



**CITY OF VANCOUVER**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Date: June 7, 2004  
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CC File No.: 3253  
Meeting Date: June 24, 2004

**TO:** Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets  
**FROM:** Director of Social Planning  
**SUBJECT:** FCM Quality of Life Indicators - Implications for Vancouver

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receive for information the FCM Quality of Life Reporting System Highlights Report and this report on Implications for Vancouver.

**GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The General Manager of Community Services Group recommends approval of the foregoing.

**COUNCIL POLICY**

On December 9, 1997, City Council agreed to continuing participation by the City in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life (FCM QOL) project, with the annual costs of \$5,000 being funded from the Social Planning Department operating budget.

**SUMMARY**

The primary conclusion reached in the 2004 FCM Quality of Life (QOL) Highlights Report is succinctly expressed by Councillor Michael Phair (Edmonton), Chair of the Quality of Life Technical Team, when he says in the introduction to the report: "Canadians believe their country is the best place in the world to live, an impression bolstered by our generally high standard of living and the amenities still available in our communities. But beneath that

confidence, awareness is growing that not everyone shares in this prosperity, and that problems are mounting that may soon challenge our ability to cope with them.”

The QOL indicators used in this report tell us about change, not about the absolute levels of QOL. They serve as an early warning system that tells us when and how QOL is improving or declining over a period of time (the 1990's for the most part in this report). For the 20 municipalities that participated in this project, the indicators show that, despite some improvements, quality of life for a growing number of people in these Canadian cities declined during the 1990's.

A more detailed look at the data, for Vancouver specifically, also shows some improvements, and the same trends towards a declining QOL for an increasing number of residents. In Vancouver, these indications of improvements are generally not as high as elsewhere in the country, while the trends towards a declining QOL are greater and/or apply to proportionately higher numbers of residents, when compared to the rest of Canada.

There are six factors that, taken together, determine quality of life. Note that no single factor or indicator can adequately describe QOL - it is truly the sum of the parts. The factors are:

- A vibrant local economy;
- The natural and built environment;
- Opportunities for the attainment of personal goals, hopes or aspirations;
- A fair and equitable sharing of common resources;
- Residents meet their basic needs;
- Rich, social interactions and the inclusion of all residents in community life.

Indicators have been developed for each of the factors that influence and determine QOL. These indicators, by themselves or collectively, do not measure QOL per se; rather, these indicators tell us about changes and trends.

One of the key findings in the FCM report is that changes to these six components of QOL do not necessarily affect all residents equally. The question of “whose quality of life” becomes critical in this context. As part of the project, demographic data was compiled to answer this question.

The demographic data shows that Vancouver is significantly different from the other cities that are involved in this project. In Vancouver, a composite of the “typical resident” is that he or she is single, a renter, belongs to a visible minority and was born outside of Canada. Note that these are the very same population groups for whom the QOL indicators tend to be different from the “norm” - this, in turn, affects overall QOL in Vancouver.

This report briefly outlines what the indicators are telling us at the national level, but just as importantly, how QOL has been changing in Vancouver. In summary, the indicators show the following in Vancouver:

1. Vibrant local economy - During the last decade, there was some economic growth in Vancouver and concurrent employment growth. Unemployment rates dropped, although they remained higher than average for some groups such as new immigrants and Aborigines.

2. Natural and built environment - Vancouver is doing as well or better than the other QOLRS municipalities.
3. Attainment of personal goals, hopes or aspirations - During the 1990's, in Vancouver, there was a significant increase in residents with higher education credentials; however, the assumed increases in employment, income or home ownership did not happen for most residents.
4. Equitable sharing of common resources - Any economic gains made during the 1990's were not shared equally. In Vancouver, a much smaller than average proportion of the population saw increases in their income and the gap between top and bottom incomes grew almost twice as much as occurred nationally.
5. Basic needs are met - Declining incomes, rapidly growing shelter costs, and reductions in social assistance are becoming problems for increasing number of individuals and families. Affordability for all basic needs is an issue for many Vancouver residents.
6. Social interaction and inclusion - Civic engagement declined in all 20 QOLRS cities, including Vancouver. Lack of social inclusion, as measured by labour force participation continues to be an issue for a large proportion of the population.

The FCM QOL indicators are telling us that certain aspects of quality of life, particularly in Vancouver, are declining for a growing number of residents. If these trends are not reversed, then the overall high levels of QOL for all residents could be in jeopardy.

Staff are investigating a number of different approaches to affecting changes in the QOL. We will report back later this year on the scope, resources and time frame required for the best strategy.

## **PURPOSE**

The third in a series of reports on quality of life, prepared by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), has recently been released. Presented here is a closer look at the information in the FCM report, particularly as it pertains to Vancouver.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1996, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) began looking at the effects of changes in Federal transfer payments on municipalities across the country. They quickly discovered that their member municipalities lacked the tools and data to consider and debate this and other issues on a nation-wide basis.

Consequently, the largest urban members of FCM, with the support of the Big City Mayors Caucus and FCM staff, undertook the creation of a reporting system to monitor quality of life in Canadian municipalities. Representatives from 16 municipalities, including Social Planning staff from Vancouver, then developed a list of strategic and sustainable indicators of quality of life, with a particular emphasis on social indicators on topics that are not often looked at in depth. Initial data collection and analysis of these indicators was completed and presented in the first QOL Report, published in May 1999. A second QOL Report was released in March,

2001 (copies of both are available through Social Planning or from the FCM website [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)). It included further refinement and updating of the original eight indicators, as well as measures of changes that had occurred over the intervening two year period.

Since the completion of the 2001 report, additional municipalities have joined the project, bringing the total to 20. The current project participants are:

Calgary, Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Halton, Ontario  
Hamilton, Ontario  
Kingston, Ontario  
London, Ontario  
Niagara, Ontario  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Peel, Ontario

Quebec City, Quebec  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Sudbury, Ontario  
Toronto, Ontario  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Waterloo, Ontario  
Windsor, Ontario  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
York, Ontario

Although these municipalities represent urban life from across Canada, the one noticeable city missing from this list is Montreal. We are hopeful that they will be joining the project in the near future.

Note also that many of the cities on the list are large amalgamations of central cities and their suburbs. The data for this project was carefully adjusted each time an amalgamation took place to ensure its integrity and to continue to be able to make comparisons over time. The Vancouver data, for the most part, is for Vancouver City, not the GVRD.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN VANCOUVER

The following definition of Quality of Life guided the data collection and analysis work:

*Quality of Life is the sum of factors that contribute to the social, environmental and economic well-being of citizens.*

*Quality of life is enhanced and reinforced in municipalities that:*

- *Enable residents to meet their basic needs;*
- *Promote a fair and equitable sharing of common resources;*
- *Develop and maintain a vibrant local economy;*
- *Protect and enhance the natural and built environment;*
- *Offer opportunities for the attainment of personal goals, hopes or aspirations;*
- *Support rich, social interactions and the inclusion of all residents in community life.*

*This definition acknowledges that the quality of life in any given municipality is influenced by interrelated factors such as: affordable, appropriate housing; civic engagement; community and social infrastructure; education; employment; the local economy; the natural environment; personal and community health; personal financial security; and personal safety.*

Quality of life, as a concept, is highly subjective. It is dependent on the values and beliefs of the people doing the measuring, and is often heavily influenced by comparisons with similar people in similar circumstances. The list of six determinants of QOL, which are in the definition, is derived from extensive research done by a number of organizations in Canada and reflect the key components for quality of life as expressed by ordinary Canadian residents. Note that no single factor or indicator can adequately capture the essence of QOL - it is truly the sum of the parts.

There is a commonly held perception or belief that the quality of life in Vancouver is very good. Throughout the year, a variety of sources confirm this notion. Typically, these studies only measure a few components of QOL (most often the economy and natural environment). As noted above, quality of life is the combined effect of multiple factors, all factors need to be considered and assessed together.

Indicators have been developed for each of the ten factors that influence and determine QOL (the full list of 65 indicators is attached as Appendix A). Rather than establishing absolute or standardized levels of QOL, the FCM indicators tell us about change, whether or not each of the six aspects of QOL in Canadian communities is getting better or declining. The "Highlights Report" draws upon those indicators where greatest change was found, so only a quarter of them were referenced at this time. These are shown in Appendix A with an asterisk.

The data for these indicators comes from a variety of sources, including census data, HRDC, a municipal survey carried out by FCM, StatsCan Small Area and Administrative data, CMHC, StatsCan Health Statistics, etc.

This current volume, "Highlights Report 2004", is the first of a series, making up the 2004 FCM QOL Report. A copy of this report has been distributed separately to Council members and can be downloaded in electronic format from the FCM website ( [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca) ) It provides analysis of indicators for the six determinants of QOL. Subsequent volumes in the 2004 report will examine in more detail issues such as affordable housing and homelessness, the environment, income security, social inclusion, community safety and security.

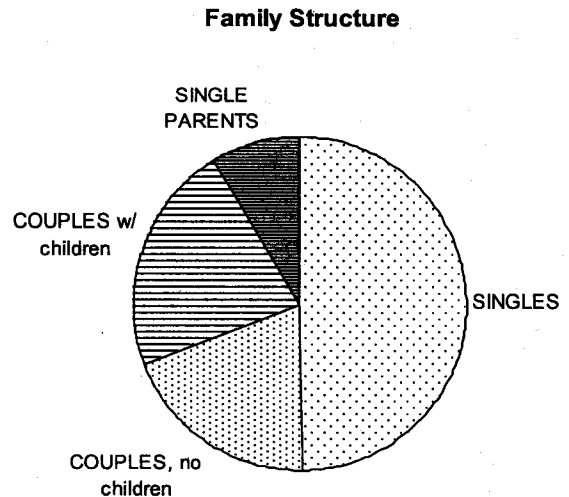
### Demographic Profile

Although the demographic data are not QOL indicators per se, they do provide the context for measuring QOL. There is some variation among the cities participating in the project (hereinafter called the Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS) cities), but Vancouver stands out as being quite different from the "normal" Canadian city.

During the 1990's, population growth was a little bit higher in Vancouver than in the other cities. Even more importantly, almost all of that growth can be attributed to immigrants from outside of Canada (in fact, the net population change between 1991 and 2001 was comprised of more than 106,000 immigrants arriving and staying in Vancouver and 32,000 existing residents leaving the city). This trend, which has been going on for many years, has resulted in almost half of Vancouver's population being immigrants from other countries, with the vast majority of these being identified as visible minorities. (As the data used in this report is from 2001, it's quite likely that the current number of "visible minorities" now constitute a majority.)

The Aboriginal population has been growing in Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg and Sudbury, to the point where it is close to or greater than the size of the visible minority population in those cities. In Vancouver, the number of Aboriginals has remained relatively constant at about 10,000, certainly nowhere near as large as the other "minority" population groups.

The family makeup of the population is also very different in Vancouver. Almost 50% of the population is made up of unattached individuals (versus an average in QOLRS cities of 34%). Another 20% of households are made up of childless couples - therefore, 70% of Vancouver households have no children in them. The traditional family of two parents, with one or more children, makes up only 22% of the population, compared to 33% in other cities. The proportion of single parent families is less here (8.5% compared to 11%). These proportions have not changed appreciably over the past ten years.



This demographic data is important for answering the question "quality of life for whom?" Ideally, QOL is being measured for the majority of residents. In Vancouver, a composite description of these residents includes those who are immigrants with English as a second language, who belong to a visible minority and are single and unattached and who are renters. Unfortunately, it is these same categories of typical residents who have seen the greatest decline in their quality of life.

#### QOL Factor #1 - Developing and maintaining a vibrant local economy.

##### **WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US....**

1. During the last decade, there was some economic growth in Vancouver, with concurrent employment growth. Unemployment rates dropped, although they remained higher than the national average for some groups such as new immigrants and Aboriginals.

The QOLRS municipalities saw improved economic progress throughout the 1990's, with strong growth in new business, fewer bankruptcies, more investment in real estate development and falling unemployment. This trend was also evident in Vancouver, although to a lesser extent than average.

In Vancouver, the number of new businesses grew by 46% between 1998 and 2002. The national average growth rate was 56%. Most of this growth occurred in 1999, and then

tapered off in subsequent years. Bankruptcy rates are lower than average in Vancouver, which indicates that there is a better chance of survival for these new businesses.

Unemployment rates in Vancouver decreased between 1991 and 2001 (10.8% to 8.2%); this is still the second highest rate in the country. Also, the drop in unemployment rates was less in Vancouver, compared to the other QOLRS cities. For example, in 1991 the unemployment rate for Aboriginals in Vancouver was 23.1 %, and 19.4% in the other cities; ten years later, it had dropped to 21.4% in Vancouver (a decrease of 1.7%), while it dropped to an average of 14.1% (a decrease of 5.3%) in the QOLRS cities.

For the group of immigrants who moved to Canada within the past 10 years, this same pattern of higher than average unemployment rates (12.1% in Vancouver versus 10.5%) and a lesser decrease in the rates over this time period (3.3% drop in Vancouver versus a 4.5% decrease in the other QOLRS cities) exists.

Two thirds of the QOLRS cities saw real growth during the 1990's in the value of building permits - there was no change in Vancouver. The recent building boom suggests that this situation has changed, but the most recent comparative data that was available for the FCM study was from 2001.



The labour force ratio is the ratio of the people entering the labour force to the number expected to leave the workforce over the next 15 years. In 1991, Vancouver's ratio was 1.0, the lowest among the QOLRS cities. By 2001, it had dropped to 0.85. Only one other city (Quebec) was below 1.0. One might assume that the higher than average number of immigrants could replace the retiring workers, but other data suggests that these immigrants are less likely to find suitable employment, at least initially.

### QOL Factor #2 - Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment

#### WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US...

This is the one factor where the indicators show that Vancouver is doing as well or better than the other QOLRS municipalities.

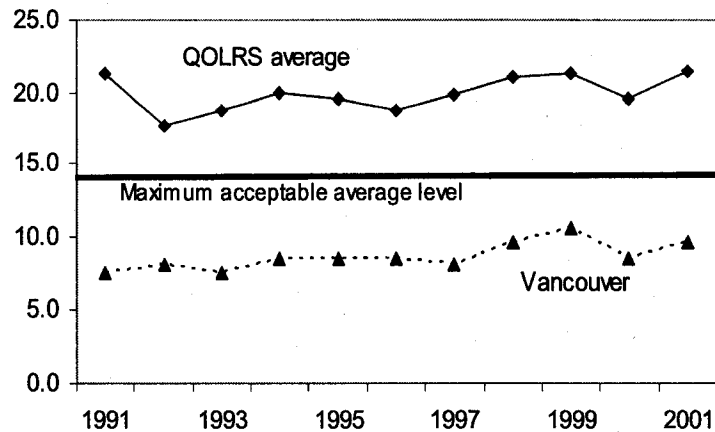
Just under 2/3 of our residents use cars to get to and from work (this is second highest % in the country), while 17% use transit (3rd highest). The data in the FCM report on changes in transportation mode shows a 25% drop in transit use in Vancouver between 1996 and 2001; this change may be reflective of the changes in transit use brought about by the transit strike

which occurred in this period, not of any general trend in transit usage. In fact, recent Translink data shows that from 2002 to 2003 ridership grew by 9%.

The ozone levels (which cause smog) are far below the national average in Vancouver and well below the accepted "safe" levels.

The majority of residents in QOLRS cities are served by centralized sewer systems; in Vancouver it is 100%. In most cities, there is an increasing amount of secondary and tertiary treatment; in the GVRD, three out of five treatment plants are secondary, and the one that serves Vancouver is scheduled for conversion to secondary by 2020.

**Ozone levels**



Unfortunately, there is no good data available for comparing solid waste recycling programs, but the recycling rate of close to 50% in this region is as good as or better than in other QOLRS cities.

There has been considerable effort made at both the city and regional levels to improve our natural environment. The data shows that these efforts have paid off.

### QOL Factor #3 - Offering opportunities for attainment of personal goals, hopes or aspirations

#### WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US...

There is often a presumption that higher education levels will translate into better jobs, higher incomes, and the ability to purchase a home. During the 1990's, in Vancouver, there was a significant increase in residents with higher education credentials; however, there was not a corresponding across the board increase in employment, income or home ownership.

Trends for the attainment of personal goals like higher education, better employment, and home ownership were positive in most of the QOLRS cities, but gains in household and individual incomes were concentrated at the high income end of the scale.

In Vancouver, between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of the population with a post-secondary certificate or degree grew from 22% to 30%, resulting in the second highest rate of higher education in Canada.



The average household (families and individuals) income in Vancouver (about \$70,000) did not change much during the 1990's, it remained about 6% below the QOLRS average. The average household income of the Aboriginal population in Vancouver (at \$35,200) also didn't change much during the last decade; it remained about 45% below the QOLRS average.

Home ownership is a goal shared by many Canadians. In the QOLRS cities, ownership increased from 56% to 62%. Vancouver is significantly different. Less than half the city's residents have been able to achieve the goal of ownership, even with the increase in ownership, from 41% to 44%, during the 1990's. The city's rental rate of 56% is by far the highest in the country. Note that these figures are from the 2001 census, and therefore don't take into account changes in ownership that may have occurred in the past few years because of low interest rates.

QOL Factor #4 - Promoting a fair and equitable sharing of common resources

WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US...

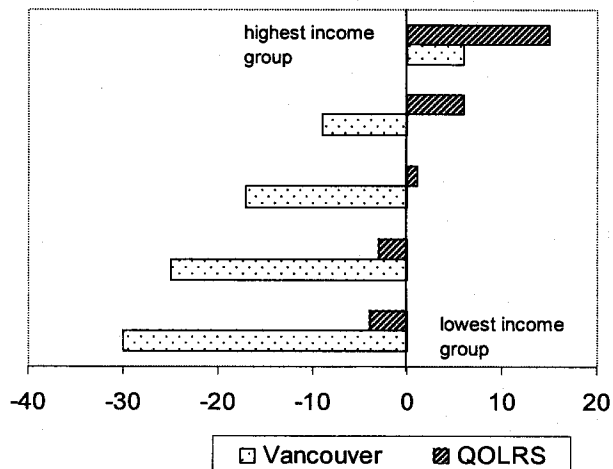
Any economic gains made during the 1990's were not shared equally - these growing inequalities are even more pronounced in Vancouver. It has been recognized for a long time that Vancouver has a very diverse population, and considerable efforts have been made to bring all these people closer together into an inclusive, cohesive community. Yet the QOL data shows that differences and inequalities are increasing.

Any economic gains made during the 1990's were not shared equally - in the QOLRS cities, only the wealthiest 30% of families and 20% of individuals enjoyed any increase in inflation-adjusted income. Families saw their inflation-adjusted incomes drop, on average, by 6%.

The growth in inequality in Vancouver was more pronounced. Only the top 5% saw any real income increase and the remaining 95% saw a decrease in their inflation adjusted incomes. Over half of families and individuals saw their incomes decrease, in real terms, by 20% or more.

Nationally, the incomes of "vulnerable" population groups (Aboriginal, youth, recent immigrants) decreased. Again, in Vancouver, the decreases in income for these groups tended to be as much as twice the national average.

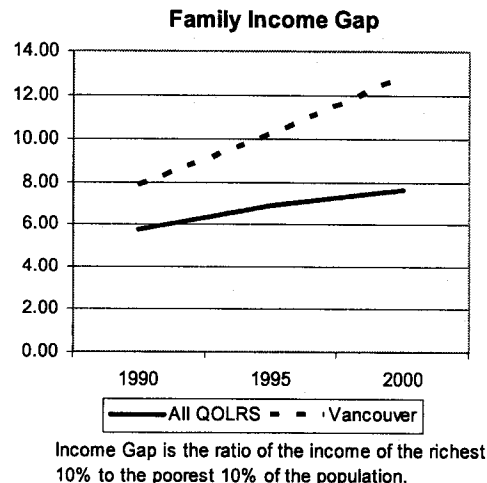
**Changes in Family Income (1991-2001)**



Nationally, single parent families saw a modest increase in average incomes. During the same time period, single parent families in Vancouver saw a 7% decrease in their incomes.

A growing income gap (defined as the ratio of society's highest income to the lowest) corresponds to a growing inequality in the distribution of income and wealth. More importantly, a growing gap between high and low incomes has implications for individual and community health, crime, education, political stability and governance, and social cohesion.

In late 2003, the FCM prepared and released an analysis of the growing income gap and its implications which explored this issue in much more detail. One of the main findings in this report is that an increase in the income gap ultimately diminishes quality of life for all residents at both ends of the income spectrum. This report, called "Falling Behind: Our Growing Income Gap" can be downloaded from [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)



In the QOLRS cities, the income gap for families grew by 33%; that is, the ratio of highest incomes to lowest incomes increased from 5.7 to 7.6. Put another way, the average income of the richest 10% of the population (\$122,400), by the year 2000, was 7.6 times higher than the average income of the poorest 10% (\$16,300). In Vancouver, the income gap for families grew from 7.8 to 12.8, an increase more than double the national increase. The richest 10% in Vancouver had incomes (at \$127,000) comparable to the QOLRS average, but the gap is so much greater here because the incomes of the poorest 10% are so much less (\$9900 versus \$16,300).

For unattached individuals, the growth in the income gap was even more dramatic - the average gap for the QOLRS cities increased by the same amount as for families (33%), but in Vancouver it increased by almost 100%.

#### QOL Factor #5 - Enabling residents to meet their basic needs

##### WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US...

Declining incomes, rapidly growing shelter costs, and reductions in social assistance are pushing many individuals and families toward the margins of society. Affordability is a problem for many Vancouver residents, particularly for growing numbers at the bottom end of the income scale.

The majority of families and individuals living in the 20 QOLRS municipalities had incomes sufficient to meet their need for food, clothing and shelter. Poverty rates for QOLRS families

as a whole remained largely unchanged between 1991 and 2001. In Vancouver, poverty rates for families were almost double the national average, and increased by 10% over this same time period. Poverty rates for youth (15-24 years), already high at over 60%, increased by 5% nationally and 11% in Vancouver.

Changes to the National Child Benefit program appear to have had the positive effect of reducing poverty rates for single parent families. The decrease in the poverty rate for single parents in Vancouver (-15%) wasn't quite as great as in the other QOLRS cities (-19%).

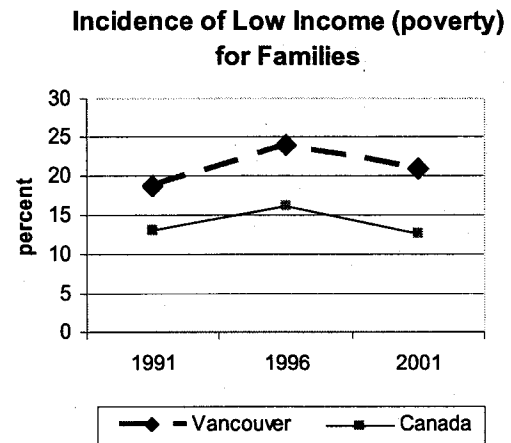
At the national level, although the majority of QOLRS families had enough income to meet their basic needs, those at the lower income levels found their income was barely sufficient, and sometimes not sufficient, to meet expenses. In Vancouver, families with the lowest incomes found that they could afford to pay for only 75% of their basic needs.

Nationally, unattached individuals with low income could only afford 92% of basics, while in Vancouver, their income was sufficient for only 65% of basic needs.

The ability to meet basic needs worsened for those receiving social assistance income (welfare). For single employables, the national average ratio of income assistance rates to the cost of basic needs decreased during the 1990's from 73% to 51%; for single parents, it went from 103% to 75%. The Vancouver figures are comparable.

While not all rental construction starts offer affordable housing, the rental market usually offers a relatively affordable entry point to the housing market. Across Canada, the construction of new rental units came to a near halt in the 1990's and there was a corresponding growing problem with housing affordability. The situation in Vancouver was, again, quite different. Almost half of all new residential construction was rental, yet the proportion of renters who had to pay 30% or more of their income (a common measure of housing affordability) stayed relatively static at 43-44%. In the other QOLRS cities, the proportion paying more than 30% increased slightly from 35% to 37%.

Affordability is a significant issue for many Vancouver residents. The first two FCM QOL reports noted that Vancouver was the least affordable of all the QOLRS cities. Data collected, but not published in the current FCM report, confirms that the least affordable city in Canada is still Vancouver. This situation is directly the result of lower than average incomes combined with higher than average costs. The previous section noted how unevenly the incomes are distributed, so this affordability problem is being felt even more severely by the growing numbers at the bottom end of the income scale.



### QOL Factor #6 - Supporting rich social interactions and the inclusion of all residents in community life

#### WHAT THE INDICATORS ARE TELLING US...

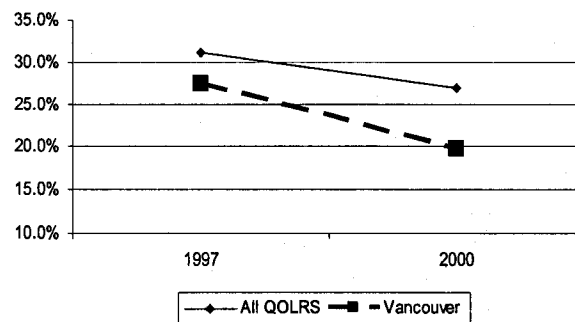
Civic engagement declined in all 20 QOLRS cities, including Vancouver. Lack of social inclusion, as measured by labour force participation, continues to be an issue for a significant proportion of the population

Several trends during the 1990's suggest that civic engagement declined in all 20 QOLRS cities - fewer people voted, the number of people making charitable donations fell and the number of people volunteering was less. Social inclusion, as measured by participation in the labour force, continued to be a problem for some segments of the population.

The situation in Vancouver was much the same. Voting patterns were the same as in the other QOLRS cities. Volunteerism was down, but by twice as much (27% decrease, compared to 13% nationally). The proportion making donations fell 14% nationally, and by 20% in Vancouver. One apparent anomaly in the data is that the average size of charitable donations increased both nationally (plus 55%) and in Vancouver (up 91%).

The proportion of the adult population of new immigrants and Aboriginals who were employed, at the national level, did improve somewhat during the 1990's, but still remained below the average for other sectors of the population. These improvements were not reflected in Vancouver. The employment rate for new immigrants (which makes up a major part of the population growth) dropped from 49% to 46%, and for Aboriginals, from 40% to 35%.

Proportion of Volunteers



### DEALING WITH A DECLINING QOL

The FCM QOL Indicators show that, while there were improvements in some components of Quality of Life over the past decade, there are growing problems for an increasing number of residents.

In Vancouver, this picture is accentuated. There are some indications of improvement in the quality of life for Vancouver residents, but for many, the situation declined. The end result is that Quality of Life for everyone declines, not just for those at the bottom of the income scale or those excluded from full and active participation in community life.

Even prior to seeing the results of the FCM project, a number of other municipalities have identified the need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with the social components of QOL, although they don't always state the issue in these terms.

For instance, in 2002, the City of Hamilton commissioned the "Social Vision for the New City of Hamilton". This document is intended to provide an overall plan or strategy for advancing a social agenda. It provides a framework for tackling social issues in a systematic and systemic way.

Similarly, Edmonton's City Council has developed a "Vision for Social Well-being and Quality of Life". After completion of a successful economic vision in 1995, Council realized that a similar social vision was needed that would provide "greater collaboration and focus so that everyone can pull together to ensure that individuals, families and communities gain the abilities they need to build healthy, fulfilling lives."

Early in 2001, the newly amalgamated City of Ottawa launched a "smart growth" planning process aimed at managing the nature and quality of growth in the City. They concluded that the key to sustaining positive growth is to protect the qualities that draw people to live in the City - quality of life, quality of place and quality of governance. This project, called "Ottawa 20/20" identified the need for 5 plans, including a "Human Services Plan", which is intended to direct priorities, strategies and investments in all aspects of social development.

Although the City of Vancouver has taken many actions and developed policies that can and have affected the social components of QOL, the FCM QOL indicators are telling us that a more coordinated, comprehensive approach may be required to make a significant difference. The "social vision" projects from other cities provide examples of how to go about doing this.

Social Planning staff are, in consultation with staff from other departments, reviewing the options for actions which the City could or should take in response to the message of a declining QOL for increasing numbers of people. We will report back to Council later this year with our conclusions.

## CONCLUSION

As Councillor Michael Phair (Edmonton), Chair of the Quality of Life Technical Team, says in the introduction to the FCM report: "Canadians believe their country is the best place in the world to live, an impression bolstered by our generally high standard of living and the amenities still available in our communities. But beneath that confidence, awareness is growing that not everyone shares in this prosperity, and that problems are mounting that may soon challenge our ability to cope with them."

If you ask people what influences their own personal quality of life, ask them how they can tell if it is getting better or worse, they will include a number of other factors, often along the lines of those listed in the FCM QOL definition. They will often identify the way in which all these factors are interconnected. Focussing only on improvements to one or two of them will probably not result in any significant improvement to the overall experience of quality of life.

The FCM QOL indicators project supports this notion. Despite improvements in the economy and environment, there has been a decline over the past year in many of the other indicators of QOL. In Vancouver, the situation with regards to most of the indicators is more pronounced.

Considering the various policies and projects that the City has implemented over the years to deal with a wide range of problems and issues, it may be surprising that the QOL indicators are saying that our QOL is not uniformly improving. Staff are reviewing what else could or should be done to stop the decline, and indeed improve upon, the quality of life of all Vancouver residents.

\* \* \* \* \*

FCM QOL INDICATORS

Demographic Background Information (DBI)	Affordable, Appropriate Housing (AAH)	Civic Engagement (CE)	Community and Social Infrastructure (CSI)	Education (ED)	Employment (EM)	Local Economy (LE)	Natural Environment (NE)	Personal & Community Health (PCH)	Personal Financial Security (PFS)	Personal Safety (PS)
DBI1 * Population	AAH1 * 30%+ Income on Shelter	CE1 * Voter Turnout	CSI1 Social Service Professionals	ED1 * Education Levels	EM1 Unemployment/employment Rates	LE1 * Business Bankruptcies	NE1 * Air Quality	PCH1 Low Birth Weight Babies	PFS1 Community Affordability	PS1 Young Offenders
DBI2 * Foreign Born	AAH2 Vacancy Rates	CE2 Women in Municipal Government	CSI2 Government Health-Care Expenditures	ED2 Literacy Levels	EM2 Quality of Employment	LE2 Consumer Bankruptcies	NE2 * Urban Transportation	PCH2 Teen Births	PFS2 * Families Receiving EI/Social Assistance	PS2 Violent Crimes
DBI3 * Visible Minorities	AAH3 Core Housing Need	CE3 Newspaper Circulation	CSI3 Private Health Care Expenditures	ED3 Adult Learning	EM3 Long Term Unemployment	LE3 Hourly Wages	NE3 Population Density	PCH3 Premature Mortality	PFS3 * Lone Parent Families	PS3 Property Crimes
DBI4 Language Spoken at Home	AAH4 Substandard Units	CE4 * Volunteering	CSI4 Subsidized Child Care Spaces	ED4 Education Expenditures	EM4 * Labour Force Replacement	LE4 * Change in Family Income	NE4 Water Consumption	PCH4 Work Hours Lost	PFS4 * Incidence of Low Income Families	PS4 Injuries and poisonings
DBI5 * New Immigrant Groups	AAH5 Changing Face of Homelessness	CE5 * Charitable Donations	CSI5 * Social Assistance Allowances	ED5 Classroom Size		LE5 * Building Permits	NE5 * Wastewater Treatment	PCH5 Suicides	PFS5 Children Living in Poverty	
DBI6 * Aboriginal Population	AAH6 50%+ Income on Shelter		CSI6 Outdoor Recreation Areas	ED6 Student / Teacher Ratio			NE6 * Solid Waste	PCH6 Infant Mortality	PFS6 Government Transfer Income	
DBI7 Migration	AAH7 * Rental Housing Starts		CSI7 Public Transit Costs	ED7 Post-Secondary Tuition			NE7 Ecological Footprint		PFS7 Economic Dependency Ratio	
DBI9 Households	AAH8 Monthly Rent		CSI8 Social Housing Waiting Lists	ED8 Spending on Private Education			NE8 Recreational Water Quality		PFS8 Government Income Supplements	
DBI10 * Renters & Owners			CSI9 Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing						DBI8 * Household Income	
DBI11 Land Area										

\* Indicators that were used in the "Highlights Report"