

ABBOTSFORD'S 2014 VitalSigns® Report



2014 VITAL SIGNS REPORT takes a look at issues that contribute to the vitality of Abbotsford's transportation, arts and culture, environment, safety and jobs and economy. Participation in the online Vital Signs survey increased significantly from 330 in 2013 to 556 this year. The report includes online survey results, comments from survey participants and statistics from local and national sources.

What is the most important issue facing the Abbotsford area today?

Homelessness, affordable housing, and employment are the top three issues facing Abbotsford today says survey participants.



What is the best thing about the Abbotsford area?

Top three best things are Friends and Family, Affordability and Sense of Community.



TRANSPORTATION

suggestion box...

"We need more buses that run more frequently and better links to transit hubs in Surrey, Langley, Aldergrove and Chilliwack."

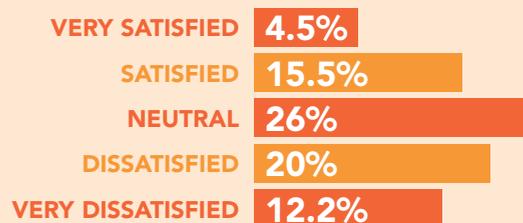
"The City should be seeking input from the community and transit users when planning transportation."

Facts:

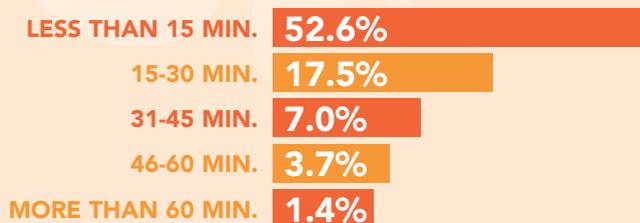
- Transit ridership increased by 23 per cent in Abbotsford from 2009 to 2013. (BC Transit).
- Some 62% of Abbotsford's working residents work in Abbotsford and 38% work outside of Abbotsford, according to the 2006 census.

How satisfied are you with the public transit services provided by the City of Abbotsford?

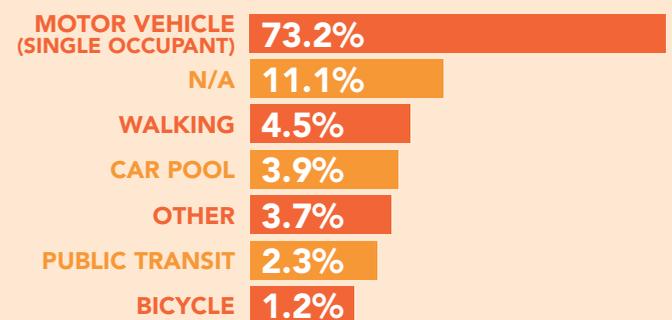
32.2% of participants were dissatisfied with public transit. Of those who were dissatisfied, 51% indicated that they had taken transit in the past month. 21% were satisfied.



On average, how long (in minutes) is your commuting time to work?



What is your main mode of transportation to work?



ARTS & CULTURE

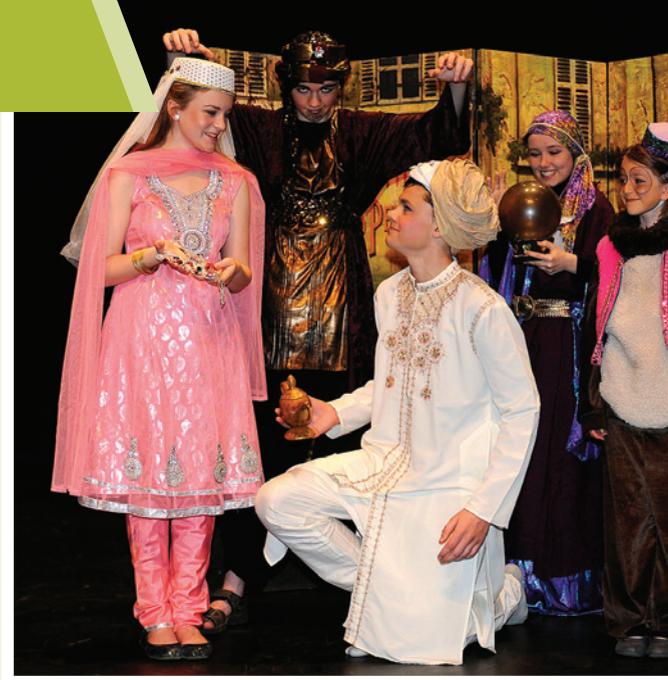
suggestion box...

"To improve access to arts and culture in our community we need to build more suitable performance spaces and do a better job at promoting cultural events."

"The City should increase funding for the Arts and involve the community more in planning where those funds will be spent."

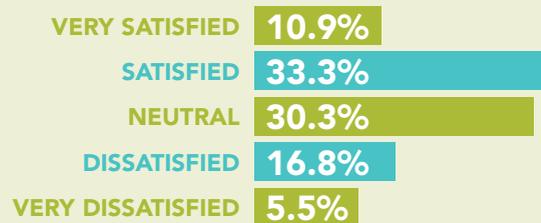
Facts:

- In 2012 Abbotsford spent approximately \$488 per household on recreation and culture, 10.95% of total municipal expenditures. Nanaimo spent \$816 per household – 14.82% of its total expenditures and Victoria spent \$531 per household which was 16.12% of its expenditures in 2012.
- When you include library spending, in 2012 Abbotsford spent \$28.6 million on Parks, Recreation and Culture with 79.6% (\$22.9 million) spent on Parks and Recreation, 13.6% (\$3.9 million) on libraries and 6.8% (\$1.9 million) on culture.

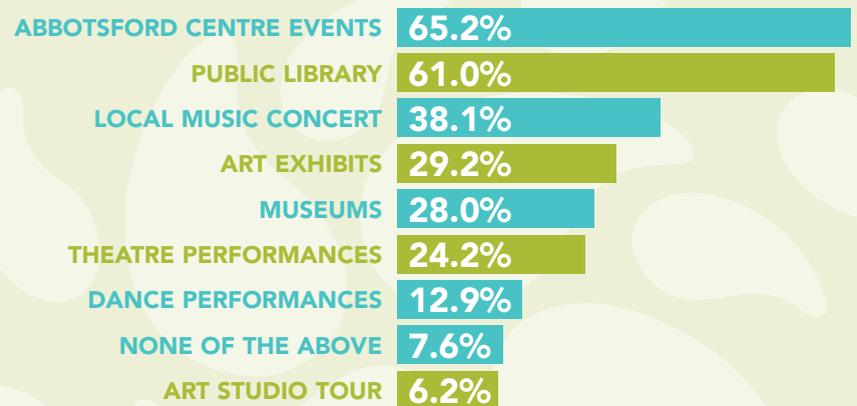


How satisfied are you with the level of support provided by the City for arts and culture?

33.3% indicated that they were satisfied and 10.9% very satisfied with the City's support for Arts and Culture. 22.3% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 30.3% were neutral.



What types of arts and cultural events have you attended in Abbotsford?



SAFETY

suggestion box...

"There should be tougher penalties for repeat offenders, more police, more cameras, especially in areas like Mill Lake, better lighting, and more citizen patrols."

"Provide safe, affordable housing, better access to drug treatment services and mental health support."

Facts:

- At 981 per 100,000 persons in 2012, the violent crime rate in Abbotsford was 17.6% below the national average and 29.0% below the provincial average. The rate decreased 6.7% from 2011 and was 36.5% less than the 1998 rate.

How has the level of crime changed over the past 12 months?

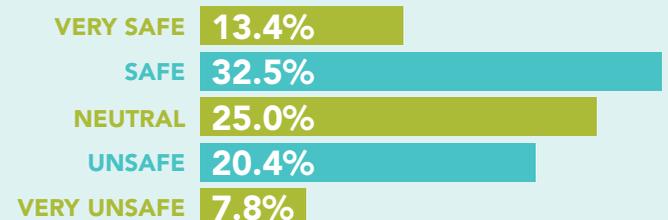
36.6% of participants indicated that the level of crime was better and 23.7% indicated that crime levels were worse in the past 12 months.



- At 3,525 per 100,000 persons in 2012, the property crime rate in Abbotsford was 3.2% above the national average and 25.2% below the provincial average. The rate decreased 13.0% from 2011 and was 48.1% less than the 1998 rate.

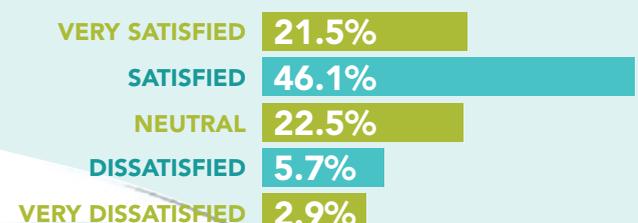
How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your neighbourhood?

45.9% of participants indicated they felt safe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood. 28.2% of participants felt unsafe.



How satisfied are you with the services provided by the Abbotsford Police Department (APD)?

67.6% of participants indicated they were satisfied with the services of the APD. 8.6% indicated they were dissatisfied and 22.5% remain neutral.



Facts:

- In 2011, 57% of households in Abbotsford-Mission (CMA) had a low-flow showerhead, 10 percentage points below the national figure and 4 percentage points below the provincial figure. Low-volume toilets were present in 40 per cent of households, 9 percentage points below the national figure and 5 percentage points below the provincial figure.
- In 2011, 35% of all households in Abbotsford-Mission (CMA) reported composting kitchen waste, and 68% of households with a lawn or garden reported composting their yard waste. By comparison, 44% of all households in British Columbia reported composting kitchen waste, and 80% of households with a lawn or garden reported composting their yard waste.



METHODOLOGY

An on-line survey was conducted the summer of 2014. It was open to all Abbotsford residents 18 years and older. A critical mass of participants volunteered to answer questions and express their views. Although the results do not represent the population, they do tell us the views of 556 citizens of Abbotsford. In comparing these views and the existing data a picture emerges of the area's strengths and weaknesses.

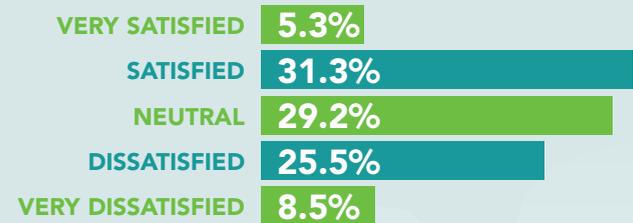
PROFILE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

1. Most were women (65% female; 35% male).
2. Most identified their ethnicity as Canadian (76%).
3. The median age was 42
4. 67% were married.
5. 16% reported their household income was below \$30,000. 29% reported their household income was between \$40,000-75,000. 19% reported income between \$76,000-100,000 while 18.75% reported household income between \$101,000-150,000. 6% reported household earnings above \$151,000.
6. Most participants (50%) were employed full-time; 14% worked part-time; 10% were retired; and 12% were self-employed.

(Please note: not all categories for each variable are being reported here).

How satisfied are you with air quality in the Abbotsford area?

36.6% of participants indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with air quality in Abbotsford. 34% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with air quality and 29.2% were neutral.



How satisfied are you with the water quality in the Abbotsford area?

A clear majority of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the water quality. Only 12% were dissatisfied with the water quality.



How satisfied are you with the recycling program in Abbotsford?

A clear majority of participants (73.2%) were satisfied with the recycling program in Abbotsford. 10.7% were dissatisfied with the recycling program.



suggestion box...

"Stop Metro Vancouver from burning garbage and polluting the air shed in the Fraser Valley."

"Increase green space and community gardens and encourage more composting and organic farming."

"Further densification, more buses and better recycling."

"Create more by-laws to protect land, streams and trees."



WORK & ECONOMY

Facts:

- In 2012, the unemployment rate for Abbotsford-Mission (CMA) was 7.9 per cent. This was above the national level (7.2 per cent) and above the BC provincial level (6.7 per cent). Since 2006, the unemployment rate in Abbotsford-Mission has increased 1.3 percentage points from 6.6 per cent.
- In 2011, 82,425 people were employed in Abbotsford-Mission (CMA). Since 2006, employment levels have increased 3.5% from 79,660. This change compares to the national rate of change between 2006 and 2011 of 3.6% and the provincial rate of change of 3.8%.
- In 2012, real GDP in Abbotsford-Mission (CMA) reached \$5,578 million, expressed in 2007 dollars, up 1.1% from its 2011 level. By comparison GDP grew 1.8% in Canada and 1.7% in B.C.

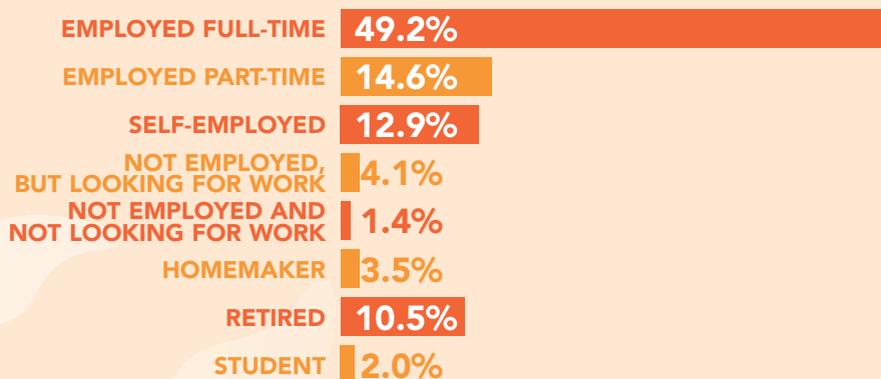
suggestion box...

"More should be done to encourage small business like cutting the red tape and lowering taxes."

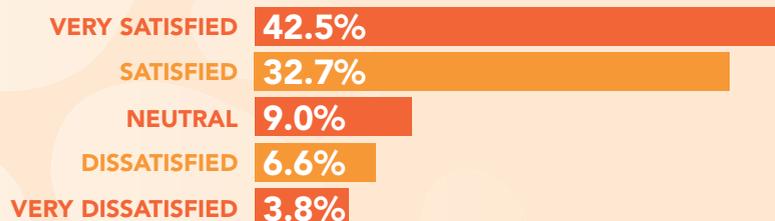
"Promote shopping local."

"The minimum wage should be raised."

Which one of the following best describes your current employment status?

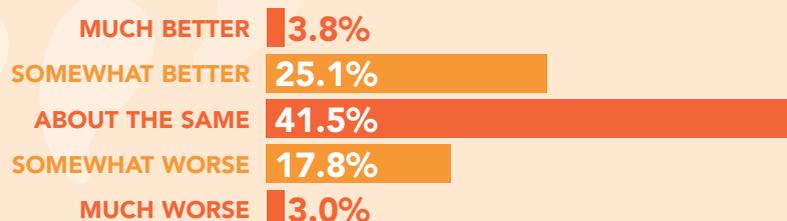


How satisfied are you with your employment status?



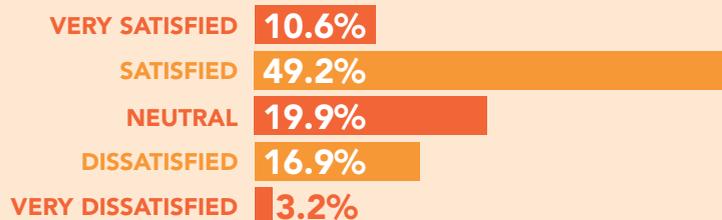
In your view, how has the local economy in Abbotsford changed in the past 12 months?

41.5% of participants believed the local economy was the same over the past 12 months and 20.8% believed the local economy was worse. 28.9% indicated that the local economy was better.



How satisfied are you with the variety of businesses in the Abbotsford area?

A majority of participants (59.8%) indicated they were satisfied with the variety of businesses in Abbotsford. 20% were dissatisfied.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Abbotsford Community Foundation is proud to have produced the 2014 Vital Signs Report for our community. We are one of 28 community foundations across Canada measuring the vitality of our communities, identifying issues and trends and providing citizens with the opportunity to give their input on key areas.

Our hope is that our Vital Signs report will help inform, not only the decisions we make, but those of other organizations who support our community. Last year's report indicated that there are a significant number of children living in poverty in Abbotsford. As a result, in June we launched our Smart and Caring Community initiative by awarding \$100,000 for programs for children in need.

Lastly, with the municipal election on the horizon, we hope our report will be useful as we engage in dialogue about our community, its future and the leadership and vision needed to move us forward.

Sincerely,

Wendy Neufeld

Wendy Neufeld, Chair



ABBOTSFORD
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

PARTNERS:



COMMUNITY
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OF CANADA
all for community.

