HEALTHY CITY FOR ALL

Goal: Being and Feeling Safe and Included

Vancouver is a safe city in which residents feel secure.

Healthy City for All Targets

- ❑ By 2025: increase Vancouver residents' sense of belonging by 10 per cent.
- ❑ By 2025: increase Vancouver residents' sense of safety by 10 per cent.
- ❑ By 2025: make Vancouver the safest major city in Canada by reducing violent and property crime every year, including sexual assault and domestic violence.

Indicators in this Fact Sheet

- Safety, Inclusion and Vulnerability
- Sense of Inclusion
- Sense of Safety
- Reported Property and Violent Crime

Key Findings

- Safety and inclusion are realized within a **context of societal inequities**, requiring systemic change.
- Metro Vancouver residents are **less likely to feel safe** than people across Canada.
- Metro Vancouver has the **highest reported crime rate** of Canada's five largest metropolitan regions.
- However, reported crime rates in the City of Vancouver have **generally declined** recently.

Why it Matters

A sense that we belong, that we are included and that we are safe in our communities are vital parts of our well-being. A feeling that we are truly a part of our community, however we may choose to define it, can help shape our personal identities and influence our level of participation in society. A strong sense of belonging is associated with better self-reported physical and mental health. On the other end of the spectrum, social exclusion means that individuals or groups are denied the opportunity for full economic and social participation in society.

Whether threats to our safety are actual or perceived, they can have powerful and lasting impacts on our personal and collective well-being. Feelings of fear and vulnerability can cause chronic stress, lower our self-confidence and decrease our sense of control over our lives. When a neighbourhood or a city is perceived as unsafe, its residents may withdraw from interactions with one another, thus undermining the community's social cohesion.

Our society is not yet equitable, safe or inclusive for all. Perceptions of safety intersect with vulnerability, marginalization and oppression. Vancouver is a place in which many individuals and groups are excluded from mainstream society, and in which people are systemically excluded based on a number of factors. Formal equality is not the same thing as full inclusion. Achieving a healthy city for all—in which all people experience inclusion, belonging and safety—will require collaborative efforts to build a more equitable city.
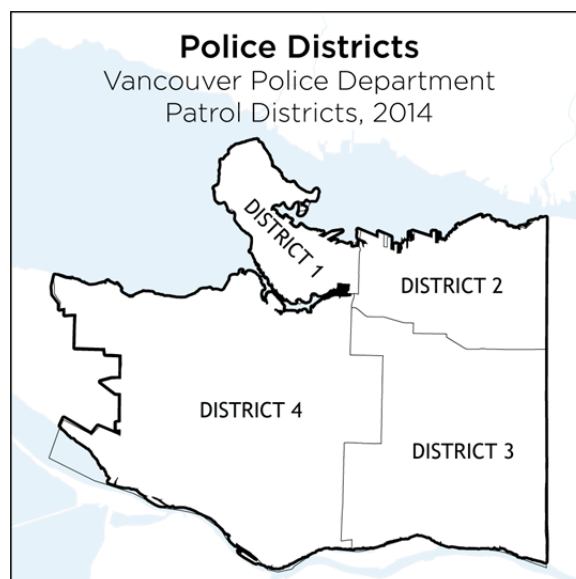
About This Fact Sheet

This series reports on social indicators and trends related to the 12 long-term goals of the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy. More information on the Strategy is available online at **vancouver.ca/healthycity4all**. **Being and Feeling Safe** sets targets for crime reduction, but also for fostering a sense of belonging, inclusion, safety and security among all Vancouverites, including those marginalized by policy, practice and privilege.

Social research is always imprecise and uncertain. Collaboration, replication and information sharing are crucial to building a more complete and rigorous picture of health and well-being in Vancouver. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback, ask questions and to engage in exploring and interpreting the information presented here.

Areas of Study

Information in this fact sheet is presented for a number of different geographies. Comparisons between Vancouver and other municipalities generally refer to individual local governments, as defined by Statistics Canada's census subdivisions. Comparisons between Metro Vancouver and other regions refer to census metropolitan areas. Within the City of Vancouver, this fact sheet provides information organized in two ways, illustrated below:

The map above left illustrates the 22 local planning areas used by the City of Vancouver. Readers should note that the Dunbar-Southlands local area includes the Musqueam First Nation community, and that Stanley Park is not included in any local area.

The Vancouver Police Department divides the city into four patrol districts, illustrated on the map above right. The boundaries for these districts often, but not always, coincide with local area boundaries.

Engaging with Data Sources

Sources used are noted in each section of this fact sheet. Key online resources include:

- Extensive statistics, surveys and other reports are available from the Vancouver Police Department at **vancouver.ca/police**. Additionally, block-by-block statistics for some crimes are published in the City of Vancouver's open data catalogue at **data.vancouver.ca**.
- The Vancouver Foundation's *Connections and Engagement - a Survey of Metro Vancouver*, conducted in June 2012, provides a wealth of information on Metro Vancouverites' engagement in their neighbourhoods and communities. Extensive reporting and discussion can be found online at **vancouverfoundation.ca/initiatives/connections-and-engagement**.

Indicator: Safety, Inclusion and Vulnerability

Perceptions of safety and inclusion are linked to broader societal inequities. Crime statistics are not neutral, and fully addressing safety requires understanding broader societal structures.

The decision to report crimes is influenced by many factors. In a 2012 Vancouver Police Department survey, 66 percent of business crimes and 62 per cent of residential crimes experienced by respondents in the previous 12 months had been reported. A variety of reasons are cited for not reporting crime. The most frequently reported reason in the VPD survey was that the crime was too small, followed by a feeling that the police could not do anything about it.

A 2011 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report found that age, gender, ethnicity, location, social status, marital status, physical ability and social network affect people's sense of safety and levels of victimization. These factors affect both actual exposure to crime and whether someone feels like a target.

Reporting Crime
Crimes Experienced that Were
Reported, 2009-2012 VPD Survey

Internationally, Canada ranks very highly overall for sense of safety compared to other OECD countries. However, Canada, BC and Vancouver have specific and high-profile examples of how a sense of safety can be privileged, and how marginalization and vulnerability in society play out in violence and victimization. The case of the missing and murdered women in the Downtown Eastside is an important example.

It is important to understand how particular groups experience vulnerability and oppression. Violence against women, particularly sexual violence, remains a pressing issue. Statistics Canada reports show that rates of sexual assaults are much higher for women than for men, and that nearly half of violent crimes against women are committed by an intimate partner. Moreover, social stigma and a lack of support can mean that many gendered crimes, such as sexual assaults, are likely to go unreported.

People's identities are intersectional: they may experience a number of different forms of oppression and marginalization. Navigating the complexities of identities—and achieving safety and inclusion for all—requires addressing discrimination in all its forms; acknowledging differential levels in power and privilege; and committing to a society that is inclusive, equitable and moving toward justice.
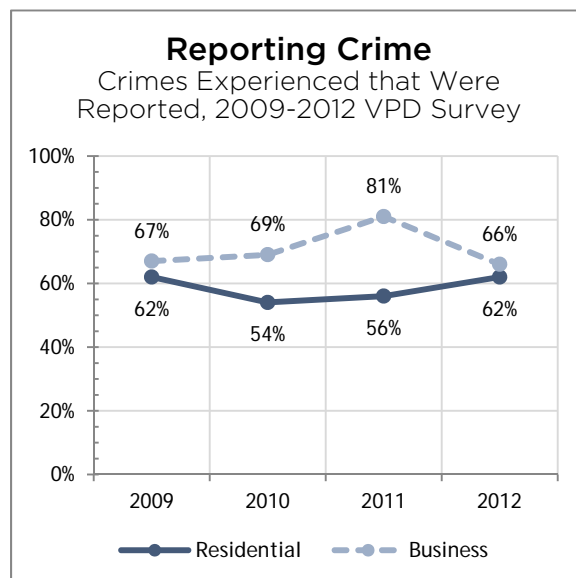
Data Sources

The Vancouver Police Department conducts annual surveys of residents and businesses, available at **vancouver.ca/police/about/publications**.

The OECD's report *How's Life? Measuring Wellbeing* (2011) provides an overview of indicators of personal security: **oecd.org/statistics/howslife.htm**.

Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry can be downloaded at **www.missingwomeninquiry.ca**.

Statistics Canada has completed research on groups that are more vulnerable to crime. For a report on violence against women visit **statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.pdf**.

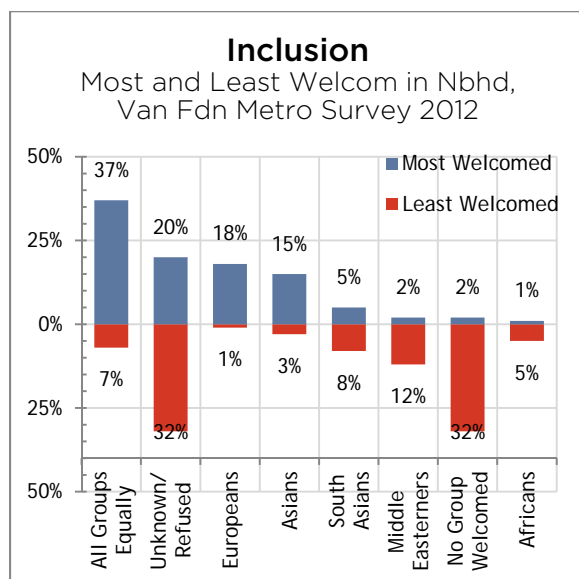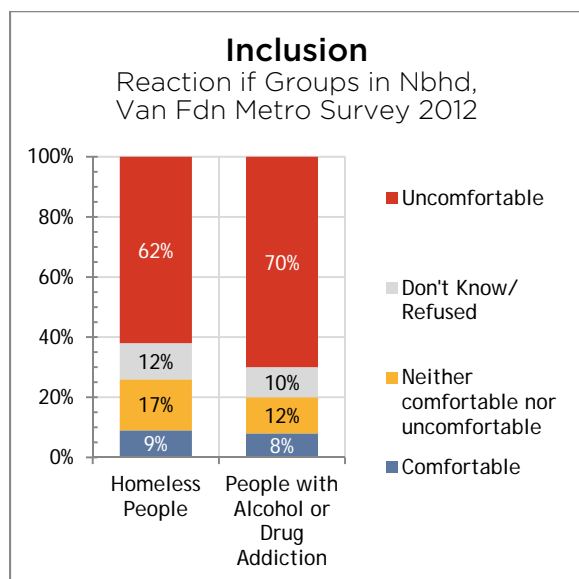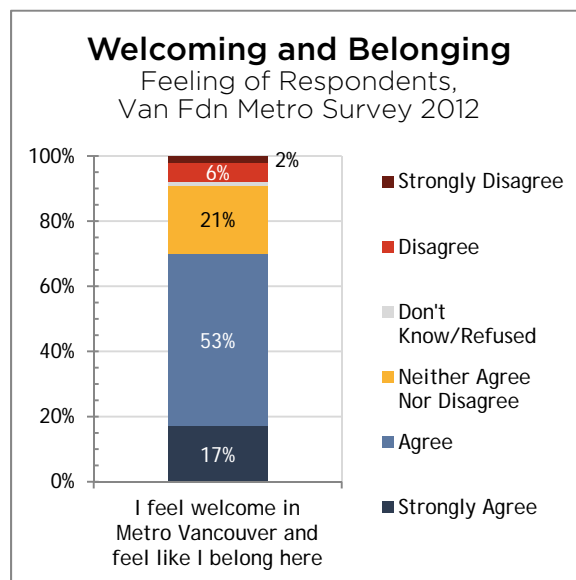## Indicator: Sense of Inclusion

Our sense of inclusion both impacts and reflects our participation in our communities, our relationships with others and our perceived sense of safety. Feeling welcome and included in our communities is essential for our full economic, social, cultural and political participation in society.

Inclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. Survey questions about sense of belonging, attitudes towards others and sense of trust measure different aspects of inclusion. The Vancouver Foundation's 2012 *Connections and Engagement* survey is the most current and comprehensive survey in Metro Vancouver on topics relating to inclusion.

When Metro Vancouver residents were asked whether they feel welcome and like they belong in their neighborhoods, 70 per cent stated that they agree or strongly agree. Six per cent of people surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed.
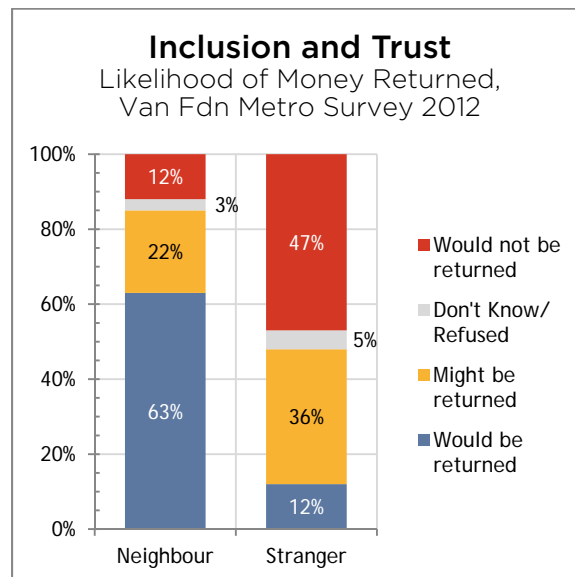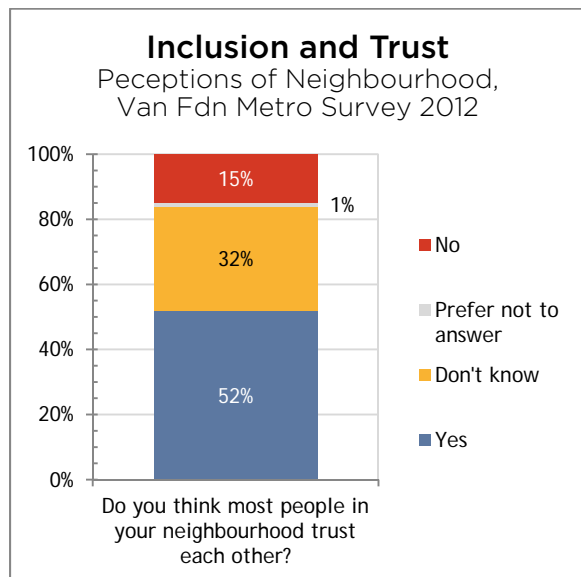
The Vancouver Foundation survey also asked a series of questions about how other people are perceived and welcomed. When asked how comfortable they thought their neighbours would be if a shelter or group home moved into their neighbourhood, 62 per cent of respondents stated that their neighbours would be uncomfortable with a group home for people who experienced homelessness and 70 per cent with a group home for people with drug or alcohol addictions.

Another question asked how different groups of immigrants and refugees would be welcomed in the respondent's neighbourhood. Thirty-seven per cent of respondents stated that all groups would be equally welcomed. European and Asian people were perceived to be most likely to be welcomed. Two per cent of responders stated that no groups of immigrants or refugees would be welcomed.

Welcoming and Belonging
Feeling of Respondents,
Van Fdn Metro Survey 2012

Inclusion
Reaction if Groups in Nbhd,
Van Fdn Metro Survey 2012

Inclusion
Most and Least Welcom in Nbhd,
Van Fdn Metro Survey 2012

Social Indicators and Trends 2014: Being and Feeling Safe and Included

Trust in others is another component of feeling safe and included. In the Vancouver Foundation survey, 52 per cent of people sampled in Metro Vancouver said that most people in their neighbourhood trust each other. When asked about the likelihood of a wallet or purse containing 100 dollars being returned with the money inside, respondents felt that strangers were much less likely to return the wallet. Specifically, 63 per cent felt that the wallet would be returned if found by a neighbour, while 12 per cent though it would be returned if found by a stranger.

Inclusion and Trust
Peceptions of Neighbourhood, Van Fdn Metro Survey 2012

Chart legend: No, Prefer not to answer, Don't know, Yes

Data (Do you think most people in your neighbourhood trust each other?): Yes 52%, Don't know 32%, Prefer not to answer 1%, No 15%

Inclusion and Trust
Likelihood of Money Returned, Van Fdn Metro Survey 2012

Chart legend: Would not be returned, Don't Know/Refused, Might be returned, Would be returned

Neighbour: Would be returned 63%, Might be returned 22%, Don't Know/Refused 3%, Would not be returned 12%
Stranger: Would be returned 12%, Might be returned 36%, Don't Know/Refused 5%, Would not be returned 47%

There is substantial variation across Metro Vancouver municipalities and neighbourhoods. The Vancouver Foundation survey provides regional context for some indicators related to inclusion, but results may not be consistent with attitudes in the City of Vancouver.

Data Sources

Vancouver Foundation conducted a survey on engagement in Metro Vancouver and produced a report titled *Connections and Engagement* in June 2012. Almost 4,000 residents of Metro Vancouver were surveyed. The results of the survey can be found at **vancouverfoundation.ca/initiatives/connections-and-engagement**.

Indicator: Sense of Safety

Fear of crime and violence can have a powerful impact on our wellbeing as individuals and as communities. Fear of being victimized causes psychological and emotional distress and may lead us to modify certain behaviours. For example, people may choose to drive a car rather than walk or take transit at night because of a perception that they will be unsafe.
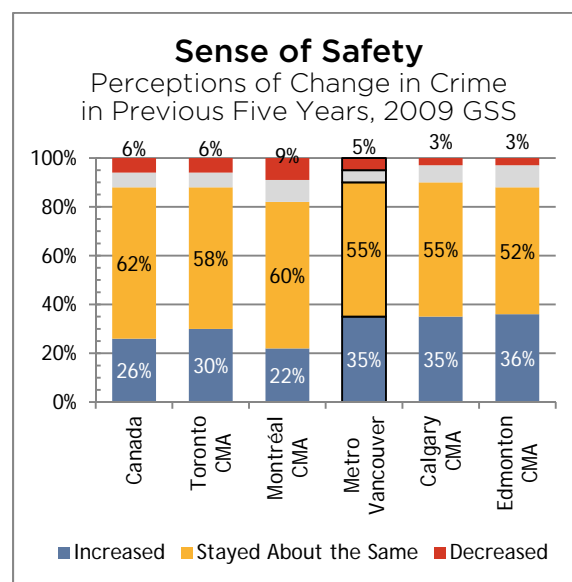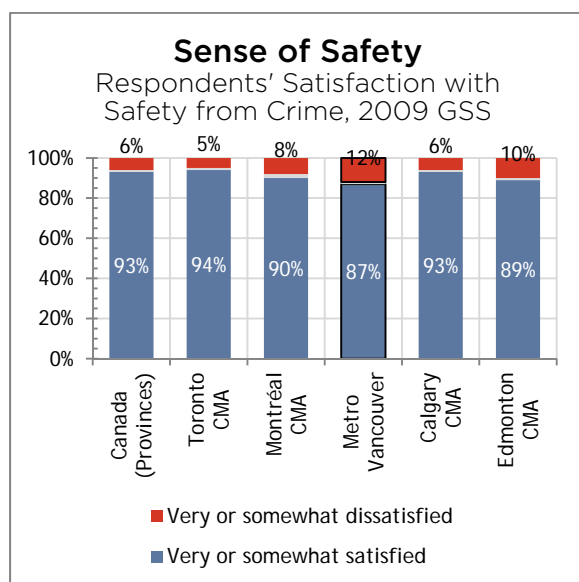
Our sense of safety may or may not reflect actual incidents of crime and can be influenced by many other factors, such as our sense of inclusion or past exposure to crime or violence. A single well publicized crime can have a large impact on entire communities, even when the frequency of such crimes is rare.

Statistics Canada's 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization is the most comprehensive source of data on victimization and perceptions of safety within Canada; data are available for census metropolitan areas (CMAs) across the country, including Metro Vancouver.

The survey found that Metro Vancouver respondents were more likely than respondents across Canada to be dissatisfied with their personal safety; to perceive an increase in crime in the past five years; to feel less safe walking in their neighbourhood or using public transit; and to regard their own neighbourhood as less safe than others.

Respondents to the 2009 GSS in Metro Vancouver felt significantly less satisfied (87 per cent) with their personal safety than Canada-wide respondents (93 per cent). Younger Canadians reported greater levels of satisfaction with their personal safety while also reporting higher levels of victimization than older Canadians. Additionally, men were more likely to indicate satisfaction than women.

More respondents (35 per cent) in Metro Vancouver thought that crime had increased in their neighbourhoods over the last five years as compared to Canada-wide respondents (26 per cent). Fifty-five per cent thought the level of crime had stayed the same and five per cent thought it had decreased.

Sense of Safety
Respondents' Satisfaction with Safety from Crime, 2009 GSS

Sense of Safety
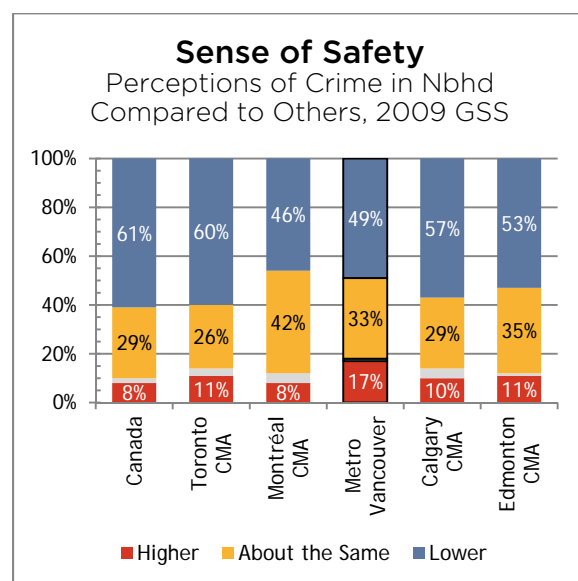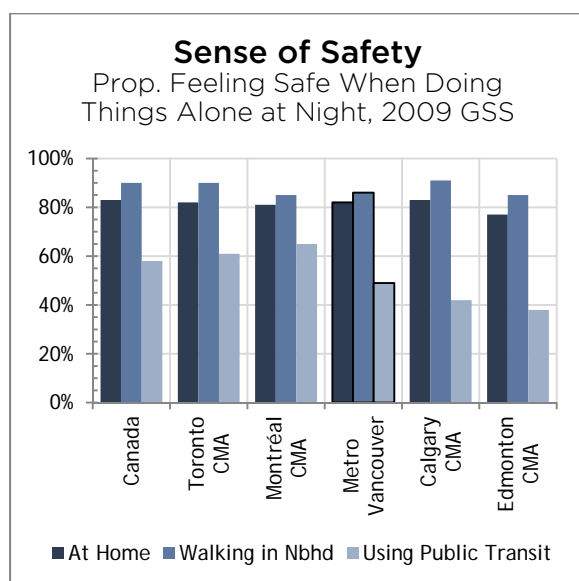Perceptions of Change in Crime in Previous Five Years, 2009 GSS

When asked about sense of safety while performing various activities, Metro Vancouver respondents reported a significantly lower sense of safety when using public transit after dark (49 per cent of people surveyed were not at all worried) and when walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark (86 per cent of respondents felt very or somewhat safe). The proportion of Vancouver CMA sampled residents not at all worried when home alone in the evening or at night (82 per cent) is on par with Canada.

Metro Vancouver respondents were more likely to perceive their neighbourhood as having higher crime than other neighbourhoods (17 per cent) and less likely to perceive the neighbourhood as having less crime (49 per cent) than respondents in Canada overall, or in most other large metropolitan regions.
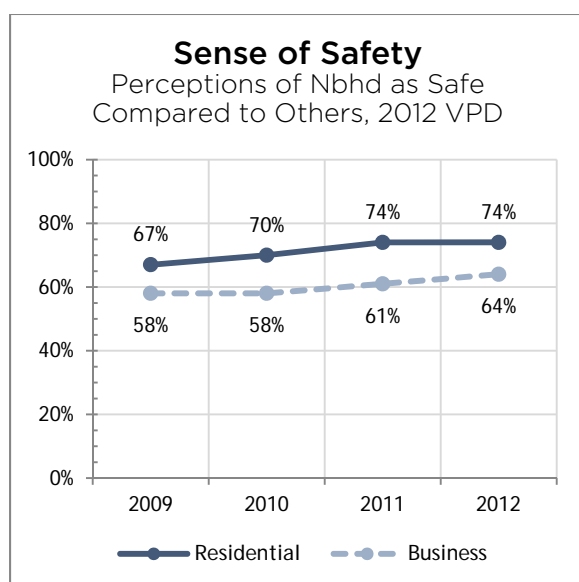
Sense of Safety
Prop. Feeling Safe When Doing Things Alone at Night, 2009 GSS

Legend: At Home | Walking in Nbhd | Using Public Transit

Sense of Safety
Perceptions of Crime in Nbhd Compared to Others, 2009 GSS

Legend: Higher | About the Same | Lower

The GSS on Victimization provides a valuable indication of perceptions of safety across the region, but the results may or may not be consistent with the perceptions of Vancouver residents. The Vancouver Police Department conducts annual satisfaction surveys of residents and businesses. In 2012, 74 per cent of residents and 64 per cent of businesses surveyed felt their neighbourhoods were safe compared to other neighbourhoods in the city.

However, this perception also varies considerably across the Police Department's four patrol districts and between businesses and residents. Businesses were generally more likely than residents to perceive their neighbourhood as less safe than other neighbourhoods, and District 2 (Strathcona, Grandview-Woodland and Hastings-Sunrise) stood out for having the highest percentage of respondents perceive their neighbourhood as less safe than other parts of the city.

Sense of Safety
Perceptions of Nbhd as Safe Compared to Others, 2012 VPD

Legend: Residential | Business

Sense of Safety
Perceptions of Neighbourhood as Safe Compared to Others, VPD 2012

District (See map P. 2)	Group	Safe	Unsafe
District 1	Residents	81%	2%
	Businesses	69%	9%
District 2	Residents	59%	10%
	Businesses	28%	33%
District 3	Residents	64%	3%
	Businesses	53%	12%
District 4	Residents	87%	2%
	Businesses	81%	5%

Data Sources

Statistics Canada report (2009) *Canadians' Perceptions of Personal Safety and Crime* and reports on victimization contain data on people's perceptions of crime and safety reported here. Data can be accessed at statcan.gc.ca by searching for catalogue number 85-022-X.
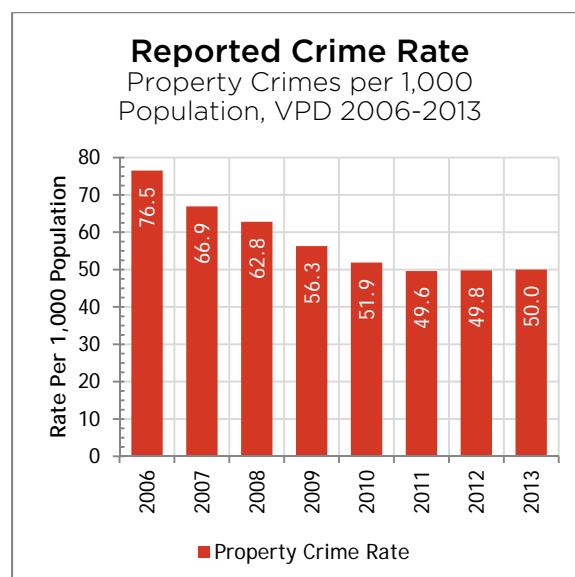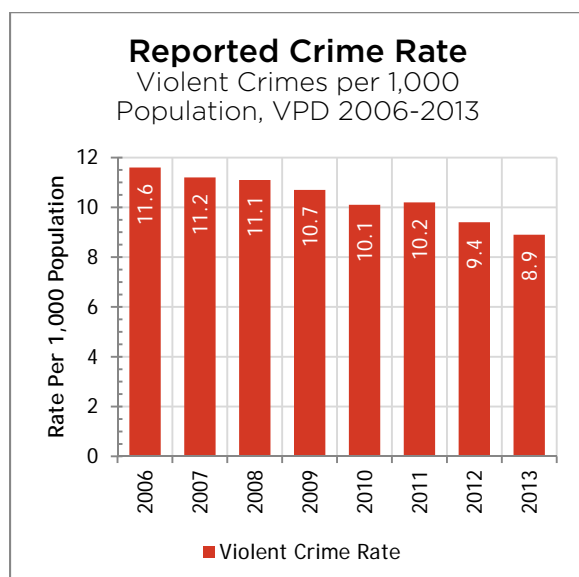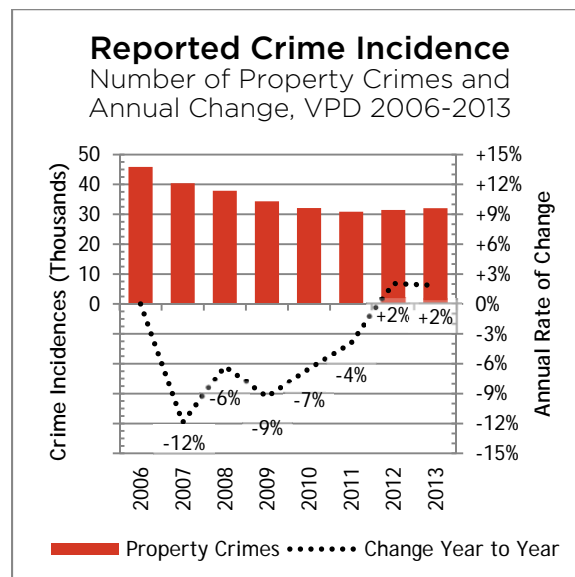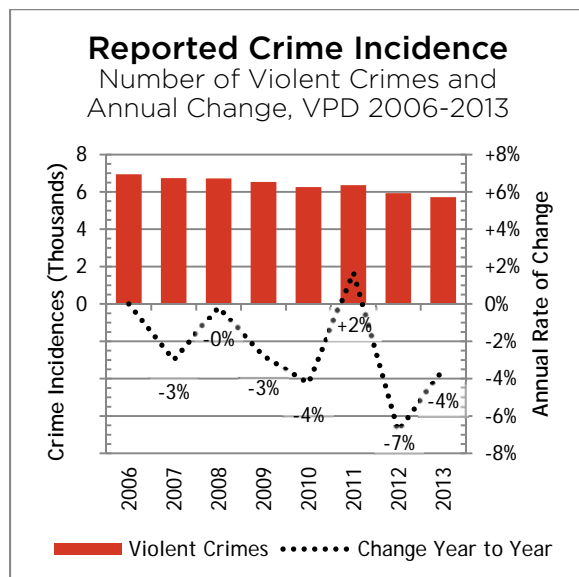
Results from the Vancouver Police Department's annual satisfaction survey from 2008 to 2012 can be found at vancouver.ca/police/about/publications.

Indicator: Reported Crime

Reported Crime in Vancouver

Crime negatively impacts personal well-being while also imposing costs on the health care system, mental health services, police departments and the legal system. The Vancouver Police Department has highlighted the need to reduce both violent and property crime in the city and this is reflected in the Healthy City Strategy.[1] The VPD 2012-2016 Strategic Plan lays out targets for an annual decrease of two-and-a-half per cent for violent crime and five per cent for property crime.

Reported crime has generally been declining in Vancouver in recent years. Even with a growth in population, the incidence of violent crime decreased by 18 per cent and of property crime by 30 per cent between 2006 and 2013. Crime rates per capita have declined by over 20 per cent.

In addition to targeting reported crime rates and incidence, the VPD's Strategic Plan also sets goals in other areas of safety. These include disrupting organized crime groups; combatting low-level crimes to improve residents' perceptions of neighbourhood safety; and reducing motor vehicle collisions.

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[1] Violent crime includes culpable homicide, attempted murder, sexual offences, assaults and robbery. Property crime includes break and enter, theft, possession of stolen goods, fraud, arson and mischief.
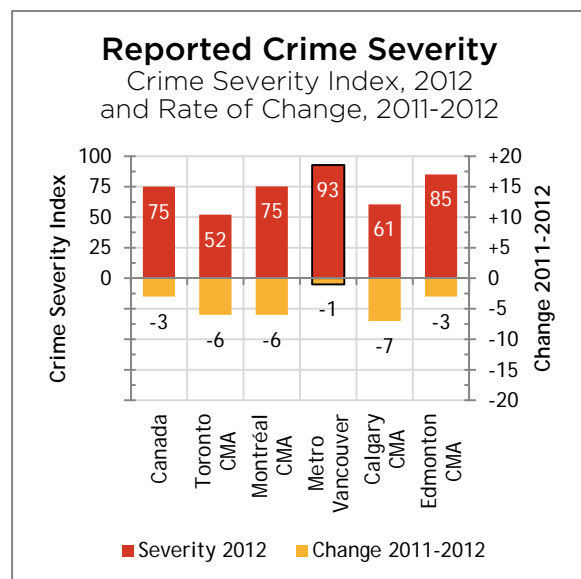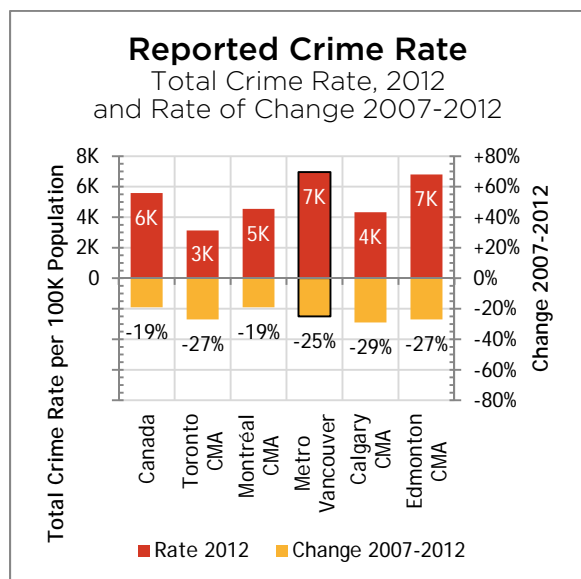
Comparative Reported Crime: Metro Vancouver and Other Regions

National comparison data regarding crime are available for Census Metropolitan Areas from Statistics Canada. There are some differences in reporting across different CMAs.
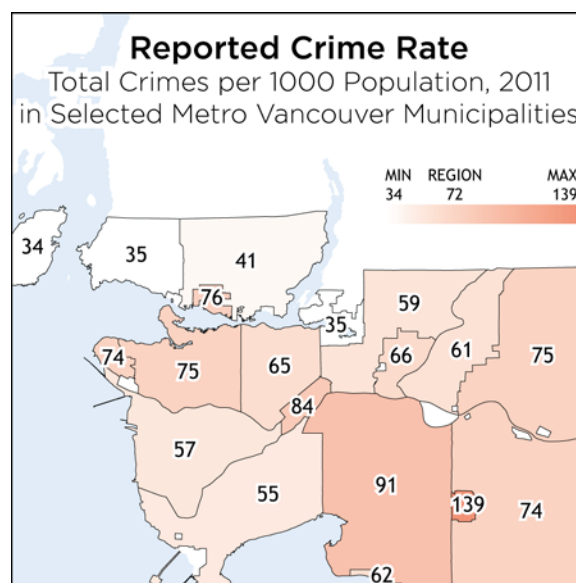
In 2012, Metro Vancouver had the highest crime rate of the five largest Canadian CMAs.[2] At nearly 7,000 crimes per 100,000 population, it was also considerably higher than the Canada-wide rate. The crime severity index, reported by Statistics Canada, weighs crimes by impact and total number of incidents. For example, a homicide is considered much more severe than mischief. Again, Metro Vancouver had the highest score in the index among the five largest regions in Canada.

However, reported crime rates vary considerably among individual municipalities in Metro Vancouver. Larger cities tend to have higher rates than smaller municipalities, and there are intersections between rates and other demographic and socioeconomic factors, as well as planning decisions and the role of each municipality within the broader region.

Out of 20 Metro Vancouver policed areas with a reported crime rate in 2011, the City of Vancouver had the fifth highest total crime rate, tied with the District of Maple Ridge, with 75 reported crimes per 1,000 residents. The Cities of Langley, Surrey and New Westminster had the highest rates.
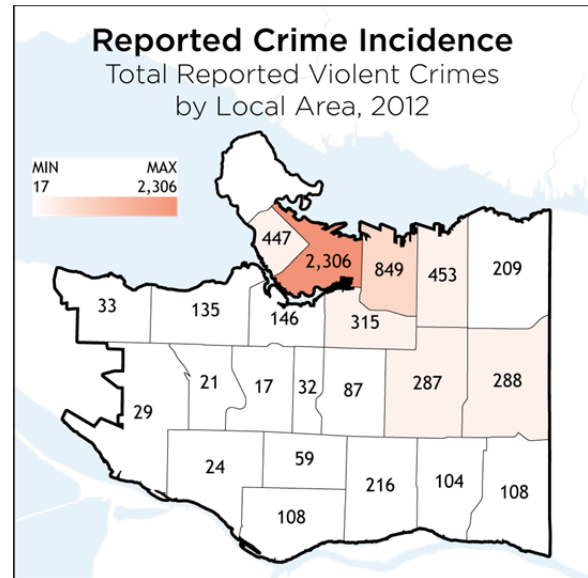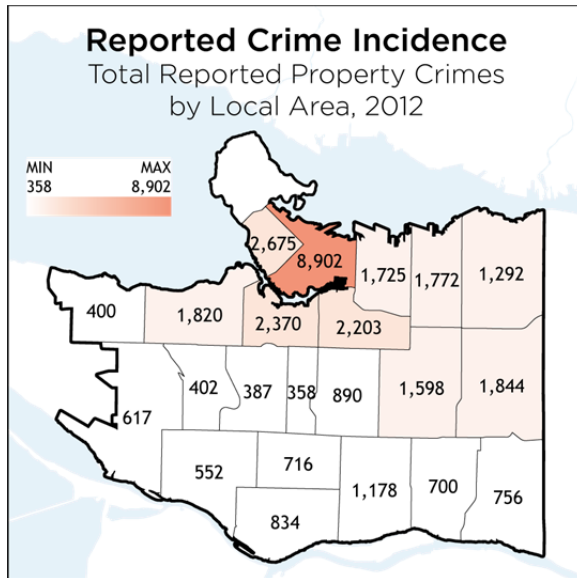
Because the City of Vancouver is the largest municipality in Metro Vancouver, it had the highest total number of reported criminal code offences. In addition, it is important to remember that crimes are recorded by the municipality they were committed in, not by the municipality that the person committing a crime resided in.
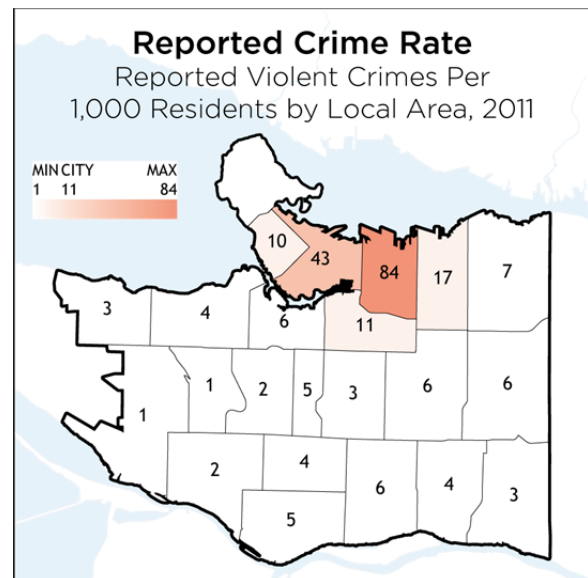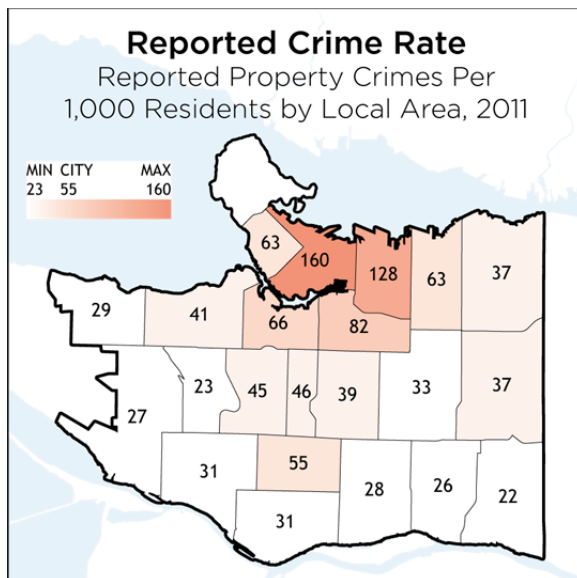

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[2] However, many smaller CMAs, including Kelowna, Regina, Saskatoon, St. John's, Thunder Bay and Moncton, had higher crime rates than Metro Vancouver.

Vancouver's Neighbourhoods

Incidents of property and violent crime appear to be concentrated in the downtown core, although overall distribution is different for property and for violent crimes. The Downtown, West End, Fairview and Mount Pleasant local areas had the most reported property crime in 2012, while Downtown, Strathcona, Grandview-Woodland and the West End had the highest reported violent crime.

Reported Crime Incidence
Total Reported Property Crimes
by Local Area, 2012

MIN 358 — MAX 8,902

Reported Crime Incidence
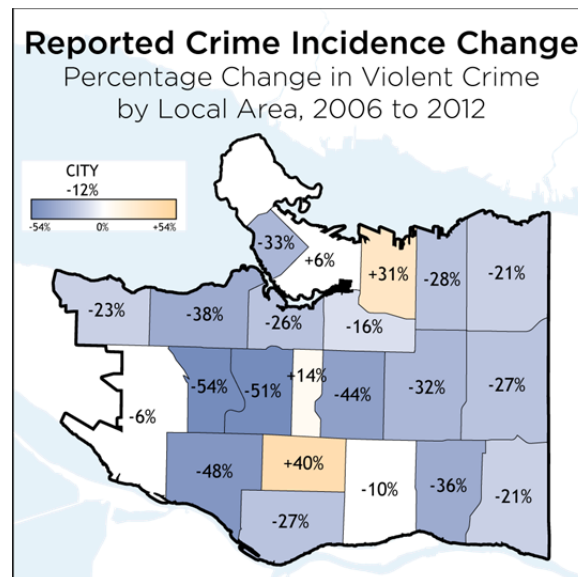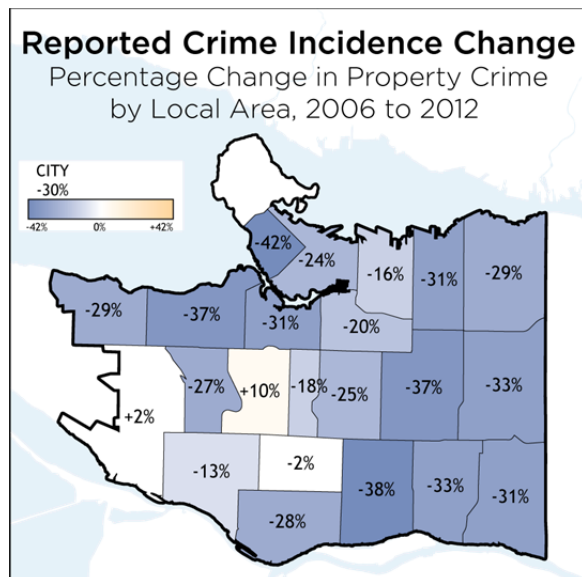Total Reported Violent Crimes
by Local Area, 2012

MIN 17 — MAX 2,306

Even when accounting for the number of residents in each local area as counted in the 2011 Census, the Downtown core continues to have a concentration of reported crimes. The local areas with the highest levels of property crime per 1,000 residents in 2011 were Downtown, Strathcona and Mount Pleasant. The local areas with the highest violent crime per 1,000 residents were Strathcona and Downtown.

Reported Crime Rate
Reported Property Crimes Per
1,000 Residents by Local Area, 2011

MIN 23 CITY 55 MAX 160

Reported Crime Rate
Reported Violent Crimes Per
1,000 Residents by Local Area, 2011

MIN 1 CITY 11 MAX 84

Most local areas have seen a reduction in reported crime in recent years. Shaughnessy and Dunbar-Southlands were the only local areas with an increase in property crime from 2006 to 2012. The largest reduction (42 per cent) was in the West End.

Oakridge, Strathcona, South Cambie and Downtown had the largest increases in violent crime between 2006 and 2012. The largest reduction was in Arbutus-Ridge (54 per cent), though this must be understood in context of that neighbourhood's extremely low rate of violent crime.

Data Sources

Police-reported Crime Severity Indexes by Census Metropolitan Area (2012) are reported in the Statistics Canada Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Data can be found at statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11854/tbl/tbl04-eng.htm. A summary of 2011 data and a discussion of the limitations of police-reported crime data can be found at statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11692-eng.pdf

Vancouver Police department data is available on the VPD website located at vancouver.ca/police/organization/planning-research-audit/stats-accuracy-comparing-data.html. As crimes are continuously being updated, the Police Department provides "live" statistics that may vary from those presented here.

The Vancouver Police Department conducts an annual satisfaction survey. Results from 2008 to 2012 can be found at vancouver.ca/police/about/publications/index.html.

Metro Vancouver crime statistics are available through the Ministry of Justice available at pssg.gov.bc.ca/policeservices/statistics/.

Toward a Healthy City for All

The indicators in this fact sheet give rise to several questions:

- How do we increase sense of safety and inclusion for *all* people in Vancouver?
- What influence does the City have in increasing feelings of safety and inclusion?
- How do we address safety and inclusion in our communities outside of the legal system?

Answering these questions is a complex challenge, requiring partnerships between the City of Vancouver, law enforcement, the justice system, other levels of government, service providers and the private sector.

The City's Role

Key areas in which the City can show leadership include:

- **Advocating** for better health and social services so that issues of mental health and poverty are addressed outside of the legal system.
- Developing **policy** guidelines that require built environment design to increase sense of safety.
- Developing training, leadership, engagement and education **programs** that increase inclusion. A recent example is the federally-funded citizenU program, which engaged youth in antidiscrimination work.
- Providing **grants** to organizations supporting marginalized groups.

The Vancouver Police Department can reduce crime and increase sense of safety by combating low level crime, disrupting organized crime, reducing motor vehicle collisions and partaking in more public outreach.

Priority Actions

Some specific actions the City may undertake include:

- The **Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions** can partner with the Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Costal Health to more effectively address mental health through social and health service provision, rather than through the legal system.
- Implement recommendations from the **Oppal Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.**
  1. 5.2 That all entities with proposed responsibilities under the Living in Community Action Plan commit to these priority actions that together form a strong basis for enhancing the safety of women engaged in the survival sex trade.
  2. 5.5 That the City of Vancouver create and fund two community-based liaison positions to be filled by individuals who have experience in the survival sex trade.
  3. 5.9 That the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department take proactive measures to reduce the number of court warrants issued for minor offences.

Your Turn

Achieving a healthy city for all will require ideas and action on the part of governments, agencies, organizations and the private sector. It will also require all Vancouverites to take part. The goal of **Being and Feeling Safe and Included** sets collective targets for all of us, to reduce crime but also to build a city in which everyone feels safe and included; in which power is distributed more equitably; and in which all people can thrive.

Learn more and get involved at **vancouver.ca/healthycity4all**.