

## Overview of the CRD Regional Information Services Program

### I Regional Information Services

The CRD Regional Planning Information Services program is responsible for collecting, maintaining, analyzing and disseminating regional data. The department is the one-stop source for Statistics Canada and Census information for the regional district, the 13 member municipalities and the electoral areas within the Capital Region. The department maintains a comprehensive website ([www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning](http://www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning)), an information counter and document library, technical assistance and a number of hard copy publications, which are detailed in the following pages.

Regional Planning has a data license with Statistics Canada which permits the department to obtain Census data for the Regional District, the member municipalities and the electoral areas. The licensing agreement does not permit the department to distribute Census data electronically, but permits the department to prepare and distribute print summaries such as the Census profiles and the Demographic Atlas. The fact sheets and regional statistics can be distributed electronically in PDF format and are available on the department's web site.

The department also offers custom demographic, market area and site location analysis for customers on a cost-recovery basis (\$70/hr). The department can customize census area profiles using the *Custom Site Demographic Profile* to develop detailed data tables on population, household characteristics, income levels, ethnic origin, labour force, education, language and marital status. Customers have included banks, real estate appraisers, researchers, academics, and new businesses.

### II Construction Activity Tracking

CRD Regional planning collects and maintains building permit and subdivision data for the 13 member municipalities and the 3 electoral areas within the CRD. The data gathered provides information on the construction and development activity in the region and is used to inform the quarterly building reports, numerous fact sheets and the annual population estimates. By accessing the regional planning web site ([www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning/monthlypermits](http://www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning/monthlypermits)) users can track construction activity for the region and individual municipalities and electoral areas for every month and year going back to 1992.

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Quarterly building permit reports replace the former *Development Review* document. Quarterly reports are posted the month following the quarter end and regularly include:

- Highlights
- Building permits and values
- New dwelling units
- Subdivision data
- Major projects

III Regional Planning Fact Sheets: the department produces a series of fact sheets on regional statistics in the Capital Region covering topics such as population, demographics, housing, income and land use. Fact sheets can be accessed on the regional planning web site ([www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning](http://www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning)) or in hard copy from the planning office.

IV Capital Region Profile Series: the department produces a series of publications on regional statistics and current trends in the region. Profiles include – Historical Development, Regional Overview, Regional Statistics, Growth, and Transportation.

V CRD Demographic Atlas: The CRD *Demographic Atlas* is a compendium publication providing information on the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the region's resident population which has been produced by CRD Regional Planning for a number of years. It is produced on a five-year cycle corresponding to the release of data from the Census of Canada. The *Demographic Atlas* was originally created in order to meet the diverse (and most commonly requested) information needs of a variety of Regional Planning's clients including elected officials, municipal staff, public agencies, businesses, and the general public.

The geographic coverage of the *Atlas* is the entire Capital Region and, for purposes of analysis, this is broken down and arranged according to the four sub-regions: Core; Peninsula, West Shore (Western Communities) and Gulf Islands. Data in the publication are presented at various levels of geography including: Capital Region (Census Division), Victoria CMA (Census Metropolitan Area), municipal (Census Subdivision), neighbourhood (Census Tract) and local area (Local Planning Area) in order to facilitate comparisons at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The content of the *Atlas* is divided into five main topic headings: Population; Households and Family Structure; Labour Force and Business Activity; Education Levels, Income and Household Expenditures; and Housing. Within each topic heading there are several sub-headings. For example the Population heading in the *2004 Atlas* was broken into:

- 2001 Population,
- Population Growth,

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- Population Distribution,
  - Population Density,
  - Components of Population Change,
  - Population Projections,
  - Age Profile,
  - Population on Indian Reserves,
  - Ethnic Origin and Immigration.

The information in each chapter includes explanatory text, charts, figures, data tables and thematic maps. Data in the tables are arranged to allow easy cross-referencing to other geographies and time periods. Provincial information and Victoria CMA is also included to permit comparisons.

Appendices include information on data quality, census geography, definitions for the terms used in the data tables, and maps showing municipal and census tract boundaries.

The *CRD Demographic Atlas* provides a wealth of information on the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of population groups within the Capital Region, which is provided to member municipalities and agencies in a very cost effective manner. The cost to source all the data used to develop the Atlas would cost an individual agency hundreds of dollars.

The information and analysis in the *CRD Demographic Atlas* can be used to provide an easy to use ready reference of current and historical facts about the population's socio-demographic and economic characteristics in the Capital Region and municipalities and neighbourhoods within its boundaries. The information in the Atlas enables staff and elected officials to find the answers to such questions as:

- How fast is the region's population growing?
- Which municipalities are growing the fastest?
- What is the age composition of migrants to the region?
- How many single parent families are there and where are they concentrated?
- What are the largest industries and has there been a shift away from (toward) any particular sector?
- Where are workers commuting from and where are they commuting to?
- What is the education/income profile in a specific neighbourhood?
- Is the incidence of low income spreading within the region, and if so, to which municipalities?
- What is the age and condition of the region's housing stock?
- To what extent is housing affordability a problem through out the region?

The production (including acquisition of data) of the *CRD Demographic Atlas* is funded as part of CRD Regional Information Services ongoing data provision services and copies are provided free of charge

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to the member municipalities and select agencies and libraries. As a condition of the CRD's licensing agreement with Statistics Canada, we are not permitted to release non-aggregated data, the complete Statistics Canada data set, or electronic versions of the Atlas, but are permitted to distribute and sell the *print* version of the Atlas to business, academic and public clients. Copies for external clients are priced on a cost recovery basis.

#### VI: 2006 CRD EMPLOYERS DATABASE

The Employers Database is a comprehensive listing of approximately 18,500 employers (business, government, institutional, etc.) within the Capital Region. The records for each of the employers are geographically located (geocoded) using their workplace address and mapped at a detailed block level which provides the highest level of geographic resolution available for analysis. The information in the database is primarily used as an input for transportation and population growth modeling, but has found many other practical applications along the way as well. Regional planning recently released the 2006 edition of its Employers Database; previous editions were prepared for 1997 and 2001.

Each individual employer record in the database includes business name; workplace address; industry classification (NAICS codes and descriptions) and number of employees. Sources for the employer information which make up the database are extensive and include:

- Municipal business licenses information provided by each municipality;
- InfoCanada Database;
- Chambers of Commerce membership directories;
- Provincial and Federal public service commissions;

The employment data is used as input to the regional transportation model and the various transportation planning initiatives such as traffic demand management strategy, and for calculating an updated employment forecast and the "jobs-to-population" ratios for the Regional Growth Strategy. The method used to collect and record this information permits preparation of customized spatial analysis for municipalities, CRD departments, and agencies. The information can be used to assess changes in employment locations, changes in employee counts, and changes in employment sectors over time.

Other applications include:

- Land Use Planning: data can be used to develop OCPs and Economic Development Strategies by showing which types of economic activities are occurring where. The CRD supplies member municipalities with subsets of the data for their own analysis. For example, the City of Victoria used the Employers Database for analyzing employment by sector and precinct for input to their *Employment, Commercial Vacancy and Land Use Trends in Downtown Victoria*

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study, on information panels for the Downtown Plan, and when creating Douglas Corridor rapid transit line employment buffer zones;

- Transit Planning: A copy of the database is provided to BC Transit under a data-sharing agreement. BC Transit staff use these data for short term bus route planning and for long term strategic transit planning;
- Transportation Modeling: Employee counts by industry classification will be used for model updating and recalibration for the new Regional Planning *TransCad Transportation Model* and for performing micro-simulation analysis of travel patterns and for transportation corridor selection. These data are critical to the overall reliability of this model in order to reflect current travel behaviour and to predict the impacts of future growth and development;
- Growth Projections: The spatial distribution of employees across the region will be used as an input into the update of the Regional Growth Strategy Population and Employment forecasts for the RGS Five Year Review. The Employers Database was also utilized by consultants working on the CRD Sewage Treatment Project to assess non-residential demand for disposal of sewage and for site locations assessments (determining what types of economic activity are occurring in select locations);
- Indicator Development: Retail/service business locations in the Employers Database are used in the creation of service centres for the RGS Monitoring Program;
- Regional Information Services: Numbers of employers/employees by industry classification and municipality are used in Regional Planning fact sheets, maps, and reports (i.e. the *Demographic Atlas*);

#### VII Community Indicators Network:

CRD Regional Planning is a member of the Community Indicators Network. The network was formed to coordinate the work of groups and organizations developing and reporting on indicator work in the Capital Region. Membership of the Community Indicators Network includes CRD Arts, CRD Round Table on the Environment, City of Victoria, District of Saanich, Victoria Foundation, Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), Victoria Real Estate Board and the Community Council.

The Regional planning department coordinates the creation and web-site hosting of an inventory of Community Indicators. The purposes of the Community Indicators inventory are:

- to encourage the exchange of information about indicators among members of the Community Indicators Network
- to provide an improved level of access to community indicators to other user groups and to the general public
- to identify data sources, data gaps, and new indicators
- to organize the detailed source information (metadata) information on major community indicators across the Capital Region

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- to improve access to these indicators via a website

Indicators are being collected from the member organizations and represent the broad categories: Social, Health, Environmental, Economic, Cultural, Sport and Recreation. Each record in the inventory will include metadata information about:

- Indicator Classification
- Indicator Name
- Description
- Usage
- Methodology
- Limitations
- Geographic Area covered
- Data Sources
- Update Frequency
- Availability (publication or website)
- Agency Contact Information

#### VIII Urban Poverty Project Tables (2006 Census)

The Regional Planning Department is participating with the Canadian Council on Social Development and Statistics Canada in their Urban Poverty Project; a data sharing project established to raise awareness within municipal and non-profit sectors about using data to better understand social and economic trends with a focus on the issue of poverty. In 2000, the Council initiated an Urban Poverty Project (UPP) with two primary objectives:

- To search for underlying factors behind poverty among Canadian communities.
- To provide relevant, local level poverty data.

The Urban Poverty Project provides a wealth of reliable, nationwide geographically comparable, historically consistent data (custom Census tabulations) covering the various dimensions of poverty. Information is provided on:

- Urban poverty: low income status (LICO), poverty rankings across Canada
- Demographics of the urban population: age, gender, immigration, aboriginal status, visible minorities, people with disabilities, household and family types
- Labour Force and Economic Characteristics: employment/unemployment, education levels, hours of paid employment
- Income: sources of income (including income security), low income, average and median earnings, number of income earners

The data acquisition costs associated with the Urban Poverty Project can be significant for small communities and social agencies so arrangements are made across Canada to form consortiums of users to facilitate the joint purchase of the Statistics Canada data. The consortium partners for the previous (2000) Urban Poverty Project included: the Capital Health Region, CRD Regional Planning, City of Victoria, Community Social Planning Council, District of Saanich, Greater Victoria Child & Social Advocacy Society, South Island Women for Economic Survival, Together Against Poverty Society, Planning & Protective Services Committee June 25, 2008

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United Way, and University of Victoria (various faculties). The various participants in the project across Canada shared data costs and produced: *Urban Poverty in Canada: A Statistical Profile* (a national report that provided a comprehensive perspective of poverty by examining low income at the local level).

Data generated by that first report have been used as a benchmark on low income in urban Canada. The Canadian Council on Social Development is now preparing to update this information using the 2006 census data. There are, at present, 15 consortia formed across Canada for the new Urban Poverty Project (UPP). Regional Planning has taken on the role of facilitating the formation of a local consortium in order to acquire the current cycle of UPP tables. The department also contributes to the project by advising the Council on data tables, content and geographies and by organising the data sets for the member municipalities

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) maintains a website at [www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/upp](http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/upp) which provides users with detailed information on the UPP project and includes examples of analyses prepared from the previous 2007 UPP project. Other uses of the Urban Poverty Tables included:

- The Capital Health Region has used the seven UPP fact sheets including *Poverty: Taking Action* and *Children, Youth and Poverty* to advocate for the elimination of poverty and consequently improve the health of the population.
- The City of Victoria Community Development Division used poverty data at the neighbourhood level in developing their Recreation and Leisure Access Policy.
- A series of Poverty Forums were jointly held by the Community Council and the University of Victoria in 1998/99.
- The Community Council published *The Quality of Life in the Capital Region* which relied heavily on the UPP tables for much of its content.
- Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS), along with the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) worked on a project designed to provide accessible dental care to poor adults in Victoria.
- The UVIC Faculty of Human and Social Development and others used the UPP data in a community-university research project on municipal housing options for women living on low income funded by Status of Women Canada.

The poverty-related data allow for detailed analyses of low income groups by socio-demographic characteristics; by location; over time (across previous Census years) and in comparison with other jurisdictions across Canada. Although, they do not provide a “profile” of the homeless population as, by definition, Census data are collected for persons in households (dwellings) they can provide a “profile” of those population groups who may be at risk of becoming homeless. They also provide a

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look into the housing situation of populations who may be in a similar situation. However, the data do not specifically incorporate CMHC's "Core Housing Need" variables.

The data provided in the Urban Poverty Project tables help answer the following questions:

- Which population groups are most vulnerable to finding themselves living in poverty?
- What are their income, educational, employment and ethnicity characteristics?
- Where do they live?
- Which households are in borderline housing?
- How much of their income is spent on rent, paying for shelter?
- What condition are their dwellings in?

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