

From: ["Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>](mailto:karen.levitt@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 12/19/2022 12:57:49 PM
Subject: City of Vancouver 2021 Census Housing Data

Dear Mayor and Council,

Given the positive feedback received regarding Theresa and Sandra's recent memo to you re: the recent 2021 Census release, we'd like to forward you the memos that were sent earlier this past fall regarding earlier 2021 Census data releases.

Please find below and attached the memo re: 2021 Census Housing Data.

All the best,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager (she/her)
karen.levitt@vancouver.ca telephone

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh/Squamish and səliłwətaʔ/Tsleil-Waututh nations

From: Mochrie, Paul <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 3:12 PM
To: Direct to Mayor and Council - DL
Cc: City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL O'Donnell, Theresa
<Theresa.O'Donnell@vancouver.ca>; Singh, Sandra <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>
Subject: City of Vancouver 2021 Census Housing Data

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Theresa O'Donnell and Sandra Singh, providing highlights from the September release of the 2021 Census on housing.

- The share of renter households continues to increase in Vancouver and the region, with renters making up about 55% of all households and 38% of all households in the region in 2021. The number of renter households is growing faster than owner households in both Vancouver and the region.
- The share of renters paying over 30% of income on rent fell in Vancouver between 2016 and 2021, from about 44% to 39%. This decline was observed across the region and Canada, in part because many households experienced increased incomes due to temporary COVID-19 income supports.
- The median income for renter households in the Metro Vancouver region increased significantly between 2016 and 2021, from approximately \$49,000 to \$67,000. This reflects a shift in the renter income distribution, with a decline in the number of households at the lowest end of the income spectrum and a gain in households at the highest end.

Should you have any questions, please contact Theresa O'Donnell (Theresa.o'donnell@vancouver.ca) or Sandra Singh (Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca) and they will ensure the queries are responded to through the weekly Council Q&A process.

Best,

Paul

MEMORANDUM

October 14, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Aftab Erfan, Chief Equity Officer
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy and Projects, ACCS
Dan Garrison, Assistant Director, Housing Policy and Regulation, PDS
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 – Housing

RTS #: N/A

PURPOSE

This memo provides a summary of housing data recently released on September 21, 2022 from the 2021 Census specific to the city of Vancouver, with comparisons to the region and other large cities in Canada.

BACKGROUND

The 2021 Census of Population took place in May 2021, and Statistics Canada is releasing initial datasets throughout 2022. Council previously received memos on February 28, 2022 ([population and dwelling counts](#)), May 10, 2022 ([age, sex at birth, gender, and type of dwelling](#)), and August 5 (households, family, and income).

Council is also receiving a concurrent memo presenting the language data released on August 17 and statistics on Indigenous peoples released on September 21.

DISCUSSION

Highlights: 2021 Census – Housing

- The share of renter households continues to increase in Vancouver and the region, with renters making up about 55% of all households and 38% of all households in the region in 2021. The number of renter households is growing faster than owner households in both Vancouver and the region.
- The share of renters paying over 30% of income on rent fell in Vancouver between 2016 and 2021, from about 44% to 39%. This decline was observed across the region and Canada, in part because many households experienced increased incomes due to temporary COVID-19 income supports.
- The median income for renter households in the Metro Vancouver region increased significantly between 2016 and 2021, from approximately \$49,000 to \$67,000. This reflects a shift in the renter income distribution, with a decline in the number of households at the lowest end of the income spectrum and a gain in households at the highest end.

Vancouver's Housing Portrait

Housing data from the Census plays a key role in the analysis of housing needs among Vancouver residents and informing housing policies and strategies. The current 2021 housing data release comes from the census long form questionnaire delivered to a 25% sample of the population.¹

The census was carried out in May 2021, one year into the COVID-19 pandemic. The impacts of the COVID-19 context are not fully known yet, and this must be considered when interpreting observed trends in census data over time. Specifically, the 2021 Census uses data on incomes linked to 2020 tax returns. As a result, this data reflects the cumulative impacts of many aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including initial income loss in many sectors and new government income support programs. The longer-term impacts of the pandemic on migration, employment, and incomes remain unknown.

Housing Tenure

Data on housing tenure is one of the core components of Vancouver's housing need analysis. Renters face specific housing challenges such as a higher incidence of core housing need and greater risk of housing insecurity. These challenges vary among renters depending on other characteristics such as income, age, family type, and ethnicity, which will be explored further as additional census data is released.

Typically, central cities like Vancouver have a greater share of renters compared to the region as a whole. Out of Vancouver's 305,335 households in private dwellings, 54.5% were

¹ Note that census housing data looks at households in private dwellings, which excludes the portion of the population living in collective dwellings (care homes, shelters etc.) or without a permanent home. Census also breaks down housing tenure into two main categories of owned dwellings and rented dwellings, lumping other forms of tenure such as co-ops into the rental category.

renters and 45.5% were owners. Across Metro Vancouver, the share of renter households was lower at 37.9%, with 62.1% of households owning their homes.

Housing tenure in City of Vancouver, 2021

Housing tenure in Metro Vancouver, 2021



Figure 1 – Private households by housing tenure in City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver, 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of population

For the second census period in a row, the number of renter households grew faster than owners. Between 2016 and 2021, the City of Vancouver saw a net gain of 15,735 renter households (+10.4%) and 5,695 owner households (+4.3%). This means that 73.4% of the total net new households in Vancouver rented their homes. The same trend can be observed at the regional level, with renter households gaining a net 13.7% compared to 6.5% for owner households in Metro Vancouver.

The recent gain in renter households in Vancouver and the region is part of a long term trend. Since 2001, the number of renter households has increased by 25.4% in Vancouver and 41.2% in the rest of Metro Vancouver (excluding the city of Vancouver). This corresponds to overall households number growing faster in the rest of the region compared to the city.



Figure 2 - Households by housing tenure in City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver 2001 to 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006, 2016, 2021 Census of Population, 2011 National Household Survey (NHS)

Looking at the geography of where renter households live in Vancouver in 2021, most renter households are in the areas where higher density rental and condominium apartments are permitted, including Downtown, Strathcona, Grandview-Woodland, Kitsilano, Fairview, Mount Pleasant, and Marpole. Renters can also be found in lower density areas, often in basement suites, laneway homes, and other secondary rental units. These patterns are generally consistent with previous census periods.

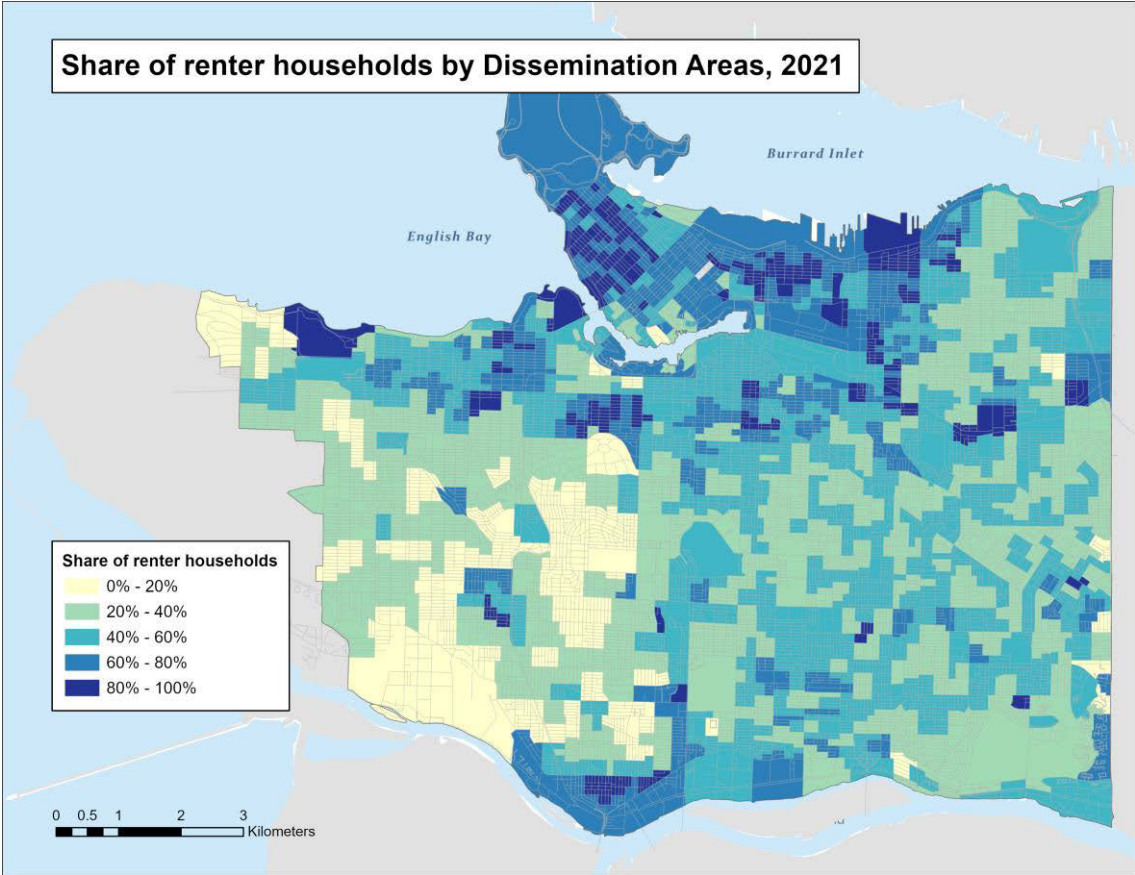


Figure 3 - Share of renter households by dissemination areas of the City of Vancouver in 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

Looking at where renters live across the Metro Vancouver region, Vancouver has the highest share of renter households among major municipalities (54.5%), followed by the City of North Vancouver (46.7%) and New Westminster (45.3%). Vancouver is home to 42.2% of all of the region's renter households, in line with Canada's other urban centres that also contain a large share of their respective region's renters, including the City of Toronto (70.7%), Montréal (65.7%), and Victoria (44.4%).²

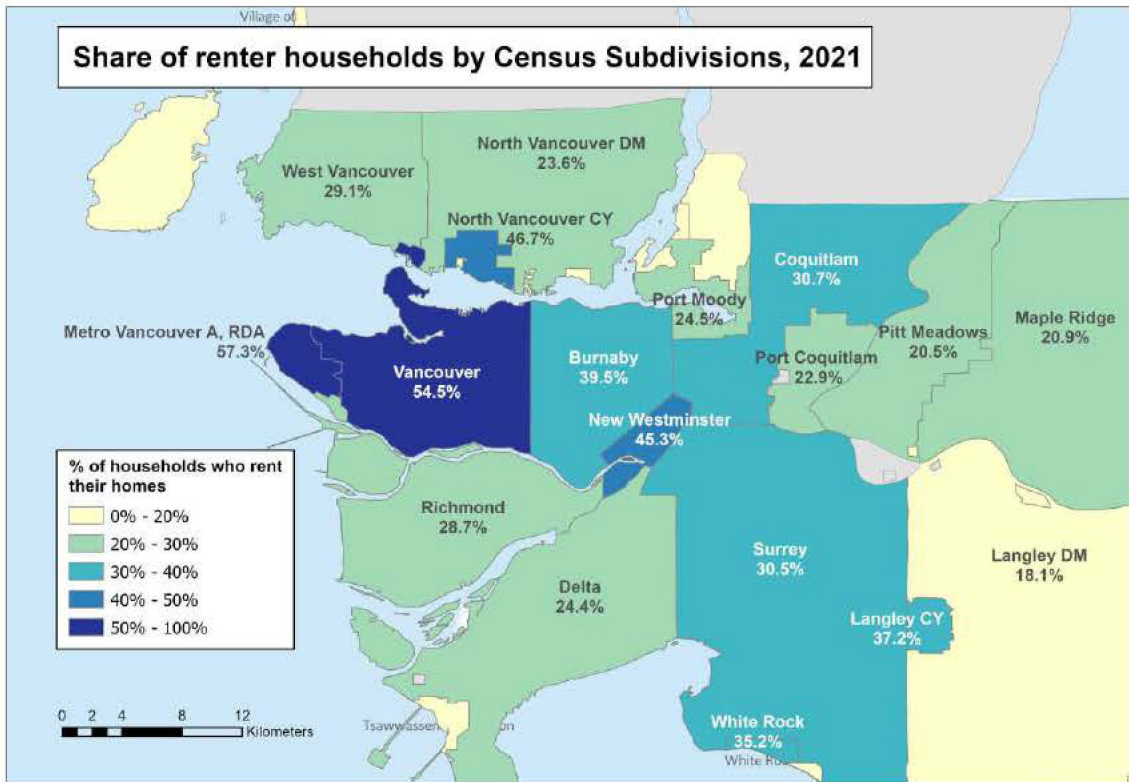


Figure 3 - Share of renter households by municipalities of the Vancouver census metropolitan area in 2021
 Note: Metro Vancouver A, RDA includes the University of British Columbia
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

Housing affordability: Shelter Cost Burden and Core Housing Need

Shelter cost burden relates the costs associated with housing to a household's income. For owners, housing costs include mortgage payments if any, property taxes, utilities, strata fees and relevant municipal fees. Costs for renters include rent, utilities and other associated fees. A household that spends more than 30% of its total before-tax household income on shelter costs is considered shelter cost burdened.

² Vancouver and Victoria's shares of regional renter households are lower than Toronto's and Montreal's in part because they represent a much smaller share of their respective region's overall population and land area. For example, the City of Toronto is home to 45.1% of its regional population, while the City of Vancouver has 25.1% of the region's population.

In 2021, one third of all Vancouver households were shelter cost burdened. Renter households were disproportionately impacted with 39.2% shelter cost burdened (44.2% in 2016) compared to 26.2% of owners (27.7% in 2016). Similar trends were observed in Metro Vancouver, where 29.6% of all households were shelter cost burdened (31.9% in 2016), 38.4% of renter households (43.3% in 2016) and 24.3% of owner households (25.6% in 2016).

When comparing Vancouver and the region, Vancouver has a higher rate of shelter cost burden than the region when looking at all tenures, but a negligible difference when looking just at renters. Similar trends are observed in other major Canadian urban centres.³

The share of renter households facing shelter cost burden declined between 2016 and 2021 across Canada and major metropolitan areas, including Vancouver and Metro Vancouver. This trend for Vancouver and the region is illustrated in Figure 5 below. Statistics Canada attributes this decline to a broader trend of rising incomes as well as temporary COVID-19 income supports.⁴



Figure 5 – Share of renter households overpaying on housing in the City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver, 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

³ We can observe this in Toronto as well, where the census metropolitan area (CMA)'s rate is 2 percentage points below that of the city (30.5 and 32.5% respectively), and in a more obvious way in Montréal, where the CMA's rate is 19.6% while the City's is 24.0%. However, in all 3 areas, this difference becomes minimal or non-existent when looking at renter households specifically.

⁴ As noted in the August 5 memo on incomes, the 2021 Census mainly reports on people's incomes throughout the year 2020. As a result, the data reflects the cumulative impacts of many aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Income data in the 2021 Census needs to be understood to reflect an exceptional and turbulent time. The longer-term impacts of the pandemic on affordability, migration, employment, incomes, policies, and programs remain unknown.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of shelter cost burdened renters across Vancouver. Renters are facing shelter cost burdens throughout the city, with areas in southwest Vancouver and Downtown recording higher proportions.⁵ Note that many buildings where people live in the Downtown Eastside such as SROs are not classified as private dwellings and are not included in census affordability data.⁶

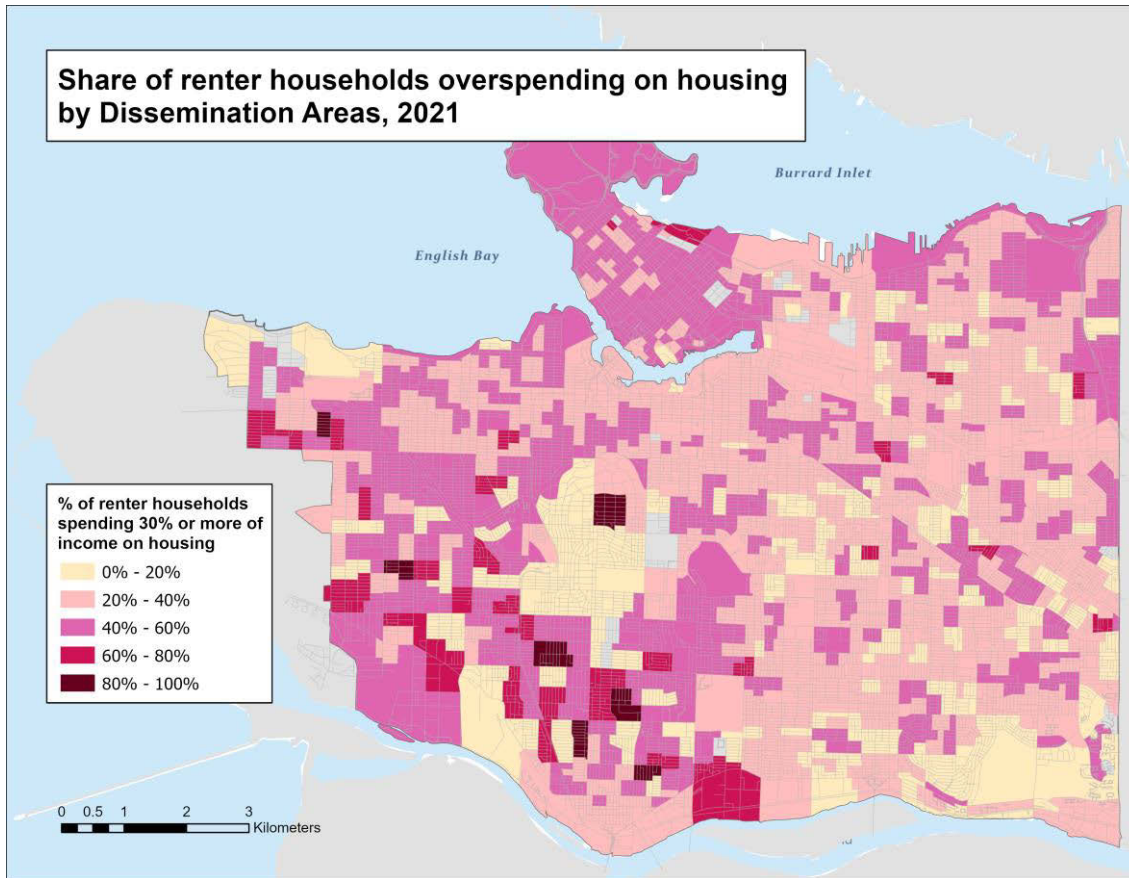


Figure 6 – Share of renter households spending over 30% of their income on shelter costs by dissemination areas of the City of Vancouver in 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

⁵ Note that most areas in the southwest of Vancouver have relatively few renter households.

⁶ Additionally, the shelter-cost-to-income ratio excludes private households who do not earn an income at all, as their ratio would not be calculable. However, it does include households who are paying 100% or more of income on housing, which can include students and low-income seniors.

Figure 7 shows the share of renters facing shelter cost burden among Metro Vancouver municipalities. In most Metro municipalities, at least one third of renters are shelter cost burdened. West Vancouver and Electoral Area A (including UBC) have the highest rate of renters facing shelter cost burden, at 56.1% and 63.2% respectively.

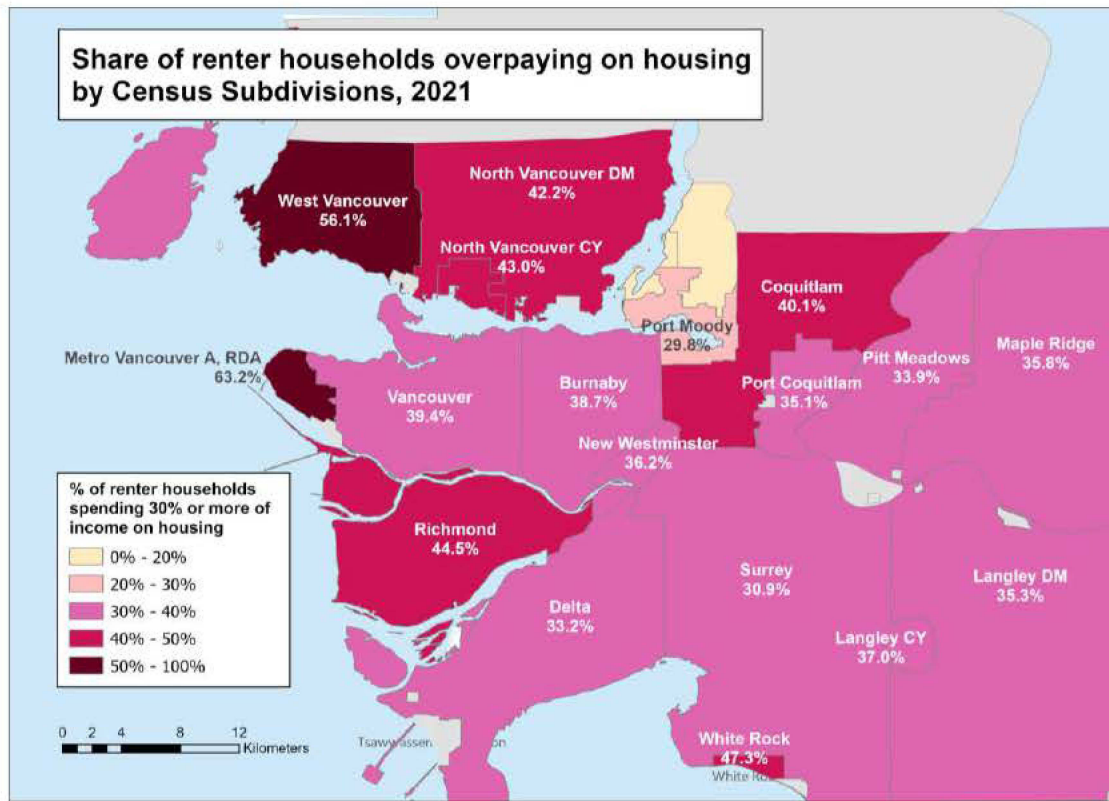


Figure 7 – Share of renter households spending over 30% of their income on shelter costs by census subdivisions of Metro Vancouver in 2021
Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

Core Housing Need

Another affordability metric captured by the census is core housing need. A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the census adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it could not afford the median rent of alternative acceptable housing in the area.⁷ The number and share of households in core housing need tends to be lower than the number of households facing shelter cost burden, in part because the core housing need variable excludes households who spend 100% or more of their income on housing and households with at least one maintainer between the ages of 15 and 29 who attend school.

⁷ Housing is considered acceptable if it is affordable, suitable and adequate. A dwelling is considered suitable when it has a sufficient number of bedrooms for the size and composition of the household, according to the CMHC National Occupancy Standards. The adequacy variable refers to the condition of the dwelling and whether it needs major repairs.

Figure 8 illustrates the incidence of core housing need among all households, renters, and owners in Vancouver and the region. Among renter households in Vancouver, the rate of core housing need fell to 25.7% in 2021 from 28.0% in 2016. This trend was almost the same in Metro Vancouver, which saw the share of renters in core housing need fall from 30.6% to 27.2%. This mirrors a Canada-wide trend of falling rates of core housing need, attributed by Statistics Canada to rising incomes and pandemic-related income supports.⁸ However, there are still over 166,000 households in core housing need across Metro Vancouver (59.7% renters) and over 54,000 households in core housing need in the city of Vancouver (73.1% renters).

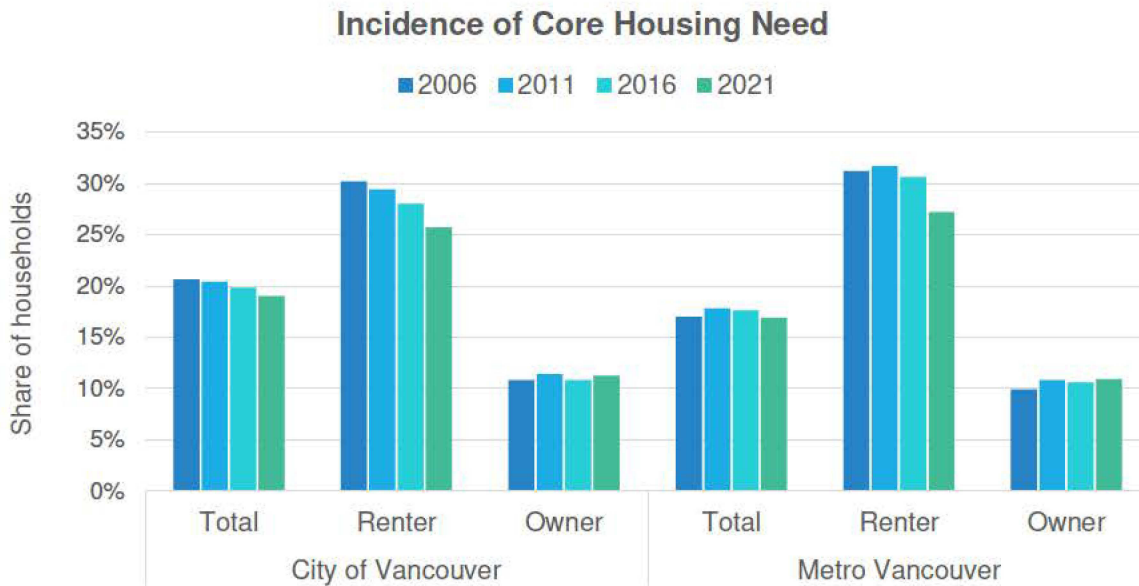


Figure 8 – Incidence of Core Housing Need among renter and owner households in City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver from 2006 to 2021

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006, 2016, 2021 Census of Population, 2011 NHS

⁸ Looking at other Canadian municipalities, the share of renter households in core housing need fell from 36.5% in 2016 to 29.3% in 2021 for the city of Toronto, and from 30.3% in 2016 to 26.8% in 2021 for the city of Victoria.

Looking at the region in more detail, we can see that most Metro Vancouver municipalities have between 20 and 35% of their renter households in core housing need, with Langley CY and White Rock just above 35%.

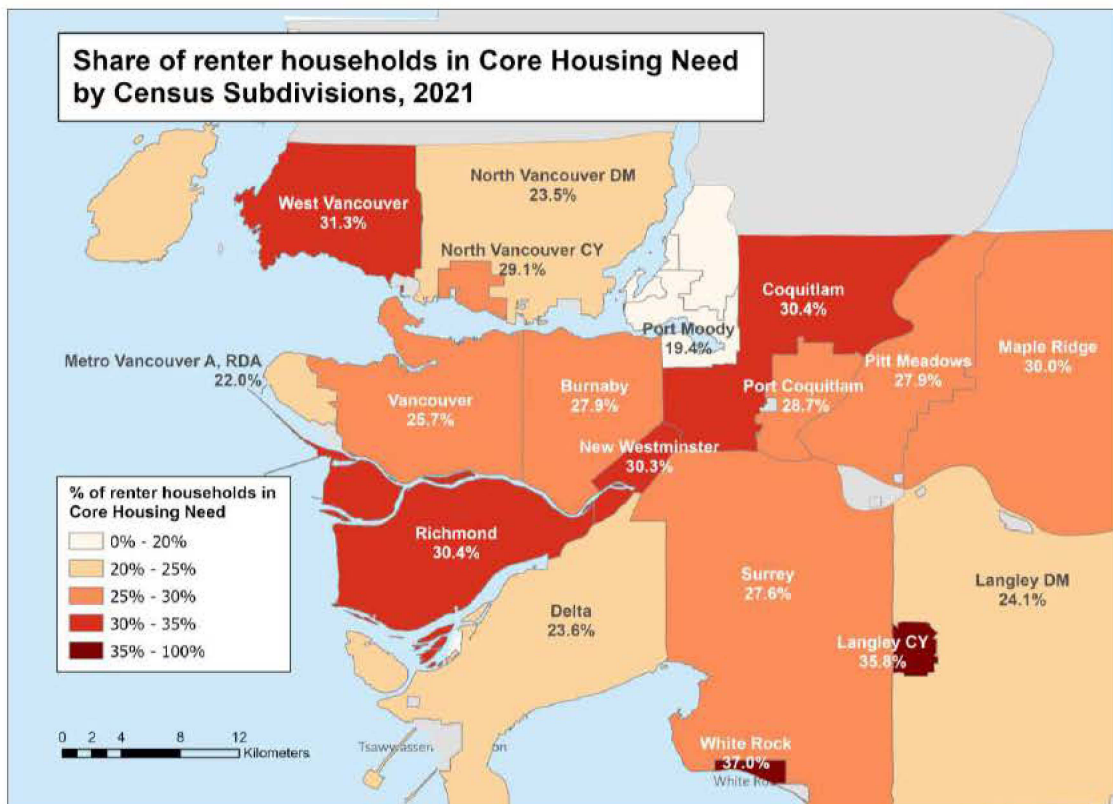


Figure 9 – Share of renter households who are considered in Core Housing Need by census subdivision of Metro Vancouver in 2021

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

Household income by tenure

Data on household incomes by tenure is not yet available for the City of Vancouver, but is available for the Metro Vancouver region. Median renter and owner incomes increased significantly between 2016 and 2021, after increasing steadily over recent census periods. The median renter household income in Metro Vancouver jumped to \$67,000 in 2021 from \$49,000 in 2016, a 36.8% increase.⁹ Owner household incomes increased to \$108,000 in 2021 from \$90,000 in 2016, a 19.6% increase (see Figure 10 below).

The increase in median renter incomes can be attributed to shifts within the renter income distribution, where there was a decrease in households at the lowest end of the income spectrum, and an increase in households earning at the highest end (see Figure 11 below). Across the region, the share of renter households earning under \$30,000 a year dropped

⁹ Note that incomes have not been adjusted for inflation.

from 31.3% in 2016 to 19.2% in 2021, while the share of renter households earning over a \$100,000 a year rose from 17.3% to 29.1%.

Median Total Before-Tax Household Income in Metro Vancouver



Figure 10 – Median total before-tax household income of owner and renter households in Metro Vancouver from 2001 to 2021 (not adjusted for inflation)
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006, 2016, 2021 Census of Population, 2011 NHS (based on administrative tax data of the previous year)

Total Before-Tax Household Income Distribution of Renter Households in Metro Vancouver



Figure 11 – Distribution of Metro Vancouver renter households by total before-tax household income groups (not adjusted for inflation)
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census of Population (based on administrative tax data of the previous year)

Statistics Canada notes that temporary COVID-19 government supports were a major contributor to rising incomes in 2020. Other factors may include a gain in higher income renters due to job growth and unaffordability of ownership; a loss of lower income households due to affordability; and the temporary loss in temporary workers and students due to pandemic travel restrictions. Staff will continue to analyze data on renter income trends when additional data is released for the City of Vancouver.

NEXT STEPS

Additional details will become available progressively in the next few months and will be included in future analysis and reporting, including the Housing Vancouver Data Book and updated Housing Needs Report.

Statistics Canada is releasing datasets regarding Immigration, Ethnocultural diversity and Mobility and migration on October 26, 2022, and staff will continue to analyze the key findings of each census release. Appendix A summarizes the remaining 2021 Census Program release dates and topics.

FINAL REMARKS

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 it into work across City departments.

If Council has any questions or requires further information, please contact Sandra Singh or Theresa O'Donnell and they will ensure responses through the weekly Council Q&As.



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Theresa O'Donnell
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Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
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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

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>.