

**CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE RECYCLING
2004 PARTICIPATION RATE SURVEY**

FINAL REPORT

August 2005

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

From September 2004 to March 2005, a survey of the CRD residential curbside recycling program was conducted for the purpose of determining:

- overall program participation
- participation by municipality
- adherence to material preparation requirements
- contamination rates overall and by municipality

RESULTS

The study yielded a variety of useful data including the following:

- the overall participation rate had increased slightly to 90.4% in 2004, up from 89.9% in 2001 and 75% in 1996
- the District of North Saanich had the highest participation rate at 98.9%, while the area of East Sooke had the lowest rate at 56.7%
- approximately 14.1% of households were either cross-contaminating or were contaminating their recyclables with non-recyclable materials, as compared to 9.4% in 2001 and 6.9% in 1996
- the types of unacceptable materials typically placed out for collection included styrofoam and other non-program plastics, unacceptable metal items and milk and juice cartons

RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional and sustained communication efforts would seem to be needed to address the program's apparent contamination and material preparation issues. Consistent utilization of uniform material acceptability standards by collection contractor staff may also help to mitigate these issues. Assuming they are acted upon, a subsequent survey may be desired in order to assess the impact of these recommendations.

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE RECYCLING
2004 PARTICIPATION RATE SURVEY**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

In order to assess householder understanding and use of its residential curbside recycling program, Capital Regional District (CRD) staff periodically undertake program participation rate surveys. The last participation rate study was conducted in 2001 and a new participation rate survey was therefore required to determine what, if any, changes have occurred with program use patterns.

2. **METHODOLOGY**

2.1 **Definition of Participation**

For the purpose of this study, a household is deemed to be a participant in the Blue Box Curbside Collection program if the household participates at least once within a period of four consecutive collection opportunities. Collection is conducted on a bi-weekly basis, meaning that the four collection opportunities would occur over an eight-week time period.

2.2 **Timing**

The survey was conducted over an eight-week period from September 13 to November 18, 2004 with the exception of two municipalities which, due to scheduling constraints, were surveyed from January 02, 2005 to March 16, 2005. Sampling was not conducted during the month of December 2004 in order to prevent the heavy volumes of materials typically received over the Christmas season from skewing the data being collected.

2.3 **Areas Sampled**

Sampled routes were selected to correspond as closely as possible with the areas that were surveyed in 2001, while still obtaining at least one sample from each municipality.

A separate survey was conducted for the District of Oak Bay because it provides its own collection program using different collection containers and because the municipality provides its residents with a no-charge recycling depot that accepts the same materials as the curbside collection program (except for glass containers). These factors impact program participation, therefore, comparing the results for Oak Bay to those for other areas should be done cautiously and with an understanding of these differences.

2.4 **Data Collected**

On the collection routes surveyed, CRD employees rode with the collection vehicles during collection and recorded the following information for each home on the route:

- date
- driver's name
- collection vehicle number

- collection route number
- map number
- street name and house number
- number of blue boxes, blue bags and other containers placed out for collection
- the types of recyclable materials placed out for collection in the above-noted containers
- whether recyclable materials had been properly prepared including:
 - bundling of corrugated cardboard
 - rinsing of containers
 - flattening of applicable containers
 - removing any labels, lids or neck rings
 - the presence of any contamination

Set-out rates were separately recorded for:

- mixed paper fibres (including newspaper)
- corrugated cardboard
- plastic containers
- glass containers and metal cans (recorded as one stream)

A copy of the data collection form is provided in Appendix A.

3. RESULTS

A total of approximately 17,000 households was surveyed across 20 different collection routes. A complete list of sampling routes and dates is provided in Appendix B.

3.1 Participation Rates

The overall 2004 population-weighted regional participation rate was 90.4%, up from 89.9% in 2001 and 75.0% in 1996. Participation rates increased in two thirds of municipalities and declined in one third of municipalities from 2001 to 2004.

In 2004, the District of North Saanich had the highest participation rate at 98.9% (97.1% in 2001), while the area of East Sooke had the lowest rate at 56.7% (66.6% in 2001). The City of Langford showed the greatest increase in participation, rising from 80.9% in 2001 to 95.9% in 2004. The District of Highlands experienced the greatest decline in participation, dropping to 64.7% from 80.4% in 2001.

The results of the separate survey conducted for the District of Oak Bay found that participation in that municipality remained below the regional average at 80.8%, as it did in 2001 when it was 79.2%.

A complete list of participation rate results by municipality is provided in Appendix C.

3.2 Material Recycling Rates

The rates at which residents recycled each material type varied greatly, as is outlined in the summary table below.

Material Type	Average Set Out Rate ¹	Highest Recycling Rate	Lowest Recycling Rate
Corrugated Cardboard	18.0%	28.2% (Langford)	5.0% (Metchosin)
Glass Containers and Metal Cans	83.3%	96.9% (Langford)	46.0% (Metchosin)
Mixed Paper Fibres	81.0%	98.7% (Langford)	39.1% (Metchosin)
Plastic Containers	46.9%	63.7% (Langford)	14.1% (Metchosin)

¹ Weighted by population.

A complete listing of recycling rates by material type and municipality along with a comparison of results from 2001 is provided in Appendix D.

3.3 Material Preparation

As the summary table below illustrates, it would seem that most recyclable materials were being properly prepared, with the exception of corrugated cardboard, which was often not flattened, cut to size or bundled properly.

Material Type	Average Correct Preparation Rate ¹	Highest Recycling Rate	Lowest Recycling Rate
Corrugated Cardboard	16.6%	23.8% (Saanich)	4.4% (Sooke)
Glass Containers and Metal Cans	64.6%	96.4% (Oak Bay)	22.4% (North Saanich)
Mixed Paper Fibres	91.9%	100.0% (Oak Bay)	76.4% (View Royal)
Plastic Containers	60.8%	74.9% (Saanich)	24.7% (North Saanich)

¹ Weighted by population.

A complete listing of preparation rates by material type and municipality along with a comparison of results from 2001 is provided in Appendix E.

The most common material preparation problems observed were:

- corrugated cardboard not being flattened, cut to size or bundled
- materials being placed out for collection in tied plastic bags
- labels not being removed from metal cans
- materials not being placed in the correct container

3.4 Contamination Rates

The average population-weighted regional contamination rate was 14.1% in 2004, up from 9.4% in 2001 and 6.9% in 1996. The area of North Saanich had the highest contamination rate at 17.0%, while the District of Sooke had the lowest contamination rate at 7.8%.

The separate survey conducted in the District of Oak Bay determined that at 15.7%, contamination rates for its distinct collection program were not significantly different than the regional average in 2004. In contrast, Oak Bay's contamination rate was more than twice the regional average at 20.4% in 2001.

Aside from the accepted material types cross contaminating one another, the most commonly observed non-collected contaminants were:

- styrofoam
- plastic grocery bags
- other non-accepted plastic items such as toys
- polycoated gable-top cartons and aseptic drink boxes (tetra paks)
- non-program metal items

A complete listing of contamination rates by municipality along with a comparison of results from 2001 is provided in Appendix F.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Overall Participation

At 90.4%, the participation rate remained relatively unchanged from the rate of 89.9% in 2001. It is believed that the lack of significant change in the region's participation rate is a reflection of the fact that the program itself has not changed. However, with the implementation of an expanded collection program in May 2005, it may be expected that a higher participation rate will be observed in the future.

As with the results of the 2001 survey, it is believed that the lower-than-average participation rate in the District of Oak Bay may be attributable to the continued operation of the no-charge recycling depot by the municipality at its Elgin Street works yard. Many Oak Bay residents seem to prefer using the depot because materials can be recycled six days per week and because of the broad range of materials that are accepted at the depot. This includes refuse, yard waste, paint, metals, propane tanks and all of the recyclable materials collected at curbside except glass containers.

4.2 Material Recycling Rates

In view of the ubiquitous nature of paper packaging and products, the consistently high set-out rates observed for mixed paper was expected. The consistently high set-out rates for glass bottles and jars and metal cans were also not surprising, given that they have both been collected since the inception of the CRD curbside recycling program in 1989.

Past public demand to add plastics to the collection program was always high and, therefore, the relatively low set-out rate for plastic containers was unexpected and may be due to a lack of public awareness of the range of plastics that are accepted.

As in 2001, the set-out rate for corrugated cardboard was again low. It is believed that the stringent preparation requirements for cardboard may, in part, be affecting cardboard set-out rates (see comments in sections 4.3 and 4.4) and that at least some residents are cutting up their cardboard and recycling it as part of the mixed paper stream.

4.3 **Material Preparation**

Proper preparation rates appear to have declined sharply from 2001 to 2004. It is believed that the low proper preparation rates observed in 2004 may be attributable to the following:

- the need for additional education and outreach regarding correct preparation
- absent or inconsistent enforcement of material preparation requirements by collection crews
- preparation requirements, for at least some material types, may be too onerous
- more stringent reporting of improper preparation in the 2004 survey

Of all materials, corrugated cardboard was the least often properly prepared, with an average correct preparation rate of just 16.6%. Preparation requirements for corrugated cardboard may be viewed as particularly arduous and this low rate may be a reflection of this fact. It is also probable this rate may be at least partly due to the lack of enforcement of preparation standards by collection crews, particularly those who tacitly recognize the tedious nature of the preparation standards. If improperly prepared materials are collected despite the established standards, there is no impetus for residents to comply with those standards.

4.4 **Contamination Rates**

The marginal increase in the overall contamination rate may be the result of the following factors:

- insufficient ongoing (maintenance) education and outreach for the program
- material preparation requirements that are too stringent, particularly for cardboard
- inconsistent enforcement of program standards by collection contractor staff
- residents persistently placing materials out for collection that are not accepted in the hope that they will be collected anyway

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Additional communication efforts appear to be required in order to address the apparent contamination and material preparation issues. The results of the survey seem to indicate that the majority of these problems are occurring as a result of a general lack of understanding of the standards and requirements of the curbside collection program.

The consistent utilization of uniform standards for the collection program by collection contractor staff may also help mitigate these issues by helping to eliminate confusion as to what is and what is not acceptable.

A subsequent survey may be desired in order to assess the impact, if any, of implementing the above recommendations, particularly within those areas that exhibited high contamination or low participation.

APPENDIX A - DATA COLLECTION FORM

Street Name: _____

Truck Number: _____ Driver: _____ Date: _____

Route Number: _____ Map Number: _____ Inspected By: _____

Street #	# of Blue Boxes	# of Blue Bags	Type of Container	Preparation Compliance (Check if correct)								Contamination and Notes
				Cardboard		Plastic		Mixed Fibres		Glass/Tin		

APPENDIX B - SAMPLING ROUTES

SCHEDULE 1

Contractor	Area	Map #	Week and Day
RDI	Sidney	21	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
RDI	North Saanich	21	Green Thursday
RDI	Central Saanich	16 & 19	Blue Monday
Alpine	Metchosin	31	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	5	Blue Friday
RDI	Sidney	21	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
RDI	North Saanich	21	Green Thursday
RDI	Central Saanich	16 & 19	Blue Monday
Alpine	Metchosin	31	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	5	Blue Friday
RDI	Sidney	21	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
RDI	North Saanich	21	Green Thursday
RDI	Central Saanich	16 & 19	Blue Monday
Alpine	Metchosin	31	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	5	Blue Friday
RDI	Sidney	21	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
RDI	North Saanich	21	Green Thursday
RDI	Central Saanich	16 & 19	Blue Monday
Alpine	Metchosin	31	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	5	Blue Friday

APPENDIX B - SAMPLING ROUTES (CONTINUED)

SCHEDULE 2

Contractor	Area	Map #	Week and Day
RDI	Central Saanich	18	Green Tuesday
CW	Saanich	13	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Friday
RDI	Sidney	23	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	25	Blue Friday
RDI	Central Saanich	18	Green Tuesday
CW	Saanich	13	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Friday
RDI	Sidney	23	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	25	Blue Friday
RDI	Central Saanich	18	Green Tuesday
CW	Saanich	13	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Friday
RDI	Sidney	23	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	25	Blue Friday
RDI	Central Saanich	18	Green Tuesday
CW	Saanich	13	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Friday
RDI	Sidney	23	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Thursday
CW	View Royal	25	Blue Friday

APPENDIX B - SAMPLING ROUTES (CONTINUED)

SCHEDULE 3

Contractor	Area	Map #	Week and Day
Alpine	Highlands	32	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
Alpine	Sooke	29	Green Friday
Alpine	East Sooke	30	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Victoria	2 & 6	Blue Thursday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Friday
Alpine	Highlands	32	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
Alpine	Sooke	29	Green Friday
Alpine	East Sooke	30	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Victoria	2 & 6	Blue Thursday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Friday
Alpine	Highlands	32	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
Alpine	Sooke	29	Green Friday
Alpine	East Sooke	30	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Victoria	2 & 6	Blue Thursday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Friday
Alpine	Highlands	32	Green Tuesday
Alpine	Langford	24	Green Wednesday
CW	Saanich	6	Green Thursday
Alpine	Sooke	29	Green Friday
Alpine	East Sooke	30	Blue Tuesday
CW	Victoria	3	Blue Wednesday
CW	Victoria	2 & 6	Blue Thursday
CW	Esquimalt	1	Blue Friday

2004 PARTICIPATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Participation Rate
Central Saanich	89.88%
Colwood	88.52%
East Sooke	56.68%
Esquimalt	93.63%
Highlands	64.70%
Langford	95.92%
Metchosin	98.23%
North Saanich	98.92%
Oak Bay	80.83%
Saanich	91.71%
Sidney	85.42%
Sooke	81.92%
Victoria	89.43%
View Royal	97.20%
Average	81.92%
Population-Weighted Average	90.40%

COMPARISON OF 2001 AND 2004 PARTICIPATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Participation Rate		
	2004	2001	Change
Central Saanich	89.88%	97.30%	-7.42%
Colwood	88.52%	77.40%	11.12%
East Sooke	56.68%	66.60%	-9.92%
Esquimalt	93.63%	89.70%	3.93%
Highlands	64.70%	80.40%	-15.70%
Langford	95.92%	80.90%	15.02%
Metchosin	98.23%	86.90%	11.33%
North Saanich	98.92%	97.10%	1.82%
Oak Bay	80.83%	79.20%	1.63%
Saanich	91.71%	93.50%	-1.79%
Sidney	85.42%	94.70%	-9.28%
Sooke	81.92%	81.10%	0.82%
Victoria	89.43%	91.30%	-1.87%
View Royal	97.20%	85.60%	11.60%
Average	81.92%	85.84%	0.82%
Population-Weighted Average	90.40%	89.90%	0.50%

APPENDIX D - RECYCLING RATES BY MATERIAL TYPE AND MUNICIPALITY

2004 RECYCLING RATES

Municipality/Area	Corrugated Cardboard	Plastic Containers	Mixed Paper	Glass Containers and Metal Cans
Central Saanich	20.56%	49.17%	80.84%	83.14%
Colwood	24.33%	47.12%	89.22%	91.56%
East Sooke	10.78%	40.84%	72.12%	81.14%
Esquimalt	19.34%	48.08%	79.97%	81.23%
Highlands	12.52%	43.91%	71.26%	76.35%
Langford	28.16%	63.74%	98.73%	96.88%
Metchosin	5.03%	14.12%	39.08%	45.98%
North Saanich	13.80%	39.95%	71.41%	73.19%
Oak Bay	20.89%	48.22%	87.67%	84.69%
Saanich	17.44%	44.81%	75.31%	77.80%
Sidney	17.19%	40.27%	73.82%	74.28%
Sooke	10.59%	34.67%	69.15%	69.52%
Victoria	20.13%	53.90%	88.62%	89.02%
View Royal	14.88%	31.76%	60.29%	62.97%
Average¹	17.95%	46.88%	81.04%	83.26%

¹ Weighted by population.

COMPARISON OF 2001 AND 2004 RECYCLING RATES

Municipality/Area	Corrugated Cardboard		Plastic Containers		Mixed Paper		Glass Containers and Metal Cans	
	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004
Central Saanich	10.40%	20.56%	40.90%	49.17%	95.90%	80.84%	89.80%	83.14%
Colwood	33.70%	24.33%	47.00%	47.12%	81.30%	89.22%	60.30%	91.56%
East Sooke	16.80%	10.78%	62.70%	40.84%	86.40%	72.12%	81.60%	81.14%
Esquimalt	21.20%	19.34%	55.50%	48.08%	95.70%	79.97%	85.90%	81.23%
Highlands	18.30%	12.52%	72.20%	43.91%	95.20%	71.26%	89.70%	76.35%
Langford	23.50%	28.16%	50.50%	63.74%	95.60%	98.73%	82.90%	96.88%
Metchosin	12.80%	5.03%	28.90%	14.12%	97.10%	39.08%	97.70%	45.98%
North Saanich	9.70%	13.80%	24.60%	39.95%	97.60%	71.41%	95.30%	73.19%
Oak Bay	26.90%	20.89%	58.70%	48.22%	94.40%	87.67%	78.40%	84.69%
Saanich	14.70%	17.44%	72.50%	44.81%	94.00%	75.31%	79.10%	77.80%
Sidney	13.40%	17.19%	49.30%	40.27%	97.10%	73.82%	82.00%	74.28%
Sooke	20.90%	10.59%	60.40%	34.67%	93.30%	69.15%	81.20%	69.52%
Victoria	19.20%	20.13%	54.20%	53.90%	97.20%	88.62%	83.70%	89.02%
View Royal	15.80%	14.88%	46.90%	31.76%	97.20%	60.29%	89.20%	62.97%
Average¹	18.00%	17.95%	58.00%	46.88%	94.80%	81.04%	81.80%	83.26%

¹ Weighted by population.

APPENDIX E - PREPARATION RATES BY MATERIAL TYPE AND MUNICIPALITY

2004 MATERIAL PREPARATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Corrugated Cardboard	Plastic Containers	Mixed Paper	Glass Containers and Metal Cans
Central Saanich	21.21%	53.19%	80.75%	54.32%
Colwood	12.27%	43.44%	84.99%	61.29%
East Sooke	12.81%	70.87%	83.49%	86.62%
Esquimalt	16.32%	50.61%	82.95%	51.62%
Highlands	8.70%	73.37%	86.86%	74.50%
Langford	10.73%	41.09%	82.97%	42.37%
Metchosin	10.30%	27.52%	81.39%	27.06%
North Saanich	10.44%	24.07%	81.73%	22.39%
Oak Bay	21.95%	71.95%	100.00%	96.38%
Saanich	23.80%	74.85%	83.60%	76.92%
Sidney	16.19%	53.62%	78.38%	53.27%
Sooke	4.36%	63.76%	82.15%	70.56%
Victoria	15.88%	58.03%	82.97%	60.40%
View Royal	19.79%	48.61%	76.38%	42.65%
Average¹	16.62%	60.78%	91.94%	64.64%

¹ Weighted by population.

COMPARISON OF 2001 AND 2004 PREPARATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Corrugated Cardboard		Plastic Containers		Mixed Paper		Glass Containers and Metal Cans	
	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004
Central Saanich	58.50%	21.21%	78.80%	53.19%	28.00%	80.75%	79.50%	54.32%
Colwood	99.20%	12.27%	100.00%	43.44%	57.80%	84.99%	100.00%	61.29%
East Sooke	97.70%	12.81%	97.30%	70.87%	72.00%	83.49%	98.10%	86.62%
Esquimalt	96.70%	16.32%	96.10%	50.61%	55.10%	82.95%	95.70%	51.62%
Highlands	100.00%	8.70%	99.20%	73.37%	75.10%	86.86%	99.00%	74.50%
Langford	99.60%	10.73%	98.40%	41.09%	51.90%	82.97%	99.20%	42.37%
Metchosin	97.90%	10.30%	100.00%	27.52%	29.80%	81.39%	100.00%	27.06%
North Saanich	96.30%	10.44%	99.40%	24.07%	25.20%	81.73%	99.90%	22.39%
Oak Bay	17.30%	21.95%	65.80%	71.95%	40.90%	100.00%	80.70%	96.38%
Saanich	96.30%	23.80%	97.20%	74.85%	74.90%	83.60%	97.30%	76.92%
Sidney	95.60%	16.19%	97.50%	53.62%	49.10%	78.38%	97.40%	53.27%
Sooke	99.50%	4.36%	99.00%	63.76%	63.50%	82.15%	99.00%	70.56%
Victoria	97.50%	15.88%	97.30%	58.03%	53.80%	82.97%	97.50%	60.40%
View Royal	100.00%	19.79%	100.00%	48.61%	48.20%	76.38%	99.70%	42.65%
Average¹	90.70%	16.62%	94.90%	60.78%	50.00%	91.94%	95.90%	64.64%

¹ Weighted by population.

2004 CONTAMINATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Contamination Rate
Central Saanich	16.60%
Colwood	8.33%
East Sooke	8.14%
Esquimalt	14.94%
Highlands	8.66%
Langford	15.25%
Metchosin	16.84%
North Saanich	17.02%
Saanich	15.39%
Sidney	10.52%
Sooke	7.84%
Victoria	12.52%
View Royal	12.71%
Average	12.67%
Population-Weighted Average	14.06%

Oak Bay	15.71%
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COMPARISON OF 2001 AND 2004 CONTAMINATION RATES

Municipality/Area	Contamination Rate	
	2001	2004
Central Saanich	3.10%	16.60%
Colwood	2.30%	8.33%
East Sooke	18.80%	8.14%
Esquimalt	7.90%	14.94%
Highlands	12.60%	8.66%
Langford	10.50%	15.25%
Metchosin	1.00%	16.84%
North Saanich	1.20%	17.02%
Saanich	11.40%	15.39%
Sidney	7.50%	10.52%
Sooke	9.40%	7.84%
Victoria	11.30%	12.52%
View Royal	8.00%	12.71%
Average	8.10%	12.67%
Weighted Average	9.40%	14.06%

Oak Bay	21.40%	15.71%
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