



Goal: A Home for Everyone

A range of affordable housing choices is available for all Vancouverites.

Healthy City for All Targets

- ❑ By 2015: end street homelessness.
- ❑ By 2021 enable: 2,900 new supportive housing units; 5,000 new social housing units (including 1,000 units of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotel replacement); and 5,000 new units of secured purpose built rental housing (*Housing and Homelessness Strategy, 2012-2021*).

Indicators in this Fact Sheet

- Homelessness
- Affordable Housing Supply
- Households and Families
- Dwelling Types
- Housing Tenure
- Rental Housing Vacancy and Availability
- Housing Affordability

Key Findings

- Vancouver has a **steady homeless population**, both in shelters and on the streets.
- There is **progress toward affordable housing targets**, though more work remains.
- Vancouver has more **apartments** and more **renters** than many other cities in Canada.
- Housing in Vancouver is often **less affordable** and **rental vacancy rates are lower** than in other cities.

Why it Matters

Vancouver is a growing and diverse city with significant housing challenges. Providing a range of housing options is critical to the social and economic health of our city. Aspects of housing that influence our health and well-being include the experience of homelessness, the quality of our housing and housing affordability.

Those living on our streets and in shelters are much more likely to experience serious and chronic physical and mental health issues, as well as challenges with addictions and disabilities.

The quality of our housing can also impact our health and well-being, for better or for worse. Ensuring appropriate, safe, well-maintained housing is an important step to better health outcomes for Vancouver's population.

Unaffordable housing impacts health and well-being in a number of ways. Residents who are struggling to maintain their basic needs have less to spend on the other basic building blocks of a healthy life, such as nutritious food, high-quality child care, lifelong learning and skills development, and opportunities to participate in recreation and culture. In addition, struggles relating to housing can mean more to worry about and increased financial stress. People across the housing continuum in Vancouver face challenges accessing housing. Home ownership is expensive in Vancouver; renters face increasing rents and low vacancy rates; and social and supportive housing supply is limited. Protecting our existing supply of market rental housing and enabling the supply of new social and secure market rental housing ensures that many households continue to have the choice to live in Vancouver.

About this Fact Sheet

This series reports on social indicators and trends related to the 12 long-term goals of the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy. More information on the Strategy is available online at vancouver.ca/healthycity4all. **A Home for Everyone** explores indicators relating to family demographics, housing affordability and housing supply, building on work completed as part of Vancouver's **Housing and Homelessness Strategy, 2012-2021**.

Social research is always imprecise and uncertain. Collaboration, replication and information sharing are crucial to building a more complete and rigorous picture of health and well-being in Vancouver. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback, ask questions and to engage in exploring and interpreting the information presented here.

Areas of Study

Information in this fact sheet is presented for a number of different geographies. Comparisons between Metro Vancouver and other regions refer to individual census metropolitan areas, as defined by Statistics Canada. Statistics for the City of Vancouver with comparisons to other cities refer to census subdivisions.

Within the City of Vancouver, this fact sheet provides some information organized by the City's local planning areas (neighbourhoods), shown below left. The map below right illustrates the 10 rental housing market zones for which the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports certain statistics.



Engaging with Data Sources

Sources used are noted in each section of this fact sheet. Key online resources include:

- Information about the **City of Vancouver's** housing and homelessness policies, initiatives and actions can be found at vancouver.ca/people-programs/housing-and-homelessness.aspx.
- **Metro Vancouver** provides research, planning and resources on housing and homelessness, with information available at metrovancover.org/planning/homelessness and metrovancover.org/planning/development/housingdiversity.
- The **Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation** collects extensive data on Canada's housing markets, available at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca.
- **Statistics Canada** collects data on some aspects of housing costs and suitability through surveys and, prior to 2011, through the long-form census. Information is available through their portal at statcan.gc.ca.

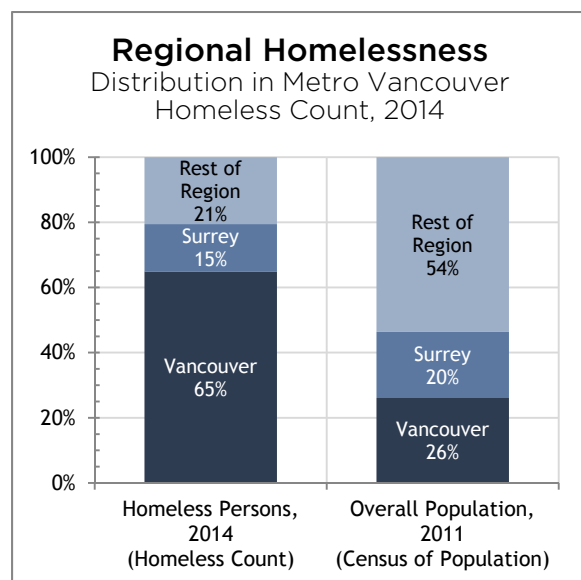
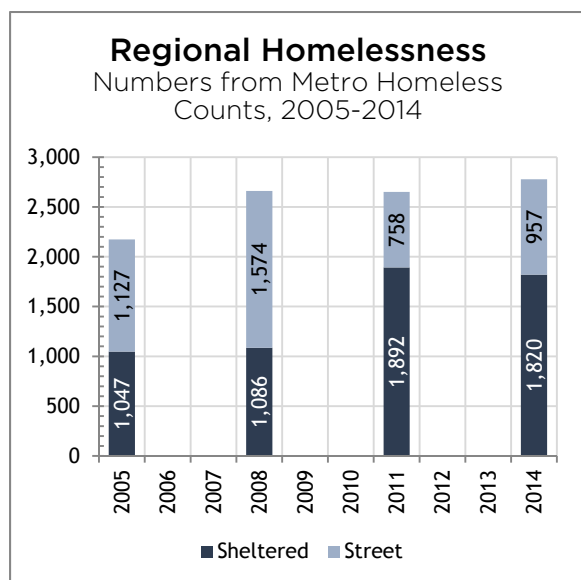
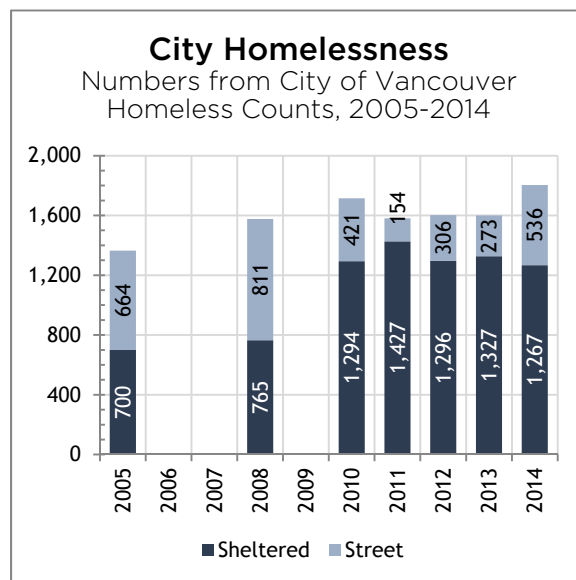
Indicator: Homelessness

The City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver have conducted counts of the homeless population regularly since 2002. Counts attempt to measure homelessness over one 24-hour period; in 2014, this meant 12:00 am to 11:59 pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2014. Homeless counts inevitably are underestimates of the homeless population; these numbers are a one-time snapshot of people who could be and chose to be identified, and they largely exclude hidden homeless populations.

The City has set a target to eliminate street homelessness by 2015. The 2014 count found 536 persons who were homeless and unsheltered, and a further 1,267 persons who were living in shelters. Addressing homelessness means ensuring sufficient shelter capacity while continuing to facilitate the development of new social and supportive housing options, and also continuing to address the intersecting social, economic and health issues that give rise to homelessness.

Vancouver's homeless population differs from its housed population. 2014 and previous counts found a population with a majority identifying as male and a disproportionately high Aboriginal population. Homelessness is also associated with health conditions; in particular, a high number of persons have reported mental health issues.

Metro Vancouver's homelessness numbers have shown a similar trend to municipal counts, as a majority of the region's homeless population is found in the City of Vancouver. The 2014 count found that 65 per cent of the region's homeless population was counted within the City of Vancouver. However, proportionally more homeless persons were sheltered in Vancouver compared to elsewhere in the region.



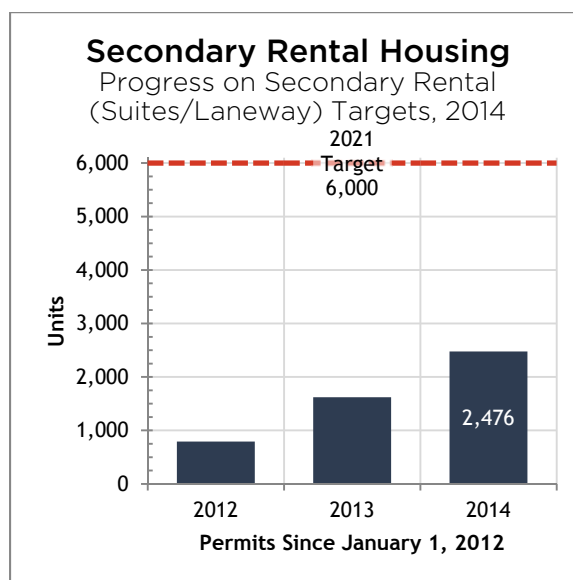
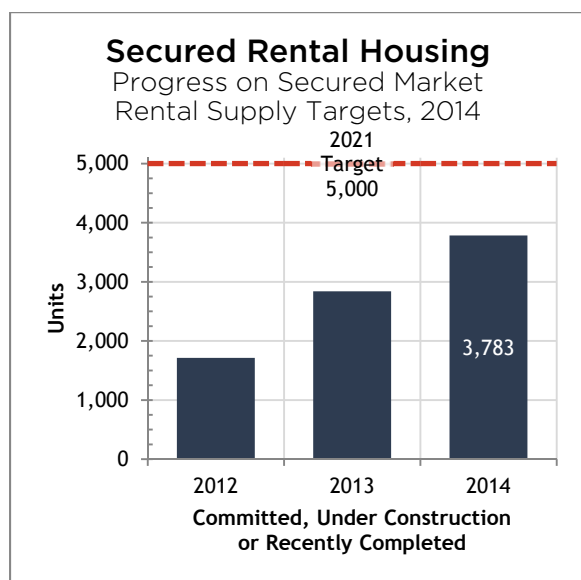
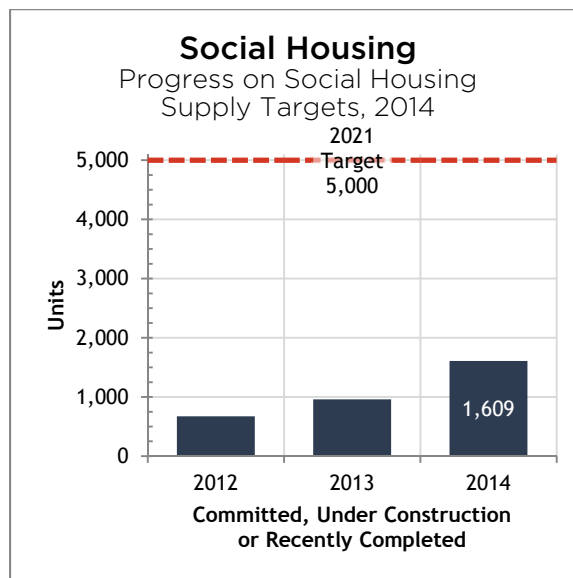
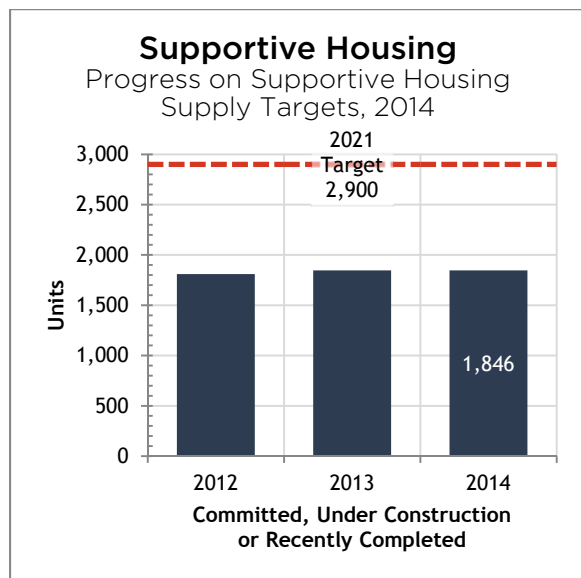
Data Sources

Information on homelessness in the region can be found through the City of Vancouver at vancouver.ca/people-programs/housing-and-homelessness.aspx, and through Metro Vancouver at metrovancover.org/planning/homelessness/Pages/Resources.aspx.

Indicator: Affordable Housing Supply

Vancouver's *Housing and Homelessness Strategy* was developed in 2011 and has established three-year and 10-year targets for increasing the supply of affordable housing in the city. The graphs below summarize progress from 2012 to 2014 compared to the 2021 targets.

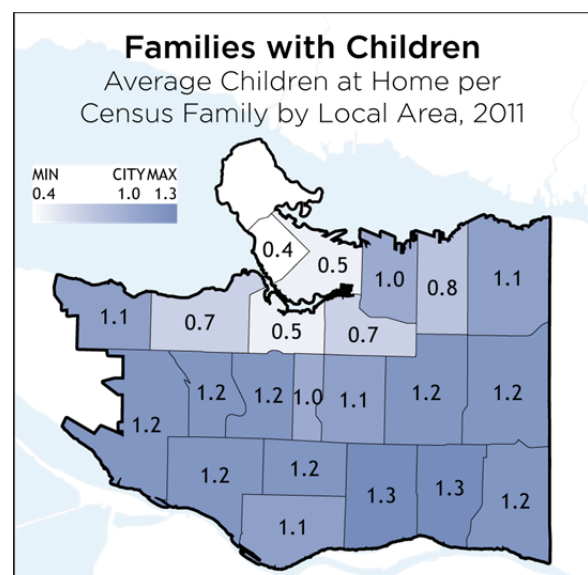
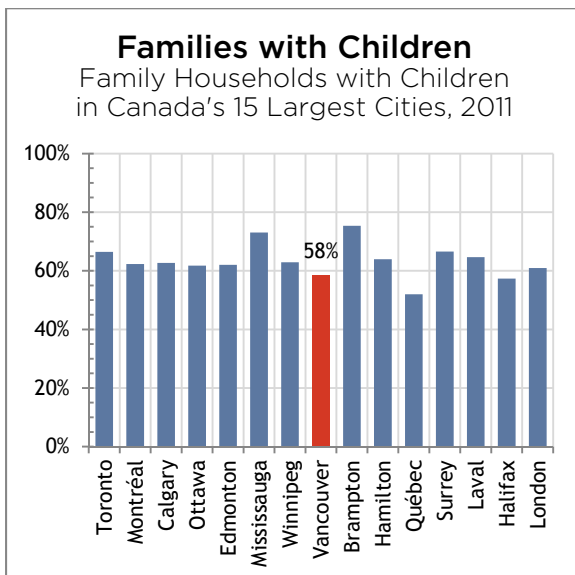
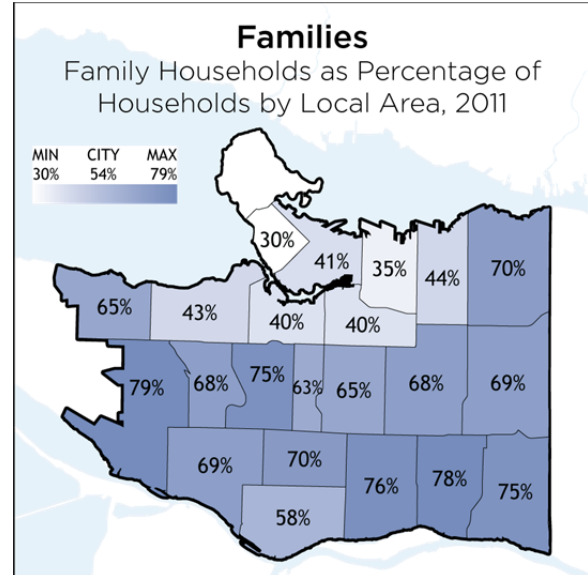
Good progress is being made on increasing the supply of affordable housing, but continued work is required to meet all of the targets. The City is continuing to undertake a number of actions, projects and partnerships to facilitate the development of new affordable housing. These include forming partnerships with provincial bodies and housing operators to develop new supportive housing; leveraging City-owned land and development fees to build new social housing; providing information and resources to support renters; and permitting the development of secondary rental options such as suites and laneway houses.



Data Sources

The City tracks progress on the targets set out in the *Housing and Homelessness Strategy* through regular monitoring programs, particularly an annual report card. More information on the Strategy and other City efforts toward affordable housing can be found at vancouver.ca/people-programs/housing-and-homelessness.aspx.

Families



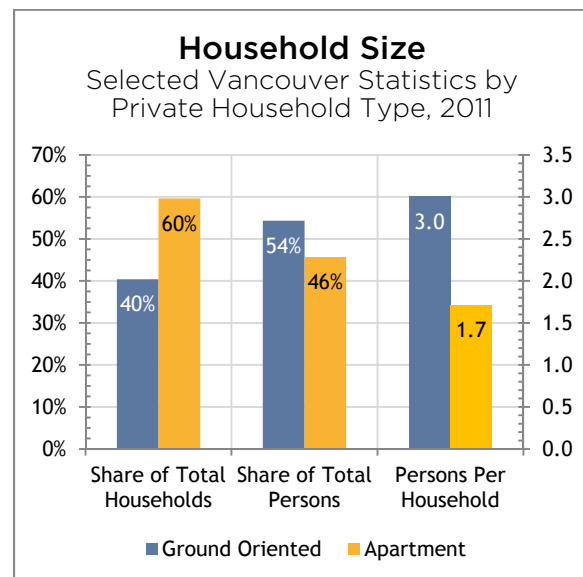
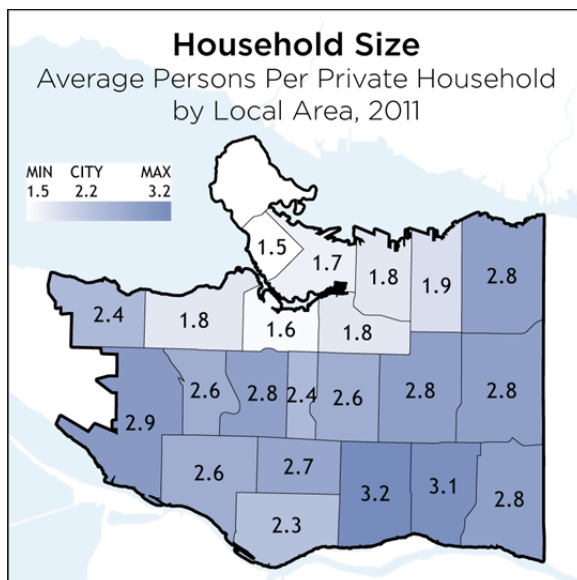
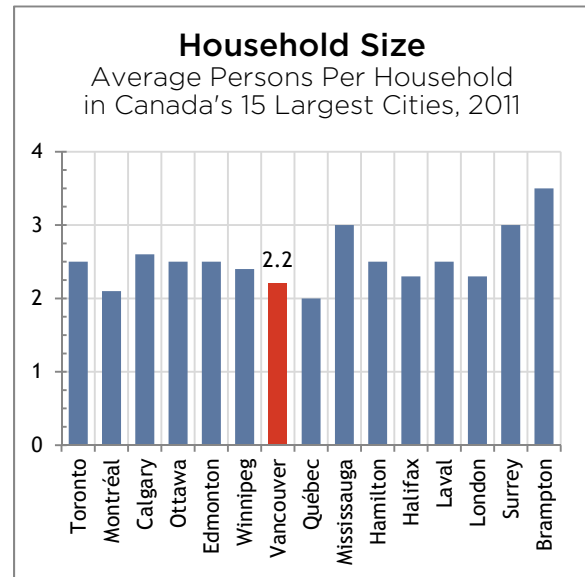
Social Indicators and Trends 2014: A Home for Everyone

Household Size

In 2011, Vancouver had an overall average of 2.2 people per household. This was low compared to other large Canadian cities, except for Montréal (2.1) and Québec (2.0). However, Metro Vancouver's figure of 2.6 people per household was more typical of other major cities, suggesting that separating the City of Vancouver from the broader region skews the picture somewhat. What makes the City of Vancouver different?

Within Vancouver, there is a clear trend toward larger households farther away from the downtown peninsula. In 2011, the West End had the lowest average household size (1.5 persons), and Sunset had the highest (3.2). Denser areas generally have smaller households; persons living alone or without children tend to be attracted to multifamily housing.

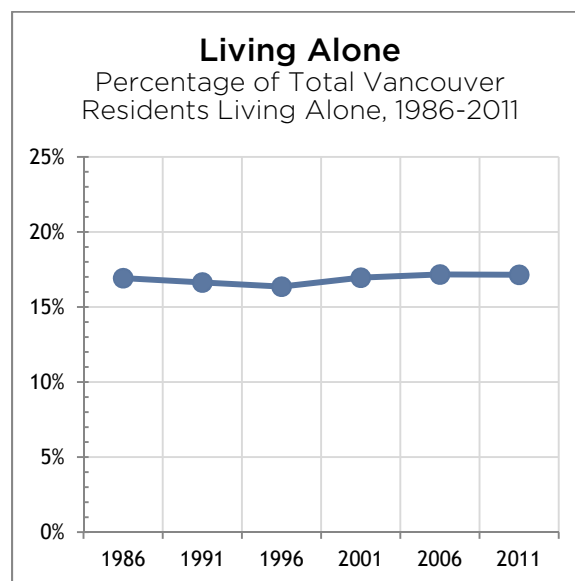
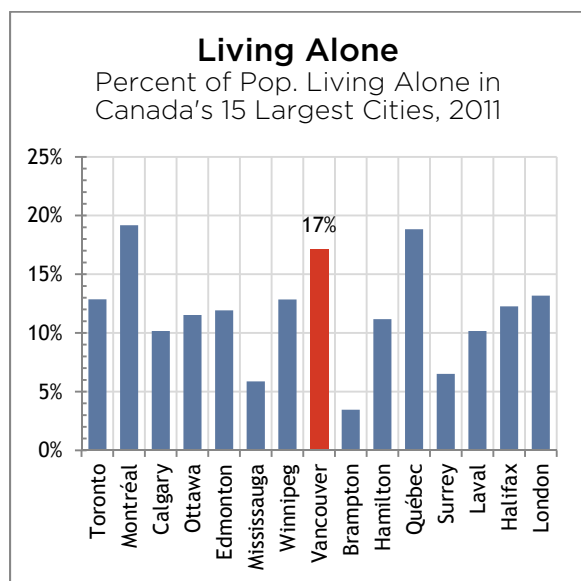
In 2011, 60 per cent of households in Vancouver were in apartments, but 54 per cent of Vancouver residents were living in ground-oriented housing such as detached houses, duplexes or townhouses. The average household size in ground-oriented housing was almost double the average size in apartments. Vancouver's smaller household sizes compared to other areas likely relate to its greater proportion of apartment households.



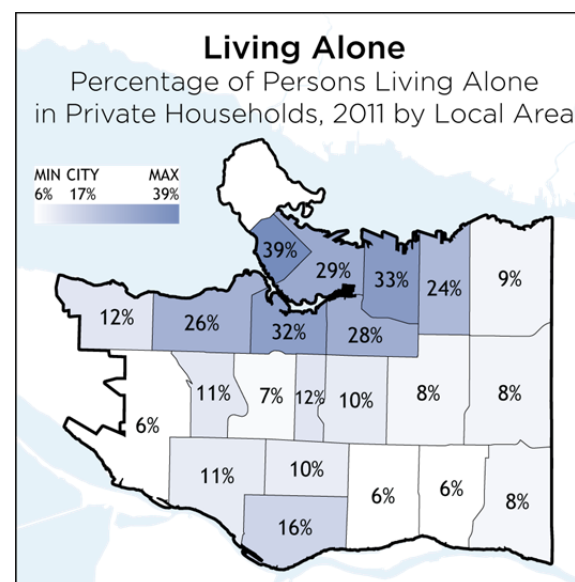
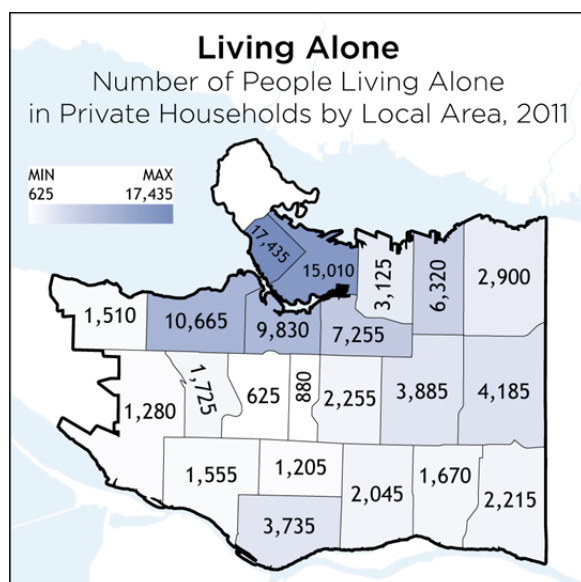
Social Indicators and Trends 2014: A Home for Everyone

Persons Living Alone

In 2011, 17 per cent of Vancouver residents lived alone. This was relatively high; among the 15 largest Canadian cities, Vancouver had the third highest proportion of persons living alone, after Montréal and Québec City. The proportion of individuals living alone has been quite steady from 1986 to 2011.



The largest concentrations of persons living alone in Vancouver were in areas near Downtown. In 2011, the West End (17,435 persons) and Downtown (15,010) had the highest absolute number of people living alone, while Shaughnessy (625) and South Cambie (800) had the lowest. Proportionally, Victoria-Fraserview (6 per cent) and Sunset (6 per cent) had the lowest percentage of their populations living alone, while the West End (39 per cent) and Strathcona (33 per cent) had the highest.



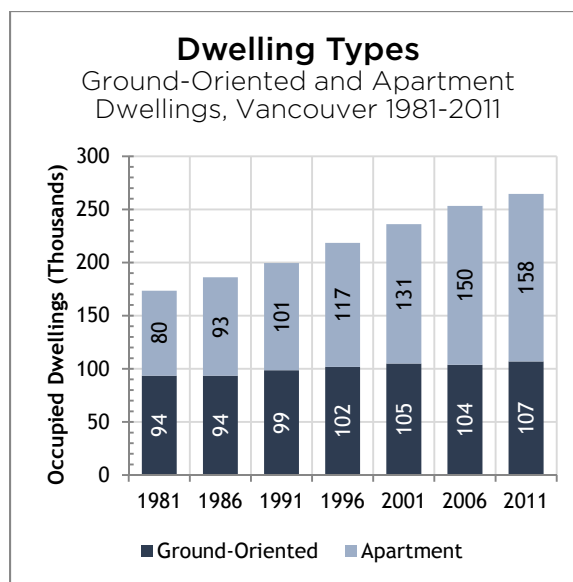
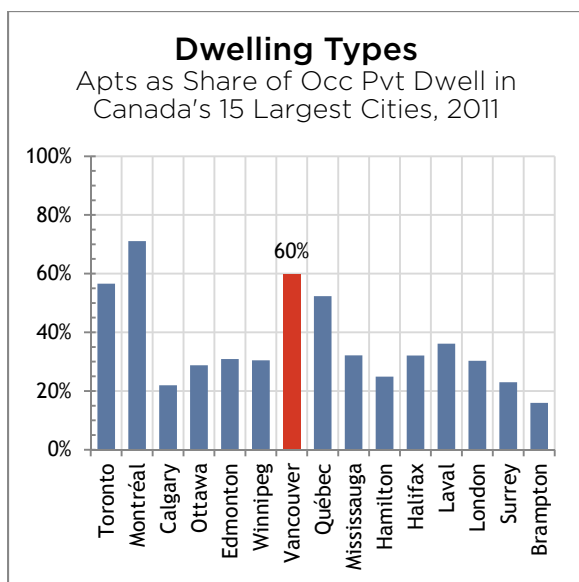
Data Sources

Information in this section is adapted from Statistics Canada's 2011 and previous Censuses of Population.

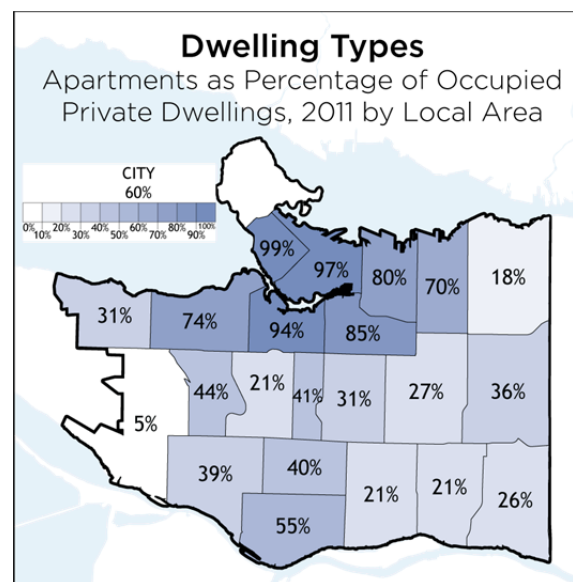
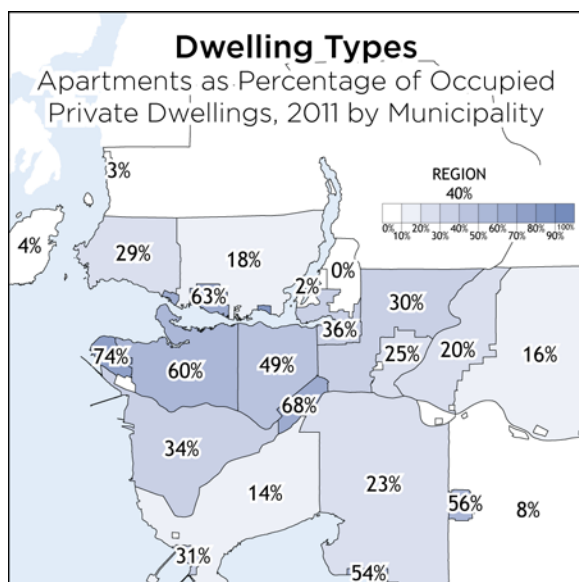
Indicator: Dwelling Types

Statistics Canada records the structural type of occupied private dwellings—whether they are apartments, detached houses, duplexes and more. As these categories have changed over time, this page simplifies data using Metro Vancouver’s framework—whether a dwelling is ground-oriented (detached houses, townhouses, row houses or duplexes) or apartment (whether in a high-rise or walk-up building).

Vancouver has proportionally more apartments than many other cities in Canada. Among the 15 largest cities in Canada, 60 per cent of dwellings in Vancouver in 2011 were apartments, the second highest proportion after Montréal. Since 1981, the number of apartment units in Vancouver has nearly doubled, while ground-oriented dwellings have increased by just 14 per cent.



When comparing different municipalities within Metro Vancouver, and also when comparing neighbourhoods within Vancouver, there is a wide range in the percentage of dwellings that are apartments.

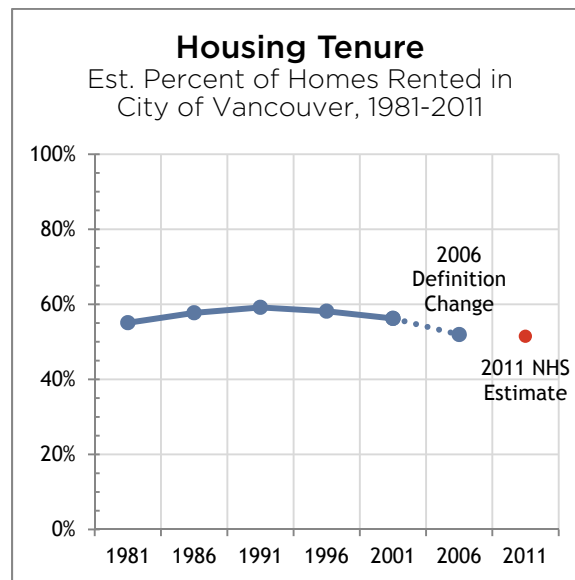
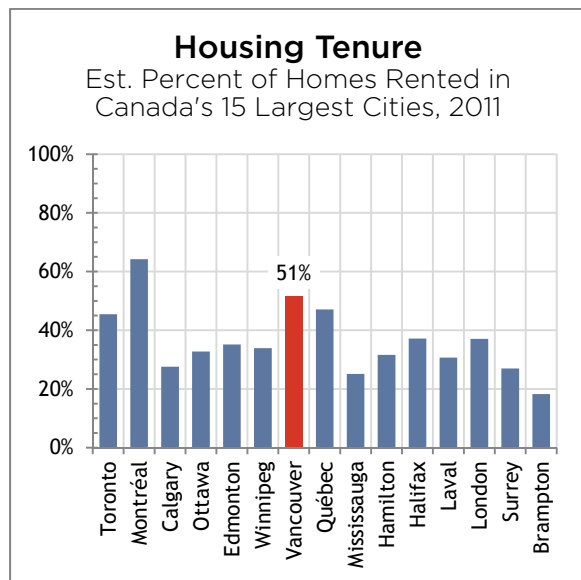


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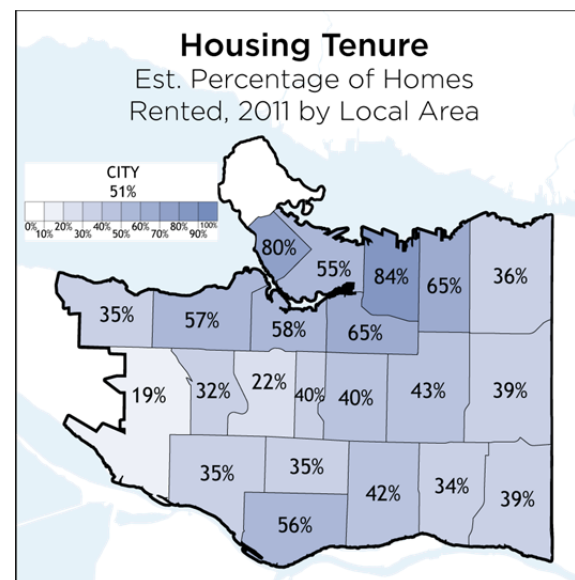
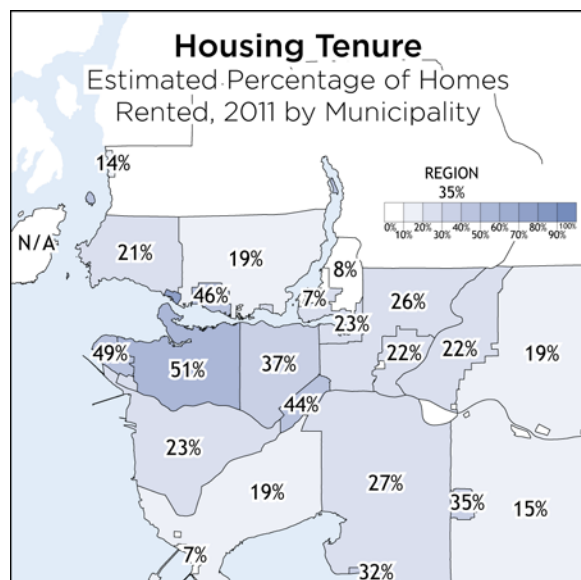
Figures are adapted from Statistics Canada’s 2011 and previous Censuses of Population. Metro Vancouver’s categories for classifying housing can be found at metrovancover.org/services/statistics.

Indicator: Housing Tenure

A majority of dwellings in Vancouver are rented. As of 2011, Vancouver had the second highest proportion of rented households among Canada's 15 largest cities, behind Montréal. The past two decades have seen a slight decline in Vancouver's share of dwellings that are rented. This likely relates to the growth in condominiums with strata titles, though reclassification of some dwellings in the 2006 census and the elimination of the census long form in 2011 make a clear trend difficult to identify.



There are different patterns of home ownership within the region and within Vancouver's neighbourhoods. In 2011, Vancouver had the highest percentage of rented dwellings of any municipality in Metro Vancouver, and contained nearly about 44 per cent of all rented households in the region. Within the city, Strathcona and the West End had the highest percentage of households that were rented, while Dunbar-Southlands and Shaughnessy had the lowest.



Data Sources

Historical data are adapted from Statistics Canada, 1981 to 2006 census. 2011 figures are from Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey, and the population estimates generated from this voluntary survey are not equivalent or directly comparable to census data.

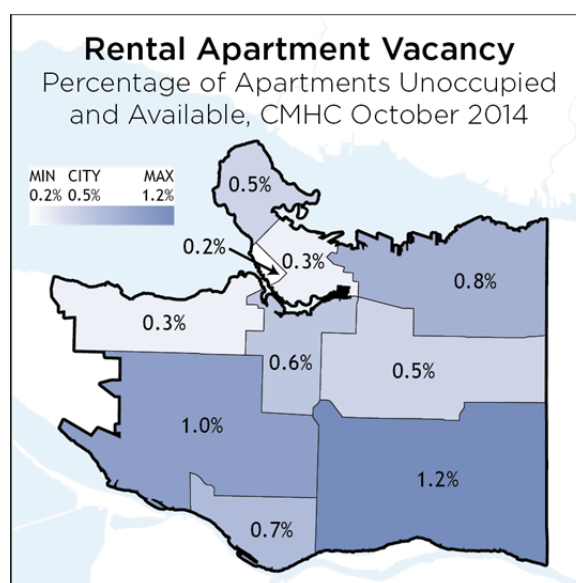
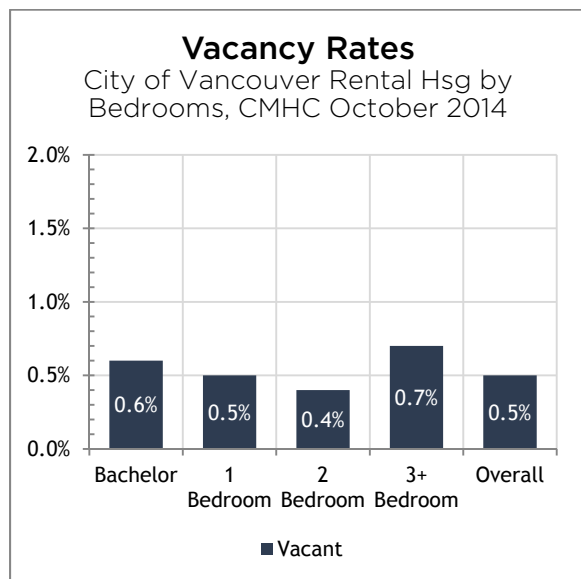
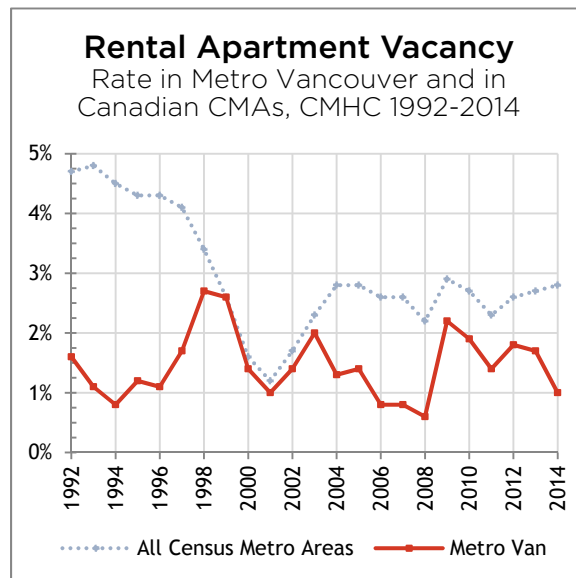
Indicator: Rental Housing Vacancy and Availability

Rental housing in Vancouver is generally in short supply. For the past two decades, according to information collected by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Metro Vancouver has consistently had a lower vacancy rate than other urban areas in Canada. In 2014, Metro Vancouver's vacancy rate was just one per cent, the lowest of any census metropolitan area in Canada.

A vacancy rate between three and five per cent is generally considered healthy, to ensure accessibility and mobility within the rental market.

Data are more limited for the City of Vancouver specifically, but information that is available generally shows that Vancouver has a lower vacancy rate than the region overall. In October 2014, the rate within the city was 0.5 per cent, compared to one per cent across Metro Vancouver.

Though the vacancy rate is low in all areas of Vancouver, there is some variation in different neighbourhoods. CMHC's Southeast Vancouver zone had the highest vacancy in October 2014, while the English Bay, Downtown and Kitsilano-Point Grey zones had the lowest.



Data Sources

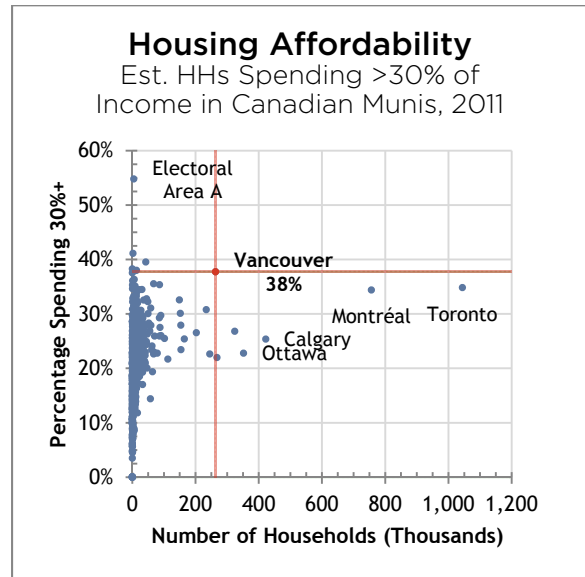
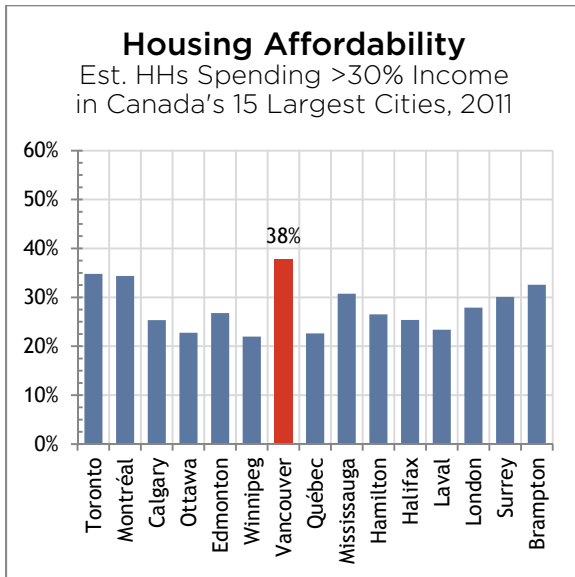
Information on this page is adapted from CMHC housing market statistics, available at cmhc-schl.gc.ca. Time-series data are also available through 027-series tables at Statistics Canada's CANSIM database.

Indicator: Affordability

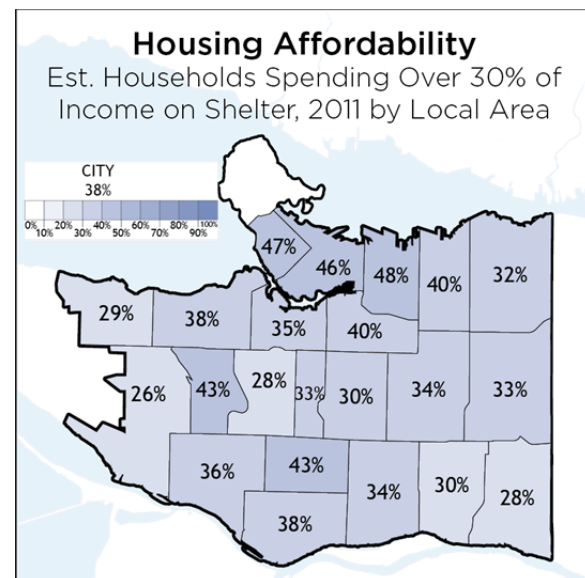
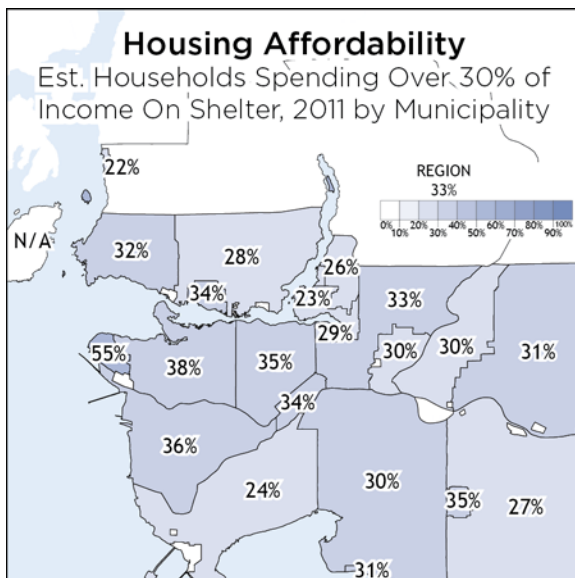
Shelter Costs and Income

Housing affordability is complex, but a simple indicator of affordability is whether a household spends 30 per cent or more of its total gross monthly income on shelter costs (rent or major ownership payments).

Using this statistic, **Vancouver is an outlier: Vancouverites are among the most likely people in the country to be spending over 30 per cent of their household income on housing.** The estimated proportion of Vancouver households in this category in 2011 was 38 per cent, the highest of Canada's 15 largest cities, and one of the highest in the country. Among all census subdivisions (municipalities or other administrative areas) in Canada for which this statistic was reported, only five places had a higher percentage than Vancouver: Metro Vancouver's Electoral Area A (i.e. the UBC endowment lands), the City of Duncan, the City of Victoria, Sun Peaks Village and the Montréal suburb of Côte-Saint-Luc.



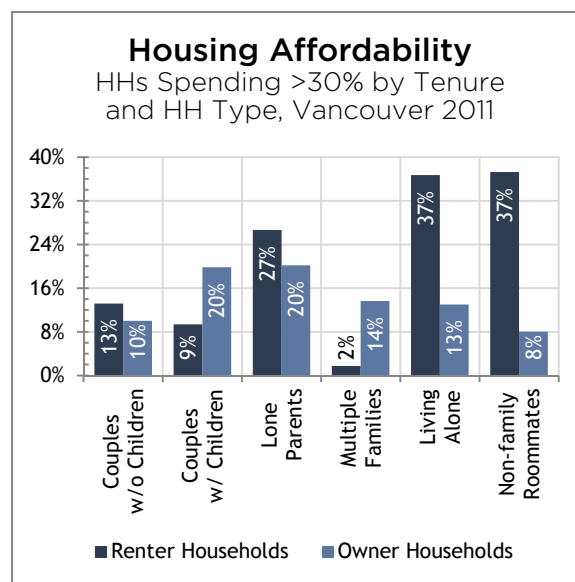
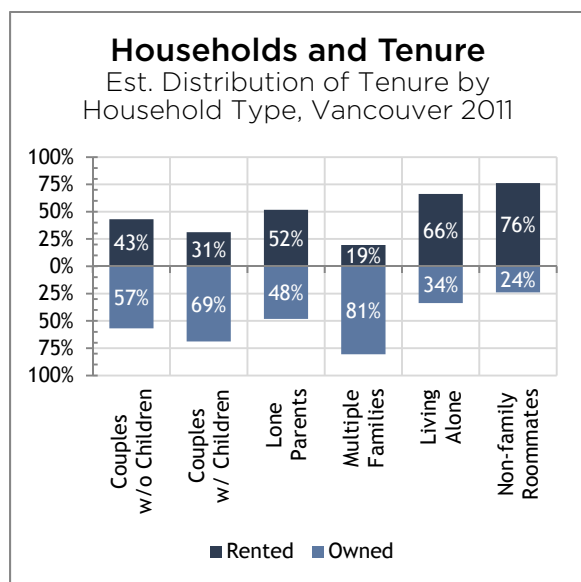
Regionally, except for Electoral Area A, Vancouver had the highest percentage of households estimated to be spending over 30 per cent of their incomes on shelter. Within the city, households in Strathcona, the West End and Downtown were most likely to be in this category. At least a quarter of households in every neighbourhood fell into this category. Although affordability must be understood more broadly, and account for other costs such as food and transportation, housing affordability is clearly a challenge for our city.



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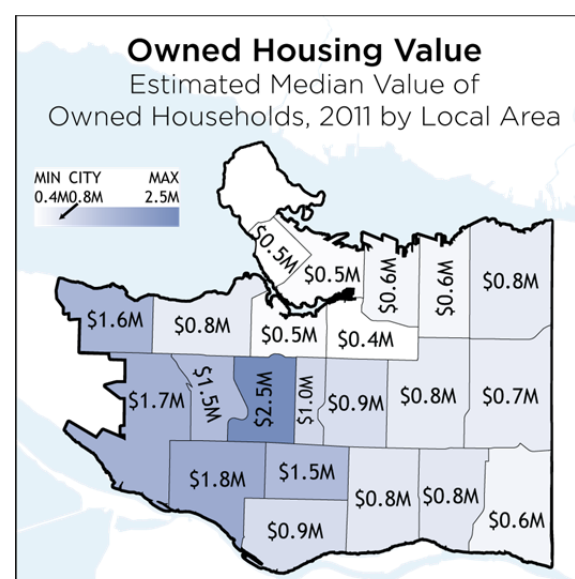
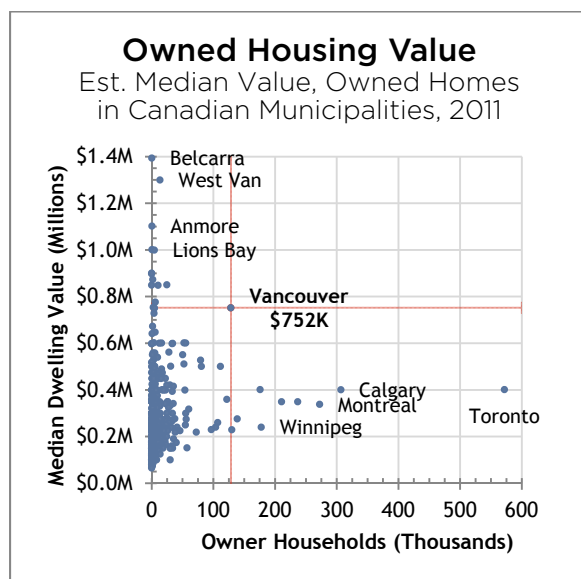
Household Type, Tenure and Affordability

The relationship between household income and housing costs is different for different household types and tenures. The graphs below summarize the distribution of tenure among different household types, and the proportion of households by tenure and family type that were spending over 30 per cent of their total household income on housing costs in 2011. The graphs should be read together: for example, 52 per cent of lone-parent households in Vancouver rented their homes in 2011, and 27 per cent of those households were spending 30 per cent or more of their total incomes on rent.



Home Ownership Costs

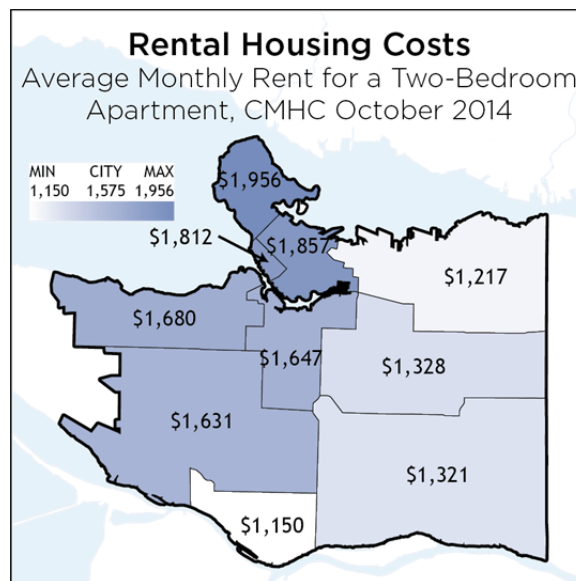
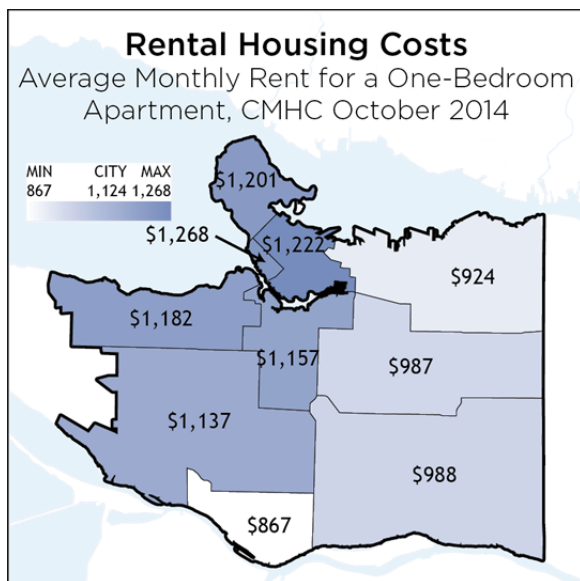
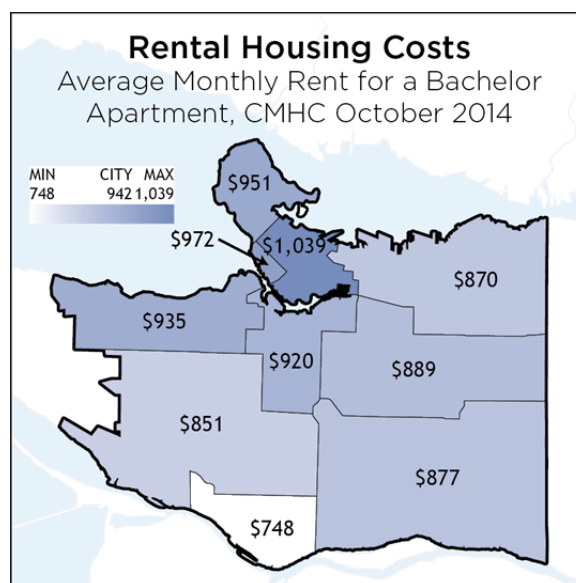
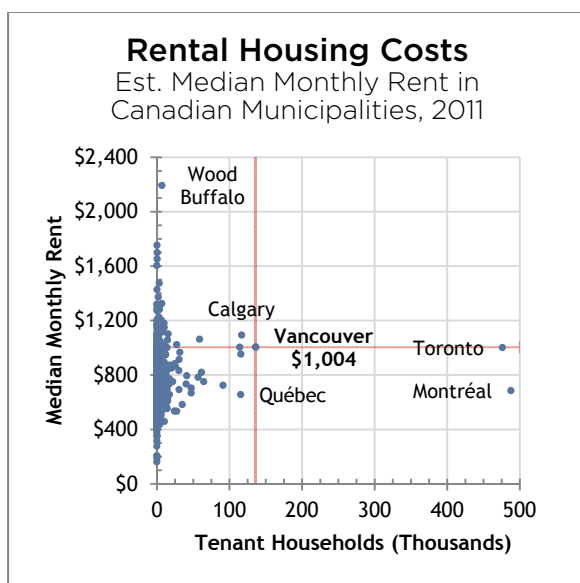
The City of Vancouver and the Metro Vancouver region stand out as having much higher housing prices than many other places in Canada. Based on the 2011 National Household Survey, the median dwelling value of owned homes in the City of Vancouver was \$750,000. This was 87 per cent higher than Toronto's median and more than double Montréal's. Across the city, the highest household values were seen in Shaughnessy while the lowest were seen in Mount Pleasant—but this needs to be understood in context of different housing mixes and sizes in each neighbourhood. For example, there are relatively few apartments in Shaughnessy.



Rental Housing Costs

Rent in Vancouver is similar to other large Canadian cities. Median rent in Vancouver in the 2011 National Household Survey was estimated to be just over \$1,000 per month. Median rent was higher than Vancouver in many other places, particular smaller cities and towns in Alberta and the north: the highest median rent in Canada was found in Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray) in Alberta, at almost \$2,200 per month.

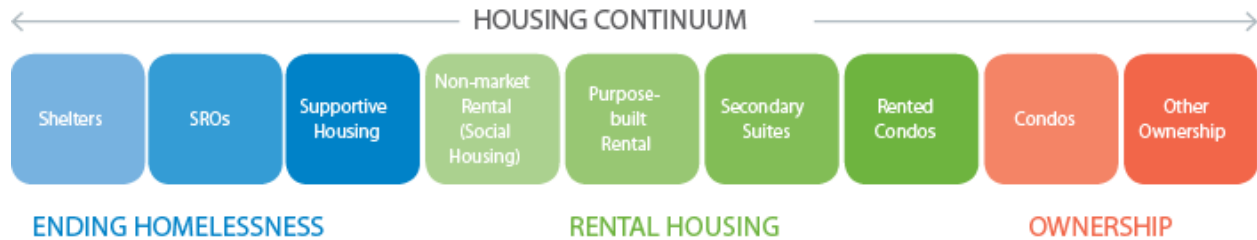
Rental costs vary in Vancouver's neighbourhoods. The maps below use 2014 CMHC data to plot the average rent for bachelor, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments in different areas of the city. The Marpole area consistently appears to be the most affordable, on this measure, while apartments downtown tend to be the most expensive.



Data Sources

2011 statistics appearing in this section are adapted from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey. Rental market information is adapted from CMHC's fall 2014 *Rental Market Survey*.

Toward a Healthy City for All



Adequate and affordable housing is fundamental to a healthy city for all. Across the housing continuum there are challenges and opportunities to ensuring a home for everyone, that require leadership and action from the City of Vancouver, other levels of government, non-profit agencies, developers and other players. We all have a part to play in ensuring **A Home for Everyone** in Vancouver.

The City's Role

Vancouver's *Housing and Homelessness Strategy* has three key strategic directions:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing;
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life; and
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

Priority Actions

Each strategic direction has a number of specific actions to be undertaken.

Priority actions to increase the supply of affordable housing include:

- optimizing the City's use of land, capital grants, incentives and other resources to lever and support housing partnerships; and
- refining & developing new zoning approaches, development tools and rental incentives.

Priority actions to encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life include:

- continuing to protect the existing rental stock;
- targeting low barrier shelters, supportive housing and social housing to specific populations, such as youth, urban Aboriginal, severely addicted and mentally ill, or women; and
- using financial and regulatory tools to encourage a variety of housing types and tenures that meet the needs of diverse households.

Priority actions to provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability include:

- enhancing support to renters; and
- focusing our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness.

Your Turn

Learn more and get involved at vancouver.ca/healthcity4all.