

City of New Westminster Response (15 May 2025)

Canada Community-Building Fund

Appendix 1: Qualitative Questionnaire for BC Municipalities

Question	Response
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.	<p>Housing in New Westminster has been significantly shaped by transportation infrastructure, employment growth, migration, and limited land availability over the past several decades. As a historically well-connected municipality, the expansion of rapid transit—particularly the addition of five SkyTrain stations—has positioned New Westminster as a key location for higher-density residential development. This accessibility has supported regional connectivity and encouraged more sustainable, transit oriented growth, while also increasing pressure to deliver housing near transit nodes to accommodate both existing and incoming residents.</p> <p>Employment growth has also influenced housing demand. Between 2006 and 2016, the number of employed workers in the city grew by 15.5%, rising from 23,465 to 27,100. At the same time, migration—especially international immigration—has played a major role in shaping the city’s housing landscape. As of 2016, over one-third of residents (34.9%) were immigrants, with 3,500 newcomers settling in the city between 2011 and 2016. Between 2016 and 2021, New Westminster’s immigrant population grew by 20.1%, outpacing the regional average. By 2021, immigrants made up 37.5% of the city’s population, contributing to a growing and diverse community with varied housing needs.</p> <p>Despite the city’s evolving context of transit oriented development, long-term housing challenges also persist. Limited land availability restricts the development of ground-oriented and family-sized housing options. The City is working to address these constraints through housing policy such as an updated <i>Family Friendly Housing Policy</i>, which requires minimum percentage of two and three bedroom units in new multi-unit residential developments. Infill housing initiatives are also underway to pre-zone most single detached dwelling properties in the city to permit up to six units. As New Westminster continues to attract new residents through employment opportunities, transit access, and community</p>

	amenities, the City will continue to work within its jurisdiction to help diversify housing supply to meet the needs of various households in the community.
2. Please detail the existing municipal housing policy and regulatory context, including approved housing strategies, action plans and policies within Official Community Plans (OCPs).	<p>The City of New Westminster is committed to the development and maintenance of safe, affordable housing through policies, plans, and programs. Housing policy directions and regulatory context are guided by Council's <i>Strategic Priorities Plan (2023-2026)</i>, which acts as a roadmap for steering the City's activities on behalf of the community. A key area of the Plan is <i>Homes and Housing Options</i>, which is focused on clearing the way for and advancing all types of homes needed by people today and tomorrow, prioritizing homes for those with the greatest need. This work is informed by clear actions and targets set out in the City's <i>Housing Needs Report (HNR)</i> and through implementation of the <i>Homelessness Action Strategy</i>.</p> <p>Please refer to the HNR for more information about existing policies, plans, initiatives, and strategies in New Westminster, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Section 7.1: Actions Implemented to Help Reduce Housing Need</i>, which provides a description of actions taken by the City since adopting the 2021 Housing Needs Report. • <i>Appendix A: Housing Policies and Initiatives</i> which includes detailed descriptions of the City's housing policies and initiatives. • <i>City of New Westminster Housing Initiatives (2000-Present)</i> which provides a snapshot of policies across the housing spectrum. <p>The City continues to take a holistic, collaborative approach towards housing policies, and will look to the HNR as resource to determine how to balance meeting needs while achieving City objectives such as funding for infrastructure and amenities.</p>
3. How have population changes in your community impacted your housing market?	Population growth in New Westminster has placed significant pressure on the housing market. Between 2006 and 2021, the city's population grew by 35%, adding over 20,000 residents—a growth rate that outpaced both Metro Vancouver and the province of British Columbia.

	<p>More recently, from 2016 to 2021, the population rose by 11% (+7,920), from 70,996 in 2016 to 78,916 in 2021. This rapid growth has driven increased demand for housing and created an urgent need to expand the housing supply. To keep pace with projected household growth, the city will need an estimated 6,251 new housing units over the next five years, and 20,321 units over the next 20 years. Without adequate planning and development, this rising demand may exacerbate affordability challenges and limit access to suitable housing for residents at all income levels.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Labour pressures in the broader Metro Vancouver region are significantly impacting both housing supply and demand. The current labour market—particularly in the construction sector—has made it more difficult and costly to build new housing. Shortages in skilled trades have resulted in project delays and increased costs, making it challenging to deliver housing at the scale and speed needed to meet current and future demand.</p> <p>The situation has been further compounded by macroeconomic factors such as rising interest rates and inflation. During and following the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation raised the price of materials and labour. These conditions have contributed to a slowdown in the construction of new housing at a time when demand continues to grow.</p> <p>Additionally, recent changes to Canada’s immigration laws are intended to ease pressure on housing and infrastructure, but they may also have complex implications for the labour market and housing development. These policy changes are expected to slow the growth in housing demand over the coming years. However, there are concerns that lower immigration levels could exacerbate labour shortages in the construction sector.</p>
<p>5. Please describe the housing needs and challenges of priority populations in your community, specifically for the 13 groups identified by CMHC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and their children fleeing domestic violence; 	<p>Women and their children fleeing domestic violence</p> <p>Limited data is available on the housing needs of women and children fleeing domestic violence in New Westminster. Currently, there are 19 transitional, supported, and assisted living units designated for women and children fleeing violence, but no data exists on the scale or nature of their housing need.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Women-led households (especially single mothers)</p> <p>Women-led households in New Westminster, particularly those led by single mothers, face significant housing challenges. Data shows that 23% of women-led households are in core housing need overall. Of all women-led renter households in the city, 32% are in core housing need. Single mother-led households also experience higher rates of core housing need, with 33% these households experiencing housing challenges. The situation is direr for renters, with 57% of senior women living alone and nearly half of female lone-parent households who rent (47%) are in core housing need.</p> <p>Seniors 65+</p> <p>Seniors are the fastest growing segment of New Westminster's population, having increased by 59.5% between 2006 and 2021.</p> <p>Seniors represent a significant portion (52%) of existing non-market housing occupants, and are the second largest group on BC Housing's waitlist for non-market housing in New Westminster, with 309 seniors waiting for housing. In 2021, 23.5% of households with at least one senior (2,175 households) were in core housing need. Seniors who rent also faced more pressure in the housing market, with 47% experiencing core housing need.</p> <p>Aging-in-place with adequate supports is important to the well-being of all seniors, regardless of income. While many seniors prefer to age in place with amenities nearby, the projected increase in residents aged 85 and over indicates a growing need for long-term care and other supportive housing options. Through community engagement, participants identified the need for both seniors housing with support services and in-home support to help maintain independence.</p> <p>The lack of age-based household projections makes it difficult to quantify future housing needs and demand for seniors accurately. Addressing these needs will require a focus on providing housing options and support services to allow seniors to live independently and safely as they age.</p>
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	<p>Young adults aged 18-29</p> <p>In 2021, young adults aged 18 to 29 made up approximately 14% of the city's population. Young adults in New Westminster have been underrepresented in past housing engagement efforts. This lack of representation makes it difficult to fully understand and address their specific housing needs. Data shows that 31.7% of households led by individuals under the age of 25 are in Core housing need. Of these households, renters faced slightly less pressure in the housing market, with 29% experiencing core housing need.</p> <p>Due to a constrained housing market, many young adults have been unable to form their own independent households. This has been a trend since 2006. To address this, it is estimated that 429 units in the next five years and 1,718 units in 20 years are needed to meet both short-term need due to affordability or availability constraints and long-term needs to mitigate future household formation suppression.</p> <p>Indigenous peoples</p> <p>There were 2,425 Indigenous residents in New Westminster in 2021, which makes up 3.1% of the city's population. Compared to other households, Indigenous households have the highest incidence of low-income status (16.5% of low-income groups). Indigenous people also disproportionately experience core housing need and homelessness. Of the city's Indigenous households in 2021, one in four were in core housing need. For the 2023 Point-in-Time Homeless Count, 27% of respondents identified as Indigenous. Of the Count participants, 43% reported that they were unsheltered, and 12% reported that they were sheltered, which indicates a high proportion of Indigenous unhoused people do not use shelter services.</p> <p>Key interest group interviews conducted as part of the 2021 HNR highlighted the lack of Indigenous-specific housing built in the region over the past 30 years. As Indigenous residents often face stigma and discrimination in accessing housing, and may need larger units to accommodate extended family, Indigenous-specific housing are needed to provide secure, inclusive housing option that allow residents to celebrate and embrace their values and cultures.</p>
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	<p>People with physical health or mobility challenges & People with developmental disabilities</p> <p>Persons with disabilities, whether physical or otherwise, face significant barriers in the housing market due to low incomes and/ or the need for accessible and adaptable units.</p> <p>In 2021, approximately 4,255 households (11.8% of all households) in New Westminster had at least one member with activity limitations in core housing need, and 2,985 (32%) of these households were renters. These households may also overlap with senior or single person households, indicating a growing need for accessible and affordable housing options. As of 2024, the BC Housing waitlist for New Westminster included 128 applications for non-market housing from persons with disabilities, with an additional 29 applicants specifically needing wheelchair accessible units. Addressing these needs requires a targeted approach to increase the availability of accessible housing units and allow persons with disabilities to have equitable access to housing that meets their specific requirements.</p> <p>People dealing with mental health and addiction issues</p> <p>People living with mental health and addiction issues in New Westminster face heightened housing vulnerability and an increased risk of homelessness. In the 2023 PiT count, 47% of respondents self-reported a mental health issue. Of these respondents, 61% were unsheltered homeless persons and 33% were sheltered homeless persons. Of those enumerated who responded to the question on health conditions in New Westminster, 52% self-reported an addiction. Of note, 78% of those who self-reported an addiction were unsheltered homeless persons and 25% of those who self-reported an addiction were sheltered homeless persons. Among individuals with cognitive, mental, or addictions-related activity limitations, 17.5% are in Core housing need.</p> <p>Of the 477 supportive/ transitional housing units in New Westminster that are deeply affordable, 162 are addiction recovery units and 88 are mental health units. Over the next five years, it is estimated that New Westminster will need 352 supportive housing units, which would mean increasing its supportive housing stock by 71%.</p>
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	<p>Veterans</p> <p>There is currently no available data on the housing needs of veterans in New Westminster. In the 2023 PiT count, 6% of the total population surveyed in Metro Vancouver indicated that they had service in the Canadian Forces or RCMP (disaggregated data separating RCMP and Canadian Forces was unavailable).</p> <p>2SLGBTQIA+</p> <p>While specific data for New Westminster is limited, available information shows that 20% of transgender and non-binary-led households are in core housing need. From the 2023 PiT count, 4% of participants (8 people) self-identified as 2SLGBTQIA+ in New Westminster. Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community continue to face significant barriers to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing. Historically, they have been overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness, housing instability, and core housing need—particularly those who also belong to other at-risk groups such as youth, seniors, Indigenous people, newcomers, or individuals with mental health or addiction challenges.</p> <p>Racialized groups</p> <p>Data specific to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) households are often buried within broader Census categories, limiting the ability to identify other culturally specific housing needs. Consultation done as part of the City's HNR with community organizations suggested concerns about discrimination and stigmatization of racialized and immigrant populations, alongside housing adequacy and security issues. The lack of detailed data makes it difficult to establish a baseline for the housing needs of BIPOC households. This impedes the ability to quantify and estimate their needs accurately.</p> <p>The University of British Columbia's Housing Assessment Resource Tools (UBC HART) shows that 19% of visible minority led households are in core housing need, with the number being higher for renter households (28%). Of Black households in New Westminster, 33% are in core housing need. According to Census data, the Visible Minority population grew by 34.3% in New Westminster between 2016 and 2021, while the Non-Visible Minority population shrank by 2.8%.</p>
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	<p>Recent immigrants (including refugees)</p> <p>UBC HART also captures categories not included in Census data. These categories show that refugee claimant-led households experience the highest rate of core housing need (35%) in New Westminster. While not all refugee claimants are BIPOC, many are racialized individuals. UBC HART data also indicates that 19% of those in core housing need in 2021 were visible minorities.</p> <p>People experiencing homelessness</p> <p><u>Shelter Units</u></p> <p>Despite recognizing the importance of and need for shelters, the number of available shelter units/ beds in New Westminster has not kept pace with the growing population of people experiencing homelessness. Community engagement revealed deep concern for people who are experiencing homelessness in New Westminster.</p> <p>From the 2023 PiT Count, 203 people in New Westminster were counted as sheltered or unsheltered – an increase of 80 people since 2020. '<i>Sheltered</i>' refers to those who are able to find a space to sleep for the evening, while '<i>unsheltered</i>' refers to those who cannot. Of those who participated in the count, 146 were sheltered – an increase of 78% since 2021 – and 57 (28%) were unsheltered. However, it should be noted that 63 people, or 43% of those sheltered, were counted at the city's nightly shelter. This indicates that the unsheltered daytime population was 120, as opposed to 57.</p> <p>PiT counts are known to underestimate the true extent of homelessness as they do not count all people who are couch surfing or staying temporarily with family members or friends. One study in Metro Vancouver in 2009 found that there were about 3.5 times as many hidden homeless as visible homeless individuals, suggesting a significant undercount in the Point-in-Time methodology. Homelessness estimates from BC's Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) suggest the actual minimum number may be closer to 341 individuals in New Westminster.</p> <p>In the next five years, it is estimated that 58 additional shelter beds/ units are needed in New Westminster to help provide housing for people experiencing homelessness. To meet</p>
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	<p>current and anticipated needs, these beds/ units need to be permanent, 24/7 units with supports provided, and exclude extreme weather beds.</p> <p><u>Supportive Housing</u></p> <p>As of 2024, there are 492 supportive and transitional housing units in New Westminster. Of these units, only 194 (or 39%) house people who were homeless or unsheltered. At the same time, there are 89 New Westminster residents registered on BC Housing's waitlist for supportive housing. Data from Metro Vancouver shows that there is a lower share of supportive/ transitional housing within the non- or below market rate housing units in New Westminster (14.9%) compared to that of the greater region (20.4%). These statistics indicate that there is a current and growing need for supportive housing units in the city.</p> <p>Key interest group interviews for the 2021 HNR highlighted a pressing need for more supportive housing for vulnerable populations – particularly for those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. There is also a housing gap for individuals who have stabilized and no longer need intensive support, but cannot transition straight to market housing. In the next five years, it is estimated New Westminster will need 352 supportive and transitional housing units. These units are required in addition to shelter beds/ units.</p>
<p>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).</p> <p>If a private individual has been engaged, please anonymize and</p>	<p>The City regularly and continuously engages with priority populations to better understand how these factors impact a person's ability to access, afford, and maintain housing.</p> <p>Community engagement was a key component in developing the 2021 HNR. For the 2024 HNR, no new consultation was conducted. The findings from the 2021 engagement have been used to complement updated data and analysis provided in this 2024 report and to inform the key statements of need. Please refer to <i>Section 4: Community Engagement</i> of the City's HNR for details on methodology, assumptions made, description of who were engaged, and the type and nature of engagement that took place.</p>

remove any identifying features from the narrative.	
<p>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.).</p>	<p>Between 2020 and 2023, New Westminster observed a 65% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness based on data from the most recent Point-in-Time Homeless Count. This rate is comparable to other neighboring municipalities during the same period, demonstrating that this is a regional issue.</p> <p>Some of the factors contributing to rising rates of homelessness are the increasing incidence of mental health and substance use issues, which were aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing toxic drug crisis. Additional factors include the high cost of housing, and inadequate shelter allowances related to Income and Disability Assistance. For instance, in the 2023 PiT Count, 29% of respondents indicated that “not having enough income for housing” was the main reason for their loss of housing. This forces people into inadequate, unsafe and unstable housing, and roommate arrangements, which have a tendency to breakdown.</p> <p>A lack of housing, specifically supportive/ transitional housing for those transitioning out of homelessness or who require ongoing supports, are also major contributing factors to homelessness. It is estimated that 352 supportive/ transitional housing units are needed between 2024 and 2029 – of which 52 are under construction. Service providers and faith-based, non-profit organizations in the community have also shared that the duration people and households spent in supportive/ transitional housing is getting longer (i.e. an average of eight or more years). This, combined with the lack of affordable independent housing for them to transition into, creates a back up in the housing system and keeps those experiencing homelessness from accessing housing that they need.</p> <p>Another factor is the uneven distribution of facilities, services and supports by municipality in Metro Vancouver. New Westminster, which has been more responsive to addressing homelessness and the related issues of mental health and substance use, is more than pulling its weight, while other municipalities have been less responsive. This results in a strain on existing resources in New Westminster.</p>

<p>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.</p>	<p>Shelter Spaces</p> <p>All shelter spaces, both year-round and seasonal, are operating at capacity. Purpose Society's year-round nightly shelter often operates over capacity, accommodating up to 80 people during periods of extreme cold. The HNR identifies the need for an additional 58 shelter beds over the next five years.</p> <p><u>Available Year-Round</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purpose Society (50 beds)</i>: Nightly shelter operated year-round. • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society (16 beds)</i>: 24/7 shelter for men at the Russell Housing Centre; • <i>Elizabeth Fry Society (12 beds)</i>: 24/7 shelter for women with or without children; • <i>Fraserside Community Services (12 beds)</i>: 24/7 shelter for families; • <i>Salvation Army – Stevenson House (14 to 16 beds)</i>: 24/7 emergency shelter for men. <p><u>Available Seasonally (i.e. Winter Only)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elizabeth Fry Society (10 mats)</i>: Extreme weather response shelter for women operating from November 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025 when weather triggers are met; • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society (25 beds)</i>: 24/7 winter shelter operating from November 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. <p>Emergency Warming Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purpose Society</i>: Warming centre is activated when the temperature reaches -4°C or below, as per Provincial guidelines. <p>Transitional Shelters and Transitional Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elizabeth Fry Society – Pathways Program (9 units)</i>: Second stage housing for women in transition to independent living. Maximum 18 month stay.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>West Coast Genesis Society – Maria Keary Cottage (20 beds)</i>: Transitional housing program to men that are unhoused or at-risk becoming unhoused. • <i>WINGS Fellowship Ministries – Monarch Place Transition House (12 beds)</i>: Transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. <p>Permanent Supportive Housing</p> <p>The HNR identifies the need for an additional 352 supportive/transitional units over the next five years. The City has estimated that approximately 40% of these new units would need to be provided for people experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elizabeth Fry Society – Mazarine Lodge (44 units)</i>: Permanent supportive housing for women experiencing homelessness. • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society – Russell Housing Centre (40 units)</i>: Permanent supportive housing for men and women experiencing homelessness. • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society – Rhoda Kaelis Residence (13 units)</i>: Permanent independent housing, with 11 transitional housing for men and women experiencing homelessness. • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society – Cliff Block Residence (23 units)</i>: Low-barrier permanent and supportive housing for men and women experiencing homelessness. <p>Resource Centres/ Drop-In Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maida Duncan Women’s Drop-In Centre</i>: Operates six days per week during daytime hours, offering laundry and shower services, food, navigation assistance, referral and support. • <i>Purpose Society Health Contact Centre (8AM to 10:30PM daily)</i>: Offers witnessed consumption services for injection drug use, harm reduction supplies, drug testing, overdose response training and take-home Naloxone, peer support, community referrals.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Union Gospel Mission – New West Drop-In (8AM to 12:30PM on weekdays):</i> Provides access to a hot meal program, health and wellness services, and resources navigation. About 125 people use this program each weekday. <p>Outreach Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>City of New Westminster Crisis Response Team:</i> Non-clinical outreach team that offers support to people experiencing homelessness, including referrals to other programs and service related to housing, mental health, and substance use. • <i>Crisis Response, Community Led (CRCL):</i> CRCL is a mobile, community-led team that offers support to individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis. The mobile team, comprised of a mental health worker and a peer support worker (someone with lived or living experience), attend to crisis calls during scheduled service hours. • <i>Fraser Health – Integrated Homelessness Action Response Team (IHART):</i> Multi-disciplinary teams comprised of nurses, outreach workers, peer support and mental health clinicians to provide outreach-based support to people experiencing homelessness in the New Westminster and Tri-Cities areas. • <i>Lookout Housing and Health Society Outreach:</i> Outreach team assists people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness through navigation assistance, referral and support. • <i>WINGS Multicultural Outreach Program:</i> Provides support for women from any cultural background, primarily living in New Westminster or Delta, who have been impacted by domestic abuse. Supports, advocacy, and referrals are provided. <p>Other Services and Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fraser Health – Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team:</i> Services available include assessment, treatment, individual and group therapy, referrals to supportive housing, long-term care programs and community support services, transition of care between services, older adult programs, crisis intervention and peer support. Services are offered in-person.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction – Community Integration Specialists:</i> Assist with applying for Income and Disability assistance, creating and processing service requests for health assistance, crisis supplements, shelter updates, identification assistance, providing security deposits for housing, start-up funds and beds, outreach to people who are not able to attend an Income Assistance Office, and more. • <i>Purpose Society Mobile Health Van:</i> Provides harm reduction supplies and connection to substance-use related supports.
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.	<p>In New Westminster, data on students, individuals in congregate housing, and temporary foreign workers were not included in the 2024 HNR or the engagement conducted for the 2021 HNR. As a result, the housing needs of these groups remain underexplored.</p> <p>Home to Douglas College and the Justice Institute of British Columbia, New Westminster's location along major transit corridors and access to other major institutions such as SFU and UBC via various forms of public transportation make the city an attractive place for students to live. Although there are currently no designated student housing in the city, a 20-storey academic and student housing building is currently underway and will deliver 244 student housing units.</p> <p>The number of temporary foreign workers in New Westminster is not available. While organizations such as Immigrant Services Society of BC and MOSAIC offer support services in the city for newcomers and temporary foreign workers, more data and targeted engagement are needed to better understand housing needs of this group.</p>
10. How have average rents changed over time in your community? What factors (economic, social, national, local, etc.) have influenced these changes?	<p>The City's HNR shows the median monthly rents for the primary rental market in New Westminster from 2013-2023, which have increased by 81%. This trend follows the overall trend for rents in Metro Vancouver. The largest increase in median rents from 2013 to 2023 was for three or more-bedroom units, which rose by \$1,213 or 93%.</p> <p>The HNR also highlights that prospective tenants face higher rents for vacant units than long-term tenants in occupied units, with the average asking rent for vacant units (\$1,925) in New Westminster being 19% higher than the average rent paid for occupied units</p>

	<p>(\$1,619). According to CMHC, the gap in rent levels between vacant and occupied units has been widening steadily since 2015. CMHC data show that newer builds (rental units built in 2000 or later) have an average rent of \$2,230, compared to a city-wide average rent of \$1,691 for purpose-built rentals. This indicates that while the City is working to bring new rental stock online, it is unlikely to address affordability concerns in the short-term.</p> <p>Rising rents in New Westminster are influenced by a combination of local, provincial, and regional factors. Regionally, strong population growth driven by immigration and interprovincial migration has increased demand for housing across Metro Vancouver. Despite significant City efforts to bring new supply on line, limited housing supply across the region, particularly of purpose-built rental, has not kept pace with overall demand. Nationally, higher interest rates and inflation have raised borrowing and development costs, impacting the development and construction of new rental units.</p>
11. How have vacancy rates changed over time? What factors have influenced this change?	<p>Low rental vacancy rates are one of New Westminster's and Metro Vancouver's key housing concerns. The City's HNR shows vacancy rates for New Westminster averaged for all units, and by number of bedrooms between 2013 and 2023. In 2023, the average vacancy rate in New Westminster was at 0.8%, a decrease by half from the 1.6% vacancy rate in 2020. Typically, a balanced rental market is considered to have a vacancy rate between 3% and 5%, while a rental market with a vacancy rate below 3% has a shortage of rental housing units. New Westminster's rental vacancy rate has been well below a balanced rate for over ten years, with 2010 being the most recent year it was over 3%.</p> <p>The historical rental vacancy rate in the city indicates that New Westminster has experienced a long-term shortage of rental housing units, which aligns with regional trends.</p>
12. How have trends in core housing need changed over time between both tenant and owner-occupied households?	<p><i>Table 26</i> of the HNR shows core housing need for New Westminster from 2011 to 2021. In 2021, 6,980 (or 20%) households were identified to be in core housing need, most of whom were renters (67.8%). The number of households in core housing need has been steadily increasing from 5,980 in 2011 to 6,415 in 2016 to 6,980 in 2021. When compared to household growth between 2016 and 2021 (10.4%), households in core housing need only experienced a growth by 8.8% during the same period. This is historically low when compared to household growth (9.5% increase). According to the University of British</p>

	<p>Columbia's Housing Assessment Resource Tools (UBC HART) project research, core housing need expressed in the 2021 Census was temporarily reduced due to the impact of the temporary Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) supports which provided temporary financial relief to very-low, and low-income households, who are most at risk of core housing need, during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Renter households have and continue to make up the majority of all households in core housing need, with the absolute number of households in core housing need increasing from 4,200 in 2011 to 4,730 in 2021. During the same period, owner households also saw an increase in the number of households experiencing core housing need – from 1,780 in 2011 to 2,250 in 2021. Between 2011 and 2021, a consistent trend has been that over two-thirds of households in core housing need were renter households. In fact, of the last three Census periods, 2021 had the lowest ratios of renters to owners in core housing need, likely attributable to the CERB benefit disproportionately supporting lower-income households, who are more likely to be renters.</p>
<p>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?</p> <p>If data is not available, please describe how the loss of affordable housing units may have impacted your community.</p>	<p>In the last five years, affordable rental completions in the city total 140 units. Another 268 new below or non-market units were under construction at the end of 2023.</p> <p>Between 2019 and 2023, 239 units in the city were demolished. Most of these units (70%) were single detached houses and had little impact on the City's rental housing stock. While the City is not aware of the loss of any secured affordable housing units during this period, any loss would contribute to the increasing need for affordable housing in New Westminster.</p> <p>In the next five years, Metro Vancouver's <i>Housing Data Book</i> shows that approximately 700 of New Westminster's existing non-market units (all types) will have their operating agreements with BC Housing expire in the next five years. With increases in the number of households waiting for social housing in New Westminster – from 564 in 2018 to 952 in 2024 – remaining a trend, the need for affordable units for low and very low-income households in New Westminster will significantly increase. The HNR estimates the city will need an additional 2,311 new below- and non-market units between 2024 and 2029.</p>

	<p>Other than secured below and non-market housing units, most affordable housing in New Westminster is in the form of older purpose-built rental housing. With the critical role that these units play in meeting the city's affordable housing supply, the City is focused on protecting these units and their tenants through policies such as the Tenant Relocation Policy, Rental Protection Policy, and Secure Market Housing Policy.</p>
<p>14. Please describe available affordable and community housing options and needs/gaps currently in your community. Examples can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are any of these affordable housing units accessible or specifically designed for seniors, including long-term care and assisted living? b) Does your municipality provide rent supplements or other assistance programs that deepen affordability for households? c) Is your community in need of supportive housing units with wrap-around supports, such as for those with disabilities? 	<p>Non-Market Housing Options</p> <p>In 2023, New Westminster had 1,257 units of non-market housing, including 60 units of supportive seniors housing, and 599 units for independent seniors. Please refer to <i>Section 3.1.9 (Non-Market Housing)</i> of the HNR, which details the make up and characteristics of these housing options.</p> <p>It should be noted that most of the city's current supply of affordable and community housing was built during the 1970s and 1980s, before the federal non-profit and cooperative housing programs stopped funding new housing in 1992 and 1993. Many of these buildings, particularly seniors' independent living residences, are in need of major repairs (i.e. building envelopes, mechanical systems, etc.).</p> <p>The 2024 HNR determined the City needs another 2,311 below and non-market housing units in the next five years.</p> <p>New Westminster Rent Bank</p> <p>In addition to enabling the delivery of multiple housing types, the City also supports affordable and community housing through the New Westminster Rent Bank (NWRB). With increases in rents and other household costs, NWRB provides loans to low-income renters in need of temporary emergency assistance to avoid eviction, and grants to those who face financial hardship in repaying a loan. A total of 26 loans (totaling \$32,369.23) and 57 grants (totaling \$74,786.80) were distributed by the NWRB from April 2023 to March 2024. During this period, the distributed loans helped support 28 adults and 9 children, while the grants helped support 63 adults and 15 children to remain housed.</p>

	<p>Affordable and Community Housing Needs & Gaps</p> <p>Of the 492 supportive/ transitional housing units in New Westminster, 194 (39%) house people who were homeless or unsheltered. All units have 100% occupancy rate, as in the overall community there are not enough affordable housing units available, including for those who no longer need support and/ or are ready to transition into affordable, independent housing. With an increase in residents registered on BC Housing’s waitlist for supportive housing, there is a critical need for supportive/ transitional housing in New Westminster, as well as affordable housing for those ready to move to the next step in the housing continuum.</p> <p>Between 2024 and 2029, it is estimated that 352 additional supportive/ transitional housing units are needed in New Westminster. Based on research and community feedback heard, supportive housing units with wrap-around supports and services are in particular needed to address the diverse needs of key sub-populations in the community.</p>
<p>15. a) How will this HNR inform your OCP, housing policies and/or actions going forward?</p> <p>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?</p>	<p>The City’s Official Community Plan will be updated in 2025 to reflect the projected 5- and 20-year housing needs of the 2024 HNR. This will include an update to the land use designation map to ensure that new housing is well located to services and transit. Following this update, related housing policies will be updated to ensure delivery of OCP goals and to address needs identified in the HNR. Other City actions will include updating existing zoning regulations, pre-zoning, and streamlining processes for various housing types.</p> <p>The City’s HNR identifies several key areas of housing need. Details on how HNR findings have or will inform City housing policies and actions are summarized below:</p> <p>Shelters for Persons Experiencing Homelessness, and Supportive and Transitional Housing</p> <p>Drawing on data, knowledge, and experiences shared by the community and interest groups, the City is focused on advancing people-centered, contextually responsive, and culturally and trauma-informed policies and actions to create more permanent shelters and supportive and transitional housing. One example of how this has and will be done is through the City’s <i>5 Year Prevention, Support and Transition Services Plan</i> and <i>10-Year</i></p>

	<p><i>Supportive Housing and Wrap-Around Services Plan</i>. The plans aim to bring people inside and address their diverse needs. The 5-Year Plan is comprised of advocacy actions focused on addressing the immediate needs of people experiencing the three crises with the goal of supporting them in stabilizing their lives. The 10-Year Plan is comprised of longer term sustainable actions focused on the construction of permanent, purpose-designed supportive housing and its equitable distribution throughout the city. Both Plans prioritize fostering and strengthening collaborations with senior levels of government on the creation of homes and providing supports to keep people housed.</p> <p>Indigenous Housing</p> <p>Based on HNR findings and the 2023 PiT Count, the City's <i>Crises Response 5- and 10-Year Plans</i> have also been developed to prioritize advocacy towards building housing for Indigenous populations. Actions include purpose design, program, and support requirements, as well as ongoing engagement with First Nations, Indigenous-led organizations and housing providers, and Indigenous people with experiences of the three crises of homelessness, mental health, and substance use. These actions aim to address findings that Indigenous populations disproportionately experience core housing need and homelessness in New Westminster. By facilitating more access to housing and services that are trauma informed and culturally safe, the City hopes to meet the specific housing needs of Indigenous populations, while also supporting their health and wellbeing. As data on Indigenous housing need is limited, the City will continue to monitor data and trends, establish and maintain respectful relationships, and collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous interest groups to deliver inclusive housing that best address their needs.</p> <p>Below and Non-Market Rental Housing</p> <p>The growing number of low and moderate income households, compounded by the lack of available affordable housing units, has resulted in a critical need for below and non-market rental housing in New Westminster. With the HNR identifying that more than 2,300 new affordable rental units are needed in the next five years, the City is advancing the Affordable Housing Acceleration Initiative and updating its <i>Inclusionary Housing Policy</i> to address need by increasing the number, availability, and diversity of affordable rental housing units.</p>
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	<p>With more households in need of affordable rental housing, the Affordable Housing Acceleration Initiative is focused on enabling the delivery of these units by reducing regulatory barriers, streamlining approval processes, and creating opportunities in the city for affordable rental housing to be built as-of-right. The City has pre-zoned sites that are already envisioned for residential apartment buildings in the OCP, and is exploring pre-zoning sites near transit hubs and allowing higher density affordable rental housing to be built on sites that permit townhouses.</p> <p>While the aim of the Affordable Housing Acceleration Initiative is to address New Westminster's need for affordable rental housing, the City recognizes that not all of units needed can be delivered through this initiative. As such, the City is updating its <i>Inclusionary Housing Policy</i>, which requires private developers to provide a percent of affordable housing units be delivered in their market-rate housing developments. Taking into account current market conditions and development feasibility, it is expected that the updated <i>Inclusionary Housing Policy</i> will be best suited to deliver affordable rental housing units of low to moderate subsidies.</p> <p>Market Rental Housing</p> <p>Despite existing City policies encouraging growth in supply, the HNR identified that there remains low vacancy amongst market rental housing alongside increasing rents.</p> <p>To address needs, the City is focused on implementing policies and actions that not only enable the delivery of new rental housing, but also maintain and enhance existing rental housing stock. Strategies and actions found in the City's <i>Secured Market Rental Housing Policy</i> aim to retain, renew, and enhance the supply of secured rental housing. Incentives such as additional density and reduced parking requirements are provided to developers in exchange for creating new rental housing that is secured by Housing Agreement. In addition, the City continues to apply the moratorium on conversions of rental buildings to strata title ownership to ensure that existing rental housing remains rental housing.</p> <p>The City also remains committed to protecting the rights of existing tenants from renovictions and redevelopment impacts. The <i>Tenant Relocation Policy</i> is currently being</p>
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	<p>updated to implement tenant protections that align with current context and provide greater support to those who may be displaced from their homes.</p> <p>Family Friendly Housing</p> <p>The City's <i>Family Friendly Housing Policy</i> was updated to increase the minimum unit mix requirements, introduce minimum unit size requirements, and creating new family friendly design guidelines.</p> <p>Housing for Persons with Disabilities</p> <p>Consistent with accessible unit design standards for municipal initiatives in the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC), the City amended the Zoning Bylaw in 2011 for the provision of adaptable housing in New Westminster to include requirements on project eligibility, percentage of units within projects that must be adaptable, and locations of these units. The amendments help to shape and regulate the delivery of accessible, affordable units that meet unique needs and support individuals – from seniors to persons with disabilities – to function in their homes with relative independence. These requirements will be updated accordingly to respond to current contexts and evolving community needs.</p> <p>Missing Middle Housing</p> <p>The Infill Housing and Townhouse Accelerator Programs are underway. The Programs will pre-zone single detached dwelling properties, outside of transit oriented development areas, to allow infill housing forms (up to six units per property) or townhouses.</p> <p>Housing Near Transportation Infrastructure</p> <p>To encourage additional housing to be delivered near transit hubs, the Province of British Columbia introduced housing legislation that identified Transit Oriented Development Areas near frequent public transportation for municipalities in June 2023. Five Transit Oriented Development Areas were identified in New Westminster, which the City has designated to allow the heights and densities enabled by the Province. An update to the City's Official Community Plan is underway. New land use designations will be introduced that align with the new legislation. Working in tandem with other City housing policies, this</p>
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	will help livable higher density housing near transportation infrastructure that serve a wide variety of demographics.
15. 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?	<p>It will take collective and interconnected efforts to improve Metro Vancouver's housing affordability crisis. The City's Official Community Plan is being updated, taking into account the findings of the 2024 HNR, as well as key priorities, strategies, and/ or actions set out in <i>Metro 2050</i> and <i>Housing 2050: A Roadmap to Implement Metro 2050's Housing Goals</i> (in progress). The alignment with regional planning will enable the City to better coordinate and collaborate on actions with Metro Vancouver and other member jurisdictions to address regional housing pressures and challenges.</p> <p>The City's HNR will be used to strengthen understanding of current and future housing needs and ensure local policies, plans, and development decisions are based on recent evidence. This includes considering the findings of the HNR to guide work on the creation of new Community Plans or Master Plans. They can also be used by local developers, non-profit housing providers, and other community organizations to help inform their own decision making and funding applications.</p> <p>In anticipation of higher growth numbers, and disbursed growth than previously anticipated, the City is assessing impacts to the long range planning for infrastructure (sewer, water, electrical), services (parks, fire halls), and resources. This will inform the work under way to review the City's financing growth tools (including updating <i>Development Cost Charge Bylaw</i>, and developing a new <i>Amenities Cost Charge Bylaw</i>). This is guided by the goal to ensure financial sustainability and livability of the community.</p>
15. 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	To address growth requirements to meet the 10 year housing targets the City is undertaking a comprehensive review of its financing growth tools and approach in order to align with new financing growth tools created by the Province, such as the new Amenity Cost Charges (ACC) and expanded Development Cost Charges (DCC). Based on initial analysis conducted in June 2024, approximately \$318M of infrastructure and amenities, within the next five years, would be required to serve the additional population while maintaining the livability of the community.

<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transit • Water/ Wastewater Systems • Roads and Bridges • Schools, Parks, Community or Recreational Centres • Broadband Service and Access • Climate Risks/Impacts 	<p>Of the estimated \$318M total, the revised DCC bylaw and interim ACC bylaw is expected to fund net project costs of \$287M of these requirements: \$171M for servicing requirements for water, sewer and solid waste; \$106M for transportation and transit improvements; \$26M for a new fire hall, a small library and expanded police services; \$18M for park and recreation improvements; and \$33M for financing costs, net of \$67M contributions from utility rates payers and 3rd party. There is a funding gap of \$31M which requires senior government funding to cover.</p> <p>Outside of the \$318M required, New Westminster has its own electrical utility which requires that development pays for all electrical service upgrades. This requirement will continue as electrical upgrades are not DCC eligible costs. B.C. Hydro follows a similar model requiring developers to pay for electrical service upgrades, though their fees may differ from New Westminster's.</p> <p>Recently, further work has been done by Metro Vancouver to refine growth projections in the region, which anticipates a higher growth scenario. Council has also received and endorsed the City's 2024 HNR, using the provincial methodology, which anticipates a need of almost double the Housing Target Order. The City's ongoing financing growth work will consider how to reflect these higher numbers; however the preliminary work presented here is based on the above. s</p> <p>Please note that these numbers are being further refined and adjusted through the City's financing growth work currently underway. The City is expecting to roll out the implementation of financing growth tools in the fall of 2025 along with updates to housing and land use policies, regulations and other initiatives in order to facilitate the delivery of housing and to address provincial and federal requirements and commitments. This also effects infrastructure that is provided by senior levels of government, including schools, childcare and regional transit which would also require additional investment but fall outside of the City.</p>
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