

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 5/10/2022 3:34:45 PM

Subject: [City of Vancouver 2021 Census – Sex at birth and gender, age, and type of dwelling](#)

Attachments: Memo to Mayor & Council - City of Vancouver 2021 Census – Sex at birth and gender, age, and type of dwelling.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Theresa O'Donnell and Sandra Singh, regarding the City of Vancouver 2021 Census – Sex at birth and gender, age, and type of dwelling:

- ☐ The census collected data on gender for the first time, counting nearly 9,500 transgender or non-binary people in Metro Vancouver.
- ☐ Vancouver continues to age. The growth rate since the 2016 Census of people age 65 and older in Vancouver was five times the rate of growth of people under 65.
- ☐ Vancouver has the smallest proportion of children (age 12 and under) of any large city in Canada, and the largest proportion from the millennial generation (age 25-40).
- ☐ Vancouver has had an increase in apartment dwellings over five storeys, as well as a small increase in single-detached dwellings likely attributable to laneway homes.
- ☐ Dwelling growth is located in areas where land use changes and policy enable new residential development, largely along arterials near rapid transit.

Should you have any questions, please contact Sandra Singh (Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca) or Theresa O'Donnell (Theresa.O'Donnell@vancouver.ca).

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

May 10, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Aftab Erfan, Chief Equity Officer
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy and Projects, ACCS
Chris Robertson, Assistant Director, City-wide and Regional Planning, PDS

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, ACCS
Theresa O'Donnell, General Manager, PDS

SUBJECT: City of Vancouver 2021 Census – Sex at birth and gender, age, and type of dwelling

RTS #: N/A

PURPOSE

Statistics Canada is releasing data from the 2021 Census of Population throughout the year. Council received the first [memo](#) on February 28, 2022, with data on population and dwelling counts. This second memo summarizes data on age, sex at birth and gender, and type of dwelling that was released on April 27, 2022. The memo focuses on data specific to the City of Vancouver, with comparisons to the region and large Canadian municipalities. Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, most high-level trends in the city are consistent with previous censuses and show that population growth and demographics respond to city planning and policy choices.

DISCUSSION

Highlights: 2021 Census – Sex at birth and gender, age, type of dwelling

- The census collected data on gender for the first time, counting nearly 9,500 transgender or non-binary people in Metro Vancouver.
- Vancouver continues to age. The growth rate since the 2016 Census of people age 65 and older in Vancouver was five times the rate of growth of people under 65.
- Vancouver has the smallest proportion of children (age 12 and under) of any large city in Canada, and the largest proportion from the millennial generation (age 25-40).
- Vancouver has had an increase in apartment dwellings over five storeys, as well as a small increase in single-detached dwellings likely attributable to laneway homes.
- Dwelling growth is located in areas where land use changes and policy enable new residential development, largely along arterials near rapid transit.

Sex at birth and gender

Changes in the 2021 Census

Historically, the Canadian Census has asked people to report their sex. The 2021 Census added a question allowing people to report their gender as well. Generally speaking, sex refers to a set of biological attributes, associated with physical and physiological features such as chromosomes, hormone levels, and sexual anatomy. Gender, on the other hand, is how one identifies, and the behaviours, roles, and expressions one adopts. A person's gender identity and expression may or may not align with society's norms and expectations based on one's sex. Like all aspects of identity, sex and gender are spectrums, but quantitative data sources create discrete categories.

In the 2021 Census, the "Sex" question was revised to specify "Sex assigned at birth", and continued to provide binary options: male or female. The gender question noted that gender might differ from sex assigned at birth or be different from legal documents. It offered respondents the possibility to identify as male, female, or to write in another identity. Based on the answers to the gender question and sex assigned at birth, Statistics Canada has classified people as non-binary people, transgender women, transgender men, cisgender women, or cisgender men. Statistics Canada defines cisgender people as those whose response to the gender question matches the sex assigned at birth question, and transgender people as those who select a binary gender identity different from sex assigned at birth. However, transgender is a broad term that reflects a wide range of gender identities, expressions, and experiences, so these definitions used in the 2021 Census are quite limited.

In the April 27, 2022 release, data in the five Statistics Canada categories above have only been released at the provincial and census metropolitan area (CMA) level for people age 15 and older. For the City of Vancouver census subdivision (CSD) and smaller geographies,

Statistics Canada has distributed the non-binary population into “men+” and “women+” categories. While this avoids data suppression in case of small population numbers, it means that gender data is still only presented in a binary way for the city.

Overall, adding a gender question to the Census is a step toward more equitable population data. Gender is a more meaningful concept than the sex assigned at birth for understanding inequities in the city. However, there are still significant limitations to the gender questions and the approach to categorization.¹ A broad “non-binary person” category does not accurately reflect the spectrum of gender identities and expressions, including people who identify as gender-diverse, genderqueer, or agender. Deriving transgender identities from mandatory disclosure of sex assigned at birth, rather than self-reporting, is not the safest or best practice in data collection. Further, Two-Spirit identities held by some Indigenous people transcend western categories of gender and sexual orientation. Because census questionnaires are completed at a household level, people may also face barriers if they wish to maintain confidentiality from other household members. For these reasons, data from the 2021 Census likely undercounts trans, non-binary, and gender diverse people.

Data on gender-based inequities is essential, and the City will make efforts to access custom datasets for a more detailed breakdown of Vancouver’s population. The City also recognizes the limitations of the data collected in the Census and will continue to engage directly with communities for a more complete understanding of the experiences and needs of people across the gender spectrum, and will continue to advocate for more equitable, safe, and inclusive data with Statistics Canada and other data providers.

2021 Census findings

The 2021 Census reports the gender of residents of the City of Vancouver as 337,675 “women+” (51.0% of the population) and 324,570 “men+” (49.0% of the population). This includes self-reported women and men, both transgender and cisgender; as noted above, the “plus” indicates that non-binary people have also been assigned to one of these categories.

While data for trans and non-binary people has not been published for the city, regional statistics offer some relevant insights. Across Metro Vancouver, Statistics Canada classifies the population (2,235,455 people age 15 and older) as follows:

- 4,470 (0.2%) non-binary persons
- 2,810 (0.1%) transgender women
- 2,200 (0.1%) transgender men
- 1,144,870 (51.2%) cisgender women
- 1,081,105 (48.4%) cisgender men

Gender identities vary across the age spectrum. Based on the Census, at least 9,480 people age 15 and older in the region are transgender or non-binary. In Metro Vancouver, people age 15 to 34 reported trans or non-binary identities at double the rate of people age 35 and older. The rate will also likely be higher in Vancouver than the region overall. One local

¹ For more discussion of the limitations of the 2021 Census approach and questions, please see e.g. V.S. Wells, “Canada’s Latest Census Still Fails Trans And Non-Binary People” *Passage* May 6, 2021 (<https://readpassage.com/canadas-latest-census-still-fails-trans-and-non-binary-people/>); or “Canada’s transgender, non-binary census data criticized by advocate” *CityNews* April 27, 2022 (<https://montreal.citynews.ca/2022/04/27/canadas-transgender-non-binary-census-data-criticized-by-advocate/>).

source of data is the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey, in which 2% of participating public school students in Vancouver identified as neither male nor female or not yet sure, and under 1% identified as transgender.²

Age

As of 2021, the median age of Vancouver's population is 39.6, compared to a median age of 39.3 in 2016. Across Canada, the population of older adults and seniors is growing much more rapidly than other age groups.

Vancouver's population profile continues to be different from most other large cities in Canada, with the proportionally smallest child population (age 0-12) of any municipality with more than 250,000 people. Figure 1 below illustrates this comparison. The same is true for youth (age 13-24). Meanwhile, the city also has the proportionally largest millennial population (people born between 1981 and 1996) in this cohort, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: Population age 12 and under in Canadian municipalities with over 250 thousand people, 2021

² McCreary Centre Society, Balance and Connection in Vancouver: The Health and Well-Being of Our Youth, April 2020. https://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/balance_and_connection_vancouver.pdf.

Millennials 25-40 in Large Canadian Municipalities, 2021

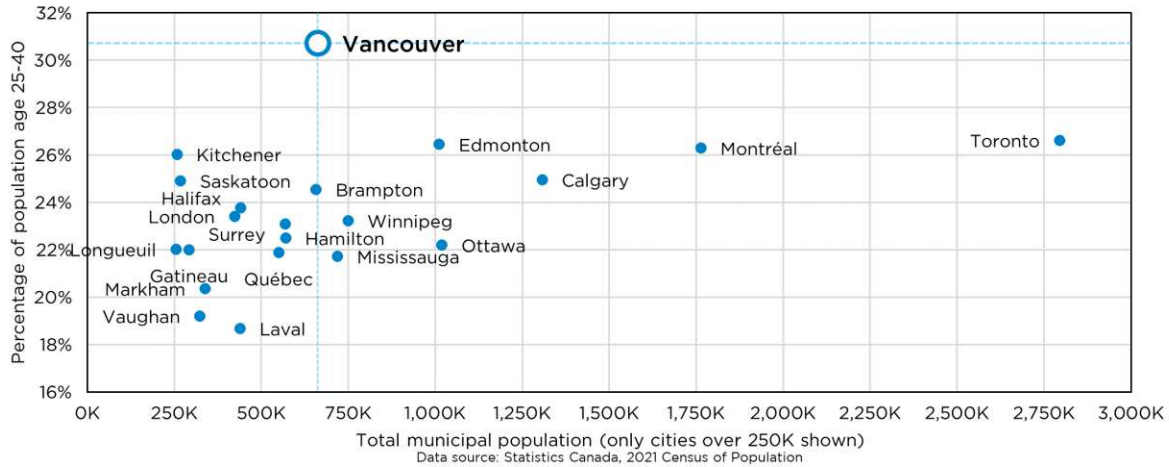


Figure 2: Population age 25 to 40 in Canadian municipalities with over 250 thousand people, 2021

The relationship between Vancouver's housing stock and its age demographics is evident from this data. Vancouver's relatively large share of rental housing stock, walkable and amenity-rich neighbourhoods, and access to transit are all strengths for attracting young adults from other municipalities and newcomers from outside Canada. However, Vancouver is less successful at retaining people as they age into middle adulthood, particularly in providing affordable and suitable housing for those that have children. Figure 3 below shows the age profile of the city and the region.

Population Distribution by Age, 2021

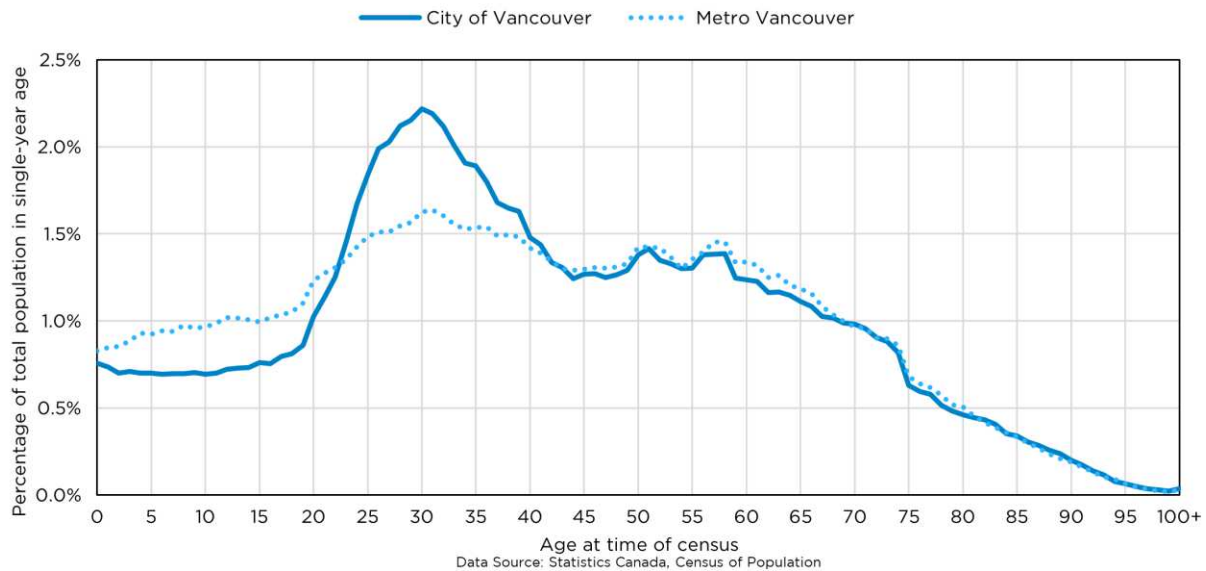


Figure 3: Population distribution by age in City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver, 2021

Figure 4 below illustrates changes in Vancouver's age demographics over a 20-year period. Significant trends visible below include:

- Flat or declining population of children and youth in the city;
- Continued growth in young adults age 25-34 each census; and
- Rapid growth in seniors and older adults.

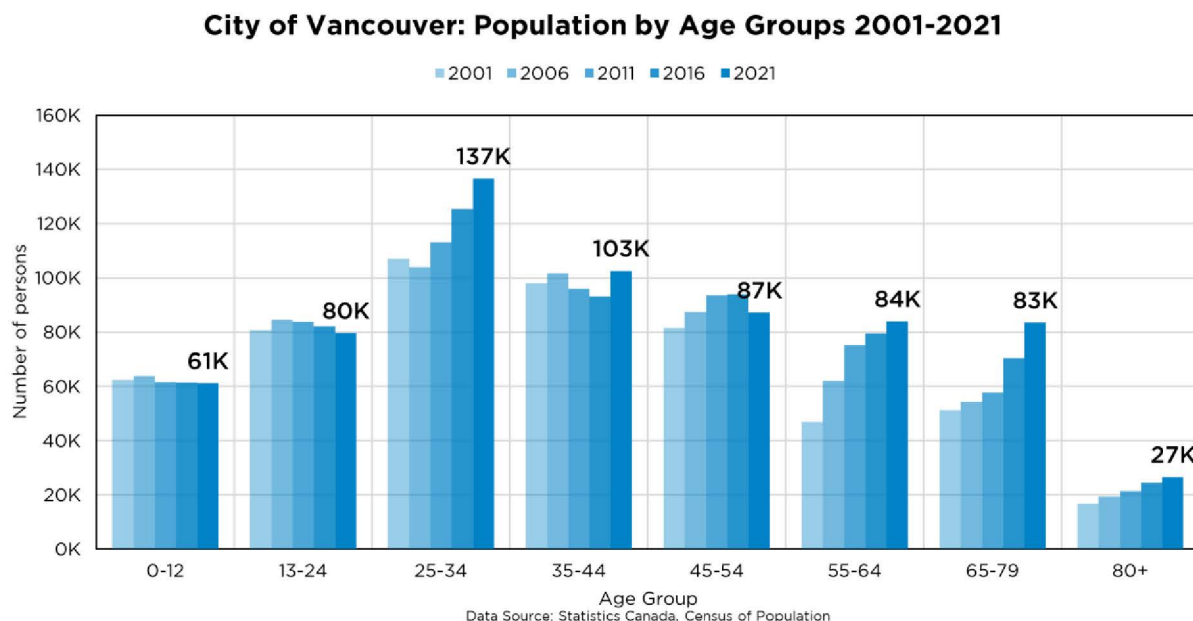


Figure 4: Vancouver population by age groups, 2001-2021

Vancouver's changing age profile is both a cause and an input to city planning and policy decisions. Population demographics are not independent of the choices that shape housing, affordability, transportation, employment, services, connections and other opportunities within a city. Trends, such as the smaller child population in Vancouver, result from issues such as a lack of affordable or suitable housing and childcare for families in the city.

At the same time, the specific trend of an aging population is occurring in cities across Canada. As the large population born during the baby boom generation (1946 to 1965) continues to age into older categories, there will inevitably be increased demand for more age-friendly policies, and accessible programs and services to meet their needs. This also emphasizes the importance of planning for accessible communities: accessible built environments, transportation networks, services and diverse housing types that enable people to age in place.

As of 2021, there are nearly 113,000 people age 65 and older in Vancouver, making up 17% of the city's total population. This is lower than for the overall population of Canada, but has increased substantially from previous census periods. As shown in Figure 5 below, the number of people age 65 and older increased by 16% from 2016 to 2021, about five times the rate of people under 65. In absolute numbers, nearly half of the city's net population growth from 2016 to 2021 was among people age 65 and older.

City of Vancouver: Net Population Growth by Age Group, 2001-2021

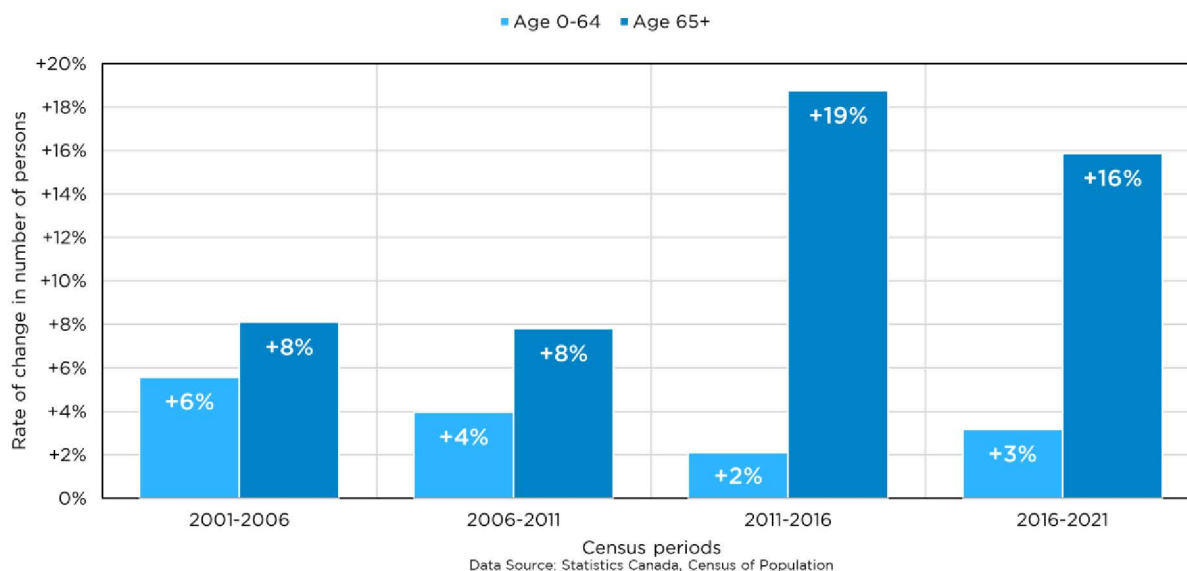


Figure 5: Vancouver rate of change in each census period by age group, 2001-2021

Structural type of dwelling

Statistics Canada collects information on the structural type of a dwelling during and between Censuses, assigning structural characteristics and dwelling configuration to all private dwellings in the country.³ This important data, combined with demographic information regarding families, informs our housing, development, childcare, and other policies.

The structural dwelling types used by Statistics Canada are different from city terminology:

Statistics Canada	Single detached house	Semi-detached house	Row house	Apartment or flat in a duplex	Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys
City of Vancouver	Single family homes, laneway houses, and infill	Duplex	Townhouse, row house and multiplex	Single-detached home with basement suite	Apartment in a building with fewer than five storeys	Apartment in a building with five or more storeys
Ground oriented					Apartment	

Table 1: Structural type of dwelling comparative chart

³ Additional information on the different types of dwellings and its definitions can be found in Statistics Canada's website. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-500/001/98-500-x2021001-eng.cfm>.

In the last Census period, Vancouver has seen an increase in all types of dwellings.⁴ The highest growth was dwellings in apartment in buildings that have five or more storeys (14%), with net increase of 11,565 apartments. There is a slight increase of 8% in the number of single-detached dwellings between 2016 and 2021 of 3,420 net new units, following years of steady decline up to 2016 (reduced by 13% from 2001 to 2016), as seen in Figure 6; this increase in single-detached dwellings might be attributed to the construction of laneway houses.

Dwellings in low-rise apartments (apartment buildings that have fewer than 5 storeys) continue to be the most prevalent apartment dwelling type in Vancouver.

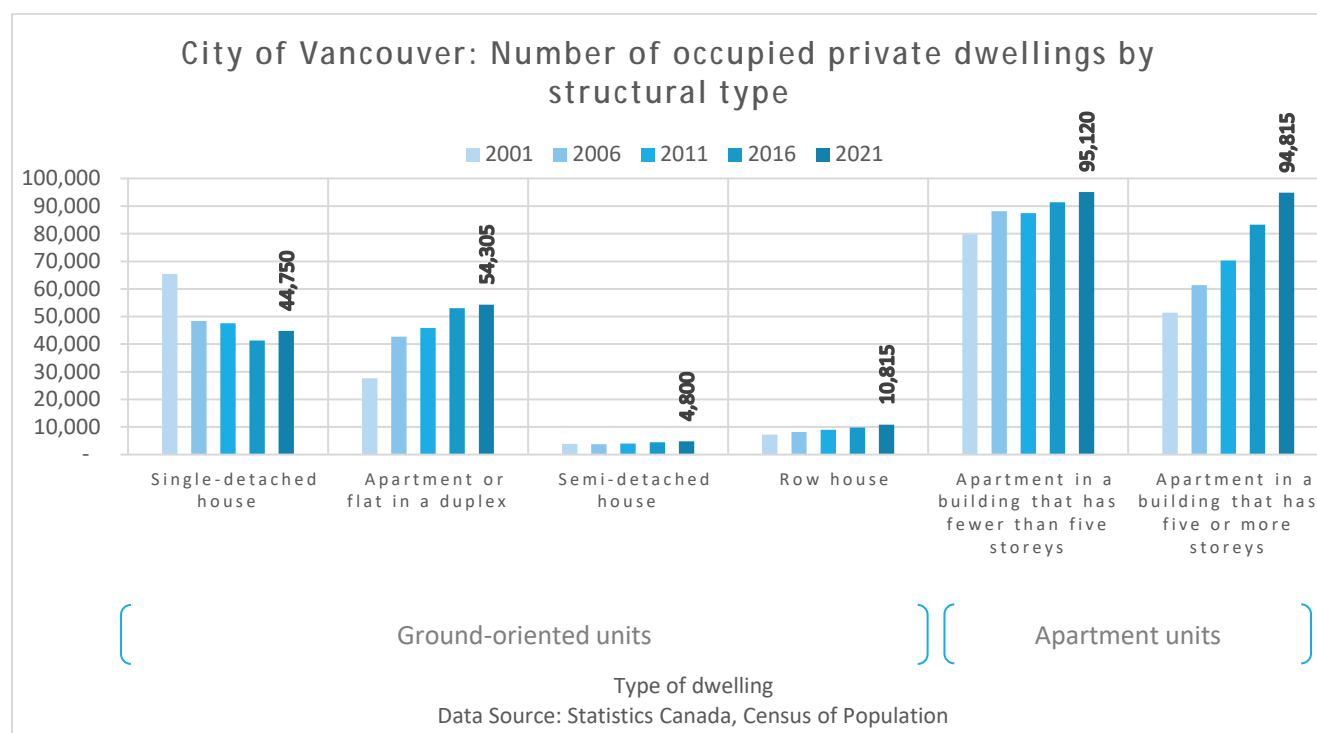


Figure 6: Number of occupied private dwellings by structural type, 2001-2021⁵

Dwelling growth between the 2016 and 2021 Census has been concentrated in local areas where the City has enabled growth through community plans and other land use policies, including South Cambie, Kerrisdale, Marpole, Mount Pleasant, Downtown, and Killarney, as seen in Figure 7 below. South Cambie, in dark blue, experienced the highest growth rate in total private dwellings in the past five years, with private dwellings increasing by 33%. On the other hand, the West End, in light blue, experienced a temporary loss of 1% in dwellings while development projects are under construction.

⁴ With the exception of movable dwellings, that decreased by 5 dwelling units from 2016 to 2021.

⁵ Other single-attached houses accounted for 695 units in 2021, and movable dwellings accounted for 20 units in the latest Census. Additional information on those dwelling types can be found in [Statistics Canada website](#)

City of Vancouver dwelling growth by local area, 2016-2021

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

Figure 7: Growth in dwellings by local area, 2016-2021

Figure 8: Average Private Household Size, Vancouver CMA and Vancouver CSD shows the average household size declining in the city and the region since 2001; they are currently 2.13 persons per private household in the city, and 2.50 in the Metro Vancouver region. One- and two-person households are the most common in the city with 39% and 33% of all private households, while comprising 29% and 32% of the region's total. Units in ground oriented structure types have a higher than average household size, while apartments have lower, as seen in Figure 9.

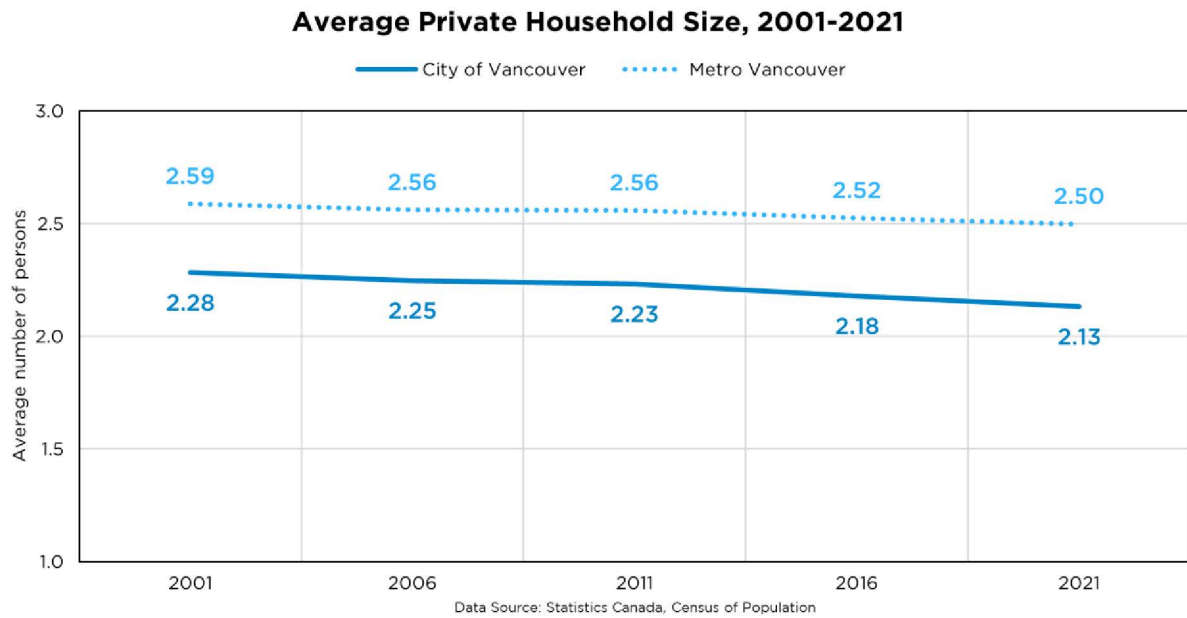


Figure 8: Average Private Household Size, Vancouver CMA and Vancouver CSD

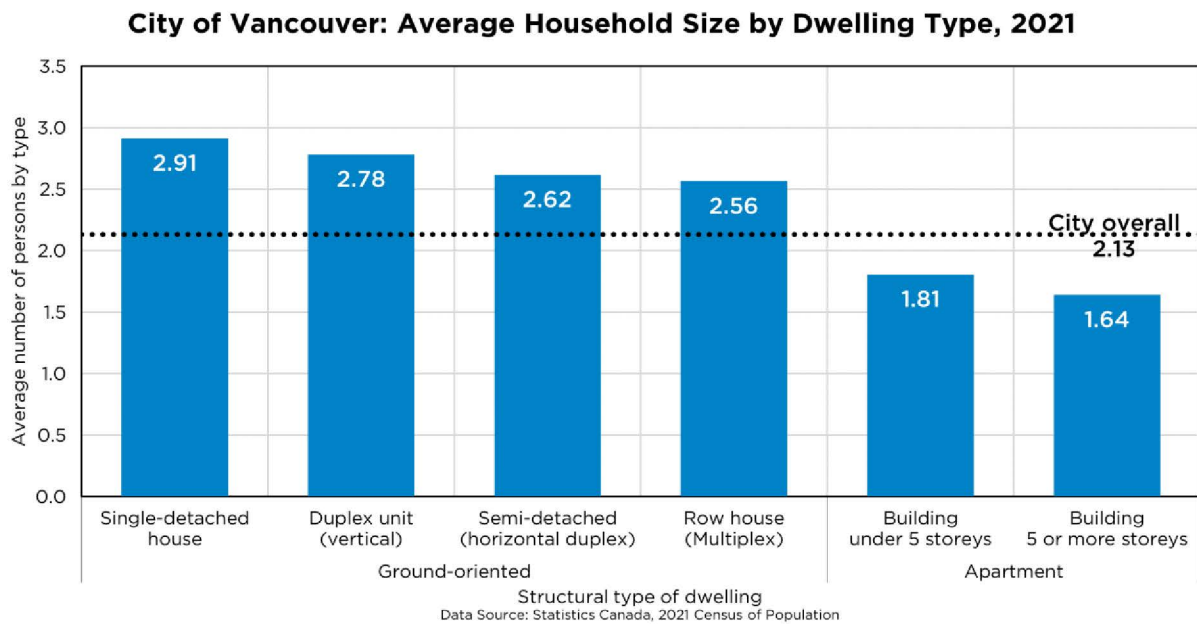


Figure 9: Average household size by dwelling type for the City of Vancouver

Ground oriented units

In Vancouver, ground oriented units represented 38% of all occupied private dwellings, and were occupied by 323,155 people, just short of half of the population. Most of those units are single detached houses (15%), units in duplexes (18%), or row houses (3.5%). According to the Census data, despite ground oriented units in Vancouver having 7% less children age 0-14 today than in 2016, the majority of them, 62%, still live in this dwelling category.

As seen in Figure 10, in dark purple and pink, the majority of ground oriented type of dwelling growth in the last five years exists in One-Family Dwelling (RS) and Two-Family Dwelling (RT) zones; whereas lighter colours show a smaller growth in ground oriented dwellings. There is also a concentration of new row houses in Oakridge Municipal Town Centre (MTC) along the Canada Line. This increase can be partially explained by the rise in building permits for laneway homes and townhouses during the time period.

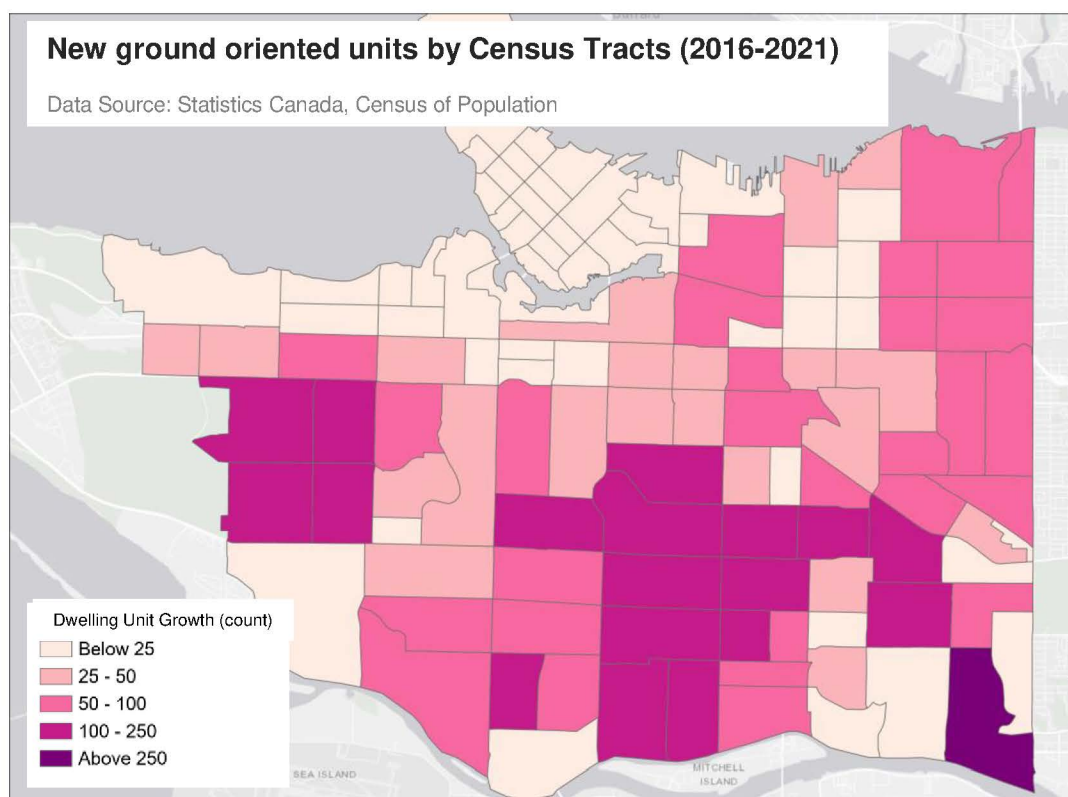


Figure 10: Change by structural type by Census Tracts: ground oriented, 2016-2021

Apartment units

Apartments accounted for 62% of all occupied private dwellings and 50.3% of the population, or 327,215 people. These typologies house 38% of children (age 0-14) and a majority of the population 25-44 years old (63%). Vancouver had an increase of 12% since 2016 in the number of children age 0-14 living in apartments, compared to a decrease of 7% in children living in ground oriented dwellings.

Apartments in buildings with five or more storeys have increased by 85% in the past 20 years, and 14% between 2016 and 2021 (to a total of 94,815), while apartments in buildings

with less than five storeys increased by 4% in the same period, to a total of 95,120. The 2021 Census has indicated new apartments, as shown in Figure 11. in dark purple and pink, were built in the Downtown area, Cambie Corridor, Marpole, East Fraser Lands, and Mount Pleasant; while smaller growth in apartment dwellings are indicated in lighter colours.

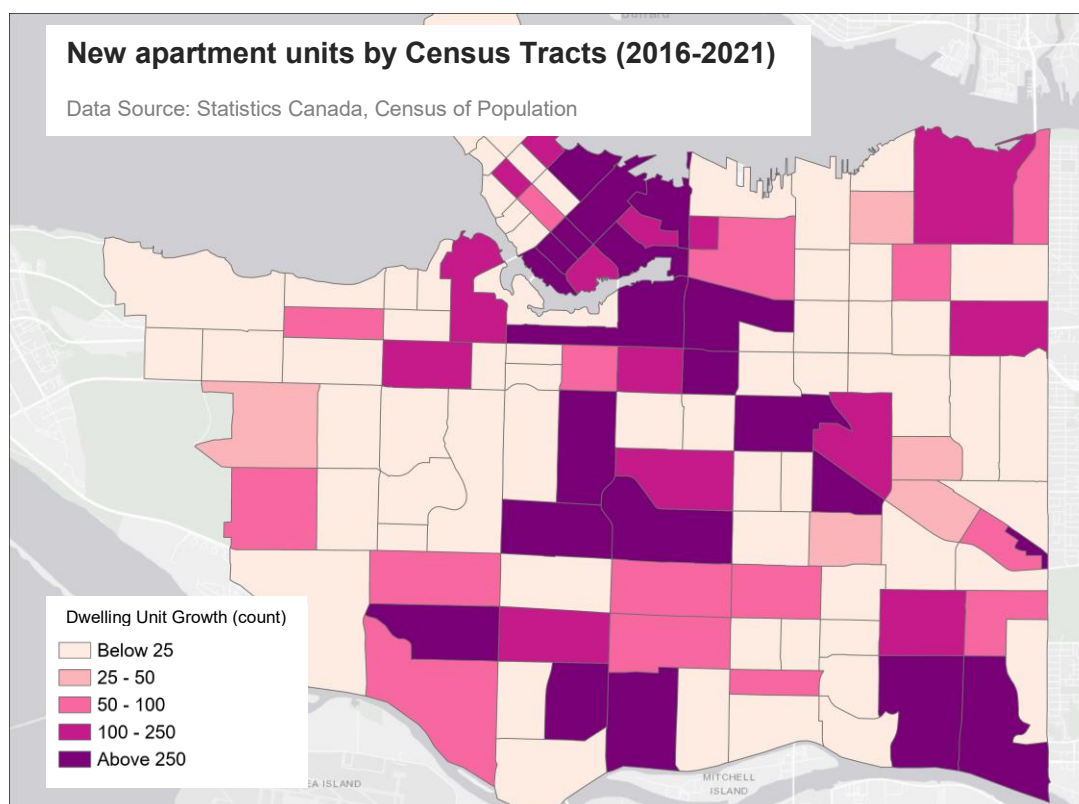


Figure 11: Change by structural type by Census Tracts: apartments, 2016-2021

While this April Census release does not include data regarding tenure or household characteristics (such as income, ethno-cultural background, education, etc.), staff will report on those topics when data becomes available.

Data sources and limitations

Data on age, sex at birth, and gender are self-reported in the short-form Census that was administered to all households in May 2021. Census enumerators categorize the structural type of dwelling based on standard categories and visual representations.

The short-form Census is intended to represent the entire population living in Canada, and is the most robust source of local population data available. Completing the Census is a legal requirement for everyone living in Canada. However, no data source achieves complete coverage. Statistics Canada estimates a 3.8% non-response rate for the short-form Census in the City of Vancouver. The Census may undercount a number of specific populations, including people experiencing homelessness or precarious housing; people living in

secondary suites; students; and people who face language or cultural safety barriers to completing the Census.

NEXT STEPS

Census data is a foundational input into all of the City's plans, policies, and projects. Staff will continue to analyze the data from this and future releases and incorporate into work across City departments.

Statistics Canada is releasing datasets regarding families, households, marital status, Canadian military experience, and income on July 13, 2022, and staff will continue to summarize the key findings of each census release in memos for Council. Appendix A summarizes the remaining 2021 Census Program release dates and topics.

Additional information on census data is available on Statistics Canada's Census of Population website at <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>.

FINAL REMARKS

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Sandra Singh or Theresa O'Donnell.



Sandra Singh
General Manager
Arts, Culture and Community Services
sandra.singh@vancouver.ca



Theresa O'Donnell
General Manager
Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
theresa.o'donnell@vancouver.ca

2021 Census of Population initial data release dates

Release Date	Topic	Theme
February 9, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population and dwelling counts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada's growing population and where they are living
April 27, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Sex at birth and gender • Type of dwelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada's shifting demographic profile
July 13, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families, households, and marital status • Canadian military experience • Income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrait of Canada's families and households • Contemporary portrait of Canadian Veterans • Income profile of Canadians
August 17, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic diversity and use of English and French in Canada
September 21, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Peoples • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Peoples, Métis and Inuit in Canada • Canada's housing portrait
October 26, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration, place of birth, and citizenship • Ethnocultural and religious diversity • Mobility and migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portrait of citizenship and immigration in Canada • Ethnocultural and religious composition of the population • Mobility and migration
November 30, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Labour • Language of work • Commuting • Instruction in the official minority language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education in Canada • The changing dynamics of the Canadian labour force and how people get to work • Instruction in the official minority language