

POWELL RIVER'S

VitalSigns®

2015



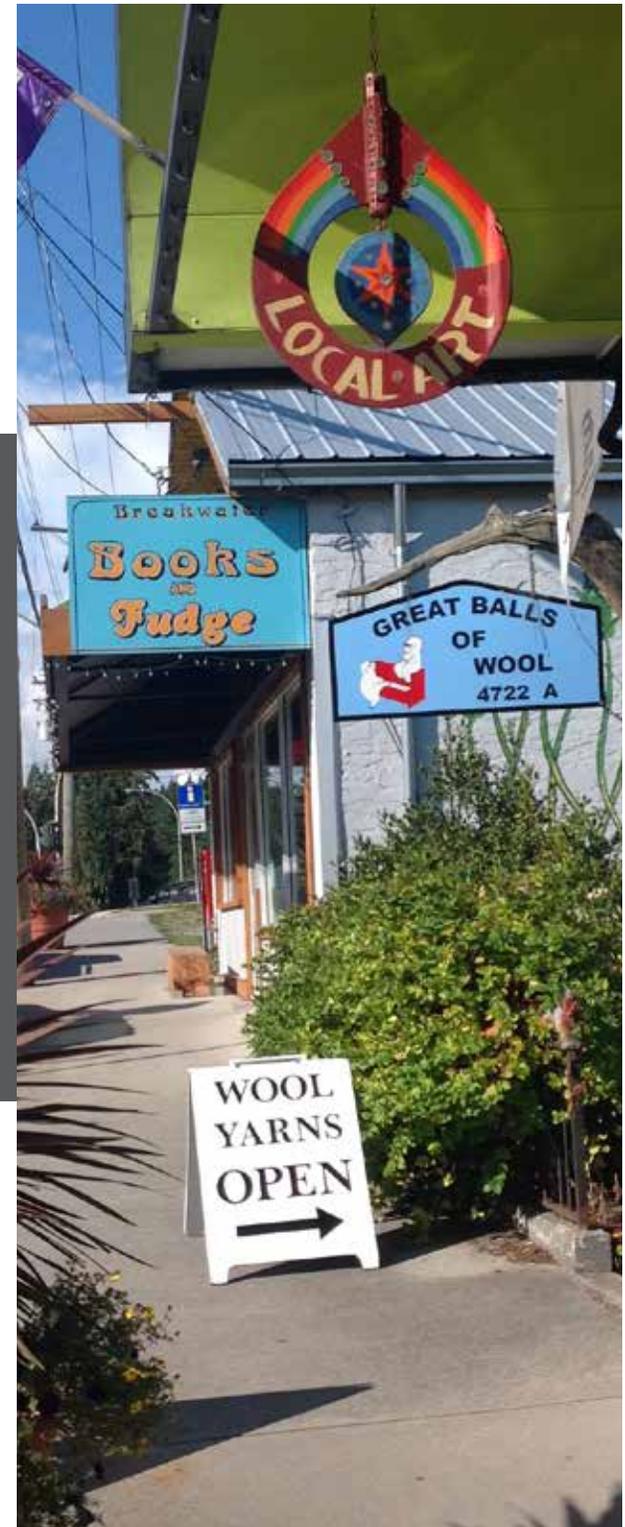
How do we feel about important ISSUES?



How healthy is our COMMUNITY?



What path do we want for the FUTURE?



President's Message

I am pleased to represent an organization that is so committed to our community of Powell River, the surrounding Regional District and the Tla'amin Nation. The publication of this report is one part of that equation. *Vital Signs* is a compilation of data gathered from and about our community with the intention of providing a "check in" of Powell River's key indicators. It helps the Foundation and other committed donors figure out who in our community are most in need and how to best make Powell River an even better place to live. This is our second publication locally, and it is being launched on the same date that 26 other Community Foundations across Canada are publishing *Vital Signs* reports about their own communities.

This important document doesn't happen on its own, and I welcome the opportunity to thank all of our sponsors that have stepped up with financial and in-kind support to make this publication a reality. The sponsors have shown true community spirit and deserve our gratitude and support. Special mention goes to Paul Schachter, who brought his personal skills and dedication to bear in managing the project, and to Kevin Wilson, who coordinated the community advisory groups and oversaw the process of collecting and evaluating the data that is presented here.

Now in our 14th year, Powell River Community Foundation is getting closer to the 1 million dollar milestone for its legacy fund. The amount of grants distributed each year has grown, as have the number of non-profit organizations that have benefited. This is the essence of a perpetual fund, in that it is there forever and growing to assist those in need in our community.

The Powell River Community Foundation is "*For Good, For Ever.*"

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Ross Cooper

President
Powell River Community
Foundation



About Powell River's Vital Signs®

Why do a Vital Signs report for Powell River?

Powell River's Vital Signs provides a snapshot of the positive and negative trends on issues that are important to our quality of life. This helps increase our knowledge of key issues that affect our vitality as a community. The report provides a valuable tool for residents, community groups and elected officials to develop innovative ideas that will build a stronger Powell River. Because this is our second report, we are able to see whether patterns and trends are emerging.

Who is included?

This report includes the City of Powell River, the Powell River Regional District (except for Lasqueti Island, which is served by the Parksville-Qualicum Community Foundation) and the Tla'amin Nation. That's the same area covered by our School District.

How is the report organized?

The report is divided into 13 broad topics that each contribute to our community's vitality. Within each topic area sub-topics, called "indicators", are evaluated. The indicators are based on verified statistics and data from the province, Canada and other reliable sources. The data show where Powell River ranks within the province and Canada and whether there has been improvement or decline from previous years. The report also includes the results of a community survey on the same thirteen topics. In contrast to the data indicators, which measure concrete facts, the survey measures our community's beliefs and feelings on how we are doing. Together, the indicators and survey give a well-rounded picture of our community.

Who decided what to include in the report?

Powell River Community Foundation consulted with a community advisory group on each of the 13 issue areas. All told, we met and talked with more than 60 representatives of community organizations, business groups, educational institutions and government. We engaged different sectors of the community to make sure that wide-ranging areas of need were considered, to encourage dialogue among different groups, to build community capacity through shared knowledge and collaboration and to inspire joint and individual solutions to recognized challenges. The advisers provided their expertise on a host of subjects to identify trends and help the Foundation to select indicators that are relevant, accurate and comprehensive.

What's next?

The Foundation, government and other groups will use *Vital Signs* as a guide to help decide how best to support the efforts to keep Powell River a dynamic and vital community. The report is also used to show local and outside funders what are the most important needs for our region.



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POWELL RIVER'S

VitalSigns® Methodology

Selection of Indicators

There were literally thousands of possible indicators that *Vital Signs* could have evaluated. Some indicators are used in *Vital Signs* reports in communities across Canada. For other indicators, we relied heavily on the community advisory groups. Some suggested indicators could not be included, because we were not able to get recent or reliable data for them. Ultimately, each indicator was chosen to be understandable, relevant to community concerns, a neutral, objective and commonly used measure of local conditions, as current as possible, trackable for future reports and relevant to many different audiences. We wanted the indicators taken together to give a complete picture of the conditions and circumstances in our community and to help to provide a focus on the future and long-term needs.

Data Compilations

Some of the data compilations from Statistics Canada and others do not include the whole of Powell River. In some cases, the Census Agglomeration (CA) is used. The CA includes the City, Regional District Areas B and C, and land belonging to the Sechelt Nation (all south of town), but not Electoral Area A or the Tla'amin community (all north of town). It contains 802.87 km² of our area and 80% of the residents. Unless noted, this report relies on data that include the most complete coverage, and we refer to all these data as being for Powell River or for the region. Any variations in results for the same item caused by differences in the coverage areas are not significant for our purposes.

Some of the data was compiled by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC). CFC is the national membership organization that connects and supports Canada's 191 community foundations from coast to coast. The *Vital Signs* team also gathered statistics from local Powell River organizations as well as other reliable sources. Data sources for all indicators can be found at *Powell River's Vital Signs* website, prvs.ca.

Special Terms

In general, when this report refers to a family, it means a "census family", which is a married/common law couple of the same or opposite sex, or grandparents if parents are not present, and children, if any, living in the same dwelling. It also includes a lone parent and children (but not a lone parent without children). This report refers to the value of dollars for the year reported, except where "current dollars" are noted in the item itself. The last Canada-wide census was conducted in 2011, and the data from that census are now four years old. Although the census data are still mostly accurate for Powell River, this report used more current data from other sources where possible.

Community and Youth Surveys

Information on the *Vital Signs* community survey and youth survey is found on p.6 of this report.



2015 Report Highlights

Economy

Powell River incomes have continued to rise, but are still noticeably less than Canadian and BC averages. We are achieving some business diversification, which ties in with the City's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

Gap Between Rich and Poor

Child poverty—identified as a serious problem in the 2011 *Vital Signs* report—remains a huge problem, and it continues to get worse. The rate in Powell River is well above the average for BC and Canada. Our overall and senior poverty rates are better than provincial and national averages, but are trending upwards.

Learning

Our rate of post-secondary qualifications is increasing, and that's good. Our high-schoolers may take more than a single year to complete Grade 12, but they get it done. However, even fewer students are taking and passing English 12, so often required for the post-secondary education they say they want.

Environment

We're doing better on parks and on recycling, but the warming world presents us with more and bigger challenges. While recent in-town logging doesn't register in statistics, it certainly registers with local citizens as an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.

Health and Wellness

Powell River's life expectancy continues to be good, and we check many boxes on the "Healthy Lifestyle" list. Many residents don't have a regular medical doctor and many have to use the Emergency Room as their doctor's office.

Housing

Home ownership is still a great bargain compared to other places. The rental situation continues to worsen, with rents up and the vacancy rate down. Our housing stock needs more major repairs than average. Rental housing is three times more likely to need repair than owner-occupied units.

Work

Over half of Powell River's income earners do not make a living wage, and women still earn much less than men. The gender wage gap is worse than the BC average and has gotten bigger since the 2011 report. Our unemployment rate is above the BC average, too, and also larger than it was in the last report. On a positive note, fewer people have been searching for jobs recently, which may signal an improvement.

Getting Started

Youth unemployment, while still higher than the all-ages rate, is down in our health region since the 2011 report and better than the provincial and national rates. Actual numbers of immigrants from overseas to Powell River are much lower than commonly thought.

Safety and Security

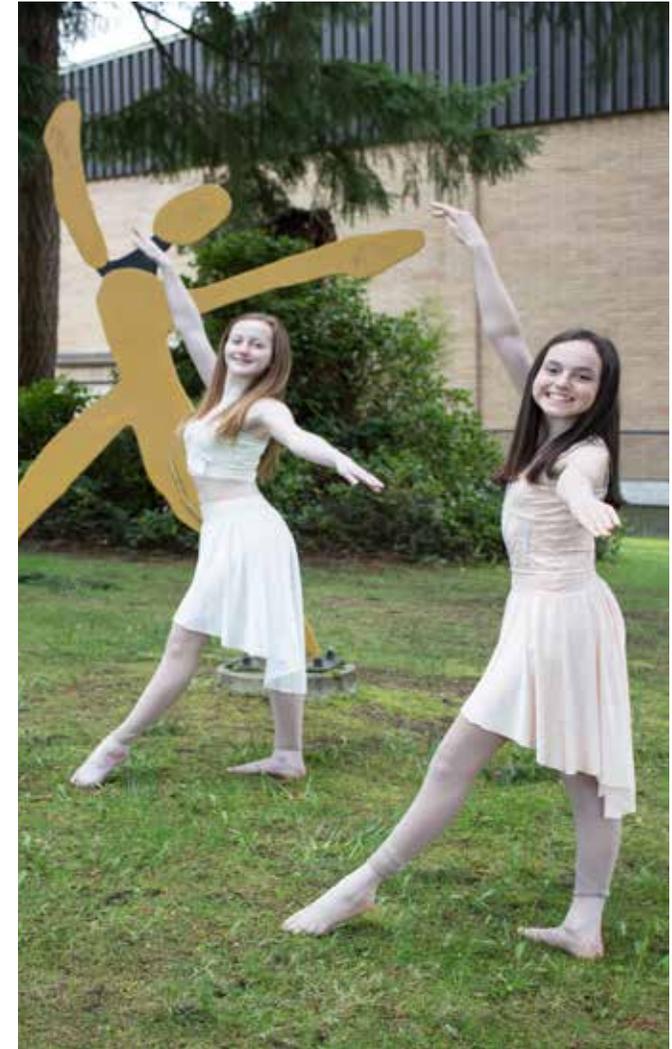
Crime rates and severity are still on a downward trend, and still well below BC and national averages, but drug crimes have increased slightly. Very few local youth are involved in drug crimes. Emergency preparedness has shown a higher profile recently.

Belonging and Leadership

There are good channels of cooperation among Tla'amin, the RD and the City. We continue to turn out for provincial and national elections at rates higher than the averages, but our turnout for City elections in 2014 was down. While slightly fewer people claimed charitable donations, we still beat the provincial rate, and the amount we donated was well above the national average. We have a stronger sense than average of belonging to our community.

Arts, Culture and Recreation

Powell River has a reputation to live up to, and we certainly have a lot of cultural activity happening. However, the survey shows that younger people are not as satisfied by what's on offer—something to work on if we want to keep them here.



Getting Around

Ferries continue to be a major issue, with fare increases and fewer sailings. Walking and cycling rates are now close to the provincial averages, but we still don't use our buses as much as we could.

Food

Powell Riverites are doing better than BC and Canada at eating 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables per day. We have a very active local food scene, but not enough production to compete with big supermarkets.



Portrait Of Our Community

Land Area

The land area of Powell River (including the City, the Regional District north and south, the Tla'amin lands and Texada Island) is 5,245.5 km² (524,550 hectares)—about 0.6% of the total land area in BC.

Economic influences

Powell River combines the attributes of a resource town, a tourist destination and an increasingly diverse community. The principal economic influences include retail trade, health care, education, the paper mill, forestry-related activities and tourism. New economies, including agricultural ventures, international education and cultural undertakings, have started to emerge as important contenders. Newcomers are attracted by the abundance of recreation and outdoor opportunities, the remote coastal lifestyle, diverse cultural amenities, affordable housing and the prospect of relaxed retirement living.

Population trends

Powell River's total population was estimated at 19,921 as of 2014, 0.43% of the total population of the province. This number shows only minimal growth since 1986. Between 1996 and 2014, the population remained fairly constant, while BC's population grew approximately 1% per year.

The 2011 *Vital Signs* report noted that there are differing assessments of whether Powell River was poised to grow or to shrink. This difference still exists, but has switched directions. BC Statistics had previously projected that the area's population would steadily decline from its 2011 levels, decreasing by more than 400 people in the following 10 years and by more than 800 people in 25 years. However, updated BC Stats population projections show an increase of over 1800 people in the next 10 years, and over 4000 more people by 2040.

In 2008 the Regional District commissioned a regional growth and development analysis that used much of the

BC Statistics data, but instead predicted a population increase of 2,085 people by 2028 as a result of migration to the region of working-age people and their families and of a larger number of retirees.

An updated set of population projections commissioned by the Regional District in 2012 estimated that population would increase by 83 people from 2016 to 2026, but decrease by nearly 1600 people from 2016 to 2041.

Age

The populations of Canada and of BC are aging, so it's no surprise that Powell River is also maturing. Baby boomers—those born between 1947 and 1966—currently comprise the largest population sector in Powell River. In fact, in 2011, Powell River had the 9th largest percentage of people 65-and-over in Canada.

In 2012, the first wave of the boomer generation turned 65. Powell River is growing older faster than national and provincial averages. The proportion of seniors grew from 16.1% in 2001, to 21.6% in 2010 and to 25.5% in 2014. By comparison, in 2014, seniors made up only 15.7% of the population across Canada and 17.0% of the population of British Columbia.

Our population's share of youth (under 15) was 13.1% in 2014, up 0.5 percentage points from 12.6% in 2010, but still down 4.5 percentage points from the 2001 levels (17.6%). That puts our proportion of youth lower than both the national average of 16% and the provincial average of 14.6%.

The working age population supports a growing number of aging dependents and fewer children. As of 2014, Powell River residents had 2.14 children (0-14) for every 10 people of working age, down from 2.67 in 2011 and 3.16 in 2006. Elder dependents (65 and older) increased from 3.19 for every 10 working age residents in 2006, to 3.65 in 2011 and again to 4.16 in 2014. It is anticipated that by 2036, we will have 13.4

dependents—primarily seniors—for every 10 working age people.



Between 2001 and 2011, Powell River's median age—the age at which half the population is younger and half is older—increased 8.1 years, from 42.5 to 50.6, putting it higher than both the national median age of 40.6 years and the provincial median age of 41.9. Migration away by young adults and the attraction of Powell River as a retirement destination are among the likely explanations of why the local population has been aging faster than the BC average.

Tla'amin Nation

In April 2016, the Tla'amin Nation will assume full control of its land and governance. See p.7 for additional details and information.

The Vital Signs Community and Youth Surveys

Why We Did These Surveys

The surveys explore our attitudes about key issues that affect our well-being and happiness. We also wanted to see if Powell Riverites thought conditions had changed since the first *Vital Signs* survey in 2011. The youth survey explored topics of more specific interest to youth.

How the Survey Worked

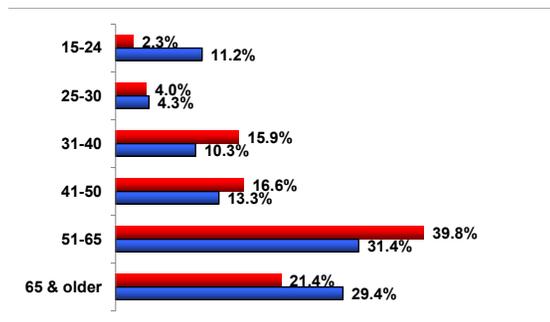
The community survey was open to everyone in Powell River. The survey ran for 10 weeks and was publicized in the newspaper, at events, on Facebook and by email. Most people took the survey online. Paper copies were available at the Public Library, the Open Air Market and other locations. We received 535 responses for the community survey and 28 responses to the youth survey.

Who Responded

Most responders lived in the City of Powell River (69.7%) with a good proportion from the Regional District North (10%) and South (17%). There were many fewer responses from Texada or the Tla'amin community. In the future we will look for ways to increase participation in those areas.

Compared to the population of the region, the survey responders included a lower percentage of youth, about the same proportion of 25-30 year olds, a greater percentage of 31-64 year olds, and fewer seniors.

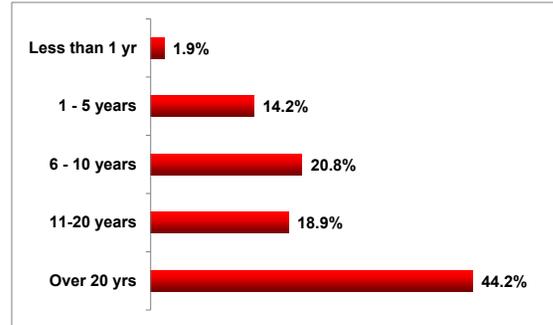
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDERS (COMPARED TO POPULATION IN BLUE)



Many more women (66.5%) than men (31.3%) responded, a variance from the 50/50 split in our population. The "Other" gender choice was selected by 11 people.

As the next chart shows, most of the responders lived in Powell River for 11 years or longer.

NUMBER OF YEARS SURVEY RESPONDERS RESIDED HERE

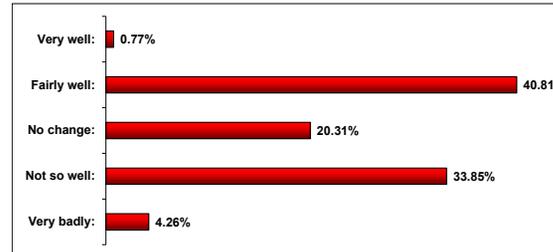


Only 9 people lived in Powell River for less than one year.

Your Responses

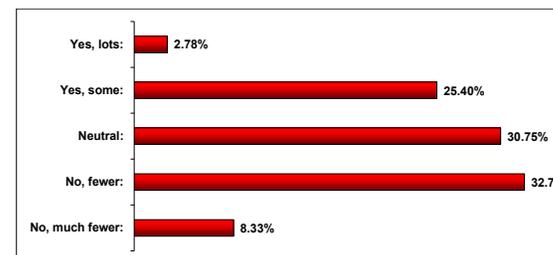
The survey responses, for the most part, are included in the report pages for each topic. Here are a few of those that were not included with their topic areas.

Over the past four years, how do you think our local economy has performed?



Opinion seems evenly split, but the largest percentage think that the Powell River economy has performed fairly well.

Do you think there will be enough jobs here in the future to keep Powell River stable and healthy?

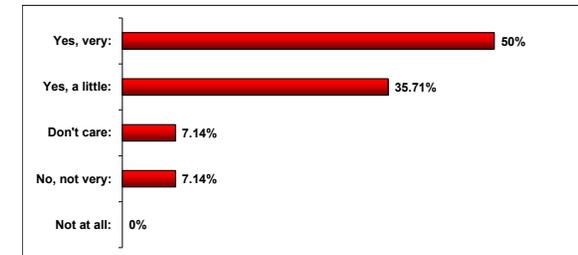


The survey shows that we're slightly more pessimistic about our future job situation than we were in 2011.

Youth Survey

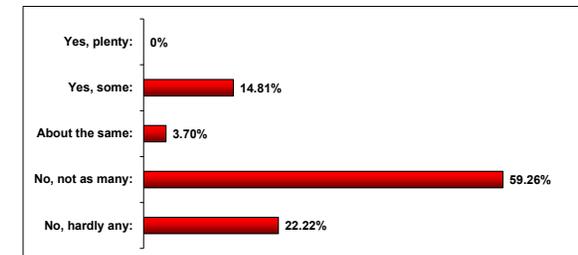
The youth survey was only available online. There were limited numbers of responses to the youth survey, so the answers to some of the questions don't give us any useful information. However, some questions had very clear answers!

Are you concerned about being able to pay for further education after high school?



86% of responders were concerned, while only 14% were not concerned or didn't care.

Do you think there are as many opportunities for young people in Powell River for enjoyment, inspiration and motivation as in a bigger city?



Over 80% of responders thought there were not as many opportunities in Powell River.

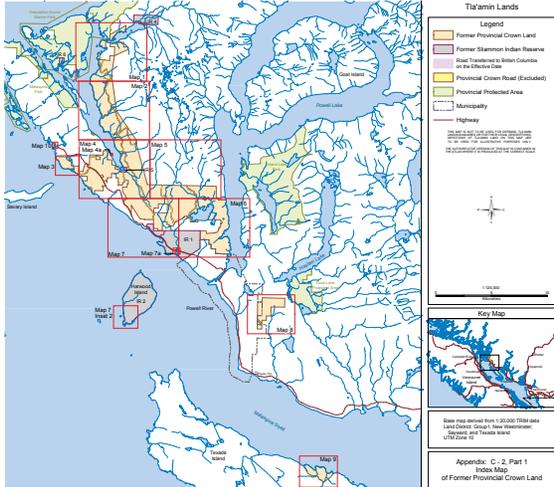
All the Responses to the Surveys

Although the community survey had an excellent response rate, it only reflects the opinions of those who responded. The full results of the surveys and all of the comments are available on *Powell River's Vital Signs* website at prvs.ca.

An Historic Time for the Tla'amin Nation

In April 2016, the Sliammon First Nation's treaty with Canada and BC comes into full effect, and the Tla'amin Nation (as it will be officially known) will become self-governing. Perhaps the most significant effect of this momentous event is that the Tla'amin people will no longer be governed by the Indian Act, a colonial era law that imposed a system of control and restricted the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples. As an autonomous government, the Tla'amin Nation will have the power and right to forge its own path into the future.

Tla'amin will regain ownership of 8,322 hectares of land, including 70 km of waterfront located in Harwood, Southview, Lund, Okeover and the Tla'amin community.



While this is, in reality, only a small fraction of the traditional lands, the Tla'amin Nation negotiators made the decision to opt for a defined land base that would give their community extraordinary opportunities to support its people from revenues derived from sustainably leveraging both lands and resources. The Tla'amin government plans to use these revenues to improve community infrastructure, enhance and increase services, fund housing and education, develop businesses and create needed jobs. The Tla'amin leadership has expressed confidence that the wealth

generated from the assets gained through the treaty will, over time, improve the quality of life for each resident of the Tla'amin community.



The vision is lofty, and the road will not be easy. Over many long years, the Tla'amin people were subjected to conditions where their resources were exploited for the benefit of the non-Aboriginal community, while they suffered deprivation and the horrors of the residential schools. Prior to contact with Europeans, over 30,000 indigenous people lived in our region. Tla'amin controlled its own economy, resources and social structure. Since that time, and for over a hundred years, that dominion was taken away and capacity removed. This led to the result we see today, where there is little general commerce in the Tla'amin community and the Tla'amin people have been largely marginalized from the mainstream economic resources of the region.



Tla'amin residents need to go out of their community for most household necessities, including access to healthy foods. These circumstances have led to the persistence of conditions of poverty and are a root cause of why Tla'amin people do not enjoy the same health status as their non-Aboriginal peers.

Given historical lack of support in the broader area for the goals of the Tla'amin community, it is sensible that the Tla'amin Nation is plotting a course towards self-sufficiency. But while distinct, the Tla'amin community is not unconnected to its neighbours, as all face many similar challenges. Much can be gained by working together to address overlapping and interrelated concerns.



Tla'amin, the City and the Regional District are meeting together regularly and forging agreements to address issues of common interest. Collaboration and mutual assistance will work to everyone's advantage.



Economy

A healthy economy for the future may require us to broaden our thinking and question our past assumptions. Business diversity, resourceful citizenry and attention to a triple bottom line (social, environmental and financial) will help create a truly sustainable and resilient economy for the long term.

Family Income

In 2010, the before-tax average family income in the Powell River region was \$71,717, compared to \$91,967 for BC and \$94,125 for Canada. The median income (half the families had total income below that amount and half above) in Powell River was \$60,417, compared to \$75,797 for BC and \$76,511 for Canada. Couple-with-children families earned more (median \$85,136) than couple-only families (median \$56,432) and much more than lone-parent families (median \$35,635). In 2012, the median income for a Powell River family had risen to \$65,290.

Average Individual Income

In 2012, people in Powell River who filed tax returns earned an average of \$35,494, which was lower than the BC average of \$42,453. The data show that income is rising. 2012 saw an increase of 1.5% over 2011 when the average income in Powell River was \$34,965.

Agriculture

The farming sector in Powell River is still precarious. Out of the 94 farms counted by the Census of Agriculture in 2011, 62 (66%) grossed less than \$10,000 for the year. This is very similar to the 65% of farms earning less than \$10,000 in the whole Vancouver Island/Coast region, but much higher than BC (48.5%) and Canada-wide (21.4%). At the other end of the scale, just three farms in our region reported earning over \$100,000 compared to five in 2006 and 2 in 2001.

Open Air Market

Powell River has an active economy of small craft and agriculture-based businesses. Many of these businesses sell through the Open Air Market, and the gross sales for the market show the increasing activity in this area. In 2010, the annual market gross sales were \$157,203, while in 2014 the gross sales for the year were \$257,910, an increase of 64% over those four years.

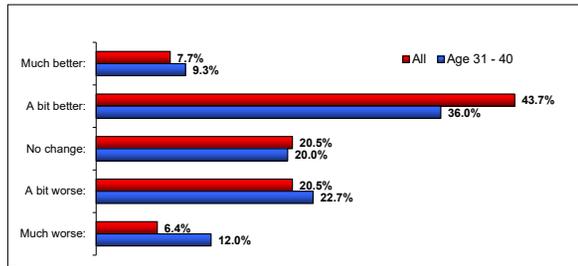
Sustainability

The City of Powell River's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is meant to implement the Sustainability Charter and the Sustainable Official Community Plan (SOCP). The "Our Economy" section says its aim is to:

- Foster a climate that supports investment and continuous innovation
- Create value through jobs, purchasing practices, and good services
- Encourage a diverse economic base to support a resilient local economy
- Promote energy efficiency to reduce risks from increasing fossil fuel prices and scarcity
- Sustain businesses that have a high degree of local ownership, are environmentally and socially responsible and enhance the reputation of Powell River

From the Survey ...

How do you think our local economy will function in the future?



In general, survey responders were fairly optimistic about the future of Powell River's economy, with over 50% convinced it will be a little or much better, and 27% thinking it will get worse. However, the 31-40 age group were less hopeful—nearly 35% think it will get worse compared to 45% who think it will get better.

Did You Know ...?

Developing Businesses

Since 1988, Community Futures Powell River has created or maintained over 500 businesses, lending \$13,027,945 and creating or sustaining over 1500 jobs. These businesses are diverse and include accommodations, fishing, forestry, aquaculture, manufacturing, tourism, service industry, specialty products, artisans and many others.

Your Comments

- Limit big box stores and franchises
- More business incentives
- Revitalize Marine Avenue, easier parking
- Prepare for Catalyst closure
- New earth-friendly enterprises, like education, eco-tourism, and seniors' care
- Charge the mill full taxes
- Less obstacles and red tape for new/small businesses
- Aggressive economic development, not just studies
- Keep property taxes affordable for retired people
- More businesses using PR dollars
- Help self employed local businesses stay and grow
- Retool the mill to produce sustainable green products
- Quit the grandiose plans and accept town for what it is
- We need industry as much as environmental stuff
- Encourage local industry like aircraft overhaul at our airport

Powell River Dollars

Powell River Dollars (PR\$) are local money that can only be spent in Powell River. This keeps more money moving in the local economy instead of immediately leaking out. The program has raised over PR\$40,000 for local non-profits since it launched in November 2012. The \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills are adorned with works by local artists and contain security features to prevent fraud. You can get Powell River Dollars at CMG Printing on Marine Ave or the PR\$ table at many community events.





Funding provided by:

Powell River & District
United Way



Gap Between Rich & Poor

The gap between rich and poor in developed countries is at its highest level in 30 years. Research shows that as income inequality rises, economic growth falls. It is vital to help those at the bottom close the gap.

Income Spread

In Powell River (CA) in 2010, 11.3 percent of families earned less than \$30,000 while 6.13 percent earned over \$150,000. The proportion of families earning less than \$30,000 is slightly lower than the national average (11.93 percent) and 2.2 percentage points lower than the provincial average (13.5 percent). The income bracket with the most earners in Powell River—15.6 percent of families—was \$60,000 - \$80,000 (current dollars).

Poverty in Powell River

Our overall poverty rate is a little lower than the national and provincial rates, but it's slowly getting worse. The 2013 overall poverty rate in the Powell River region was 14.3 percent based on the Low Income Measure (LIM) after-tax. The LIM is a good indicator of relative poverty. Our rate is up from 13.1 percent in 2008 and 13.7 percent in 2012. Powell River's overall poverty levels are still 1.9 percent below the national average (14.6 percent) and 12.4 percent below the provincial average (16.3 percent), but the trend is worrisome.

Child Poverty

We're headed in the wrong direction. Our child poverty rate is substantially higher than the national and provincial

rates, and it's gotten worse over the last several years. The 2013 child poverty rate in the Powell River region was 23.1 percent based on the LIM after-tax. The number of children living in poverty is up from 17.6 percent in 2008 and 22.1 percent in 2012. The 2013 child poverty rate was 21.6 percent above the national average (19.0 percent) and 13.2 percent above the provincial average (20.4 percent).

Elder Poverty

Our seniors may still be benefiting from the region's prosperity during the mill's glory days. In 2010, 10.9 percent of seniors (65 and older) had incomes below the LIM after tax. This is much better than 13.9 percent for BC and 13.4 percent in Canada as a whole.

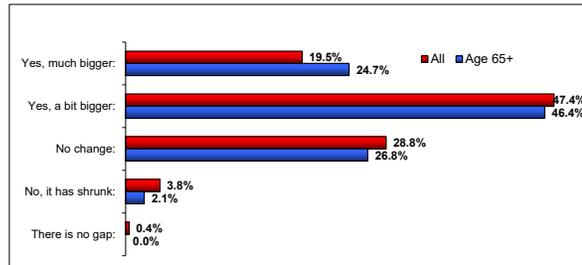
Dependence on the Safety Net

In September 2012, 2.8% of Powell River residents under 65 were dependent on Basic Income Assistance, which is higher than the provincial figure of 1.7%. The rate for children under 14 was 6%, compared to 3.1% for BC. For youth 15-24, 5% in Powell River were receiving Income Assistance compared to 1.8% provincially. 1.2% of Powell River residents 15+ were on Employment Insurance at that time, compared to 1.3% for BC as a whole. Youth 15-24 on EI totaled 1.2% compared to 0.7% provincially



From the Survey ...

Over the past four years, do you think the gap between people with high incomes and people with low incomes has changed?



While most people think the gap has grown rather than shrunk, seniors are more likely to see the gap as having grown much larger, perhaps because many are on fixed incomes.

Did You Know ...?

BC Disability Assistance

In 2014, the monthly average number of people receiving disability assistance in BC was 107,255. This number has increased steadily every year since 1995. The January to June average for 2015 was 110,745, a 4.1% increase over 2014. Most disability assistance recipients are single people (88%), with smaller numbers for couples, two parent families and single parent families.

Sustainability

Canada and the Gap

A survey of 3000 Canadians commissioned by the Broadbent Institute released in December 2014 showed how vastly we underestimate the unequal distribution of wealth in Canada. Canadians believe that the wealthiest 20% in Canada hold 55% of the wealth and that the poorest 20% hold under 6%. In reality, the wealthiest hold 67.4%, while the poorest 20% hold no wealth at all.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an organization of 34 developed countries of which Canada is a member, also reported in December 2014 that, "The biggest factor for the impact of inequality on growth is the gap between lower income households and the rest of the population. The negative effect is not just for the poorest income decile (10%) but all of those in the bottom four deciles (40%) of the income distribution." They concluded that "The most direct policy tool to reduce inequality is redistribution through taxes and benefits. The analysis shows that redistribution per se does not lower economic growth."



Barriers

The gap is mostly thought of in financial terms, but those at the bottom often also experience health, ability, cultural and psychological barriers. Services and opportunities often miss the people they are designed to help because of these barriers to participation and access, which create and increase the gap. Lack of high-quality, accessible, affordable childcare is another common barrier to participation in work and other activities. When it costs more for childcare than the parent takes home from the job, what's the point?



Learning

Whether young, middle aged or senior, we learn as we grow. The quality of our learning depends on the programs and resources to which we have access. High quality opportunities that are widely available and cover a broad range of interests help us make the most of our talents and passions.

High School Graduation

Better the second time around? In 2013/14 the first-time graduation rate in Powell River for Grade 12 (students who entered Grade 12 for the first time in 2013) was 53%. This is way below the 80% rate for BC and worse than the 69% rate in Powell River in 2010/11. From a broader perspective, the graduation rate for all eligible students (i.e., those who met graduation requirements, even if it was not their first year in Grade 12) was much better—93%. This is up from 92% in 2010/11 and comparable to the 94% provincially in 2013/14.

Disconnected Plans

82% of Powell River students reported that they planned to continue education after high school. English 12 is a gateway to university admission and many skilled or professional grade positions. For example, BC Hydro requires English 12 for cable splicers, electricians, mechanics, meter and power line technicians and other similar jobs. VIU requires English 12 as a prerequisite for most academic courses. In 2013-14, only 41% of Powell River Grade 12 students took the course and passed the exam. This is down from 2009/10 when 45% of Powell River Grade 12 students took English 12 and passed the exam.

Provincially in 2013-14, 65% of Grade 12 students took the exam and 98% passed. 11% of our region's Grade 12's took Communications 12, a less challenging course not used for university admissions, and 94% passed. The combined pass rate for both senior English courses for Powell River students is 92.7%, which is higher than the BC average of 91.4%.

Finishing High School

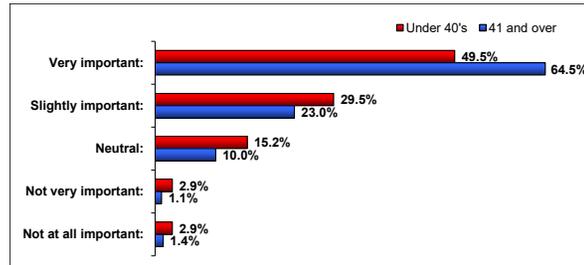
Although the first time graduation rates are low, Powell Riverites tend to catch up eventually. In 2011, 88% of residents aged 25 to 64 had completed high school. That's up from 85% in 2006 and 71.4% in 2001. We're also catching up to the rest of the country. In 2006 the non-completion rate was 2.6 percentage points higher than the BC average, but in 2011 that gap had decreased to 1.9 percentage points. And, we are now only 0.7 percentage points lower than the Canadian average for high school non-completion.

Post-Secondary Education

In 2011, 51% of the working age population (15 years and over) had a post-secondary education (trades certificate, diploma, or university degree) compared to the BC rate of 56%. That's an improvement from 49% in 2006.

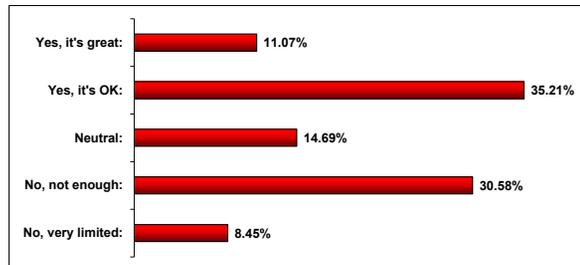
From the Survey ...

How important is high speed broadband internet for learning in Powell River?



Surprisingly, those over 40 thought that high speed internet is more important for learning than did younger people.

Do you think Powell River offers enough high quality learning choices to its young people?



Over 36% think the learning opportunities here are OK or Great, with about 39% choosing Not Enough or Limited, so opinions are nearly even on both sides of that divide.

Your Comments

- Upgrade VIU; offer more course so young people don't have to move away
- Create a vibrant and useful library with plenty of community space for events and meetings
- Teach environmental practises in school
- Bring affordable internet infrastructure to the rural areas (Lund!)
- Provide more opportunities for youth to leave Powell River on trips
- Develop a specialty post-secondary institution, like multimedia, sustainable forestry or tourism
- More retraining programs for people laid off from a job
- Set up exchange where high school students do a semester in a large city
- More help for special needs students who are capable of learning

Youth Focus

Dual Credit Program

15 current Grade 12 students are taking up to two dual credit academic courses at the local VIU campus, and 25 Grade 13 students are enrolled in up to four academic courses throughout the year, for a total of 40 students that SD 47 supports through funding as they transition to university outside of Powell River.



Library Use

With the passage of the New Library referendum in November 2014, Powell River now has the opportunity to expand its small library and improve library services. In 2013, 810 new registrations meant that over 30% of the region's population were active library cardholders. Circulation of all types was 9.8 per person compared to 8.6 in 2010. That's high, but still below the BC average of 12.6, probably because of space limitations. Despite the space restrictions, 6558 print volumes were added to the collection in 2013 bringing that total to 33,909. The entire library's collection was 100,011 volumes (39.1% physical and 60.9% electronic).



Environment

The environment surrounds and underlies everything we do. A healthy environment is essential for a healthy economy, healthy culture and healthy people. Powell River is gifted with beautiful surroundings, but protecting our area from local and global environmental risks will take effort and determination.

Greenhouse Gases

Even though the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) greenhouse gas inventory has not been updated, local governments in our area have continued to take action to reduce GHG emissions. In 2014 in the City, a Sustainability Steering Committee was formed; the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan was developed; energy and lighting audits of City facilities were carried out; bike lane budgets were approved (bike lanes were created in 2015); cycling plans moved forward; EV charging stations were researched (and installed in 2015); a transit service review was carried out; and water main replacements were done.

In the Regional District, two landfills were closed; a Resource Recovery Centre was planned; GHG emissions targets were set in all OCPs; a Regional Transportation Plan including Walking and Cycling Network Plan was adopted; public education was provided on active transportation; cycling and walking paths were built and planned; zero waste education was provided; energy efficient construction was implemented on new buildings; energy and water conservation upgrades were made to Texada Community Hall; and the Green Shores pilot project was started.

Green Spaces

There are 277 hectares of Regional Parks and 18,094 hectares of Provincial Parks and Protected Areas within the Powell River Regional District. Since the 2011 *Vital*

Signs report, the Regional District has developed 20 new Waterfront Access Sites; acquired two new Regional Parks (Boot Point Regional Park on Lasqueti Island and Divers Rock Regional Park north of Lund); and will be initiating a Regional Trails Plan late in 2015. Within the City, there are 98.79 hectares of parks, playing fields and open spaces, with no change since 2010.

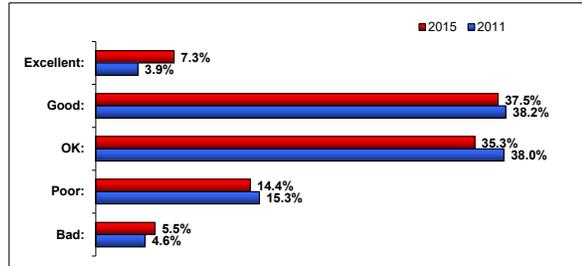
Recycling and Waste

Solid waste levels are remaining constant in the region. In 2014, the Regional District exported 4604 tonnes (t) of municipal solid waste to external landfills, compared to 4,698 t in 2010 and 4470 t in 2013. Despite the confusion caused by the switch to the MMBC program, residents recycled 4,615 t of paper, plastics, metals, yard waste, gypsum, scrap metals and batteries, plus 7172 tires, 1045 litres of waste oil, and 301 units of freon (from fridges and freezers). Our diversion rate (material not going into the landfill) is 50%.

Powell River's collection and handling systems produce a very clean recycling stream, with only 3% contamination, compared to the previous "green bin" program, which was often contaminated at higher levels, and up to 40% ended up in the landfill, anyway. The good news is that what we send to recycling now really is recycled. Locally, we've supplemented the program to accept items not in MMBC, such as plastic zipper bags, but the program needs to be further expanded to include products that are clearly recyclable but not currently accepted.

From the Survey ...

Over the last four years, how do you think Powell River is doing on recycling, composting and other ways to reduce waste, energy use and pollution?



Compared to the previous *Vital Signs* survey, many more people think that our area is doing an excellent job. The survey indicates that we believe that things are moving slowly in the right direction.

Millennium Park

In May 2015, Powell River finally achieved full ownership of Millennium Park—the trees as well as the land. Timber sales from the Powell River Community Forest provided the \$1,181,250 to pay Island Timberlands for the timber rights on the Millennium Park lands. Powell River Community Forest Foundation makes sizable donations to local community groups and projects every year. Wouldn't it be great if Island Timberlands acted as a responsible corporate citizen and contributed a chunk of its profits from Millennium Park back to the community?



Forest Fires and Smoke

2015's hot, dry early summer brought forest fire danger home to Powell River. While we were lucky to have only minor fires locally, we watched nearby communities on the Lower Coast and Vancouver Island suffer major burns. For days in July, we woke up to ominous heavy yellow skies and falling ash flakes, as smoke from forest fires near Pemberton, in the BC interior and up north was blown into our area. In a warming climate, even our "wet" coast is not as wet as it used to be, and forest fire danger is greater.

Sustainability

Early snow melt

Unusually warm spring temperatures across a large part of BC in 2015 meant that snow melt happened much earlier than usual, leaving snow packs far below normal levels by June. This meant lower river and stream flows and lower reservoir water levels especially in Southwestern BC. While Powell River escaped the worst effects, our neighbours on the Lower Coast and Vancouver Island had stringent water restrictions in place. Many scientists are concerned that climate change may make this the new normal.

Your Comments

- Preserve green spaces---PRSC lands, Valentine Mt., Stillwater Bluffs.
- Annual curb side collection of household goods that are no longer usable
- Develop composting and waste recovery to divert trash and generate revenue
- Improve air quality by stopping outdoor burning in rural areas
- People can enjoy the same tree over and over again if you leave it in the forest
- Establish a dog park or area just for small breeds
- Invest in community owned solar
- Conserve water through greywater/rainwater reuse
- Prevent the logging of lot 450 in the heart of our city
- Hooray for Millennium Park! Now let's create a park at Stillwater Bluffs





Funding provided by:



Health & Wellness

A positive culture of health and wellness includes taking charge of our own well-being and having available, responsive health care. The opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and access to expert medical providers shape our health profile.

Family Doctors

The estimate of the number of “unattached” patients—those without a regular medical doctor—in Powell River can vary depending on the source you look at. The Powell River Division of Family Practice reports that 25% of our population were unattached in 2014, based on their 2012-13 Attachment Algorithm and their own 2014 community survey of 857 people locally. This is likely more accurate than the 17% unattached rate for our area in 2014 estimated by the “My Health, My Community” report, which was derived from a smaller survey. Under either estimate, Powell River’s unattached rate is higher than the average rate for the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Health Region (of which we are part). That rate has been steady between 2011 and 2014 at 13.5%.

Life expectancy

The life expectancy of a person born in Powell River between 2010 and 2014 was 80.6 years, which is essentially no change from 80.5 years for those born 2006-2010 reported by *Vital Signs* four years ago. For the 2010-2014 period, the BC life expectancy was 80.8 years. Powell River does better than Vancouver Island North, at 78 years, but worse than the lower Sunshine Coast or Courtenay, both at 82 years.

Obesity, High Blood Pressure, Arthritis

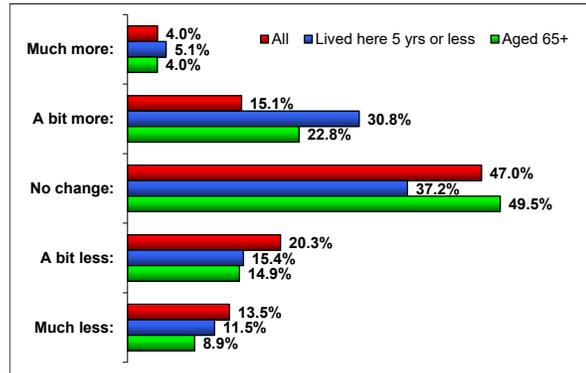
The “My Health My Community” report shows that Powell River has one of the highest rates of obesity in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. Our rate is 37.9% compared to 17% for VCH as a whole. That’s just a bit under the worst obesity rate in any community within VCH (39.1%). Our high blood pressure rate is also among the worst at 29.6%, compared to 16.4% for all of VCH, and so is arthritis at 21.1%, compared to the 12.4% rate for VCH. Some of these high rates may be explained in part by our large proportion of older residents.

Healthy Lifestyle

Powell River has better rates of physical activity (150 minutes/week or more) at 53.8% compared to the 46.4% VCH average. We also excel at eating 5+ servings of fruit and veggies daily—35.3% for Powell River vs. 27.2% for the VCH average. We have an especially low binge drinking rate at 15.4% compared to 23.4% for VCH. On the other hand, slightly more of us smoke (11.6% vs. 10.6%) and more spend their time staring at screens—55% in Powell River spend 2+ hours per day compared to 48.8% across VCH.

From the Survey ...

Over the last four years, have you been more able or less able to get good medical care and support here in Powell River?



In spite of the ongoing problems with finding a regular medical doctor, vulnerable groups like seniors and new residents say they have been more able to get good medical care over the last four years.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the current health and wellness system is a difficult problem due to the extreme energy-dependency. Addressing the issue may require a change from the current medical system practice model of "illness care" to a "prevention" model, which includes, supporting healthy life practices from prenatal to old age, related to diet, activity, work, rest and social interactions.

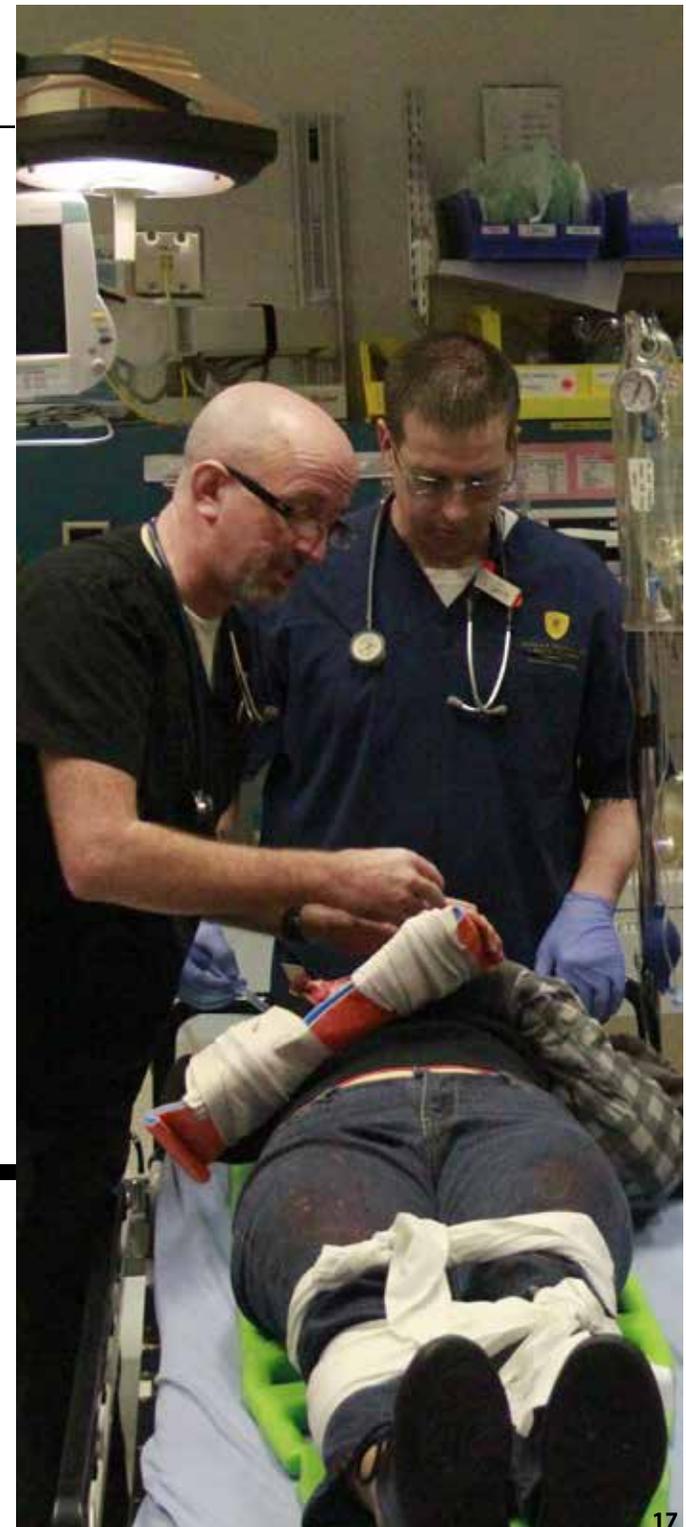
Youth Focus

Youth Obesity: Fact and Perception

In 2013, 18% of Powell River youth were overweight or obese according to their Body Mass Index. Advertising and unrealistic "role models" have an effect on youth body image, making many with normal body mass believe that they needed to take action to lose weight. 24% of youth reported that they considered themselves overweight—that's 6 percentage points more than actual fact. An astounding 41% of the youth were trying to lose weight, and 9% reported that they had vomited on purpose after eating in the previous year.

Your Comments

- Need a walk-in clinic to decongest the ER
- Increase the number of doctors so newcomers can have a family doctor
- Recruit unemployed recently graduated doctors
- Bring specialists in for the day rather than make people travel out of town
- We need a hospice for compassionate and whole family care
- We desperately need more support in the field of mental health
- Better health care here will help retain residents
- Do more to promote healthy living
- Create access to community based health care prevention programs
- Employ nurse practitioners in every doctor's office



Biking Promotes an Active Lifestyle

Powell River's Bike to Work Week 2015 included 308 riders in 22 teams (with 45 riders new to riding to work). Those riders cycled a collective 9,062 km over the week of May 25-31, saving 1,965 kg of greenhouse gases. Across BC, 34,261 riders in 46 communities rode a cumulative total of 1,411,161 km and saved 306,087 kg of GHGs.



Funding provided by:



Falcon Electric Ltd
604 483 1483 cell
falconelec@shaw.ca

Housing

Decent housing is necessary for us to succeed, prosper and be proud to call Powell River our home. We need affordable housing and a diversity of types for people at all stages of life and at all income levels.

Rent or Own?

Powell River renters are feeling more of a bite. The percentage of households spending 30% or more of their income on rent increased from 43.3% in 2005 to 47.7% in 2010. This percentage has grown more in Powell River than overall in BC, where the percentages were 43.7% in 2005 and 45.3% in 2010. Privately owned homes were more economical. A lower proportion of Powell River homeowners had high home expenses. The percentage of households spending 30% or more of income on major homeowner expenses was 14.1% in 2005 and 14.7% in 2010, markedly lower than BC's average of 22.8% in 2005 and 23.8% in 2010.

Rental Affordability

In September 2015, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, together with VanCity Credit Union and other partners, released the Canadian Rental Housing Index. That index identified affordability of rental housing in Powell River as a critical issue. Overspending on rental housing was identified as a severe issue. 25% of all renters pay more than half of their income on rent. Renter households here earning less than \$17,327 pay an average of 57% of their income each month on rent plus utilities. Those earning between \$17,328 to \$32,920 pay an average of 40% of their monthly income on rent and utilities.

Rents and Vacancies

The average monthly rent for housing in Powell River for October 2014 (\$651/month) is lower than the BC average

(\$1005/month). But, apartments here are becoming scarce. The vacancy rate in the City of Powell River was 6.1% in 2011, 5.5% in 2012, and 5.4% in 2013. In October 2014, it was down substantially to 2.0%, a level where tenants may have difficulty finding suitable housing. As of June 2015, there have been no new apartment or rental housing starts in Powell River since 2005.

Housing Units Requiring Repair

The proportion of households living in housing (rental and owned) requiring major repairs in Powell River in 2011 was 9.9%. This is higher than the provincial figure of 7.2%. In the same year, 29.4% of Powell River (CA) housing required minor repairs and 60.7% required only regular maintenance. Within the City, 9.4% needed major repair, but the percentage was very different for owner and renter households. For owners, 6.6% needed major repair, while for renters, the proportion was 19.3%. "Major repairs" included items such as defective plumbing or electrical wiring and structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings.

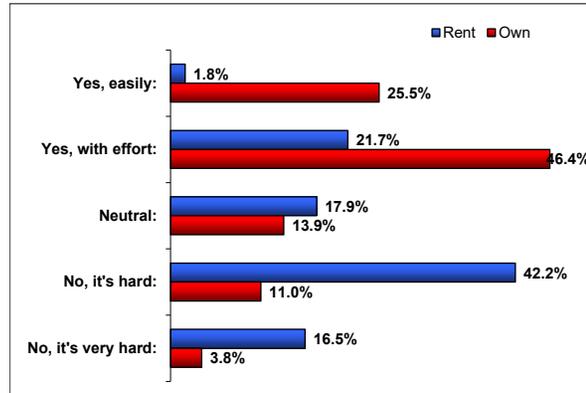
Powell River Property Buyers

In 2014, 129 property buyers (36.5% of buyers) were from outside Powell River. Of those, 43% came from the Lower Mainland, 24% from Alberta, and 8% from Vancouver Island. Only three buyers came from outside Canada. Future circumstances and projects might cause changes in these numbers.

From the Survey ...

Do you think people who need decent and safe rental housing in Powell River can find a place they can afford?

Do you think people who want to buy a home in Powell River can find a suitable house at a price they can pay?



Survey responders think that people looking for a place to rent have a much harder time than people who are looking for somewhere to buy. This is partly because of the low vacancy rate for rentals, but also because, as the data show, Powell Riverites pay a larger percentage of their income to rent than to own.

Your Comments

- More decent, affordable housing—rental and for sale
- More low income housing to support those on assistance
- Better seniors' housing choices
- More assisted living housing
- Too many people are living in inadequate apartments
- No one wants to rent out a place when it only gets damaged or destroyed—we sold ours
- Promote our low real estate prices to encourage people to move here
- Add higher end multi-family housing
- City-supported initiatives for renovations for affordable housing
- Give incentives to developers and builders to provide better quality housing
- Mandate social and low cost housing into developers' building code.
- Create co-housing communities
- Stop the practice of buying up property and then renting it back at twice its value
- Explore innovative low cost housing for seniors
- Make affordable off-grid housing available to rent or buy



Even Tighter Rental Market?

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada's national housing agency. CMHC rental and vacancy cost statistics are based on apartments and townhouses, but much of Powell River's rental stock consists of single detached houses and secondary suites. There is poor tracking of the availability of these as rental units, but the community advisory group suspects that there are fewer of these units available, as sales have removed them from the rental market. This could be contributing to the difficulty in finding rental housing that many people are experiencing.



Funding provided by:



103-4511 Marine Avenue
604-485-7958
www.careerlinkbc.com
info@careerlinkbc.com

Work

Work encompasses many different kind of labour— self-employment, employment, paid, unpaid and volunteer. When we have a sense of security about our work we can look beyond making a living day to day and contribute more to the totality of life in our community.

Living Wage

A living wage is based on what a family of four with two children aged 4 and 7 and both parents working full-time needs for food, clothing and footwear, shelter, transportation, child care, MSP premiums, non-covered health expenses, some continuing education for parents, and a two-week contingency cushion in the event of job loss or other loss of income. 85% of families in BC are headed by couples and 62% have two or more children. Based on this methodology the living wage for Powell River is \$21.30/hour or \$38,766/year. In 2010, there were 13,510 income earners in Powell River (CA). Of those, 53% earned below \$30,000 and 39% earned below \$20,000 for the year. Paying a living wage and preventing child poverty are very much linked, since the vast majority of poor children live in families with working parents.

Employment by Industry

It is surprising to many people, but the mill, the forest industry and aquaculture do not provide most of the jobs for Powell Riverites. In 2011, the top five industries for the labour force aged 15 and over in Powell River (CA) were retail trade (15.2%), health care & social assistance (13.7%), manufacturing (8.8%), construction (8.3%) and accommodation & food services (7.0%). The percentages in this report and in the 2011 *Vital Signs* report are not directly comparable because of changes in the way the

province measures jobs, but the top three industries are unchanged from those reported four years ago.

Unemployment

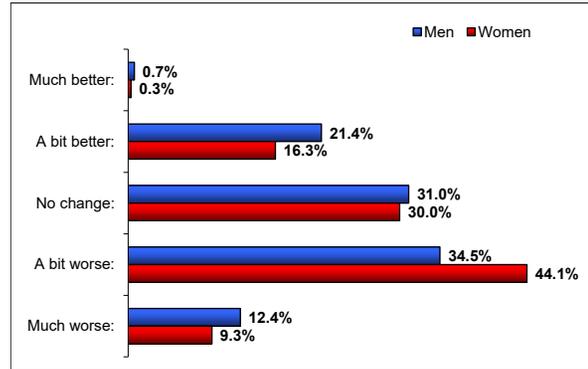
In 2010, the unemployment rate in Powell River was 8%, slightly above the national and provincial level of 7.8%. This was an increase of 1.6 percentage points over the 2006 unemployment rate of 6.4%. There are signs of recent improvements in employment. In 2014, on average 411 residents received Employment Insurance benefits each month. This was a 4% decrease from 428 recipients in 2013. And, this measure has been dropping steadily since 2009.

Earnings Disparity

According to the National Household Survey, in 2010 the median income for men in Powell River aged 15 years and over who worked full time and full year was \$55,087. The median income for women in the same group was \$37,489. This means that women earned only 68% of men's earnings. In 2006, that number was 69.5%, so the earning power for women is slightly worse and trending in the wrong direction. The gap in Powell River was larger than for BC as a whole in 2010. Province-wide, men earned a median income of \$55,334 and women earned \$42,839 or 77.4% of men's earnings.

From the Survey ...

Over the past four years, how do you think the number of full-time jobs has changed?



When it comes to full time jobs, men are more likely to say they have seen the situation improving, while women perceive the situation as getting a little worse. This difference between the sexes may be explainable by the “gender gap” in income.

Youth Focus

Youth pessimistic about jobs

Over the last 5 years, the SD 47 student survey shows a steady decrease in the percentage of Grade 12 students who are satisfied that school is preparing them for a job in the future, from 54% in 2009/10 to 26% in 2013/14. Grade 10's have shown a similar decrease in satisfaction from 89% in 2009/10 to 51% in 2013/14.

Your Comments

- We need more full time, higher paying work positions
- Let's demand “living wage” employers
- Higher paying jobs will retain young people in Powell River
- Many people have to work away from home in order to live here
- Hard to find meaningful work here even with lots of experience and education
- Develop viable travel options so that people can work here and commute when necessary
- We can fund jobs for Powell River through innovation without waiting for outside investment
- Give incentives to viable businesses to offer permanent employment
- Bring in new industries, especially those that hire trained young people

Youth Focus

Good results in the trades program

In June 2014, out of the 45 students enrolled in the trades program for 2013/14, 20 were already working locally. For 2014/15, 52 students are enrolled as of mid-September 2015, even though overall enrollment in the school district is down. For both 2013/14 and 2014/15, on a per-capita basis, Powell River leads the province in trades programs.



Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Career Link reports that between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, there were 1260 Powell River jobs posted (at Career Link and elsewhere). Top industries for these jobs were Retail Trade (17.5%), Food Services & Accommodation (21.1%) and Health Care & Social Assistance (21%). Construction, the top industry in 2010-2011, dropped to 6% of jobs posted. The job picture seems to have improved recently. 721 clients attended appointments related to finding new positions at Career Link in 2014/15, a 43% drop over 2010/11.



Funding provided by:



Free ESL tutoring and settlement assistance
immigrantservices@prepsociety.org
604-414-3630
<http://www.prepsociety.org/>

Getting Started

What does it take for newcomers to get traction in our community these days? Our youth, as well as new arrivals to Powell River or to Canada, need support that will enable them to build flourishing families, careers and social networks.

Youth unemployment

In 2014, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15-24 in the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi health region, which includes Powell River, was 11.4%, compared to 11.6% for BC and 13.5% for Canada. This is an improvement over 2010 when the local rate was 14.3% compared to 13.9% for BC and 14.9% for Canada.

New Immigrant Unemployment

The unemployment rate for new immigrants (in Canada 5 years or less) is consistently about double that for the population as a whole. In 2014 the new immigrant unemployment rate was 12.5% in BC compared to 6.1% overall, and in Canada was 12.9% compared to 6.9%. These rates are improvements over 2010, when the unemployment rate for new immigrants in BC was 13.2% compared to the overall unemployment rate of 7.6%. In Canada in 2010, the new immigrant rate was 15.7% compared to 8.1% overall.

Newcomers to Powell River

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, Powell River's population decreased by 72 persons due to natural

changes (births minus deaths) and out migration. The area lost 6 people through international migration during this period, but gained 4 from within BC and 29 from other parts of Canada. During the 10 year period ending on June 30, 2014, natural changes caused a decrease of 707 people in Powell River. 92 people came here from other countries, and 254 from other parts of Canada, but 76 left for other places in BC. This resulted in a net population decrease of 437 over that period.

Did You Know ... ?

The Languages We Speak

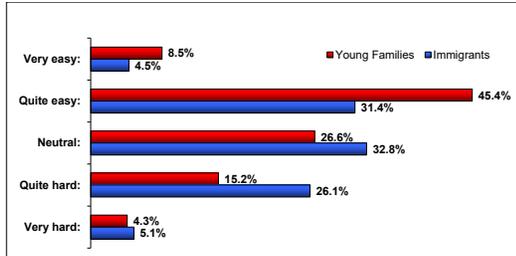
2040 people in Powell River report speaking languages other than English or French. They include 150 who speak Aboriginal languages, 425 German, 365 Italian, 310 Spanish, 250 Dutch, and between 15 and 65 each for Chinese, Swahili, Polish, Afrikaans, Maltese, Hindi, Hungarian, Japanese, Portuguese, Danish, Norwegian, Ukrainian, Swedish, Thai and Russian.



From the Survey ...

How easy is it for youth and young families in Powell River to become part of the community?

How easy is it for immigrants to Powell River to become part of the community?



Comparing the effort required for young families and immigrants, survey responders think that it's quite a lot easier for a young family to find its place in the community than it is for immigrants.

Did You Know ... ?

Who is an immigrant?

2465 people in the Powell River Regional District are immigrants—that's 12.6%. We don't notice most of them because they are not "visible" minorities, and they have been here for a long time—more than half (1330) immigrated before 1971. 400 people (2%) are visible minorities compared to 27% in BC and 19% in Canada.

Your Comments

- Let's support newcomers and immigrants
- Entice more young families to move here
- Need qualified care for babies under a year
- Powell River is a very hard community to break into
- More events for families with children, like Fun in the Sun
- Welcome all new residents and businesses, regardless of nationality
- Recognize and combat bias that some residents have against newcomers
- Not enough activities for young children to partake in.
- Powell River needs real youth centre, open every day, with creative space

Did You Know ... ?

Guidebook for Newcomers

Newcomers to Powell River, especially new Canadians, have a very comprehensive resource in the BC Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services, Powell River Edition. Written in plain language to be accessible to those whose first language is not English, it contains lots of nitty-gritty information to help people get started.



Tutoring and Support

Powell River Immigrant Services offers services to newcomers. Its Immigrant Services Office provides information and referral, consultation and crisis support, assisted access to services, and assistance with documents and forms. It helps run The Learning Centre, where it provides ESL tutoring and Parents' Group, community orientation sessions and workshops, bridging resources for community services, cultural celebrations and social events. Powell River Immigrant Services can be contacted at (604) 485-2004 or immigrant services@prepsociety.org.



Funding provided by:

RIVERCITY MINI

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604-483-1294

Safety and Security

Our community feels safe, compared to many other places in Canada, not to mention the rest of the world. The low local crime rate supports our sense of well-being. Our preparations for emergencies and the knowledge that we can rely on our neighbours contribute to a solid sense of security.

Overall Crime Severity

The overall crime severity index (which measures both the number and seriousness of the violations) for Powell River in 2014 was 62.66. This figure represents a small 4.3% increase from 2013, but a decrease of almost 20% from 2012. It is a 56.5% decrease from 1998, the earliest year for which data are available. Powell River's 2014 overall crime severity index was lower than the figures for BC (91.6) and Canada (66.7).

Drug Crimes

In 2014, the drug crime rate for every 1,000 people in the region was 5.3, which is slightly higher than the BC rate of 5.19. From 2007-2012, the Powell River drug crime rate was lower than the BC rate, but for 2013 and 2014 the Powell River rate was higher than the BC rate. It is not clear whether this data indicate an upward trend. Since 2004, the number of youth involved in drug crimes in Powell River has bobbed up and down between 5 and 18 each year.

Violent and Non-violent Crime

In 2014, both the violent and non-violent crime severity indexes for Powell River dropped over 2012, although non-

violent crime saw a small up-tick in 2013. The 2014 index was 45.92 for violent and 68.62 for non-violent crimes, down from 61.62 for violent and 84.03 for non-violent crimes in 2012. Powell River's indexes are much lower in three out of the four comparisons with BC and Canada. In 2014 the violent crime index was 77.0 in BC and 70.2 in Canada and the non-violent index was 96.8 in BC and 65.2 in Canada.

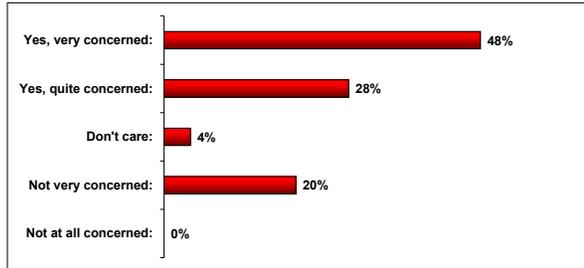
Fire!

From 2006-2012, the number of fires per 1,000 persons in the City of Powell River was between 1 and 2.5. The average over the seven years is 1.5. Compared to other BC communities in the same size range (10,000-15,000 people) we do as well or better on average (2012 rates per 1,000 for Comox, Prince Rupert, Sooke and Whistler range between 0.1 and 3.5, with an average of 1.8). Communities of a similar size in the Interior have consistently higher rates of fires, perhaps due to the hotter and drier climate. The 2012 rates per 1,000 for Dawson Creek, Summerland, Terrace and Williams Lake range between 3.4 and 4.6, with an average of 3.8. This raises concerns that our warming, drying climate on the coast will push our fire rates higher than previously seen.

Funding provided by:

From the Youth Survey ...

Are you concerned about drug and alcohol use among youth in Powell River?



While young people generally get tagged as being both reckless and free from the cares of responsibility, 76% of the young responders were quite or very concerned about drug and alcohol use among youth in Powell River, while 20% were not very concerned and only 4% didn't care.

Sustainability

Search and Rescue

In 2013, Powell River Search and Rescue received a permanent home at 6791 Drake Street thanks to support from Powell River City Council. The City property was transferred to Search and Rescue at a cost of \$1.00. SAR also successfully fundraised for a new Command Vehicle. From March 2012 to July 2013 there were 20 local incidents involving SAR and the number is increasing annually.



Emergency Preparedness Fair

In May 2015, Powell River Emergency Support Services arranged an Emergency Preparedness Fair with 37 groups and agencies, presentations, vendors and other offerings designed to help Powell River citizens become more prepared at home, school and work. Adults and children gathered information to take home, and participated in activities to help them plan ahead for possible emergencies and disasters.

Youth Focus

Bullying and Safety at School

Most Powell River students felt safe at school in 2013/14, but the pattern shows that reported bullying and teasing are on the increase for some grades. Only 85% of Grade 12's felt safe in 2013/14 compared to 91% in 2009/10. In Grade 3, 10% reported being teased or bullied in 2013/14 compared to 6% in 2009/10. In the other grades, bullying and teasing rates have held steady or dropped.

Did You Know ... ?

Wildlife Safety

WildSafe BC, a program of the BC Conservation Foundation, grew out of the previous Bear Aware program. It covers safety issues involving all kinds of wildlife. Local Community Coordinator Francine Ulmer has been energetically spreading information online and at community events and organizing workshops. Bear, cougar and even wolves are all present in the Powell River area, and we all need to know how to handle an encounter so that it ends safely for humans, pets and wildlife.



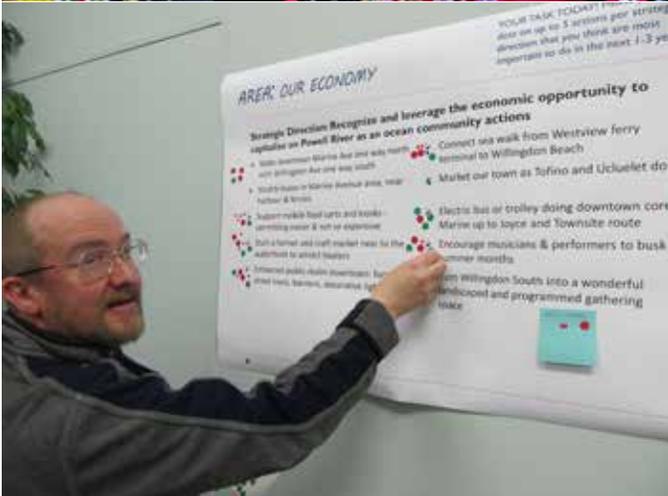


Funding provided by:



Belonging & Leadership

The more we participate, join in, volunteer, vote, and make our voices heard, the greater our feeling of belonging. And, as we contribute to the life of the community, we provide leadership to others. Powell River offers many ways to participate but not everyone finds them easily accessible.



Voter Turnout

In the 2011 federal election, voter turnout in our riding (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky) was 64.2%, 2.8 percentage points higher than the national turnout (61.4%) and 3.1 points higher than the provincial turnout (61.1%). This was a 1.3% increase from voter turnout in 2008. In the 2013 provincial election, voter turnout in the Powell River-Sunshine Coast riding was 63.24%. That's better than 59.6% in the 2009 election, and better than the provincial turnout of 55.32% in 2013. In the 2014 City elections, 4357 people out of 10764 eligible voters cast their ballots—a voter turnout of 40.47%. This was a decrease compared to 2008, with a turnout of 47.6%, but still better than 2005 with 38.8%.

donation for Powell River was \$390, which is up 30% from its 2008 level of \$300. For the same year, the median charitable donation was \$400 for BC and \$280 for Canada (amounts are in current dollars).

Sense of Belonging

78% of Powell River residents say they have a strong sense of belonging to the community. This compares with 58% for the whole Vancouver Coastal health region and 69% for BC as a whole. A survey of Inclusion Powell River clients in 2013 asked the question, "Do you feel you are part of your community?" 51% answered Yes, and 20% answered Somewhat.

Seniors Living Alone

Across all ages in Powell River, 15.1% of the population live alone, and the split by gender is quite even—14.6% of males and 15.6% of females live by themselves. The picture for seniors, however, is different. For everyone 65 and older in Powell River, 30% live alone, with 20.9% of males and 38.7% of females living by themselves.

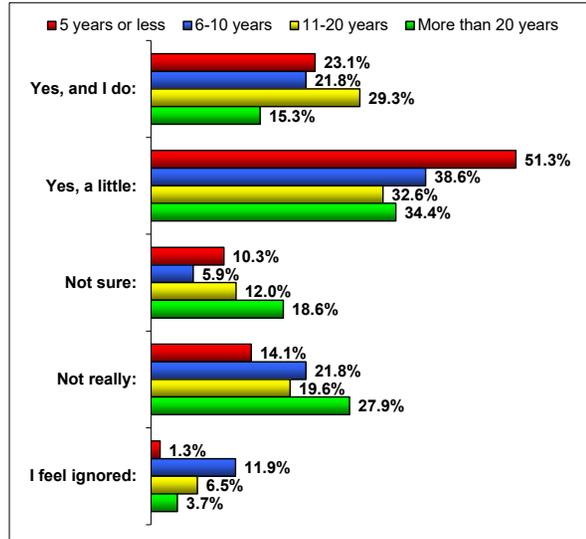
Charitable Donations

In 2013, 21.95% of people in Powell River (CA) who filed a tax return declared charitable donations, which is about the same as the national rate (21.9%) and 1.25 percentage points above the provincial rate (20.7%). This total is down 1.2 percentage points from people who claimed charitable donations in 2012 (23.2%). In 2013, the median charitable



From the Survey ...

Do you feel that you can take part in or affect important community decisions?



While overall, more than 50% of responders felt that they could affect community decisions, those feelings varied depending on how long a person lived in Powell River. People who have been here 10 years or less were most likely to feel that they play a small role in affecting decisions. Those here for 11-20 years were most likely to actively participate in community decisions. 6-10 year residents were the largest group of those who felt that they were being ignored.

Your Comments

- Clean up old vacant buildings and fill up the empty storefronts.
- Young people shouldn't have to leave to get educated and get a decent job
- Improve transparency within City Hall, especially from staff and non-elected officials
- Continue developing relations between Powell River and Tla'amin in every way possible
- Make a centralized online/searchable information bank for our community
- Turn "negative" thinking into "positive" because Powell River is a really great place
- Support people's self-reliance and reciprocity
- Help our disabled, they are suffering greatly
- Support non-profits and volunteers
- Welcome and sponsor refugee families seeking a new place to live
- Let's have more community involvement when deciding important projects
- Seriously address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations locally
- More decisive major decisions and fewer costly studies that just gather dust



Powell River's Top 5 List

In 2014, Powell River Voices carried out a "values survey" and collected 680 responses. The top five issues identified by the Powell River residents who responded were:

5. New library (in favour)
4. Sewage
3. Ferry cuts
2. Environmental concerns (e.g., logging, Texada coal terminal)
1. Jobs/economic diversification



Funding provided by:



Arts, Culture & Recreation

Opportunities in arts, culture and recreation are both offered to us and created by us. Here in Powell River, we certainly experience a wide variety of cultural and recreational interests. These activities hugely contribute to our quality of life and are extremely important to people making decisions to come here or stay here.

Employment

Arts, culture and recreation employment is increasing in Powell River, though slowly. The increase in numbers of people employed in these fields from 2006-2011 was 11.4%, from 175 to 195. The percentage of the experienced labour force employed in arts, culture, recreation and sport increased from 1.94% to 2.21%. This is still low compared with the BC rate of 3.4% and the Canada-wide rate of 2.86%, but we are closing the gap.

Lottery & Gaming Grants

In 2012-13, BC Lottery and Gaming grants provided \$85,000 for arts and culture and \$112,660 for sports. In 2013-14, arts and culture activities in Powell River received \$95,500 and sports received \$127,589. In 2014-15 the amount decreased from the prior year and Lottery and Gaming grants contributed \$88,000 to arts and culture and \$106,350 to sports.

Music on the Beach

The Celebration of the Senses at Willingdon Beach has been a feature of the annual PRISMA festival since it was

started in 2013. The popularity of the event, which features performances by the Pacific Philharmonic and the festival's guest artists, as well as other music and cultural offerings, has grown in attendance each year, from 600 in 2013 to 1200 in 2014 and to over 2000 in 2015.

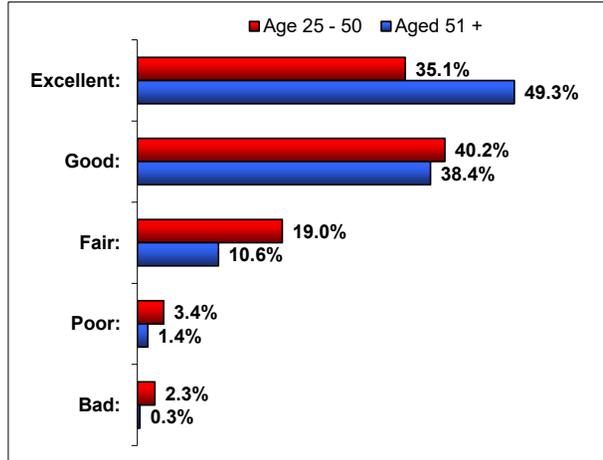
BC Bike Race

Powell River has been a stage on the BC Bike Race since 2010. We put on a big welcome for the riders as they come off the ferry at the Westview terminal, provide them with beachfront camping at Willingdon beach, and wow them with our great trails maintained by the Chain Gang, a volunteer trail building association that put in over 9,000 hours on trail maintenance in 2014. In 2015, local teacher Graham Cocksedge came in 4th in his age division—after blowing out a tire and having to run 15 km while carrying his bike! In 2014, local residents Russell and Saravie Brewer and Lyell Woloschuk participated in the race.



From the Survey ...

How do you rate the amount and variety of arts, cultural, and recreation activities that you enjoy in Powell River?



People aged over 50 were much more likely to say that the activities they enjoy locally are excellent, while those under 50 were more likely to describe their enjoyment of activities as Fair or worse.

Did You Know ... ?

Audio and Video at the Library

Watch and Listen: in 2013 the Powell River Public Library had 2,996 videos and DVDs, and 1,970 general circulation audio materials.

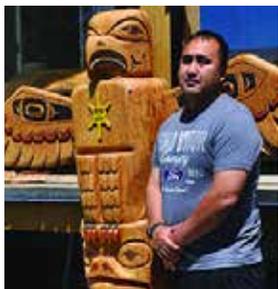
Youth Focus

Bike/Skate Park

Powell River's Bike and Skate Park at the Recreation Complex opened on March 7, 2015 after a long process of advocacy, fund-finding, and building. The park includes dirt and some concrete-surfaced ride-lines geared to everyone from beginner to advanced, with many jumps and skill-building features. Kids and adults have given the park a heavy workout since—and even before—it opened.

Your Comments

- Update Evergreen Theatre
- Turn Powell River into an arts destination.
- More events for families at the Complex.
- An art school and public art gallery
- More places for youth, such as water park or rock climbing
- Need more nature/fitness groups/clubs for all ages
- More public art
- Low or no-cost social opportunities
- More local neighbourhood events and activities
- Arts are fine and dandy, but we're spending too many community dollars on it
- Increase signage for all area points of interest—the Sunshine Coast Trail signs are an excellent start
- Subsidies for children's sports—they're expensive
- More outdoor music events



Kathaumixw Totem Pole

At the Kathaumixw choral festival of 2014, the grand prize for the "Choir of the World" was a totem pole created by local Tla'amin carver Craig Galligos. In May 2015 the pole, representatives of the Academy of Music and the Tla'amin Nation, Mayor Dave Formosa and filmmaker Claudia Medina all travelled to the home of the winning choir, St. Stanislav's Youth Choir, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where the pole was presented at a gala concert. The pole now lives in the atrium of the St. Stanislav's Institute in Ljubljana.

Getting Around

Given the history and sprawling layout of our community, it is not surprising that driving still prevails as our main form of transportation. Other ways of getting around are important to our future, though, and we are making headway in increasing our use of bikes, buses and walking.



Ferry Fares

Ferry fares continue to increase at warp speed pace, well above the overall rate of inflation. For a family of four travelling in a car with two children (one between 5 and 11 years old and one over 11) in January 2010, the roundtrip ferry fare to Vancouver was \$158.50. By April 2015, the fare for this family had risen to \$209.98. That's an increase of 32.5% in five years. The roundtrip fare between Powell River and Comox for the same family of four was \$157.60 in January 2010. By April 2015, the fare had gone up to \$203.44, an increase of 29% in five years. For the Texada Island route, the fare for the family was \$50.60 in January 2010 and \$65.19 in April 2015—also a 29% increase.

Bike Lanes

After much hard work by local groups, individuals and local government staff, Powell River now has bike lanes! In the Regional District, 4.3 km of bike lanes have been built since 2013 on Padgett Rd and Gillies Bay Rd. The City built 6.7 km of bike lanes on Duncan St and Manson Ave in 2015.

Transit Ridership

In 2012/13, total ridership was 183,355 on the scheduled City bus routes (Nos. 1, 2 and 3), 8,633 on the rural routes (Nos. 12, 13 and 14), and 9,596 on HandyDART and supplemental taxi. Ridership on conventional buses has increased by nearly 60% since 2004-5, although it has dropped slightly since a peak in 2011-12. Changes in ridership track very closely with increases and decreases

in service hours, and anecdotally correspond to large changes in gas prices as seen in 2008. HandyDART ridership has increased by almost 65% since 2004-5, and BC Transit's 2014 review reports that HandyDART demand exceeds capacity.

Getting to Work

In 2011, in the Powell River region, 84.8% of workers got to work by car (77.7 as driver and 7.1 as passenger), while 2.4% used public transit, 7.8% walked and 2% cycled. These numbers show increases in use of transit, bike and bus modes over 2006. While our transit usage is well below BC and Canada averages of 13.5% and 12.7% respectively, more of us walk (BC 7.4%, Canada 6.2%) and we're catching up rapidly in the numbers who cycle (BC 2.3%, Canada 1.4%).

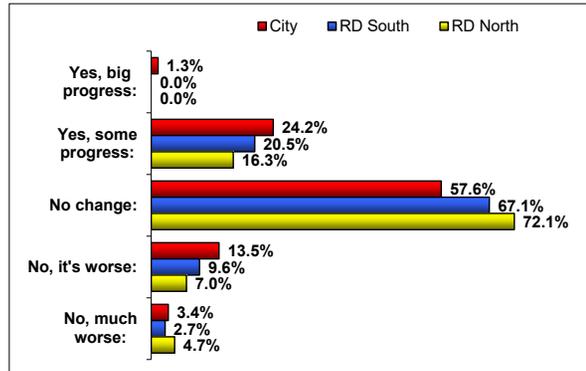
Did You Know ... ?

Trail Sounds and Stories

Powell River has a new series of audio walks related to the places and spaces around our community. The recordings, created by a collaboration of Powell River Division of Family Practice, Tourism Powell River, Powell River Cycling Association, PREP Society and Powell River Diversity Initiative, present not only the features of some of Powell River's most beloved areas, including Valentine Mountain, Willingdon Beach Trail, the Sea Walk and Willingdon Creek Trail, but also integrate themes of art and transportation.

From the Survey ...

Over the last four years, has it become easier in Powell River to get around without using a car or truck?

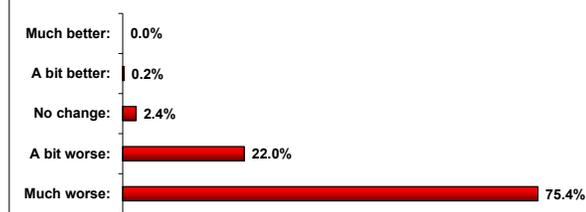


Wherever they live, responders are most likely to say that there's been no change in needing a car and truck to get around. Those who saw some progress outnumbered those who thought matters were worse.

Your Comments

- Safe walking and cycling routes
- Smaller buses, bigger routes, more frequent schedules
- Better prices and schedule on BC ferries
- Make ferry service equal to highways
- More affordable transportation in and out of the city
- Bus route to the Complex
- Quit blaming the ferries for everything
- Low rate resident ferry card
- Mandatory licencing for motorized scooters
- Workable connecting schedule between ferries
- More public transportation north and south of town
- Besides ferries and flying, we need a road
- Better access for seniors who can no longer drive
- Develop electric vehicle network
- Put roundabouts where no one stops at stop signs

Compared to four years ago, do you think the ferries are serving Powell River at a price everyone can afford?



In the 2011 *Vital Signs* report, over 80% of survey responders felt that the ferry system would not meet their future needs. This year, over 97% of respondents said that the situation has gotten worse since then.



Trailriders Bring Everyone on Board

Powell River Mobility Opportunities Society (PRMOS) brings together volunteers and people with mobility challenges to enjoy hikes and other activities. They use "Trailriders"—one-wheel contraptions with a human carrier at front and back that conducts a mobility-challenged person safely into areas where wheelchairs and scooters cannot go, even in the snow! PRMOS has also brought up a paddleboard from Vancouver, which takes a wheelchair, for a visit to Powell Lake.





Funding provided by:



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604-485-2771

Food

Food is a basic need, but we're increasingly disconnected from its production. The recent notion that it will magically and dependably appear on the supermarket shelf may be a risky one in light of climate change and economic factors. Bringing some food production back makes sense, if we can ensure easy, affordable access to nutritious food that's grown here.

The Cost of Food

The average cost of the 2013 nutritious food basket in BC for a reference family of four was \$914/month. This is an increase in cost of \$46/month between 2011 and 2013, or 5.3% over the two years. Powell River's costs are calculated as part of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, but food prices for that area are skewed by the cheaper food in the Greater Vancouver area. For the Island Health Authority, the same food basket cost \$873 in 2011 and \$948 in 2013, an increase of \$75 or 8.6% over the two years.

Are You Getting Your Fruit and Veggies?

According to the "My Health My Community" survey, 35.3% of Powell Riverites report eating 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables per day. This compares favourably to 32.2% for the Coastal Rural health region, and 27.2% for the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We're bucking a downward trend. 2014 Census data from the Canadian Community Health Survey show that the percentage of people eating 5+ fruit and vegetable servings per day has decreased since 2010 in Canada by 3.8 percentage points, in BC by 2.6 points and in the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi health region by 17.6 points.

Hobby Farms?

There is a perception that many of the small farms in Powell River are "hobby farms" and not to be taken seriously. The 2011 Census of Agriculture lets us see how many farmers have off-farm jobs and how much time

they spend at them. Powell River region farm operators are a little more likely to work off the farm—57.1% of farm operators in our region report paid off-farm work, compared with 53% for BC and 46.9% Canada-wide. Those who do work off the farm spend less time at it—21.4% report working less than 20 hrs/week off the farm, compared to 10.1% for BC and 8.6% for Canada. 7.1% in Powell River report working away from the farm for 30-40 hrs/wk compared to 15.8% for BC and 13.7% for Canada.

Where Do We Buy Our food?

In 2015, the Society for the Advancement of Local Sustainable Agriculture (SALSA) carried out a local agriculture survey in Powell River. Even though 82% of 194 respondents said that they grow some of their own food, large supermarkets are still the #1 place to buy food for 74% of them. Local grocers like Mitchell Bros and Ecosentials are the most popular second choice.

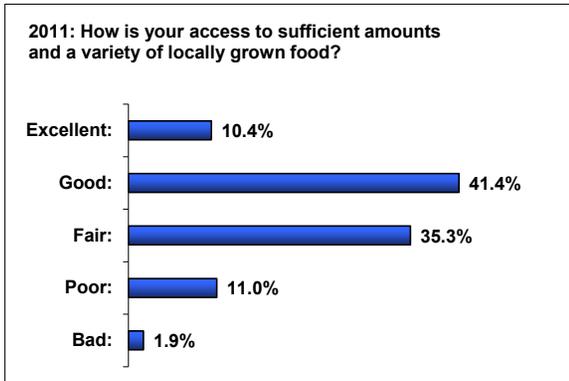
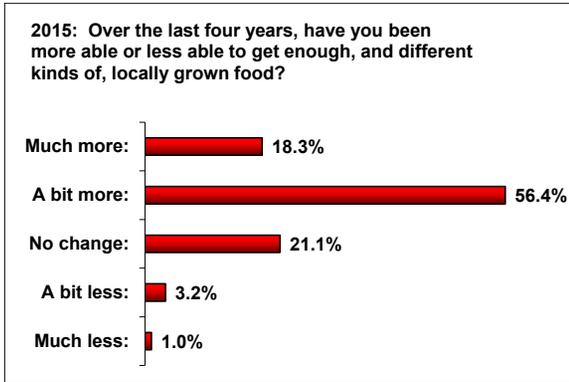
Sustainability

Backyard Chickens

In December 2012, amendments to the Animal Control Bylaw in the City allowed for the keeping of up to three poultry (but no roosters) on most lots. This enhancement was the result of a multi-year process, starting with the "Hens in the Hood" project in 2010 and involving many groups and individuals in the City, an Urban Livestock Committee of the PR Farmers Institute, a new City Planner, and a public hearing.



From the Survey ...



In the last four years, nearly 75% of responders felt that their access to local food had improved.

Youth Focus

What Are Youth Eating?

In 2013, adolescents were surveyed on what they ate yesterday. 84% had eaten fruit, 82% vegetables, 22% traditional foods and 26% food grown or caught by them or their family. On the other hand, 77% had eaten sweets, 27% fast food, and 32% soda.

Your Comments

- Need more places to buy locally grown food
- Donate land for Community Farm use
- Support farmers who serve the community and build relationships with customers
- Let's get with Full Circle Farm with all that that entails, including getting students involved
- Allow more poultry in the back yard
- Support local food initiatives
- Encourage local, organic gardening
- Support and provide resources for new farmers to attract them to the community
- Locally grown and organic food is too expensive for a lot of residents
- We need a real venue for farmers to sell their goods to the public
- Food is getting too costly
- Give low income seniors tokens to be used at the Farmer's Market



Food Systems Assessment

Powell River's Food Security Project (part of PREP Society) is conducting a Community Food System Assessment of the regional food system. Information is being collected on topics such as the affordability of healthy food, access to food outlets, barriers to local food production, health and nutrition in schools, emergency preparedness, and food waste management. The final report, to be available in early 2016, will provide an overview of the current food system and identify key opportunities and actions to improve local food security. Contact fsp@prepsociety.org for more information.

Support Your Community Foundation

Powell River cares. It has an exceptionally high number of volunteers who generously share their time and resources. Hundreds of community organizations enrich our arts and culture, provide recreational and social opportunities for youth and seniors, help new newcomers and immigrants, improve economic conditions, advance farming and agriculture, create affordable housing, assist disabled and disadvantaged residents, safeguard the environment, help our hospital and contribute in countless other ways.

We individually do what we can to donate regularly to these groups that keep our community thriving. But, contributing in this way has three shortcomings. First, individuals and businesses just don't have the financial wherewithal to donate to all of the worthy organizations in our town. Second, when there is an economic downturn and things are toughest for those in need, times are also hard for donors—the flow of money slows and sometimes dries up. Third, our donations stop after we die, even though the need continues.

That's where the Powell River Community Foundation comes in. Year after year, the Foundation builds up a community endowment so it can make grants to charities to supplement the gifts from other donors and continue to make donations in years when individuals and businesses don't have extra funds. And, it keeps going for the next generation when the prior one passes on.

A community foundation makes it easy to build a lasting source of charitable funds to be used locally. Here is how it works. Residents donate to the Powell River Community Foundation, in addition to what they give to the other great causes they support. It can be a few dollars, a few hundred dollars or a larger amount. Donors can give once or make regular contributions. They can put a bequest in their wills. People or businesses with more resources can establish named funds within the foundation, as First Credit Union, Crossroads Village Shopping Centre, the

Graeme Cooper Family and an anonymous donor have already done.

No matter how you give, the Foundation will put your donation into the permanent community endowment and make grants **only** from the money earned each year. We never touch the donations, so they keep growing and growing. In that way, your donation will be a lasting legacy that will do good for today and tomorrow, and will keep on giving 50, 75 and even 100 years from now.

The Powell River Community Foundation awards grants to a wide variety of charities. That is another special feature of a community foundation—our grant-making is 100% local. In the 14 years since its founding, the Powell River Community Foundation has given out over a quarter million dollars in grants for seniors' housing, women's shelters, women's health, music, art, film, museums, heritage activities, animal rescue, ambulance services, cancer recovery, disabled persons, poverty law, salmon enhancement, playgrounds, public fitness, land trusts, local sports and youth activities. The grants to organizations for these purposes make a real difference to the lives of people in Powell River.

Visit www.prcommunityfoundation.com to find out more. Another good beginning step is to talk to your accountant, lawyer or other adviser. Feel free to give us a call at (604) 483-8678 or send us a message at info@prcommunityfoundation.com to discuss one of the most important ways to give back to the community. You'll be talking to a neighbour whose interest is the same as yours—how to make and keep Powell River a vital community. You'll be happy to have started the conversation.

Your Powell River Community Foundation is working for our community today, and we'll still be here for your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and beyond. That's the advantage of a community foundation



For good. For ever.

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to the 60 community experts who consulted on specific issue areas for the report. Please visit Powell River's Vital Signs website, prvs.ca, for their names and affiliations.

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Powell River's Vital Signs is published by:



Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and supports action on issues that are critical to our quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.



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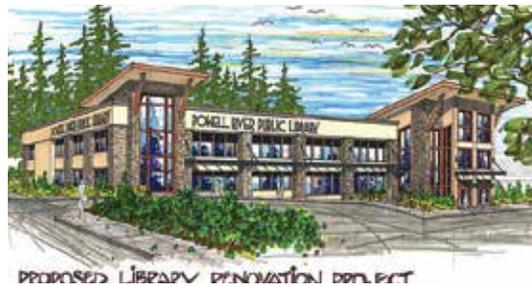
Powell River Town Centre

School District No. 47



Futurevest Investment Corporation, owners of **Crossroads Village Shopping Centre**, is proud to support the Powell River Community Foundation and the *Vital Signs* Report. Giving back to the community that supports us is an important value for our company.

The Powell River Community Foundation supports charities and community organizations. **Crossroads Village Shopping Centre** is proud to have two of its partners sit on the Foundation's board of directors to enhance its work and help it grow. As it grows, it will do even more to improve the lives of Powell Riverites. The Powell River Community Foundation is here "for good, for ever" and will leave a lasting legacy.



Crossroads Village

Shopping Centre

Crossroads Village Shopping Centre is a great place for businesses and community engagement. We thank Powell River and our tenants for working with us to make the mall an important centre of activity.

We are excited to have the new Public Library join **Crossroads Village Shopping Centre** and further contribute to our sense of community.