the grade they gave their overall quality of life: B– (70%). In fact, overall quality of life received the second-highest grade among the indicators, just below belonging and community participation.

According to those surveyed, the areas that most need improvement are housing, health, and jobs—each of which received an average grade of C– and safety, which received the lowest grade of any indicator, D.

- **Newcomers view Surrey as a welcoming place,** despite the challenges they may face. Belonging and community participation was the highest-rated of any indicator, receiving a B– (71%). A strong majority of newcomers surveyed said they have a friendly

relationship with their neighbours. Nearly half of respondents reported that they felt a sense of belonging in Surrey.

- **Surrey newcomers do not necessarily feel community problems personally.** Respondents identified crime as the most pressing issue facing Surrey, yet two-thirds said they felt safe in their communities.

Affordability in general was considered a serious issue, yet affordable housing was also identified as the most common reason to move to Surrey.

Finding a job was seen as the top challenge associated with moving to Surrey, yet 89% of those surveyed were satisfied with their own job or occupational status.

- **While discrimination does exist, it is not a top concern for most Surrey newcomers.** Only 10% of survey participants reported having felt unsafe because of their race or religion. Even among those who identified as a member of a visible minority, only 12% said they have felt unsafe.

Twenty percent of survey respondents said they have felt *uncomfortable* because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or another factor.

- **Still, white newcomers seem to fare better than visible minorities** in a number of areas. Among the newcomers surveyed, those who identified as a visible minority experienced lower job satisfaction than those who did not.

More than three-quarters (77%) of those who did not identify as a visible minority agreed they feel safe in their neighbourhood. However, only just over half of the visible minority respondents claimed to feel safe where they live.

- **Newcomers to Surrey care about the environment and the arts.** Survey respondents identified the two best things about Surrey as parks and recreation and the natural environment. Protecting the environment was a priority for 93% of those surveyed. And nine newcomers in 10 agreed with the statement that individuals need to play a role in preserving the environment. Nearly two-thirds of participants considered arts and culture important to expressing their personal identity.
- **Surrey newcomers are here to stay.** Almost two-thirds of those surveyed said they plan to be living in Surrey in five years.
- **The top three challenges for newcomers** were identified as finding a job, finding a place to live, and affording the cost of living in Surrey.
- **How can Surrey become Canada's most welcoming community?** Survey respondents expressed a desire for more support for newcomers in the job market and more affordable housing for new residents. Although many support services for newcomers are already in place, those new to Surrey are often unaware of what services are available, or don't know how to access them. It is worth a coordinated effort to create a central accessible listing for anyone to access.

Introduction

Surrey has become one of Canada's most popular destinations for newcomers. Nearly a thousand new residents arrive in Surrey each month, drawn by the natural setting, the young and diverse population, the relatively affordable housing, and the proximity to Vancouver's business centre.¹

According to Statistics Canada, Surrey's estimated population in 2015 was 505,359. The second-largest city in BC, Surrey is one of the fastest-growing urban centres outside of Alberta, with an average of 2.17% annual growth between 2001 and 2015.²

In comparison, BC's average population growth rate over the same period was 0.89%, slightly lower than the national average of 0.94%, while Vancouver has grown by an average of 1.26% each year.³ Surrey is expected to surpass Vancouver as BC's most populous municipality by 2020.⁴

Surrey is a city of flourishing diversity. More than 40% of Surrey residents were born outside of Canada, a figure more than twice the national average.⁵ More than half (52.6%) of Surreyites belong to a visible minority, representing an increase of 16.1 percentage points since 2001.⁶

And while Surrey has always been known as a welcoming place for immigrants, the city has recently gained renown as a safe haven for refugees: the city has accepted more Syrian refugees than any other municipality in the province.⁷ Between November 2015 and March 2016, 26,176 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada. Of this number, about 5,125 were settled in BC, and half of them will make Surrey their home.⁸

¹ City of Surrey, "Population Estimates and Projections," <http://www.surrey.ca/business-economic-development/1418.aspx>.

² Statistics Canada, "Estimates of Population," Cansim Tables 051-0034 and 051-0052 (2016), <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ City of Surrey, "About Surrey," <http://www.surrey.ca/3547.aspx>.

⁵ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, "NHS Profile, Surrey North, British Columbia, 2011," <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=FED&Code1=59028&Data=Count&SearchText=Surrey%20North&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=028&TABID=1>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Wendy Stueck, "Syrian refugees in Surrey transition from conflict to the classroom," *The Globe and Mail*, March 2, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/syrian-refugees-in-surrey-transition-from-conflict-to-the-classroom/article29007039>.

⁸ Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, City of Surrey, and Simon Fraser University, *Our Community, Our Voice: The Settlement and Integration Needs of Refugees in Surrey, BC* (2016), http://www.surreyilip.ca/sites/default/files/RefugeeNeedsResearchReport_OCOV_final_Apr29.pdf.

If diversity and change represent the future for Surrey, then newcomers have a leading role to play. But what does Surrey offer in return as a home for new residents? This paper provides a snapshot of the lives of the newest members of the Surrey community, highlighting both the challenges they face and the positive aspects of Surrey they appreciate.

Research Objectives

Each year, approximately 10,000 newcomers flood into Surrey.⁹ But how do they fare once they arrive? This paper investigates the experiences of newcomers who moved to Surrey in the past five years (as early as 2011). These include those who moved from other parts of Canada, BC, and the Lower Mainland, as well as newcomers from other countries.

This paper considers the following questions:

- How satisfied are newcomers with their lives in Surrey?
- What barriers delay their success and prevent them from fully integrating into the Surrey community?

Vital Signs is an annual community check-up conducted in partnership with Community Foundations of Canada. With their support we take a deeper look into an area of potential need in our community. The results provide a comprehensive, straightforward look at how our communities are faring in key quality-of-life areas.

The focus of this year's research was to highlight the experience of the newcomer with a view to identifying gaps for service providers, highlighting funding priorities, and communicating needs. Of note, SurreyCares did not find what it was not looking for in this research. In other words, if it isn't here, it wasn't asked. Comparisons were not drawn intentionally, whether between groups or between Surrey and other communities.

Surrey Newcomers Vital Signs 2016 analyzes the results of a custom survey that asked newcomers to evaluate nine key areas of life, or indicators: Employment, Education, Health & Wellness, Housing, Safety, Environment & Sustainability, Arts & Culture, Belonging & Community Participation, and Overall Quality of Life.

For each indicator, this paper identifies what the community of Surrey is doing well to provide a hospitable climate for new residents, as well as areas that can be improved. Highlights from the findings will be presented further in a published report that will be used to make funding decisions, inform public policy, and spark community discussion.

⁹ City of Surrey, "Population Estimates."

Methodology

Surrey Newcomers Vital Signs 2016 investigates the lives of newcomers to Surrey. For this study, a “newcomer” was defined as any person who had moved to Surrey within the past five years (since 2011).

Secondary data

This paper draws on two broad data sources. First, we collected secondary statistical data from respected sources, to establish a general picture of life in Surrey and to serve as a backdrop against which to analyze and present the primary source material. Data sources included Statistics Canada, DataBC, the City of Surrey, Fraser Health, the BC Ministry of Education, the Surrey School District, the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, and the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board. Previous Surrey Vital Signs reports were also consulted.

Primary data

At the heart of the report is information drawn from a survey of newcomers to Surrey. Survey respondents were asked to grade nine key areas of life in Surrey, including their satisfaction with their overall quality of life. The survey had a total of 80 questions. In each area, participants were asked a combination of multiple-choice (69) and open-ended (11) questions.

The majority of multiple-choice questions presented statements and then asked respondents to indicate to what degree they agreed or disagreed on a five-point Likert scale offering a range of choices. In an attempt to minimize the effects of order bias, multiple-choice questions were presented throughout each indicator section in randomized order.

Survey distribution

An online version of the survey, created using Qualtrics survey software, was launched on Monday, May 9, and remained available until Tuesday, June 21, 2016. The survey was posted on the SurreyCares website and was disseminated through various channels.

Online distribution was facilitated by organizations serving immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers in Surrey, including the Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society, the Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society, locally elected governments, Surrey Libraries and other community social agencies, such as Doctors of BC. A link to the online survey was posted by media outlets such as Surrey604, RedFM, and the *Indo-Canadian Voice* newspaper. It was also shared on Facebook (where it was boosted with paid advertising) and Reddit and circulated via Twitter.

A paper version of the survey was also made available. Surrey Libraries provided printed copies at various locations, and the research facilitator attended the main branch on two occasions to provide on-site assistance. We made the print copy available at two community service organizations that delivered the survey to clients and also provided translation support. A day was spent gathering responses at the Surrey International Children's Festival (May 26, 2016), although with limited success.

Survey responses

A total of 132 responses were collected. Of these, 117 were considered complete (the respondent reached the end of the survey, whether or not they answered every single question). Paper copies accounted for 69 responses (65 complete and 4 incomplete), and the internet survey received another 63 responses (52 complete and 11 incomplete).

The data from the printed surveys was uploaded manually into Qualtrics. The complete data set was then downloaded and analyzed in Excel. Graphs were also created using Excel software. Please refer to the Appendix for a copy of the print survey. The data set can be accessed at www.SurreyCares.org

Study limitations

This study faced five main limitations, as outlined below.

1. Little secondary data was available for the specific group being studied. In most cases, the secondary data presented refers to either the immigrant or refugee population or to the population at large. Attempts were made to interpret this data in light of the particular needs and concerns of Surrey newcomers.

2. Minor discrepancies occurred in the response patterns to the online and paper formats of the survey, even though the two versions of the survey contained the same questions. For certain questions, the online version was designed to force the respondent to select a single response (or, in some cases, their three top responses). If the respondent selected too many choices, they were directed to return and correct the submission.

In the paper version of the survey, there was no way to ensure such control. As a result, a number of participants entered more than the requested number of responses.¹⁰ A footnote is included with the affected questions to explain how the data was analyzed to minimize bias.

In addition, while the multiple-choice questions in each section of the online survey were randomized, such a manoeuvre was impossible on paper. Finally, while online respondents

¹⁰ For example, in the section on safety, the question "What would you say is Surrey's biggest challenge in terms of safety?" experienced a discrepancy in response patterns. Forty out of 116 respondents gave multiple answers. This is discussed further in the section of this report on safety.

were not able to return to previous sections while advancing through the survey, respondents to the paper version could. It is not known how these minor variations might affect the results.

3. The survey was made available in English only. That said, some assistance was available to respondents who spoke English as a second language. At DIVERSEcity, the survey was administered to students enrolled in LINC classes (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). Here, a language instructor was on hand to provide some translation and answer questions.

At the PICS Society, settlement workers helped newcomers to work through the questions. The survey administrator was also able to clarify language for newcomers participating in the survey at the public library. However, it must be assumed that the unilingual survey may have been inaccessible to some Surrey newcomers for whom English is not their first language.

4. Newcomers are a challenging population to reach. Although Surrey is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Canada, newcomers make up only about 10% of the local population. In addition, we assume many new residents may be preoccupied with basic necessities associated with arrival, such as finding housing, searching for a job, enrolling children in school, and learning a new language. They may thus be less inclined than the average person to devote time to a survey.

Because of the survey's small sample size, the results are considered to be accurate to within ± 9.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20. In other words, the opinions and perceptions revealed by the collected data cannot be assumed to represent the views of Surrey's newcomer population as a whole. However, the responses do provide a fascinating window into the lives of Surrey's newest residents and suggest many avenues for both more targeted services and further research.

5. The timeline to deliver the survey was short. Reaching more newcomers would have required more time, due to the limitations noted already. In six weeks, the response rate was lower than hoped for. Had the survey distribution through the various advisory groups occurred earlier in the spring, it is likely a larger group would have participated.

A note on the methodology

SurreyCares consulted with more than one national research firm regarding sampling methodology for this particular study. It was recommended that because newcomers probably make up only 2% of Surrey's population, a telephone survey would be prohibitively expensive. One company, when asked, would not even undertake such a survey or recommend it. These experts confirmed that the best way to reach newcomers would be the method undertaken by SurreyCares: connecting with community groups to get the word out.

A note on the grading

A central feature of the Vital Signs research project, as promoted by Community Foundations of Canada, is the grading of key indicators. Respondents are asked to select a grade of A, B, C, D, or F in each area of life. The grades are not intended to be punitive, nor can they be expected to provide an objective assessment of a region's success in any area. Instead, they should be seen as one of a number of ways in which residents can express their subjective rating of their life satisfaction.

We calculated the average grade for each indicator by assigning each letter grade a number from one to five (F = 1, A = 5). We totalled these grades and then divided by the number of respondents for that particular question. That figure was then multiplied by 20% to present a percentage score. Finally, letter grades were assigned to percentages based on the grade distribution chart of Simon Fraser University's Department of History.¹¹

While this method of grading provides us with one snapshot of the grading responses, there are multiple scientific methods that could be applied. However, it was our view that we should present the average grade, given the small sample size.

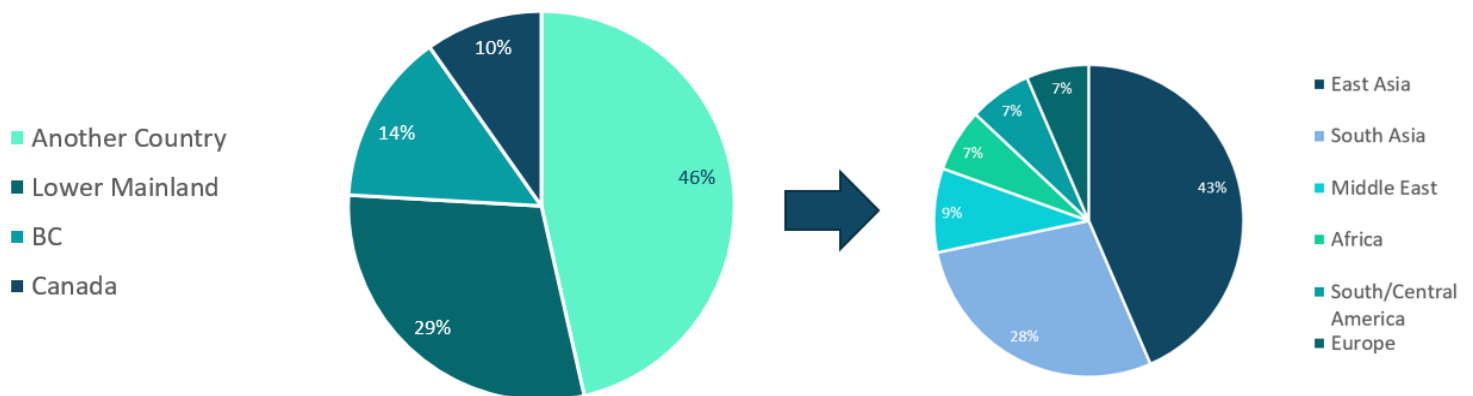
¹¹ Grade distribution based on percentages was as follows: A+ 90–100, A 85–89, A– 80–84, B+ 77–79, B 74–76, B– 70–73, C+ 67–69, C 64–66, C– 60–63, D 50–59, F 49 and below.

Demographic Profile

Place of origin

Survey participants were asked where they came from to get here. As shown in the next graph, the data sample is split quite evenly between those who moved from locations within Canada (53%) and those who came from other countries (46%). About one-third (29%) of those surveyed moved to Surrey from other parts of the Lower Mainland. Fourteen percent came from elsewhere in BC, and 10% came from other parts of Canada. (Rounding explains why these figures do not total 100%.) In this respect, the survey sample mirrors quite closely Surrey's population at large: 40.5% of Surrey residents were born outside of Canada.¹²

FROM WHERE DID YOU MOVE TO SURREY?



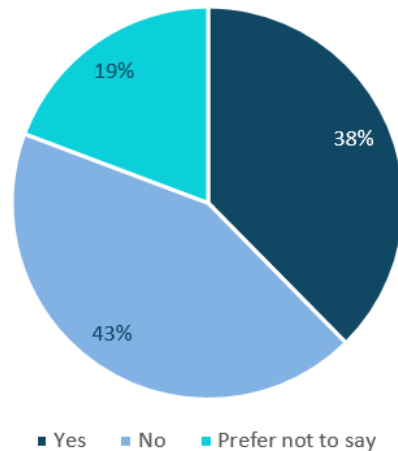
Of those who said they moved to Surrey from another country, 88% identified their country of origin. The largest segment (43%) of this group reported they were from East Asian countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines. About three in 10 (28%) said they came from South Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Smaller groups came from the Middle East (9%), Africa (7%), South and Central America (7%), and Europe (7%).

It should be noted that the survey question posed here was “From where did you move to Surrey?” While it was expected that respondents reported their last place of residence, it is quite possible that some newcomers indicating they had moved from within Canada are actually new to the country since 2011.

¹² Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

Ethnic origin

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A VISIBLE MINORITY?



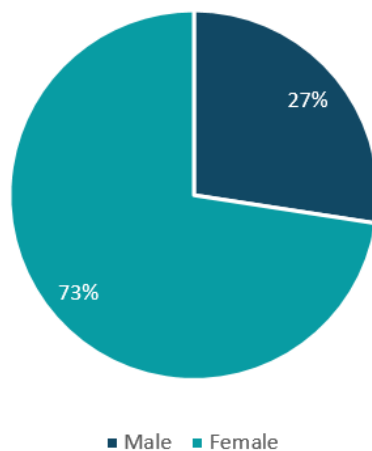
Respondents to the survey reported various ethnic origins. As this graph shows, about four out of every 10 survey participants (38%) identified themselves as a member of a visible minority, while slightly more (43%) did not. Another fifth (19%) of respondents preferred not to say.

Canada's Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than aboriginal

peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."¹³ Since, according to Statistics Canada, more than half (52.6%) of Surrey residents as a whole belong to a visible minority,¹⁴ newcomers who identify as a visible minority are slightly under-represented in the Vital Signs survey.

Gender and age

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



The survey sample contained substantially more women than men (see graph). Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents identified as women, and the balance said they were male. Of all respondents fully completing the survey, only 3% chose not to identify their gender. Although options of "Transgender" and "Other" were offered, no respondents so identified.

Survey participants also deviated from Surrey averages in terms of age. Surrey has a reputation for being home to a particularly young population. The percentage of city residents under the age of 14 was 19.2% in 2011, significantly higher than the national and provincial averages (16.7% and 15.4%, respectively).

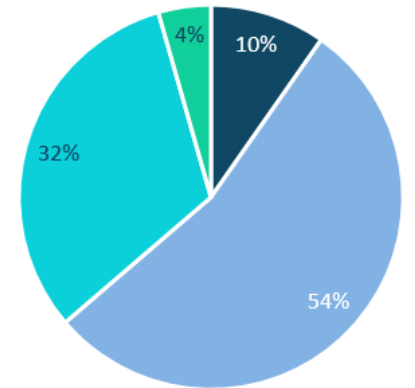
¹³ Canada, Employment Equity Act, S.C. 1995, c. 44, <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/page-1.html#h-2>.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

Conversely, adults over the age of 65 make up just 12.2% of the population in Surrey, compared with 15.7% in BC.¹⁵ Surrey's median age is, at 37.5, equal to the figure for Metro Vancouver, but substantially younger than the BC median of 41.9.¹⁶

However, survey respondents tended to be younger still (see graph). The majority (54%) fell into the 25-44 age range, while another 10% said they were between 12 and 24. A third (32%) were between 45 and 64, and only 4% were aged 65 and above. This age distribution may be partially a result of the sampling method, as many responses were collected through social media or language classes, where older adults are less likely to congregate.

WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



■ 12 to 24 ■ 25 to 44 ■ 45 to 64 ■ 65+

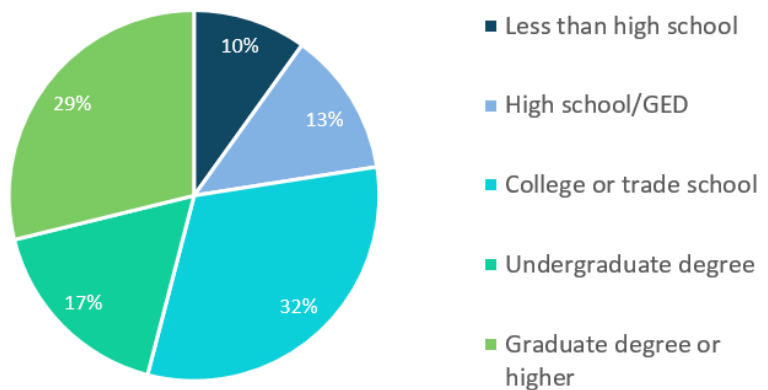
Education and income level

Participants reported a range of levels of education.

As the next graph shows, over three-quarters (77%) said they had completed at least some post-secondary education. Of these, 32% had completed or were currently pursuing college or trade school, 17% an undergraduate degree, and 29% a graduate degree or higher. Another 13% identified high school or GED (General Educational Development) as their highest level of education, and 10% listed less than high school.

In comparison, according to the 2011 National Household Survey, 19% of Surrey residents aged 15 and over have completed no certificate, diploma, or degree. About a third (31%) have completed high school or its equivalent, while another third (31%) have completed college, trade school, or a university diploma. Twelve percent of Surrey adults list an undergraduate degree as the highest level of education they have attained, while just 7% have completed a graduate degree.¹⁷

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION



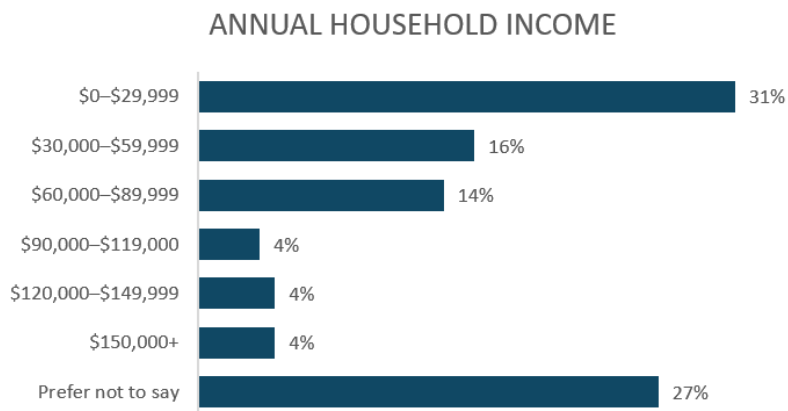
■ Less than high school
 ■ High school/GED
 ■ College or trade school
 ■ Undergraduate degree
 ■ Graduate degree or higher

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, "NHS Profile, Surrey, CY, British Columbia, 2011," <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5915004&Data=Count&SearchText=Surrey&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=59&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=TABID=1>.

A bulk of respondents to the Vital Signs newcomer survey reported incomes at the lower end of the economic spectrum. Nearly one-third (31%) reported their annual household income as less than \$30,000 before tax. About half as many (16%) said they lived on between \$30,000 and less than \$60,000, and 14% said they make between \$60,000 and \$89,999. Only small numbers said they made more than \$90,000 (4%), \$120,000 (4%), or \$150,000 (4%). More than a quarter (27%) of participants preferred not to say. A total of 42% earned more than \$30,000 per year.



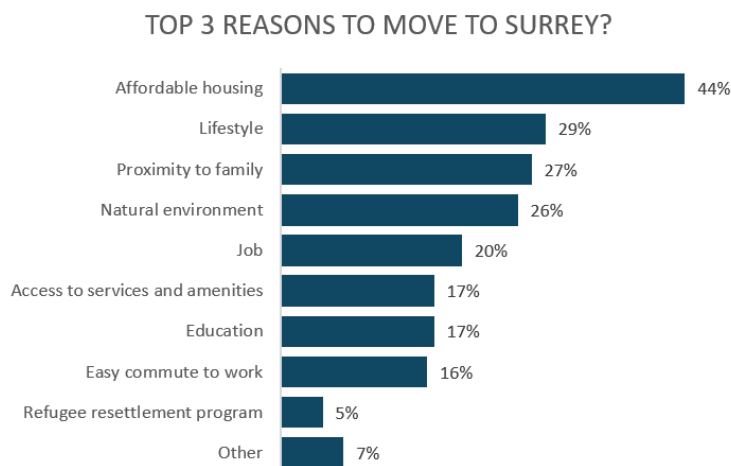
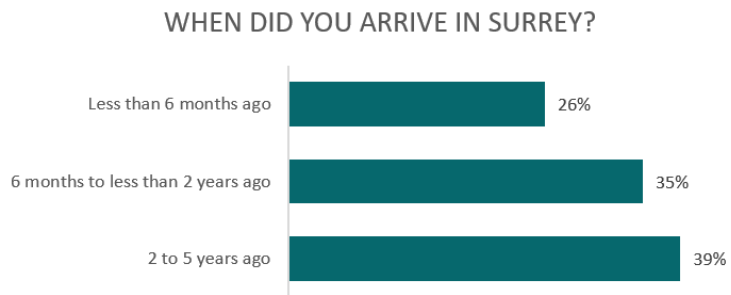
It is not possible precisely to compare the Vital Signs survey results with income levels in Surrey's population at large, since the National Household Survey divides some categories slightly differently. However, about one-fifth (19.1%) of Surrey's households report an annual household income of less than \$30,000. A quarter report between \$30,000 and \$59,999,

while slightly more (26.5%) live on between \$60,00 and \$99,999. Smaller groups make between \$100,000 and \$124,999 (10.5%), between \$125,000 and \$149,999 (7.2%), and \$150,000 or more (11.7%).¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid.

Moving to Surrey

Survey participants were asked when they arrived in Surrey. The sample is fairly evenly split between those who arrived less than six months ago (26%), six months to two years ago (35%), and two years to five years ago (39%). Respondents were also offered the option “more than five years ago,” and those who selected it were filtered out of the survey.



What brings newcomers to Surrey in such numbers? Despite the recent surge in Surrey house prices, the city is still seen as a relatively inexpensive place to call home. When asked directly why they moved to Surrey, by far the largest group of respondents (44%) gave affordable housing as one of their top three reasons.

Other popular reasons were lifestyle (selected by 29%), proximity to family (27%), and natural environment (26%). One respondent in five said they moved for a job (20%).

Smaller groups were attracted by the convenient access to a range of services and amenities (17%), educational opportunity (17%), or the easy commute to work (16%). A handful said they moved as part of a refugee resettlement program (5%), and 7% said they had another reason.

What Makes Surrey Unique?

Having arrived in Surrey, what are newcomers' first impressions of their new home? What stands out? Survey respondents were asked to highlight what, in their view, makes Surrey unique compared to other municipalities. The answers were unprompted; in other words, participants were not given options from which to choose, but rather were asked to provide their own perspective.

By far the two most common themes in respondents' answers were diversity and the natural environment. Respondents revealed their appreciation for Surrey's multicultural citizenry, comparing it to a "melting pot" and mentioning the "many different cultures," the "large immigrant population," and the "variety of people."

Most respondents seemed to view this diversity in a positive light, including one person who wrote: "All of these cultures get along and work together and even work towards increasing shared projects and priorities."

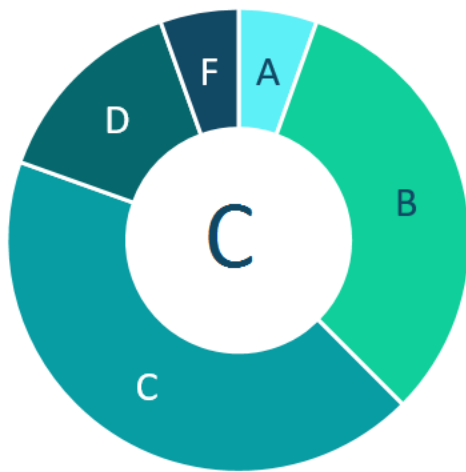
In addition to Surrey's diversity, nearly as many survey participants felt Surrey's natural setting makes it unique, citing the "beautiful landscape," the "open spaces," the "big skies and sunshine," and the "walking trails, views, ocean access." Surrey's parks were often mentioned as a special feature.

Survey participants recognized that what distinguishes Surrey from other cities is its physical size and rapid growth. Said one, "It's the largest municipality in the Lower Mainland, and the fastest growing, which is a double-edged sword in terms of building infrastructure (schools, hospitals, recreation facilities, parks) to support ever increasing population numbers." Others noticed the community feel, or the diversity in urban and rural areas. For still others, what made Surrey unique was its friendly people.

Participants also mentioned Surrey's location and proximity to a variety of amenities, its roads and transportation system, and its sense of safety as unique features of the city.

The responses to the question of what makes Surrey unique were overwhelmingly positive. The comparatively few negative answers generally referenced Surrey's poor record in terms of crime, saying Surrey is "unique because of so many crimes compared to other cities" or "Observing and reporting works well, but the system appears backlogged." Only 3% rejected outright the premise that Surrey is somehow unlike other cities, saying, "Honestly I don't think Surrey is unique," or "I'm still trying to figure that out."

INDICATOR: Employment



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 5% |
| B | 32% |
| C | 43% |
| D | 14% |
| F | 5% |

Average grade: C (64%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Nine out of 10 respondents were satisfied with their occupational status.
- After 10 years, immigrants face the same, or lower, unemployment rates as other Canadians.
- Only 14% of survey respondents reported discrimination in the job market.

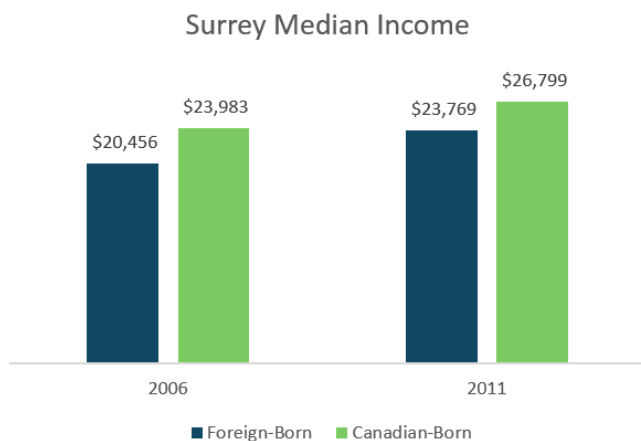
TO IMPROVE

- Many newcomers have trouble getting their foreign credentials and work experience recognized.
- Surrey has well below the national average for number of child care spaces.

Employment received the second-lowest score among the Vital Signs indicators.

Overview

For newcomers to Surrey, one of the main concerns is finding a job, so it stands to reason that survey respondents rated employment as one of Surrey's top areas to improve. When asked to grade Surrey in terms of jobs and the economy, almost two-thirds (62%) of participants selected a grade of C or below (see circle graph). About a third (32%) felt the subject merited a B, while just 5% awarded employment an A.



Data source: **NewToBC**; Statistics Canada.

Those newcomers who come to Surrey from outside of Canada may have reason to be concerned. In general, immigrants living in Surrey earn less than Canadian-born residents, although they tend to be better educated. In 2011, the median individual income of immigrants living in Surrey was \$23,769, compared to \$26,799 for those born in Canada (see graph).¹⁹

Immigrants to Canada in general also face higher unemployment rates than workers born in Canada. However, according to data

from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), employment rates for immigrants improve the longer they stay in the country. By the time they have lived in Canada for 10 years, they experience even slightly lower unemployment rates than the average Canadian.²⁰

Measuring poverty

Canada has no single measure for poverty. The low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) is used internationally to identify families living in poverty. The measure is based on the idea that households are considered low-income if they earn less than half of the median household income. According to this measure, 15.5% of Surrey residents were low income in 2011. In comparison, according to the Low Income Cut-off (LICO) measure, 13.6% of Surrey's population were living in low-income households in 2005.²¹

Many Canadians live in poverty despite working part-time or even full-time at low-wage jobs. According to a report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the living wage for Metro Vancouver in 2016 was \$20.64.²² The living wage is the hourly rate two adults need to earn to support a family of two children.

¹⁹ "Surrey Immigrant Demographics" (NewToBC, 2014), 15, <http://newtobc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Surrey-Immigrant-Demographic-Profile-10.2014.pdf>; Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

²⁰ OECD Data, "Foreign-Born Unemployment" (2014), <https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-unemployment.htm>.

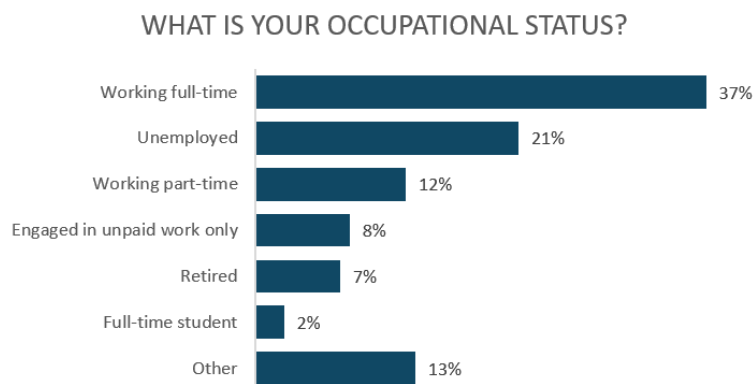
²¹ City of Surrey, "Low Income Fact Sheet" (December 2014), 2, [https://www.surrey.ca/files/Income_\(Low\)_Demographic_Profile.pdf](https://www.surrey.ca/files/Income_(Low)_Demographic_Profile.pdf).

²² Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Working for a Living Wage: 2016 Update* (2016), <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2016/04/CCPA-BC-Living-Wage-2016.pdf>.

BC's minimum wage is currently the lowest in Canada, at \$10.45. It is slated to increase to \$10.85 in September 2016, which will improve BC's relative position in terms of wages, but will do little to resolve BC's high incidence of working poor. Statistics Canada defines the working poor as those living in a household where the primary earner works at least 910 hours per year. In 2006, 9.5% of Surrey families were identified as working poor, while in Canada in 2007, 7.3% of working families were considered low-income.²³

Levels of employment

The results of the Vital Signs survey seem to reflect these labour market challenges. As shown in the next graph, half (49%) of those who responded to the survey were engaged in paid work. A little less than two-fifths (37%) of participants said they were working full-time, while 12% said they were working part-time. About a fifth (21%) were unemployed, and



another 8% said they were engaged in unpaid work, such as volunteering or caring for children or elderly parents. Small numbers said they were retired (7%) or full-time students (2%).

Another 13% identified their occupational status as "Other." Those respondents

who chose to further specify tended to report that they were on maternity leave, collecting workers' compensation or disability benefits, or combining work and school.

Job satisfaction

In this study, employment as an indicator received one of the lowest grades overall. However, when asked whether they were satisfied with their current occupational status, the vast majority of participants responded positively. Almost nine out of 10 respondents (89%) replied that they were satisfied, including nearly half (45%) who declared themselves very satisfied. About a fifth (18%) said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and only 13% proclaimed they were dissatisfied.

Among survey participants, those who identified as a visible minority experienced lower job satisfaction than those who did not. Although a majority of both groups declared themselves satisfied, 74% of newcomers who did not identify as a visible minority were satisfied, compared to 61% of visible minorities. A quarter (25%) of those who identified as visible minorities were dissatisfied, in comparison to 8% of those who did not.²⁴

²³ City of Surrey Open Data, "Working Poor Families" (2014), <https://data.surrey.ca/dataset/working-poor-families>.

²⁴ When considering this data, it is important to remember that these comparisons are based on an extremely small sample size. For example, only 88 participants answered the question on visible minority

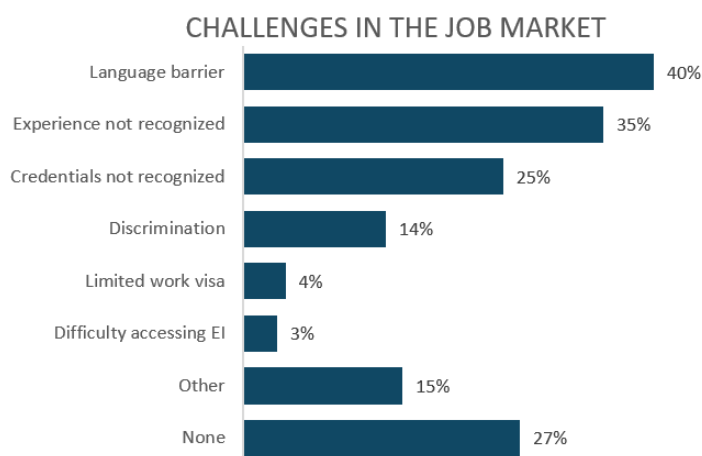
Newcomers from other countries were less likely to be satisfied with their job or occupational status than those who arrived in Surrey from other parts of Canada. Sixty-three percent of those who arrived from other countries said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, compared to 73% of those who arrived from elsewhere in Canada.

Still, finding a job is a significant challenge for many newcomers to Surrey. Two-thirds (66%) of those who responded agreed that it was difficult to find a job upon arriving in Surrey, including 42% who strongly agreed. One-fifth (20%) disagreed, while another 13% were ambivalent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Employment challenges

A number of challenges complicate the job search for Surrey newcomers. Not surprisingly, the biggest barrier to finding employment was identified as a language barrier (see graph).

Two-fifths (40%) of newcomers overall, and more than half (52%) of those who arrived from other countries, pinpointed language as an issue.



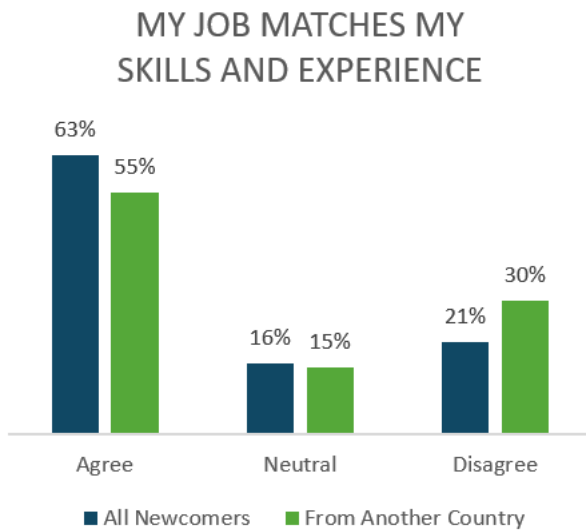
Another widespread problem is having foreign experience and credentials recognized. About one-third (35%) of all newcomers indicated “Experience not recognized” as a barrier to the job market, while more than half (54%) of those from other countries did. Foreign or non-local “Credentials not recognized” was seen as a

problem by a quarter (25%) of newcomers overall, and by 38% of those who arrived from other countries.

Smaller numbers of new job-seekers (14%) felt discrimination was a barrier. Although newcomers who identified as visible minorities were more likely to face discrimination in the job market, still only a fifth (20%) saw it as a challenge. In comparison, only a handful of new residents listed visa problems (4%) or difficulty accessing Employment Insurance (EI) as issues (3%). Other challenges identified unprompted by respondents included disability, difficulty getting along with co-workers, and the problem—not unique to newcomers—of finding a first job without experience of any kind.

(another 21 preferred not to say). Considerable caution must be taken when drawing conclusions from this data; however, it does suggest an interesting avenue for further research.

About a quarter of participants (27%) noted they had not experienced any challenges in the job market. Those who had arrived from other countries (10%) were far less likely to indicate they had faced no challenges than those from other places within Canada (38%). Nearly half (45%) of newcomers from other parts of the Lower Mainland said they had experienced no challenges.



Perhaps an even bigger concern than securing gainful employment in general is finding an appropriate job given a newcomer's background and education. Many immigrants to Canada, including some of those surveyed, are underemployed because their credentials and experience are not accepted as being equivalent to Canadian benchmarks.

Lack of work experience was reported as the top barrier to the labour market in the *Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada* (2005).²⁵ However, as graphed, almost two-thirds (63%) of those who responded to the

Vital Signs survey agreed that their job matches their skills and experience. Even among those who said they had arrived from other countries, the majority (55%) said their job is a good match. (In comparison, 30% did not.)²⁶ This result parallels quite closely recent research by the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), which found that about two-fifths (41%) of immigrants have had difficulty finding a job in Surrey that matches their education and skills.²⁷

Integral to successful employment, for many, are the necessities of transportation and child care. The survey revealed some challenges in these areas that are further discussed in their own sections here.

²⁵ Cited in Li Xue, *Portrait of an Integration Process* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, June 2007), <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/integration/4-employment.asp#employment3>.

²⁶ A significant number of respondents selected Not Applicable in answering this question. Overall, a third (33%) of participants selected Not Applicable, which could indicate that they do not have (or are not seeking) a job. In the group of newcomers from other countries, a similar proportion (37%) answered Not Applicable. The figures above are based on those who answered the question, with the Not Applicable responses removed. As usual in this study, since dividing respondents into two or more groups yields particularly small sample sizes, the results should be considered with caution.

²⁷ Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, "How Well Are Immigrants Being Integrated?" [Fact sheet] (September 2015), http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/LIP-InfoSheet06-web-final-rev_0.pdf.

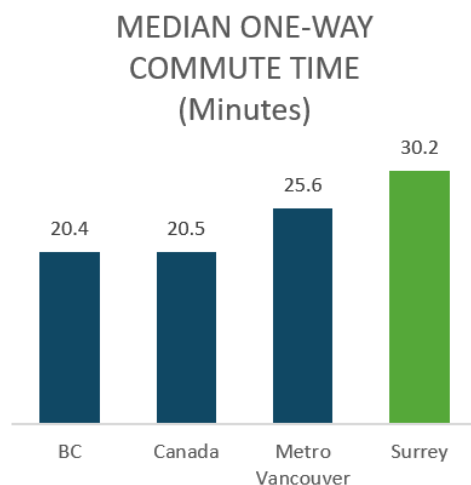
Child care

For parents of young children, one common barrier to success in the labour market is child care. Residents of Surrey face greater challenges than most other Canadians when it comes to accessing affordable and appropriate child care options. According to a recent study by the City of Vancouver, fewer than nine child care spaces are available in Surrey per 100 children under age 12. Surrey's ratio is the lowest in Metro Vancouver, with the exception of the City of Langley. As a point of comparison, the average for Metro Vancouver in 2011 was 16 spaces per 100 children under 12. The Canadian average was still higher, at nearly 19 spaces.²⁸

Participants in the Vital Signs newcomer survey tended to be moderately satisfied with child care. A little less than half (46%) of those who responded agreed that affordable and appropriate child care options are available to them in Surrey. In comparison, about two in 10 (22%) were neutral on the subject, while approximately a third (31%) disagreed.

Transportation

Geographically, Surrey is enormous. As Mayor Linda Hepner emphasized in her 2016 State of the City address, "Surrey is physically five times larger than Manhattan, six times larger than Tel Aviv; we're almost three times larger than San Francisco, and we're nearly four times the size of Zurich."²⁹



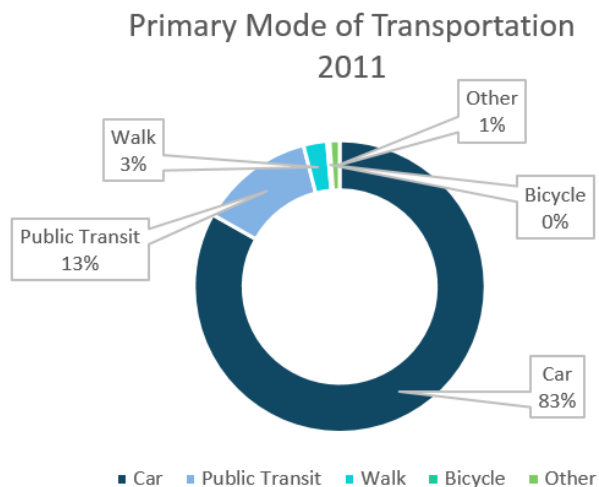
As a result, many Surrey residents face an unusually long daily commute. According to data from the 2011 National Household Survey (see graph), the median commute for working Surreyites is 30.2 minutes each day—one way. This is somewhat higher than the figure for Metro Vancouver (25.6 minutes) and nearly 50% higher than the BC and national median commutes of 20.4 and 20.5 minutes, respectively.³⁰ In this context, Hepner stated, "Good transportation options are more than just key. They are absolutely critical."³¹

²⁸ Neil Spicer and Janet Kreda, *A Municipal Survey of Child Care Spaces and Policies in Metro Vancouver* (Metro Vancouver, 2011), http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/Child_Care_Spaces_and_Policies_in_Metro_Vancouver_Oct_2011.pdf.

²⁹ Linda Hepner, "2016 State of the City Address" (May 19, 2016, <http://www.surrey.ca/city-government/19692.aspx>).

³⁰ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

³¹ Hepner, "2016 State of the City Address."



Data source: Statistics Canada.

How do Vital Signs survey participants fare in terms of commute time? The majority (55%) agreed with the statement “My daily commute is too long,” including 22% who strongly agreed. Just two in 10 (19%) disagreed, while 25% were more ambivalent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.³²

Surrey remains a community of motorists. As graphed above, in the 2011 National Household Survey, 83% of residents reported driving as their primary mode of transportation from home to work, compared to 13% who used public transit and 3% who travelled on foot.³³

Transit use in Surrey increased significantly in the decade between 2001 and 2011: just 4% reported taking transit in 2001 compared to 13% in 2011, while drivers had declined from nearly nine out of 10 (89.6%) to 83%.³⁴ Still, compared with other communities, Surrey residents have a relatively high propensity to drive.

In Metro Vancouver, an average of 71% listed driving as their primary mode of transportation in 2011, while nearly 77% of BC residents did.³⁵ The statistics may not imply that Surrey residents are less environmentally conscious than other British Columbians, however. Surrey is the third-largest municipality in the province in terms of area,³⁶ and public transit is not accessible in all areas. Some residents may drive not by choice, but by necessity. Many newcomers may face the added expense of operating a vehicle, if public transit is not an option for them.

³² One in five (20%) participants answered Not Applicable to this question, perhaps because they do not work or they work from home. The figures above are based on those who responded, with the N/A responses removed.

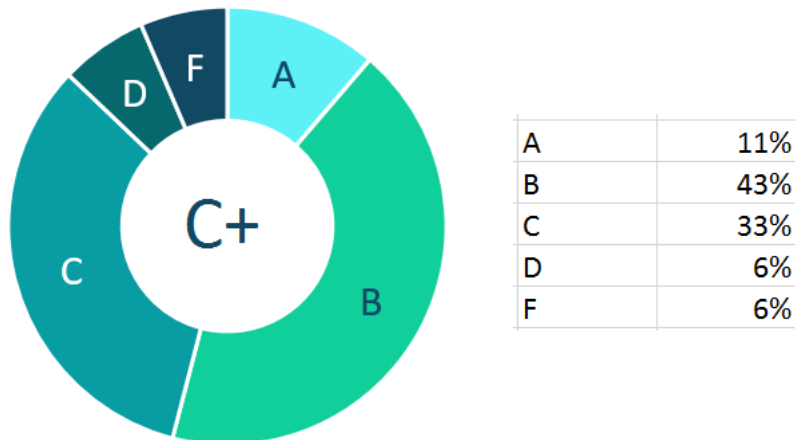
³³ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

³⁴ Ibid.; Statistics Canada, Census Community Profiles, Surrey, 2001, 2006.

³⁵ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey.

³⁶ “Surrey, British Columbia,” *Wikipedia* (2016), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrey,_British_Columbia.

INDICATOR: Education



Average grade: C+ (69%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Surrey offers a variety of options for different types of learners.
- Newcomers tend to be satisfied with the quality of education they and their children receive.

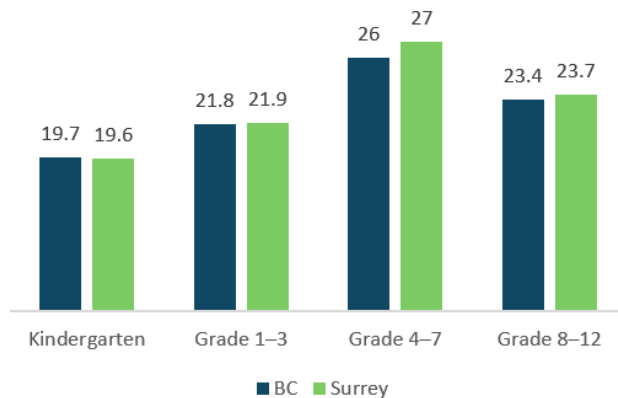
TO IMPROVE

- Serious overcrowding is an issue in Surrey schools.
- Newcomers experience waiting lists for adult education.
- Educational opportunities may not be well matched to the needs of the job market.
- Newcomers may need additional educational guidance.

Overview

Newcomers to Surrey had a generally positive outlook on the educational opportunities available in their new city. A majority of respondents awarded a grade of either A (11%) or B (43%) (see circle graph). Another third (33%) were more tepid in their opinion of education in Surrey, giving it a grade of C. Only a handful were dissatisfied, awarding education a D (6%) or F (6%).

Average Class Sizes in BC and Surrey,
2015



The problem of overcrowding

Overcrowding in schools is often cited as one of the leading issues facing Surrey.³⁷ Data from the BC government (see graph) shows that class sizes in Surrey are only slightly above the provincial averages: an average of 27 children attend each Grade 4 to 7 class in Surrey, compared to 26 across BC, while the average Grade 8 to 12 class is 23.7 students in Surrey, compared to 23.4 province-wide.³⁸

However, the number of classes far exceeds the number of classrooms available in Surrey schools. According to the Surrey School District, Surrey schools are home to nearly 300 portables.³⁹ As many as one in 10 students are educated in portables, raising concerns because of dim lighting, poor air quality, and high energy and maintenance costs. Portables and overcrowding were seen as a top issue in Surrey's education system by respondents to the 2014 Vital Signs survey.⁴⁰

On May 13, 2016, Premier Christy Clark appeared at Panorama Park Secondary School in Surrey to announce the addition of 2,700 new seats by the end of 2020. However, critics point out that the announcement made no mention of two of the Surrey School District's top priorities: new elementary schools in the Grandview and Clayton areas.⁴¹ As of May 2016, 1,870 seats were already under construction.⁴²

³⁷ Tracey Sherlock, "Overcrowding challenges Surrey schools," *The Vancouver Sun*, March 31, 2016, <http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Overcrowding+challenges+Surrey+schools/11821855/story.html>; Ian Bailey, "B.C. premier commits millions to Surrey school construction projects," *The Globe and Mail*, May 20, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-government-to-add-2700-new-seats-in-surreys-overcrowded-schools/article30107350/>; Brian Coxford, "Surrey faces overcrowding issue," *Global News*, April 15, 2013, <http://globalnews.ca/news/483556/surrey-schools-face-overcrowding-issue>.

³⁸ British Columbia, Ministry of Education, "Overview of Class Size and Composition in British Columbia Public Schools 2015/16" (2015), http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/class_size/2015/public.pdf.

³⁹ Surrey School District, "Long Range Facilities and Education Plan" (2015), <https://www.surreyschools.ca/Publications/SD36%20Long%20Range%20Facilities%20and%20Education%20Plan%20June%202015.pdf>.

⁴⁰ SurreyCares Community Foundation, *Surrey's Vital Signs 2014* (Surrey, BC: SurreyCares, 2014), https://www.surreycares.org/App_Themes/SurreyCares/uploads/SurreyCares_VitalSigns_2014-2.compressed.pdf.

⁴¹ Amy Reid, "Premier commits to 27 new student spots in Surrey, ignores two of five priority projects," *Surrey Now*, May 20, 2016, <http://www.thenownewspaper.com/news/380265051.html>.

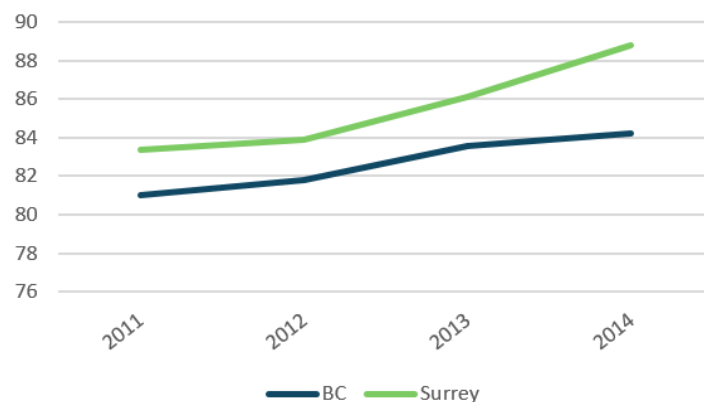
⁴² *Ibid.*

High school completion rates

Despite less than ideal facilities, Surrey is successful at shepherding students through high school graduation (see graph). In 2013/14, nearly nine out of 10 (89%) Surrey students graduated within six years of beginning Grade 8,⁴³ compared with the provincial average of 84%.⁴⁴

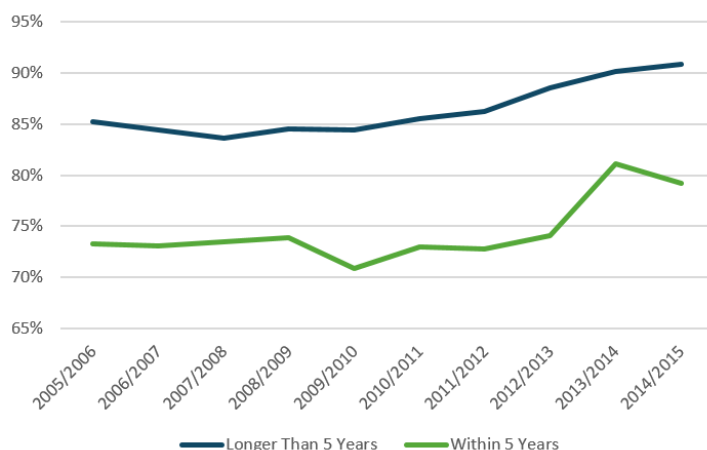
Newcomers fare somewhat less well, however. As shown in the graph below, when students who have entered the Surrey school system in the past five years are compared with peers who have been enrolled longer, they experience significantly lower six-year completion rates: 79% compared to 91% in 2014/15.⁴⁵

Six-Year High School Completion Rates, 2011–2014



Data sources: BC Ministry of Education; City of Surrey.

SURREY SIX-YEAR COMPLETION RATES, Newcomers vs. Others



Data source: BC Ministry of Education.

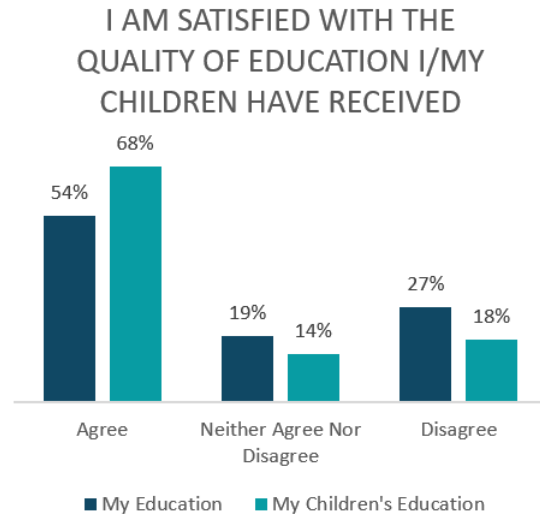
⁴³ City of Surrey Open Data, "High School Graduation" (2015), <http://dashboard.surrey.ca/#education/highschoolgraduation>.

⁴⁴ British Columbia, Ministry of Education, "Six-Year Completion and Grade 12 Graduation Rates—2014/15" (October 2015), <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/graduation/prov.pdf>.

⁴⁵ British Columbia, Ministry of Education, "Six-Year Completion Rates for Those That Entered Surrey at Different Points," provided by special arrangement, 2016.

Overall satisfaction

Vital Signs survey participants were, by and large, pleased with the educational environment in Surrey. As shown in the graph at right, when asked directly, a majority of respondents (54%) agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of education they themselves have received in Surrey. However, just over a quarter (27%) reported they were dissatisfied, and about a fifth (19%) said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



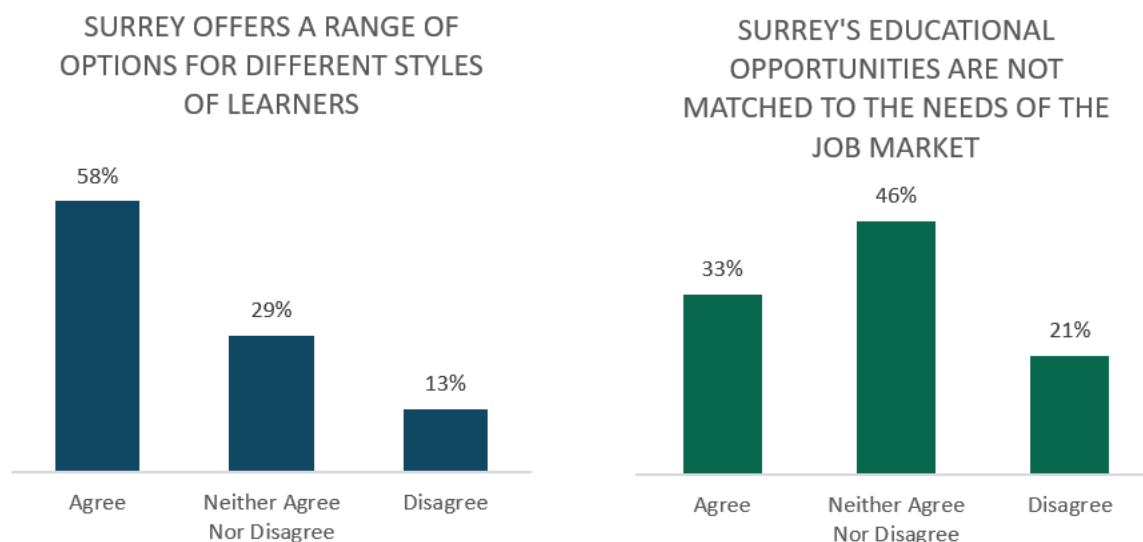
Despite the current crisis of overcrowding in Surrey schools, participants were even more likely to be happy with their children's school experience: more than two-thirds (68%) responded that they were satisfied with the quality of their children's education. One appreciative parent mentioned "lots of diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Nice and supportive school staff from principals to teachers to multicultural support workers." Fewer than a fifth (18%) were dissatisfied, while another 14% were more neutral on the question.

It should be noted that the questions in the education section of the survey experienced a particularly low response rate, since a significant number of participants—likely those not pursuing a course of studies or whose children were not in school—selected Not Applicable. The percentages presented here represent the proportions after the N/As were removed.

A small survey conducted in 2016 by BC Parents of Special Needs Kids seems to indicate that Surrey is doing a relatively good job of supporting and integrating children with learning challenges. Forty-four percent of Surrey respondents in that survey reported they were satisfied with the quality of education their child received. In contrast, just 21% of Vancouver respondents and 24% across the province said they were satisfied.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ BC Parents of Special Needs Kids, "Action for Equitable Access to Education: Survey Results for Surrey School District" (2016), <https://equitableaccessstoeducation.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/surrey.pdf>.

A majority of Vital Signs respondents shared the opinion that the education system in Surrey is flexible in its programming. As the graph below left shows, a firm majority (58%) agreed that Surrey offers a range of options for different styles of learners, compared to 29% who remained neutral and only a handful (13%) who disagreed.



Specific concerns

However, newcomers were not without complaint about education in Surrey. One concern was that newcomers were not finding courses applicable to the realities of the economy. As the graph above right illustrates, a third (33%) of those surveyed agreed that the educational opportunities available in Surrey are not well matched to the needs of the job market, while fully 46% neither agreed nor disagreed. Just two in 10 (21%) said opportunities are well suited to the practical problem of finding a job.

When asked, unprompted (without a list of options), to identify challenges they had faced in the educational arena, respondents tended to refer to one of a small number of issues. The most commonly quoted concern was waiting lists for adult education, while the crowding issue in the public school system was also mentioned. Some participants were worried that entrance requirements, including English tests as well as other certification, would prevent them from embarking on their desired course of study. One wrote, “I’ll have to do Grade 12 English to enter into any course; that is delaying [me] in pursuing my further studies.” Other newcomers mentioned the financial challenges associated with pursuing education.

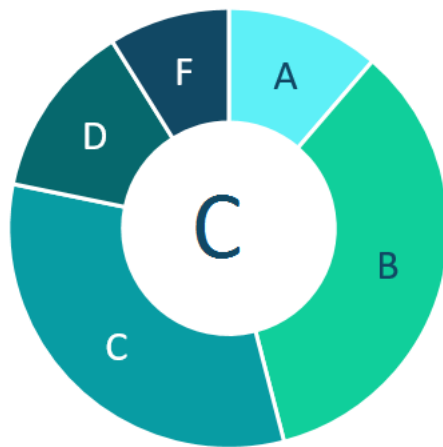
When evaluated using the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), an international measure that rates adult information processing skills including literacy, immigrants score about 25 percentage points lower than other

Canadians.⁴⁷ Of course, this discrepancy is due in large part to the fact that many immigrants are taking the test in their second language. Still, literacy rates could have impacted the response to the Vital Signs survey.

There is a sense that while Surrey offers plenty of courses of study, some newcomers may need extra help in connecting with the right one for them. A number of respondents mentioned the need for more assistance, including one who said, “I seek guidance to put me back in my career line.” Another reported, “I didn’t [get] help for how can I upgrade my diploma (what documents are needed).” One went as far as to suggest that the lack of guidance was systemic and deliberate: “I didn’t get right advice to upgrade my skills in nursing. The private colleges misguided just to get money.”

⁴⁷ Alex Usher, “PIAAC: The Results for Aboriginal and Immigrant Canadians” [Blog post], Higher Education Strategy Associates (October 11, 2013), <http://higherstrategy.com/piaac-the-results-for-aboriginal-and-immigrant-canadians>.

INDICATOR: Health & Wellness



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 11% |
| B | 35% |
| C | 32% |
| D | 13% |
| F | 9% |

Average grade: C (65%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Eight out of 10 of those surveyed were satisfied with their physical health.
- Three-quarters said they were happy.

TO IMPROVE

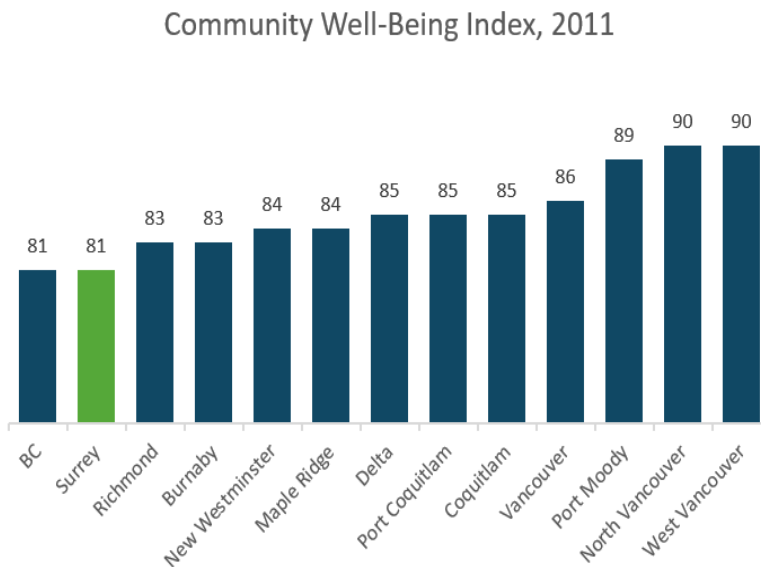
- Many newcomers have trouble finding a family doctor.
- Six in 10 survey participants complained of long wait times.
- Surrey has half the Canadian average number of doctors per 100,000 residents.

Overview

Newcomers perceived both positives and negatives in regard to health care in Surrey. Respondents tended to be pleased with the state of their own health and felt they receive adequate care; however, they complained about wait times and overcrowding in the medical system. Overall, Surrey received a grade of C for health and wellness. More respondents (35%) selected B than any other grade, while about one-tenth (11%) were satisfied enough to give an A (see circle graph). One-third (32%) of those surveyed rated health and wellness C, while about a fifth were more dissatisfied, giving health and wellness a D (13%) or F (9%).

Measuring well-being

What is well-being? There are many definitions and just as many measures, ranging from a purely economic scale to more spiritual indicators like Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) index.

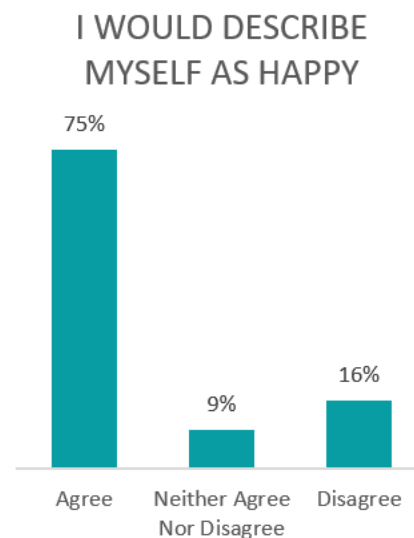


One such measure, the Community Well-Being (CWB) index, is calculated by Statistics Canada based on four components: income (total income per capita), education (how many residents have high school diplomas or university degrees), housing (whether housing is in good repair and not overcrowded), and employment (labour force participation rate and

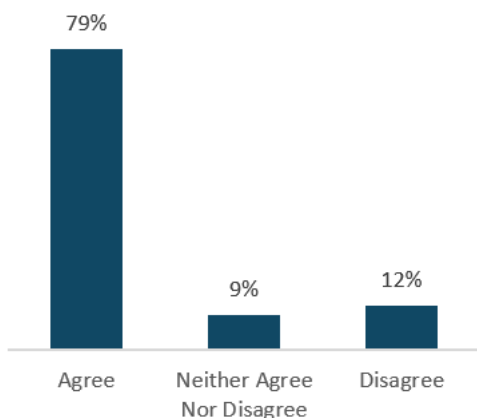
employment rate). The scores range from 0 to 100. Surrey is on a par with the BC average of 81, as the graph here shows. However, it is the lowest-scoring municipality within Metro Vancouver.

Data source: Statistics Canada.

Despite their concerns and the challenges they face, Surrey newcomers declared themselves to be generally happy people (see graph below). Almost three-quarters (75%) of Vital Signs respondents agreed with the statement “I would describe myself as happy,” including 34% who strongly agreed. A small minority (16%) disagreed, indicating they were not happy, while 9% said they neither agreed nor disagreed.



I AM SATISFIED WITH MY PHYSICAL HEALTH



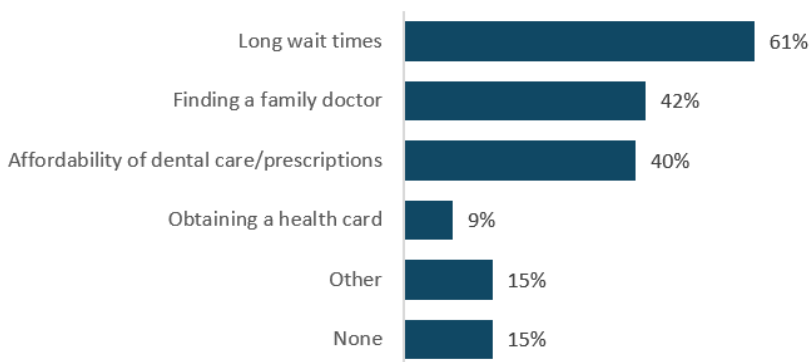
Health care challenges

Moreover, almost four-fifths (79%) of survey respondents declared themselves satisfied with their physical health (see graph). Only 12% admitted they were dissatisfied, while about one in 10 (9%) said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Still, maintaining their mental and physical health poses a number of challenges for newcomers, as shown in the next graph. A majority of those surveyed (61%) have faced long wait times for medical services, and many (42%) have had trouble finding a family doctor. Two-fifths (40%) have found the cost of dental care and prescriptions to

be a problem. In comparison, just one-tenth (9%) of participants said they have had difficulties obtaining a health card. While 15% of those surveyed indicated they have faced no challenges in the health system, it should be noted that 22% of newcomers from other parts of Canada said they had no problems, while less than 10% of those from other countries did.

HEALTH CHALLENGES



When asked about challenges they have faced in accessing health care (with multiple responses possible), about 15% of participants selected “Other,” and many of these took the opportunity to comment further.

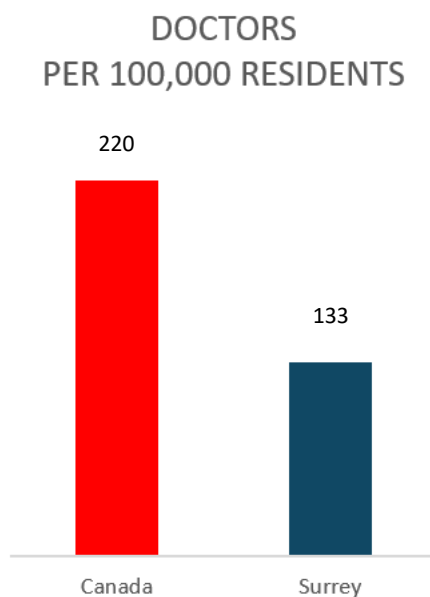
Among the issues

raised was the fact that some new residents have trouble finding doctors that both speak their mother tongue and are available. Said one, “Almost [all] family doctors who can speak Mandarin are occupied and cannot accept patients anymore in South Surrey.”

Other respondents were concerned with the capacity of the current health institutions. They mentioned the “lack of hours open at [walk-in] clinics. Services max out by 10 a.m. for the day in South Surrey.” They also referred to the fact that it is often necessary to travel to another municipality to visit a specialist. Still others seemed to crave a more personal approach from medical professionals. One felt they needed more time to talk to the doctor, while another reported the doctor “doesn’t pay attention to what I say, if I visit over and

[over] again for the same problem. He just interrupts in between. I just feel like he doesn't care.”

For a significant minority of Surrey newcomers, one difficulty is finding a general practitioner. When asked directly if they have a family doctor, just over three-fifths (61%) agreed that they do, while 5% neither agreed nor disagreed. More than a third (35%) disagreed, saying they do not have a family doctor.



Data sources: Canadian Medical Association; City of Surrey.

This problem is not limited to new residents. Doctors of BC estimates that 220,000 British Columbians, or about 5%, do not have a family doctor. Surrey is particularly problematic in this regard. According to the Canadian Medical Association, 220 doctors were available per 100,000 residents of Canada in 2013 (see graph).⁴⁸ In Surrey, in contrast, only 133 doctors were available to serve each 100,000 residents.⁴⁹

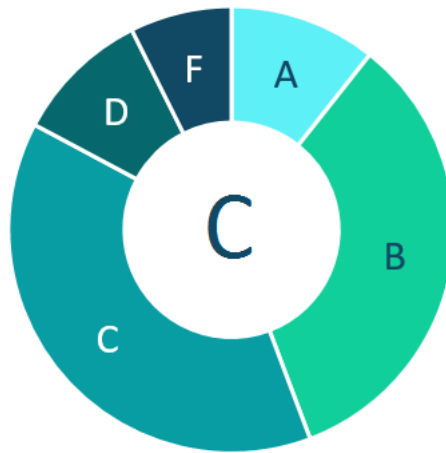
Another third (36%) of those surveyed for the Vital Signs project agreed that they have trouble communicating with their family doctor, while 46% disagreed. About a fifth (18%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed. As might be expected, newcomers from other countries were somewhat more likely to experience communication problems—40 percent of those who arrived in Surrey from other countries said they have trouble communicating with their doctors, compared to 32% of those who arrived from within Canada.

A slightly larger group reported they have trouble accessing health care in general. More than four in 10 respondents (43%) agreed that they have had difficulties accessing health services in Surrey, while 39% said they have not. About a tenth (9%) were neutral on the subject. Interestingly enough, among those who responded, newcomers who arrived from other countries fared slightly better in this regard than those who came from other parts of Canada.

⁴⁸ Canadian Medical Association, “Physicians per 100,000 Population by Province/Territory, 1986–2014” (2014), https://www.cma.ca/Assets/assets-library/document/en/advocacy/12-Phys_per_pop.pdf.

⁴⁹ City of Surrey Open Data, “Availability of Doctors” (2014), http://dashboard.surrey.ca/#health_and_safety/doctors.

INDICATOR: Housing



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 11% |
| B | 34% |
| C | 39% |
| D | 10% |
| F | 7% |

Average grade: C (66%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Affordable housing is the leading reason to move to Surrey.
- Three-fifths of survey respondents see Surrey as a good place to raise a family.

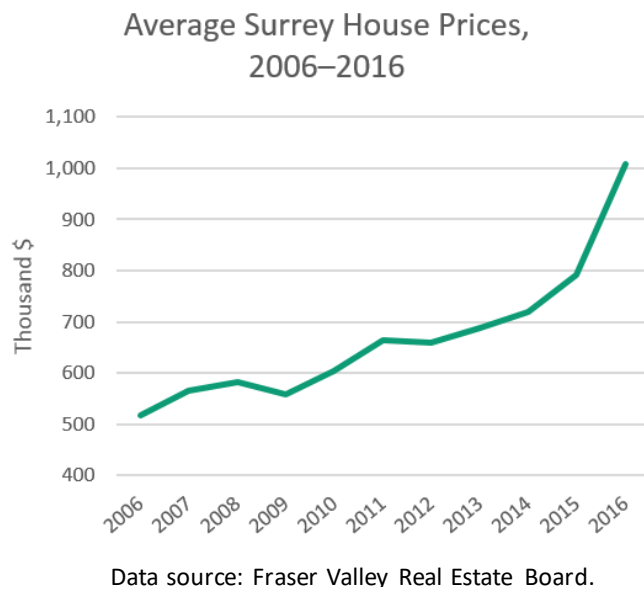
TO IMPROVE

- Surrey detached house prices have soared 43% in the past year.
- Newcomers see affordability as the biggest challenge.

Overview

Surrey's relatively reasonable housing prices were the leading motive for participants in this survey to move to the city. It does not follow, however, that respondents were completely satisfied with Surrey housing. Rather, Surrey was often seen as a necessary refuge in the midst of the Vancouver housing crisis—cheaper than the other Metro Vancouver municipalities, but not cheap enough for comfortable living.

Housing as an indicator received an average grade of C, which was also the grade chosen by the largest group of respondents (39%) (see circle graph). Smaller numbers of respondents declared themselves truly dissatisfied with the Surrey housing market by awarding D (10%) or F (7%). But a solid minority was more optimistic, giving housing a B (34%) or an A (11%).



The affordability issue

Surrey has traditionally been a haven for families and young professionals seeking relief from Vancouver house prices. However, the days of affordable house prices may be in the past. According to the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, single-family home prices in Surrey have skyrocketed in recent months, increasing by a shocking 43% between April 2015 and April 2016 (see graph). Average prices for detached homes surpassed a million dollars for the first time in March 2016.⁵⁰

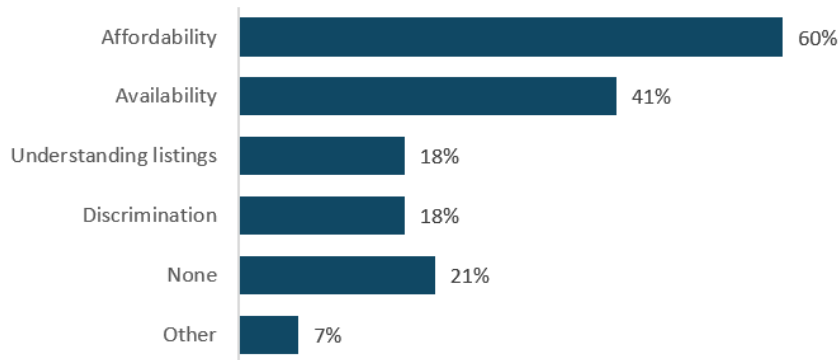
The soaring prices have not dampened sales, however: 2,969 sales were recorded throughout the Fraser Valley in April 2016. That is 48% more than the same period in 2015.

In 2010, 37.7% of Surrey households spent 30% or more of their household income on rent. This is substantially better than the average from Metro Vancouver (44.7%) or for British Columbia (45.3%). However, when it comes to owning properties, Surrey residents are not as well off. More than a quarter (27.3%) spend 30% or more of their household income on owner's major payments (which may include mortgage payments, condominium fees, property taxes, and municipal service fees), just slightly below the Metro Vancouver average of 27.6%, and well above the BC average (23.8%).⁵¹

⁵⁰ Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, "City of Surrey Average Housing Prices" (2016).

⁵¹ Ibid.

CHALLENGES IN THE HOUSING MARKET



Additional challenges

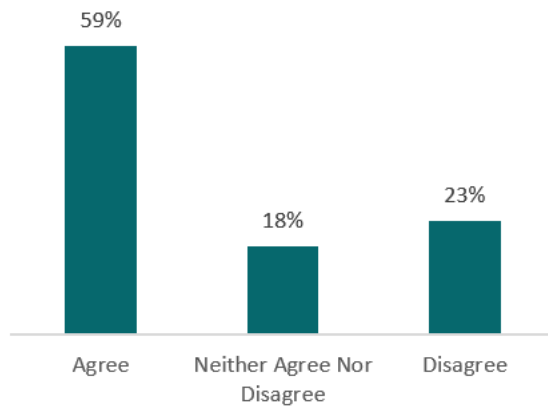
When it comes to housing, affordability is definitely the top issue on the minds of newcomers. As shown in the graph at left, a solid majority (60%) of those surveyed

identified affordability as a challenge they had faced in finding housing. Another four out of 10 (41%) pinpointed a related challenge: availability. About a fifth (18%) said they had experienced difficulties finding and understanding listings, while similar numbers (18%) reported they faced discrimination. Respondents who identified as visible minorities were almost three times as likely to experience discrimination in the Surrey housing market (29%) as those who did not (11%).

Two in 10 participants (21%) indicated that they face no housing challenges at all, although here again visible minorities fared slightly worse than others. A scattering of respondents selected “Other,” mentioning issues such as insufficient or inconvenient parking, lack of alternative housing models such as social housing and co-ops, difficulty finding residences that allow pets, and inaccessible public transit.

For some survey participants, the skyrocketing real estate market was forcing them to settle away from their most desired areas. Almost half (48%) of those surveyed agreed that they cannot afford to live in the Surrey neighbourhood of their choice, including more than a quarter (27%) who strongly agreed. Another three out of 10 (29%) disagreed, while about a quarter (23%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

SURREY IS A GOOD PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY

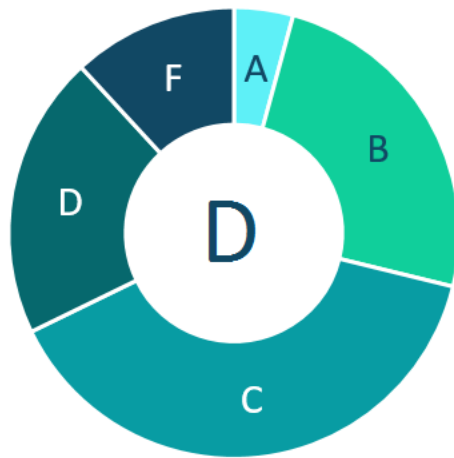


environment in which to put down roots and build a stable life. As the graph illustrates, almost six out of 10 respondents (59%) agreed that Surrey is a good place to raise a family, while about another fifth (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Less than a quarter (23%) disagreed with the statement.

Other housing concerns were less widespread. Just over a quarter (26%) of the newcomers surveyed reported that their landlord does not keep their home in good condition, compared to 45% who were satisfied with the upkeep of their home. Meanwhile, only about a fifth (21%) of respondents agreed that their homes are overcrowded, compared with 58% who disagreed.

Despite any barriers they have had to overcome in finding appropriate and affordable housing, most Surrey newcomers see their new home as a healthy

INDICATOR: Safety



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 4% |
| B | 25% |
| C | 39% |
| D | 20% |
| F | 12% |

Average grade: D (58%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Two-thirds of those surveyed feel safe in their communities.
- Respondents have strong support networks in case of emergency.
- A majority of respondents have confidence in the police.

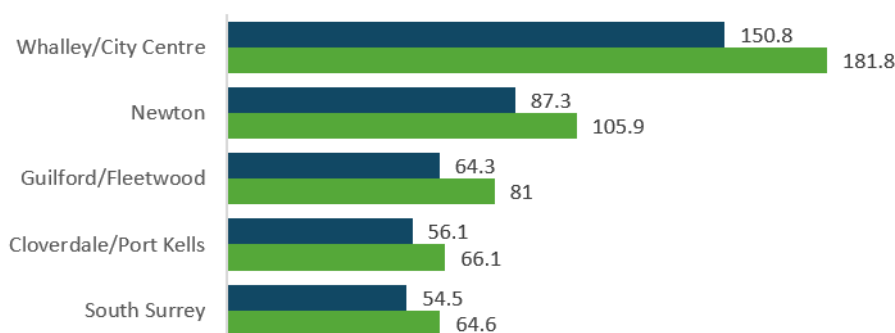
TO IMPROVE

- A majority of respondents consider drugs and gangs to be the top safety issue facing Surrey.
- Drug-related deaths have increased dramatically in 2015/16.
- Safety was ranked by respondents as the area most in need of improvement.

Overview

It should come as no surprise that safety and crime prevention in Surrey was perceived as the area that most needs improvement. More than seven respondents in every 10 (71%) gave safety a grade of C or below (see circle graph). More than one-tenth (12%) went so far as to award a failing grade. Only 4% accorded safety top marks—giving it the fewest As of any indicator.

Criminal Code Offences per 1000 Residents, 2013–2014



Data source: City of Surrey. ■ 2013 ■ 2014

Crime rates

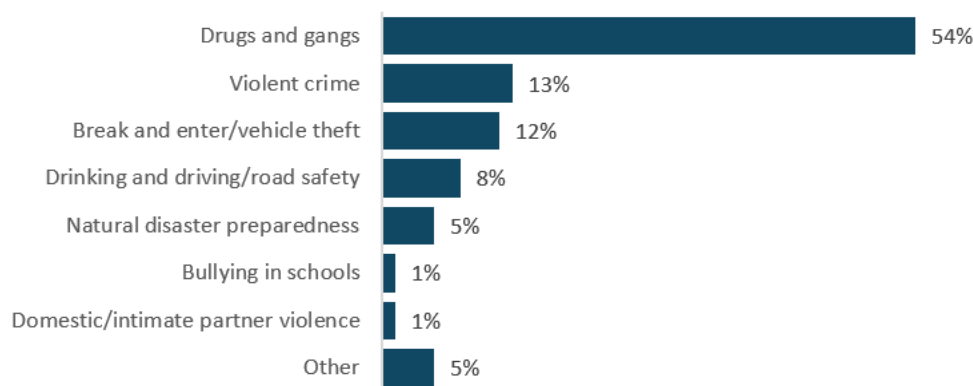
According to data from the City of Surrey, crime rates are increasing across all Surrey jurisdictions. As the graph shows, in Whalley/City Centre, 150.8 offences were committed per 1,000 residents in

2013, while 181.8 crimes were recorded per 1,000 residents in 2014. Even in South Surrey, the jurisdiction with the lowest crime rates, recorded offences rose from 54.5 per 1,000 residents in 2013 to 64.6 per 1,000 residents in 2014.⁵²

According to data from Fraser Health, there was a sharp increase in drug-related deaths in 2015 in Surrey. Sixty-nine deaths due to drug overdose were recorded in 2015, compared to 44 in 2014. The upward trend seems to continue: 31 had been recorded in 2016 as of May.

Surrey's increase in drug-related deaths mirrors the upswing across the province: 480 people died in BC as a result of drug overdoses in 2015, up from 366 in 2014. In the first four and a half months of 2016, 256 died, nearly half because of fentanyl.⁵³ The Provincial Health Officer, Perry Kendall, declared a province-wide public health emergency in April 2016, in response to the increase in deaths due to opioid overdoses.

WHAT IS SURREY'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN TERMS OF SAFETY?



In that light, it is unsurprising that according to those surveyed, by far the biggest threat to security is the drug trade. A majority of participants indicated drugs and

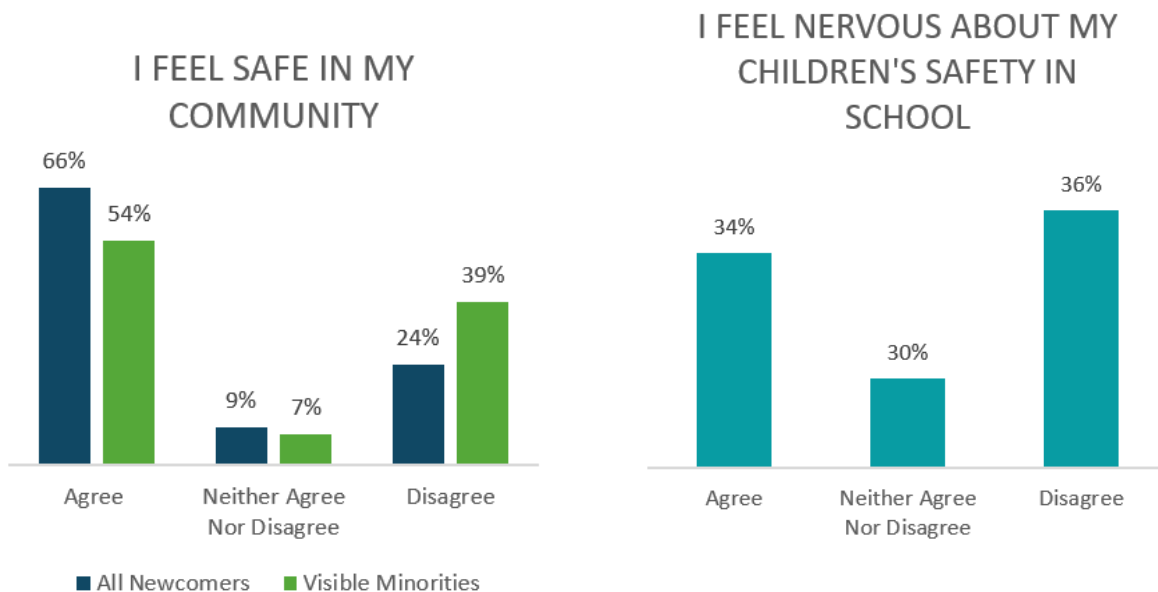
⁵² City of Surrey Open Data, "Criminal Offences" (2014), <https://data.surrey.ca/dataset/criminal-offences>.

⁵³ Jeff Nagel, "Charts: Drug overdose deaths in B.C. by city, region," *The Now*, May 13, 2016, <http://www.thenownewspaper.com/news/379476281.html>.

gangs as Surrey’s biggest challenge in terms of safety.⁵⁴ Comparatively tiny groups of respondents felt that violent crime (13%), or robberies like car theft and break and enter (12%) should top the list. Even fewer named drinking and driving and road safety (8%) or natural disaster preparedness (5%) as the number one issue. And despite high profile reports in the media of both bullying in schools and domestic violence, only 1% of those surveyed selected each one as Surrey’s biggest safety challenge.

A sense of safety

Despite views about the crime rate in Surrey in general, newcomers seemed to feel more concerned by a situation outside their experience than personally threatened by it. In fact, most survey respondents personally indicated they feel safe. As the next graph shows, fully two-thirds (66%) of newcomers said they feel safe in their communities. Only about a quarter (24%) said they do not feel safe, while the remaining few said they feel neither safe nor unsafe.



Parents tended to be fairly confident in their children’s safety as well. As illustrated in the graph above right, only about a third (34%) of respondents agreed that they feel nervous about their child’s safety in school, while a slightly larger group (36%) disagreed. Another three-tenths (30%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Surrey may also feel safer to white newcomers. Just over half (54%) of visible minority respondents said they feel safe in their community, while more than three-quarters (77%)

⁵⁴ The data displayed above includes only those respondents who made a single selection as directed. When multiple answers are incorporated, the order of choices remains precisely the same, i.e., Drugs and gangs 69%; Violent crime 41%; Break and enter/vehicle theft 37%; Drinking and driving/road safety 20%; Bullying in schools 16%; Natural disaster preparedness 9%; Domestic/intimate partner violence 7%; Other 6%.

of those who did not identify as a visible minority agreed. Fully three times as many (39%) of those who identified as a visible minority said they feel unsafe as did those who did not so identify.

No such discrepancy exists between newcomers from Canada and other countries; in fact, those who arrived from outside Canada are slightly more likely to feel safe. Newcomers who identified as a visible minority are slightly more likely to have felt threatened because of their race or religion than those who do not so identify, although still only about one in 10 (12%) reported they have.

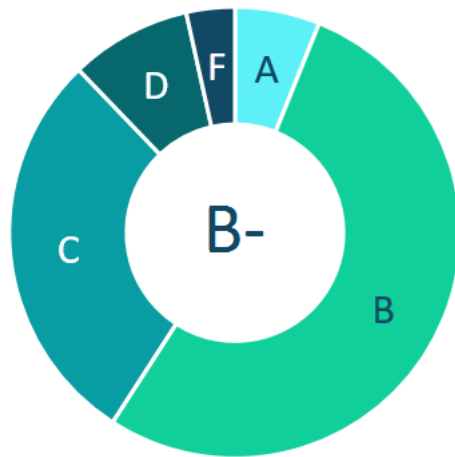
Surrey newcomers also tended to have resources in case of emergency. A robust majority (79%) agreed that they know how to access emergency services, compared to a small handful that disagreed (7%). Personal support networks are in place as well: more than three-quarters (78%) of participants asserted that they have family and friends that they can call if they have a problem. Only about a fifth disagreed, saying they do not have a circle of friends to rely on (12%), or were neutral (10%).

There was also a sense that although newcomers might not be satisfied with the incidence of crime in Surrey, they think the police are hard-working and trustworthy. Six out of 10 (60%) agreed with the statement “I have confidence in my local police force.”

In comparison, about another quarter (24%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while only 16% disagreed. A number of respondents remarked on the quick response time of the police department, and emergency services in general. However, despite the recent augmenting of police force ranks in Surrey,⁵⁵ some respondents noted a need for still more officers. One wrote, “The police service is trying hard, but lacks sufficient manpower and needs to focus its resources in the community not elsewhere.”

⁵⁵ “Surrey to get 100 new officers to fight gang crime,” CBC News, May 19, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/surrey-rcmp-get-100-new-officers-to-fight-gang-crime-1.3079461>.

INDICATOR: Environment & Sustainability



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 6% |
| B | 53% |
| C | 29% |
| D | 9% |
| F | 3% |

Average grade: B– (70%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Protecting the environment is a priority for more than nine in 10 respondents.
- Respondents feel individual Surrey residents need to play a role in conservation.
- Surrey's waste management program is appreciated.

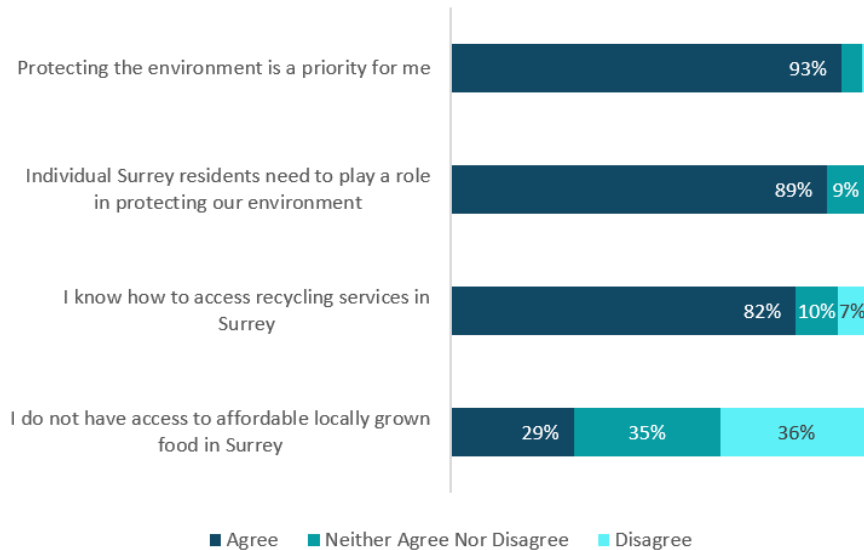
TO IMPROVE

- Respondents are most concerned about the loss of green space.

Overview

Enthusiastic about parks and informed about conservation, newcomers to Surrey take environmental sustainability seriously, and by and large they feel the city is doing fairly well in this domain. A majority (53%) of those surveyed thought Surrey merited a B in terms of the environment, while 6% awarded the environment in Surrey an A (see circle graph). Another three-tenths (29%) were more circumspect, awarding C, while smaller groups gave the environment a D (9%) or F (3%).

SURREY NEWCOMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



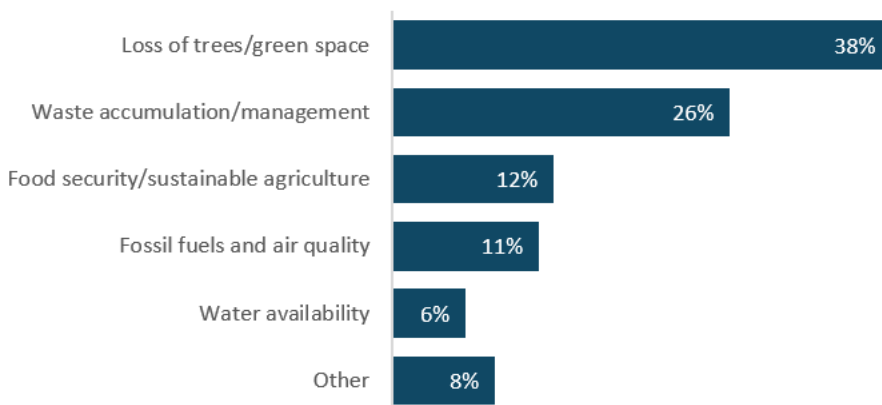
Respondents to the Vital Signs survey were almost unanimous in their concern for the environment. As the graph shows, More than nine-tenths (93%) agreed that protecting the environment is a personal priority, including almost two-thirds (65%) who strongly agreed. A small number were more neutral (5%) or disagreed (2%).

Almost as many participants believe in a hands-on approach to sustainability. An overwhelming majority (89%) agreed that individuals need to play a role in protecting the environment. In comparison, just over a tenth were either neutral (9%) or disagreed (2%).

Environmental challenges

A large percentage of newcomers seemed to know how to follow through with their environmental ideals. More than four-fifths (82%) agreed that they know how to access recycling services. One in 10 were more ambivalent about their recycling knowledge, saying they neither agreed nor disagreed (10%), while even fewer disagreed (7%).

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE FACING SURREY?



Respondents were less enthusiastic about their access to locally grown food. Despite Surrey's proximity to agricultural land, about three participants in 10 (29%) agreed with the statement "I do not have access to affordable locally grown food in Surrey." About a third (35%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 36% disagreed with the statement, indicating they felt they could find locally grown

food at reasonable prices.

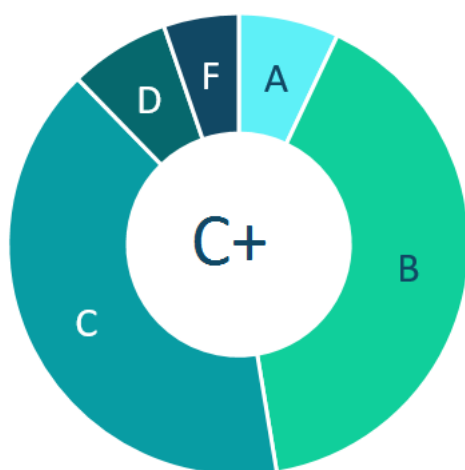
However, as shown in the previous graph, Surrey's most pressing environmental concern, according to those newcomers surveyed, is the loss of trees and green space. Many participants saw green areas, natural landscapes, and undeveloped open space as some of Surrey's finest assets, and they felt their loss keenly. The issue was selected by the largest group of respondents (38%) as the biggest environmental concern facing the city.⁵⁶ Although a number of respondents noted that Surrey is doing a good job with recycling and composting programs that divert waste from landfills, waste accumulation and management was still seen as the most critical environmental issue by about a quarter (26%) of respondents.

Smaller groups were more concerned about food security and sustainable agriculture (12%), and fossil fuels and air quality (11%). A handful (6%) identified water availability as the biggest environmental concern currently facing Surrey. A small number (8%) of respondents selected "Other." Some of those seemed to perceive a widespread problem with littering. In the words of one respondent, "Every resident need[s] to protect our environment and keep Surrey clean from unused furniture on the street."

Survey participants were asked to explain, in their own words, what is working well in Surrey in the area of the environment. A majority of responses followed one of two themes. First of all, participants lauded the many parks, trees, trails, and natural areas to be found in the city. In addition to the beauty of the natural surroundings, there seemed to be a sense of space in Surrey that respondents valued deeply. Second, those surveyed expressed satisfaction with Surrey's recycling and waste disposal programs.

⁵⁶ This question ("In your opinion, what is the biggest environmental challenge facing Surrey?") experienced a discrepancy in response patterns. Respondents to the online survey were prompted to select a single top answer. In the paper version, however, no such control could be enforced. Perhaps because the survey also included a number of questions where respondents were allowed to select multiple responses, a significant number of those surveyed (19% of those who answered the question) indicated multiple answers. To avoid bias, the results displayed above include only single responses. When those responses with multiple selections are incorporated, the results remain quite similar.

INDICATOR: Arts & Culture



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 7% |
| B | 40% |
| C | 40% |
| D | 7% |
| F | 5% |

Average grade: C+ (67%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Almost two-thirds of those surveyed say arts and culture are important to expressing their personal identities.
- Respondents value Surrey's diverse cultural landscape.
- A majority of respondents recognize arts and culture as a public good.

TO IMPROVE

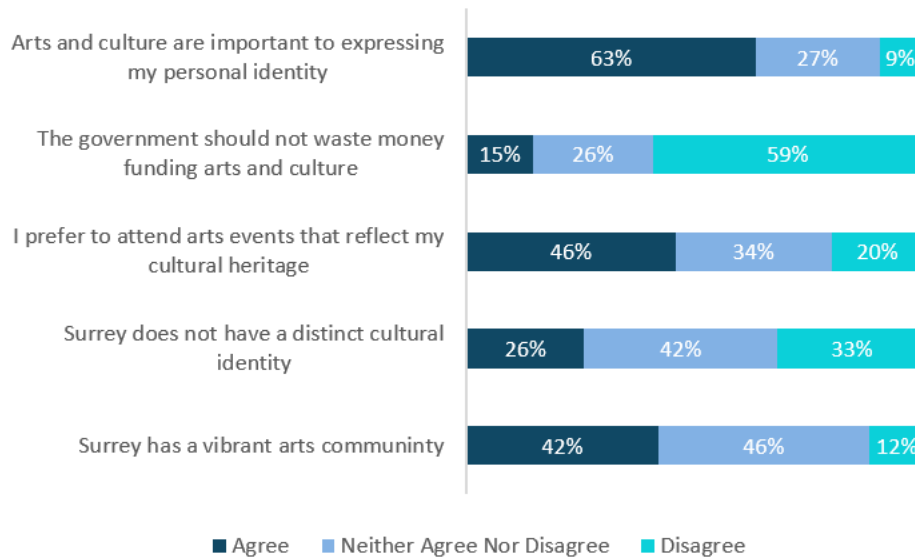
- Only a third of respondents feel Surrey has a distinct cultural identity.

Overview

It might be expected that newcomers as a group are too preoccupied by basic concerns such as jobs, housing, and transportation to have much time for recreation and entertainment. However, those surveyed tended to feel that the arts play an important role in their lives. Almost two-thirds (63%) agreed with the statement "Arts and culture are important to expressing my personal identity," while only 9% disagreed. About a quarter (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Arts and culture were seen by newcomers as a relatively positive aspect of Surrey. Overall, the indicator received a grade of C+ (see circle graph). Equal groups of respondents awarded arts and culture in Surrey a B (40%) or C (40%). Furthermore, as many participants graded Surrey's cultural scene with an A (7%) as with a D (7%). A scattering were truly dissatisfied, giving a grade of F (5%).

NEWCOMERS AND ARTS & CULTURE



As shown in this graph, over half (59%) disagreed with the statement that the government should not waste money funding arts and culture, possibly suggesting more civic dollars in this area would be welcome. Only 15% of those surveyed agreed with the statement “The government should not waste money

funding arts and culture” The 59% who disagreed included 30% who strongly disagreed. About a quarter (26%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

In many cases, Surrey newcomers saw the arts as a way to celebrate and reinforce their own background and traditions. Forty-six percent said they prefer to attend arts events that reflect their own cultural heritage. Fewer than half that number disagreed (20%), while another 34% were more neutral, reporting they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Although survey respondents revealed rather strong support for the arts in general, they were more ambivalent about Surrey’s arts and cultural landscape. Only a third (33%) of those surveyed disagreed with the statement “Surrey does not have a distinct cultural landscape.” Although fewer (26%) agreed with the statement outright, a substantial proportion (42%) were more equivocal, saying they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Survey participants again reacted tepidly to the statement “Surrey has a vibrant arts community.” Forty-two percent agreed with the statement, far more than those who disagreed (12%). However, the largest segment of respondents (46%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

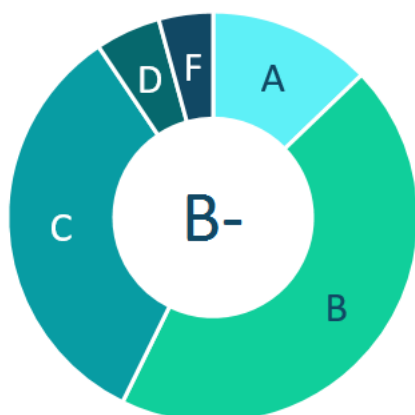
Suggestions for improvement

When asked how Surrey could improve in terms of arts and culture, survey respondents were bursting with ideas. Suggestions ranged from improving cultural infrastructure by erecting more physical arts facilities to providing more classes and opportunities for arts education. Some respondents felt that more free performances, exhibitions, and events would provide more equal access to lower-income Surrey residents.

Others recommended increasing funding and opportunities for artists themselves, so that they can both expand and deepen their creative output. Several believed the city would benefit from more municipal cultural events. And while diversity is generally seen as a positive aspect of Surrey's cultural scene, a few mentioned that it would be nice to see more traditions—in particular, Latino culture was mentioned—reflected at public events.

Respondents asked for “more programs,” “more public art pieces,” “more arts and culture classes,” “more cultural events.” For some respondents, though, what was needed is not necessarily more, but better engagement to include all Surrey dwellers in the cultural opportunities on offer. As one newcomer suggested, Surrey should “engage community in festivals that feature art education and participation. Engage parents with their children and encourage guerilla art. Organize opportunities for adults to re-engage with arts and culture they did as a kid.”

INDICATOR: Belonging & Community Participation



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 13% |
| B | 44% |
| C | 33% |
| D | 5% |
| F | 4% |

Average grade: B- (71%)

TO CELEBRATE

- Belonging and community participation received the highest score among the indicators.
- Seven in 10 survey respondents reported having friendly relationships with their neighbours.
- Newcomers are active in a variety of activities in the community.

TO IMPROVE

- Four in 10 newcomers said they find it hard to make friends in Surrey.
- Less than half of newcomers surveyed said they feel a sense of belonging.

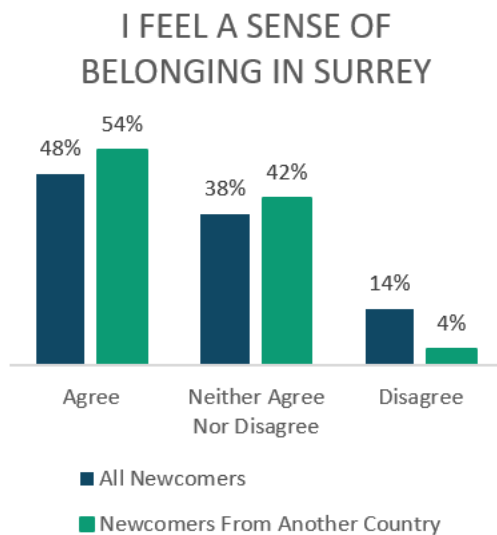
Overview

Despite the many challenges facing them, newcomers still see Surrey as a welcoming place. According to a recent survey conducted by the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), more than nine out of 10 immigrants (93%) living in the city feel welcomed.⁵⁷

A solid majority (57%) of Vital Signs respondents showed their appreciation with grades of A or B, with 13% awarding an A (see circle graph). About a third (33%) of respondents gave this indicator a C, while fewer than one in 10 (9%, and less than in any other indicator) gave a D or F.

⁵⁷ Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, *Surrey Is Home: Immigrant Integration Research Project* (2015), http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/SurreyLIP_ImmigrantIntegrationResearch_FinalReport.pdf.

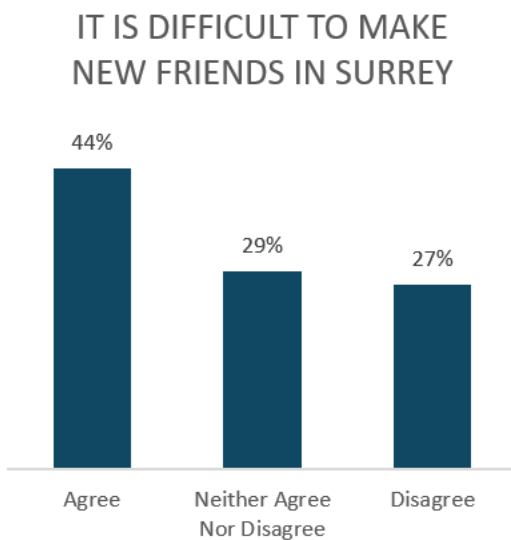
A sense of belonging



embraced by the community. Fifty-four percent of those who came from other countries said they feel a sense of belonging, compared to 40% of those from other parts of Canada.

According to the Vital Signs newcomer survey (see graph left), nearly half (48%) of new residents agreed that they feel a sense of belonging in Surrey. While this does not quite represent a majority, it is more than three times the number who said they do not feel they belong (14%). A significant minority (38%) were more ambiguous in their response, saying they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Interestingly enough, while visible minorities are about as likely to feel welcome in Surrey as other newcomers, people who arrive from other countries are slightly more likely than people who arrive from within Canada to feel



Newcomers tend to feel goodwill in their neighbourhoods. A robust majority (71%) of those surveyed agreed that they have friendly relationships with their neighbours, while another two in 10 (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed. In comparison, a small minority (11%) disagreed.

Still, getting started in a new social sphere can be a challenge, and for many, making deeper connections proves more difficult. Forty-four percent of those surveyed (see graph) agreed with the statement “It is difficult to make new friends in Surrey.” Only about a quarter (27%) disagreed, and 29% were neutral.

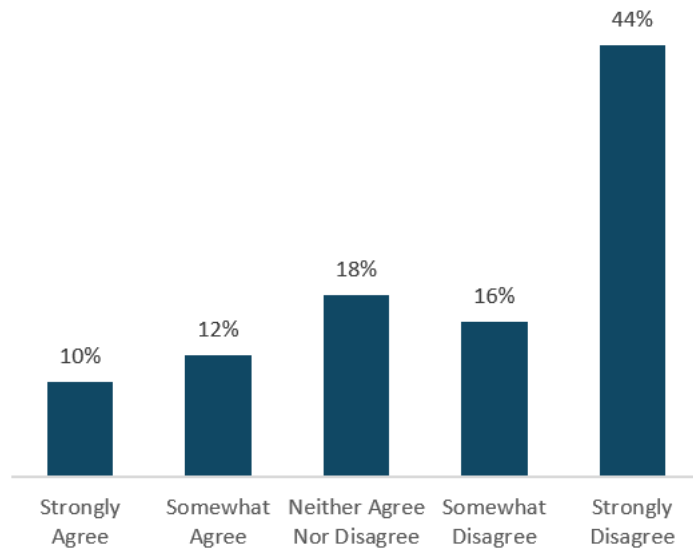
Comfortable or uncomfortable?

To Surrey’s credit, newcomers of all descriptions feel comfortable living here. A 2015 study by the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) revealed that just over half of immigrants (54%), and 59% of non-immigrants, felt that discrimination is a problem in the city.⁵⁸

Yet, as shown in the graph at right, only a fifth (22%) of Vital Signs respondents agreed that they had personally felt uncomfortable or out of place because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other factor, while another fifth or so (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed. A majority (60%) disagreed with the statement, including 44% who strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, respondents who identified as a visible minority were not significantly more likely to feel uncomfortable than those who did not so identify. Similarly, women were not more likely to report feeling uncomfortable; in fact, they were less likely to than men!⁵⁹

I HAVE FELT UNCOMFORTABLE OR OUT OF PLACE IN SURREY BECAUSE OF MY RACE, RELIGION, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR OTHER FACTOR



Community participation

It is logical that people who participate in activities in their community feel a stronger sense of belonging, and Surrey newcomers are a fairly active bunch. In a previously cited study by the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, 93% of Surrey immigrants expressed comfort accessing public programs and services such as libraries, community centres or cultural centres.⁶⁰

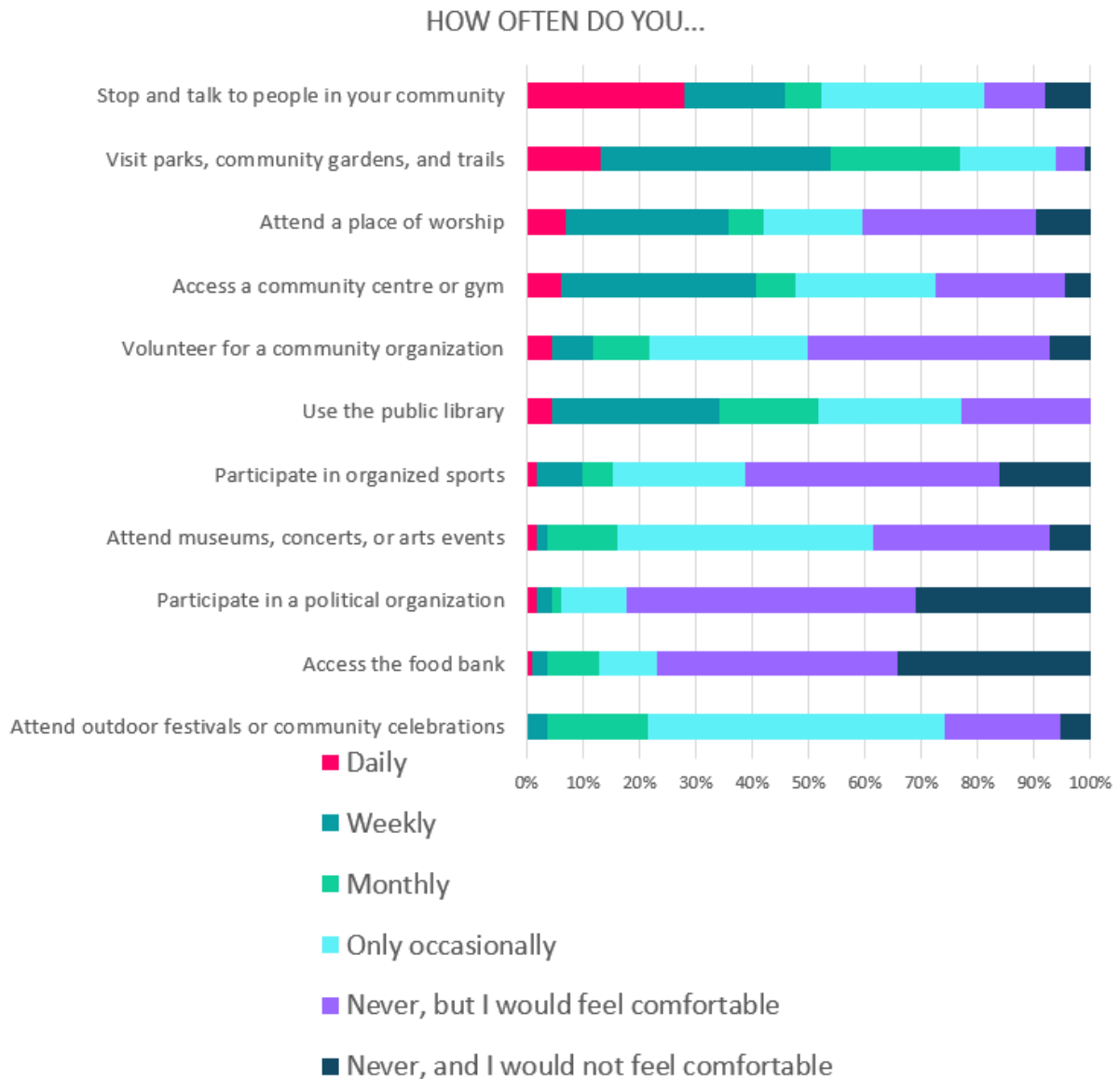
This openness was expressed in more specific terms by Vital Signs participants. As shown in the next graph, more than half (54%) of those surveyed said they visit Surrey’s parks, community gardens, and nature trails at least once a week, and the vast majority (94%) take advantage of those resources at least occasionally.

⁵⁸ Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, “How Well Are Immigrants Being Integrated?” [Fact sheet] (September 2015), http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/LIP-InfoSheet06-web-final-rev_0.pdf.

⁵⁹ A note of caution: this observation should be taken as particularly tentative because of the small number of men in the sample.

⁶⁰ Surrey LIP, “How Well Are Immigrants?”

Four in 10 respondents (41%) are more focused on their fitness and recreation, accessing a gym or community centre at a minimum of once a week, while about three-quarters (73%) do so at least on occasion. Comparatively fewer said they take part in organized sports: only 43% say they ever do, and only one in 10 (11%) make it a weekly habit.



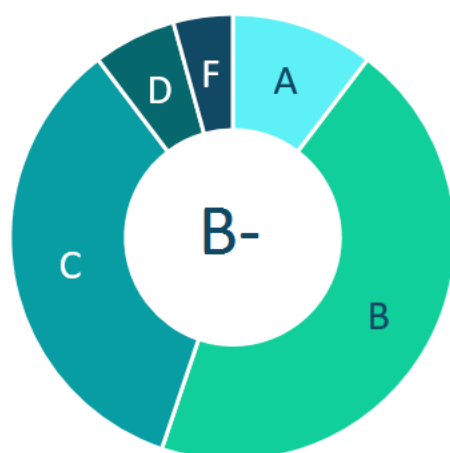
Many of Surrey's newcomers also regularly take part in cultural activities. Over three-quarters (77%) of those surveyed visit the public library at least occasionally, including more than a third (34%) who said they make a weekly trip. They reported less frequent visits to museums, concerts, and arts events—only 17% said they do it once a month—but these were enjoyed on occasion by a robust majority (63%) of those surveyed. In addition, three-quarters (75%) of newcomers said they attend outdoor festivals or community celebrations at least once in a while.

About a third of the newcomers who participated in the Vital Signs survey are regular participants in religious ceremonies: 36% said they visit churches, temples, mosques, or other places of worship at least once a week. Another quarter (24%) said they attend monthly or occasionally, and 31% said they never attend but would feel comfortable doing so. About one in 10 respondents (10%) reported they would not feel comfortable visiting a place of worship.

Some newcomers get involved in community organizations. Fully half (50%) of those surveyed said they volunteer for community organizations, at least on occasion. Significantly fewer take part in political activities: only about two in 10 (19%) said they ever do, and almost a third (31%) said they would not feel comfortable doing so. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents reported that they access the food bank, at least on occasion. This could point to their low income level, since respondents to this survey tended to be at the lower end of the income spectrum.

According to the survey, newcomers tend to feel that their relationship with their neighbours is friendly, and most make an effort to be friendly themselves. The vast majority (81%) of those surveyed stated that they stop and talk to people in their communities, at least once in a while, and almost half (46%) said they make conversation at least once a week. Almost three participants in 10 (28%) declared they stop and talk to their neighbours every day.

INDICATOR: Overall Quality of Life



| | |
|---|-----|
| A | 10% |
| B | 45% |
| C | 34% |
| D | 6% |
| F | 4% |

Average grade: B– (70%)

3 BEST THINGS ABOUT SURREY

- Parks and recreation
- Natural environment
- Friends and family

3 BIGGEST ISSUES FACING SURREY

- Crime and personal safety
- Cost of living
- Housing

Overview

Newcomers to Surrey are realists: they enjoy the positive aspects of life in their new home, and they recognize the negative aspects with relative equanimity. This pragmatism is reflected in the average grade of B– awarded to overall quality of life in Surrey (see circle graph). More respondents (45%) gave quality of life a grade of B than any other grade, while one in 10 (10%) thought it deserved an A.

Interestingly enough, other than belonging and community participation, overall quality of life received the highest average score of any of the indicators. This could indicate that, while newcomers identify problems and barriers in many different areas, they are actually quite pleased with their decision to move to Surrey, and fairly satisfied with their lives in general.

It is a testament to the quality of life in Surrey that most residents are here to stay. Almost two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed agreed that they plan to be living in Surrey in five years. About a fifth (19%) of respondents were less sure, saying they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Only 16% said they disagreed. It is interesting to compare this statistic to the response to the same question in the 2014 community-wide Vital Signs survey, when one-third of respondents said they did not believe Surrey would be their place of primary residence in five years.⁶¹

Newcomer challenges

Moving to a new city, province, or even country causes enormous upheaval in the life of any newcomer. Adjustments arise in every aspect of life, ranging from the major challenges of finding a new home and possibly learning a new language to the more minor hurdles such as joining a new softball team or finding the way around a new grocery store. Asked to identify what were, overall, the biggest challenges associated with moving to Surrey, the largest group of respondents identified finding a job. As graphed below, fully half (50%) of those surveyed included the job search as one of their top three challenges. The next biggest obstacle, selected in the top three by 38% of participants, was finding a place to live. Compounding that issue is the third most commonly selected challenge: affordability. More than a third (35%) of respondents indicated that the high cost of living is a top barrier to their success in Surrey.



Smaller groups of respondents struggled with other challenges. Only about a quarter (24%) of those surveyed considered a language barrier to be one of the top three challenges they faced in moving to Surrey. Newcomers from other countries were more likely than others to identify a language barrier as

a top challenge, but, at 29%, only marginally so. Another two in 10 (21%) felt that forging a new circle of friends was among the biggest challenges they had to surmount, while about the same number (20%) thought finding their way around was a challenge.

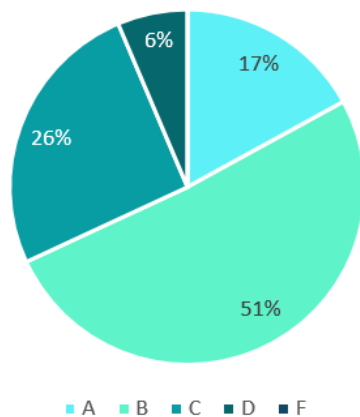
Comparatively fewer newcomers identified other factors as top challenges. Separated from their former home, routine, friends, and often family, a handful (9%) were troubled by loneliness or isolation. Smaller numbers (5%) had difficulty negotiating the immigration process. Only about one in 10 (11%) considered discrimination to be a top problem,

⁶¹ SurreyCares Community Foundation, *Surrey's Vital Signs 2014*, 19.

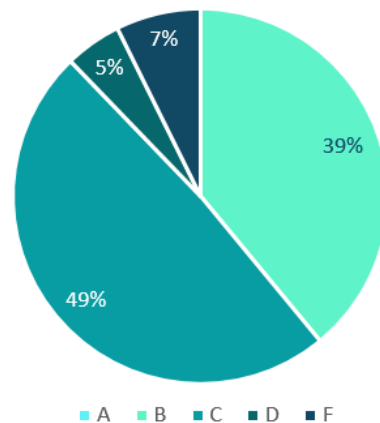
although this figure was higher (17%) among those surveyed who identified as visible minorities.

The experience of moving to Surrey is not the same for all newcomers. Survey respondents reported substantially different quality of life, depending on whether or not they identified as a visible minority. As shown in the next graph, more than two-thirds (68%) of respondents who identified as white (not as a visible minority) graded their overall quality of life as A or B. Another quarter (26%) rated it as C, with just 6% giving D (and no F ratings). In comparison, only four-tenths (39%) of respondents who identified as a visible minority graded their quality of life as B, and none were satisfied enough to rate it as A. Almost two-thirds (61%) awarded a C (49%) and below (5% D, 7% F).

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE
(NON VISIBLE MINORITY)



OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE
(VISIBLE MINORITY)



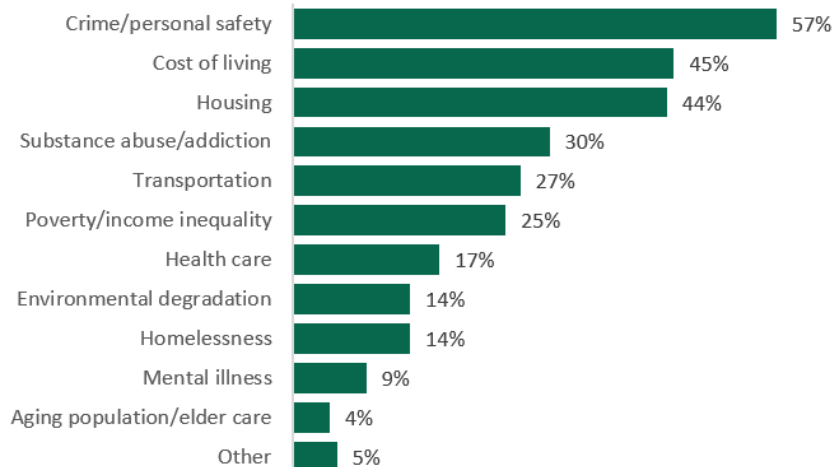
Areas for improvement

Newcomers may still be finding their way in Surrey, but they have definite opinions about their new city. The first thing they would like to see improved is the area of safety and crime prevention. Asked to name the three biggest issues facing Surrey, a healthy majority (57%) selected crime and personal safety (see next graph). This result is consistent with previous Surrey Vital Signs reports: the 2014 community-wide survey identified crime rates as the leading issue, and the 2015 youth survey concluded that safety was the greatest challenge.⁶²

The Lower Mainland is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and while Surrey has traditionally been a welcome haven from Vancouver prices, the cost of living is creeping up. Cost of living was identified as a top issue by 45% of respondents. Another 44% included housing in their list of Surrey's three most pressing issues. Farther down the list, poverty and income inequality was selected by a quarter (25%) of those surveyed.

⁶² Ibid.; SurreyCares Community Foundation, *Surrey's Vital Signs 2015* (Surrey, BC: SurreyCares, 2015), https://www.surreycares.org/App_Themes/SurreyCares/uploads/366_VitalSigns2015_Web-2.pdf.

TOP 3 MOST PRESSING ISSUES FACING SURREY



Social and medical challenges were identified by smaller groups of respondents as important issues facing Surrey. About a third (30%) of those surveyed saw substance abuse and addiction as one of Surrey's top problems. Seventeen percent pinpointed health care as a leading issue. Homelessness was included by 14% as one of the three most pressing issues,

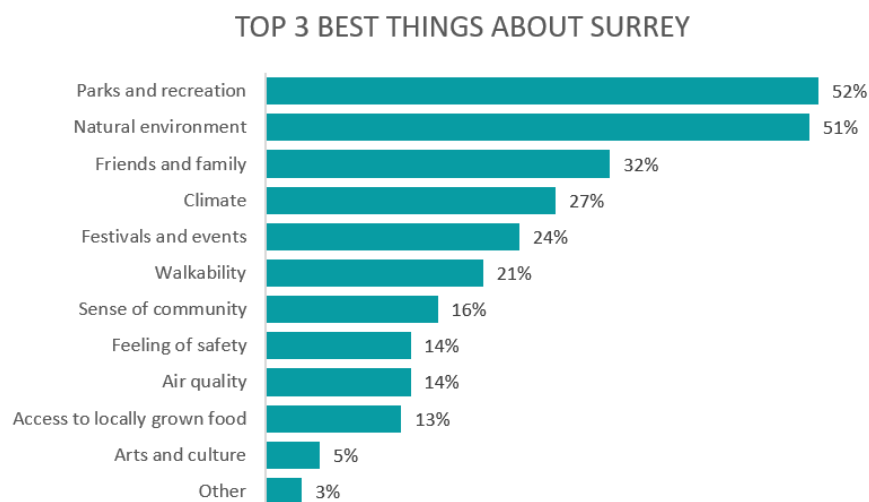
and mental illness was chosen by 9%. Perhaps because of Surrey's unusually young population, and the even relatively younger survey sample population, comparatively few respondents selected elder care and the aging population as an issue that needs most immediate attention.

Some Vital Signs survey participants also identified problems that affect both their current and future quality of life. Traffic, bridges, and public transit infrastructure are hot-button issues now and will only gain importance as Surrey's population swells. More than a quarter (27%) of respondents chose transportation as one of the city's top challenges. Similarly, Surrey's natural environment is valued as one of its strongest attributes, but rapid growth and development could place it in jeopardy. Environmental degradation was seen as a top-three issue by 14% of those surveyed.

Things to celebrate

Of course, issues and challenges are only part of the picture. Newcomers have many things to celebrate in Surrey. And according to the newcomers consulted in the Vital Signs survey, the biggest thing to celebrate is the great outdoors. As the next graph shows, a majority (52%) of respondents selected parks and recreation as one of the three best things about Surrey.⁶³ Just over half (51%) of those surveyed also ranked the natural environment in the top three. And it's not only trees, parks, and green spaces that are prized by Surrey newcomers: The city's climate came in fourth on the list, selected by more than a quarter (27%) of respondents. Lower down the list came air quality (chosen by 14%) and access to locally grown food (13%).

⁶³ Multiple responses included.



This appreciation for Surrey's outdoors is consistent with the results of the first Surrey Vital Signs (2014), when more respondents (members of the general public, not only newcomers) selected parks as an asset to

celebrate than any other factor. Continuing the green theme, locally grown food and the natural environment were the third and fourth most popular choices in 2014.⁶⁴

Smaller groups of participants in the 2016 newcomer survey identified their favourite aspects of Surrey as related to people and community. Personal relationships were seen as important: about a third (32%) placed friends and family in their list of top three things. Another quarter (24%) chose festivals and events. About two in 10 (21%) of those who responded appreciated Surrey's walkability. And a small handful (5%) favoured the city's arts and culture.

Many newcomers to Surrey were alarmed by the crime rate (see safety indicator), but safety is relative. Fourteen percent of survey participants chose the feeling of safety as one of Surrey's top attributes.

In any case, Surrey newcomers are realistic, but not fatalistic. They recognize the problems and challenges before them, but many believe they can be part of positive change. A sizeable minority (45%) feel that they have the opportunity to make a difference in their community, compared to just 21% who disagreed.

⁶⁴ SurreyCares Community Foundation, *Surrey's Vital Signs 2014*.

Conclusion

Surrey acts as a powerful lure for newcomers, whether from other parts of the Lower Mainland, BC, and Canada or from other countries. Our survey of newcomers who had moved to Surrey since 2011 showed that the majority were fairly satisfied with their life in Surrey, giving their overall quality of life a grade of A or B. Overall survey results for the nine indicators were as follows:

| Indicator | Average Percentage | Average Grade |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Employment | 64 | C |
| Education | 69 | C+ |
| Health & Wellness | 65 | C |
| Housing | 66 | C |
| Safety | 58 | D |
| Environment & Sustainability | 70 | B- |
| Arts & Culture | 67 | C+ |
| Belonging & Community Participation | 71 | B- |
| Overall Quality of Life | 70 | B- |

Of note, respondents to the survey reported that they form close networks of friendship and support, take an active role in their communities, and see Surrey as a welcoming place to live. Most of these newcomers want to make Surrey their home in the long term, picturing themselves living here in five years.

Vital Signs participants were particularly enthusiastic about Surrey's natural environment. They voted "parks and recreation" and "natural environment" as by far the two best things about Surrey. Surrey's outdoors is also seen as a big part of what makes the city unique: respondents enjoy the green spaces, the landscape, the climate, the trails, and the proximity to mountains and ocean. Respondents not only admire Surrey's environment, but feel a responsibility for preserving it.

Respondents to the Vital Signs survey rated friends and family as the third best thing about Surrey. More than 70% said they make an effort to be friendly with their neighbours and speak to people on the street. Surrey's diversity is seen as one of its most unique features. Although discrimination does exist in Surrey, the meeting of many cultures is generally valued as a positive attribute that animates and distinguishes the city.

Surrey has a lot to offer to potential new residents, but moving to Surrey is not without its challenges. This survey revealed several actions that would make Surrey an even more hospitable destination for newcomers.

1. Facilitate job search

Many newcomers reported difficulty finding a job in Surrey; in fact, survey respondents rated finding a job as the top challenge associated with moving to Surrey. Newcomers desire more guidance in the job market, more straightforward mechanisms for having credentials and experience recognized, and clearer (and sometimes more fair) expectations from employers.

2. Provide affordable family housing

Vital Signs respondents identified housing as the second biggest challenge associated with moving to Surrey. Respondents reported having difficulty finding affordable and appropriate housing. For some survey participants, the skyrocketing real estate market was forcing them to settle away from their most desired areas. Housing, rated C, was one of the lowest-rated indicators in the Vital Signs survey; however, at the same time, affordable housing was still identified as the most common reason to move to Surrey. Almost six out of 10 respondents (59%) agreed that Surrey is a good place to raise a family.

3. Increase awareness of existing services

Newcomer respondents expressed a need for a wide range of services and supports, including help accessing appropriate jobs and courses of study, and medical services tailored to newcomers. In many cases, these services already exist, but there is a need for more central access.

Opportunities for further research

The Surrey Vital Signs project uncovered fascinating perspectives of the city's newest residents. Because of the small sample size, these opinions and attitudes cannot be assumed to represent the perspectives of Surrey's newcomer population as a whole. However, the information suggests a number of avenues for new research projects.

- Why do some newcomers feel a sense of belonging, while others do not?
- Why do some newcomers succeed in finding work while others do not?
- How can new residents be more assisted and empowered to find gainful and fulfilling employment?
- How does discrimination affect newcomers to Surrey?
- What role can the arts play in assisting newcomers to integrate into their communities?
- How do the experiences of newcomers who identify as a member of a visible minority differ from those who do not so identify?

Surrey Newcomers Vital Signs 2016 represents a significant step towards making Surrey an even more inclusive and hospitable city. At SurreyCares Community Foundation, our vision is to lead a stronger, more meaningful, inclusive community connection into the future, and to build a resilient and resourceful community. This research is vital in recognizing the experiences of newcomers and identifying areas of further progress in community development as well as areas of greatest need.



Appendix: Print Survey

Welcome to Surrey's Third @Vital Signs Survey!

Are you new to Surrey? We want to hear from you!

We want to learn about the experiences of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers from other parts of Canada as they take their first steps in Surrey. How well is Surrey meeting the needs of newcomers to our community? What can we do to improve?

Surrey Vital Signs is an annual community check-up that asks you to grade nine key areas of life in our community. You will also have a chance to answer open-ended questions--feel free to write as much (or as little) as you wish!

The data we collect will be presented in a published report that will be used to make funding decisions, inform public policy, and spark community discussion. All responses will be anonymized. By filling out this survey, you are consenting to participate.

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

Help us make Surrey Canada's most welcoming city for newcomers!

When did you arrive in Surrey?

- ☐ Less than 6 months ago
- ☐ 6 months to less than 2 years ago
- ☐ 2 years to less than 5 years ago
- ☐ More than 5 years ago

What do you think makes Surrey unique?

Why did you choose to move to Surrey? (Please select up to 3 reasons)

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Job
- ☐ Lifestyle
- ☐ Easy commute to work
- ☐ Natural environment
- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Proximity to family
- ☐ Access to services and amenities
- ☐ Refugee relocation program
- ☐ Other _____

What is your current occupational status?

- ☐ Working full time
- ☐ Working part time
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Engaged in unpaid work only (e.g., caring for children/parents, volunteering)
- ☐ Full-time student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other _____

Whether or not you work, how satisfied would you say you are with your job or occupational status?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| My job matches my skills and experience | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It was difficult to find a job when I arrived in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My daily commute is too long | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Affordable and appropriate child care options are available to me in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What challenges, if any, have you experienced in Surrey's job market? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Language barrier
- ☐ Credentials not recognized
- ☐ Experience not recognized
- ☐ Limited work visa
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Difficulty accessing Employment Insurance
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other _____

In your view, what can Surrey do to better assist newcomers to find suitable jobs?

What is working well when it comes to employment and the economy in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in the area of jobs and the economy?

- ☐ A
 ☐ B
 ☐ C
 ☐ D
 ☐ F

Education

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am satisfied with the quality of education I have received in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am satisfied with the quality of education that my school- aged children have received in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't know how to access the educational services I need | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It was not possible to enroll my children in a school near my house | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Surrey offers a range of options for different styles of learners | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The educational opportunities available in Surrey are not well matched to the needs of the job market | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What challenges have you faced pursuing education in Surrey?

What is working well when it comes to education in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in the area of education?

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Health and Wellness

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am satisfied with my physical health | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would describe myself as happy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have had difficulties accessing health services in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have trouble communicating with my family doctor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a regular family doctor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What challenges, if any, have you faced in accessing health care in Surrey? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Obtaining a health card
- ☐ Finding a family doctor
- ☐ Affordability of dental care/prescriptions
- ☐ Long wait times
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other _____

What is working well when it comes to health and wellness in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in the area of health and wellness?

- ☐ A
 ☐ B
 ☐ C
 ☐ D
 ☐ F

Housing

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I can't afford to live in the Surrey neighbourhood of my choice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Surrey is a good place to raise a family | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My landlord keeps my home in good condition | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My home is overcrowded | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What challenges have you faced in finding housing in Surrey? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Affordability
- ☐ Finding and understanding listings
- ☐ Availability
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other _____

What is working well when it comes to housing in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in terms of housing?

- ☐ A
 ☐ B
 ☐ C
 ☐ D
 ☐ F

Safety

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I feel safe in my community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I know how to access emergency services | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have family and friends that I can call if I have a problem | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel nervous about my children's safety in school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have felt threatened or unsafe because of my religion or race | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have confidence in my local police force | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What would you say is Surrey's biggest challenge in terms of safety?

- ☐ Drugs and gangs
- ☐ Violent crime
- ☐ Break and enter/vehicle theft
- ☐ Drinking and driving/road safety
- ☐ Domestic/intimate partner violence
- ☐ Natural disaster preparedness
- ☐ Bullying in schools
- ☐ Other _____

What is working well when it comes to safety and crime prevention in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in terms of safety?

- ☐ A
 ☐ B
 ☐ C
 ☐ D
 ☐ F

Environment and Sustainability

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I know how to access recycling services in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Individual Surrey residents need to play a role in protecting our environment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Protecting the environment is a priority for me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I do not have access to affordable locally grown food in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

In your opinion, what is the biggest environmental challenge facing Surrey?

- ☐ Waste accumulation/management
- ☐ Water availability
- ☐ Loss of trees/green space
- ☐ Fossil fuels and air quality
- ☐ Food security/sustainable agriculture
- ☐ Other _____

What is working well when it comes to environmental sustainability in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in terms of the environment and sustainability?

- ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Arts and Culture

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Arts and culture are important to expressing my personal identity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The government should not waste money funding arts and culture | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I prefer to attend arts events that reflect my cultural heritage | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Surrey does not have a distinct cultural identity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Surrey has a vibrant arts community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How can Surrey improve in terms of arts and culture?

What is working well when it comes to arts and culture in Surrey?

Overall, how would you grade Surrey in terms of arts and culture?

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Belonging and Community Participation

How often do you participate in the following activities or access the following services?

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Only occasionally | Never, but I would feel comfortable | Never, and I would not feel comfortable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Attend a church, temple, mosque, or other place of worship | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Use the public library | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Access community centres, gyms, or recreation facilities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participate in a political organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attend museums, concerts, or arts events | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteer for a community organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participate in organized sports | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attend outdoor festivals or community celebrations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Visit parks, community gardens, and trails | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Access the food bank | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Stop and talk to people in my community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| It is difficult to make new friends in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My relationship with my neighbours is friendly | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have felt uncomfortable or out of place in Surrey because of my race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other factor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel a sense of belonging in Surrey | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel I have the opportunity to make a difference in my community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I plan to be living in Surrey 5 years from now | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Overall, how would you grade Surrey in terms of fostering a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for community participation?

- ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Wrapping Up

Overall, what would you say have been the biggest challenges associated with moving to Surrey? (Check up to three challenges)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Finding a place to live | <input type="radio"/> Finding a job |
| <input type="radio"/> Finding your way around | <input type="radio"/> Making friends |
| <input type="radio"/> Affordability | <input type="radio"/> Language barrier |
| <input type="radio"/> Loneliness or isolation | <input type="radio"/> Discrimination |
| <input type="radio"/> Negotiating the immigration process | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

In your opinion, what are the best things about Surrey? (Please select your top three)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Festivals and events | <input type="radio"/> Natural environment |
| <input type="radio"/> Feeling of safety | <input type="radio"/> Friends and family |
| <input type="radio"/> Climate | <input type="radio"/> Arts and culture |
| <input type="radio"/> Sense of community | <input type="radio"/> Walkability |
| <input type="radio"/> Parks and recreation | <input type="radio"/> Air quality |
| <input type="radio"/> Access to locally grown food | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues facing Surrey? (Please select your top three)

- ☐ Cost of living
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Homelessness
- ☐ Environmental degradation
- ☐ Poverty/income inequality
- ☐ Crime/personal safety
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Health care
- ☐ Aging population/elder care
- ☐ Mental illness
- ☐ Substance abuse/addiction
- ☐ Other _____

Overall, how would you grade your quality of life in Surrey?

- ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Finally, we have a few demographic questions for you:

From where did you move to Surrey?

- ☐ From elsewhere in the Lower Mainland
- ☐ From elsewhere in BC
- ☐ From elsewhere in Canada
- ☐ From another country (please specify) _____

Are you a member of a visible minority?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Other _____

What is your age?

- ☐ 12-24
- ☐ 25-44
- ☐ 45-64
- ☐ 65-79
- ☐ 80+
- ☐ Prefer not to say



What is the highest level of education you have completed / are currently pursuing?

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school / GED
- ☐ College or Trade school
- ☐ Undergraduate degree
- ☐ Graduate degree or higher

What is your annual household income before tax?

- ☐ \$0-\$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000-\$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000-\$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000-\$119,999
- ☐ \$120,000-\$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

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