

City of Burnaby
Canada Community Building Fund (previously Gas Tax) Annual Report
Housing Needs Report & Questionnaire

Copy of Housing Needs Report (Interim 2024 update is appendix F):

- <https://www.burnaby.ca/sites/default/files/acquiadam/2021-07/Housing%20Needs%20Report.pdf>

Questionnaire:

1) Please provide a brief history of how housing in the community has been shaped by forces such as employment growth and economic development, transportation, and migration. Please include any long-term housing challenges the community has faced.

- Much of Burnaby's single-family homes were first built post-WWII, serving a primarily working-class population
- Several new large subdivisions took place in the 1970s-1990s, this period also saw the development of several large townhouse complexes in eastern Burnaby
- The introduction of the Skytrain rapid transit facilitated new developments along its path, especially in eastern Burnaby. Burnaby's central location has made it one of the best-served communities in the region for Skytrain stations. Since the 1990s, Burnaby's land use framework has focused on increasing densities around four town centers that are each served by a Skytrain station.
- Metrotown became a central location for the development of many low-rise multi-family buildings in the 1960s-1980s, many of which were purpose-built market rentals offering residences close to the offices and services located in that area as well as convenient access to Metrotown Skytrain station providing direct access to jobs in downtown Vancouver. In recent years, this housing has been a popular location for recent immigrants.
- 1980s-2000 saw the development of several co-operative housing buildings under federal funding programs that offered affordable alternatives to home ownership for a diverse range of households.
- Since the 2010s, two of the town centres, Metrotown and Brentwood, have seen a significant amount of new development occur, with new high-rise mixed-use developments going up.
- Keeping pace with affordable housing needs in our Town Centres has been a challenge, while policy implementation in the fields of inclusionary zoning and tenant protection have helped, long-term investment by other orders of government is essential to meet our housing needs over the next 25 years.

2) Please detail the existing municipal housing policy and regulatory context, including approved housing strategies, action plans and policies within Official Community Plans (OCPs).

- Burnaby 2050 OCP (2025)
- Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing Final Recommendations (2019)
- Mayor's Task Force on Unsheltered Community Members Final Recommendations (2024)
- Burnaby Housing Needs Report (2021), Interim update (2024)
- HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021)
- Economic Development Strategy (2007)
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)
- Climate Action Framework (2022)
- 4 Town Centre Community Plans
- 11 Urban Village Community Plans
- 7 Suburban Multi-Family Community Plans

3) How have population changes in your community impacted your housing market?

- Between 1996 and 2021, the population grew by 69,916 residents. During the same period, the number of dwelling units increased by 32,386. This means that one dwelling unit was created for every 2.16 new residents.
- In 2021, the average household size in Burnaby was 2.4 people, suggesting that housing demand resulting from population growth exceeds new housing supply over those years.

4) How have employment and labour conditions (e.g., prevalence of precarious employment, temporary or seasonal workforces, reliance on less predictable sectors such as natural resources, agriculture, tourism, etc.) in your community impacted housing supply and demand?

- Most employment in Burnaby is related to sales and services, followed by business, finance and administration, natural and applied sciences and related occupations*. These types of jobs may require employees to have higher levels of education, usually leading to higher earnings and full-time positions.
- Many of these jobs are located in commercial, office and industrial areas, usually (but not always) in town centers and in proximity to transit. Given the demand for employers to find space and locate near transit and amenities, as well as the desire of residents to find housing near their workplace; there has been an increase in housing in areas like Brentwood and Metrotown.
- In the last few years, the number of completed units has gone up, increasing the housing supply. In 2024, 3,261 dwelling units were completed. Additionally, approximately 39% of Burnaby households are renters, indicating a high proportion of ownership compared to

Vancouver where 54% of the households are renters. Despite the latter, vacancy rates in Burnaby remain under 2.5%*, indicating high demand for rental units.

**Based on CMHC data from October 2024, and 2021 Census Data*

5) Please describe the housing needs and challenges of priority populations in your community, specifically for the 13 groups identified by CMHC: women and their children fleeing domestic violence; women-led households (especially single mothers); seniors 65+; young adults aged 18-29; Indigenous peoples; people with physical health or mobility challenges; people with developmental disabilities; people dealing with mental health and addiction issues; veterans; 2SLGBTQIA+; racialized groups; recent immigrants (including refugees); and people experiencing homelessness.

- The Burnaby Housing Needs Report suggests that rental households are far more likely to experience Core Housing Needs than owned households. Further, the households listed below face the highest Core Housing Need:
 - 36% of renter households with children
 - 33% of Indigenous renter households
 - 49% of lone-parent families
 - 47% of senior-led households
 - 45% with at least one senior
 - 41% of one-person households
 - 41% of recent immigrant households
- Affordability of housing remains the main challenge for these households.

6) How has your community engaged with priority populations? Please provide an overview of the methodology and assumptions used to conduct engagement with priority groups. Please provide a description of who was engaged, the type of engagement that took place, and the nature of the engagement (e.g. interviews, consultations). If a private individual has been engaged, please anonymize and remove any identifying features from the narrative.

- Burnaby has undertaken a number of comprehensive engagement processes in the last 5 years through the Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing (2020), the development of the provincially mandated Housing Needs Report (2021), HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021), the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (2025), Burnaby Poverty Reduction Strategy (anticipated in 2026), Mayor's Task Force for Unsheltered Community Members (2024), Burnaby Pride and the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table.
- Various methods of engagement are undertaken, including:
 - In-person and virtual open houses
 - Interviews with individuals with lived experience
 - Interviews with front-line workers
 - Focus groups with agencies serving or housing these priority populations
 - Community workshops with representational participation

- Consultation with stakeholders on draft recommendations for various strategies
- Consultation with host First Nations and urban Indigenous residents
- Door-to-door interviews with low-moderate income renters
- Information booths at community events and at transit stations
- Ongoing/monthly participation on community planning tables
- Community Assembly process in partnership with post-secondary institution
- Consultation with the Youth Advisory Council
- Pop-up engagement events in the community
- Online surveys and interactive maps
- Materials translation into ten languages

7) Please describe local factors that are believed to contribute to homelessness in your community (e.g., the closing of a mental health facility, high numbers of refugee claimants, etc.).

The following local factors are believed to contribute to homelessness in Burnaby:

- Health and mental health continue to be a factor contributing towards housing loss.
 - The 2023 and 2025 Homeless Count indicates that across Metro Vancouver mental health continues to be a main reason causing housing loss. (Reference: [2025 PIT Homeless Count for Greater Vancouver](#); and [2023 POT Homeless Count for Greater Vancouver](#))
 - The 2023 Homeless Count reported that in Burnaby over 60% of respondents indicated they have two or more health concerns ([reference: 2023 PIT Homeless Count for Greater Vancouver](#))
 - Additionally, the 2021 Housing Needs Report Burnaby surveyed stakeholders who serve those experiencing homelessness. This survey noted that there is an increase in complexity of needs people are facing including mental health, addiction and physical disabilities that make it challenging to find appropriate housing.
- The overdose crisis has significantly impacted people's trauma, grief, and loss. In addition to addictions, this ongoing trauma affects people's behaviours and makes it even more difficult to find housing.
- Burnaby General Hospital, and other acute sites across the region, have experienced high numbers of individuals seeking shelter at their facilities due to a lack of available shelters and housing resources within the community (note from Fraser Health). The Integrated Homelessness Action Response Team (IHART), as an example, supported 208 active unhoused clients in 2024.
- Increases to the cost of living (market-based measures of goods and services e.g. groceries, transportation, household goods, etc.)
- Tenant displacement (e.g. evictions due to unpaid rent/cannot afford rent)

- Lack of affordable housing available generally (increased rental prices in primary and secondary market rental homes, not enough rent-stabilized or subsidized non-market rentals matched to various household income levels)
 - Existing shelters at capacity – one temporary year-round shelter (40 spaces, 100% occupied), one temporary winter-only shelter (40 spaces, 100% occupied)
 - Existing supportive housing at capacity – two supportive housing buildings (52 and 43 spaces, 100% occupied)
 - Other types: Car/RV living, a number of unsheltered members still reside in Burnaby in tents/precarious housing arrangements
- Burnaby has been known as a city with a high number of refugee claimants. However, this number may shift based on current immigration targets being reduced, funding from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) reduced, and settlement service provision reduced.

8) Please identify temporary and emergency relief resources available for individuals experiencing homelessness in your community (e.g., number of shelter beds, resource centres, transitional beds available). If possible, please indicate whether capacity levels are commensurate with need.

- ***Shelters:***
 - One temporary year-round shelter (40 spaces, 100% occupied)
 - One temporary winter-only shelter (40 spaces, 100% occupied)
- ***Supportive Housing:***
 - two supportive housing buildings (52 and 43 spaces, 100% occupied)
- ***Extreme Cold Weather responses***
 - Extreme at local churches
 - City of Burnaby's emergency warming centre

A full list of services available at <https://www.burnaby.ca/services-and-payments/seniors-and-family-support/homelessness/shelters-and-supportive-housing>

9) Some groups, including students, those in congregate housing, and temporary foreign workers, may be excluded from publicly available core housing need data sources. Communities are encouraged to use this section to describe the housing needs of these respective populations to ensure that all groups are represented in their HNR.

Data is not readily available for these populations such as students, those in congregate housing, and temporary foreign workers.

- ***Students:*** The City relies on educational institutions to determine the housing needs of their students and provides financial incentives, such as reduced Development Cost Charges for development of non-profit student housing by post-secondary institutions.

- **Congregate Care:** The provincial government funds the development of congregate housing for various populations through funding programs to non-profit organizations.
- **Temporary foreign workers** are considered part of the general renter population in Burnaby.

10) How have average rents changed over time in your community? What factors (economic, social, national, local, etc.) have influenced these changes?

- Median market rents have increased by 31% in Burnaby between 2020 and 2024 (source: [Metro Vancouver Housing Databook 2025](#)). Factors that have influenced these increases include:
 - Growing demand for rental housing arising from population growth and the rising cost of ownership being out of reach for those earning local incomes
 - Increased immigration/international students (many newcomers start off in rental housing adding to demand)
 - consistently low vacancy rates
 - Economic recovery from COVID may have also encouraged more people to move to the region.

11) How have vacancy rates changed over time? What factors have influenced this change?

- Vacancy rates have fluctuated over the past 10 years but have remained very low. With the exception of 2020, vacancy rates have remained below 2% since 2014.
 - In 2016 vacancy rates were at a low of 0.6%
 - In 2021 vacancy rates were at a high of 3.2% (early days of COVID shutdowns) (Source: Metro Vancouver Housing Databook 2025).
- There continues to be strong demand for rental housing, especially as the cost of home ownership increases beyond the reach of many households.

12) How have trends in core housing need changed over time between both tenant and owner-occupied households?

- Between 2006 - 2021, the proportion of total households in Core Housing Need has stayed relatively stable between 18%-20% of total households.
- The proportion of renter households in Core Household Need decreased slightly.
 - In 2006 12% of rental households were in Core Housing Need
 - In 2021 10% of rental households were in Core Housing Need. Though the total number of renter households in Core Housing Need has increased by 1,625 since 2006. In 2021, the number of renter households in core housing need was 10,100.
- The proportion of Owner households in core housing needs has also remained stable
 - In 2006 8% of total households were in Core Housing need

- In 2021, the number of owner households in core housing need was 7,645, which is an increase of 2,080 owner households since 2006.

13) In the last five years, how many affordable units for low and very low-income households have been built, and how many have been lost? If data is not available, please describe how the loss of affordable housing units may have impacted your community.

- In the last five years (2019-2024), 214 non-market units rented at RGI rates to households earning BC Housing's Housing Income Limits or less.
- In the last five years (2019-2024), 30 units of non-market rental have been demolished on-site to enable redevelopment of the site with 174 new non-market rental units.

14) Please describe available affordable and community housing options and needs/gaps currently in your community. Examples can include:

a) Are any of these affordable housing units accessible or specifically designed for seniors, including long-term care and assisted living?

- As of December 31, 2024:
 - Burnaby has a total of 6,492 non-market units within the community
 - 3,145 of the total non-market units are for seniors, or seniors and families.
 - 371 units out of the 3,145 units for seniors are assisted living or long-term care housing units.
 - There are additional market seniors housing units in Burnaby as well.

b) Does your municipality provide rent supplements or other assistance programs that deepen affordability for households?

- No, rent supplements and other assistance programs are a provincial responsibility in British Columbia. BC Housing has programs to provide rent supplements to low-income families, seniors, and for individuals experiencing homelessness.

c) Is your community in need of supportive housing units with wrap-around support, such as for those with disabilities?

- Yes, additional supportive housing units are needed.
- The City is developing a Shelter and Supportive Housing Strategy to better understand the community needs. This work is currently underway and is exploring areas that include low and high-barrier shelters, demographic-specific needs, and the intersections of individuals from a GBA+ lens.

15) This final section aims to determine how your community anticipates using the results and findings captured in the HNR to inform long-term planning, as well as concrete actions that can address identified needs. Please use the following questions to describe how those linkages will be made.

a) How will this HNR inform your OCP, housing policies and/or actions going forward? For example, if the HNR identifies specific needs in your community across the housing spectrum – such as housing needed for priority populations, units for large households in denser form factors, more diverse structural types such as missing middle housing, or more affordable and higher-density housing near transit – how could actions and changes in policy and planning help address those needs?

- Historically, Burnaby has been growing at a rate of 1.5% per year
- Burnaby has completed a new 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP) with a new parcel-based land use map, which allows for a diversity of housing types, sizes and densities across the city, which would facilitate meeting the housing needs identified in current and future Housing Needs Report (HNR).
- The OCP is required to include housing policies that support housing growth including, affordable housing, rental housing, and special needs housing. This is beneficial as all bylaws and future work must be consistent with these housing policies after the OCP is adopted. Having housing policies supported at different levels will allow the City to advance housing needs outlined in the HNR.
- The latest interim HNR (2024) indicates the anticipated number of units needed up to 2041. While Burnaby's projected needs are higher than the projected dwelling unit growth provided by Metro Vancouver, there is sufficient capacity designated to meet those needs within the OCP land use map.

b) How will data collected through the HNR help direct those plans and policies as they aim to improve housing locally and regionally, and how will this intersect with major development patterns, growth management strategies, as well as master plans and capital plans that guide infrastructure investments?

- Data collected through the HNR can be integrated into the OCP through implementation to determine housing indicators. Both of these can help measure the impacts of the housing policies.
- Based on the progress housing indicators show over time, policies may be revised to better address the needs outlined in the HNR.

c) Based on the findings of this HNR, and particularly the projected housing needs, please describe any infrastructure gaps that may potentially limit the ability of your community to

support forecasted growth unless they are addressed, or that could facilitate more complete and resilient communities. This can relate to any type of enabling infrastructure needed for housing, including fixed and non-fixed assets, as well as social, community or natural infrastructure. Communities are encouraged to illustrate how infrastructure gaps impact their housing systems and growth. Examples of types of enabling infrastructure may include:

- **Public Transit**
- **Water/Wastewater Systems**
- **Roads and Bridges**
- **Schools, Parks, Community or Recreational Centres**
- **Broadband Service and Access**
- **Climate Risks/Impacts**

Potential Infrastructure gaps may include:

- **Public Transit:** Additional funding is required to transform Willingdon Ave into a growth corridor with diverse and higher density forms of housing. Provincial and Federal investment in a Rapid Transit System from the North Shore to Metrotown is a critical component of realizing this growth corridor.
- **Water/Wastewater Systems:** Infrastructure improvements are needed in places where growth is expected, as well as in areas where existing infrastructure is aging. Additional funding is required to support efficient infrastructure upgrades and focus housing growth in higher-density areas such as Downtown, Town Centres and Rapid Transit Urban Villages.
- **Roads and Bridges:** Improvements to pedestrian corridors, commercial services, and open space amenities via grade separated crossings are essential. A number of grades separated crossings across the BNSF/CN Rail Corridor south of Brentwood Town Centre are planned and necessary to link market and affordable housing to commercial, cycling and open space assets throughout the City.

Schools, Parks, Community or Recreational Centres: Additional funding is required for new schools, recreational park services, community services, and public amenities and facilities to accommodate increased population in areas of anticipated growth.

- **Broadband Service and Access:** Public investment in WIFI services for non-market housing is a priority for the City. Funding for the provision and maintenance of City WIFI in all non-market housing requires financial assistance.
- **Climate Risks/Impacts:** Additional funding is required to address the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, provide additional heat shelters, and continue reducing GHG emissions in new and existing buildings.