



NEWS RELEASE

Victoria, B.C. Oct. 4, 2011 – Victoria residents are concerned about the cost of living but love the natural amenities of their community. They are still wed to their cars for commuting, report better mental health than they did last year, but say they are involved in less physical activity.

These are some of the results from the [2011 Vital Signs](#), an annual community report card produced by The Victoria Foundation. The report is a combination of public opinion and statistics that provides a snapshot of livability and well-being in Greater Victoria.

This is the sixth year the foundation has produced *Victoria's Vital Signs*, which is sponsored by [Island Savings Credit Union](#). It is the fourth year survey respondents were asked to identify what they think are the most [important issues](#) facing Greater Victoria today. For the first time since the question was asked, cost of living moved ahead of homelessness to top the list. Addictions, housing and mental illness followed as the third, fourth and fifth areas of concern.

This year respondents were asked for the first time to list the [best things about Greater Victoria](#). Natural environment, climate, walkability, air quality, and festivals and events were the top five answers.

“It appears we love where we live and what it offers us,” said [Sandra Richardson, CEO of the Victoria Foundation](#). Richardson said *Vital Signs* has become a critical tool in helping the foundation identify causes that matter to Victorians.

“It has helped us understand our community like never before - highlighting needs and opportunities and assisting our foundation to make impactful grants.”

The statistics reported in Vital Signs demonstrate some [indicators](#) are improving while others are staying the same or falling behind. For example, there is less [property crime](#), less garbage going into Hartland Landfill, and a larger number of people who report enjoying good mental health. Meanwhile, the percentage of [commuters driving cars](#) has stayed the same, as has revenue from tourism.

Trends that are worsening include: more children in government care and more [living in poverty](#), higher [housing costs](#) as a percentage of income – especially for young people – and fewer people reporting regular physical activity.

Despite this last fact, residents of southern Vancouver Island are bucking a national trend that is seeing obesity rates rise.

Victoria Foundation board chair Steve McKerrell said the kind of information tracked in *Vital Signs* can help both individuals and organizations in making funding, donating and policy decisions.

“The *Vital Signs* initiative helps keep us in touch and on track,” he said. “And as we celebrate our foundation’s 75th anniversary this year, initiatives like *Vital Signs* demonstrate the ways we continue to build traction for organizations that do good work in the community – in perpetuity.”

The *Vital Signs*® report is part of a nation-wide initiative, coordinated by [Community Foundations of Canada](#). A total of 22 community foundations across Canada released local *Vital Signs*® report cards today.

Victoria’s *Vital Signs* report, as well as source information and links, is available at: www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca

This year, results of the Youth Vital Signs survey will be released in a separate report sponsored by the TELUS Victoria Community Board. The report will be released at the [TED-X Youth Conference](#) Nov. 20.

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Note: See also the [report](#) on arts and culture economic activity in Greater Victoria, released Sept. 29.

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