

THRIVING CRITICAL

2008

CALGARY'S

VitalSigns[®]

TAKING THE PULSE OF CALGARY



THE CALGARY
FOUNDATION
FOR CALGARY FOREVER

WHAT IS CALGARY'S VITAL SIGNS?

A CITIZEN'S REPORT CARD ON CALGARY

A LOOK AT 12 KEY ISSUE AREAS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

CALGARYVITALSIGNS.CA

Calgary's *Vital Signs* was launched by The Calgary Foundation in 2007 to spark discussion, encourage connections and inspire action, provides a snapshot of Calgary that tells it like it is – highlighting both areas of concern and celebration.

Along with Calgary's economic prosperity comes the importance of stepping back and taking the pulse of our community so we as citizens can better respond to both the opportunities and the challenges.

CALGARY UNCOVERED

- ❑ **SAFETY** – CALGARY LEADS THE COUNTRY IN RATES OF DOMESTIC ASSAULTS. HOWEVER, AFTER REHABILITATIVE TREATMENT, 67% OF OFFENDERS DON'T RE-OFFEND.
- ❑ **LEARNING** – IN 2006, THE PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT RANKED ALBERTA STUDENTS 2ND IN THE WORLD IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.
- ❑ **WORK** – IN 2007, CALGARY HAD THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF SMALL BUSINESS (LESS THAN 50 EMPLOYEES) PER CAPITA IN CANADA.
- ❑ **GETTING STARTED** – ALMOST 50% OF EMPLOYED IMMIGRANTS WHO COME TO ALBERTA WITH POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS ARE NOT UTILIZING THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE IN THEIR JOBS.
- ❑ **SUSTAINABLE CITY** – CALGARY TRANSIT CARRIES OVER 500,000 PASSENGERS EVERY BUSINESS DAY – 270,000 ON THE CTRAIN ALONE – THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA NUMBER OF PASSENGERS OF ANY LIGHT RAIL TRAIN SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA.
- ❑ **VALUING DIVERSITY** – WITH AN AVERAGE WAGE OF \$14.00/HOUR, THERE IS A 40% STAFF TURNOVER RATE IN THE COMMUNITY DSABILITY SERVICE SECTOR AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS HAS DECLINED BY 20%.



LEARNING B

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: proportion of the population who have not completed high school, proportion with post secondary education, internet use and aboriginal educational attainment.

Calgary is one of the most highly educated cities in the country with positive trends for high school completion and aboriginal educational attainment that are above the national average.



BOUNDLESS
 LIMITED

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, 69% of Calgary's aboriginal population aged 15 and older graduated with at least one certificate, diploma or degree, up from 63% in 2001.

CHALLENGE

In 2007, 15% of Calgarians (aged 15 and over) had not completed high school.

GETTING STARTED C+

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: proportion of foreign born in population, languages spoken at home, english as a second language, immigrant unemployment rate and median income of recent immigrants.

Almost 50% of employed immigrants who come to Alberta have post secondary credentials but despite these qualifications, their average income is 63% lower than non-immigrants.



OPPORTUNITIES
 OBSTACLES

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, Calgary's foreign-born population was 252,770 representing 24% of the total population, up from 21% in 2001.

CHALLENGE

The median total family income of recent immigrants in 2005 in Calgary was \$55,273.

ENVIRONMENT C-

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: air quality, recycling rate, households that composted kitchen or yard waste, pesticide use and bow river water quality.

While Calgary has among the best air quality of major Canadian cities and the quality of our main water source is good, many are concerned about the 82% of Calgarians who don't compost and the lack of a city wide recycling program.



REUSE
 WASTE

ACHIEVEMENT

Calgary has among the best air quality of major Canadian cities with no days of above threshold levels of ozone in 2006, the same levels as in 2001.

CHALLENGES

In 2006, 85% of households in Calgary had access to a recycling program, below the national average of 93%.

In 2006, 18% of all households in Calgary reported that they composted, lower than the Canada-wide rate of 27%.

HEALTH & WELLNESS C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: obesity rate, physical activity during leisure time, mental health, family physicians, best health index and problem gambling.

Calgary has one of the highest rates of good mental health in Canada and continues to be one of the most physically active cities but our challenges continue to be access to timely health care and physicians.



FIT
 FLABBY

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2007, 56% of Calgarians aged 12 and over reported being moderately active or physically active compared to 49% nationally continuing to be one of the most physically active cities in Canada.

In 2007, 79% of those aged 12 and over in the Calgary Health Region reported excellent or very good mental health – compared to 73% nationally – one of the highest rates in the country.

CHALLENGE

In 2006, there were 112 general/family physicians per 100,000 population in Calgary.

HOUSING D

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: rental vacancy rate, household spending on shelter, average housing price in relation to median family income, minimum housing wage and homelessness.

The lack of affordable housing options and an 18% increase in homelessness are major challenges for our city. Without spending more than 30% of gross income, 23% of employed Calgarians cannot afford the \$1100 average monthly rent for an apartment.



AFFORDABLE
 IMPOSSIBLE

CHALLENGES

In 2005, 39% of households spent 30% or more of their income on rent and 19% of homeowners spent 30% or more of their income on shelter which was higher than the national average of 18%.

In 2006, the average house cost 4.2 years of annual income for the median family.

In 2008, there is 4,060 homeless in Calgary, an 18% increase over 2006, with 3,195 in facilities, 296 counted by service agencies, and an estimated 569 people living on the streets.

ARTS & CULTURE C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: attendance at cultural events, household spending on arts and culture, civic public art investment and visual and performing art spaces.

Based on spending, attendance, and municipal investment in public art, Calgarians support a vibrant arts scene but the shortage of visual/performing art spaces doesn't allow new organizations to establish and existing arts groups to grow.



INSPIRED
 INDIFFERENT

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, Calgarians spent an average of \$1,484 on arts – up 18% from 2005. Calgary households spent more than the provincial average of \$1,250 and the Canada-wide average of \$948.

CHALLENGE

A 2007 study conducted by Calgary Arts Development Authority, determined that the number (23) of significant visual/performing arts spaces is critically low.

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, Calgary experienced 243 criminal code traffic offences per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 368.

CHALLENGE

In 2007, the Calgary Police Service received 12,276 domestic violence calls. Over the past five years, more than 27% of all homicides in Calgary have been domestic in nature.



SECURE
 VULNERABLE

SAFETY C –

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: criminal code traffic offences, traffic deaths, domestic violence, perception of safety and workplace injuries.

Statistics show crime rates falling, but many Calgarians feel less safe. The discouraging news is that our domestic violence rates are the highest in Canada but the encouraging news is the re-offence rate amongst those that have undergone treatment is low.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2007, Calgary had the highest number of small businesses (employing less than 50 people) in Canada, accounting for 94% of all Calgary businesses with employees.

The number of Calgary head offices increased from 68 in 2002 to 109 in 2006, the highest concentration of head offices in Canada.

CHALLENGE

Calgary has business costs that are 2% higher than other comparable cities.



PROSPERITY
 PRESSURE

WORK B

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: employment growth, small business per capita, corporate head offices, cost competitiveness and work absence.

Calgary enjoys a low unemployment rate, a high number of small businesses per capita and the highest concentration of head offices in Canada but a growing challenge is rising business costs.

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, 22% of Calgary's population were visible minorities, higher than the national proportion of 16% and the provincial proportion of 14% of the population. Calgary saw an increase of 44% in the visible minority population between 2001 and 2006.

CHALLENGES

In a recent study of people with physical disabilities, 46% weren't living in accessible housing and 73% have annual income of less than \$25,000.



RESPECT
 IGNORE

VALUING DIVERSITY C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: share of elderly in population, accessible city, proportion of the population classified as a visible minority and proportion of single-parent families.

Making the city accessible for all by welcoming and integrating our increasingly diverse citizens and supporting the well-being of the most vulnerable including developmentally challenged or low income Calgarians are priorities for our city.

ACHIEVEMENT

In 2008, Calgary had 54 projects registered with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard – 49 registered for certification and 5 projects certified. Over 2,173 Built Green™ homes have been constructed since 2004.

CHALLENGES

Calgary has one of the highest vehicle ownership per capita in Canada, with 4 cars for every 5 people.

In 2006, the median commuting distance to work in Calgary was 8.2 km, higher than the national and provincial average of 7.6 km.



DRIVE
 RIDE

SUSTAINABLE CITY C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: green buildings, household energy conservation, registered vehicles per capita, median commuting distance and average time and Calgary's attractiveness.

Calgary is leading the country in the number of green building projects registered with the Canada Green Building Council's LEED Standard and Built Green™ but our dependence on cars and the growing commuting distance is our greatest challenge.

ACHIEVEMENT

Calgarians average charitable contribution in 2006 was \$320, 28% higher than the national average of \$250.

CHALLENGE

Voter turnout for municipal elections was 33% in 2007, lower than the 46% and 38% in 1998 and 2001 respectively. It's been more than 30 years since 50% of Calgarians cast a municipal ballot vote.



BYSTANDER
 PARTICIPANT

BELONGING & LEADERSHIP C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: voter turnout, median charitable donors, sense of community belonging and community spirit.

Calgarians are more charitable than the national average, but our municipal voting rates continue to decline and with many Calgarians working long hours, our sense of community belonging is slightly lower than the rest of Canada.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Calgarians are the most affluent Canadians, with the highest wages/employee in Canada for the past seven years, and the highest average personal income at \$52,922 in 2007.

Calgary is home to the highest number of millionaires in Canada on a per capita basis. (183 per 100,000 in 2005).

CHALLENGE

An Albertan, working full time at minimum wage of \$8.40 per hour (the seventh lowest rate in Canada) would have a before-tax income of \$18,171 which is \$3,031 below Statistics Canada's 2006 Low Income Cut-Off.



PRIVILEGED
 STRUGGLING

GAP BETWEEN RICH & POOR C

This grade is derived from the grades taken for the following indicators: child poverty, elderly poverty rate, individual income, millionaires per capita and living on minimum wage.

Ensuring low income earners are able to support their basic needs is of deep concern; 6.5% of Calgarians earn less than \$25,000 annually and overall debt climbed at a higher rate than income.

KEY ISSUE AREA	PRIORITY
SUSTAINABLE CITY	COMMUTE TIME AND DISTANCE
SAFETY	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
LEARNING	HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUT RATE
ARTS & CULTURE	INADEQUATE ART SPACES
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	ACCESS TO FAMILY PHYSICIANS
WORK	COST COMPETITIVENESS
GAP BETWEEN RICH & POOR	LIVING ON MINIMUM WAGE
GETTING STARTED	IMMIGRANT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
BELONGING & LEADERSHIP	VOTER TURNOUT
HOUSING	HOMELESSNESS
ENVIRONMENT	RECYCLING RATE
VALUING DIVERSITY	ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

METHODOLOGY

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP GROUP

Representatives from key Calgary organizations provided expert advice to ensure Calgary's Vital Signs report is an effective vehicle for showing emerging trends and priorities for Calgary.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION TABLES

A cross section of 230 community members attended workshops to provide guidance in identifying and selecting indicators in 12 key issue areas.

CITIZEN GRADERS

Hundreds of Calgarians signed up to be graders, assigning grades to the 4 – 5 indicators in 12 key issue areas.

PROFILE OF GRADERS

- 78% have lived in Calgary for more than 10 years
- 68% are female
- 28% are between ages 19 and 34
- 49% are between ages 35 and 54
- 23% are over age 65

INDEX OF GRADING

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

RESEARCH

RESEARCH NETWORK

Sustainable Calgary, along with 20 local indicator and issues research experts, ensured the indicators for Calgary's *Vital Signs* were relevant, accurate and comprehensive. **Community Foundations of Canada**, who retained the Centre for the Study of Living Standards to undertake national research, provided additional expertise.

SURVEY

The Praxis Group executed the online survey. Registration was open to all Calgarians.

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Photography

ARTS & CULTURE: Sculpture on-loan from the Benefic Foundation. Image courtesy of Glenbow Museum and TORODE Group of Companies. Photo: Chris Bolin.
SUSTAINABLE CITY: Photo: Daniel Buchanan
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Established in 1955, The Calgary Foundation assists donors in creating a giving and caring community by applying its resources, expertise and leadership, in partnership with others, to identify needs address issues in the Calgary and area community. With over 900 Endowment Funds established, the Foundation strengthens the charitable Sector through knowledgeable grantmaking in the areas of Arts & Heritage, Human Services, Education, Environment, Health and Neighbourhoods through knowledgeable grantmaking.

thecalgaryfoundation.org

Vital Signs is an annual community check-up that is conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities, identifies significant trends, and assigns grades in at least ten areas critical to quality of life. *Vital Signs* is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

Vital Signs reports are published by 15 community foundations across Canada can be viewed at vitalsignscanada.ca



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