

Cedar Valley Reporter

A look at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church and Mission in 2009

Church in busy, visible location

In the Spring of 2009 the District of Mission Traffic engineering Department conducted a vehicle count on Cedar Valley Street.

The study found that almost 11,000 vehicles pass by the corner of Cedar St. and cherry Ave. each day.

With the completion of the Cedar Valley connector the number of vehicles on Cedar Valley St. has increased dramatically, giving Cedar Valley Mennonite Church a highly desirable, visible location.

CVMC serves small percentage

When the average attendance at weekly services at Cedar Valley Mennonite church is compared to the population of Mission it is shown that CVMC serves a very small percentage of the population.

With a general population of 35,000 and an average weekly church attendance of around 250, it works out that CVMC serve just over on-half of one percent of the community. (0.6 percent).

Mission is a young and growing community

Mission is a community of English speaking, home owning, married, young people.

As reported in the 2006 census, Mission has a population of 34,505. That is more than 10 per cent higher than the population at the previous census, in 2001. Projections are for a continuation of the two percent annual growth rate with the population rising to 45,000 in 2011 and 51,000 by 2016. Mission's present population will double by 2031.

Census figures also show that 66 per cent of Mission's population is under 45 years of age. That is considerably higher than the provincial average of 57 per cent for the same age group.

English is the predominant language of the community with 87 per cent reporting that English is their first language. 4.5 per cent say that Punjabi is their first language and 2.26 per cent say that German is their first language.

Of those who are older than 14: 7,400 are single, 12,350 are married, 3,000 are separated or divorced and 1,200 are widowed.

The average household is 3.1 people, slightly higher than the provincial average. Seventy-five percent own their homes and 25 per cent are renting.

Mission has many churches

There are at least 26 churches and places of worship serving Mission. As well there are three monasteries and a convent: Westminster Abby (Catholic), Orthodox Monastery of all Saints (Canadian Orthodox); a Buddhist monastery and the Poor Claires Convent.

In the 2006 census 55 per cent of the people in Mission identified themselves with Christianity. Almost 39 per cent said they had no religious affiliation. The next largest number was the 5.1 per cent who said they were Sikh. All other religions made up a total of less than one per cent.

Homeless number growing

On March 10 and 11, 2008 teams of volunteers canvassed communities throughout the Fraser Valley, including Mission. The local team identified **100** people who were considered **homeless** in Mission. This included those living in recovery houses, “couch surfing” with friends, those in temporary shelters and those living outdoors. Of those surveyed, 62 identified Mission as their home town.

A similar survey done in Mission in July, 2004 found 74 homeless people.

The report of the survey findings showed that the following organizations provide food and/or shelter to the homeless: Mission Community Services Society, Union gospel Mission, Miracle Valley, All Saints Anglican Church, Mission Indian Friendship Society, Sikh Temple and Fraser House.

Plan omits churches

A Social Development Plan, commissioned by the District of Mission virtually ignores the role of churches in the community.

Even though some church leaders served on some of the sub-committees the report does not seem to recognize either the physical facilities that churches have in the community or the skills of their paid staff and volunteers.

Youth fast growing segment

In an interview the police chief did not see how churches could fit into his crime prevention plan and he provided a copy of that plan. The Mission Crime Prevention Plan Report, published in 2001 offers some significant conclusions:

“Over the period 1991 to 2016 Mission is expected to have the largest growth (90.6%) of any in the Fraser Valley Health Region. With this growth; can be expected a significant increase in the number of young males (15 to 25), who are the most likely candidates to become involved in criminal activity. High growth brings challenges for maintaining the current social fabric of a community, as well as for the delivery of social, educational and community services:

“Mission has 14.2 % of its families headed by single parents. Of the children in these families, approximately 8.7 per cent were supported through BC Benefits (welfare)

“Mission has a significantly higher teen pregnancy rate compared to BC. (Mission 60/1000, versus BC average of 49/1,000) Mission teens are also more likely to give birth than are the BC average (approximately 27/1,000 live births versus 20/1,000). This is significant as teen mothers are more likely to live below the poverty line and become dependent on social assistance. They can tend to experience social isolation, and most are associated with a lower educational level, thus limiting their economic prospects for the future.

“Mission youth reported a greater volunteer involvement in many community activities than their counterparts in the region or the province. They volunteered more in school, in fundraising, in helping the community and in other activities.

“Conversely Mission youth were less often involved in many community activities than their counterparts in the region or the province. Mission youth were less involved in physical activities without a coach, in community clubs or groups and in hobby or craft activities than their regional peers. Mission youth were more involved in activities like dance/aerobic classes, than their regional or provincial peers.”

Food security of concern

The 2007 report on Community Food Security Assessment, conducted by Fraser Health, found that Mission, when compared to the rest of the Fraser Valley, has:

- The second highest percentage of single parent families at 18.1%
- The third highest percentage of households paying more than 30% of their income on housing (31.7%)
- Has the second highest rate of mortality due to diabetes
- The third highest standardized mortality rate
- The third highest rate of mortality from Ischemic Heart Disease.