

NEWS RELEASE

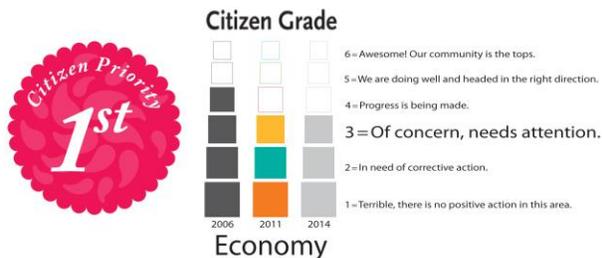
For Immediate Release
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Good 'Nuff?

What do we do now that Golden & Area A's Vital Signs Report has been published?

GOLDEN & AREA A'S

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Golden & Area A's Vital Signs Report summarized survey responses on 12 different local Issue Areas in a six-point scale, as shown below. Over time, some Issue Area grades were perceived to improve, while some have regressed, like the 'Economy' featured below, which was also selected as the top Citizen Priority. Vital Signs Reports are available online and at businesses throughout the area.

(Golden, BC) – On October 5th, over a year of work from the Golden & District Community Foundation and its committed volunteers was put on display and placed into the hands of all Golden & Area A citizens.

Since then, the Vital Signs Steering Committee has presented to the report's finding to individual groups and had countless conversations with local citizens.

Although the culmination of this project included volumes of data, the key feature is the compilation of over 300 surveys from citizen graders on 12 Issue Areas and community priorities.

The survey asked respondents to score each issue area from 1 to 6, 1 being "Terrible, there is no positive action in this area," and 6 meaning, "Awesome! Our community is the tops."

The highest citizen-appointed grade went to the Issue Area of Arts & Culture, likely because of how Kicking Horse Culture has grown its membership from 35 people to 650. The score could also be attributed to the success of the Art Gallery of Golden or the Christmas Craft Faire. But its improvement most likely is due to how the Town of Golden has redeveloped our aging Civic Centre. Peoples' perception of Arts & Culture in the Vital Signs report has steadily grown from a 3/6 in 2006 to a 5/6 in 2011.

There were a number of Issue Areas that saw a similar improvement in perceived strength, such as the Environment, Learning and Getting Around. Remember that 2006 was almost at the most recent peak in global and local economic growth, yet we still managed to improve in these issue areas.

However, there were some Issue Areas that were not perceived to improve between 2006 and 2011. One actually regressed or lost ground.

The Economy was selected by one-third of survey respondents as the top priority Issue Area. The crazy, busy, heady days of 2006 are long behind us. While 3% more visitors stopped by the BC Visitor Centre @ Golden, 35% fewer visitors stopped in the Yoho National Park Visitors Centre in 2010, compared to 2007. The median residential home sale price increased 35%, while the number of homes sold fell 60% between 2007 and 2010. While \$1B is set to be spent on completion of the Donald Bridge and Kicking Horse Canyon Projects, we have little local training opportunities for residents to transition into civil engineering and construction employment (although the College of the Rockies' Intro to Trades may start to change that).

The second priority of the citizen graders was the Issue Area of Work. As of September 2010, 4.3% of the local labour force was on Employment Insurance compared to 2.1% across BC. Job posting through Golden Employment Services were down 55% in 2010 from 2006 and 45% of clients accessing employment services between 2008 and 2009 were 40+ years of age.

Overall, citizen graders score all of these 12 Issue Areas as 3 out of 6. On the 1 to 6 scale, a 3 means, "Of concern, needs attention." It's not a pass, not 50% but it's not a horrible fail either. In a school setting we might say, "Additional work and perseverance could build this mark up for Golden & Area A." Or reflecting back on 2006, we have seen some improvements and looking forward to 2014 we have something to be positive about. If our kids brought home a report card from school that said they had been doing better in some subjects and worse in others, they might say that it was "good 'nuff." But is it? Would they be reaching their potential? As a community, are we?

Our citizen grade average can be summarized with a few questions.

Question 1: Are we happy where we are? Response: Not really.

Question 2: Is there room for improvement? Response: Yes, absolutely.

Question 3: So where do we start? Response: Well, err, umm... We should, ah... No. Maybe *they* need to, hmm.... [Pause] Ah, I don't know. Maybe I'll leave it to someone else...

It seems so overwhelming. Change, meaningful change – not just changing our socks, underwear or tires – can be daunting. So let's break it into small, easy chunks.

First we all need to review the very brief, easy-to-read 16 page Vital Signs printed report, which brought together many local, regional and national data sources together. That is the starting point.

At the bottom of each page there is a list of successes we have achieved that improve our community's quality of life. Beside that, to the right, is a brief list of ways we as individuals, as groups and as a community can "Take Action."

Naturally, we need to proceed with one of those "Take Action" ideas and do it. For instance, let's walk over to the computer, open up a browser and Google "economic leaks." See, that was easy. There is a great site that you'll probably find called, www.pluggingtheleaks.org, that provides a great 'leaky bucket' analogy, where money flowing into your community (the bucket), and re-generates the local economy from within, as long as your leaks aren't causing more outflows than inflows. You'll have to see the website for yourself to learn how that can work.

Try another one, like search "economic leaks." Think about how much are you putting your money back into the community?

Next, try another "Take Action" item with your family, class, co-workers or volunteer group. It's likely that someone else is already thinking the same thing, which will provide enough inertia to move an initiative and improve one of our 12 Issue Areas. Before you know it, your small action has fused with others and you will change your community. For the better and for your future.

Through these steps, you can inspire change projects for yourself, your family and your community. But it all starts with you and Golden & Area A's Vital Signs. Our benchmark has clearly been raised and our first directions are set.

Happy reading, thinking, talking and doing!

About the Golden & District Community Foundation

The Golden & District Community Foundation's mission is to attract and effectively grow permanent funds; provide leadership and administration that helps in addressing significant community needs; and help donors fulfill their philanthropic interests.

To learn more about your community foundation and *Golden & Area A's Vital Signs* project, please bookmark www.goldencommunityfoundation.ca.

Contact Ryan Watmough if your group would like to hear how you can build on the Vital Signs findings.

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