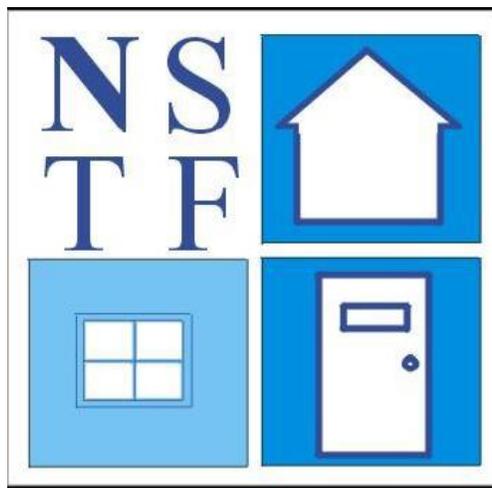


# **Housing Vulnerable Populations on the North Shore: An Inventory and Gap Analysis Summary**

**Updated: April 2016**



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Revised from Summary Prepared by Ashton Teulon, June 2010

Based on the full report by Julia Howard, 2009

Housing Vulnerable Populations on the North Shore: an Inventory and Gap Analysis

# Housing Vulnerable Populations on the North Shore

## BACKGROUND

In 2009, the North Shore Homelessness Task Force recognized a need for more up-to-date information on housing needs and providers on the North Shore (NS). In response, Julia Howard and Vancouver Coastal Health developed the *Housing Vulnerable Populations on the North Shore Report*. The intention was to improve the Task Force's state of readiness to apply for housing grants by describing the region's greatest housing needs and where further data are needed. The report also serves as a useful tool for housing advocates. In 2010 the inventory was updated and compressed into an executive summary. This report is the third update of the summary report and reflects the current housing situation on the North Shore as of April 2016.

This report provides North Shore demographics, housing waitlists and an affordable housing inventory for emergency and transitional housing providers. It also provides updates on housing available for vulnerable populations, assesses the need for affordable housing, identifies gaps in service and makes recommendations for stakeholders who are addressing housing challenges on the North Shore.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Figure 1: North Shore Demographics

**Total population:** 180,022\*

- 34% of the adult population was born outside of Canada: The majority of people have been living on the North Shore for at least 16 years (58%) whereas 19% are considered recent immigrants within the last 5 years.

**Most common countries of birth outside of Canada:**

Country	Percent
United Kingdom	21%
Iran	16%
USA	9%
China	8.5%
South Africa	4%

**Most common language spoken at home:**

Language	Percent
English	88%
Farsi	5%
Cantonese	2%

\* 2011 Census data

Data Source: North Shore Community Wellness Survey 2013

The North Shore region encompasses the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver, Island Municipality of Bowen Island and Village of Lions Bay, the Squamish Nation and the Tseil Waututh Nation.

The North Shore community level data shows:

- 49% of people are in the 40-64 age group
- 21% of people are in the 65+ age group
- 25% of household incomes are under \$40,000
- 5% of people are unemployed
- 67% were born in Canada
- 68% of people have a strong sense of community belonging
- 49% of people have four or more people to confide in<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the North Shore has a strong sense of community belonging and community resilience. It is a healthy community in general, although one that is highly dependent on cars and is in need of more forms of active transportation. For more demographic information, see Figure 1 or My Health, My Community, North Shore Community Health Profile, 2013.

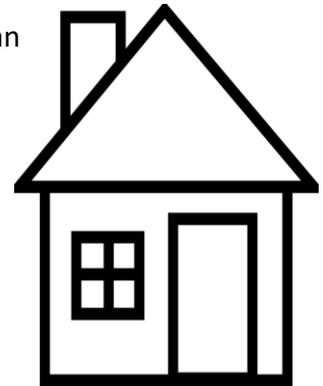
<sup>1</sup> My Health, My Community, North Shore Community Health Profile. (2013). Retrieved from: [https://www.myhealthmycommunity.org/Portals/0/Documents/NorthShore\\_final.pdf](https://www.myhealthmycommunity.org/Portals/0/Documents/NorthShore_final.pdf)

## HOMELESSNESS

The Metro Vancouver 2014 homeless count showed that the number of homeless people on the North Shore has decreased since 2008 with a reduction from 127 to 119 people. Of the 119 homeless people there were 59 sheltered and 60 unsheltered people. There were 24 homeless youth counted, 10 of which were unsheltered. This highlights the critical need for increased housing for vulnerable youth. The North Shore homeless represent 4% of the 2,777 homeless people counted in 2014 Metro Vancouver Count.<sup>2</sup> These homeless counts are a snapshot in time and are considered well below the true number of homeless. However, considering the number of homeless on the North Shore, the housing need is greater than the current capacity of stable housing.

## AFFORDABILITY AND CORE HOUSING NEED

Housing affordability is often defined by household spending that is less than 30 percent of pre-tax income on housing. It should also be recognized that location and transportation play a large part in affordability. When the cost of transportation is combined with the cost of housing, there is a better picture of what is deemed affordability.<sup>3</sup>



Demographic data on income and shelter costs indicate that the North Shore region has a substantial number of households spending greater than 30 percent of their income on housing. These households are considered to be in core housing need. The Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2015) describes the North Shore housing needs with this information:

- There are 13.6% or 8,990 households that are in core housing need on the North Shore.
- There are 4,310 INALH (In Need, At Least Half –those that are in need and spending at least half of their income on their housing costs) households on the North Shore, which are at risk for homelessness.
- There are 1,250 or 29% of INALH households that have a household maintainer that is age 65 or older.
- The estimated number of social housing units on the North Shore is 2,573, which is 12% of the renter household stock estimates and second lowest percentage in Metro Vancouver.
- The average vacancy rates vary by unit type and location; however, the lowest average vacancy rate for Metro Vancouver was found on the North Shore at 0.9%.<sup>4</sup>

Further to these circumstances, BC Housing waitlists and data from non-profit organizations demonstrate that residents are continuing to find it extremely difficult to secure stable, affordable housing on the North Shore.

<sup>2</sup> Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. (2014). Results of the 2014 Homeless Count in the Metro Vancouver Region. Retrieved from: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2014MVHomelessCountJuly31-14Results.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Metro Vancouver. (2015). Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study. Retrieved from: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/HousingAndTransportCostBurdenReport2015.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book. (2015). Retrieved from: [http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/MV\\_Housing\\_Data\\_Book.pdf](http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/MV_Housing_Data_Book.pdf)

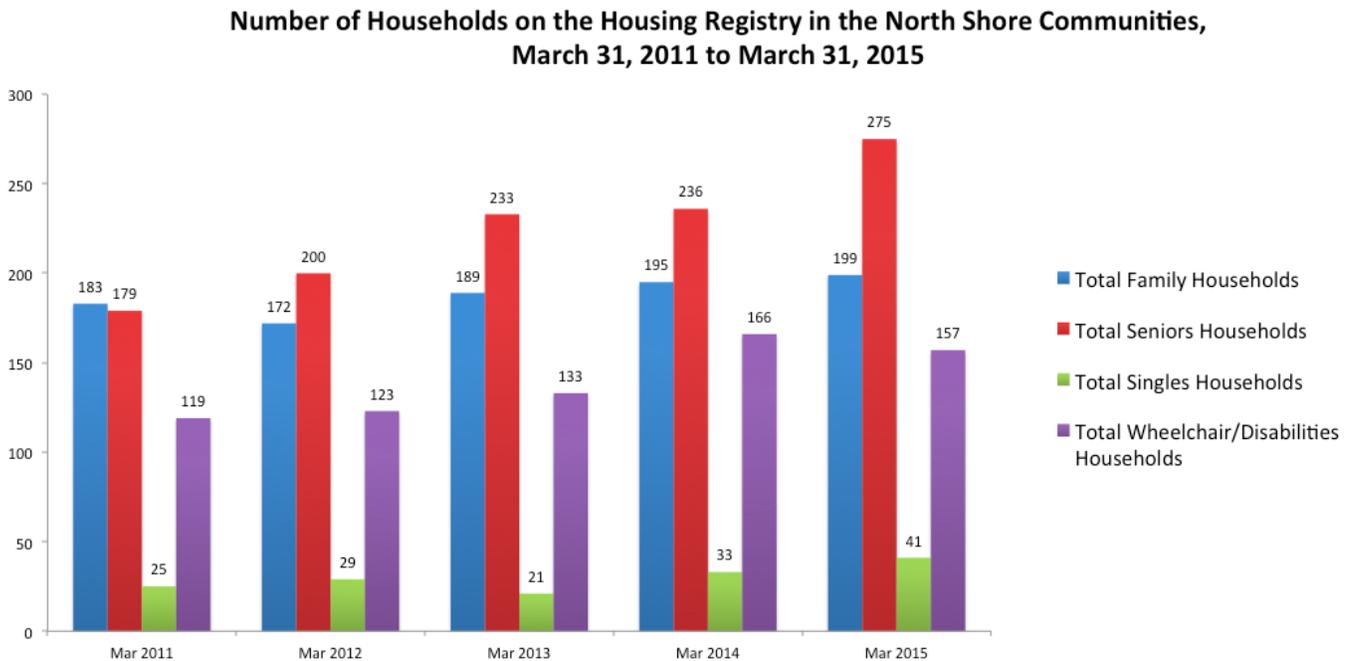
## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Responsiveness to the needs of specific vulnerable groups is an important aspect of advocating for an overall increase in affordable housing stock. People who are vulnerable to poverty and homelessness as a result of systemic issues include single-parent families, youth, seniors, people with mental health and addictions as well as people with disabilities seem to be at greatest risk for housing instability on the North Shore. Additional considerations should also include Aboriginal peoples, LGBT2Q population, newcomers and refugees. Aboriginal people are more likely to be in core housing need and are significantly over represented within the homeless population. Consultation and considering the needs of these groups of people is recommended when securing future housing options or providing homeless outreach programs. Currently, service providers continue to have a vital role in addressing the homeless and at risk populations as well as improving the stability of the housing situation for these populations.

## BC HOUSING REGISTRY

As of March 2015, the BC Housing Registry had 571 household applicants for North Vancouver, 98 for West Vancouver and 3 for Bowen Island. The total household applicants for the North Shore were 672, which were up from 630 in 2014 and 576 in 2013. The overall number of household applicants has been increasing over the last several years (See Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2: Number of Households on the BC Housing Registry**



Source: BC Housing, Housing Registry Statistics, Web Focus Report HCSTAT002, March 31 of 2011-2015

<sup>5</sup> BC Housing. (2016). Housing Registry Statistics, Web Focus Report HCSTAT002, March 31 of 2011-2015

## HOUSING UPDATES

Since the North Shore Housing Inventory for Vulnerable populations was updated in June 2012, there have been several changes in the housing situation.

### Housing First Approach

In the last several years, there have been a growing body of literature, support and implementation of the Housing First approach. In 2014, as a part of the housing strategy, *Housing Matter BC*, the province adopted the Housing First approach to provide housing and supports without treatment expectation in social housing and the private market.<sup>6</sup> Housing First is a successful model with four core principles that include consumer choice and self-determination, immediate access to permanent housing with the supports to sustain it, housing is not conditional on sobriety or program participation, as well as social inclusion, self-sufficiency, and improved health and quality of life.<sup>7</sup>

### Rent Banks

Rent banks are micro-loans that provide short term funding to prevent evictions or the loss of essential utilities. The program aims to supports housing stability. The organizations that provide the loans also often provide financial education. Currently, the City of Vancouver, Surrey, and Kamloops within BC have rent bank programs.

### New Housing on the North Shore

City of North Vancouver: The YWCA partnered with the City to develop new social housing called Centreview at Lonsdale and 13<sup>th</sup>, which will provide 9 units for low-income single mothers and their children. It is expected to be ready for the summer of 2018. Another 5 units will be developed called Wallace & McDowell with the Vancouver Resource Society that should be ready for 2016 in lower Lonsdale.<sup>8</sup>

West Vancouver: The redevelopment of the Kiwanis Seniors housing called Kiwanis Garden Village resulted in an additional 86 unit. These units were completed in 2013-2014 and are located in between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The North Shore Crisis Service's Society: Sage Transition house has created 2, two bedroom self- contained suites for women and children fleeing abuse.

Hollyburn Family Services: Seniors Safe House has created 6 beds as a temporary housing for seniors with a 60 day maximum stay.

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<sup>6</sup> Province of British Columbia. (2014). *Housing Matter BC*. Retrieved from: [http://www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/HousingMattersBC\\_2014.pdf](http://www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/HousingMattersBC_2014.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (2016). Housing First. Retrieved from: <http://www.caeh.ca/a-plan-not-a-dream/housing-first/>

<sup>8</sup> City of North Vancouver. (2015). Non-Market Housing Projects. Retrieved from: <http://www.cnv.org/~media/5F46E58073904E0CACD0E0CF05CB2ADE.pdf>

In 2011, Malchow House, located at 2234 Marine Drive was closed because it needed costly renovations to remain habitable and the house had 10 beds that were used for people with mental illness. It has now been rebuilt and renamed as The Boulevard and the existing 10 beds have been re-established.

## SUMMARY TABLES

The following summary tables list the housing that is currently available as of February 2016 and the needs that remain. It should be noted that these numbers are estimates only and use proxy measures like waitlists or homeless counts. The estimated need for homeless shelters and transitional housing beds is based on the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, even though we generally know that this is an undercount of the true number of homeless. The estimate for stable housing is taken from the BC Housing Registry applicants that were on the waitlist as of March 2015 (See Table 1, 2, and 3).

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF UNMET HOUSING NEEDS FOR SENIORS, FAMILIES, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ON THE NORTH SHORE, 2015**

Facilities	Type of Stable Housing	Existing Units	# Turnaways or Waitlisted	Estimate of total need	Estimate of additional need
BC Housing (Multiple facilities)	Housing for Low-Income Seniors (1,271 independent seniors and 264 frail seniors)	1,535	275	1,810	275
BC Housing (Multiple facilities)	Housing for Persons with Special Needs (mental and/or physical disabilities)	245	157	402	157
BC Housing (Multiple facilities)	Housing for Low-Income Families	502	199	701	199
BC Housing (Multiple facilities)	Single Persons	N/A	41	N/A	41
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,282</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>672</b>

Source: BC Housing (2016). Housing Registry Statistics, Web Focus Report HCSTAT002, March 31 of 2011-2015

**TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF SOCIAL HOUSING AND SERVICES USED ON THE NORTH SHORE, 2015**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>North Vancouver</b>	<b>West Vancouver</b>	<b>Bowen Island</b>	<b>Lions Bay</b>	<b>Totals:</b>
<b>Permanent Social Housing</b>	Total housing administered by BC Housing for senior, families, and people with disabilities	1,787	495	0	0	<b>2,282</b>
<b>Rental Assistance Program</b>	Direct cash assistance provided to families and seniors renting in the private market. (Rental Assistance Program for working families with children and Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters)	959	402	17	2	<b>1,380</b>
<b>Homeless Rent Supplements</b>	This program connects people who are homeless to housing, income assistance, and community-based support services. The number of units shown represents an estimate of rent supplements given monthly based on available funding.	41	2	N/A	N/A	<b>43</b>

Source: BC Housing, Unit Count Pivot Tables, March 31, 2015

**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF UNMET EMERGENCY AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ON THE NORTH SHORE, 2015**

Organization	Type of Housing	Existing Units	# Turnaways or Waitlisted	Estimate of total need	Estimate of additional need
Lookout Society: North Shore Lookout Shelter	North Shore Homeless Emergency Shelter for adults	45 (2 emergency mats, 20 extreme weather mats)	400 turnaways per month	N/A	50
Lookout Society: North Shore Lookout Shelter	Transitional housing for adults	25	75 waitlisted	N/A	250 affordable housing units
Hollyburn: North Shore Youth Safehouse	Emergency shelter for youth	2 beds	32 turnaways	4 (lost two beds in 2015)	2
Hollyburn: North Shore Youth Safehouse	Transitional housing for youth	8 beds	3 waitlisted	N/A	N/A
Hollyburn: Seniors Safe House- Iris Suite	Temporary housing for seniors (60 day stay)	6 beds	15	12	6
North Shore Crisis Service's Society: Hope's Place	Second-stage transitional housing for women and children fleeing abuse	2 units (2 BR)	49 turnaways	N/A	N/A
North Shore Crisis Service's Society: Sage Transition House	First stage transitional housing for homeless women and children	18 beds	424 turnaways	N/A	N/A
North Shore Crisis Service's Society: Sage Transition House	Second stage transitional housing for women and children fleeing abuse	6 beds	40	N/A	N/A

Notes: 1) NA = Not Available,  
2) Mental health beds and disability housing are not included.

## DRAFT REGIONAL HOMELESS PLAN

The Draft Regional Homeless Plan (2014) prepared by The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH), estimated the number of housing units needed over the next 10 years. One limitation to this approach is that the homeless count underestimates the number of people who are homeless, so it is a point-in-time count. For the North Shore, the estimate is 1,000 low-income rental units over the next 10 years.<sup>9</sup>

Municipal Sub-Region	PIT Count # Adults and Youth	PIT Count %	Estimated population growth rate for each municipal sub-region <sup>17</sup>	Proportion of people found in PIT Count applied to Annual Prevalence (5,331) plus estimated population growth rate for each municipal sub-region over 10 yrs <sup>18</sup>	Regional Growth Strategy: Low Income Rental Demand
Burnaby	54	2%	18%	129	2,400
Delta	15	1%	9%	33	400
Langley (City + District)	91	3%	30%	240	1,700
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	84	3%	16%	200	1,000
New Westminister	91	3%	17%	213	700
<b>North Shore</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>1,000</b>
Richmond	38	1%	17%	90	1,800
Surrey	388	14%	24%	976	5,600
Tri-Cities	49	2%	22%	121	2,700
Vancouver	1,760	65%	11%	3,970	3,800
White Rock	4	<1%	12%	9	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,689</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>6,237</b>	<b>21,400</b>

Note:

- Vancouver includes Electoral Area A
- North Shore includes Lions Bay, North Van City North Van District and West Vancouver
- Delta includes Tsawassen First Nation
- Tri-Cities includes Anmore and Belcarra

Source: RSCH (2014). Draft Regional Homeless Plan (2014) prepared by The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, p. 27

## EMERGING ISSUES

An emerging concern as the densification increase on the North Shore, the cost of housing skyrockets, older rental buildings are being demolished and not replaced is the decrease in affordable, below market rental housing, the increased risk of homelessness and the departure of low income families and residents who are moving off the North Shore to more affordable communities elsewhere. In addition many seniors who remain in their homes are unable to afford operating costs of their own home; they often end up house rich but cash poor.

<sup>9</sup> RSCH. (2014). Draft Regional Homeless Plan. Retrieved from: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2014%20RegionalHomelessnessPlan.pdf>

## LIMITATIONS OF THIS INVENTORY

- Lack of data on specialized housing for populations such as seniors in subsidized housing, assisted living or residential care, those living with disabilities, or those living with severe mental health and addictions challenges (not included in table)
- Lack of data on how long people are waiting for affordable housing
  - Anecdotal data suggests a range from two to ten years
- Wait list data are a proxy of subsidized housing needs
  - Does not include persons who do not to apply due to long wait lists, or those who choose to go elsewhere
- Need for more comprehensive data collection from housing providers to:
  - Determine the demand for affordable housing for vulnerable groups
  - Plan an effectively coordinated advocacy strategy

## CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped that the information in this report will provide a foundation for more coordinated and thorough data collection among housing service providers, enabling them to better address the affordable housing shortage on the North Shore. Continuing to create and maintain extensive community networks and learning from success stories, especially in the area of mental health and addictions, will be key in securing reliable funding and resources for North Shore housing providers in the future and gaining community support for these initiatives. It is also important to recognize that increasing the stock of homeless shelters and transitional housing reduces the immediate need for affordable housing. However, the preference is more affordable and supported housing stock, which would decrease the need for emergency and transitional housing.

*For a copy of the complete report from 2009, email [Sandra.Edelman@vch.ca](mailto:Sandra.Edelman@vch.ca).*