



A Pathway to Home:
Surrey Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan
SITUATION REPORT

JULY 2024

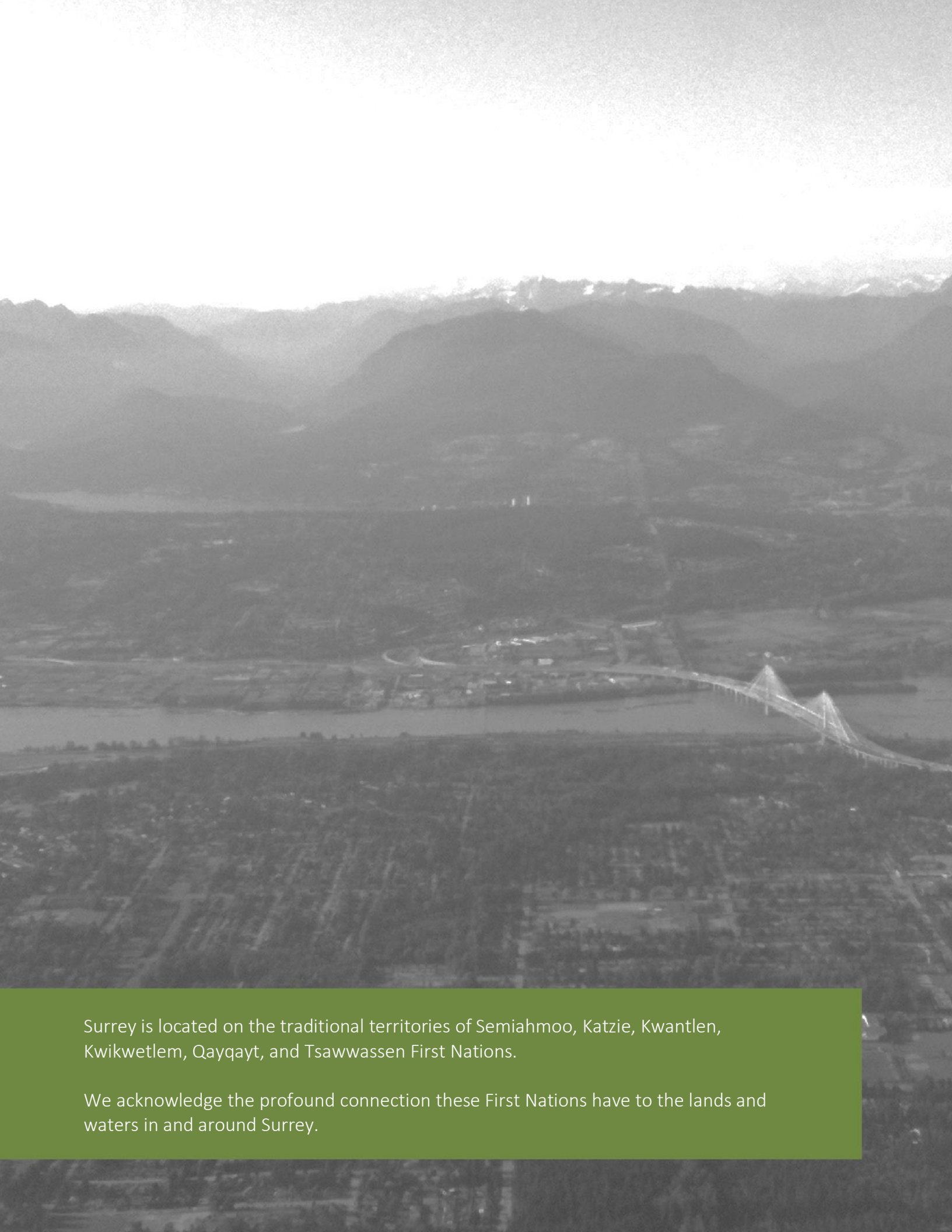
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Surrey is located on the traditional territories of Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations.

We acknowledge the profound connection these First Nations have to the lands and waters in and around Surrey.

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SURREY DATA AT-A-GLANCE

Figure 1: Surrey Data At-a-Glance

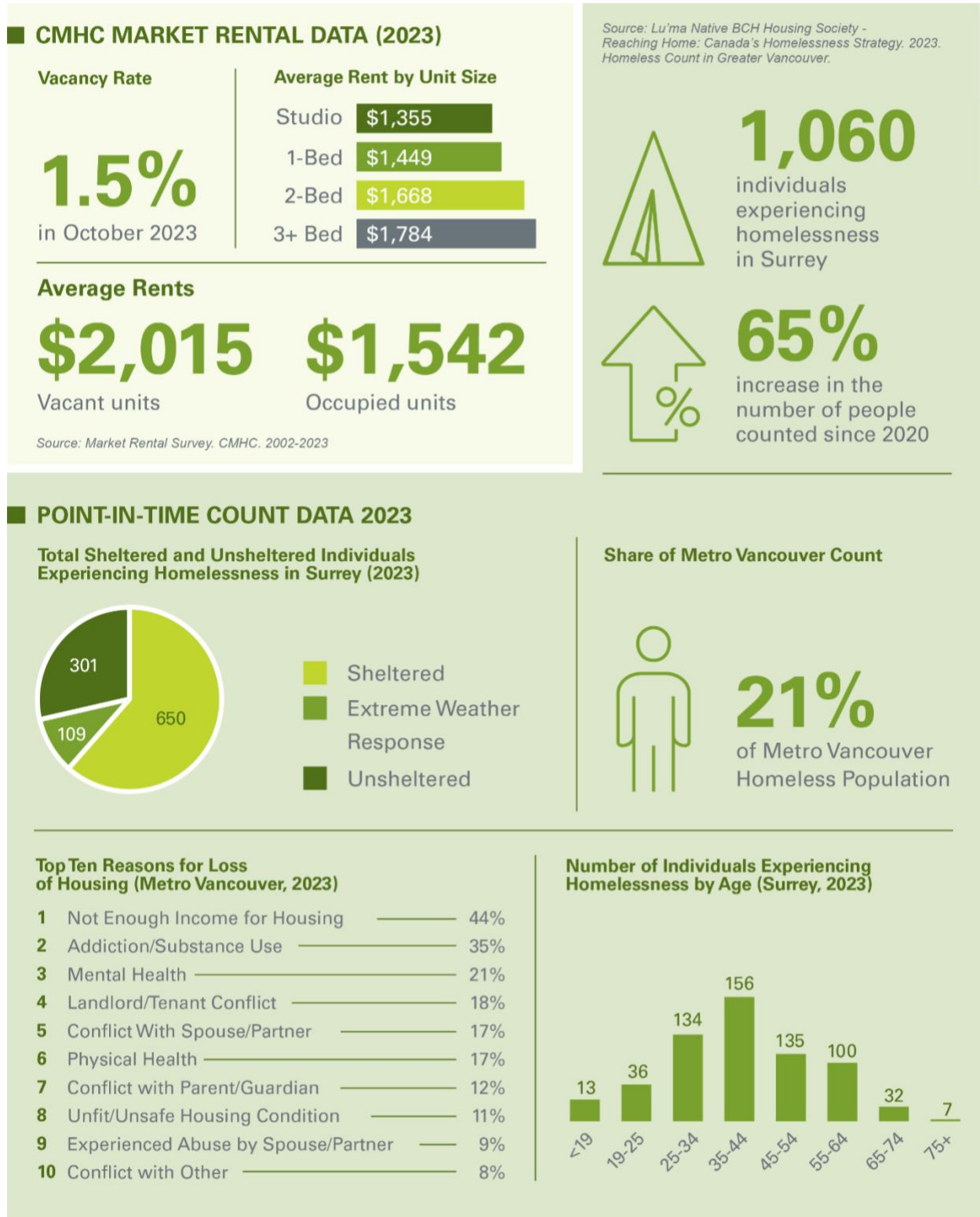


Figure 2: Surrey Data At-a-Glance continued

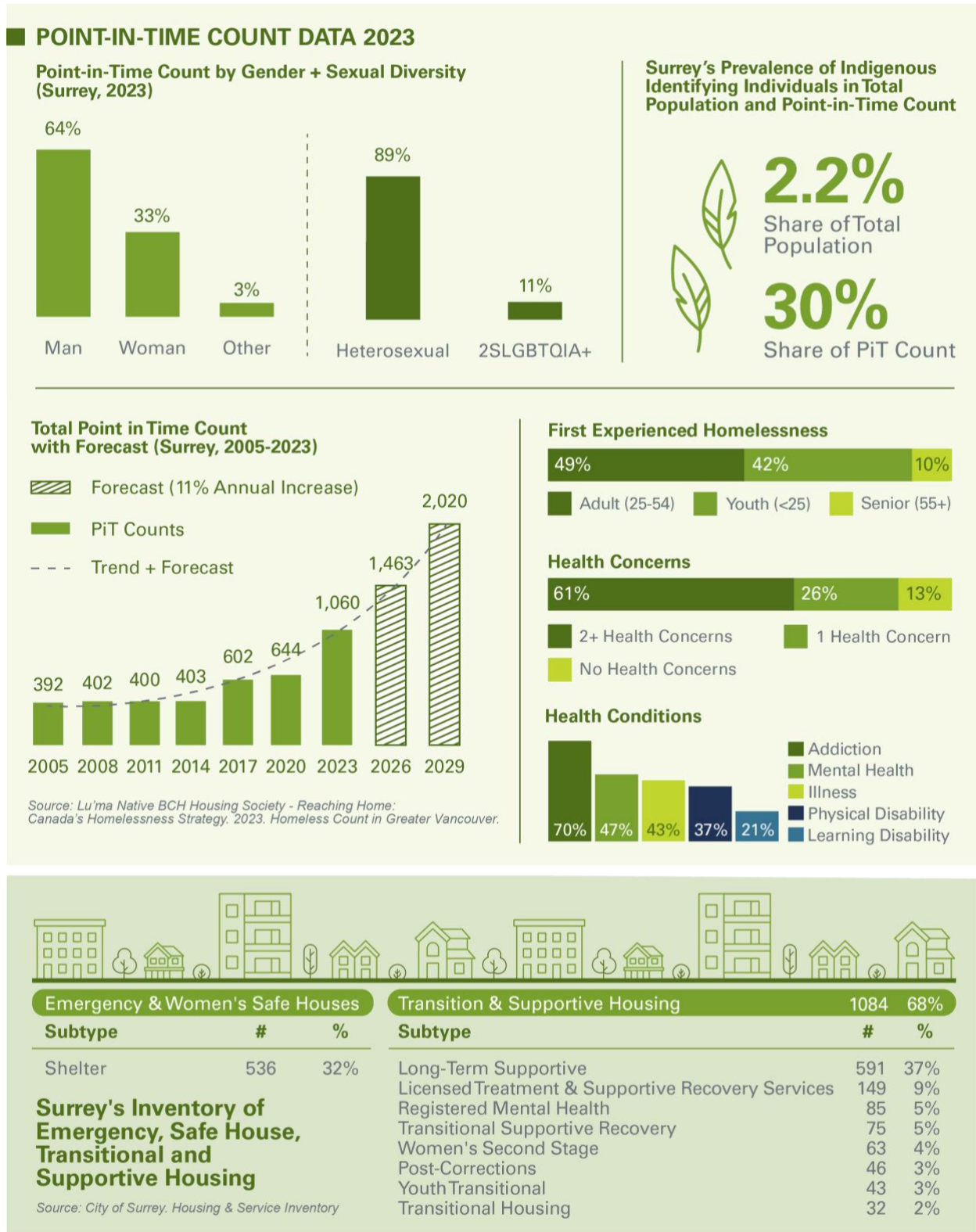


Figure 3: Emergency, Safe House, Transitional, and Supportive Spaces by Neighbourhood

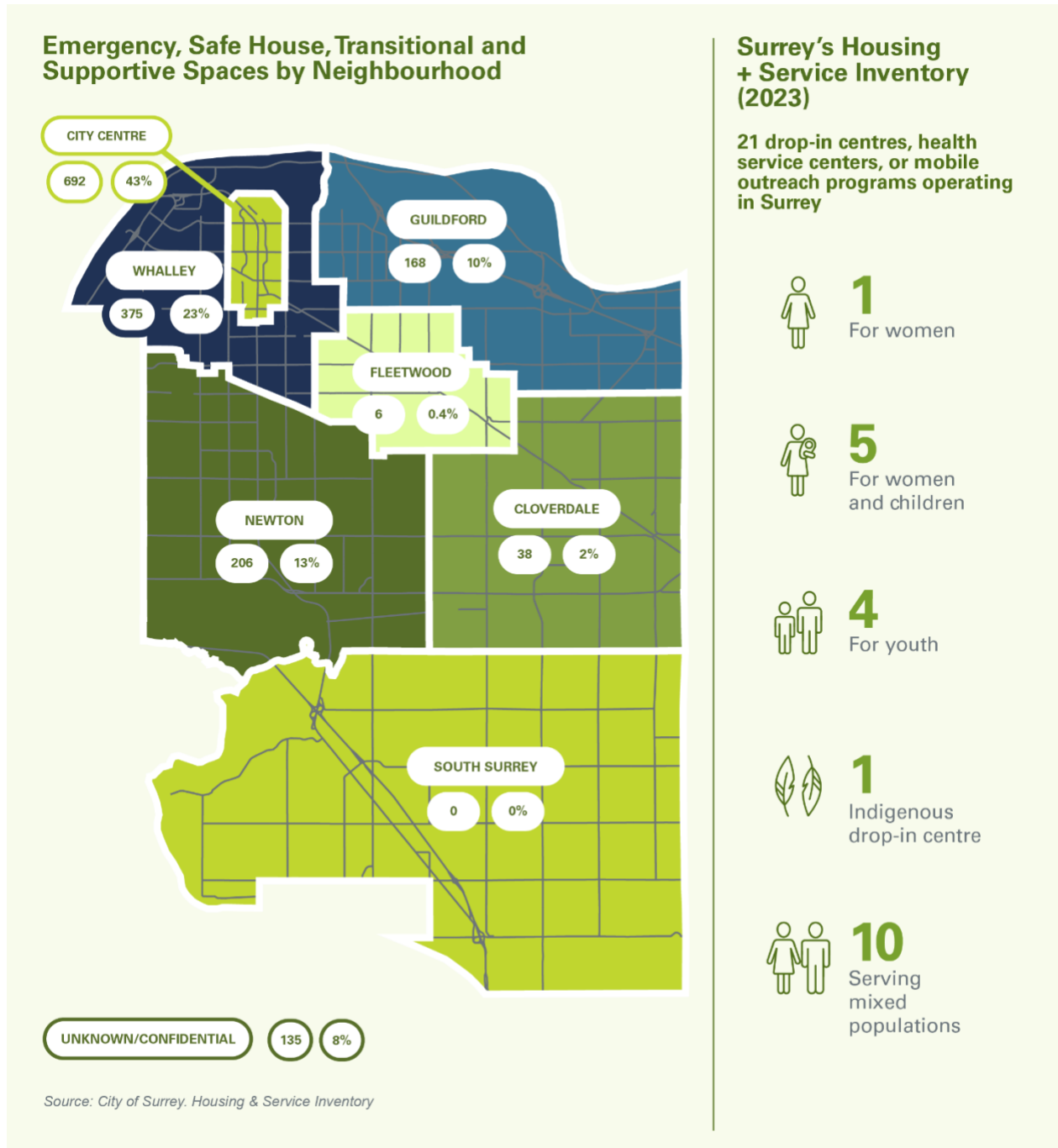
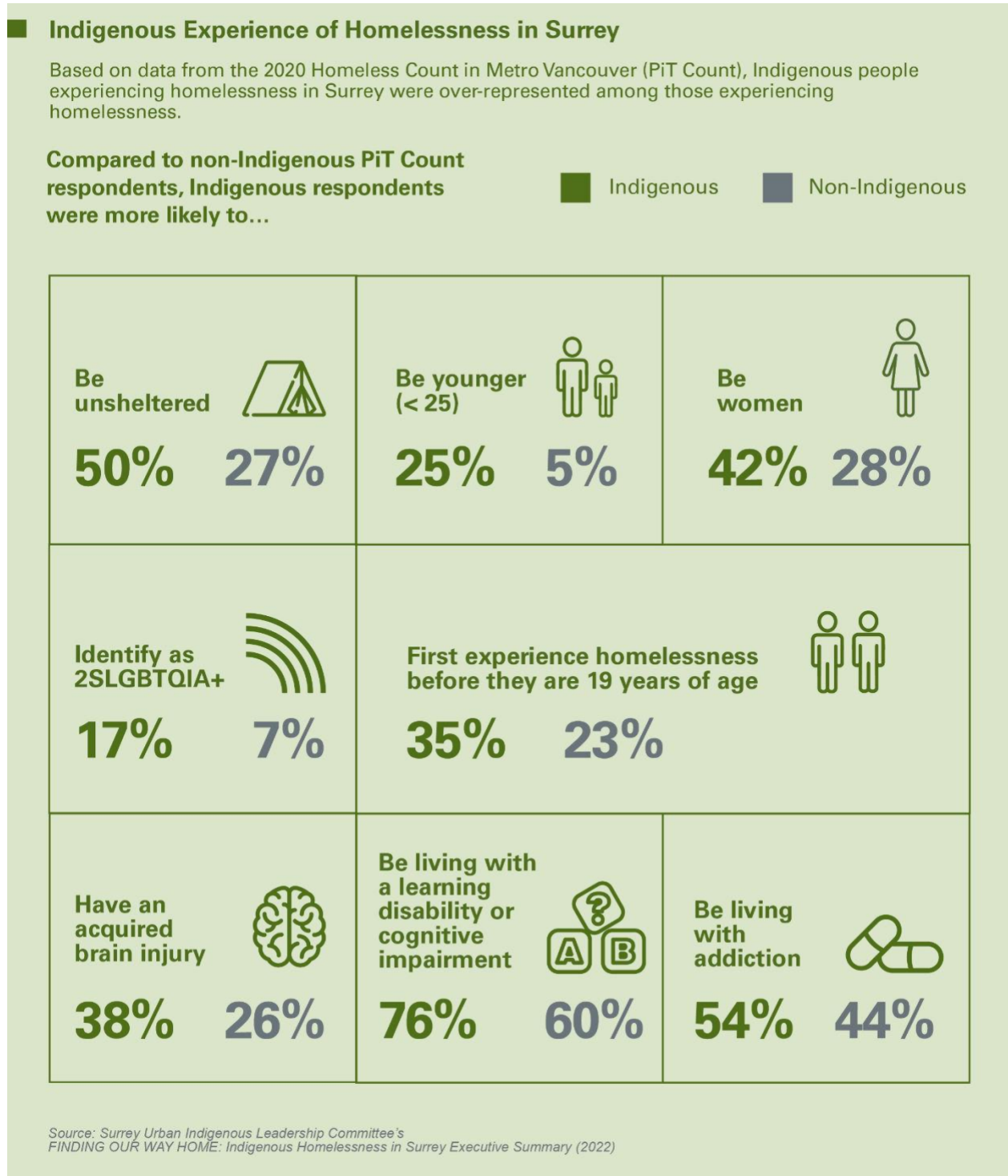


Figure 4: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey (2023)





INTRODUCTION

Introduction

City of Surrey’s **Master Plan for Housing the Homeless (2013)** is over ten years old and a new plan is needed to respond to the current situation. Housing affordability is now even more of an issue in Surrey, especially for low- and moderate-income renters. There is a need to improve access to health services and housing for people with complex health needs, particularly those with concurrent mental health, substance use, and physical health challenges. Vulnerabilities resulting from decreasing affordability have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, drug toxicity crisis, and more extreme weather events caused by the climate crisis.

The **Surrey Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan** comprises three reports:



This **Situation Report** provides background planning and policy context, an overview of quantitative data on rental affordability and homelessness in Surrey, and an analysis of Surrey’s housing and services inventory.

SURREY CONTEXT

There is an urgent need for rapid, emergency solutions to homelessness and delivery of new non-market housing units in Surrey. By 2030, Surrey is projected to become the largest city in the province of British Columbia. The incidence of homelessness has been increasing across Metro Vancouver in recent decades. In 2023, a minimum of 1,060 people in Surrey were in urgent need of housing and experiencing homelessness, including 301 people sleeping in spaces unsuitable for human habitation (2023 Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver). Surrey has the second highest prevalence of homelessness in the region. Without intervention, this trend will likely

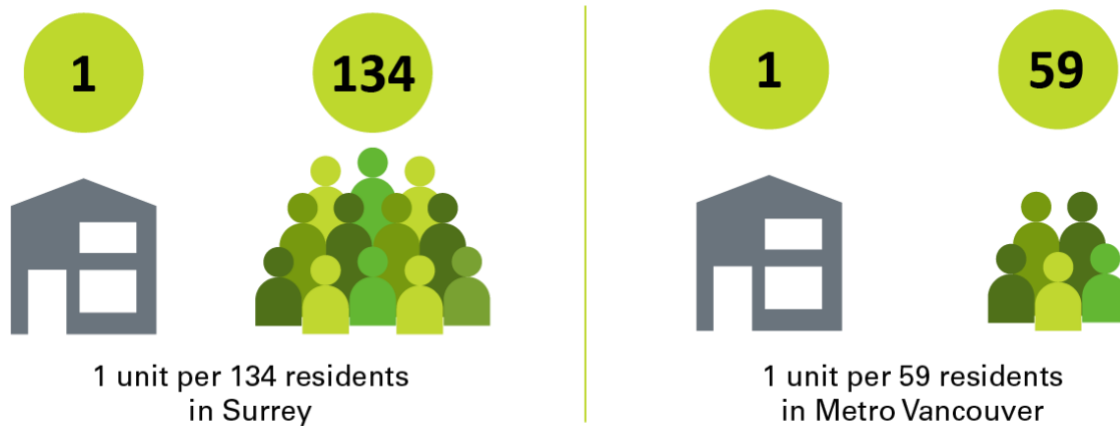


continue as the population grows. There are several population groups at disproportionate risk of homelessness, such as people with complex health and substance use issues, Indigenous peoples, and other population groups where dedicated spaces or services would be more impactful, such as women and women-led single-parent households with children, and youth.

Surrey is underserved in terms of shelter spaces, supportive and non-market units per capita when compared to Metro Vancouver. In fact, Surrey has less than half the regional average with one space or unit per 134 residents, compared to one space or unit per 59 residents in Metro Vancouver. Vancouver has twice the regional average, with one space or unit per 28 residents.

Figure 5: Number of Shelter Spaces, Supportive, and Non-Market Units per Resident, Surrey and Metro Vancouver

Source: BC Housing, Unit Count Reporting Model, March 31, 2023



A rapid increase in Surrey’s affordable and supportive housing supply is required to address the critical shortfall in non-market units. A focus on prevention is also required to create a coordinated system to serve people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness where people can access the housing, services, and supports they need. The City cannot address these challenges alone. Partnerships with senior governments, as well as collaboration across the homelessness, housing, and health sectors, is required. Although a significant challenge, the vision of attaining a functional zero end to homelessness in Surrey is achievable by undertaking the approach outlined in A Pathway to Home: Surrey Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan.



WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means, or ability to acquire such housing. Homelessness is the result of systemic and societal barriers; a lack of affordable and appropriate housing; the individual / household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural, or physical challenges; and/or racism and discrimination. Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end and insecurely housed at the other end (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

- **AT-RISK:** People not currently experiencing homelessness but whose current economic and/or housing situation is dangerously lacking security or stability.
- **CHRONIC:** Individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g., chronic physical or mental illness, substance use challenges), currently experiencing homelessness and have experienced homelessness for six months or more in the past year.
- **EPISODIC:** Individuals, often with disabling conditions, currently experiencing homelessness with three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year.
- **TRANSITIONAL:** People living in interim housing at the in-between stage of unsheltered homelessness or emergency accommodation and permanent housing (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2021).

Based on Point-in-Time Counts, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey has been increasing over time. Between 2014 and 2023, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased from 403 to 1,060 – a 163% increase (11% annual average growth rate).



CITY HALL



HOUSING POLICY CONTEXT



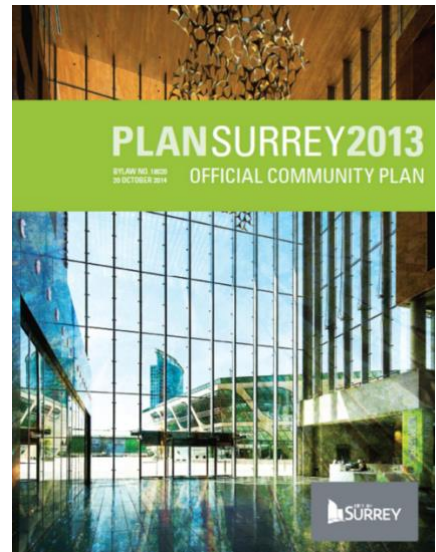
Housing Policy Context

This section provides an overview of Surrey’s existing policy foundation, with a specific focus on policy documents that aim to address the housing problem.

PlanSurrey 2013: Official Community Plan (OCP) outlines Surrey’s vision, objectives, and policies that guide planning and land-use management. Other municipal plans and reports include the **Affordable Housing Strategy (2018)**, **Housing Needs Report (2022)**, and **Master Plan for Housing the Homeless (2013)**, to be replaced by **A Pathway to Home: Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan (expected 2024)**. Table 1 identifies City of Surrey housing planning and policy documents including key policies and recommendations.

A Pathway to Home: Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan draws upon two reports: Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC)’s 2022 **Finding Our Way Home: Research on Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey** and Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group (SVWG)’s 2023 **In Their Own Words: Current Reflections on Housing and Service Needs for Vulnerable Women and Girls in Surrey**.

Homelessness is not a Surrey-specific issue, and there are other regional, provincial, and national plans and strategies that support the need for more system-wide change. Recent provincial legislative changes and provincial and federal funding calls offer significant opportunities for housing solutions, support services, and prevention programs that respond to homelessness.



Final Report

PREPARED FOR THE
City of Surrey

PREPARED BY
CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

July 2013

Table 1: City of Surrey Housing Plans + Policy Documents

MUNICIPAL PLANNING + POLICY DOCUMENTS	KEY POLICIES + RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Master Plan for Housing the Homeless (2013) identifies and responds to the needs for long-term housing and support services for people experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>The Master Plan is over 10-years old. The context of homelessness and housing in Surrey has changed significantly and requires updating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of an additional 450-units of transitional and supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness. • Replacement of Gateway emergency shelter in Whalley with a new purpose-built facility that incorporates transitional housing units. • Enhancement of supportive housing, shelter, and drop-in services that focus on vulnerable population groups with unique needs. • Continue to strengthen partnerships with BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, Surrey Homelessness & Housing Society, and government funders & foundations.
<p>PlanSurrey 2013: Official Community Plan (2014) outlines the City’s long-term plan for community development and identifies objectives and policies to achieve the Plan.</p> <p>The Official Community Plan (OCP) will be updated by end of 2025 to align with new provincial legislative requirements, creating an opportunity for the update to further support the direction of A Pathway to Home: Homelessness Prevention and Response Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge #5 ‘Serve the Increasingly Diverse Needs of Surrey’s Population’ acknowledges that as the city grows, additional services helping persons experiencing homelessness or mental illness or addiction issues are needed. • F3 Policies relate to Non-Market Rental with the objective to establish a full range of non-market housing and supports to meet current and future residents’ needs.



MUNICIPAL PLANNING + POLICY DOCUMENTS	KEY POLICIES + RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Affordable Housing Strategy (2018) sets out strategies and actions to increase housing affordability in Surrey, with a focus on purpose-built market and non-market rental housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 4.0 aims to increase the supply of housing affordable for low- to moderate-income renter households through continued partnerships to increase the supply of non-market housing, as well as to continue implementing the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless actions.
<p>Housing Needs Report (2022) provides an overview of current and future housing needs in Surrey to inform planning processes and policies.</p> <p>The report will be updated by end of 2024 to align with new provincial legislative requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tackle homelessness, the report advises increasing the supply of below-market and non-market rental housing that is affordable to those with very-low incomes. • There is no data source that exists to accurately estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey. Although Point-in-Time Counts are an important source of information to assess trends over time, they are widely accepted as an undercount. Therefore, the Housing Needs Report utilized a 3.5 ratio to estimate the number of people experiencing hidden homelessness in Surrey.¹

1. Based on research by M. Eberle et al. 2009. *Results of the pilot study to estimate the size of the hidden homeless population in Metro Vancouver.*



SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH

Finding Our Way Home: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey (2022)

Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) research provides insight into Indigenous people experiencing homelessness in Surrey, their pathways into homelessness, existing services and supports, and how these services and supports can be improved to reduce and then eliminate Indigenous homelessness in Surrey. Priority recommendations include:



- **Priority #1:** Immediate coordinated action is needed by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments to create deeply affordable housing, with and without supports, in Surrey to offer an exit strategy for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness and to prevent individuals and households from falling into homelessness. Housing is needed for single Indigenous men and women, and low-income families in crisis, especially single-parent families.
- **Priority #2:** Create and implement a strategy to increase local Indigenous capacity to develop affordable housing in Surrey.

Other recommendations include:

- Distributing **Finding Our Way Home** results to all stakeholders working on Indigenous housing and social services in Surrey;
- Including Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association at the Coordinated Access System (CAS) table to strengthen access to services for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, especially those who are unsheltered;
- Advocating for increases to income and disability assistance to provide Indigenous people unable to work with more income for housing and increase the financial viability of operating deeply affordable housing; and

- Advocating for the implementation of the right to housing at the federal level and implementation of UNDRIP at the provincial level, including the right of Indigenous peoples to housing.

The *Finding Our Way Home: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey* report can be found at surreyindigenousleadership.ca.

At least 635 Indigenous individuals are estimated to have experienced homelessness in Surrey as of 2020, a rate of 1 in 26 Indigenous people living in Surrey compared to 1 in 239 non-Indigenous people.

With a rental vacancy rate of 0.6% as of 2021 and BC Housing waitlist of 2,554 individuals as of 2019, Surrey simply does not have the affordable housing supply to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness. Compounding this, Surrey has a deficit of Indigenous housing options. Despite similar urban Indigenous populations, Surrey had less than one-fifth the number of Indigenous housing units as City of Vancouver.

There is an urgent need to act. More deeply affordable non-market units – led by and in collaboration with Indigenous organizations – are needed to create exit pathways for those experiencing homelessness. Without more housing options, more Indigenous people will be put at-risk of homelessness. And without exit pathways, those currently homeless will face more severe and long-term erosion in their health, social connections, and trust in the systems that are meant to provide assistance.

Source: Finding Our Way Home: Indigenous Homelessness in Surrey, Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

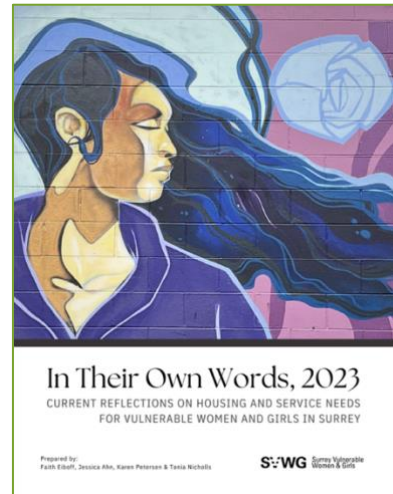


In Their Own Words, 2023: Current Reflections on Housing and Service Needs for Vulnerable Women And Girls in Surrey

Surrey Vulnerable Women & Girls Working Group

Surrey Vulnerable Women & Girls Working Group (SVWG)

research showcases the findings of a study conducted with 70 women and girls in Surrey about housing and service needs and challenges. The research focuses on the perspectives of women and youth, conveying key findings and recommendations in their own narratives. Twenty key organizations working on the direct care serving vulnerable women and girls in Surrey also provided their perspectives.



The report identified housing as being the most important need by women and youth, with the main housing barriers being availability and affordability. Women with children found housing often does not take into account their children's needs. Youth highlighted the vulnerabilities faced when transitioning to independent living due to expensive rental markets and hesitancy from landlords to rent to younger individuals.

Participants expressed the need for a greater variety of affordable, safe, secure, adequate housing, including longer-term and no / low barrier options, and a spectrum of housing from supportive to independent, as well as family housing (suitable for women with children and/or a partner), transitional and recovery housing (for women leaving hospital, treatment, or corrections facilities), and assisted living (for seniors, women with disabilities and/or serious mental illness).

A need for broader emergency response solutions was also identified, specifically safe housing/shelters for women fleeing violence. Another key group is women with developmental disabilities and ensuring supportive housing and shelter options include safeguards and supports for this population.

The full *In Their Own Words, 2023: Current Reflections on Housing and Service Needs for Vulnerable Women and Girls in Surrey* report can be found at surrey.ca.

Vulnerable women and girls in Surrey experience challenges relating to transportation, stigma, trauma, cultural insecurity, and access to women-only support and age-appropriate services. Surviving the Night (2019) reports on research conducted with vulnerable women and girls in Surrey about night-time safety and service needs.

The report recommends increasing funding for mobile service vans to enable night-time service, opening separate night-time drop-ins for women and youths involved in indoor sex work, and developing more women-only shelter and housing in Surrey.

Source: In Their Own Words (2023): Current Reflections on Housing and Service Needs for Vulnerable Women and Girls in Surrey, Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group



REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL, + NATIONAL PLANS

Provincial Plans

- **Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) BC Indigenous Homelessness Strategy (2022)** looks to reintroduce traditional and innovative Indigenous-led approaches to helping and empowering Indigenous people that have been disturbed and dismantled through colonization. The Strategy emphasizes the role of government to fund and work with Indigenous organizations, to build capacity of the Indigenous housing and support sector, enhance partnerships, strengthen policy in a culturally safe way, and design and deliver equitable services. The full report is available at ahma-bc.org.
- **Government of British Columbia Belonging in BC: A collaborative plan to prevent and reduce homelessness (2023)** covers the initial phase to address homelessness from 2022-2025, with immediate actions supported by \$633 million (2022 BC Budget), and \$1.5 billion (2023 BC Budget). The full plan can be found at gov.bc.ca. The plan commits to four strategy actions to be implemented over three years:
 1. Transform housing and health systems and programs to reduce barriers to support;
 2. Strengthen community partnership to build capacity and respond to local needs;
 3. Ensure programming and service delivery includes input from people with distinct needs and perspectives; and
 4. Apply better data on drivers and impacts of homelessness to improve policy and program design and development.
- **Province of British Columbia BC Housing Action Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 (2022)** outlines an investment of more than \$1.5 billion over 10 years to benefit BC households with access to appropriate, affordable, safe, and inclusive housing in their community. The full plan can be found at gov.bc.ca.
- **Province of British Columbia: TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019)** addresses homelessness based on prevention, immediate response, stability, and working better together. Actions include a provincial rent bank, targeted interventions, policy enhancements, rapid response and supportive housing, and provincial homeless counts. The full strategy can be found at gov.bc.ca.

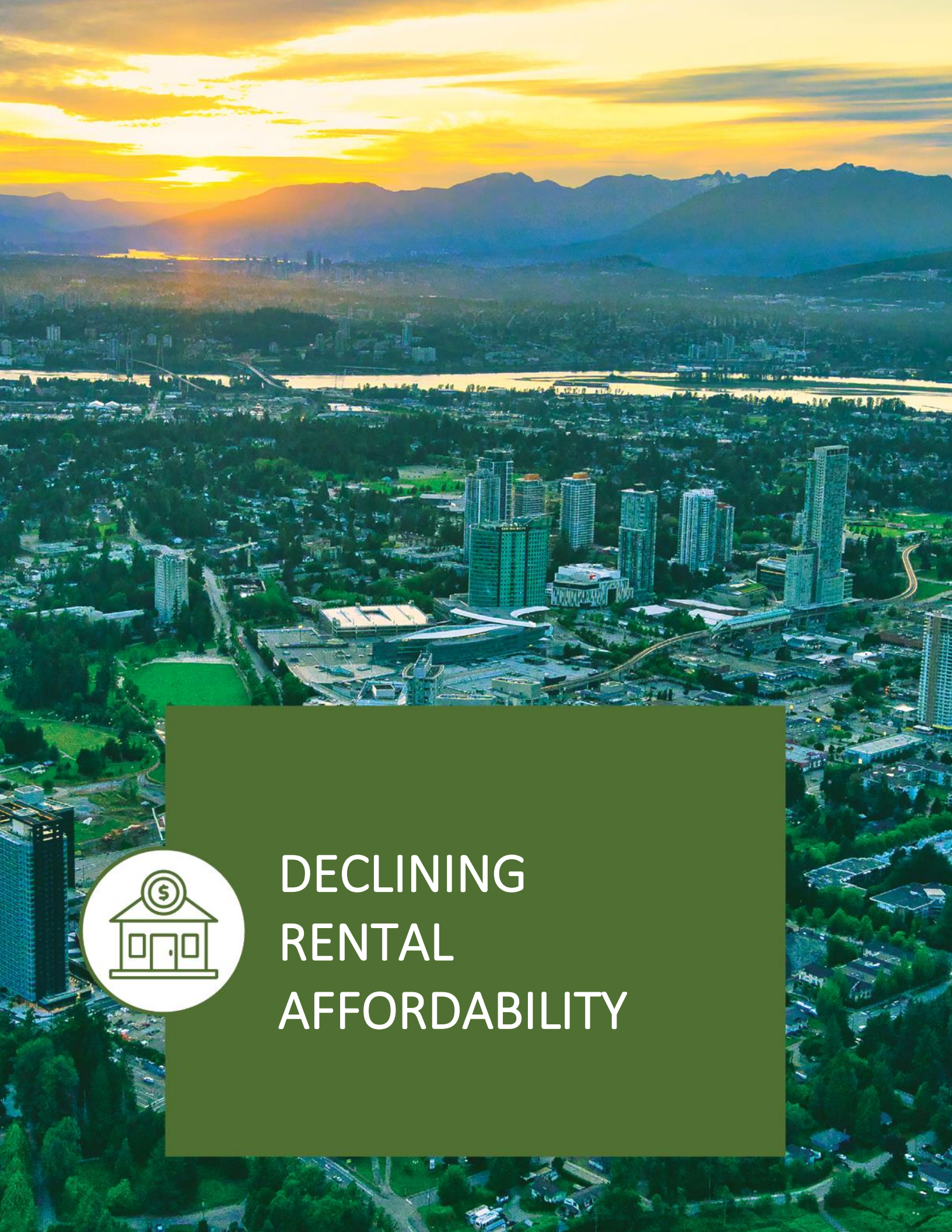


Federal Plans

- Government of Canada: Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy (2019) & National Housing Strategy (2017): Both documents aim to support the needs of the most vulnerable Canadians by creating safe, stable, and affordable housing, and reducing chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-2028. The 2019 Strategy can be found at [infrastructure.gc.ca](https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca) and the 2017 Strategy can be found at [aplacetocallhome.ca](https://www.aplacetocallhome.ca).

Figure 6: Surrey's Housing Policy Context





DECLINING RENTAL AFFORDABILITY

Declining Rental Affordability

The following section provides an overview of current statistics related to homelessness and housing affordability in Surrey and Metro Vancouver. The analyses focus on affordability for renters, which are the households most at-risk of experiencing homelessness. Owners are typically less likely to experience homelessness – often having equity in their home to support through a transition into the rental market if required to sell.

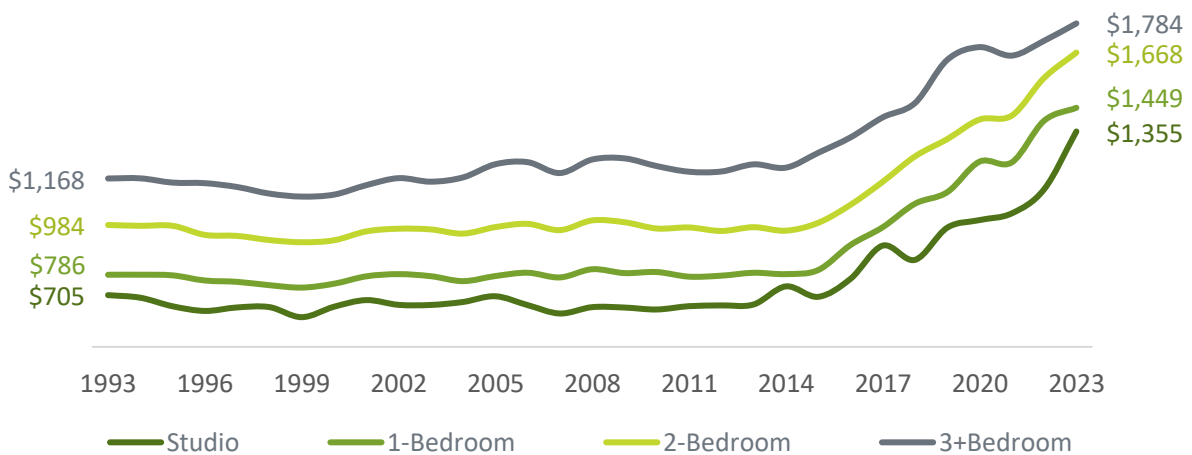
AFFORDABILITY OF RENTAL UNITS

Rental housing costs have been increasing year-over-year since 2014.

Since 2014, the cost of rental housing has seen a significant increase across Metro Vancouver. In Surrey, prior to 2014, purpose-built primary rental units had relatively flat rents year-over-year on an inflation-adjusted basis ². Available data suggests there was generally equilibrium between supply and demand for rental dwellings, with the market balanced overall when taking a multi-year view. However, this pattern abruptly changed after 2014 when rental costs began experiencing an upward trend, which has maintained a similar pace through 2023. Average rents increased by 74% between 2015 and 2023.

Figure 7: Inflation Adjusted Average Rent by Unit Size (Surrey, 1993-2023)

Source: Market Rental Survey. CMHC. 1993-2023



2. Inflation-adjusted to 2023 dollars based on Vancouver CMA Shelter CPI rate as published by Statistics Canada (Table: 18-10-0005-01).



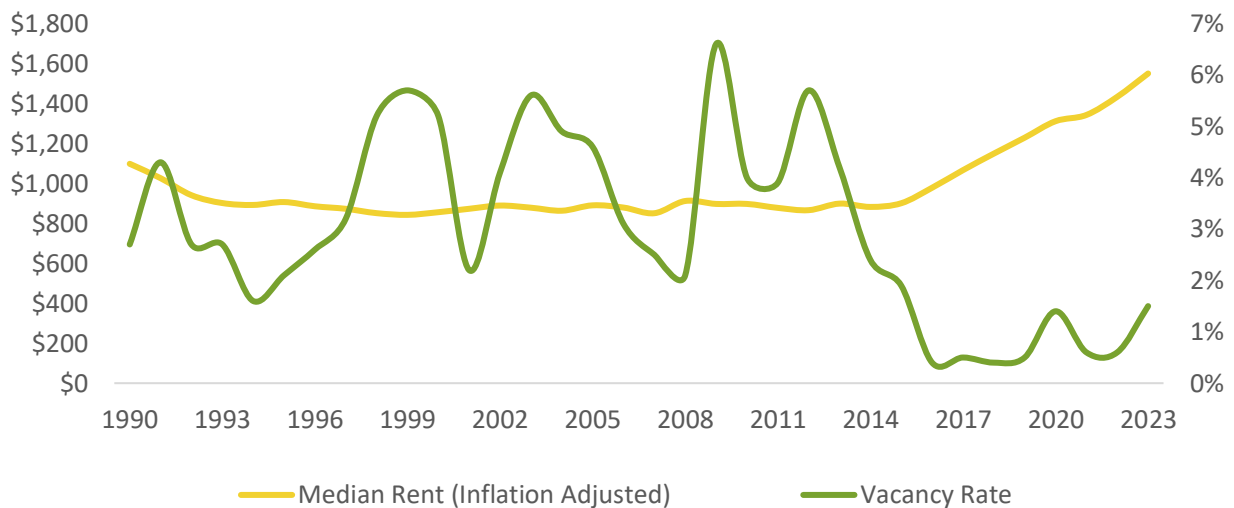
Vacancy rates have remained below 2% since 2015.

After years of a relatively balanced rental market, Surrey vacancy rates dropped from a healthy rate of between 3% and 4% to 1.5% or below every year since 2016. In October 2023, the vacancy rate was 1.5% and median rent increased 8.1%³ since the previous October.

A balanced vacancy rate is between 3% and 4%, which allows for existing residents to move between units. Less than 3% indicates high rental demand and more competition for available units, resulting in increasing rental costs.

Figure 8: Median All Units Rent and Primary Rental Vacancy Rate (Surrey, 1990-2023)

Source: Market Rental Survey. CMHC. 1990-2023



Low vacancy rates and high year-over-year inflation-adjusted rent increases have continued every year since 2015. Rents increasing much faster than the rate of inflation suggest significant ongoing and persistent rental scarcity or undersupply.

Vacant units in Surrey are 28% more expensive than occupied units.

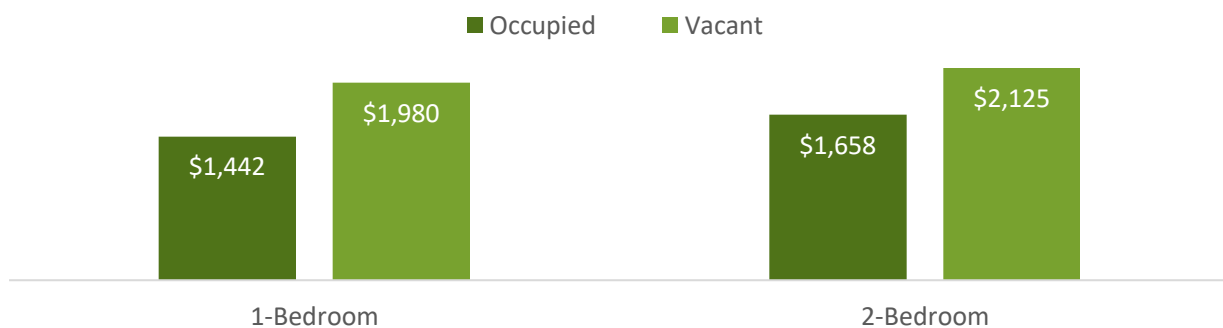
Rental controls in British Columbia cap annual rent increases to help maintain affordability for renters. In 2024, the maximum rent increase permitted is 3.5%. Otherwise, landlords can only increase rent in between tenancies. When considering all unit types collectively in Surrey, the median rent for vacant units is \$2,015 compared with \$1,542 for occupied units. On average,

3. 8.1% on an inflation-adjusted basis; 10.7% increase overall.

vacant units are 31% more expensive to rent than occupied units; a discrepancy not reflected in the standard median rental statistics collected by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This has created a situation in which households with secure and affordable housing can suddenly be put at-risk of homelessness if evicted or otherwise displaced. For many households, the cost increase of securing a new tenancy may be too high and is a significant driver of increasing homelessness across the region.⁴

Figure 9: Occupied and Vacant Average Rents, (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Market Rental Survey. CMHC. 2023



More than half of renters cannot afford the average rent of a new 1-bedroom tenancy.

The University of British Columbia HART methodology uses income quintiles to measure housing need; this concept can also be applied to consider how much renter households earn and therefore their ability to afford housing (as illustrated in Table 2).⁵ Examining renter household incomes shows that **at least 56% of renter households in Surrey would not be able to afford the average rent for newly initiated 1-bedroom tenancy (\$1,980)**. 32% of renter households in the bottom two income quintiles (17,845 households) would likely face significant challenges in securing new housing and be at-risk of experiencing homelessness if they had to move with a maximum monthly affordable housing cost of less than \$500 to \$1,250.

4. Primary rental only; vacant unit rent data is not available for studio or 3-bedroom units in City of Surrey.

5. The HART methodology developed by University of British Columbia Housing Research Collaborative uses a custom census dataset with an income quintile concept that can be freely cross tabulated against other census variables. This derived variable is based on multiples of the Area Median Household Income against specific percentages to establish five income ranges. Considering households in this way can help to understand the distribution of household income, and therefore the relative ability of households to afford their housing.



Table 2: Income Quintile Distribution of Renter Households (Surrey, 2021)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2023, HART - 2021 Census of Canada.

INCOME QUINTILE	VERY LOW	LOW	MODERATE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
% OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	<20%	21%–50%	51%–80%	81%–120%	>121%
Households	3,415	14,430	13,785	13,270	11,310
Share of Households	6%	26%	24%	24%	20%
Income Range	<\$20,000	\$20,000 – \$49,999	\$50,000 – \$79,999	\$80,000 – \$119,999	\$120,000+
Maximum Affordable Rent	<\$500	\$501 – \$1,250	\$1,251 – \$2,000	\$2,001 – \$3,000	\$3,000+

CORE HOUSING NEED + HOUSING STANDARDS

Recent core housing need data from the 2021 Census is likely not reflective of actual trends.

It is important to consider the increasing vulnerability of people currently housed. As long-term housing shortages increasingly lead to rapidly escalating rents, more households will be at-risk of homelessness.

The 2021 housing standards and Core Housing Need (CHN) data present a mixed picture.

Between 2006 and 2016, CHN rates increased or were flat. However, in 2021, the overall CHN rate fell. Despite a population increase of 50,435 (15,705 households) between 2016 and 2021, there were 35 fewer households in CHN in Surrey.

Statistics Canada has suggested the reduction in the CHN statistics may be an anomaly from the timing of the census and market rental surveys during the global COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the availability of COVID-19 income supports over the period.

There are two opposing factors leading to what is likely a temporary reduction in CHN rates:

- the earnings of lower income households were boosted by temporary income supports, and
- rents were also temporarily suppressed due to reduced immigration and migration during initial periods of social distancing, meaning the ‘reference unit’ applied in the CHN test to



determine if households could afford to move to another dwelling and meet their needs, temporarily had a lower rent unrepresentative of the actual rental market.

Ultimately, low incomes increased and the income required to not be classified as being in CHN was reduced. Both factors had the effect of suppressing CHN rates nationally and in most jurisdictions; it is expected rates will rebound in the next census.

While overall CHN rates decreased in Surrey between the 2016 and 2021 Census, the rate of unaffordability and overcrowding (lack of suitability) increased for the first time since 2006 suggesting increasing vulnerability despite a lower CHN rate. This is particularly important as it indicates the number of households in precarious housing situations was potentially greater in 2021 than suggested by CHN rates.

Core Housing Need is when a household's housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability, or suitability, and the household would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable.

Adequacy means housing does not require major repairs.

Suitability means housing has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household.

Affordability means shelter costs are less than 30% of total before-tax household income.

Source: Statistics Canada

Table 3: Share of Households Below Housing Standards and in Core Housing Need (Surrey, 2006–2021)
Source: Housing Market Information Portal, CMHC, Surrey (CY), Housing Standards (2006 -2016); Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0247-01, Core housing need by tenure, 2021

YEAR	HOUSEHOLDS				
	BELOW AFFORDABILITY STANDARD	BELOW ADEQUACY STANDARD	BELOW SUITABILITY STANDARD	IN CORE HOUSING NEED %	#
2006	26.4%	5.0%	10.2%	15.4%	19,210
2011	25.9%	4.4%	11.2%	17.0%	24,450
2016	25.0%	4.1%	9.2%	17.1%	27,740
2021	26.0%	3.8%	12.2%	15.4%	27,705





INCREASING
INCIDENCE OF
HOMELESSNESS

Increasing Incidence of Homelessness

This section highlights recent data on homelessness in Surrey and Metro Vancouver. The 2023 Point-in-Time Count data demonstrates there has been a significant increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey and across the region since 2014, with equity-seeking groups particularly adversely affected. This section also considers rates of homelessness and the relationship between median rent and income when considering forecasting homelessness in Surrey.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT DATA

Incidences of homelessness have increased across the region.

Metro Vancouver has seen an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness since 2005, when 2,174 individuals were identified across the region according to Point-in-Time data. In 2023, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased to 4,821, representing a 122% increase over the 18-year period.

There has been a 65% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey since 2020.

Based on Point-in-Time Counts, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey remained relatively consistent between 2005 and 2014. However, in the years between 2014 and 2017, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 49% (14% annually).

Another significant surge in the number of people counted occurred in 2023, with a 65% increase since 2020 (18% annually).

Point-in-Time (PiT) Count data provides a snapshot of homelessness in a community and are considered an undercount as they represent only those individuals identified within a 24-hour period. PiT Counts only measure visible homelessness (i.e., people on the street or in shelters) which does not capture the extent of the population experiencing hidden homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.

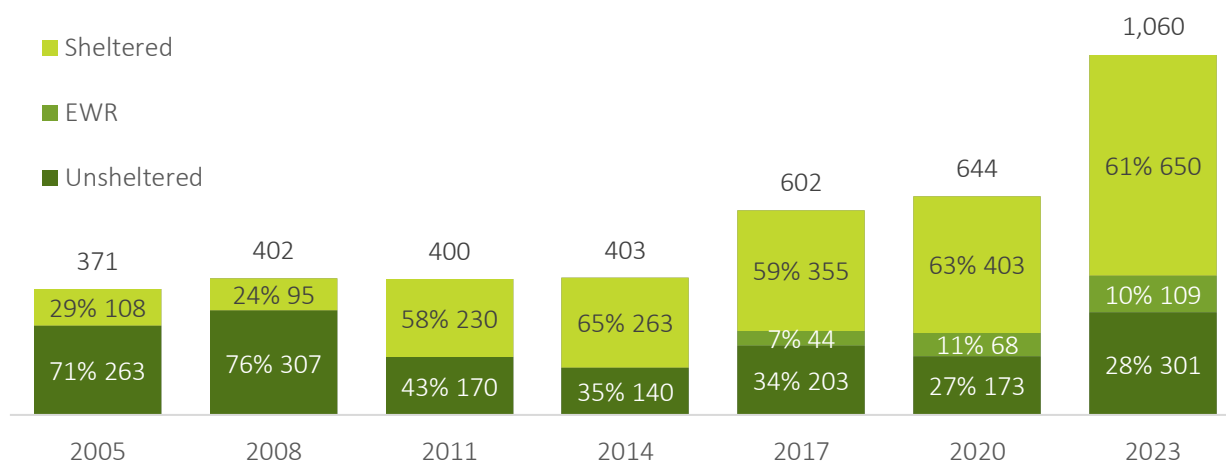
Hidden homelessness refers to people who live 'temporarily with others but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing' such as couch surfing.

Source: Homeless Hub



Figure 10: Sheltered + Unsheltered Individuals Experiencing Homelessness (Surrey, 2005-2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society – Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



61% of people experiencing homelessness were sheltered.

In 2023, most people experiencing homelessness in Surrey were sheltered (61%), while 109 stayed overnight in Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters (10%) and 301 (28%) were unsheltered at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, contrasting with 71% unsheltered counted in 2005. The overall number of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness in 2023 was higher (301 + 109 in EWR) than in 2005 (263). While the share of sheltered and unsheltered reversed between 2005 and 2023, the overall count is 185% higher (or 163% over ten years since 2014).

Sheltered refers to individuals in sheltering facilities (permanent/ temporary shelters, transition houses, or safe houses), or who would be released from the hospital (or police holding cells) in the next 30-days without a fixed address.

Unsheltered refers to the number of individuals without shelter on the night of the count (sleeping outside, in makeshift shelters / tents, in vehicles, or informally staying with others).

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) refers to the number of individuals staying in temporary emergency shelter spaces open during periods of extreme winter weather.

Source: HSABC (2023)

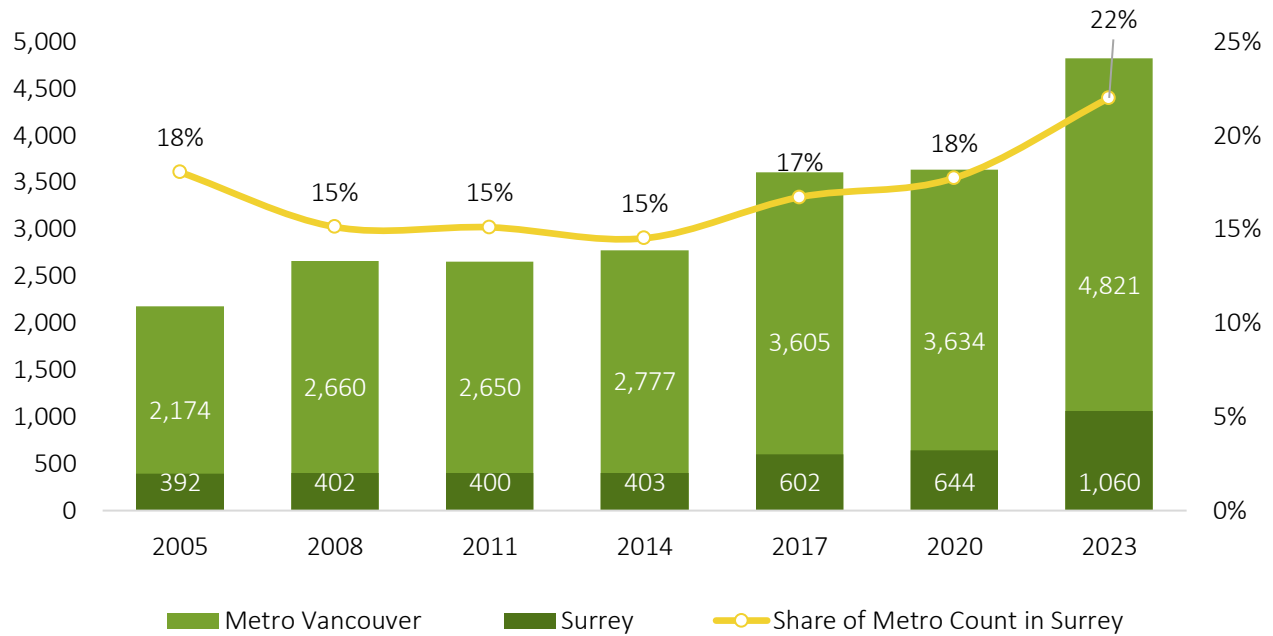
Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver

Surrey's regional share of The PiT count increased to 22%.

Surrey's share of individuals captured by Metro Vancouver's PiT Count increased from 15% (2014) to 22% (2023), suggesting the prevalence of people experiencing homelessness is increasing faster in Surrey than other areas in the region.

Figure 11: Share of Metro Vancouver Count, Surrey + Metro Vancouver (2005-2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



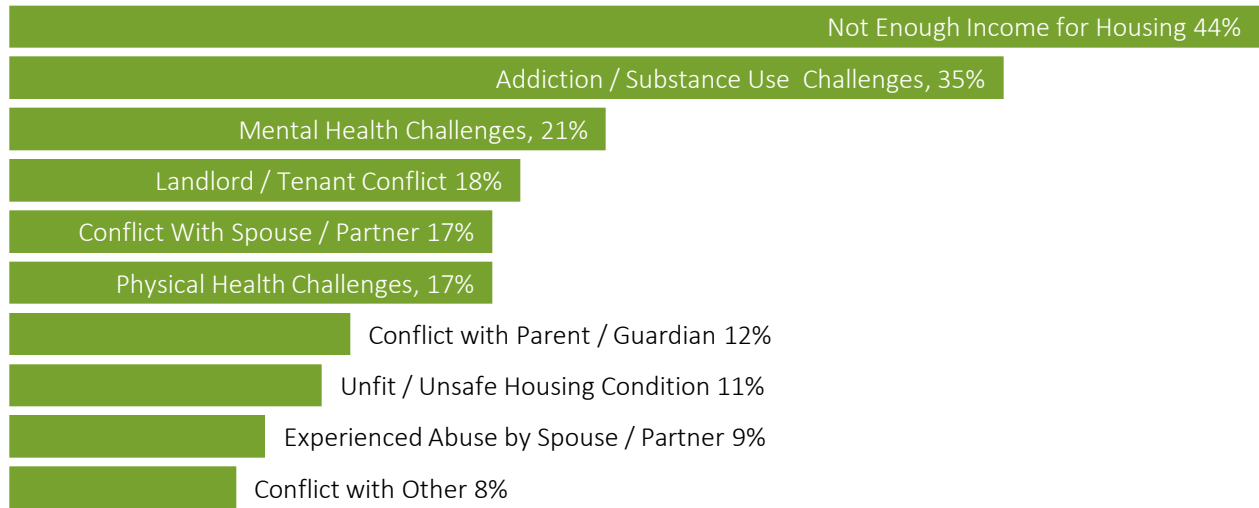
Not having enough income for housing most common reason for homelessness.

Respondents in Surrey identified at least 25 reasons for losing housing and experiencing homelessness, with the top ten reasons provided in Figure 12. Top reasons include not having enough income and addiction or substance use challenges, as well as more than 15% of individuals noting mental health challenges, landlord conflict, partner conflict, and physical health issues.



Figure 12: Top Ten Reasons for Loss of Housing (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



Most peoples' first experience of homelessness occurs in youth (42%) or adulthood (49%).

Most people captured by the 2023 PiT Count in Surrey first experienced homelessness in youth (42%) or adulthood (49%), while 10% were seniors when they were first without a home.

Figure 13: First Experienced Homelessness (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



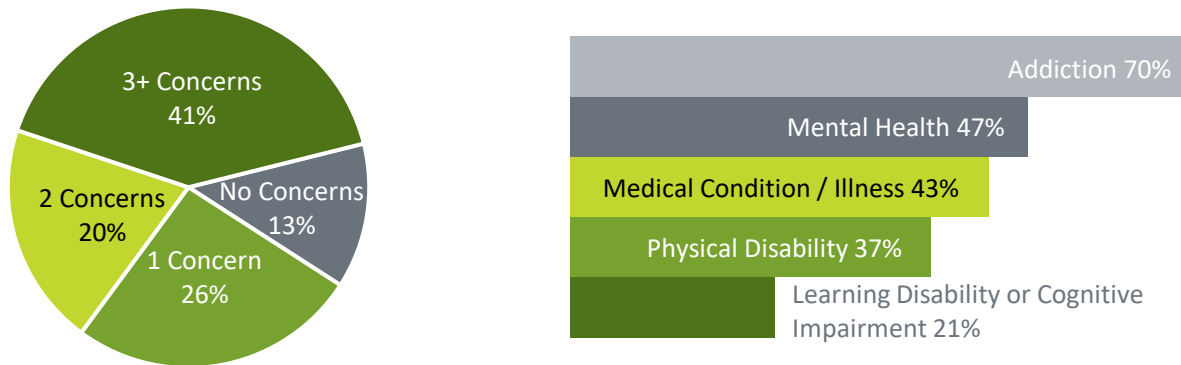
Health Concerns

Most individuals in Surrey reported at least two health concerns (61%), while only 13% reported no health issues. Most people reported an addictions challenge (70%), with half also reporting a mental health challenge (47%). More than a third reported a physical disability (37%), while almost half reported a medical condition (43%). A third also reported an acquired brain injury separately from a primary health challenge.



Figure 14: Number and Type of Health Concerns/Conditions (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



DEMOGRAPHICS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Different populations and identities experience the housing system unequally and these variations can become particularly apparent for those experiencing homelessness. People of colour, Indigenous people, people identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+ (particularly youth), and increasingly seniors are all disproportionately represented in the population experiencing homelessness due to complex systemic experiences compounding to create barriers in accessing or maintaining secure and permanent housing.

Increase in the Working Age Population

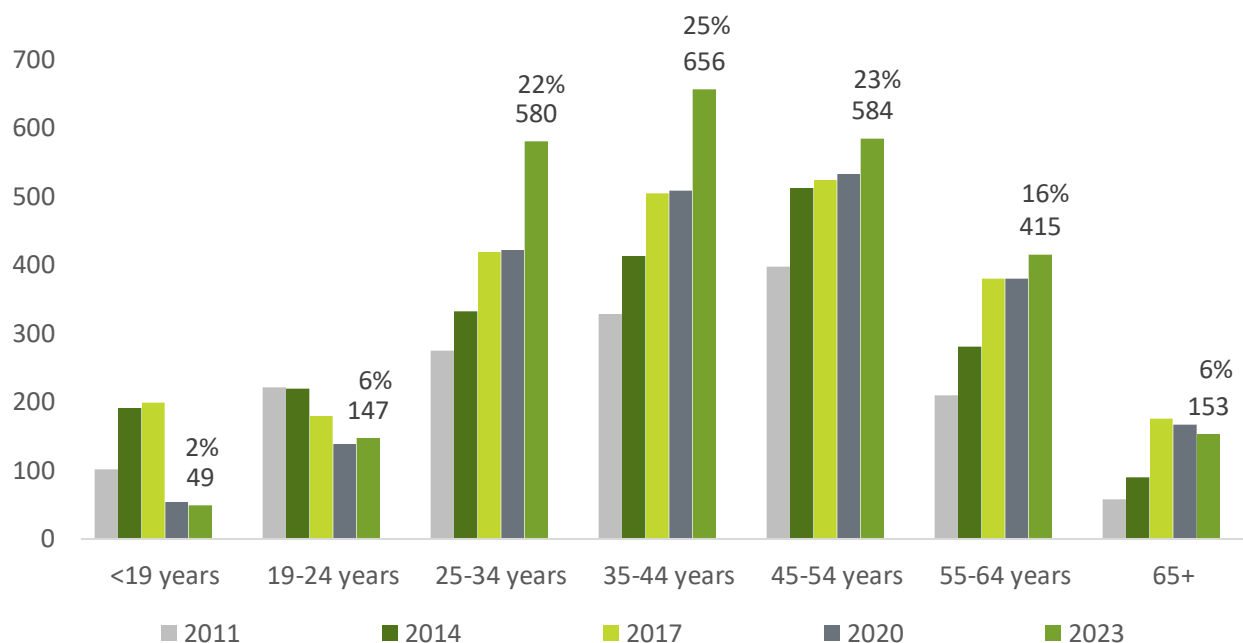
Figure 15 illustrates the share of population experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver⁶ by age category between 2011 and 2023; there is a consistent downward trend in children and youth (under 19), and young adults (19-24), while the opposite is true for adults. While the trend had been relatively flat for those in primary working years (25-54) for the previous two PiT Counts, a large increase was seen in 2023. **The 2023 increase is largest for those aged 25-44, suggesting an increasingly large number of working-age individuals are experiencing housing precarity and homelessness.**

6. Historical PiT Count age data is unavailable for Surrey; however, 2023 distribution in Surrey is almost identical to Metro Vancouver – the only discrepancy 45-54 years rounding down to 22% in Surrey compared to 23% in Metro Vancouver. The historical regional trend may be a good indicator of patterns in Surrey.

While there are increasing concerns for the growth of seniors experiencing homelessness in recent years, the trend is not as apparent in the data. However, seniors likely have more complex health and housing needs, and may be the most challenging to support or place in suitable housing. It is also important to note the reduction in children and youth captured by the PiT Count may be related to a change in the visibility of this population and the ability of counts to capture the population rather than a reduction of children and youth living in precarious or unstable housing.

Figure 15: Age Distribution of People Experiencing Homelessness, Metro Vancouver (2011-2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



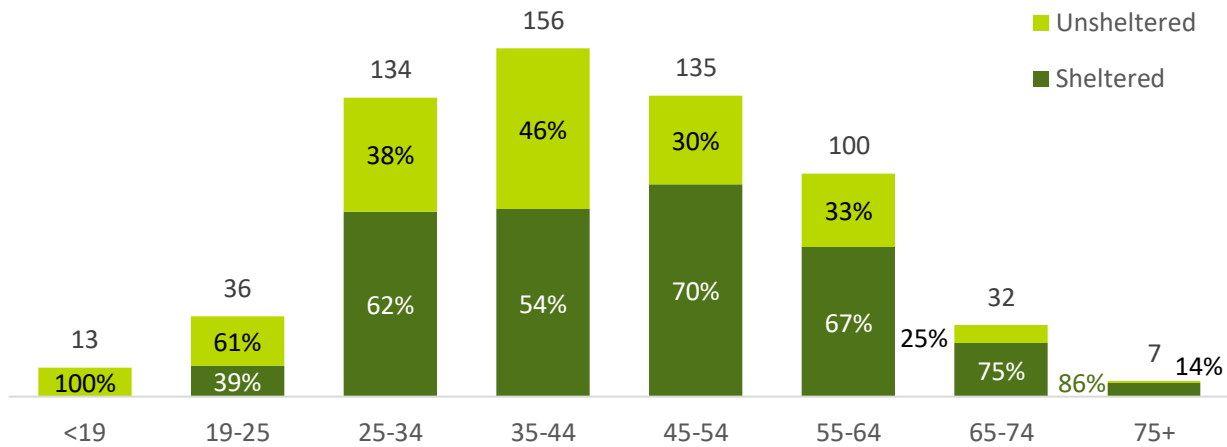
In considering the sheltering rate of those counted in Surrey, seniors were most likely to be sheltered (86%), with no one counted under the age of 19 having shelter (Figure 15).⁷ Other than those under 25, the age group least likely to be sheltered, whether by choice or lack of availability, is those aged 35-44 (54% sheltered).

7. Most emergency shelters do not serve children or youth, who must access specialized services that would likely result in being classified as being housed and no longer captured by the PiT Count.



Figure 16: Share of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Age (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



Youth in Care

Overall, a third of individuals counted reported previously being a youth in government care (31%), with a higher share for those unsheltered (38%) compared to those sheltered (27%) at the time of the PiT Count.

Gender and Sexual Diversity

Most individuals captured by the 2023 PiT count in Surrey identified as men (64%), with 33% identifying as women, and 3% identifying as another gender identity⁸. Women were slightly more likely to be unsheltered (41%) than men (37%), while those expressing gender diversity were rarely sheltered (76% unsheltered). While most individuals identified as heterosexual, 11% identified as 2SLGBTQIA+. Those expressing sexual diversity were almost twice as likely to be unsheltered (61%) as those identifying as heterosexual (35%).

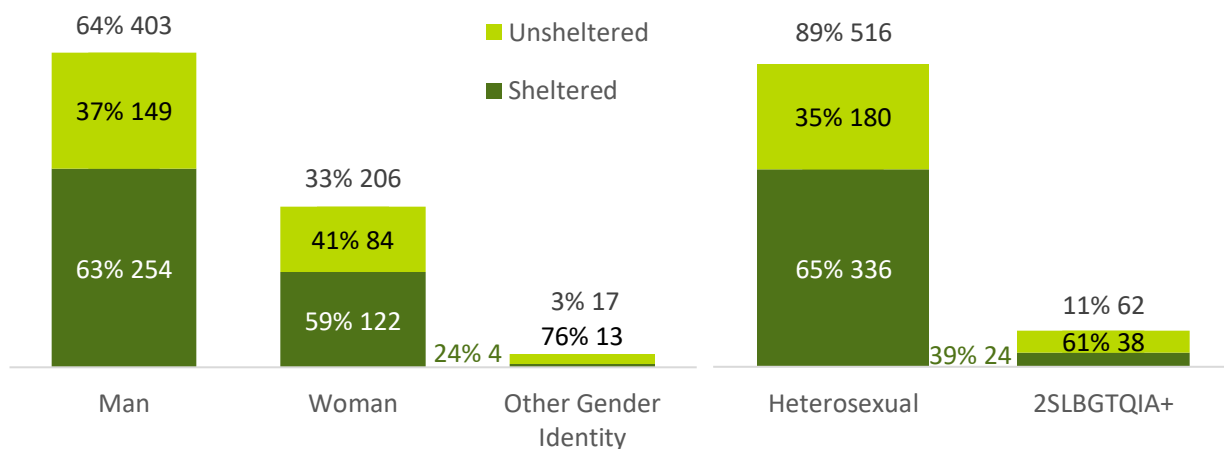
Methodologies for counting people with diverse gender and sexual identities have evolved over time creating challenges in assessing a trend. These populations may also be more likely to not identify themselves and an undercount is possible as it is generally recognized that people of diverse gender and sexual identities disproportionately experience homelessness and challenges in securing housing.

8. Including agender, non-binary, two-spirit, and 'not listed'.

Men are often overrepresented in counts due to the pressure for women and gender non-conforming people to pursue alternative arrangements due to safety concerns when sleeping rough or in shelters. The lower rates captured by PiT Counts does not necessarily mean these populations do not struggle with homelessness or housing precarity as much as men.

Figure 17: Point in Time Count by Gender Identity – Sheltered and Unsheltered (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu’ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



Gender and Sexually Diverse Youth

Gender and sexually diverse youth are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing homelessness, often due to rejection from family. It is estimated 2SLGBTQIA+ youth comprise 25-40% of youth experiencing homelessness compared to 5-10% of the general population.⁹ The data is insufficient to assess whether this is similar for youth in Surrey.

Indigenous Peoples

Surrey has one of the largest urban Indigenous populations in the province. In 2021, 12,180 Surrey residents identified as Indigenous (down 9.5% from 13,465 in 2016). Many Indigenous households are in disproportionate need of affordable housing. In 2016, 43% of Indigenous renters were in Core Housing Need, compared to 27% of all renters. The difference has narrowed in 2021, with 29% Indigenous-identifying households in Core Housing Need compared to 28% of the general renter population. However, Core Housing Need statistics were likely compromised

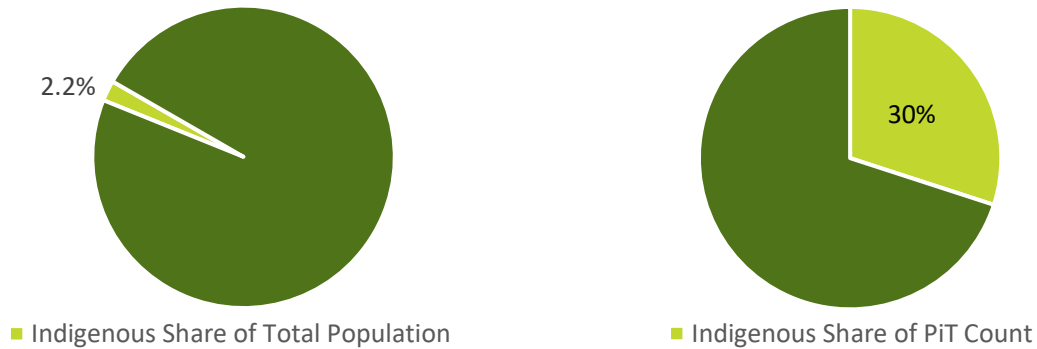
9. Youth Homelessness in Canada, 2013. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.



in 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19 income supports, which largely flowed to lower income households (see explanation of core housing need issues in the 2021 Census on page 18).

Figure 18: Indigenous Identifying Individuals in Total Population and Point-in-Time Count (Surrey, 2021-2023)

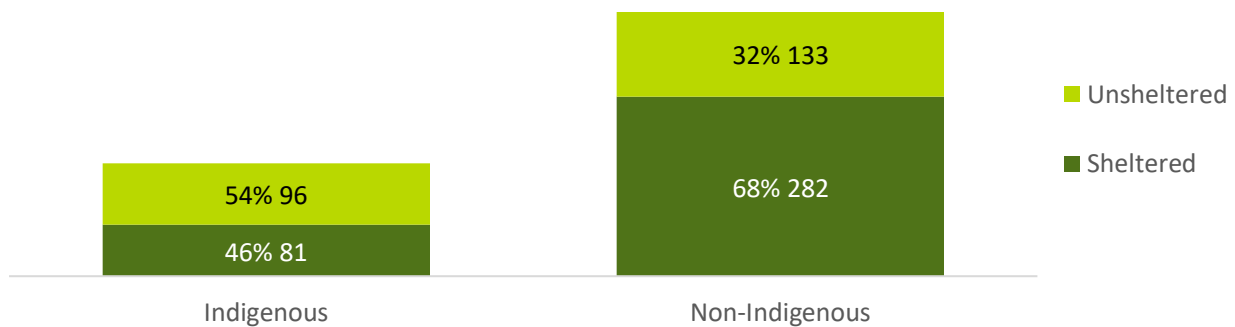
Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver; Census of Population, Surrey CSD, 2021.



The 2023 PIT Count found 30% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Surrey identified as Indigenous compared to 2.2% of the total City of Surrey population identified as Indigenous in the 2021 Census.¹⁰ The prevalence of Indigenous-identifying individuals experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver has been consistent since 2008, with a fluctuating range of 27% to 34% of those captured by the count. In Surrey, among those identifying as Indigenous, 54% were unsheltered in 2023, which represents a prevalence two thirds higher than the non-Indigenous population (32%).

Figure 19: Indigenous Status of People Experiencing Homelessness (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



10. It should be noted only 56% of Point-in-Time respondents answered this question and 30% may not be representative of the total population or of the population captured by the count.



Racial Identity

The Point-in-Time Count included a broad question on racial identity for the first time in 2020, and again in 2023 (see Table 4). Respondents were able to identify more than one category.

Analysis found Black people are overrepresented among the population experiencing homelessness in Surrey, with 7.5% of respondents identifying as Black compared to 2.3% of the overall population (2021 Census).

Table 4: Homelessness by Racial Identity (Surrey, 2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.

RACIAL IDENTITY (MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE POSSIBLE)	#	%
Arab	11	2%
Asian - East	5	1%
Asian – Southeast	12	2%
Asian – South	35	6%
Asian – West	9	2%
Black	44	7%
Black – Caribbean and Latin America	12	2%
Black – African	25	4%
Black – Canadian / American	12	2%
Latin American	22	4%
White	361	61%
Not Listed	18	3%
Total Respondents	587	
Don't Know / No Answer	473	
Total	1,060	

HOSPITAL PATIENTS UNABLE TO BE DISCHARGED

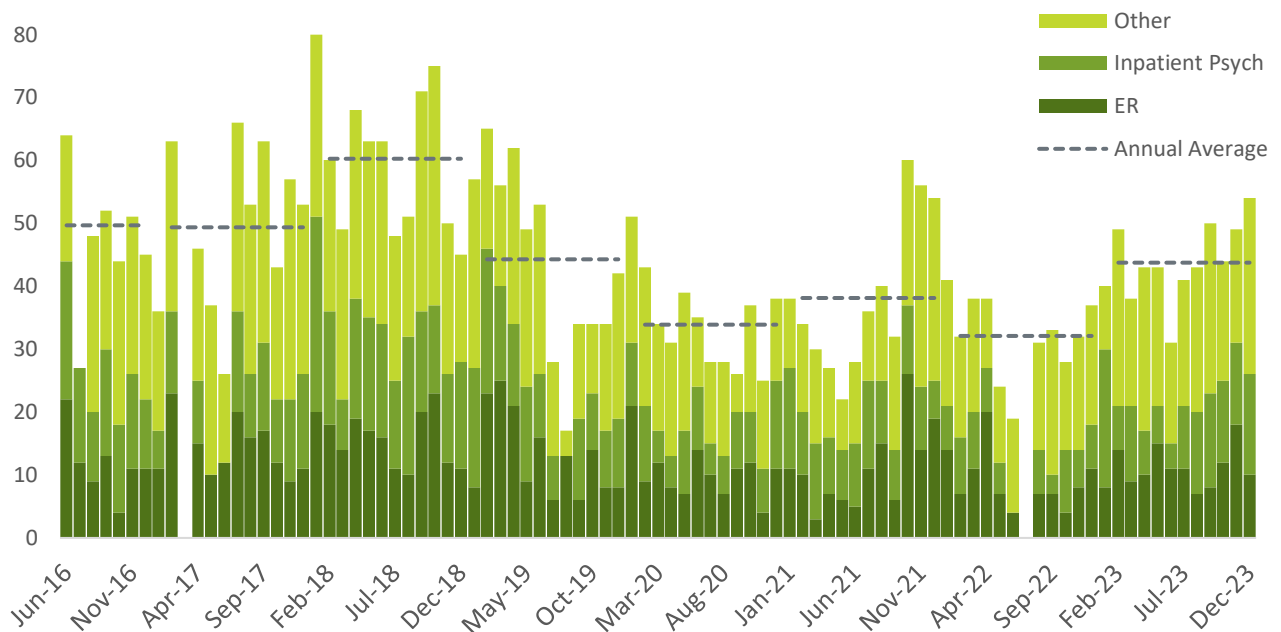
Between June 2016 and December 2023, an average of 43 patients were unable to be discharged from the Surrey Memorial Hospital each month due to experiencing homelessness.

Fraser Health Authority has been tracking the number of individuals unable to be discharged from Surrey Memorial Hospital because they have no fixed address or health / mobility needs that cannot be met in the community. While not a comprehensive record of patients, this information is helpful in assessing the trend over time. Due to the relatively informal nature of this data collection, there may be gaps where staff were unable to complete the count and it is therefore considered an undercount.

In December 2023, there were at least 54 patients at Surrey Memorial Hospital unable to be discharged into the community and an annual average of 44 patients in 2023.

Figure 20: No Fixed Address Admissions, Surrey Memorial Hospital (2016-2023)

Source: Surrey Memorial Hospital. Homeless Counts 2016-2023.



Hospital capacity and access to emergency services has increasingly been a challenge since the COVID-19 pandemic. The persistent presence of individuals with no fixed address and those unable to be discharged despite no longer needing acute level care is a barrier to addressing this larger issue. **The individuals being unable to be discharged from hospital is indicative of a lack of sufficient services and housing with supports for those with complex health needs and experiencing homelessness.**

In some instances, patients remain in hospitals who no longer require hospital care but cannot be discharged due to having no fixed address, lack of access to supports to live independently, or the available shelters are inappropriate for their needs (for example, a patient cannot be discharged to a shelter unless they can get themselves up off the floor).

There are also cases where patients need a higher level of care than is available, but do not need acute hospital treatment. These individuals often have very complex cases and may need a specific and high level of care outside a hospital setting.



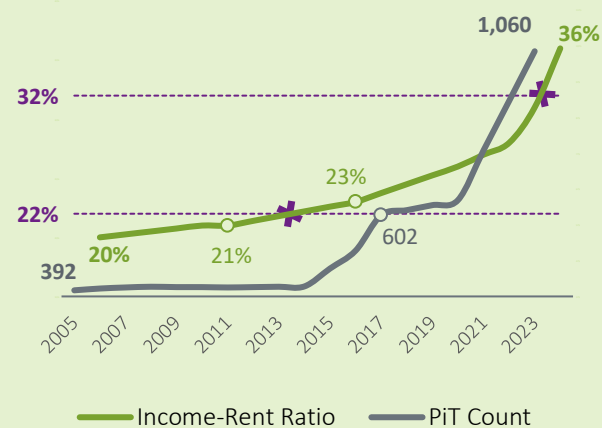
TIPPING POINTS: RATES OF HOMELESSNESS AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIAN RENT + INCOME

A recent study¹¹ examining the relationship between median income and rental cost found there were two thresholds where homelessness rates increased –when median rental cost was 22% and 32% of median household income. For example, if the median monthly household income was \$1,000, increasing homelessness rates were seen when median rents were more than \$220 (22%) and \$320 (32%). While available data does not allow for this analysis to be fully applied in the Surrey context, a high-level examination aligns with these findings.

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Surrey was relatively flat between the 2005 and 2014 (PiT counts of ~400 people). Upon examining available rental and income data, the ratio of median rent to median income was approximately 20% and 21% (2006 and 2011 censuses), but by the 2016 Census it was 23% (\$47,965 median renter income and \$925 median rent), suggesting sometime between 2011 and 2016 Censuses, the ratio surpassed the 22% threshold. Between the 2014 and 2017 PiT counts, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness increased by 50% to 602 (after the 22% threshold was surpassed).

When the best available statistics are tested, it appears the ratio of median rent to income is 36% in 2024, surpassing the 32% threshold. Correspondingly, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Surrey increased by 65% to 1,060 between 2020 and 2023. As illustrated in the accompanying chart¹², the 22% and 32% thresholds were likely passed in 2014 and by 2023.

Despite lacking detailed data to fully apply this methodology in Canada, the study’s findings seem to align with local patterns. From this perspective, there is rationale to suggest the recent and rapid increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness is likely to continue at a similar, or increasing, pace until the ratio of median rent and renter income can be brought below the 22% and 32% thresholds through increased income or reduced rent.



11. C. Glynn, T. Byrne, D. Culhane. Inflection points in community-level homeless rates. *Ann. Appl. Stat.* 15 (2) 1037 - 1053, June 2021; Homelessness Rises Faster Where Rent Exceeds a Third of Income. Zillow. 2018

12. Chart is for illustrative purposes only and relies on a mix of data sources to test the methodology explored in the described study, including CMHC Market Rental Report. 2005-2023; Zumper. Rental Market Trends. 2024/2022; StatsCan. Census (2006-2021); and Point-in-Time counts in City of Surrey.

Forecasting Homelessness in Surrey

Between 2014 and 2023, the annual growth rate of people experiencing homelessness in Surrey was 11%. **If this rate of growth continues, it is estimated that by the next Point-in-Time Count in 2026, 1,463 people will be experiencing homelessness in Surrey (representing an increase of 403 people since 2023).** By 2029, this number will have grown to 2,020 (representing an increase of 960 people since 2023).

Figure 21: Total Point in Time Count with Forecast (Surrey, 2005-2023)

Source: Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. 2023. Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver.



Figure 21 projects forward the estimated number of people expected to experience homelessness in Surrey by two additional three-year intervals to align with future PiT Counts (assuming counts will continue to be completed every three years).¹³ A growth rate considering the longer 2014-2023 trend has been applied (+11% annually). Although, the theory presented by the study discussed (page 33) suggests the 2020-2023 growth rate will continue (+18%

13. If the frequency of Point-in-Time Counts is changed, the same principles apply. A flat 11% growth rate growth was assumed based on the historical trend; the projected trend could be assessed against any future PiT Count by increasing the 2023 count by 11% per year to the time of that count.

annually) until the rent-income ratio drops below 32%.¹⁴ **If an annual increase of 18% is maintained, it is estimated there will be 2,872 individuals experiencing homelessness by 2029 (852 or 42% more people than shown in Figure 21).**

While it is impossible to predict the future, addressing the current housing affordability crisis will likely be a long-term challenge, just as it has taken decades to reach this level of severity. It is anticipated homelessness will continue to increase in the medium-term and only addressing the housing needs of those counted in the 2023 PiT Count will be insufficient to achieve functional zero end to homelessness. This is especially true considering PiT Counts do not capture everyone experiencing homelessness at any given time.

14. The ratio of median income to rent likely surpassed both 22% and 32% thresholds between 2014 and 2023.



INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Inventory Analysis

This section shares data on the existing inventory of non-market, supportive, and transitional housing, emergency shelter spaces, and support services in Surrey as of June 2024.

SURREY'S Supportive + Transitional Housing, Emergency Shelter, and Service Inventory

Surrey has 1,620 units / beds for people experiencing homelessness or substance use challenges.

Surrey has a wide range of units and beds of emergency shelter, supportive, transitional, second stage, post-corrections, or live-in substance use programs. In total, City of Surrey currently tracks 1,620 spaces, which may vary from units tracked by BC Housing. Table 5 provides a summary of current shelters, facilities, and programs as tracked by City of Surrey.

Shelters: Temporary, short-term accommodation for individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Safe Houses: Short-term shelter and other supports for women fleeing violence and youth, often apartments, hotel/motel rooms, or a secure room in a private home.

Second Stage Housing: Safe, low-cost, temporary housing for women fleeing violence to live independently with staff available for support.

Supportive Housing: Subsidized self-contained units with on-site supports for single adults, seniors, and people with disabilities at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, operated by non-profits.

Transition Houses: Supportive, temporary accommodation meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support, life skills, education, etc.

Supportive Recovery Housing: Transitional housing that provides supports for people seeking assistance with substance use, including Licensed Addiction Treatment facilities.

Registered Mental Health: Housing that provides supports for people living with mental health challenges to build skills to live with an optimal level of independence.



Table 5: Emergency, Safe House, Transitional, and Supportive Spaces by Facility Type/Subtype

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory

PROGRAM / FACILITY TYPE	SUBTYPE	# SPACES / UNITS	% TOTAL STOCK ¹⁵
Emergency Shelter + Women's & Youth Safe Houses (536)	Shelter (Permanent + Temporary)	458	28%
	Women's Safe Houses / Transition Houses	72	4%
	Youth Safe Houses	6	0.4%
Transitional + Supportive (1,084)	Long-term Supportive	591	36%
	Licensed Addictions Treatment + Supportive Recovery Services ¹⁶	149	9%
	Registered Mental Health	85	5%
	Transitional Supportive Recovery	75	5%
	Women's Second Stage	63	4%
	Post-Corrections	46	3%
	Youth Transitional	43	3%
	Transitional Housing	32	2%
	Total	1,620	

15. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding

16. This does not include other supportive recovery facilities that are not licensed but are registered under the Assisted Living Registry.



Almost half of all Surrey shelter spaces are temporary.¹⁷

Approximately half (250 / 47%) of all existing shelter spaces are temporary¹⁸ and all temporary spaces are for adults (19+). Some facilities are specifically targeted to youth, women, or women and children, with approximately one-fifth for anyone 19+.

Table 6: Shelter Beds by Population Served and Facility Stability

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory

Shelter Unit Type	All Clients (19+)	Women / Women + Children	Women Only	Youth (16 - 18)	Total
Permanent	122	144	14	6	286 (53%)
Temporary	250	0	0	0	250 (47%)
Total	372 (69%)	144 (27%)	14 (3%)	6 (1%)	536



17. Shelter spaces include Women and Youth safe houses.

18. Temporary facilities include shelters that are non-purpose-built, in retrofitted commercial spaces, or houses, and/or with expiring leases in the next 2-10 years (depending on the facility).

Of those identified, over half of all shelter spaces serve adults aged 19+ and only 3% are youth-specific.

Table 7 provides a breakdown of emergency, safe house, transitional, and supportive spaces by client group. Over half of the available spaces (55%) are generally targeted to adults (19+), with the next largest category for women and children (18%). There are also gender-specific spaces for adult men (12%) and women (6%). Only 5% of spaces (77 in 2 facilities) are for seniors or people with disabilities, while there are 19-spaces for youth aged 16-18, 30-spaces for youth aged 19-24, and 12-spaces for young adult men (19-35).



The Nest, located in Newton is a 40-unit supportive housing site: 16 supportive recovery units for people having recently completed a treatment program and 24 units for people at-risk of homelessness.

Table 7: Shelter Beds, Safe House, Transitional, and Supportive Housing Units by Target Population

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory

CLIENT GROUP	#	% ¹⁹
All (Aged 19+)	891	55%
Women & Children	292	18%
Men (Aged 19+)	197	12%
Women	102	6%
Seniors or Disability	77	5%
Youth (Aged 19-24)	30	2%
Youth (Aged 16-18)	19	1%
Men (Aged 19-35)	12	1%
Total	1,620	

19. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding



Most shelter, transitional, and supportive spaces are located in City Centre (43%), followed by Whalley (23%) and Newton (13%).

The distribution of emergency, safe house, transitional, and supportive spaces in Surrey is uneven, with housing and services clustered in City Centre (43%) and Whalley (23%), other communities, such as South Surrey (0%), Cloverdale (2%) and Fleetwood (0.4%), being particularly underserved.



Opening in 2021, Baird Blackstone supportive housing offers 61 air-conditioned studio apartment units to people experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness in the community.

Table 8: Emergency Shelter Beds, Safe House, Transitional, and Supportive Housing Units by Neighbourhood

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory

NEIGHBOURHOOD	#	% ²⁰
City Centre	692	43%
Whalley	375	23%
Newton	206	13%
Guildford	168	10%
Confidential Locations	135	8%
Cloverdale	38	2%
Fleetwood	6	0.4%
South Surrey	0	0%
Total	1,620	

20. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding



Most shelters and supportive housing currently operating opened after 2010.

More than one third of shelters and supportive housing sites have opened since 2020 (43%) with three-quarters being supportive or transitional units. An additional 32% of shelters and supportive housing sites opened in the previous ten years. While the opening date of 11% of spaces / units are unknown or suppressed for facilities with confidentiality protections, only 15% were opened prior to 2009 compared to at least 75% since 2010. Only 4% (25) of long-term supportive spaces existed prior to 2010, with 69% (409) opened since 2020.

Table 9: Emergency Beds, Safe House, Transitional, and Supportive Units by Opening Year

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory

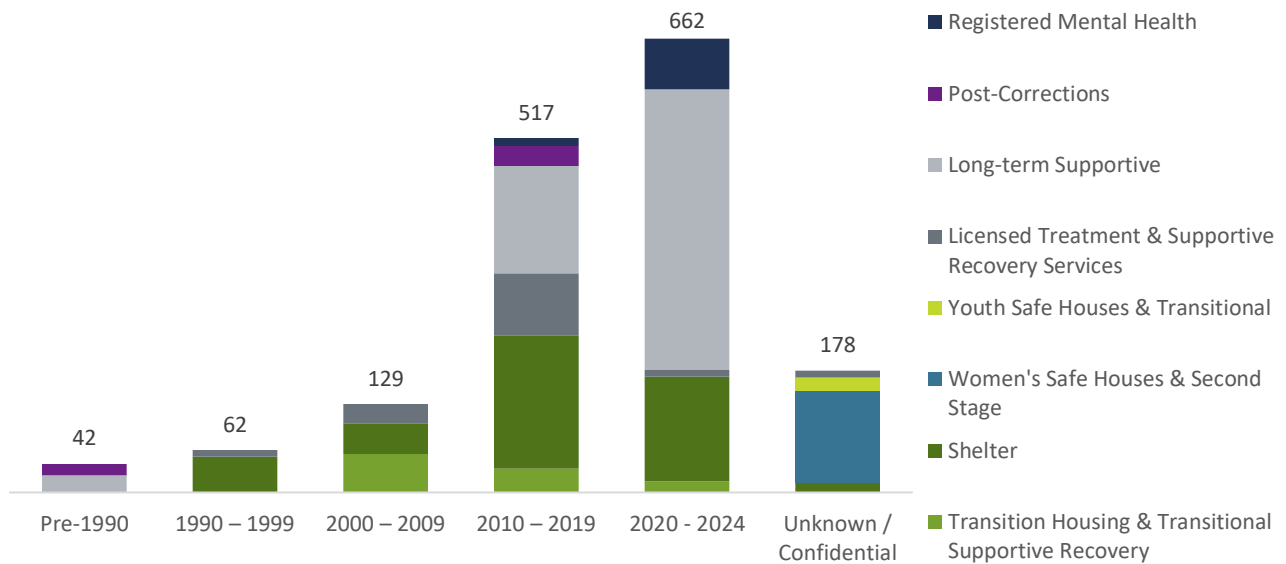
YEAR OPENED	#	% ²¹
Pre-1990	42	3%
1990 – 1999	62	4%
2000 – 2009	129	8%
2010 – 2019	517	32%
2020 – 2024	692	43%
Unknown / Confidential	178	11%

21. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding



Figure 22: Shelter, Safe House, Transitional and Supportive Spaces by Year of Opening

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory



Surrey has 21 centres or programs offering a range of support services.

There are 21 drop-in centres, health service centres, and mobile outreach programs operating in Surrey, with many targeting supports to women (1), women and children (3), women and female youth (2), youth (4), and one Indigenous drop-in centre. The remaining centres serve all populations (10). The two services for women and female youth are mobile, in addition to one mobile outreach program for all populations.

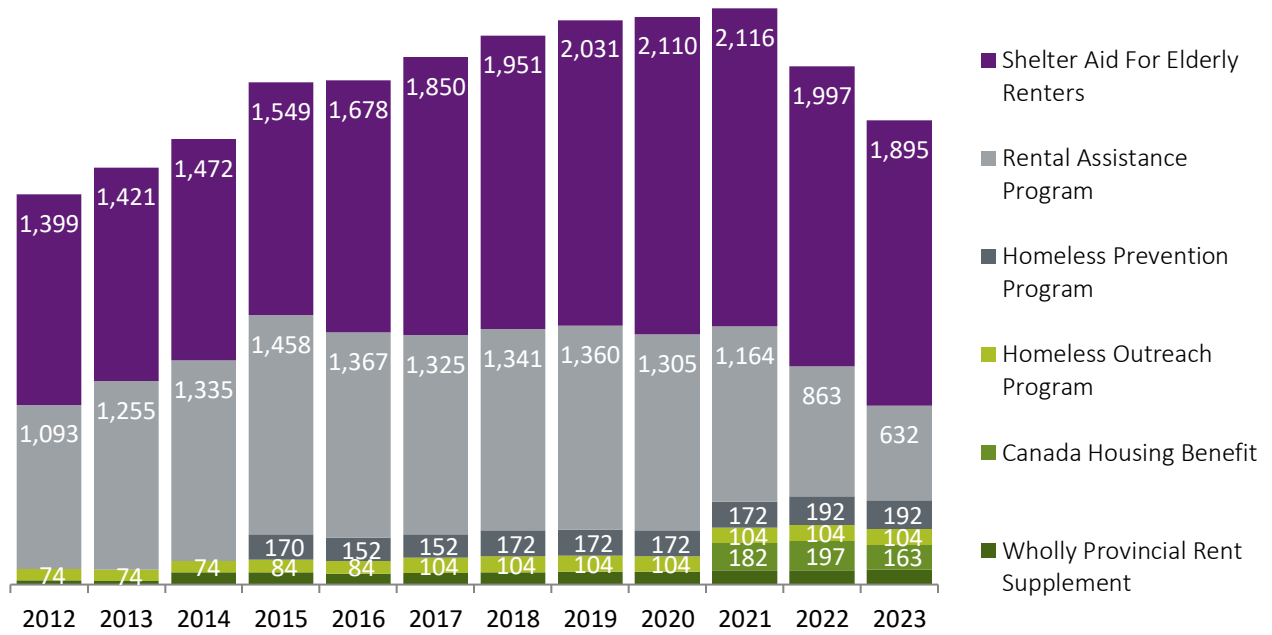
Since 2021, fewer Surrey residents are receiving rent supplements.

Figure 23 illustrates the number and type of rent supplements received by Surrey residents from 2012 to 2023. The overall number of rent supplements increased year-over-year until 2021, after which it decreased by 19%. There were 745 fewer Surrey residents receiving rent supplements in 2023 (3,087) than in 2021 (3,832). Reductions were seen in the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) (-532) and Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) (-221). Since 2021, the Canada Housing Benefit started being distributed, representing ~5% of all subsidies (163 recipients in 2023).



Figure 23: Rent Supplements (Surrey, 2012 – 2023)

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory



Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters provides monthly rental payment assistance to eligible seniors.

Rental Assistance Program provides eligible low-income working families with monthly rental payment assistance.

Homeless Prevention Program provides rent supplements and support services to youth aging out of care, women experiencing or at-risk of violence, Indigenous individuals, and individuals leaving correctional or hospital systems help access rental housing in the private housing market.

Homeless Outreach Program is a support program for people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.

Canada BC-Housing Benefit assists vulnerable low-income households renting in the private market.

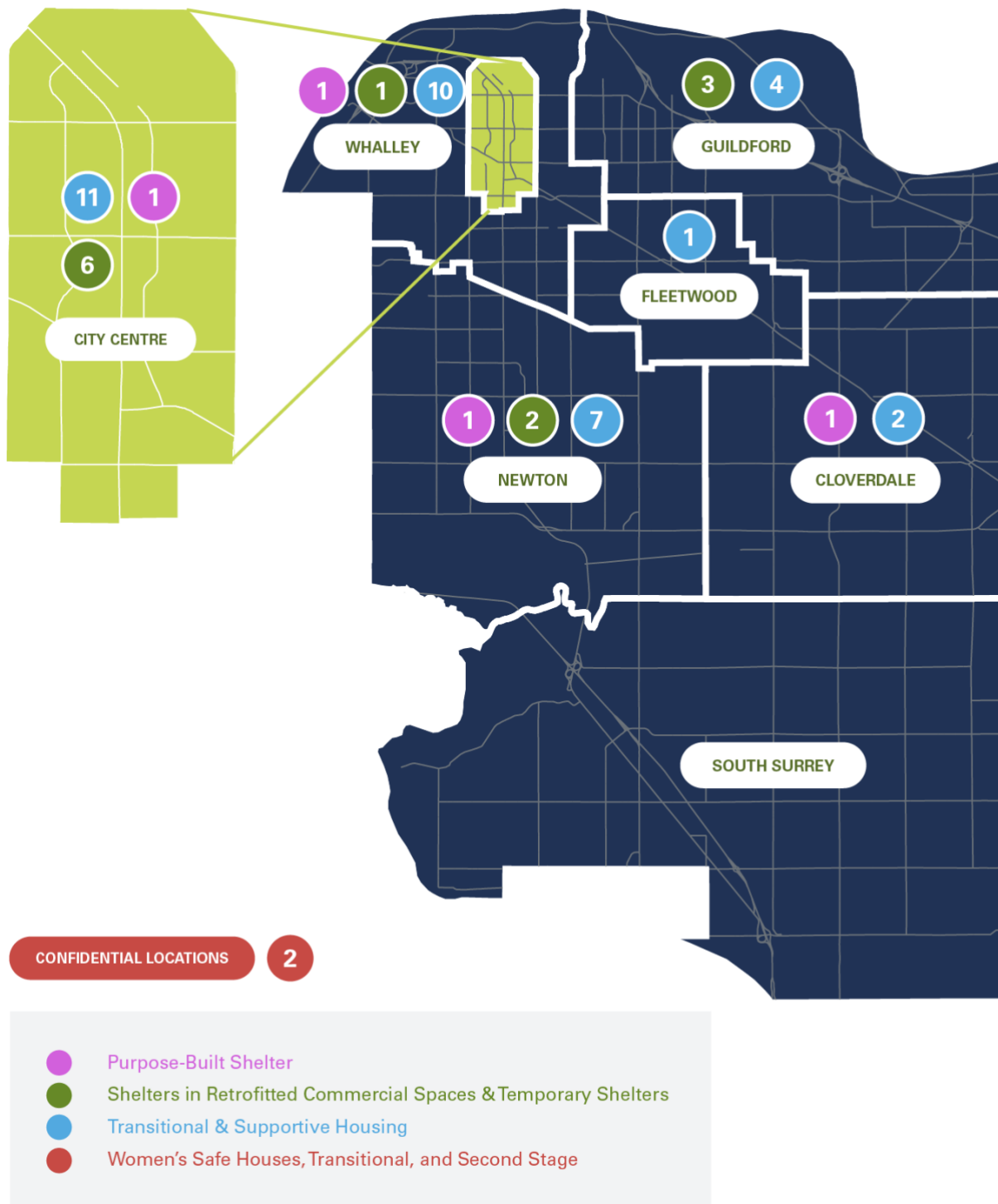
Wholly Provincial Rent Supplement is an older subsidy program for those assessed by health services as stable and connected to appropriate supports where a directly managed building meeting their needs is not available.

Source: BC Housing



Figure 24: Shelter and Supportive / Transition Housing in Surrey by Type

Source: City of Surrey. Housing & Service Inventory



SURREY'S NON-MARKET HOUSING INVENTORY

Surrey has a total of 4,625 non-market housing units.

According to City of Surrey data, Surrey has 4,625 non-market housing units including non-profit housing, Indigenous non-profit housing, non-profit seniors supportive and independent housing, and co-op housing. Most non-market units fall within the non-profit housing category, with 1,955 units (or 42% of total non-market units).

Table 10: Surrey's Inventory of Non-Market Housing Units by Type (2024)

NON-MARKET HOUSING TYPE	UNITS
Co-op Housing	821
Indigenous Non-Profit Housing	194
Non-Profit Seniors Independent Housing	962
Non-Profit Housing	1,955
Non-Profit Seniors Supportive Housing	693
Total	4,625

Non-Market Housing: Housing for low- or moderate-income households that is owned/or and operated by a public agency, non-profit society, or housing co-operative.

Non-Profit Housing: Housing units that are owned and/or operated by a non-profit society. These buildings may consist of a mix of low-income rental units and market rental units or 100% of the units may have subsidized rents.

Co-op Housing: Housing units that are owned and/or operated by a housing co-operative. Residents are members of the housing co-operative and pay a monthly housing charge instead of rent.



In terms of non-market unit breakdown by population, the category with the highest proportion of non-market units is seniors with 1,655 (or 36% of non-market units). Most other non-market units serve all populations and families (at 56% combined), while 194 units are for Indigenous people and families, 91 units serve veterans, and 6 units serve people with HIV/AIDS.

Table 11: Surrey’s Inventory of Non-Market Housing Units by Population (2024)

POPULATION SERVED	UNITS
All	1,363
Families	1,316
Indigenous	194
People with HIV/AIDS	6
Seniors	1,655
Veterans	91
Total	4,625



BC HOUSING INVENTORY OF SHELTER, TRANSITIONAL, AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

BC Housing tracks an inventory of 4,631 spaces in Surrey.

BC Housing maintains an inventory of non-market rental, shelter, transitional, and independent social housing spaces or units. Many of the units tracked by City of Surrey overlap with those tracked by BC Housing.²² The categories used to classify units also vary and BC Housing only tracks units while it has an active operating agreement; the inventory may not be comprehensive of all spaces, beds, or units in Surrey.

City of Surrey relies on its own actively tracked inventory, as described above; however, BC Housing’s inventory can be used to compare coverage rates across different municipalities in Metro Vancouver.



The Rosewood, opened in 2022, is a low-barrier emergency shelter and supportive housing site for women and children. The site provides 60 shelter beds and 57 apartments with 24-hour staffing. The ground floor provides a community care hub with a health and dental clinic and drop-in centre.

Surrey is underserved in terms of beds, spaces, or units per capita compared to Vancouver.

Table 10 provides coverage rates for spaces or units of shelter, transitional, and independent social housing in Vancouver and Surrey (values represent the number of spaces or units of each subtype per 100 residents). The ratio indicates how many times more units or spaces there are per 100 residents in Vancouver compared to Surrey (e.g., there are 3.52 shelter spaces per 100

22. BC Housing only tracks units it has a financial relationship with and there may be other subsidized housing units in the community funded through other means or those previously funded through BC Housing that have reached the end of their operating agreements but are still operating.



residents in Vancouver for every one space per 100 residents in Surrey).²³ A ratio of 1.00 would indicate the same coverage rate.

Table 12: Shelter, Transitional, and Independent Social Housing Units / Spaces per 100 Residents, City of Vancouver and City of Surrey (2023)

Source: BC Housing, Unit Count Reporting Model, March 31, 2023²⁴

HOUSING TYPE + SUBTYPE		CITY OF VANCOUVER	CITY OF SURREY	RATIO
Emergency Shelter and Housing for the Homeless	Homeless Housed	1.09	0.12	8.75
	Homeless Shelters	0.14	0.04	3.52
Transitional, Supportive, and Assisted Living	Supportive Seniors Housing	1.67	0.86	1.93
	Special Needs	0.26	0.06	4.62
	Women and Children Fleeing Violence	0.020	0.023	0.87
Independent Social Housing	Low Income Families	0.89	0.23	3.89
	Independent Seniors	5.43	0.91	5.96

Ratios shown in red indicate that Surrey is underserved compared to Vancouver. The only housing subtype where Surrey has a marginally higher ratio than Vancouver is Transitional Housing for Women and Children Fleeing Violence.

23. 2021 populations in Vancouver and Surrey were 662,248 and 568,322.

24. To determine coverage rates, total population from the 2021 Census was applied for all but supportive seniors housing and independent seniors housing (which used the 65+ population instead).



EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE + TEMPORARY WINTER SHELTER DATA

Extreme Weather Response Shelter (EWR): Temporary emergency shelter spaces only open during periods of extreme winter weather for people who are unsheltered, unlike emergency shelters which are open all year.

Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS): Open nightly during the months of November to the end of March to provide additional shelter capacity for those experiencing homelessness.

One fewer extreme weather response facility was available in the 2023-2024 season than the previous season.

Seven Extreme Weather Response (EWR) facilities were open through the 2023/2024 season, with a total of 147 spaces. There was one fewer facility than the 2022/2023 season, although due to capacity, seven more spaces were available in the 2023/2024 season. **In 2023/2024, four of the seven facilities operated at or above 100% capacity at least half the nights they were open.** All but one facility (Pacific Community Resources Society) had at least one night over 100% capacity. Surrey Urban Mission Society’s Welcome Hub was over capacity 82% of the time and Shimai House (the only EWR option specific to women) was over capacity 64% of the nights it was open in the 2023/2024 season. The majority of EWR sites were in City Centre.

Table 13: Extreme Weather Response Capacity and Usage (Surrey, 2023/2024 Season)

Source: Surrey EWR Data, 2024

FACILITY	AREA IN SURREY	MATS	POPULATION SERVED	NIGHTS OPEN	NIGHTS AT OR ABOVE CAPACITY	
Pacific Community Church	Cloverdale	25	19+	6	4	67%
Lookout Surrey Alliance	City Centre	30	19+	63	3	5%
Options South Surrey	South Surrey	45	19+	67	1	1%



FACILITY	AREA IN SURREY	MATS	POPULATION SERVED	NIGHTS OPEN	NIGHTS AT OR ABOVE CAPACITY	
Pacific Community Resources Society	City Centre	10	Youth	61	0	0%
Shimai House	City Centre	6	Women	88	56	64%
Surrey Urban Mission Society NightShift	City Centre	16	19+	89	45	51%
Surrey Urban Mission Society Welcome Hub	City Centre	15	19+	97	80	82%

Since the 2019/2020 season, the overall number of EWR mats across all sites increased in Surrey by 19, which represents an increase of 15%, while homelessness increased in Surrey by 65% between the 2020 and 2023 PiT Counts.

Table 14: Extreme Weather Response Mats (Surrey, 2019/2020 – 2023/2024)

Source: Surrey EWR Data, 2024

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
EWR Mats	128	64 ²⁵	121	140	147

In the 2023/2024 season, Pacific Community Church, operated by Options Community Services Society, was the only Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) in Surrey. This shelter operated as an EWR for six days before converting to a TWS for the remainder of the season.

Table 15: Temporary Winter Shelter Data (Surrey, 2023/2024)

FACILITIES	AREA IN SURREY	NUMBER OF MATS	NIGHTS OPEN	NIGHTS AT OR ABOVE CAPACITY	
Pacific Community Church	Cloverdale	25	112	93	83%

25. Including 40 spaces operated as Temporary Winter Shelters (open every night) for Winter 2020-2021 as part of COVID-19 response (Peace Portal Alliance Church and Pacific Community Church). Pacific Community Church operated as Emergency Weather Response in Winter 2019-2020 and Winter 2021-2022.





CONCLUSION

Conclusion

In Surrey, the rising cost of living, particularly the high price of housing, stands out as the leading cause behind the growing number of people experiencing homelessness and housing precarity. The 1,060 people experiencing homelessness in Surrey counted by the 2023 Point-in-Time Count demonstrates a significant need and under-delivery in housing and support services. While Surrey's inventory of non-market housing has increased, especially since 2020, the growth of the housing stock has not kept pace with population or household growth; this is not a Surrey-specific issue, with housing system pressures being felt across Metro Vancouver and the country. Long-term structural issues in meeting housing demand have built over decades to reach the current state of crisis.

Data highlights the urgent need for rapid, emergency solutions to homelessness and the delivery of new non-market housing units in Surrey. Addressing homelessness will require both expanding supports and services for those currently without housing, and also a significant increase in the supply of both non-market and market homes to reduce the pressure on the housing system and displacement, and better match the supply of homes to housing need. The insights and data presented in this report, along with what was heard from community engagement, have influenced the recommendations found in **A Pathway To Home: Surrey Homelessness Prevention + Response Plan**; this initiative emphasizes the City of Surrey's dedication to ensuring every resident has a safe and affordable place to call home in the long-term.



