Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report

DATE: July 2, 2020

FILE: 6410-20 / 5 Year Review

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Final Housing Needs Assessment – Regional Report

Purpose
To provide the Board with the final report of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment – Regional findings.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:
THAT the Regional Housing Needs Assessment be received and posted to the Comox Valley Regional District's website.

Executive Summary

- The final Regional Housing Needs Assessment report (2020) is attached (Appendix A). This report provides a picture of the Region's housing needs and provides context for each of the community-specific reports (i.e. municipal and electoral area-specific reports).
- The reports reflect a significant volume of both quantitative and qualitative data. Key community partners included the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness and the Comox Valley Community Health Network. Project partners included the Village of Cumberland, the Town of Comox and the City of Courtenay.
- The findings provide a solid baseline to track progress towards Goal No. 1 of the Regional Growth Strategy being "ensure a diversity of affordable housing options to meet evolving regional demographics and needs".
- The findings will also support the Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy project (underway), future updates to the Rural and municipal Official Community Plans and the Regional Growth Strategy. Further, this report as well as the community-specific reports, will provide important insight for the private and non-profit sectors in housing development proposals within the Valley.
- The findings will assist decision makers in assessing development proposals and when making funding decisions. It is anticipated that senior level government will look to these findings in respect to both housing policy and funding decisions.
- The Regional report as well as the community-specific reports will be posted to the Comox Valley Regional District's website.
- The next step in the Housing Needs Assessment project is a public presentation of findings. Planning for a virtual community forum is underway.

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Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

K'ómoks First Nation	✔
Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness	✔
Comox Valley Community Health Network	✔
Comox Valley Economic Development Society	✔

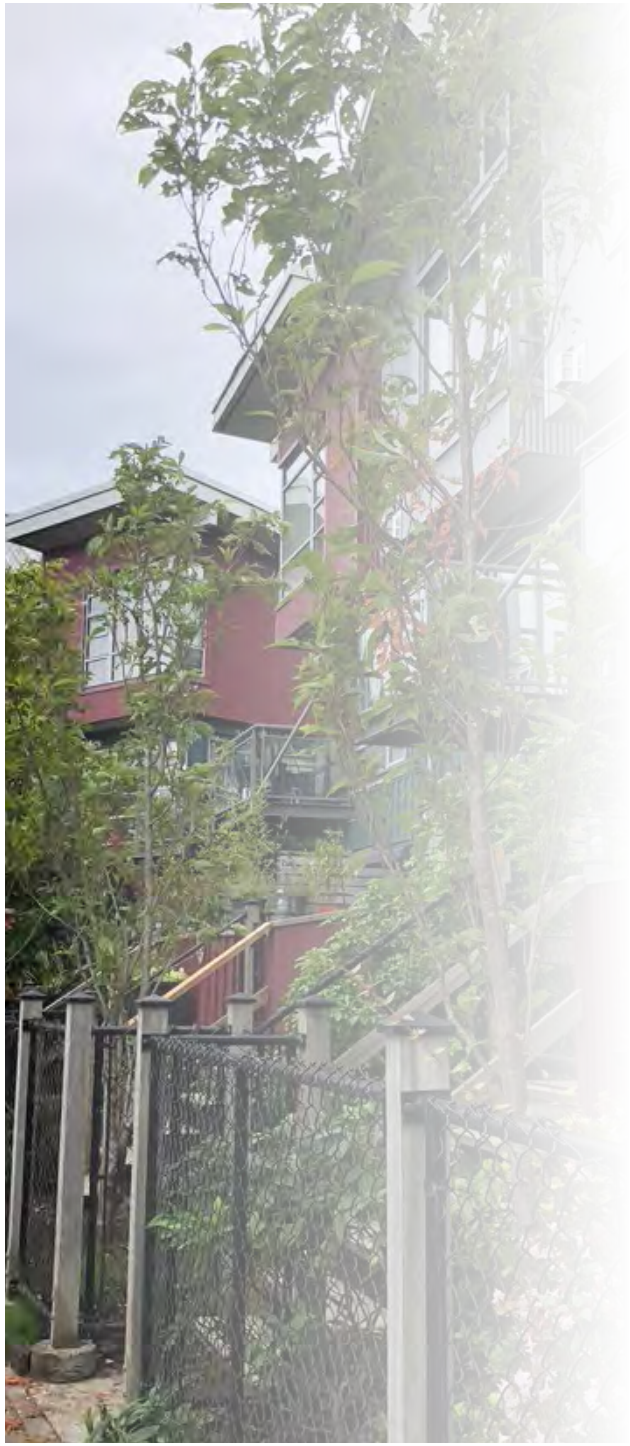
Attachments: Appendix A – "Regional Housing Needs Assessment Report"

Comox Vally Regional District

Housing Needs Assessment

Final Report

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT



Acknowledgments

The development of the Housing Needs Assessment was led by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and supported by staff from the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland. We would like to acknowledge and thank key stakeholders and members of the community who participated in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, shared lived experience, or participated in interviews.

- Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
- Comox Valley Health Network
- Comox Valley Accessibility Committee
- CFB Comox, 19 Wing
- Early Years Collaborative
- Association for Community Living
- School District 71
- Mount Washington Alpine Resort
- M'akola Housing Society, Comox Valley
- Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society
- LUSH Valley Food Action Society
- Comox Valley Transition Society
- Wachiay Friendship Centre
- Comox Valley Social Planning Society
- Cumberland Community Housing Society
- Comox Valley Economic Development Society

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT

With support from participating municipalities:

CITY OF COURTENAY

TOWN OF COMOX

Village of Cumberland
Incorporated 1898

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Executive Summary

Safe, affordable, and inclusive housing is an important component of a complete community and contributes to society and individual well-being. Unfortunately, it is becoming harder to find, especially for those most vulnerable. The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Village of Cumberland have undertaken a Housing Needs Assessment, funded by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Housing Needs Report program which supports local governments in undertaking this work. The work strengthens local understanding of what kinds of housing are needed in the region and informs local plans, policies, and development decisions.

Purpose

Housing Needs Reports are a way for communities to better understand their current and future housing needs. These reports can help identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information about local demographics, economics, housing stock, and other factors. A Housing Needs Report is critical to developing a housing strategy or action plan, but it does not provide policy direction itself. Goal Statement #1 of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy is to "ensure a diversity of housing options to meet evolving demographics and needs".[12] This assessment is a tool through which the Regional District and participating municipalities can begin to meet that policy goal.

The goals of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment are:

1. Clarify the problem – what are the current and projected housing needs of the Comox Valley Regional District and its member municipalities?
2. Identify focus areas – what needs are the most pressing in participating communities and which population groups are finding accessing housing to be the most difficult.
3. Inform regional action – a regional housing needs assessment gives municipalities, the regional district, the province, and community partners the same base from which to work to address housing.

*Note: Denman and Hornby Island are not included as part of this Housing Needs Assessment.

Requirements

Data Collection

The Province requires local governments to collect approximately 50 distinct kinds of data through a Housing Needs Report, including current and projected population, household income, significant economic sectors, and currently available and anticipated units. Key data sources include a provided custom data set from Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), BC Assessment, and BC Stats. This study also collected data from additional sources, including the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, and AirDNA.

Data Reporting

Housing Needs Reports are required to report on the following data:

12 From Schedule 'A' Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010, available at: https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/bylaws/bylaw-120_comox_valley_regional_district_regional_growth_strategy.pdf

- housing units required currently and over the next five years,
- number of households in core housing need, and
- statements about key areas of local need.

Engagement

The Housing Needs Reports are primarily focused on the collection and analysis of statistical data on housing needs. However, stakeholder and community input is important to fill gaps not captured by statistical data. To address these gaps, engagement opportunities were provided through:

- a community housing survey,
- key informant interviews,
- focus groups sessions,
- lived experience surveys, and
- informal "pop-up" engagement.

Key Findings

The following key themes were found throughout the data and community engagement portions of this project:

Defining "Appropriate Housing" in the Comox Valley

Throughout the engagement portions of this project, stakeholders were asked to discuss a suitable definition of "appropriate housing" for the Comox Valley. It was consistently agreed that appropriate housing would be affordable for people of all income levels, accessible for people of all physical abilities, the right size for all families, close to necessary services and supports, connected to services, supports and community spaces by active and public transportation routes, stable, safe, healthy, and includes necessary supportive elements.

Aging population

The Comox Valley, like most areas of British Columbia, has a population that is aging. The population of seniors (age 65 years and older) in Comox Valley grew 58.2 percent over from 2006 to 2016 (see **Figure 1**). This increased their share of the total population from 18.1 to 25.2 percent. CVRD's median age in 2016 was 50.3, up from 44.9 in 2006.

These findings indicate a need for housing across the Comox Valley that supports the needs of older residents. Specifically:

- **There is a need for more housing that is affordable for those on a fixed income, particularly within the rental market.** In

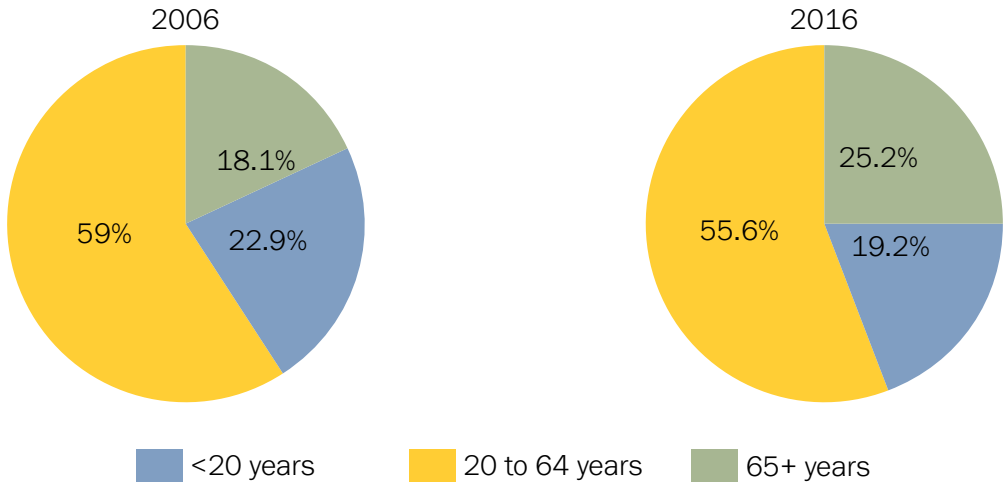
2016, 31.6% of all households in Core Housing Need had at least one member who was 65 years or older. Senior-led renter households have the highest rate of Core Housing Need at 41.0 percent.

- **There is a need for more accessible housing options.** Seniors are more likely to be living with a disability or activity limitation than other age groups. Housing that is accessible or follows universal design principles will be important to promote to meet the expected need as the population of the CVRD ages.
- **There is a need for connected housing options.** Engagement feedback from this study indicated that seniors and other community members would like housing that is better linked to reliable public transportation. This is especially important for seniors who may choose to drive less as they age or may not be able to operate a personal vehicle. Consistent with a complete community approach, zoning and land use decisions that prioritize public transportation infrastructure before private transportation infrastructure would support the growing needs of seniors, as well as many other population groups.

Growth

The Comox Valley is growing steadily, not rapidly. The population of CVRD is expected to grow to 70,875 by 2025, up 10.1 percent from 2016. Between 2006 and 2016 the number of owner households grew 15 percent to 21,625 and the number of renter households grew 24.5 percent to 6,775. Housing within the region, and specifically within core settlement areas (as identified in the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy), will need to appropriately accommodate this growth.

Figure 1. Comox Valley Age Distribution for 2006 and 2016.



Low-Income Measure and Young Families

About 15 percent of Comox Valley residents fall below the after-tax Low-Income Measure (LIM) measure. Low-Income Measures (LIMs) are a set of thresholds calculated by Statistics Canada that identify Canadians belonging to a household whose overall incomes are below 50 percent of median adjusted household income. "Adjusted" refers to the idea that household needs increase as the number of household members increase. Statistics Canada emphasizes that the LIM is not a measure of poverty but identifies those who are substantially worse off than the average.

Younger people and young families in the Comox Valley experience the greatest difficulty in meeting their needs (or for their families to meet their needs); 23.4 percent of children between 0 to 5 years and 21.3 percent of children under the age of 18 belong to a household below the measure. Studies have shown that people and especially families with children unable to meet their needs are more likely to experience mortality, chronic illness burden, adverse early childhood development, exposure to toxic stress, mental health illness and poor educational attainment.[13] If young people and young families feel that housing affordability and availability in the Comox Valley puts them at risk of financial insecurity, they may consider moving. A complete community relies on people from all experiences and ages participating in and being fulfilled by community life. If a key age group is not being supported by institutions and markets in the Comox Valley, it impacts life for all residents.

Childhood poverty is an important local issue with several organizations dedicated to alleviating the burden on parents and advocating for more equitable income distribution in the Comox Valley, including the Comox Valley Health Network, whose top strategic priorities are housing and children, youth, and families, and the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative.[14] Both participated in this study.

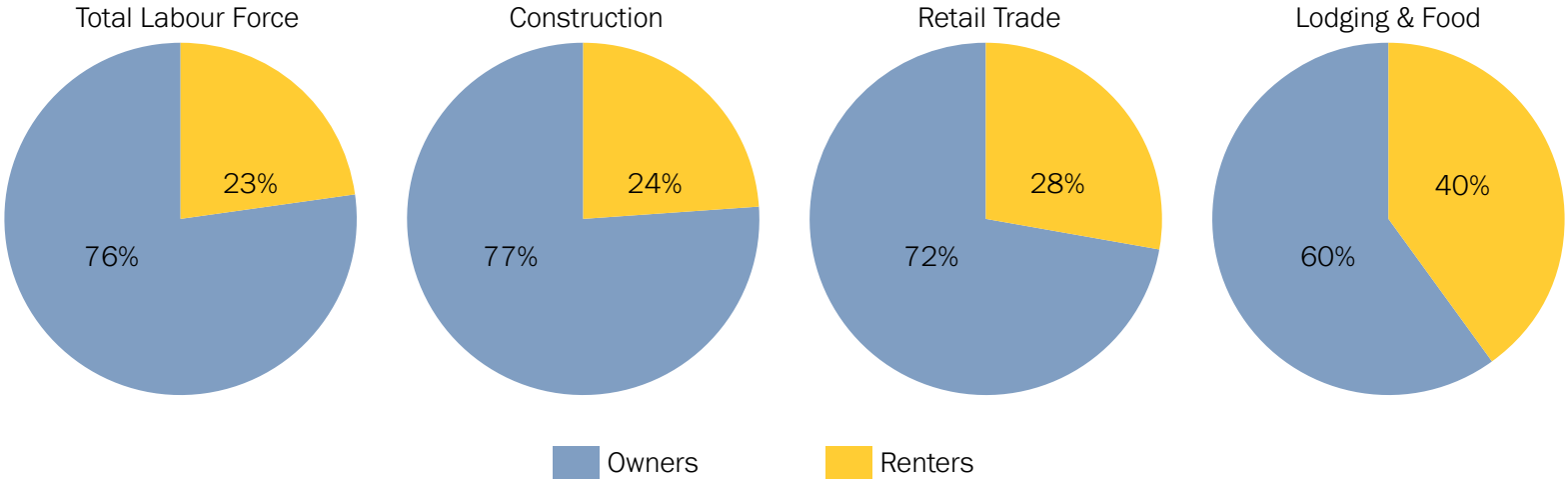
Renters

The numbers of renters are increasing across the Comox Valley, with a 24.5 percent increase in the number of renters since 2006. Renter households also earn significantly less income than owner households. The median CVRD owner household income is $73,367; rental household income is $38,394.

13 From Canadian Medical Association Journal, The impact of poverty on Canadian children: a call for action. Available at: https://cmajblogs.com/the-impact-of-poverty-on-canadian-children-a-call-for-action/

14 Comox Valley Health Network. https://www.cvchn.ca/priorities

Figure 2. Comox Valley Labour Force Distribution by Employment Sectors, Owners, and Renters.



Renters are 6 times more likely to experience Extreme Core Housing Need than owners in the Comox Valley. Extreme Need depicts what households pay more than 50 percent of their income on shelter costs.

The increased percentage of renters and frequency of Core Housing Need points to a greater demand for dedicated rental housing options that are affordable, accessible and appropriate for the community. Renters tend to make up a disproportionately large amount of the workforce in key Comox Valley employment sectors including retail and construction. Engagement revealed that employers are finding it more and more difficult to find workers for positions in those and other industries. Improving housing options for renters may alleviate concerns from employers, improving the viability of key industries (see **Figure 2 on page 11**).

Owners and renters are both worse off than they were in 2006 according to Core Housing Need

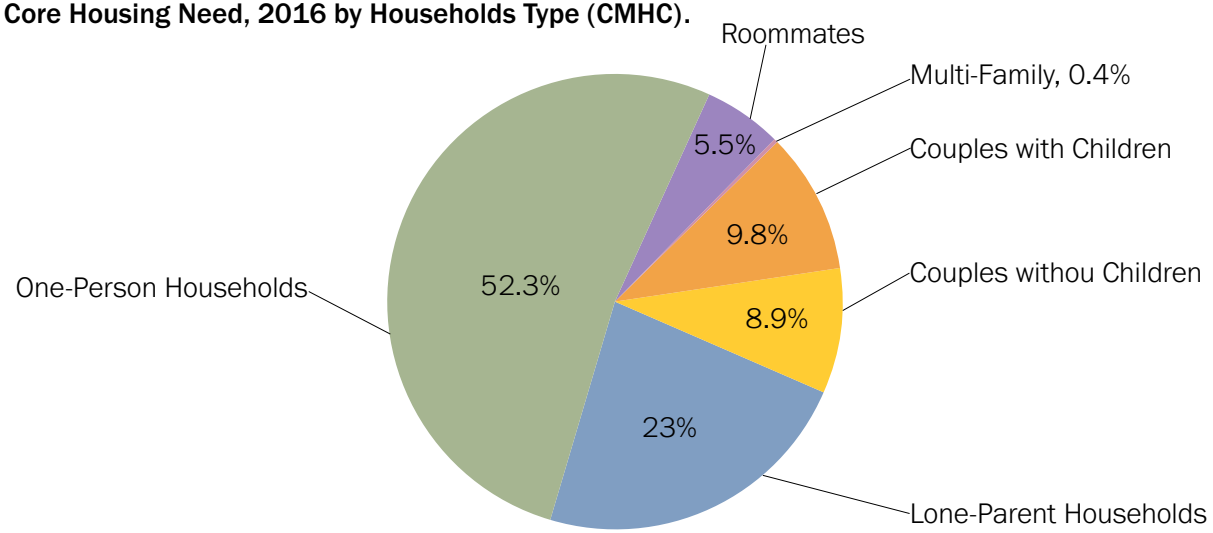
In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that 2,815 households (10.3 percent) were in Core Housing Need. This is an increase of 735 households since 2006. Proportional to their respective totals, both owners and renters are now worse off than they were in 2006. When people spend more than 30% of their income on housing, or do not have access to the housing they need to support their needs it impacts their ability to contribute to other aspects of their community, including the economy. Lower

proportions of housing costs are associated with an increase in disposable income, making it easier for individuals and families to afford non-housing related essentials such as medication and nutritious food. Individuals and families are also supported to stay in one place for a longer period, which improves their social well-being and builds connections with the community. Affordable and stable housing for both owners and renters is a key component of a complete community.

The private market is not able to provide housing for a significant proportion of the Comox Valley.

Across the region, 10.3 percent of households are in Core Housing Need and nearly 30 percent of renter households are in Core Housing Need. Only couples or couples with children can reasonably expect to own a single-detached home. Lone parent and non-economic households (for example, roommates or individuals living alone) would struggle to rent or own more affordable housing options, and the stock of those options is limited. A household earning the median income should be able to rent a 2+ bedroom home but would not be able to purchase a detached house, the most common housing type in the Region. In 2016, the largest proportion of the CVRD's households in Core Housing Need were one-person households at 52.3 percent, followed by lone-parent households at 23.0 percent. Households with children represented 32.8 percent of households in Core Housing Need including lone-parents and couples with children (see **Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Households in Core Housing Need, 2016 by Households Type (CMHC).



Individuals living alone may be struggling the most

Individuals living alone represent 52.3 percent of all households in Core Housing Need. Those households without a dual income struggle to find affordable housing in the Comox Valley. The primary rental market provides supplies a minimal amount of bachelor or studio type apartments available for rent in the region. Individuals with lived experience of homelessness shared that affordable single room housing options were once available in the region, but have become unavailable for a variety of reasons including the loss of Single Occupancy Room (SRO) building stock to redevelopment in downtown areas. The provision of bachelor and studio style housing options is an area of need for both affordability and suitability.

There is a need for more non-market housing and support for unhoused populations across the Comox Valley. As of January 2020, the BC Housing wait list for subsidised units had 270 applications; 73 families, 82 residents with disabilities, 74 seniors, 12 persons requiring wheelchair modified housing, 25 singles, and 1 rent supplement applicant. As of 2018, 117 people identified as experiencing homelessness, 58 percent of whom were unsheltered. Thirty-two percent identified as being indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total population identifies as indigenous. Of all respondents to the 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, 29 percent were above the age of 54, while 6 percent were below 26. An explanation of these totals is at the end of this section.

This is likely an underrepresentation of the actual need as those who are in “hidden homeless” situations (couch surfing, living in campers, boats and other vehicles) are often hard to identify. Community engagement activities highlighted this need and it was shared that several community members who are unable to find affordable housing options are living in insecure situations, such as in RV’s on available properties or camping year-round. A more recent PIT count was completed in March of 2020; however, results were not available at the time this report was completed.

Rent subsidies are not keeping up with changes in the housing cost

In 2016, 10.8 percent of renter households in the CVRD received a form of subsidy to help pay for their rental accommodation. Accounting for inflation, the purchasing power of rental subsidies has decreased over the past 10 years while rental prices have increased, leaving those who rely on a rental subsidy with fewer available, affordable options. This leaves some of the most vulnerable community members in precarious housing situations.

Precarious Housing

Housing that is not affordable, is overcrowded, is unfit for habitations, or is occupied through unstable tenancy.[15]

There is a desire to explore alternative housing options.

One of the most encouraging themes to emerge from community engagement activities was a strong public desire to pursue alternative tenure types and forms of housing. People understood that encouraging denser development or more rental housing could improve housing availability but did not trust market housing to provide a long-term solution to the housing crisis. Many people brought up cooperative housing models, land trusts, and even housing authorities as potential methods of improving availability, affordability, and stabilizing the market.

"There's no diversity in the available affordable housing options. Apartments are not going to meet everyone's needs OR BE DESIRABLE to everyone."

"One family, they each had two jobs, and they worked worked worked, but couldn't qualify for a mortgage. That middle is missing!"

"They had cooperative housing in the 80 and that was a great thing!"

"Tiny homes, other models, co-ops, land trusts - co-housing with seniors and students, etc. etc. There's a million ways to meet housing needs that just don't seem to be on the table.

The people in most need are those with the least housing options available to them.

There is recognition in the Valley that people with the least ability to weather unstable housing conditions are the most likely to be affected by the current housing deficit. Populations that were identified explicitly include: single-income parents, seniors, people who require accessible homes, and people living on income assistance or making less than the median income

Equity-seeking groups are more often in Core Housing Need

Equity-seeking groups, including Indigenous households, senior households and households with at least one person with an activity limitation, reported higher rates of Core Housing Need compared to other households in the Region. For example,

15 https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Precarious_Housing_In_Canada.pdf

households with at least one person with an activity limitation represent 72.9 percent of households in Core Housing Need and Indigenous community members, though only 6 percent of the Comox Valley population, represent 12.2% of all households in Core Housing Need. This illustrated the need to support equity-seeking groups who have historically been excluded from employment and housing opportunities.

> ***Equity-seeking groups***
>
> *Equity-seeking groups are communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation.*[16]

These findings were reiterated through both qualitative and quantitative data findings. Community engagement activities reinforced the concern that people who have traditionally been able to afford housing in the Comox Valley are increasingly being pushed out. This manifests in hidden homelessness, increased usage rates at places like food banks, or people renting in places that are further from vital services so that they can access the affordability level or number of bedrooms they might need.

The following report provides much greater detail on these and other housing related indicators that are relevant to all communities in the Comox Valley. It is important to note that this report assumes that the difference between housing supply and demand begins at equilibrium in 2016. Meaning, any deviations from this equilibrium are considered a variation from the "status quo." Establishing 2016 as the starting year is based on the availability of detailed data (specifically, the 2016 Census) and the replicability of the exercise in future report iterations.

If the supply and demand remain equal, then the CVRD market should generally maintain the same market characteristics (such as affordability, discussed in greater detail in the **Affordability Gap** section). Meaning, those households struggling to pay for housing would generally not be worse or better off than they were in 2016.

Though the CVRD is split into separate communities, the relative proximity of those communities means CVRD housing markets are interrelated and can experience ebbs and flows in demand based

16 https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/equity-seeking-groups

on the circumstances of each community. Notably, the projected excess supply in the City of Courtenay does not mean that units will stand vacant or that the community is building “too much”.

Furthermore, it is important to note that speaking to housing supply only takes into consideration those units within the market; non-market options (i.e. transitional shelters or social housing) are not contemplated by the census and estimating future vulnerable populations is complex. Currently occupied non-market accommodations, referred to in the **Non-Market Housing** section, are the best indicators of actual supply.

Introduction

Project Overview

In October 2019, Gather Planning and Engagement and Turner Drake & Partners Ltd. were engaged by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) to complete a Regional Housing Needs Assessment for the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and Electoral Areas 'A', 'B', and 'C' of the Regional District. Denman and Hornby Islands were not included in this assessment. The assessment is meant to provide staff, the Regional Board, participating municipalities, Indigenous governments, and community partners with a better understanding of local housing needs. The Assessment will be used to guide policy formulation for the local and regional governments, inform land use planning decisions, and direct regional housing action.

The overall objectives of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment were to:

- Provide a comprehensive understanding of housing supply, demand and needs within the region across the housing continuum, including: emergency and transitional shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, rental housing (both primary and secondary market) and ownership housing (fee simple, strata ownership or shared equity ownership);
- Assess current housing policy within the CVRD and participating member municipalities;
- Identify housing gaps and make recommendation as to strategies and best management practices taken by other local

governments to address housing gaps that may be applicable;

- Identify opportunities, partnerships, programs, and funding in support of local and regional housing projects and initiatives;
- Identify any additional factors that influence the supply, demand or provision of housing, including the influence of housing speculation and short-term rental accommodations;
- Engage key stakeholders in the development of an "appropriate housing" definition and create performance measures or common housing indicators that can be used to measure progress over the short and long-term for policy and decision-making.

Report Organization

This report is organized into four key sections:

1. **Executive Summary** – A brief overview of the key report findings from the regional report.
2. **Regional Housing Needs Assessment** – The full Regional Housing Needs Assessment with in-depth discussion and analysis of regional housing trends. The Regional report contains most of the market analysis from the region and is meant be used by each community in conjunction with their local report. The regional report also contains an overview of the different policy tools available to regional and local governments, their applicability in the Comox Valley, and recommended next steps to address housing in the Regional District.
3. **Local Reports** – Local reports contain more specific data and analysis on each of the participating municipalities and electoral areas. While these reports individually meet all the requirements of Provincial legislation, the regional report contains more in-depth analysis and commentary. We recommend that individual community reports be reviewed along with this Regional Report to ensure the most complete housing picture is available for your community.

Housing Continuum and Wheelhouse

Throughout this report, housing needs are often categorized by tenure, or the financial arrangements under which an individual or group of individuals in a partnership has the right to live in their home. The most common types of tenure are rental and ownership, but there are many different tenure forms or financial relationships that individuals can have with their home. These relationships are often organized along the housing continuum or spectrum as shown in **Figure 4 on page 19**. Used around the world, the model typically displays housing as a linear progression from homelessness or housing need to homeownership.

For most of us, housing need changes as we move through different stages of our lives. In Canadian settler culture, for example, children and youth tend to live with their parents, then maybe move to a semi-supported housing option (like a university dormitory or housing associated with their job), before

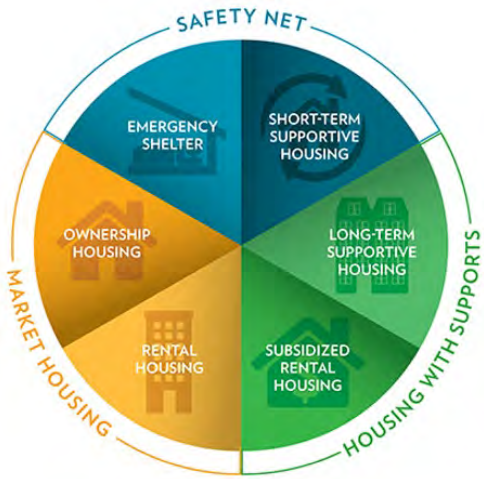
Figure 4. The Housing Continuum. Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018.

renting while they save up enough money to enter market home ownership. The traditional housing continuum model supposes that people will start somewhere on the axis and then move from left-to-right, with homeownership as the ultimate goal and marker of "success".

While still a useful tool for visualizing the many available housing options, many communities are experimenting with alternative housing frameworks that can account for different cultures, lifestyles, and economic realities. For a variety of reasons, changes to housing needs can occur in different directions along the continuum and many families and individuals may not choose homeownership as their ultimate goal. If an economic hardship hits your family and you need to move from ownership to rental, you have not failed; rather, your needs have changed. Similarly, if you choose to rent rather than own so you can live closer to work, you are no less successful. The housing continuum promotes a false narrative that moving from left to right, towards a market-oriented relationship to housing is the correct way to navigate the housing system.

One of the more innovative alternatives to the continuum model that re-frames housing relationships has been recently adopted in British Columbia. The Housing Wheelhouse as shown in **Figure 5**, consciously repositions homeownership from the end of the spectrum to just one outcome among three equal outcomes.

Figure 5. The Housing Wheelhouse from the City of Kelowna. Source: The Housing Wheelhouse, City of Kelowna (2017)



The goal of the shift was to encourage decision-makers, housing providers, developers and residents to understand that all tenures of housing are vital components to creating and maintaining a healthy, sustainable and adaptable housing system. No one level of housing is greater or more important than another.

> *"By de-emphasizing homeownership in favour of a more diverse and evolving approach, the Wheelhouse allows the City to respond more efficiently and effectively to people's changing needs by adapting the programs and strategies."*[17]

Through this Housing Needs Assessment, the Comox Valley has an opportunity to use the information in this report and knowledge gained through the process to similarly re-frame conversations around housing. The Wheelhouse is one tool for you and your partners to collectively envision and build a housing system that includes all forms of housing, rather than focusing solely on homeownership, bringing the Region closer to achieving Goal #1 of the Regional Growth Strategy.

17 Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2019)

Preparing the Report

This report is based on analysis of qualitative data and quantitative information gathered through community engagement activities. It draws on the partnering local government's existing policy context, available statistical data on demographics and housing, and the knowledge and expertise contributed by community members and other stakeholders. The intent of this report is to identify the housing needs of individuals at all life stages, with a particular emphasis on community members who are struggling or unable to meet their housing needs through options available in the housing market.

Housing is a human right, enshrined in Canadian law, to which all groups should have equal access and opportunity.[18,19] It is an important social determinant of health; the quality, accessibility, and affordability of housing has significant short and long-term impacts for mental and physical health and wellbeing.[20] Equity-seeking groups face systemic discrimination and often have greater housing needs. Considering equity can help ensure these groups benefit from housing policies, programs, services, or initiatives, from which they may otherwise be excluded, and can have ongoing benefits for community health and wellbeing.[21]

Equity is about "the fair distribution of opportunities, power, and resources to meet the needs of all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, culture or background."[22] Generally, equity-seeking groups are people who have been systematically disadvantaged and excluded. These groups may face extra barriers in accessing affordable, suitable, and adequate housing.

Roles in Addressing Housing Need

Local Governments

Changes to federal and provincial government roles are placing considerable pressure on municipalities to become more active in providing and facilitating affordable housing. Additionally, housing issues are often felt most acutely at the local level.

The Comox Valley Regional District maintains the Regional Growth Strategy to guide growth in the region and encourage the development of affordable housing. It also has planning authority for Electoral Areas A, B, and C. Municipalities maintain

18 The full bill can be reviewed here: https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=10404016
19 From United Nations Fact Sheet #21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing, available at: https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/FactSheet21en.pdf
20 From the BC Centre for Disease Control Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit, available at: http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE_linkages_toolkit_2018.pdf
21 From the PlanH Healthy Housing Action Guide, available at: https://planh.ca/sites/default/files/tools-resources/healthyhousing_guide_web_v1.0.pdf
22 PlanH Healthy Housing Action Guide.

Official Community Plans and in some cases, Affordable Housing Strategies that they may use to plan for affordable housing. Generally, local government roles generally fall into four categories:

- Incentivize – Local governments can make land available, directly award funding, and provide relief from various fees and charges (e.g. development cost charges, community amenity charges). Local governments can also incentivize affordable housing though provisions in planning documents like Official Community Plans, affordable housing strategies, and transportation plans.
- Regulate – Local governments can mandate affordable housing, for example through an inclusionary housing or zoning policy;
- Partner – Local governments can partner with non-profit housing providers, social service organizations, and other affordable housing advocats by creating an Affordable Housing working group as an arm of Council, sitting on coalition boards as a member, and utilizing relationships with these sectors to guide further decision-making. In the CVRD, the Comox Valley Homelessness Supports Service Establishment Bylaw No. 389 allows the Region to fund one or more non-governmental organization(s). This unique funding arrangement is an example of a productive partnership that has impacted homelessness supports, and community education and advocacy. The primary recipient of funding has been the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness.
- Education and Advocacy – Local governments can make affordable housing easier to develop by raising community awareness of local affordability issues and encouraging increased support from senior levels of government.

Non-Profit Organizations

The non-profit housing sector builds and manages housing units that are typically priced at the low-end of market or below market rates and may include support services. Non-profit organizations typically receive some form of financial assistance from senior levels of government to enable them to offer affordable rents, usually reduced-rate mortgages, capital grants, and ongoing operating subsidies. Sometimes an organization will manage a portfolio that includes market units as a means of subsidizing rents for other units or properties. As senior government responsibilities have changed, and as other levels of government have stepped back from providing affordable housing directly, non-profits have become the most active provider of affordable housing across British Columbia.

Private Sector

Including speculators, developers, builders, investors, landowners, and landlords, the private sector is the most common provider of housing in British Columbia. Responsible for development, construction, and ongoing management of a range of housing

forms and tenures the private sector is an important partner in addressing housing goals. However, the private sector has limitations as investors expect their developments to earn profits. Although important, private sector development is only one housing tool in an increasingly diverse toolbox.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was a key component of the Comox Valley Regional Housing Needs Assessment and approximately 1,100 individuals provided input. Beginning in November 2019 and ending with the close of the online survey in January 2020 a variety of engagement events were held, including focus groups, key informant interviews, pop-ups, and online and in-person surveys. Objectives for the engagement process included:

1. Collect Additional Data

Quantitative data can be very effective at showing housing need, but often qualitative data like quotes or stories can a greater impact with community members and decision makers. Additional data captured through the engagement process illustrates quantitative findings and provides further information about the people effected by housing, rather than just numbers.

2. Ground Truth Data Findings

In smaller communities, Census Canada data can be unreliable and may not paint an accurate picture of housing need. Additionally, the most recent available data is from 2016 and may be out of date in communities that have experienced market fluctuations or substantial shifts in employment or population. Engagement captured up-to-date data that informed findings and helped determine the accuracy of external data sources.

3. Promote Equity Through the Engagement Process

Planning processes that incorporate equity and inclusion have been shown to promote health, well-being, and community connectedness, regardless of the outcome or findings of the study. When people are asked to participate in a planning process, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership over decisions that are made and are more likely to support recommendations or priorities set by decision makers.

4. Identify Community Strengths to Inform Asset-Based Recommendations

Community engagement helps the researchers meet members of the community and observe the different housing processes at work. This informs recommendations that leverage community assets rather than focus on deficits.

Each engagement event and process were designed to contribute to these objectives and capture meaningful data from community members across the housing spectrum. Community engagement findings are shared in the “Community Perspectives” section of

each chapter and a full accounting of all engagement activities is available in the Community Engagement appendix of this report.

Quantitative Data: Sources and Limitations

This report contains quantitative data from a variety of sources, including BC Custom Housing Needs Reports data from Statistic Canada for the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses and 2011 National Household Survey, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), BC Housing, BC Assessment, BC Statistics, Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, the Comox Valley Regional District, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Village of Cumberland. Much of this data was accessed through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing datasets prepared for the Housing Needs Reports in BC.

External Impacts on Housing

In addition to the limitations and methods described below, emerging trends and issues add further uncertainty to the assessment presented in this report. Population, household, and housing projections are only able to provide a sense of trend, should current assumptions remain the same over time.

In reality, population growth and housing needs are highly dependent on unpredictable external factors. Recently, increased strata insurance premiums have impacted strata tenure developments, making insurance unaffordable for some stratas and homeowners. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread loss of employment across the globe and will likely have ongoing impacts for years to come, with the implications very difficult to assess right now.

In short, this assessment is subject to external influences beyond the Local Governments' control or ability to foresee, so it is suggested that the results be used as a guide to inform future planning and decision-making, rather than a definitive record of community conditions and housing needs.

Limitations

Although the report aims to maintain consistency in the data it shares and analyzes, there are some notable considerations to keep in mind:

1. This Housing Needs Report does not include the Denman and Hornby Island Trusts. Consequently, their associated demographic and economic data has been removed from overall CVRD totals and those of Electoral Area A. Readers may notice a difference between the data provided as part of this report and the data shown by the Statistics Canada website.

2. In order to provide tenure specific information (i.e. owner and renter households), the report had to use the custom Statistics Canada dataset generated on behalf of the Province. When compared to the aggregate data on the Statistics Canada website, the reader may notice discrepancies; particularly, for total populations. This is due to the custom data only reporting on "usual residents" – those permanently residing on the premises; whereas, total population numbers normally available through Statistics Canada take all persons into account. Accordingly, the report puts added emphasis on percentages when discussing trends or making cross-

geographical comparisons.

3. Notwithstanding consideration (2), those sections that refer solely to the total population or total households (e.g. historical and anticipated), without reference to owners or tenures, use data acquired directly from Statistics Canada and not the custom dataset.

4. Between the 2006, 2011, and 2016 censuses, many boundaries within the CVRD have changed, which makes it difficult to compare data across time. Although historical comparisons can be made using percentages/proportions, the discrepancies can have considerable impact on the dependability of population projections. In other words, not accounting for a boundary change, which may involve increasing or decreasing the population total by the number of people already living in that area, could result in higher/lower projected populations. To roughly estimate consistent boundaries over time, work required the addition or subtraction of Dissemination Area (DA) data from the individual community totals, adjusted by the proportion of land within that DA that was actually added or subtracted. The result is 2016 community boundaries applied to both 2006 and 2011, where necessary.

5. Both traditional Statistics Canada data and the custom dataset may have small discrepancies between its discrete data categories for populations or households. The differences are due to statistical rounding within each individual section, which may result in those categorical sums differing from others.

6. Rental rate statistics reflect the median rent that is paid among all units in the market. In locations where rents are increasing, it is typical that asking rents for currently available (vacant) units are higher than median market rents. Occupied units may trail these asking rents for a variety of reasons: market changes since the lease contracts were executed, legislative controls on rental increases for existing tenants, the introduction of newly completed (more expensive) dwellings into the pool of available units, landlords applying less aggressive rent increases to current tenants to reduce unit turnover, etc. Therefore, rental statistics in this report likely understate the rents that households currently looking for rental accommodation would have to pay. CMHC does track the difference in rents between vacant and occupied units, but only for larger markets. The closest location for which data is available is the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area. The difference in rents between vacant and occupied units can vary significantly by unit type and location, in Victoria's submarkets this difference can vary from 2 to 45 percent. Over the entire market, rents in Victoria are 20% higher in vacant units, compared to occupied.

Report discussions attempt to bridge data from separate sections where appropriate and/or possible. As such, it is important to consider the document as a whole and not solely as its individual parts. For greater detail about the communities that make up the CVRD, please refer to their specific Housing Needs Reports, available in the appendices of this report.

Regional Report

Demographic Profile

Understanding the past, current, and future demographics of a community is crucial to understanding its housing needs. Ages and stages of life are directly related to the types of housing that is needed. This section summarizes the demographic context of the Region, using data from the standard Census Profiles where possible and supplemented by data from the Custom Census datasets published by MAH. All data is derived from the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses and 2011 National Housing Survey.

Key Takeaways:

Aging population

The Comox Valley, like most areas of British Columbia and Canada, is aging. The Region's population of seniors (persons aged 65 years or older) grew 58.2 percent over 10 years. This increased their share of the total population from 18.1 to 25.2 percent. CVRD's median age was 50.3, up from 44.9 in 2006.

Growth

The Comox Valley is growing - the population of CVRD is expected to grow to 70,875 by 2025, up 10.1 percent from 2016. Between 2006 and 2016 the number of owner households grew 15

percent to 21,625 and the number of renter households grew 24.5 percent to 6,775.

Homelessness

There is an acute need for those who are unhoused. In 2018, 117 individuals were identified as living without shelter. This is likely an underrepresentation of the actual need, as those who are in "hidden homeless" situations (couch surfing, living in campers, boats and other vehicles) are often hard to identify. We heard through community engagement that several community members who are unable to find affordable housing options are living in insecure situations, such as in RV's on available properties.

Renters

The numbers of renters are up across the Comox Valley 24.5% since 2006. This points to a greater need for dedicated rental housing options.

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to the impacts of the Valley's changing demographics were shared through community engagement activities.

Community empathy and concern for future generations.
There is a deep and genuine concern for the well-being of others and the future of housing availability in the Comox Valley. Many parents were concerned that their children would not have the same opportunities in the housing market as they did and almost everyone was concerned that there was an increasing number of people in their community struggling to find a place to live. Community members are also concerned that housing availability will only get worse as more people move to the Valley to retire.

Impacts of an aging population.
The aging population presents a greater need for at home care options and smaller housing units that allow for downsizing.

Key Quotes:

"I am 62 years old and would like to retire in the next 5 years but have no clue where I will be able to afford to live. My pensions will be too high to get subsidy but too low to pay market rates."

"Two seniors living in a 4-bedroom house. but no small 2-bedroom houses being built, and can't afford cost of moving, realtor costs, and house price."

1. Population

Between 2006 and 2016, the CVRD's population grew by 13.6 percent (1.3 percent annually), as described below in . Cumberland grew the fastest at 36.3 percent. All others, with the exception of Electoral Area B, rose about 15 percent. Electoral Area B had marginal gains of just 0.1 percent.

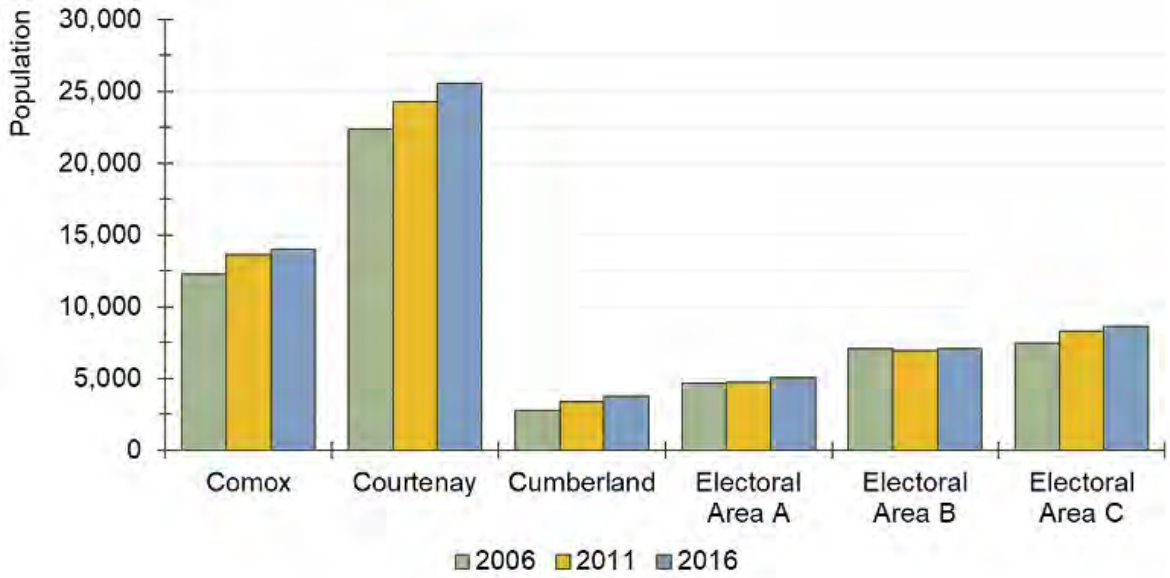
2. Age

Although CVRD communities are generally growing, they exhibit distinct age cohort trends, as described within **Figure 7 on page 29** and **Table 2 on page 109** in the Appendix. The Town of Comox has the largest relative share of seniors, followed by Electoral Area A. The main difference between the two is the higher rate of residents aged 85 or older – 4.6 percent in the former, 2.6 percent higher than the latter.

The Village of Cumberland reported noticeably higher numbers of children below the age of 15 years old, reaching 18.3 percent. This was 4.0 percentage points greater than the City of Courtenay (14.3 percent). Cumberland also has the highest share of people between the ages of 25 to 64 years old (58.1 percent). The increase in the Village's youth and working age populations is directly related to the growth of both cohorts since 2006.

All communities, except for Cumberland, reported declining numbers of young persons and young adults. CVRD's population

Figure 6. All Communities – Historical Population, 2006 to 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



growth depended heavily on rises in the number of older residents. Accordingly, local median ages rose, as described within **Figure 8 on page 30** and **Table 3 on page 109** in the Appendix.

Overall, CVRD's median age was 50.3, up from 44.9 in 2006. As of 2016, Electoral Area A had the highest median age at 55.3, followed by Electoral Area B with 53.0, and Electoral Area C with 51.2. This indicates that older residents are more likely (relative to local total populations) to live in the more rural areas of the CVRD. Cumberland aside, all communities had an increase in their median age.

Across CVRD, the median age of renters fell considerably below those of owners. Overall, the CVRD median for owners and renters was 53.9 and 34.6, respectively, in 2016.

3. Senior Population

Comox Valley's senior population (65+ years old) grew 58.2 percent over 10 years. Their share of the total population rose from 18.1 to 25.2 percent. Although the Town of Comox has the highest proportion of seniors at 29.1 percent, its senior population grew the slowest.

Aside from both K'ómoks First Nation and Comox, senior growth rates were higher than 53 percent. The highest rates were in

Figure 7. All Communities – Population Distribution. Source: Statistics Canada.

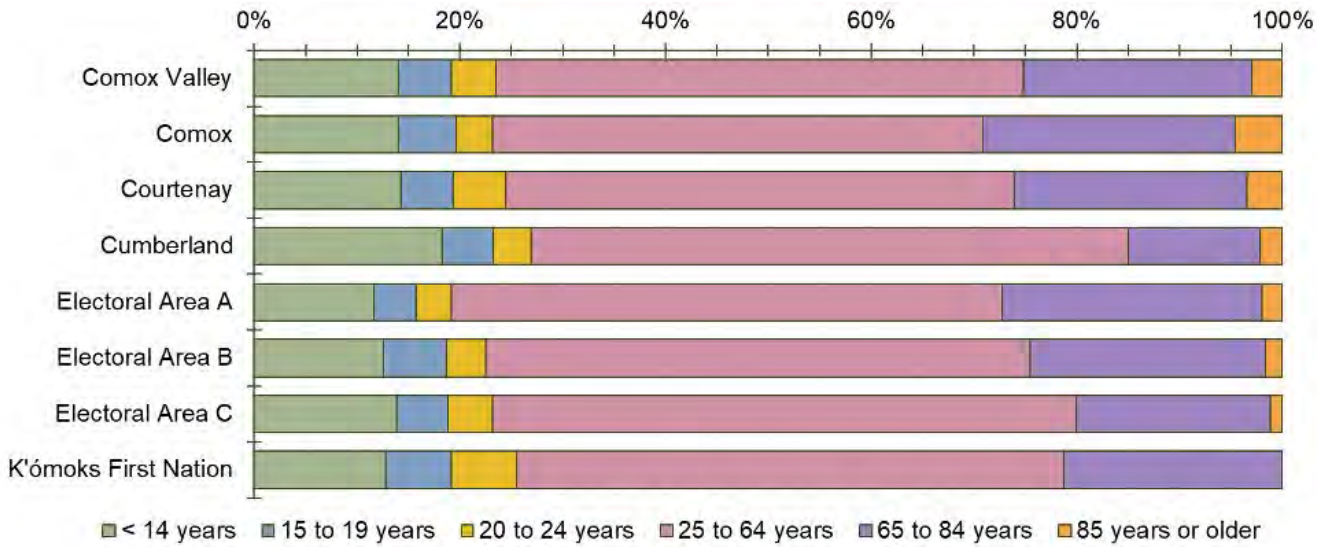
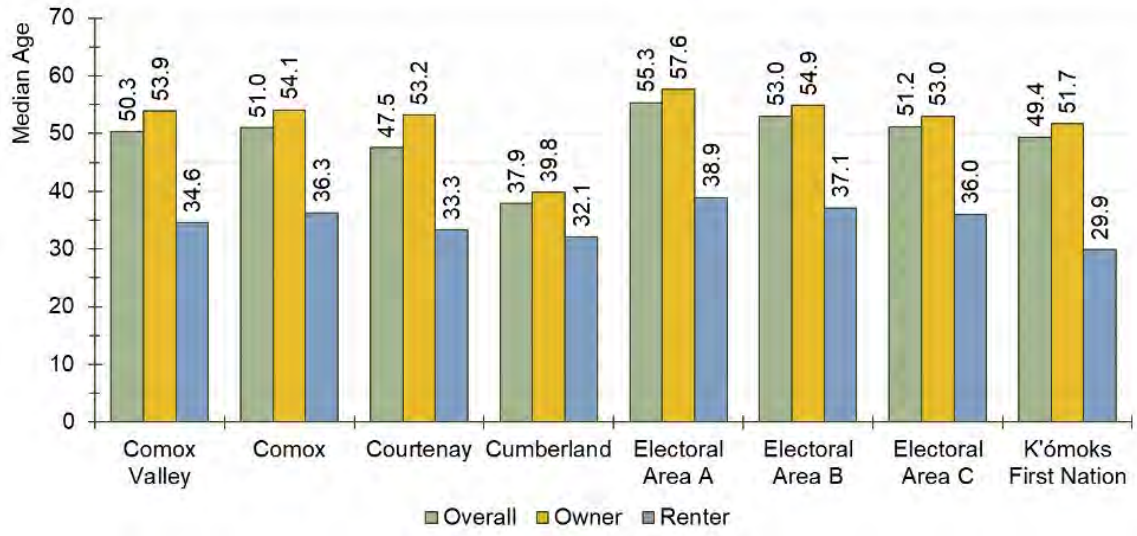


Figure 8. All Communities – Median Age by Tenure. Source: Statistics Canada.



Electoral Area C, at 92.2 percent (6.8 percent annually).

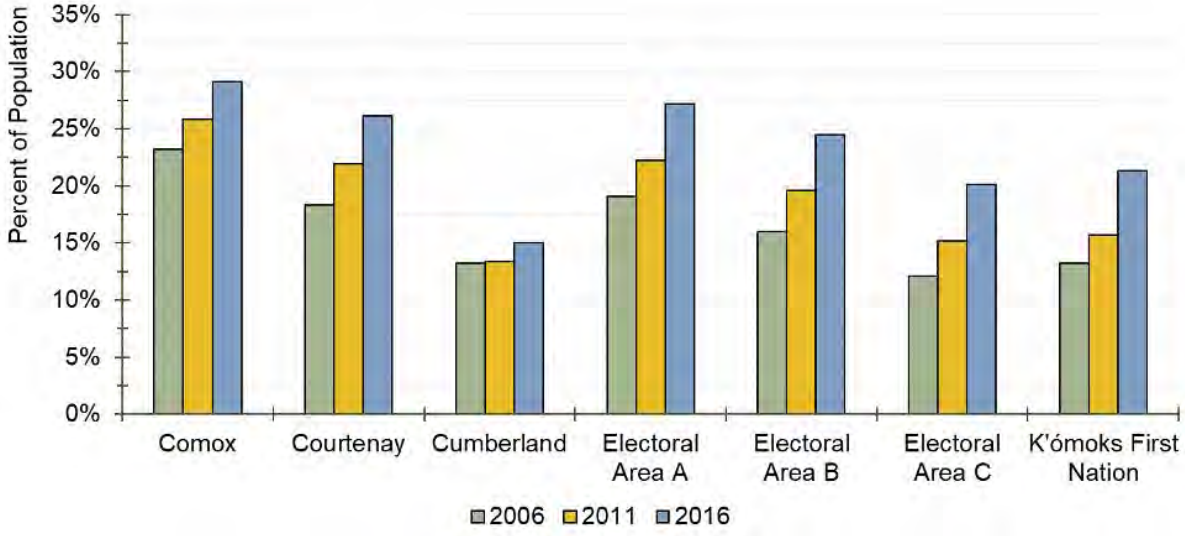
All CVRD communities demonstrated higher growth in seniors than in any other age cohort, as described within **Figure 9 on page 31** and in **Table 4 on page 110** of the Appendix. Even Cumberland, which was the only area to experience a growth in young persons, saw growth in the population aged 65+. The overarching trend impacting Comox Valley, as well as most Canadian communities, is the aging of the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1944 and 1964).

4. Persons with Disabilities

Statistics Canada released its 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability in 2019. This report, and its dataset, provides national and provincial insights into the prevalence of disability across Canada, including the type and severity of a disability, as well as the economic circumstances for persons with one or multiple disabilities.

Unfortunately, data representing more granular geographies (like the CVRD) are not available, meaning that this report can only provide provincial level results with some discussion about how conclusions may relate to the CVRD if the proportions of persons with disabilities, their types, and their severities are applied to the local total population.

Figure 9. All Communities – Senior (65+) Population. Source: Statistics Canada.



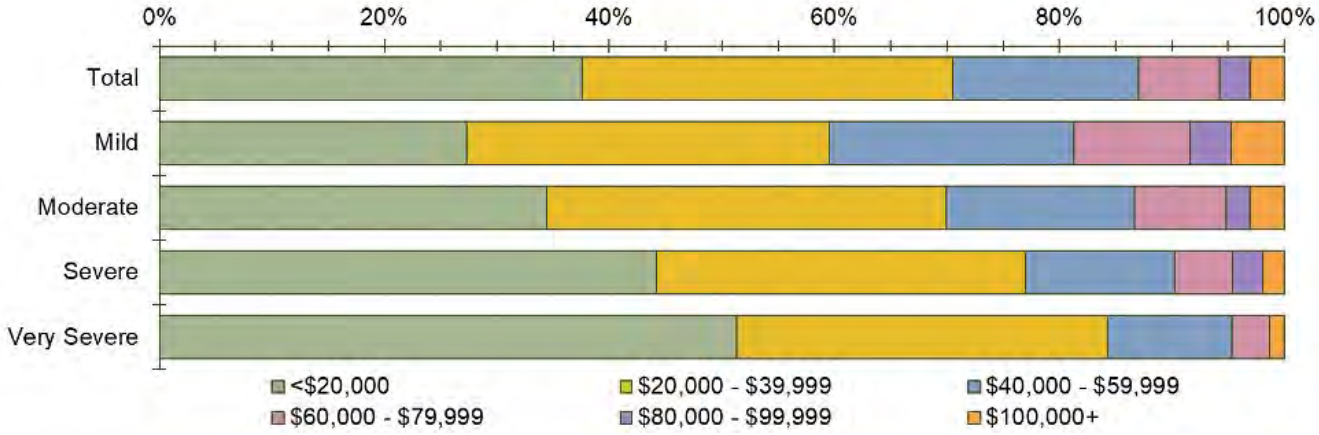
The 2017 survey classifies a disability as falling within one of eleven categories: pain, flexibility, mobility, mental health, seeing, hearing, dexterity, learning, memory, developmental, or unknown. Most Canadians with a disability had more than one type. Of the 6.2 million Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 29 percent had one type; 38 percent had two or three; and 33 percent had four or more.

As of 2017, 926,100 British Columbia residents aged 15 years or older reported having at least one disability, which represents 24.7 percent of the Province's total corresponding population. If the same proportion applies to the CVRD, about 13,680 residents would identify as having at least one type.

As residents age, the prevalence of disability increases. Statistics Canada reported that 41.7 percent of persons aged 65 or older had a disability. The rate of disability rises almost 10 percentage points for those 75 or older. This increased prevalence among older cohorts is particularly important to consider as said cohorts have historically and will continue to represent greater proportions of the overall population.

Statistics Canada reported that 65.9 percent of the working BC population (described in **Table 6 on page 111** of the Appendix as those between 25 and 64) with a disability were employed or actively seeking employment. For the same cohort, 60.4 percent

Figure 10. After-Tax Personal Income Distribution for Persons with a Disability. Source: 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability.



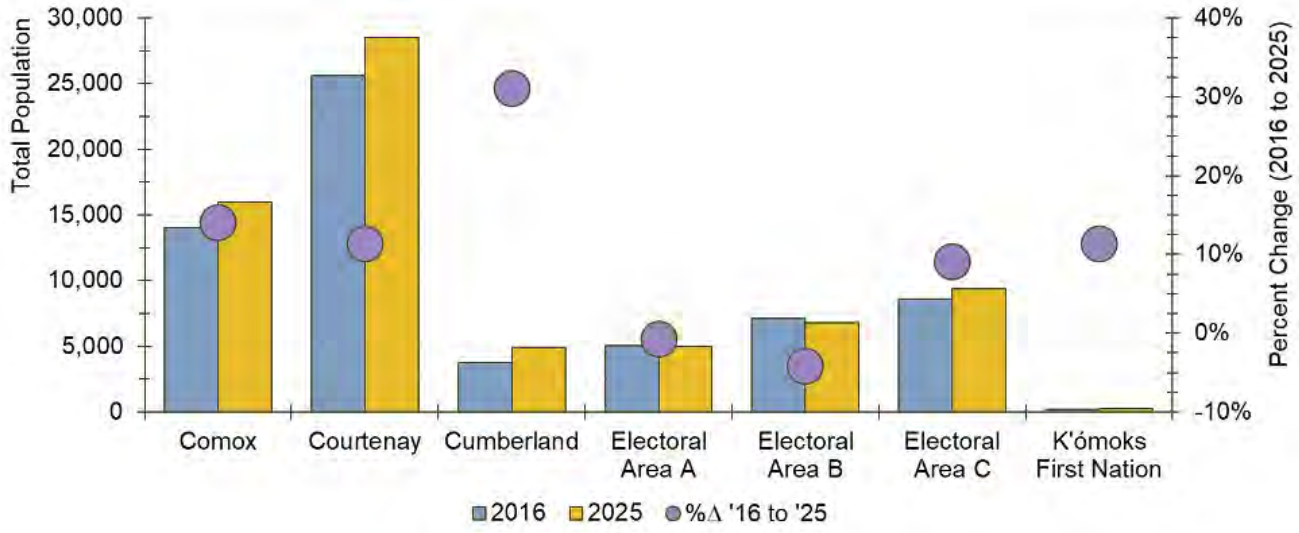
of the total corresponding population were employed, and 8.4 percent of the labour force were unemployed. Unfortunately, data for the all working age persons (15 or older) is not available. Since the percentages do not include youth and seniors, it is likely that the overall rates of participation and employment are lower.

According to **Figure 10** above, about 70 percent of persons with at least one disability earn less than $40,000 after-tax. This distribution is relatively consistent with overall population distributions of personal incomes. People earning between $20,000 to $40,000 after-tax remains relatively consistent across categories of disability severity; there is a noticeable increase in the share of those earning less than $20,000 as the severity increases. For instance, about 27 percent of those with a mild disability will earn below this amount, while it reaches almost 50 percent for those with a severe disability.

5. Anticipated Population

Population projection estimates anticipate that most of the CVRD communities will continue their growth until 2025 and beyond, as described in **Figure 11 on page 33**. The exceptions are Electoral Areas A and B, who may potentially decline by 1.2 and 4.2 percent, respectively. Cumberland is projected to continue to rise at the most dramatic rate within the CVRD, adding 3.0 percent more residents annually. Comox and Courtenay are projected to grow by 14.1 and 11.1 percent, followed by Electoral Area C at

Figure 11. All Communities – Anticipated Population, 2016 to 2025. Source: Statistics Canada.



9.7 percent. Electoral Area C's historical and anticipated growth is in part associated to the Mount Washington Alpine Resort, which attracts both seasonal and permanent residents.

Median and average age are anticipated to rise gradually over the next five years. The average age is projected to increase from 49.9 to 51.6 years, while the median age is projected to increase from 45.8 to 49.0 years. The greater relative increase in the average is from increases in people aged 85 and over.

Population projections use the Cohort Survival Method (CSM) to anticipate growth every five years until a chosen cut-off period using historical birth, mortality, and migration rates. Similar to any projection exercise, results become less accurate over longer periods – this particular method treats the community as being in a constant state economically, socially, and environmentally, when in reality, these factors constantly change due to local, regional, and wider influences.

Because the CSM generates results every five years, straight line change between projection periods is used to estimate the population on an annual basis. The results are as displayed in **Table 7 on page 111** of the Appendix.

6. Tenure

Courtenay, the largest urban community, has the highest rate of

renter households at 30.5 percent. This is followed by Cumberland and Comox at 26.3 and 22.7 percent. The electoral areas exhibit rates around 15.5 percent.

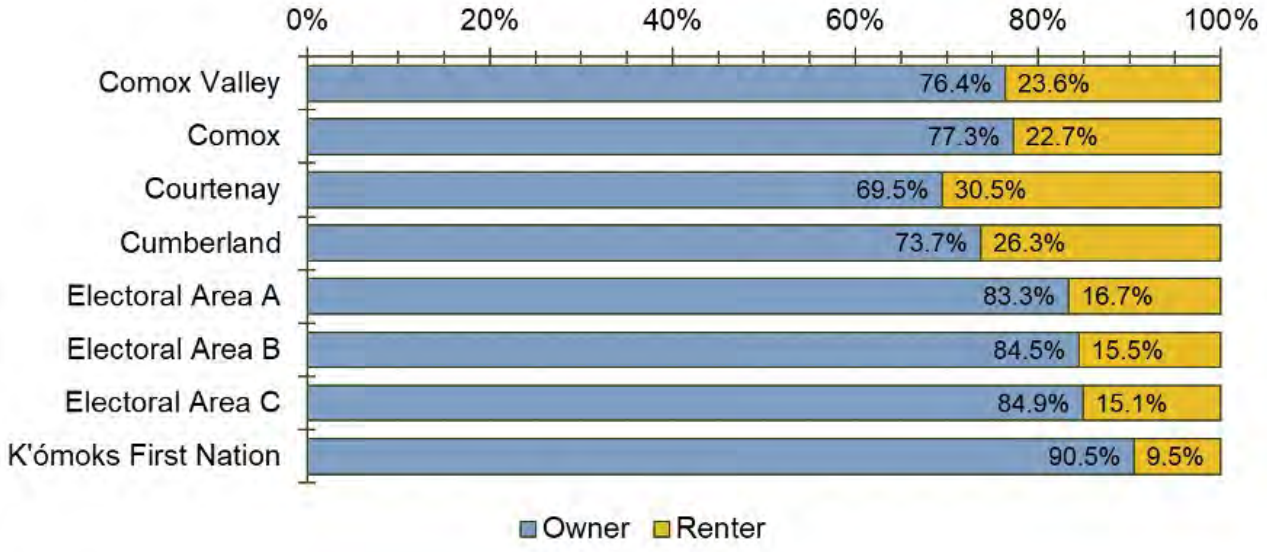
Because of major population growth, the Village of Cumberland experienced the highest percentage increases for both owner and renter households, at 26.4 and 82.2 percent. The other two urban areas reported increases of about 20 and 18 percent for both tenure types.

The electoral areas had consistent renter household growth at about 36 percent. This may suggest that more households are choosing to rent single-detached (or alternative low-density) dwellings rather than own, likely driven by the idea that older housing stocks are generally less expensive to rent. The results are as displayed below in **Figure 12** and in **Table 8** of the Appendix.

7. Unhoused Population

As of 2018, 117 people identified as experiencing homelessness, 58 percent of which were unsheltered. Thirty-two percent identified as Indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total CVRD population identifies as Indigenous. Of all respondents to the 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, 29 percent were above the age of 54, while 6 percent were below 26. PIT counts historically under-represent the actual number of individuals who are

Figure 12. All Communities – Population by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



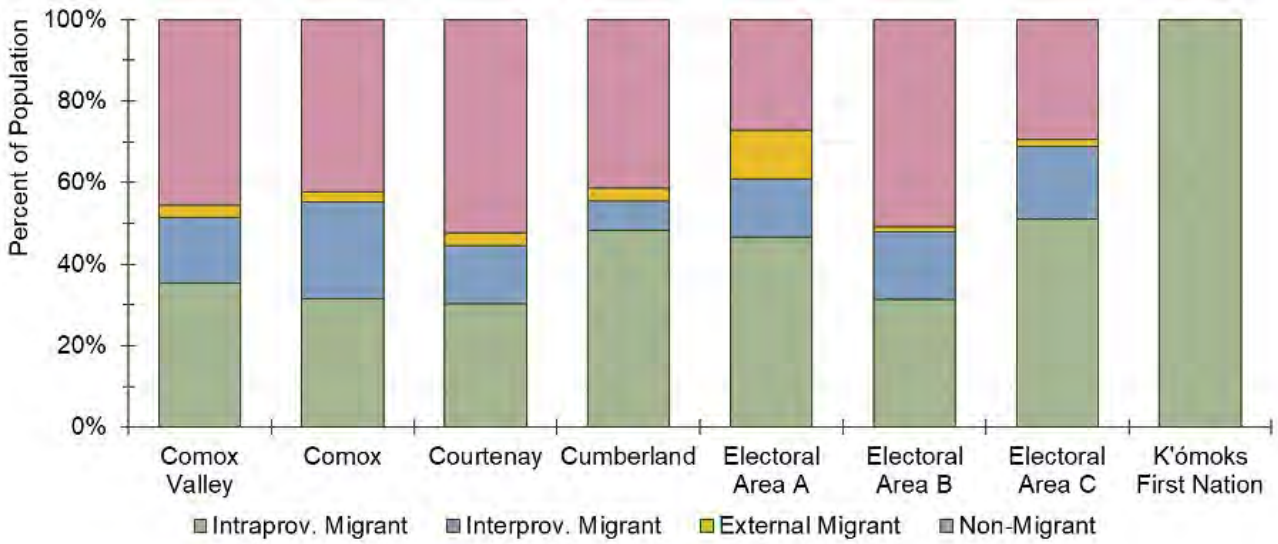
unhoused in a community; the need is likely much greater than what is represented here. For example, community engagement made clear that there are several people living in RV's across the region because they lack alternative options.

8. Mobility

One-year mobility refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier. In 2016, Comox Valley reported that 5,045 people moved to the Regional District from an external origin within the previous year. This is equivalent to 54.5 percent of people who had moved, meaning another 4,215 people changed homes within the Valley (known as non-migrants). Of those who were migrants, the majority (64.8 percent) came from elsewhere in British Columbia, while 29.9 percent moved from somewhere in Canada. Overall, mobility trends remained relatively consistent between 2006 and 2016.

Courtenay exhibited the highest share of movers within the same community (52.3 percent), followed by Electoral Area B (51.2 percent). Electoral Area A had the highest relative share of incoming migrants from outside its boundaries. Among those migrating to Electoral Area A, 16.2 percent were of international origins – the highest rate among all compared communities. As for national migrants, the Town of Comox welcomed the most people relative to total movers – 23.7 percent.

Figure 13. All Communities – One-Year Mobility. Source: Statistics Canada.



9. Household Size

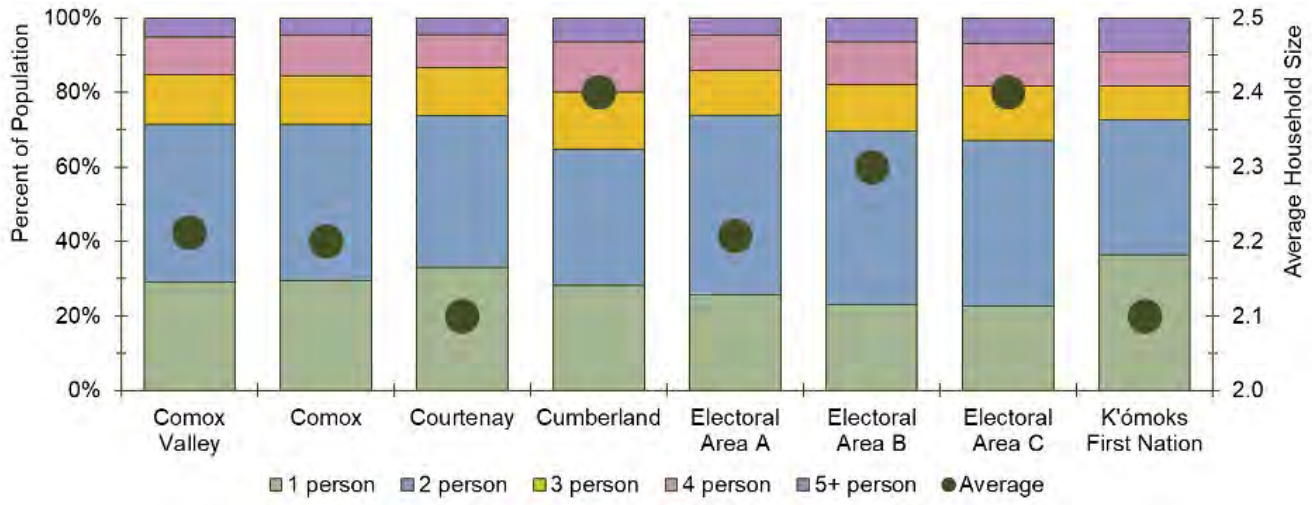
Comox Valley's average household size decreased from 2.3 to 2.2 between 2006 and 2016. The decrease in the number of people per household relates to the rise in older populations. This is either from children ageing and moving out, or by the loss of loved ones in old age.

Cumberland and Electoral Area C have the highest average household size of 2.4 as shown below in **Figure 14**. Cumberland's household size has remained consistent from 2006, and Electoral Area C household size decreased from 2.5 over the same time period. Cumberland's consistency is due to similar percentage growth in households with 1 person and for those with 3 or more. Conversely, Electoral Area C had almost five times greater percentage growth in 1 person households than those with 3 or more people.

Courtenay (73.6 percent) and Electoral Area A (73.4 percent) reported the highest share of households that are 1 or 2 people large. However, two different trends are occurring. For Courtenay, a large portion of its 1 person households are attributed to young professionals or students; Electoral Area A's are predominantly seniors.

Courtenay reported the lowest average household size (2.1). It is typical for urban areas to attract a larger number of single

Figure 14. All Communities – Household Size. Source: Statistics Canada.



persons. Accordingly, 1-person households in Courtenay represent 33.1 percent of the total. Please see **Table 10 on page <OV>** of the Appendix for further details.

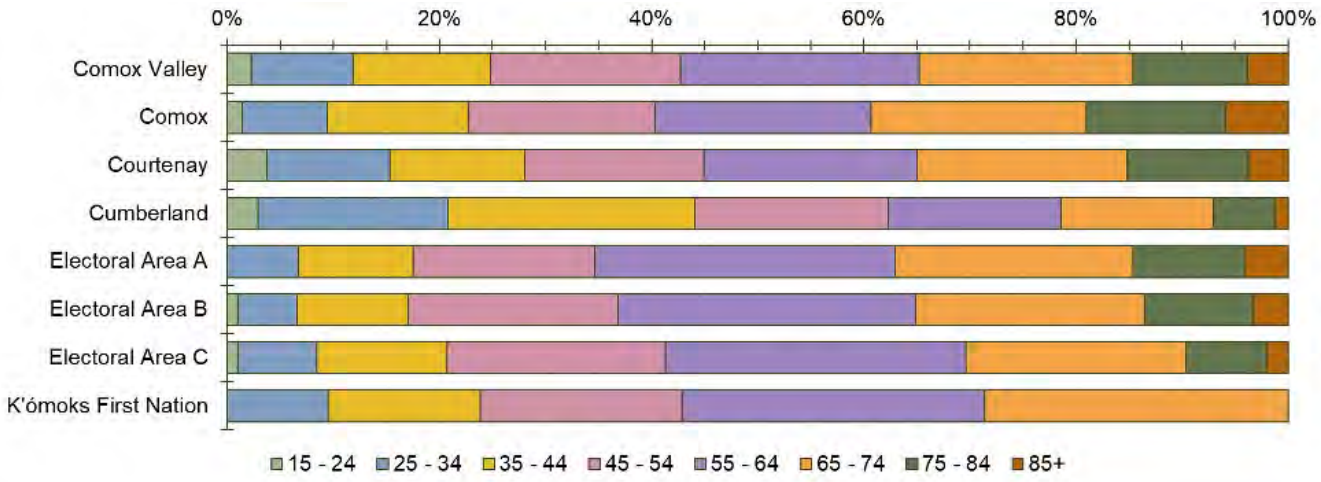
10. Maintainer Age

Primary household maintainers (those most responsible for attending to shelter related bills) were most common within the 55 to 64 age cohort, at 22.5 percent of the total, as described below in **Figure 15**. In 2016, Comox Valley had 28,395 households, up from 24,235 in 2006 – a 17.2 percent rise. Overall, seniors represented 34.8 percent of primary household maintainers, while those under 55 represented 42.8.

The Village of Cumberland reported the youngest maintainers, with 62.3 percent of its households maintainers below 55-years-old. Its cohort with the largest share were those aged 35 to 44 (23.3 percent). The Town also the highest share of maintainers below 35, with 20.8 percent (relative to population). This was 5.5 percent higher than the City of Courtney, which was the second highest in this category.

The Town of Comox had the highest number of maintainers above 65, with 39.3 percent. This is largely due to the relatively higher share of persons above the age of 85 compared to the neighbouring geographies. Please see **Table 11 on page <OV>** of the Appendix for further details.

Figure 15. All Communities – Maintainer Age. Source: Statistics Canada.



Regional Report

Income and Economy

Like demographics, income and employment are directly related to the types of housing need in a community. This section summarize the Region's economic context using data from the standard Census Profiles where possible, and supplemented by data from the Custom Census dataset published by MAH. All data is derived from the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses and 2011 National Housing Survey.

Please note that all reported incomes within this report have been adjusted to 2015 dollars (meaning adjusted for inflation to represent 'real' values) for better comparison. Therefore, increases in reported income mean growth exceeded inflation, while decreases mean growth fell short.

In addition, the 2005 and 2015 comparison years differ from the normal 2006 and 2016 used by Statistics Canada. The reason is that census incomes come from the previously reported tax year.

Key Takeaways

Low-Income Measure and Young Families

About 15 percent of Comox Valley residents fall below the after-tax Low-Income Measure (LIM). Younger cohorts experience the greatest difficulty in meeting their needs (or for their families to meet their needs); 23.4 percent of children between 0 to 5 years and 21.3 percent of children under the age of 18 belong to a household below the measure.

Relationship Between Tenure Type and Incomes

Renter households earn significantly less income than owner household. The median owner household income is $73,67 across the Comox Valley compared to the median rental household income at $38,394.

Key Employment Sectors

Between 2006 and 2016, CVRD's total employed persons rose 10.4 percent, from about 27,465 to 30,335. The top three industries in the Comox Valley as of 2016 are: Health Care & Social Assistance (4,290 people), Retail Trade (4,170 people), and Construction (2,955 people).

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to the Valley's income and economic conditions were shared through community engagement activities.

Regional employers are finding it very difficult to attract and retain vital staff because of limited housing availability and affordability.

Key Quotes:

"We have had quite a few people pull out of hiring process because of the uncertainty of housing. We just hired someone who had quite a lot of challenges finding a place to live, and it was right down to the wire for her to find something."

"Middle income range employees are finding it particularly challenging to find housing. Middle income housing is not available"

"Absolutely, just looking at the number of people who are homeless, we are missing all level of housing. Talking to businesses and single people who are housing insecure with the wages that they have. See that expressed by businesses that are having to cut down."

"The costs of living has gone up considerably but my wages only increase 2% a year - these do not line up. I work full-time for my local gov't (pretty good job) and have had to go to the food bank multiple times this year. I don't know how some people in our communities are surviving."

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to the Valley's income and economic conditions were shared through community engagement activities.

There is generally a lack of rental availability in the region, while a high percentage of the workforce is employed in the sales and services sector and traditionally do not have high enough incomes to purchase a home. This lack of rental options is affecting employer's ability to operate and obtain employees.

Key Quote:

> ***"Affordable Housing for the working class is a massive issue. Rentals should not cost what they do and purchase costs are astronomical. Denser residential is needed - and not luxury."***

Younger families and single parents are struggling to meet their needs. Both coupled parents and single parents expressed feelings of housing discrimination and a lack of appropriate and affordable options to meet their family's needs. Single parents shared that they often felt judged by prospective landlords who saw their incomes as being too low or because housing within their budget was deemed to be of an unsuitable size. Parents also shared that housing for low-income working families located close to schools and transit, is especially hard to find.

Key Quote:

> ***"[I was] homeless for 6 months because nobody was willing to rent to a single parent with one low income. [I'm] only housed now because the apartment is owned by a relative. Told multiple times places within my budget would be too small for my children and were constantly rented to childless double income families instead of mine."***

Non-profits and social service organizations are routinely bearing the cost of serving the most vulnerable in the region. There are many non-profits doing incredible work in the Comox Valley, but the burden of providing housing services is incredible taxing, especially when faced with need that is outpacing resources. Service organizations and non-profits all indicated a desire to work more closely with the Regional District and municipalities and reiterated that they understand all levels of government are struggling to address housing.

Key Quote:

> ***"It's difficult because everyone is frustrated and working too hard. Non-profits are frustrated with local governments, local governments are frustrated with the Province, the Province is frustrated with the Feds. We all want to help, but everyone is struggling to find answers."***

11. Household Income

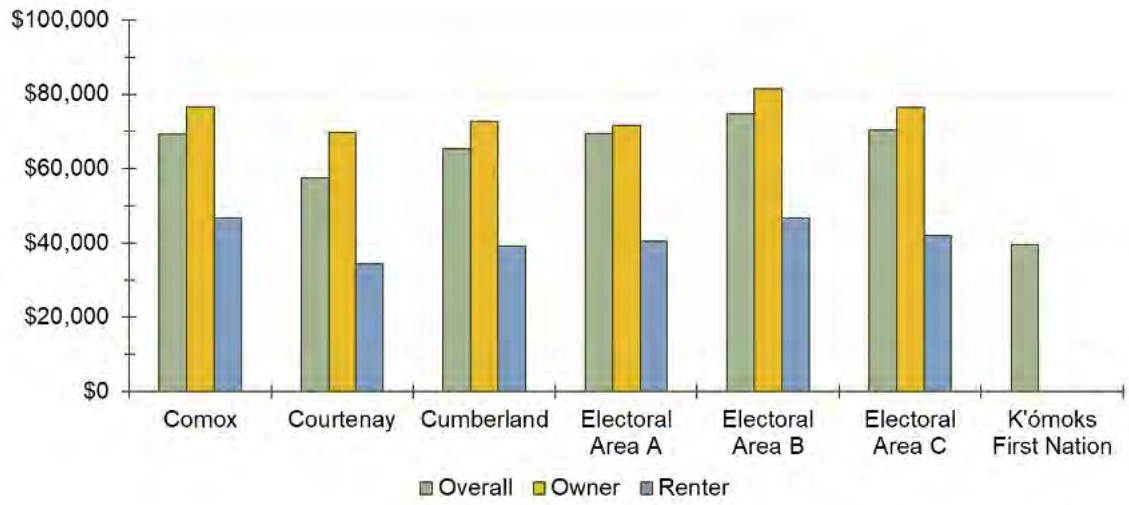
In 2015, Comox Valley's median before-tax household income was $64,379. This was 11.2 percent higher than 2005 (adjusted for inflation). Median income of renter households increased 17.6 percent to $38,394 between 2005 and 2015. Owner households saw a 11.1 percent increase in median income over the same time period, to $73,367.

Electoral Area B was the highest earning community, with a household median income of $74,701 (before-tax). This is a rise of 10.4 percent since 2005. Its growth is predominantly attributable to owners; they achieved a household median of $81,432, up 11.4 percent over the 10 years.
Renter household incomes grew by 4.3 percent. Courtenay had the lowest overall median income at $57,463 (14.6 percent growth).

The Village of Cumberland had the greatest income growth in CVRD, rising 26.6% over the ten-year span (2.4% percent annually). Cumberland's population growth led to an inflow of younger (likely dual income) couples, in both tenure types, which pushed their median higher. Renter households now earn 26.1 percent more than their 2005 counterparts, in 2015 dollars.

Median income grew the least in the Town of Comox. It also

Figure 16. Before-Tax Median by Tenure, 2015 dollars. Source: Statistics Canada.



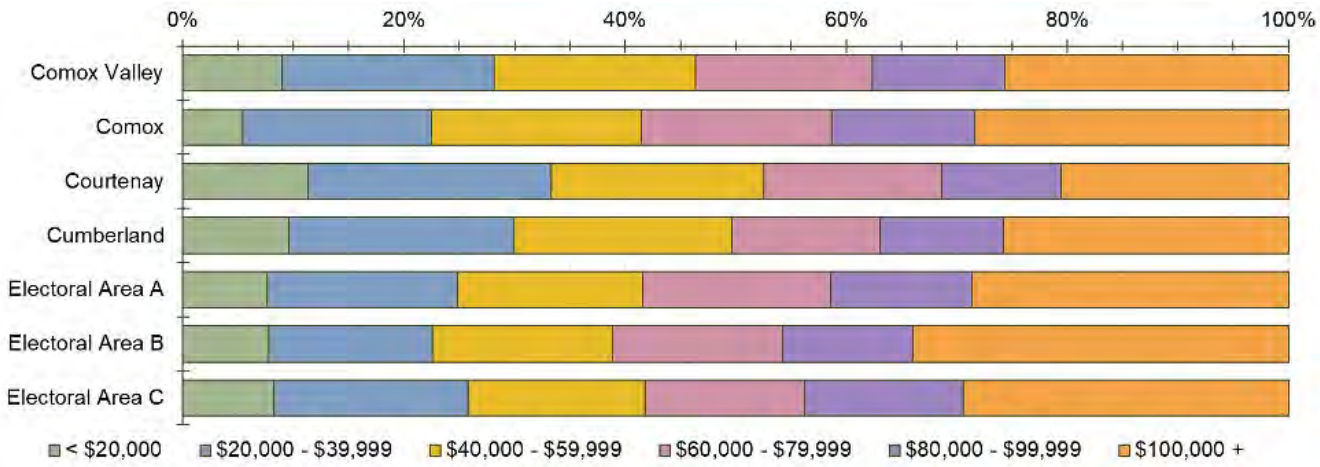
had the lowest median income growth in both owner and rental households. It is unclear why Comox is not keeping pace with the rest of the Region. The presence of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Comox may be a factor. Fluctuations in pay will likely be less, thereby stabilizing income growth. This could be perceived negatively when an economy is expanding, but it can be a major positive when trends are the opposite (i.e. the recession of 2008). Important to note is that CFB Comox is recorded under the category of "Public Administration" within the Canadian Census employment categories.

As **Figure 17** illustrates, all areas have considerable portions of their households earning more than $100,000. It is impossible to determine what outliers exist that may elevate the average. This is because Statistics Canada does not provide greater detail about those making more than $200,000 (about 3.7 percent of total CVRD households). Courtenay had the highest share of households earning less $40,000 (30 percent). Electoral Area B households had the greatest share of households earning more than $100,000 (33.9 percent), followed by Electoral Area A and C, at 28.8 and 29.4 percent.

12. Low-Income Measure (LIM) – After Tax

Low-Income Measures (LIMs) are a set of thresholds calculated by Statistics Canada that identify Canadians belonging to a household whose overall incomes are below 50 percent of median

Figure 17. All Communities – Household Size. Source: Statistics Canada.



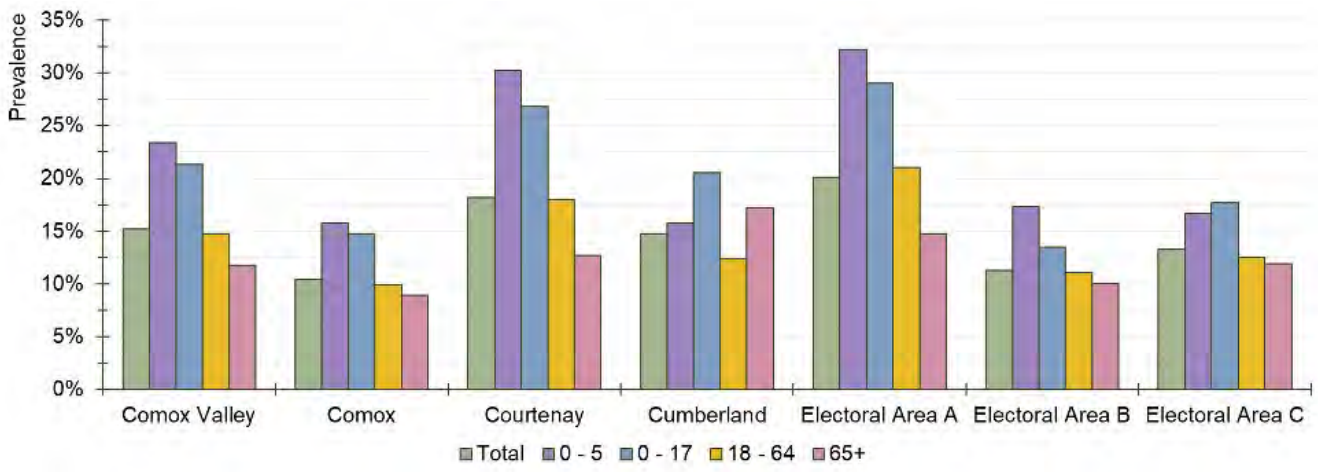
adjusted household income. "Adjusted" refers to the idea that household needs increase as the number of household members increase. Statistics Canada emphasizes that the LIM is not a measure of poverty but identifies those who are substantially worse off than the average.

About 15 percent of Comox Valley residents fall below the after-tax LIM, as described below in **Figure 18**. Younger cohorts experience the greatest difficulty in meeting their needs (or for their families to meet their needs); 23.4 percent of children between 0 to 5 years belong to a household below the measure, compared to 21.3 percent of children under the age of 18. This suggests that younger households (associated with younger children) have less available income, particularly as their expenses increase when they become a first-time parent. Comparatively, only 14.8 percent of people aged 18 to 64 are below the LIM in 2016. That drops again to 11.8 percent for those age 65 and older. As cohorts age, their incomes increase and their number of dependents decrease, thereby reducing the prevalence of low-income individuals.

Electoral Area A had the highest rate of low-income people at 20.1 percent. This was driven by the 29.0 percent associated with residents aged 0 to 17. The lowest rate belonged to Comox (10.4 percent).

Seniors in the Village of Cumberland are shown to be experiencing

Figure 18. All Communities – LIM After-Tax Status, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



greater financial pressure to meet the needs of their households. It is the only community to have a high prevalence of seniors below the LIM. The other communities have higher rates for those between 18 and 64.

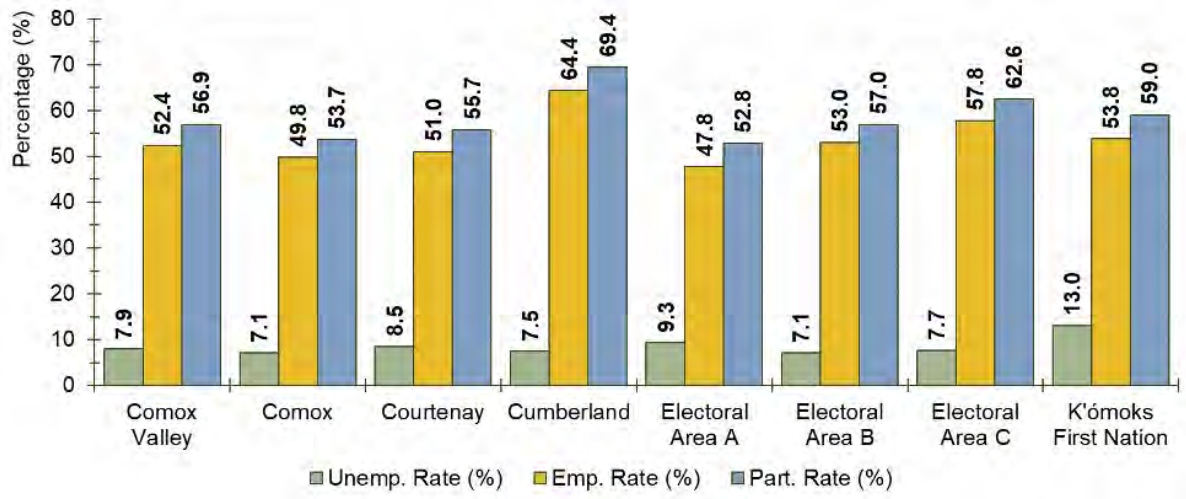
13. Employment

In 2016, CVRD reported a labour force of 30,815. This was a 10.4 percent increase since 2006. Conversely, 23,385 persons did not belong to the labour force in 2016, meaning that they were not actively seeking employment. This figure increased by 24.3 percent over the same period.

CVRD's labour force participation rate (56.9 percent) and employment rate (52.4 percent) decreased between 2006 and 2016. The major contributor to this was likely increased levels of retirement by older persons, which was unmatched by increases in those employed.

Unemployment grew by 1.9 percent to 8.0 percent. A partial reason for this is that the labour force had a lesser increase than that of the non-labour force, resulting in a proportionally lower total with which to calculate the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed divided by the labour force. The labour force participation rate is the proportion of people in the labour force relative to the size of the total working-age population.

Figure 19. All Communities – Local Labour Metrics, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



14. Industry

Between 2006 and 2016, CVRD's total employed persons rose 10.4 percent, from about 27,465 to 30,335, as described in **Figure 20 on page 46**. The following absolute totals are the number of residents employed in each industry; growth is over the previous 10 years.

Top three industries in the Comox Valley (2016):

1. Health Care & Social Assistance – 4,290; 34.9 percent growth.
2. Retail Trade – 4,170; 5.3 percent growth.
3. Construction – 2,955; 21.6 percent growth.

Industries with major increases:

1. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation – 34.9 percent (620 to 810)
2. Transportation and Warehousing – 22.5 percent (1,090 to 1,335)
3. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services – 12.0 percent (1,335 to 1,495)

Industries with major decreases:

1. Information and Cultural Industries – 15.9 percent (440 to 370)
2. Manufacturing – 10.2 percent (1,180 to 1,060)
3. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting – 8.0 percent (2,055 to 1,890)

15. Commuting

Comox Valley reported 20,935 usual workers in 2016, about 69.0 percent of the total employed labour force.

The breakdown of general commuting patterns is:

1. (39.0 percent (8,170) of Comox Valley residents commuted within their specific community;
2. 46.6 percent (9,760) commuted elsewhere within the Regional District; and
3. 14.3 (3,005) travelled outside of the CVRD, whether within or out of province.

The highest rates of CVRD commuting belonged to the electoral areas. Most jobs, particularly commercially related ones, cluster within urban municipalities. Specifically, Courtenay has the highest rate of community-specific work travel (61.3 percent). This suggests that it is the main employment hub, supported by it being the most populous community within CVRD.

Commute data describes patterns exhibited by "usual workers". These are workers that report themselves as generally having the same workplace location at the beginning of each work day. For instance, an office job would typically be classified as a same or usual workplace, whereas contractors (e.g. landscaping or construction), truck drivers, or travelling salespeople would not. Commuting patterns are shown below in **Figure 21**.

Figure 20. NAICS Industry Employment Totals by Tenure, 2006 to 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

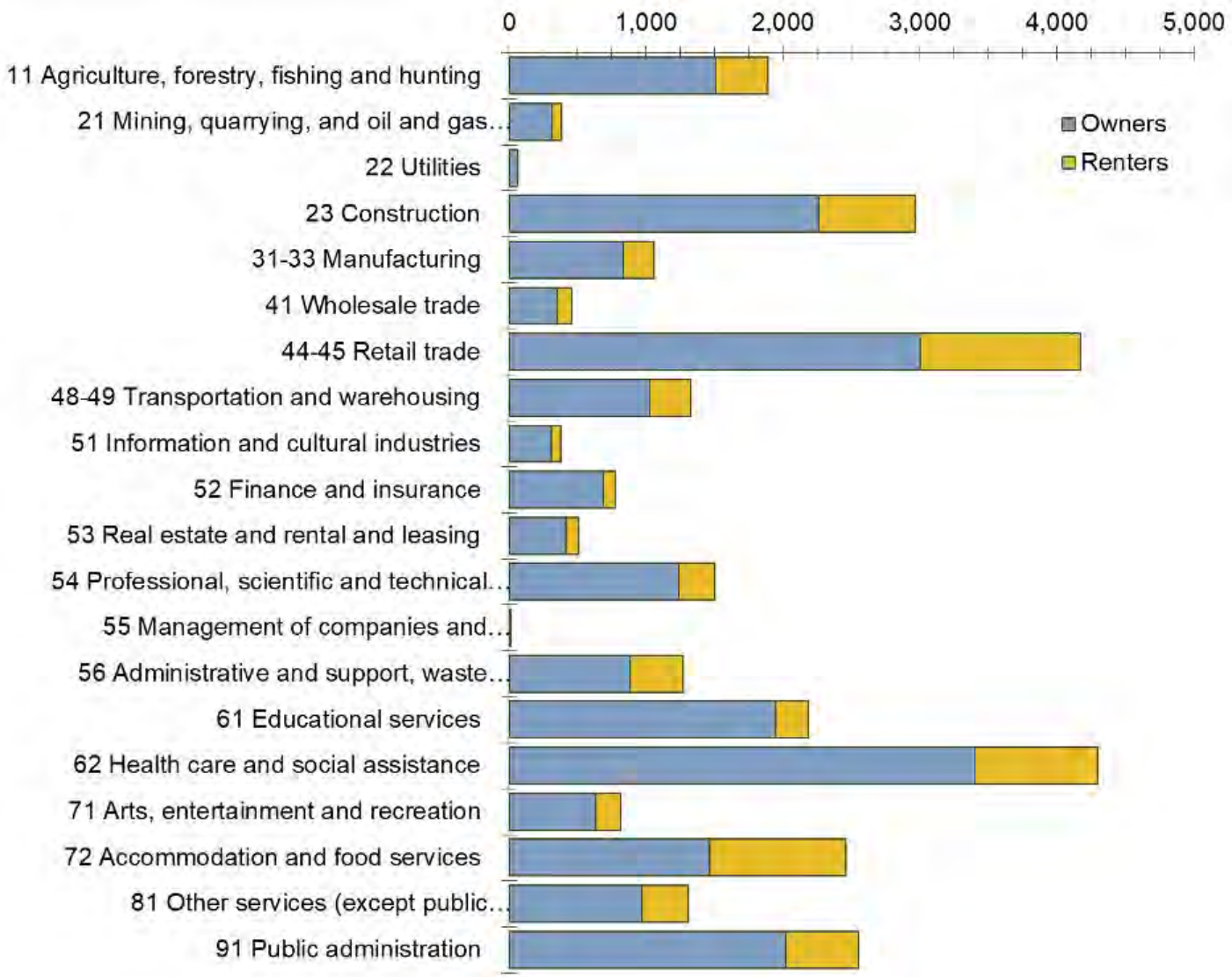
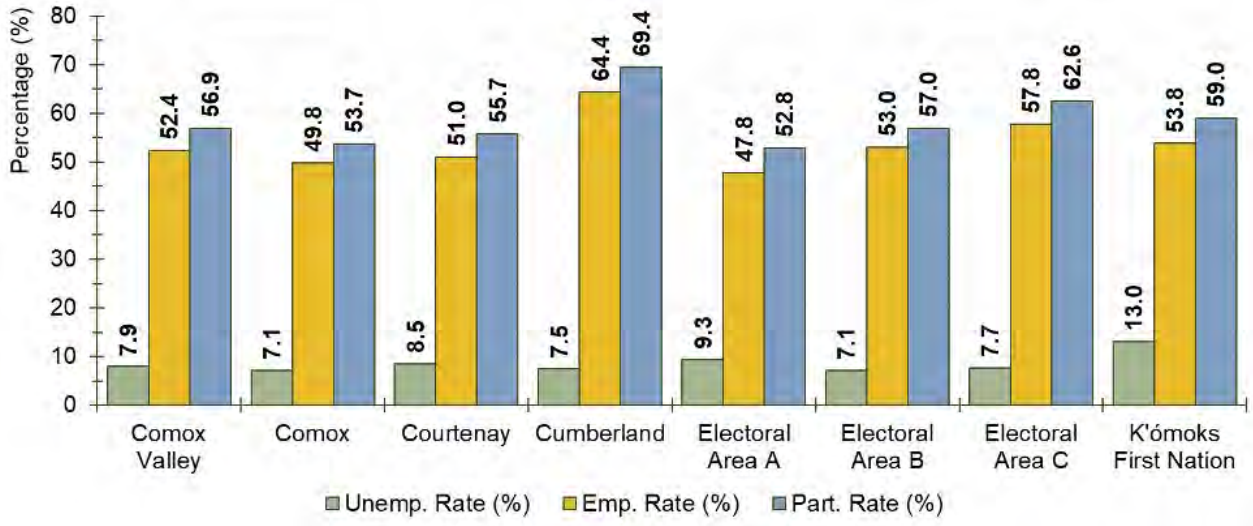


Figure 21. All Communities – Commuting Patterns for Usual Workers, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



Regional Report

Housing Profile

This section summarizes the Region's housing context. Like previous sections, data used includes those from the standard Census Profiles where possible, supplemented by data from the Custom Census dataset published by MAH. All data is derived from the 2006, 2011, and 2016 Censuses and 2011 National Housing Survey. For a greater picture of housing, the report also draws upon the following sources:

- AirDNA
- BC Assessment
- BC Statistics
- Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- Vancouver Island Real Estate Board (VIREB)
- Secondary Market Research

Key Takeaways

No Bachelor/Studio Units Available in Primary Rental Market

Availability of bachelor/studio style units has declined in recent years. There are now nearly none of these apartment units available. This dwelling type can often provide affordable housing options for community members, particularly those most vulnerable.

Very Low Vacancy Rate

The Courtenay CMA has a very low vacancy rate, rarely exceeding 2 percent. Vacancy has generally been lowest in 3-bedroom or larger units. Typically, a primary rental market is considered healthy and balanced when vacancy rates are in the 3 to 5 percent range.

Increase in Rental Cost

There was a notable increase in the cost of market rent in the Courtenay CMA in 2018 and 2019. Average monthly rental costs for the secondary rental market, which represents 70 percent of the overall rental market in the region, indicate that affordability issues are much worse than what is represented when we look at the primary rental market alone.

Increase in Assessment Value of Most Common Housing Types

Since 2016, median assessment values grew 49 percent for single-detached homes, grew 29 percent for duplexes, fell 9 percent for rows, and fell 4 percent for multi-family dwellings.

Short-Term Rentals are Predominantly Used for Commercial Purposes

Short-term rentals (STRs) exhibit steady growth since their widespread popularization in 2016. CVRD STR "entire-unit" totals reached 371 in October 2019, of which about 85 percent were available more than 50 percent of the year (herein referred to as "commercial" units).

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to the Valley's current housing stock were shared through community engagement activities.

There is great need for smaller housing units.
Single individuals, unhoused community members, students and older adults all reiterated the acute need for smaller housing units that are affordable and appropriate for smaller households. It is very hard to find housing options that are affordable for a single person. Single individuals with lower incomes are forced to live with roommates or share spaces within a home.

Although not always an issue, sometimes this can lead to dangerous housing situations where individuals are forced to share a space where they do not feel safe. Women for instance may be sharing a space with a male roommate who is physically, verbally, or sexually violent, but they lack other options and much choose to either stay or become unhoused.

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to the Valley's current housing stock were shared through community engagement activities.

Key Quotes:

"[There is] no availability for single individuals, very high prices when finding something. It may be affordable for a couple but not for 1 person"

"Modest homes are hard to find. Not every bedroom needs an ensuite! We dont all need double door garages. All this extravagance ups the cost to buy, operate and maintain these properties. We need more affordable housing; not just for the underserved/homeless/single parents/elderly, middleclass/ single income households need homes in their price range too."

Community members need additional supports in order to afford increased housing costs. One-third (25 percent) of individuals who completed a housing needs assessment survey indicated that they had accessed housing supports in the last two months. These supports included the food bank, Dawn to Dawn, BC Housing RENT and SAFER programs, shelter beds, and various others. The experience of accessing these supports can sometimes be stressful and humiliating and waits for subsidies or supports can be long and paperwork can sometimes be confusing. Individuals that worked full-time but were also trying to access supports shared that work hours can conflict with when support offices are open and therefore make it challenging to access support without having to take time off work. It was noted that individuals who do not have a vehicle or do not drive find it challenges to accesses the food bank because it is not located close to transportation and individuals may not be able to afford to travel there by taxi for example. There is also a lot of concern that people who have traditionally been able to afford housing are increasingly being pushed out. This manifests in hidden homelessness, increased usage rates at places like food banks, or people renting in places that are further from vital services so they can get the number of bedrooms they need.

Key Quotes:

"I access the food bank when I can afford gas to get there. Transit doesn't have a bus stop close enough to the food bank to make it easy to use."

"There is a sense in the community that a lot of people are one paycheque way homelessness."
"There are a lot of people right on the edge, couch surfing or living in RVs."

"Eight years ago we had very few people couch surfing or homeless. Now... well, lots of people in our program and staying with friends or something like that."

Despite the variety of local supports that are available, it was felt that they were not widely known and that more could be done to promote various programs or support opportunities.

Key Quotes:

"I accessed them because I was leaving my abusive husband. Honestly, I didn't even know they existed. The public isn't aware of most of them."

"[Accessing supports can be] confusing because of all the piecemeal help available. as in 'go here then go there'. Without a car and family help it is a give-up-on kind of task.. The Valley's cities each need a place to go for a "one stop" kind of help and even a fee of some kind would be favourable for the work done after all we do loose many of our abilities when we become seniors and are easily confused, etc. and for the same reasons homeless, ill, or addicted people cannot cope with all the regulations and give up in disgust and anger. A warm/cool room and a specialized person to help others find a 'home' is required."

Very low vacancy rates create instability for renters.
Low vacancy rates lead to a lack of choices for renters. Because of this many are forced to stay in rental housing situations that are less than ideal or if they lose their rental housing, they may need to find other creative housing options such as RV's or couch surfing.

Key Quote:

"We're given very short notice to move and had to purchase an RV to live in until we can purchase rural property and /or a house."

Increase in rental costs are impacting quality of life.
Just over half of renters (58 percent) surveyed indicated that their monthly housing costs were not affordable for them (58%). As rents continue to increase across the valley, the overall quality of life for residents continues to be compromised.

Key Quote:

"It's distressing how much the housing costs have risen in 20 years, while the general quality of life has declined in the Comox Valley."

16. Dwelling Types

CVRD's housing stock grew 17.1 percent between 2006 and 2016. Cumberland's stock had the greatest rise at 37.3 percent. This closely followed the percentage increase in their population over the same period.

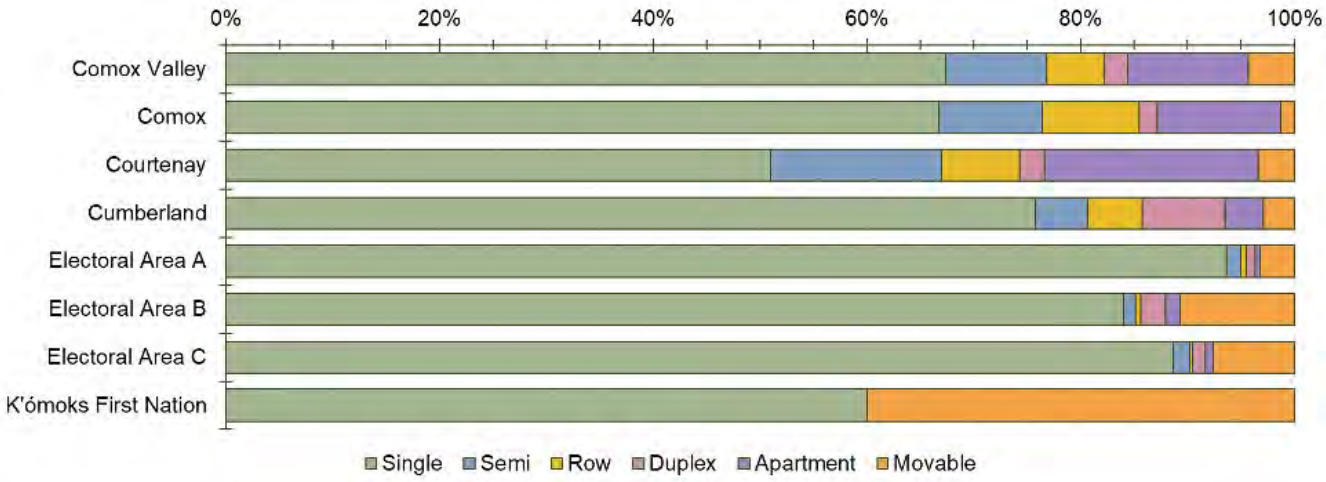
In 2016, 67.4 percent of Comox Valley's housing supply was single-detached dwellings (19,135), as described below in **Figure 22** and **Table 18 on page 117** of the Appendix. Since 2006, CVRD added 4,155 units to its overall stock, of which 2,620 (63.1 percent) were single-detached dwellings.

Apartment units (11.2 percent) were the next most common dwelling type (3,185 total). This was followed by semi-detached and rowhouse dwellings. CVRD reported 1,225 movable dwellings in 2016, up 21.9 percent.

Electoral Area A had the highest total of single-detached dwellings relative to total stock, reaching 2,070 dwellings or 93.7 percent. The next most common type was movable dwellings, with 70 (3.2 percent).

The City of Courtenay had the highest total of apartment units with 2,340. This was 73.5 percent of the entire CVRD apartment supply in 2016. Courtenay also demonstrated the highest proportion of semi-detached dwellings at 16.0 percent. Although Comox was

Figure 22. All Communities – Proportions of Dwelling Types, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



second in most metrics, it did surpass Courtenay's proportion of row houses with 9.1 percent.

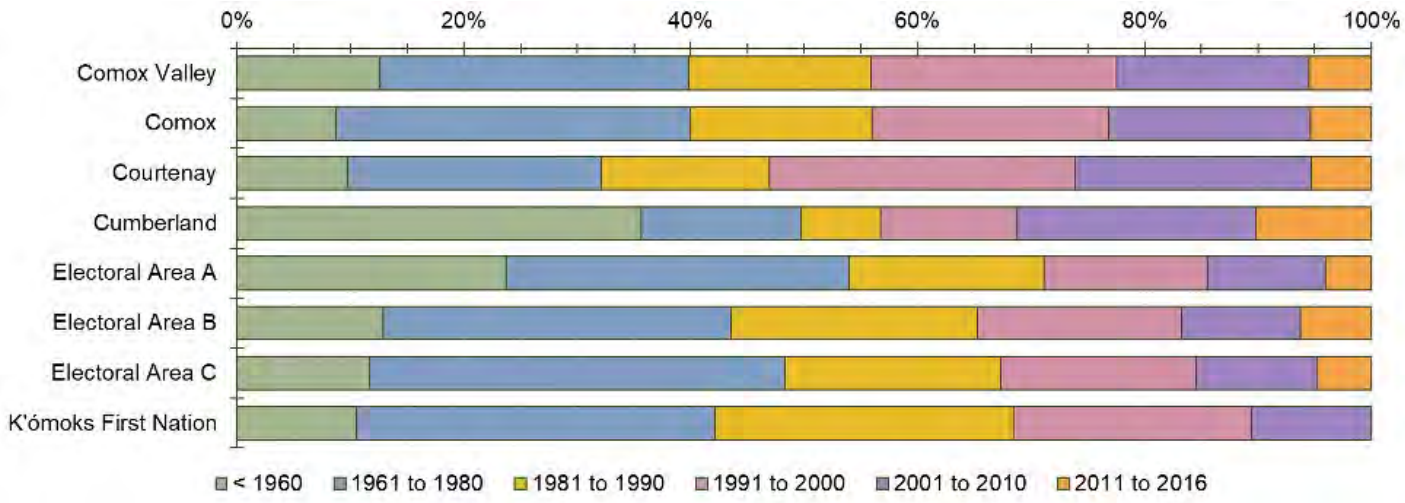
Electoral Area B reported the most movable dwellings (325), and the second highest share of its total (10.7 percent). Nevertheless, its number of movable dwellings decreased 9.7 percent since 2006. In Electoral Area C, the number of said dwellings grew 86.2 percent over the same time period, reaching 270.

17. Dwelling Age

As of 2016, 12.6 percent of CVRD's building stock (3,580 units) was built before 1961; 38.5 percent of construction appears to have happened between 1991 and 2010, amounting to 10,940 units (about 550 annually), as described below in **Figure 23** and from **Table 19 on page 118** of the Appendix. Between 1981 and 1990, the CVRD experienced a 'lull', with only 4,575 units added to the overall stock (about 230 annually). Since 2011, 1,575 units came to market (about 315 per year). This falls short of the build-out rates for the previous two decades.

The brackets for dwelling age, as defined and required by Housing Needs Report legislation, are not uniform periods. Nevertheless, comparing unequal periods still highlights the impacts of unit build-out over time, particularly during more recent years.
The City of Courtenay had 47.7 percent of its (finished) construction between 1991 and 2010. During those 19 years, it

Figure 23. All Communities – Dwelling Age, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



recorded an annual build-out of approximately 280 units per year. Since 2011, that rate has slowed to about 125.

Cumberland had the greatest share of post-2010 stock, with 10.2 percent (20 units per year) built after 2010. Cumberland also had the highest proportion of homes built pre-1961, at 35.8 percent. This was 12.2 percent higher than Electoral Area A, the community with the next highest share. These percentages are relative to the total households in each community.

18. Bedroom Number

As of 2016, housing units with 3-or-more bedrooms accounted for 63.3 percent of the housing supply in Comox Valley. This is mostly due to the abundance of single-family dwellings across the Region, both in rural and urban communities. Closely mirroring CVRD's growth in said dwelling types, the number of 3-or-more bedroom units have grown 18.9 percent from 2006. However, 2-bedroom units had the greatest level of growth, rising by 21.4 percent.

Courtenay had the highest share of 2-bedroom units with 35.9 percent (totalling 4,200). Comox had the fewest 2-bedrooms relative to its housing stock, with 23.7 percent (1,470 units). By comparison, the electoral areas exhibited a minimum 2-bedroom share of 25.4 percent. However, this relationship may be related more to the size of older dwellings (of which there are proportionally more in the electoral areas); single-detached homes with fewer bedrooms were more common in the mid- and early-1900s.

19. Market Housing Development Trends

Housing construction data from CMHC does not cover the entirety of Comox Valley Regional District, estimates of unit completions are therefore derived by time adjusting building permit data from the Province, adding 12 months to account for construction. Using this method, and as described in **Figure 25 on page 55**, both the addition of new housing to the CVRD has been variable, with periods of low and high unit completions. Lower periods of construction typically average around 250 units/year, while higher periods are usually in the 400 to 500 units/year range; 2018 was the strongest year by a substantial margin, with an estimated 665 units completed. Historically, years of higher production are associated with an increase in development of apartment style units. Most of the last 10 years have been a period of low, predominantly single-detached, housing development. For historical breakdown of dwelling completions, please see **Table 21** and **Table 22 on page 119** of the Appendix.

The Region has historically built housing with an overwhelming focus on owner-occupied tenures. Intended tenure data is only available from CMHC for the combined area of Comox and Courtenay; however, this can be considered a conservative estimate of the dominance of owner-occupied tenures as less

Figure 24. All Communities – Units by Number of Bedrooms, 2016 . Source: Statistics Canada.

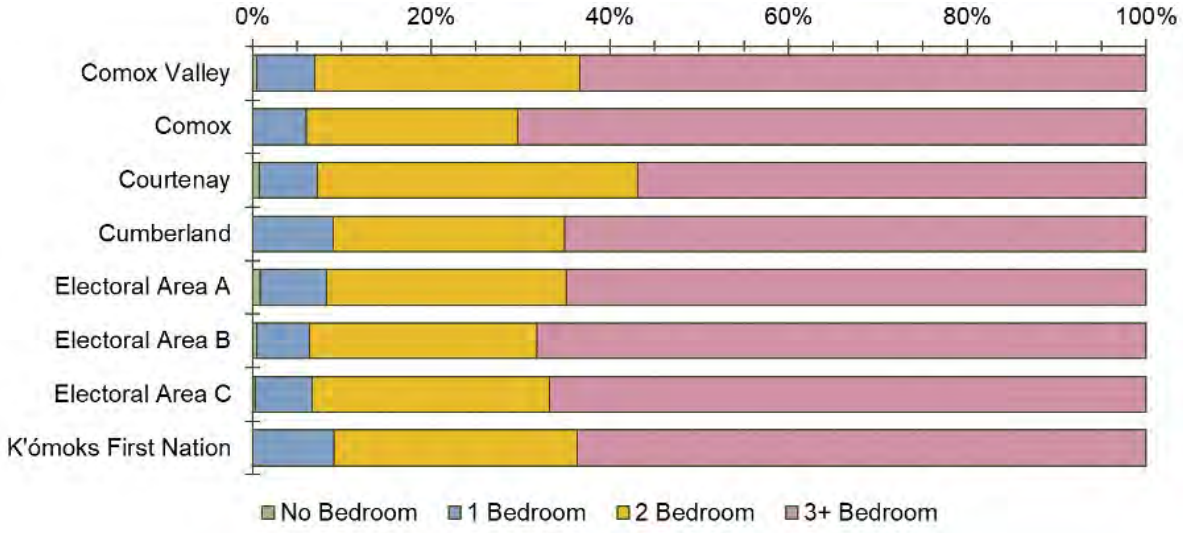
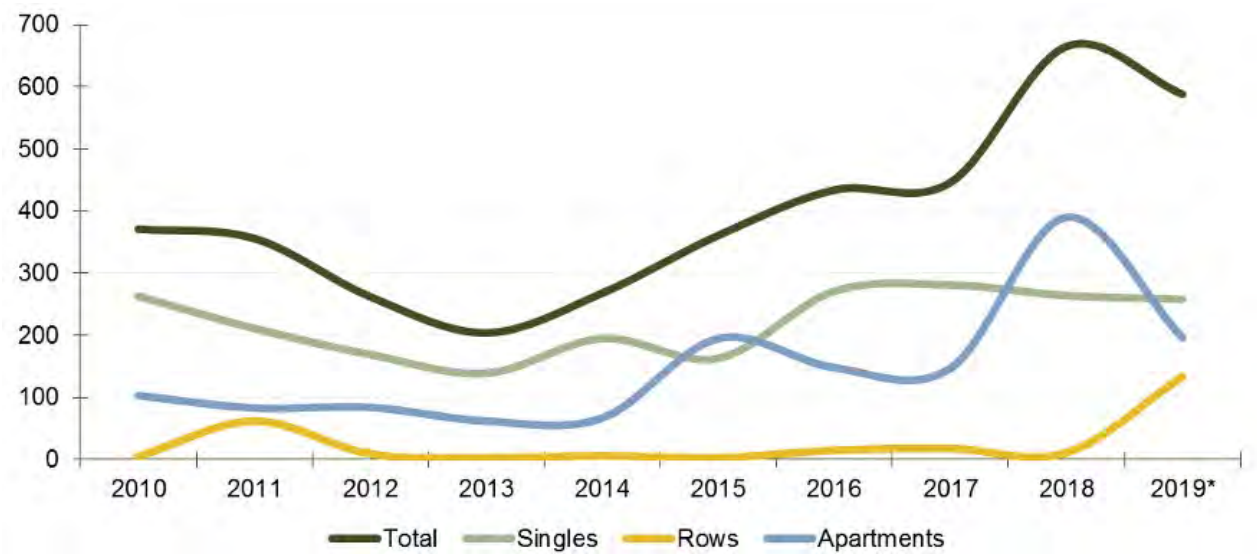


Figure 25. Historical Unit Completion Estimates by Dwelling Type. Source: BC Stats.



urban areas tend to have less rental housing generally, and census data for other areas of the CVRD bear this out. There have been notable years which saw substantial completion of units intended for the rental market, and in general, these tenures have been growing in market share recently, as described below in **Figure 26**.

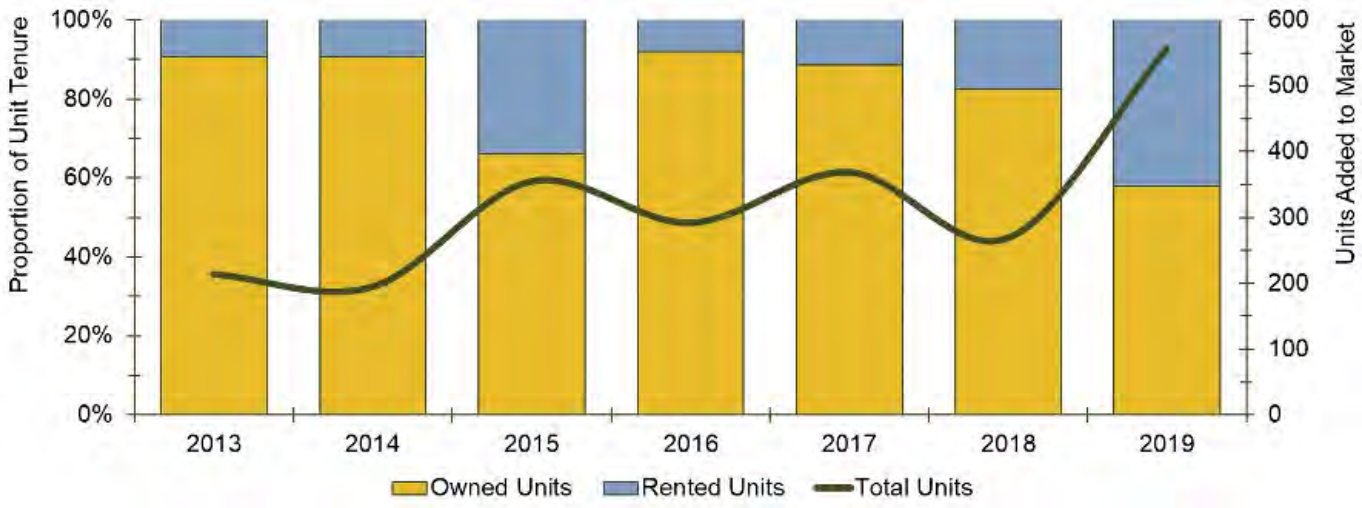
20. Rental Inventory

The primary rental universe (the inventory predominantly made up of purpose-built rental buildings) belongs to the communities of Comox and Courtenay, the only markets which meet CMHC's threshold for inclusion into their annual survey. This stock was static in size for most of the last decade but has declined in recent years, as shown in **Figure 27 on page 57**.

Data for 2019 shows a total inventory of 1,680 units, down roughly 18 percent from typical levels. However, this does not yet reflect the addition of 234 new rental units completed in 2019. Adding these into the stock, CVRD can expect to have a total primary rental inventory of 1,914 units, which would only be 6 percent lower than typical levels over the last decade. Housing starts data suggests more rental inventory is on the way, which should lead to primary rental market reaching a new high point in the next year or two.

The proportional breakdown of the primary rental market by

Figure 26. Historical Unit Completions by Intended Tenure (Comox and Courtenay only). Source: CMHC.

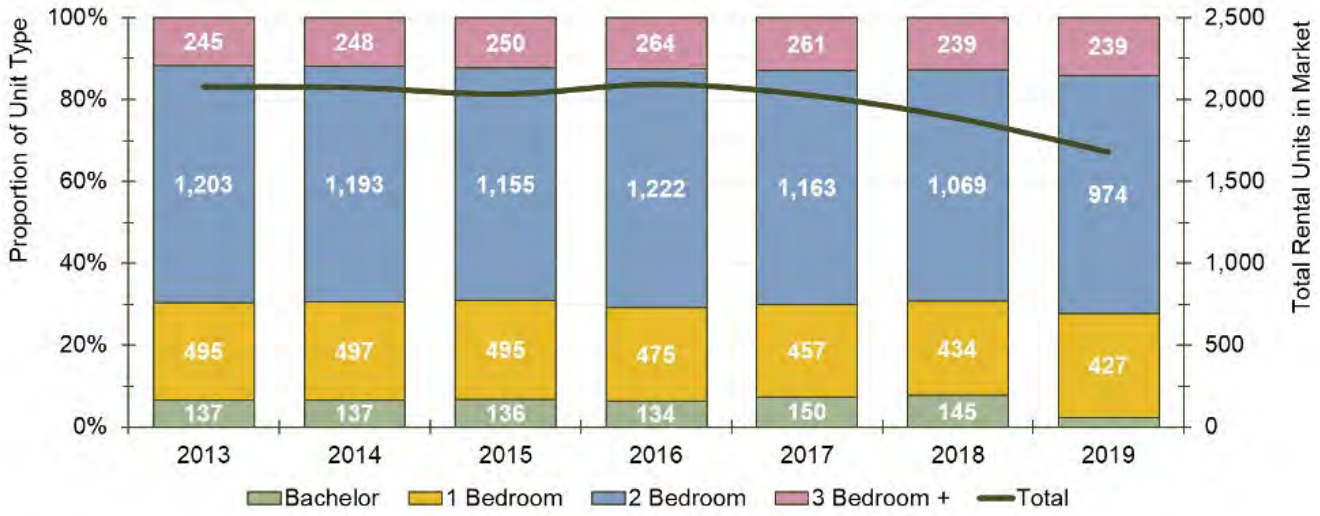


bedroom count has been historically steady. However, the recent reduction in stock reflected in the current data shows that most of the lost inventory consisted of 2-bedroom units. Bachelor/studio style units also notably declined in recent years such that there are now nearly none of these apartment types. Data is not yet available to determine the unit types of those recently completed.

The primary rental market is generally more focussed on one- and two-bedroom dwelling units. In 2016, 32 percent was attributed to 1-bedroom units, and 44 percent to 2-bedroom units. Secondary rental market units do contribute to the 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom unit styles; however, the majority of their stock consists of 3-bedroom or larger dwellings, at about 57 percent in 2016. Secondary rental markets include housing types such as single or semi-detached units (which can easily flip between owner and renter occupied tenures), condominium apartments (rented out by their owner), larger houses that have been internally converted to rental units, other smaller multi-unit buildings (like duplexes or triplexes), or small mixed use buildings that contain a few apartments above a ground-floor commercial unit. These tend to not be captured by the CMHC survey.

Comparing this information to census figures on rental households, it can be concluded that most of the rental housing stock in CVRD, especially in communities outside of Comox and Courtenay, operates in the secondary universe. The 2016 census

Figure 27. Historical Primary Rental Housing Universe. Source: CMHC.



reported 6,980 households being housed in rental dwellings, however the primary market that year was only 2,095 units in size, representing 31% of the rental market.

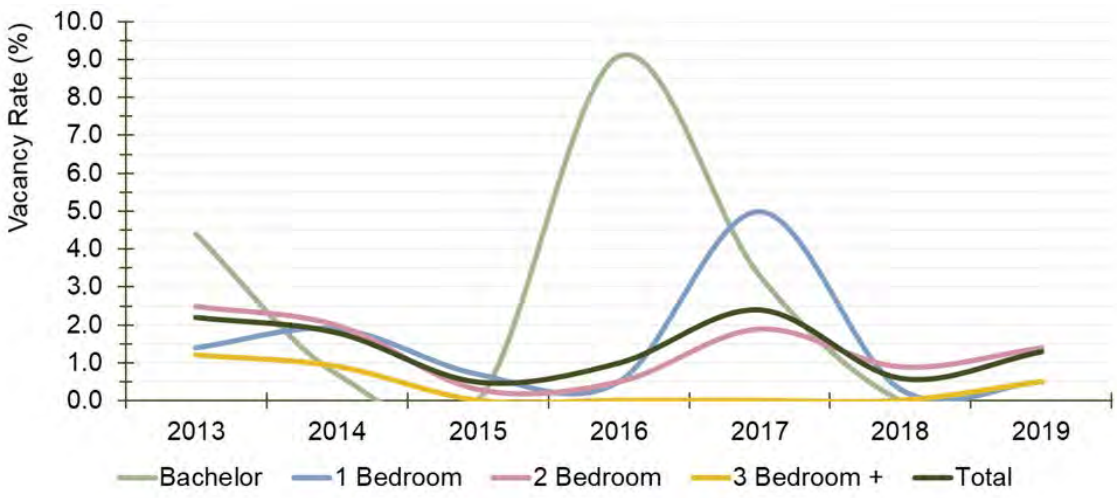
Overall, the secondary market contributed 70 percent of 2016 rentals (as shown in **Table 23 on page 120** of the Appendix), providing most of the stock across all unit styles aside from the small number of No Bedroom units:

- 1-bedroom: 67.7 percent
- 2-bedrooms: 59.3 percent
- 3-or-more bedrooms: 88.9 percent

21. Rental Market – Rent & Vacancy

Given that many areas of CVRD are not yet large enough to qualify for the CMHC rental market survey, direct data on rental vacancy or rates is unavailable in many areas of the region. That said, the combination of Comox and Courtenay represent 63% of the region's households and data is available for these communities. Further, while there are many other distinct communities in the Comox Valley region, it is reasonable to assume that rental market trends are similar to those observed in these main rental markets given the relatively close distance between them. This section presents rental market data for the Courtenay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), roughly the City of Courtenay and Town of Comox combined.

Figure 28. Historical Rental Housing Vacancy by Unit Type, Courtenay CMA. Source: CMHC.

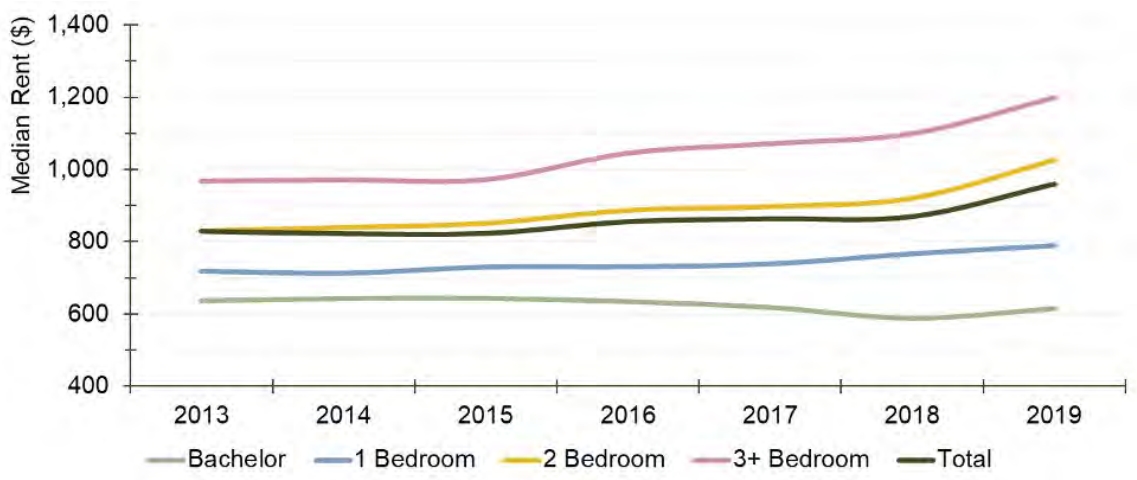


Typically, a primary rental market is considered healthy and balanced when vacancy rates are in the 3 to 5 percent range. The Courtenay CMA has had a variable but overall low vacancy rate, only rarely exceeding 2 percent, as described in **Figure 28 on page 58**. Vacancy has generally been lowest in 3-bedroom or larger units.

Vacancy rates are a measure of market demand, with low and declining vacancy signalling high and increasing demand. Accordingly, declining vacancy is a leading indicator of market rents, as prices increase to balance the changing demand with available supply. That said, vacancy can decrease without major price changes, but once unit availability hits a critical threshold of very low vacancy, rents tend to react disproportionately. Within this context, price increases generally lag a year or more as the impact of low vacancy ripples through the market.

Rents in the Courtenay CMA tended to increase gradually year to year, as described below in **Figure 29**. This changed in recent years, with a notable increase in market rents in 2018 and 2019. Reflecting vacancy data, rental price growth has been strongest for 2 and 3+ bedroom units. For historical median rent pricing, please go to **Table 25 on page 121** of the Appendix. For historical average rent pricing, please go to **Table 26 on page 121** of the Appendix.

Figure 29. Historical Median Market Rents by Unit Type, Courtenay CMA, 2019 dollars. Source: CMHC.



22. Secondary Market Scan Data

A scan of the secondary rental market was completed between March 30th and April 17th, 2020. Postings were reviewed from the online rental posting sites Craigslist and Kijiji. In total 82 unique rental postings were tracked, the majority of those being advertised as located in the City of Courtenay. Each posting was tracked by reported dwelling type, number of bedrooms and cost. The accuracy of postings was not assessed, but the scan provides a snapshot of asking rents in the CVRD for those who are looking to enter the rental market today, as described below in **Table A**.

Bachelor or studio suites, of which there were 5 postings average a monthly rental cost of $999, 1-bedrooms of which there were 22 averaged $1,106, 2-bedrooms of which there were 36 averaged $1,392, 3-bedrooms of which there were 17 averaged $2,082 and finally 4+ bedrooms of which there were only 3 advertised, averaged $2,450.

Although only a snapshot of the secondary rental market, all the monthly average rents were higher than that suggested by CMHC data for the primary rental market. In some cases, such as 3-bedroom rental units, the cost to rent in the secondary rental market was more than double that of the primary. This helps confirm that the local market experiences price premiums between available units and all units, as demonstrated in CMHC analysis for Victoria (see item 6 in the Limitations section on page

Table A. **Average Price of Secondary Rental Market Postings by Bedroom Number, 2020.**

Unit Type	Average Primary Rental Market Price (2019)	Average Secondary Market Rental Price	% difference
Bachelor/studio	$640	$999	+56.1%
1 bedroom	$828	$1,105.68	+33.5%
2 bedroom	$1,038	$1,391.67	+34.1%
3+ bedrooms	$1,166	$2,367.50	+103%

24). This is also important to note as 70 percent of the regions rental market is serviced through the secondary rental market.

23. Ownership Market – Prices & Sales

Days on market shows the length of time a property listing takes to find a buyer. It is therefore a measure of market demand; the ownership equivalent to vacancy rates. Generally, across the CVRD, the early 2010s were stable, if declining slightly. In the latter part of the past decade, demand showed a significant increase across all communities, particularly from 2017 onwards, as shown below in **Figure 30**. This trend has reversed slightly in 2019, though still remains low, especially in the Town of Comox.

This period of increasing market demand also matches with patterns of market activity in terms of total number of sales. Coinciding with days on market, total sales volumes were fairly stable for most of the last ten years in Comox. As demand for individual listings grew, so too did the total number of transactions in each community, as described in **Figure 31 on page 62**.

Consequently, price action in most housing markets matches with the demand patterns already discussed. Annual price changes were mixed for the early 2010s but showed an increase across all dwelling types starting in 2016, peaking in 2017 at a dramatic 20 to 30 percent year over year increase, and generally continuing at a lower pace to the present. The most recent year

Figure 30. Historical Average Annual Days on Market by Dwelling Type. Source: Vancouver Island Real Estate Board - VIREB.

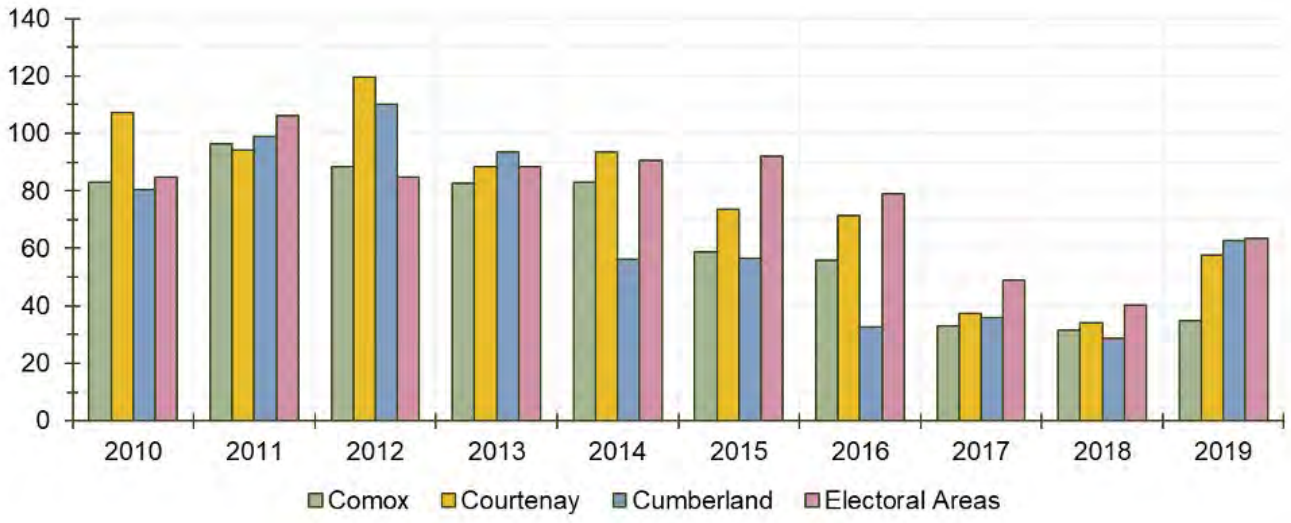


Figure 31. Historical Annual Sales Volume by Dwelling Type. Source: VIREB.

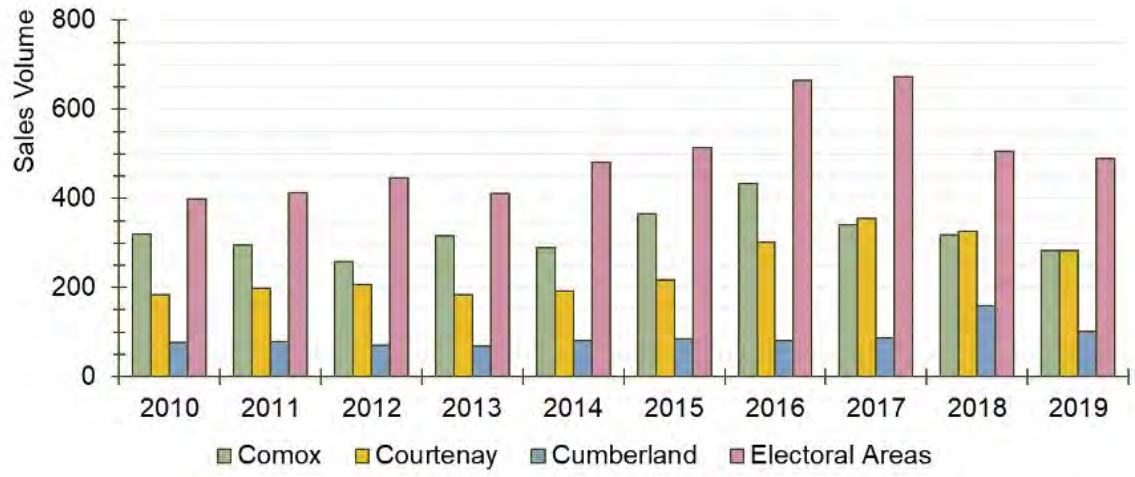
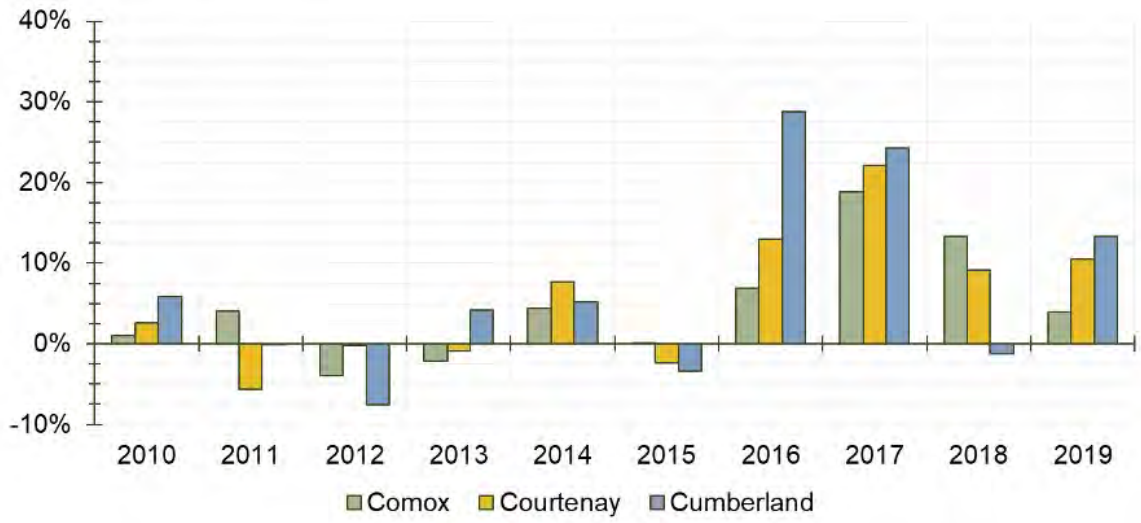


Figure 32. Historical Year/Year Housing Price Change by Dwelling Type. Source: VIREB.



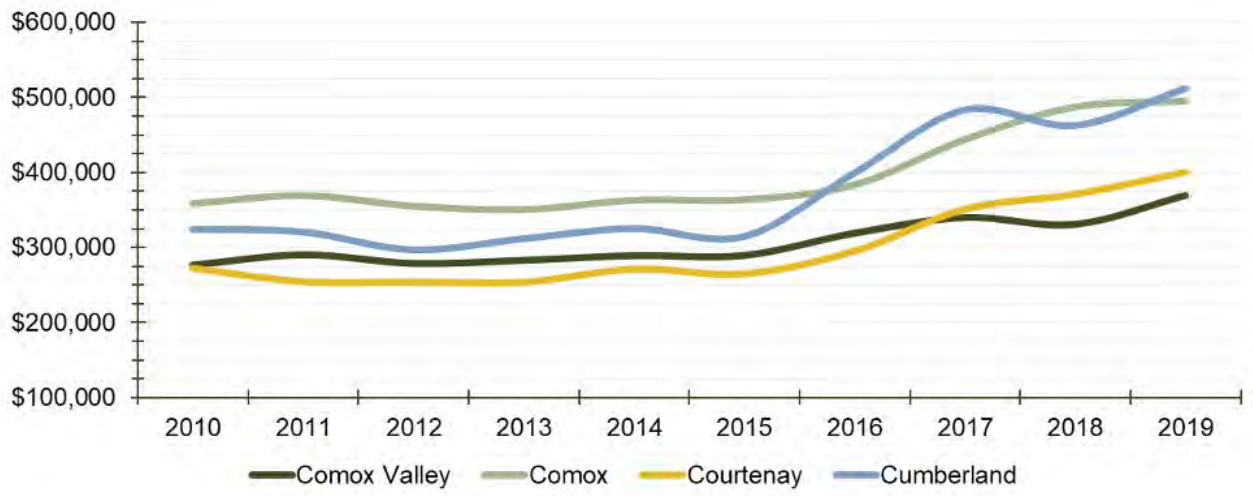
(2019) indicated that the market price for most dwelling types remained steady after the recent escalation. Condo apartments showed the strongest price appreciation and unlike all other types, continued to increase strongly in 2019. This is likely due to their comparatively lower starting point for price, their relative affordability compared to other housing types, and possibly demographic factors driving demand to smaller housing forms. Please refer to **Figure 32 on page 62** for details.

Accordingly, median sale price across all communities in CVRD was generally stable for most of the past 10 years, with a significant increase observed from 2016 to 2018, which tempered in 2019, as described below in **Figure 33**. The overall price in 2019 was 28 percent higher than the 2010 to 2016 average.

24. Short-term Rentals (AirBnB)

Over the last decade or so, short-term rentals (STRs) have grown significantly as a new form of residential property tenureship: a more fluid and flexible use of residential dwelling space for temporary accommodations that blurs the line between rental housing and a commercial hospitality use. At the epicentre of the STR boom is the technology company AirBnB, an internationally used STR marketplace that connects STR "landlords" and users. Especially since 2016, AirBnB, and the STR market with it, have experienced exponential growth worldwide.

Figure 33. Historical Median Historical Median Sale Price by Dwelling Type, 2019 Dollars . Source: VIREB.



Alongside this market growth is concern about the impact of STR units on traditional residential market sectors. There has been notable concern by local residents and governments in the Comox Valley region about STR impacts on the availability of long-term rental housing; specifically, whether STRs are removing traditional rentals from the market, thereby reducing supply and causing greater difficulty for households to find a suitable place to live. This concern is exacerbated by the general lack of authoritative data on the extent of local STR markets due to the fact that AirBnB, and other platforms like it, are private companies which do not publish data on their users.

The following discussion aims to identify the actual number of units that are potentially being removed from the market, and whether the developing trends warrant immediate concern. To do so required the use of third-party data provided by the company AirDNA, which provides monthly (as of January 2016) data on STR markets, scraped from the public-facing websites of several STR platforms, including AirBnB. This report's analysis combed said data and applied the following definitions to the exercise:

Total market:
all short-term rental units that were active (meaning, offering lodging) within a given time period.

Commercial market:
All short-term rental units that were active within a given time period, but are available and/or reserved more than 50 percent of the days that they have been active. For instance, if a property was active in 2017 and provided booking availability for 200 days (about 55 percent of the year), it would be considered as "commercial" as the primary use of the unit is for STR accommodations, rather than being a minority use of a residential dwelling. In other words, the 50 percent cut off is meant to separate residents using the service to create supplemental income from their dwellings, from non-resident STR operators using the unit principally for income/investment purposes.

Additional Notes
The data includes listings from several STR platforms. In examining the data, it was noted that AirBnB accounted for the vast majority of listings, with other platforms mostly serving as another avenue to advertise properties which were also available on AirBnB. To avoid double-counting units, only data for listings on AirBnB are used.

In this report, market types are divided into "entire unit" and "other." The former means an STR listing that is the entirety of an apartment or dwelling, while the latter can be a room in a dwelling, a hotel room, or other type. For the purpose of this analysis, only "entire unit" listings are considered to represent units that may be

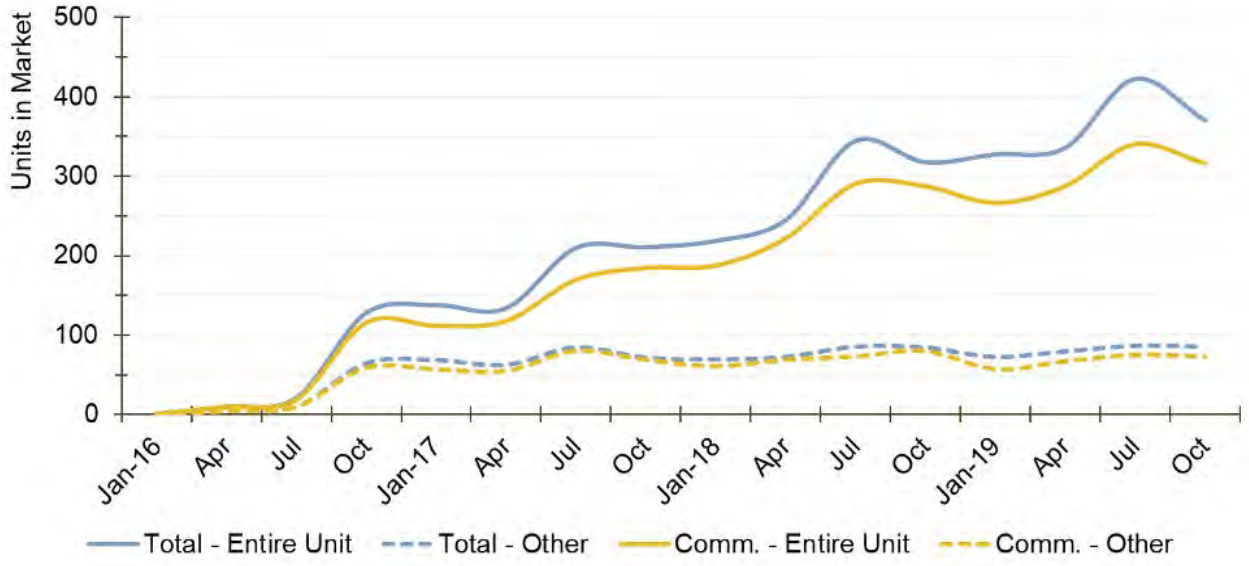
impacting traditional housing market sectors.

According to **Table 31 on page 124** of the Appendix, the overall STR market had grown to 457 individual units by October 2019, up 54 units since the same time in 2018 and 174 since the same time in 2017. Over time, the actual total has fluctuated as it mirrors the demand for accommodation during specific seasons. For instance, there are typically spikes in July of each year, specific to summer vacation rentals. Overall, 81 percent of the total market are entire units.

Alongside the overall market's relatively steady growth of the last four years (see **Figure 34**) is growth in commercial units, which historically maintain a strong majority of listing types within the CVRD. In October 2016, there was 116 commercial entire units, 91 percent of the "entire unit" market. Since then, it peaked in July 2019 at 341. As of October 2019 (the last date of data available for this report), commercial entire units made up approximately 85 percent of the entire unit market.

At 317 units (October 2019), commercial STRs represented an estimated 1 percent of total housing supply. If compared to rentals only, this represents about 4 percent. However, there is no way to conclude how many of these units would convert to renter or owner housing if they had not been listed on an STR website.

Figure 34. : Historical AirBnB Market – Total versus Commercial Market. Source: AirDNA.



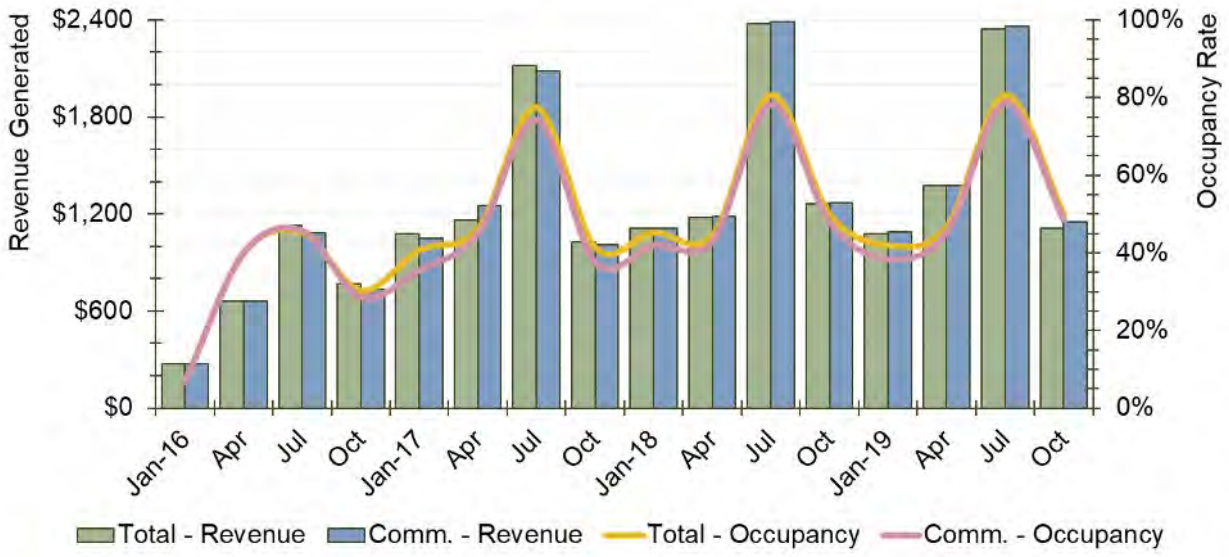
Regional revenue data provides insights into the profitability of commercial AirBnBs. Specifically, that the median revenue of commercial units has remained at par with the total market (mostly since it holds the majority of units and thus influences the trend). Similarly, the median nightly asking price has remained relatively constant at around $110 to $120 (adjusted for inflation to October 2019). **Table 32 on page 124** in the Appendix and **Figure 35** illustrate the parallel revenue generation and booking occupancy over time for both markets.

25. Property Assessments

Multiple property-use codes exist and are tracked by BC Assessment; many of which refer to the same kind of dwelling (e.g. a duplex) but within minor differences for greater record keeping accuracy. The following tables summarize these various codes into four main categories: single family, duplex (separated either vertically – one above another – or horizontally – otherwise known as a semi-detached), row, and multi-family. As per BC Assessment, records are only available since 2012. Furthermore, vacant land has been omitted from the summaries. For further details regarding median and average assessments, please see **Table 33** and **Table 34 on page 125** of the Appendix.

Between 2012 and 2016, median and average assessments remained relatively stable (in 2019 dollars) for all dwelling types, except for multi-families. Since 2016, median assessments: grew

Figure 35. Historical AirBnB Occupancy & Revenue – Total versus Commercial Market. October 2019 dollars. Source: AirDNA.



49 percent for singles, grew 29 percent for duplexes, fell 9 percent for rows, and fell 4 percent for multi-family dwellings.
Readers may notice that the discrepancy between the median and average assessments change considerably over time and over dwelling types. For instance, single family homes appear skewed to higher valued properties up until 2016 where the relationship becomes the opposite. Conversely, row house dwellings maintain higher average assessments than median over the entire period.

According to 2019 BC Assessment records, the median single-family home sale price was $472,500. This is noticeably lower than the corresponding median assessed value ($593,000). Based on the overall appreciating real estate market in 2019, this difference may be mostly attributed to the sale of generally older, smaller, or possibly less desirable dwellings that are offered at more competitive prices. Median row house sale prices almost doubled their corresponding assessments, while duplexes were lower and multi-family buildings were relatively close. For further details on median and average sales, please see **Table 35 on page 126** of the Appendix.

Please note that the above values may vary from the Ownership Market section due to different sources which may categorize properties differently. For future affordability analysis, the report uses those sales values provided through the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board.

Regional Report

Housing Needs

This section summarizes the Region's current and future housing needs. Like other sections, it relies on Statistics Canada data (primarily the custom dataset) to report actual occurrences, as per censuses, and serve as the basis for housing demand and supply projections.

Other sources drawn upon include:

- BC Government
- BC Housing
- Local Government

Key Takeaways

The private market is not able to provide housing for a significant proportion of the Comox Valley.

Across the region, 10.3 percent of all households are in Core Housing Need and nearly 30 percent of renter households are in Core Housing Need. Only couples or couples with children can reasonably expect to own a single-detached home. Lone parent and non-economic households would struggle to rent or own cheaper options, and the stock of those options is limited. A household earning the median income should be able to rent a 2+ bedroom home but would not be able to purchase a detached house, the most common housing type in the Region. In 2016,

the largest proportion of the CVRD's households in Core Housing Need were one-person households at 52.3 percent, followed by lone-parent households at 23.0 percent. Households with children represented 32.8 percent of households in Core Housing Need including lone-parents and couples with children

There is a need for more non-market housing and support for unhoused populations across the Comox Valley.

As of January 2020, the BC Housing wait list for subsidised units had 270 applications, specific to: 73 families, 82 residents with disabilities, 74 seniors, 12 persons requiring wheelchair modified housing, 25 singles, and 1 rent supplement applicant. As of 2018, 117 people identified as experiencing homelessness, 58 percent of which were unsheltered. Thirty-two percent identified as being indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total population identifies as indigenous. Of all respondents to the 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, 29 percent were above the age of 54, while 6 percent were below 26. An explanation of these totals is at the end of this section.

Rent subsidies not keeping up with changes in the housing cost and rent subsidies rates are highest in Comox

In 2016, 10.8 percent of renter households in the CVRD received a form of subsidy to help pay for their rental accommodation. The highest was in Comox, with 13.8%. Accounting for inflation, the purchasing power of rental subsidies has decreased over the past 10 years while rental prices have increased.

Owners and renters are both worse off than they were in 2006 according to Core Housing Need

In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that 2,815 households (10.3 percent) were in Core Housing Need. This is up 735 households since 2006. Proportional to their respective totals, both owners and renters are now worse off than they were in 2006.

Renters are 6 times more likely to experience Extreme Core Housing Need than owners.

Extreme Need for owners dropped from 2.4 in 2006, to 2.2 percent in 2016. Renter extreme need decreased from 15.5 to 14.0 percent.

Equity-seeking groups are more often in Core Housing Need

Equity-seeking groups, including Indigenous households, senior households and households with at least one person with an activity limitation, reported higher rates of Core Housing Need compared to other households in the Region.

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to housing needs were shared through community engagement activities.

One quarter (25 percent) of individuals who responded to the community survey indicated that they are considering moving out of the community they currently live in due to housing issues.

When asked why, respondents provided the following:

- Housing costs are just too expensive, and housing is unaffordable. This includes the cost of property tax and other additional cost of living such as transportation, food and heating.
- Younger community members fear that they will never be able to afford to rent or own a home.
- Wages are not keeping up with cost of living and other communities may provide more affordable options.
- Cannot find an appropriate home to live in. What is available is either too big (namely for empty nesters) or too small (largely for renter) to meet current or future needs.
- There is a lack of public transportation options, making it very difficult to access community and services without a vehicle.
- There is a lack of housing available to meet the needs of students.
- Low income families are in need of greater support and would like to be able to access programming such as recreation programs but cannot reasonably do so in the region.
- Housing instability is a concern. Individuals or families who have had to move multiple times do to changing tenancy, affordability or a lack of appropriate housing options are not able to set down root.
- Increasing rates of crime are leading community members to feel unsafe.
- A general lack of rental options makes it hard for community members to stay.

Key Quotes:

"I worry I will never be able to afford a home here and cannot see myself living in my rental forever. My partner and I both make good wages, but seemingly could never afford the mortgage rates for the current homes on the market, or the rental rates of well-maintained rental homes."

"I love my town and my friends here, but if I cannot afford to stay, I will have to move to a place with lower rentals."

"All I can afford is to live off-grid in an RV and I can't do this for years longer. They are moldy and rot quickly."

"Housing for students here is horrible. Students bring money to NIC and the community, but with poor housing options, less students will stay beyond their time at NIC. I like the area, but student housing is a "shrug of the shoulders" problem. Will study elsewhere next year"

"Gentrification is a constant threat for folks with unstable housing so I'm always thinking about moving away so I have a back up plan for the day when we are evicted and can't find anywhere to live here (again)."

"We have lived in 5 different places since moving to the Comox Valley in 2014. Every time we have been evicted for one reason or another (renoviction, illegal eviction due to having a toddler, landlord moving back in, etc) and every time we face an increasingly more difficult rental market. From 2017-2019 we were forced to move THREE times. It's unsustainable for setting down roots, it's extremely hard on our hardworking family, and it makes us feel like the Comox Valley is a hostile and unwelcome place to live unless you have lots of money."

"We have been forced to sell our home, and could not find affordable and suitable rental accommodations, and DEFINITELY no affordable properties to purchase in the valley, so we have to leave the community that has been home for over a decade."

"House prices and rentals are way way to expensive for a single person. It is impossible to buy a home unless you have a second income and paying rent by yourself is astronomical. The housing system discriminates against single people and there are a lot of older single persons out there!"

The private rental market is not meeting the needs of many renters. The private and secondary rental markets, which represents the largest proportion of rentals available in the valley, is not able to meet a diversity of community members needs. Renters who require more accessible spaces or have mobility challenges have very few options available to them. There is also a lack of stability for renters in the private market and it can be challenging to find long-term stable housing.

Key Quotes:

"Much if the rental housing is provided by private owners. It makes it difficult to obtain and keep. Huge percentage do not allow pets and the ones that do are usually below standard. If the market changes private landlords will sell rather than keep rental in the market. Long term does not

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to housing needs were shared through community engagement activities.

really exist. No stability. We cant afford a one bedroom apt for 1400+ so we live as extended family splitting rent and costs."

There is a need for more non-market housing options, both with and without supports.
The people in most need are those with the least housing options available to them. People will the least ability to weather unstable housing conditions are the most likely to be affected by the current housing deficit and there are very few non-market housing options available for them. Populations that were identified explicitly include: single-income parents, senior's, people who require accessible homes, and people living on income assistance or making less than the median income.

Key Quotes:

"There are woman who have taken places because they are desperate and it makes me cringe. Pregnant women, on their own, living with men they don't know because it is the only room they can find or afford."

"There aren't enough affordable options for low income seniors or persons with diverse abilities. The way we build affordable housing has been very focused on niche groups (youth, at risk, etc) but there is a larger group that doesn't fit into those "at risk" categories."

I really think there's a huge gap with senior's housing. A huge gap that is terrifying to me because of how fast its growing. The front line agencies say to me that every day there are more and more seniors walking through the doors and they just don't have anything to offer them."

"We could be doing a lot more. A lot more specialised, traditional housing, an actual low barrier shelter..."

BC Housing Waitlists
Though someone may qualify for a unit through BC Housing, many never expected to live in one. Waitlist are prohibitively long, and people do not feel like there will ever be enough units to meet the demand. Those we met who were in one of the supportive units were very happy to have it.

Rent subsidies are not enough to afford housing costs.
Especially at the events at the Regional Library, a repeated housing concern was that there are very few options for people accessing Income Assistance, Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers, and Persons with Disabilities programs. Depending on your classification, the typical monthly shelter allowance is $375 for a single person. There are very few market or non-market

units available at that price point and assistance rates have largely not increased for over a decade. Through community engagement we heard that some landlords in the private rental market can sometimes be hesitant to rent to individuals who receive income supports and that individuals have been denied housing simply because of the fact that they do receive some level of income support.

Key Quotes:

"I'm on disability assistance and the money received is extremely low compared to how much rentals cost these days. I've been denied rentals because I'm on assistance and the landlords are aware that it's low so they are unlikely to rent to people like me in fear of having a tenant who cannot afford to pay up each month. I've never missed a rent payment but that doesn't change their minds when they could easily find a working couple to rent to instead."

"I am currently living on social assistance, which allows $375.00 monthly for rent. There is nothing available at this price, and I am spending almost the entirety of my monthly stipend on shelter. Thus far I have used my small savings account to purchase food, but this is almost exhausted. Now I face homelessness or going without food, what a choice."

Renters and owners are both challenged by the current housing market. There is also a lot of concern amongst community members that people who have traditionally been able to afford housing are increasingly being pushed out of the region. This manifests in hidden homelessness, increased usage rates at places like food banks, or people renting in places that are further from vital services so they can get the number of bedrooms they need. There are many people in the Comox Valley who, five years ago, may have been able to afford market housing who are now unable to because of the accelerated cost. Key informants routinely pointed out that accessing housing is more difficult for everyone, not just marginalized populations. More and more, only those making more than the median income are insulated from housing instability.

Key Quotes:

"There is a sense in the community that a lot of people are one paycheque way homelessness."

"There are a lot of people right on the edge, couch surfing or living in RVs."

"Eight years ago we had very few people couch surfing or homeless. Now... well, lots of people in our program and staying with friends or something like that."

Community Perspectives

The following insights and experiences related to housing needs were shared through community engagement activities.

"The transit system is not fabulous so our families are getting stuck in housing out in Black creek and Merville and there are only two busses a day."

Transportation and housing are significantly linked.
There are a lack of transportation options in the region and many community members indicated that transportation was a challenge that greatly contributed to the adequacy of their homes. Many shared frustrations with the lack of available public transportation options which limit their ability to access services and contribute to overall costs of living. A need for more housing located close to transportation was indicated. Twenty-nine percent or renters and twenty-two percent of home owners who responded to the community survey indicated that transportation was a challenge for them.

Key Quote:

"When the time comes that I am not able to drive any longer I have no other options. It's too far to town/store by bicycle or electric scooter with no shoulders on the roads anyhow. Because of this I will be forced to move even though my housing situation is ideal otherwise."

Transportation challenges included:

- A lack of bus stops within walking distance from individuals' homes or close to work, or other amenities they may be trying to access.
- Many respondents shared that they had to own a vehicle because it was their only transportation option due to a lack of public transportation service in their area.
- Individuals have difficulty accessing the bus with a mobility aid such as a walker and also accessing bust stops that have no lighting or seating available.
- Public transportation options do not come frequently enough to be convenient and are often unavailable for those who work evenings or weekends.
- There are a lack of safe bike routes throughout the region.

Key Quotes:

"I can't afford a vehicle and usually take the bus or walk. I had to move to a cheaper place but it's on the edge of the community and the bus doesn't come out this far, so I've been staying indoors most of the time."

"We now have to look into buying a second car, which we can't really afford, because trying to navigate having two full time jobs and a child in preschool is impossible with only one vehicle and this transit system."

"Little transit available, no resources within walking distance, unable to afford a vehicle as well as rent."

"My car needs repair and I live on disability and with the cost of food and everything its really tough."

"I want to take transit but there are limited to no options later in the evenings when I finish work. The schedule also doesn't line up with my work times."

There is also a lot of concern that people who have traditionally been able to afford housing are increasingly being pushed out. This manifests in hidden homelessness, increased usage rates at places like food banks, or people renting in places that are further from vital services so they can get the number of bedrooms they need.

There are many people in the Comox Valley who, five years ago, may have been able to afford market housing. Key informants routinely pointed out that accessing housing is more difficult for everyone, not just the priority populations or equity seeking groups. More and more, only those making more than the median income are insulated from housing instability.

26. Non-Market Housing

BC Housing provides annual reports regarding the provision of non-market housing across communities like Comox Valley. The report, made available in April 2019, details the total persons or households using forms of emergency shelters, transitional and assisted living, independent social housing units, or private market rental assistance programs. **Figure 36** summarizes the current offerings across all CVRD communities, with totals provided below. Please note that totals may not equate to the sum of the units listed above it due to data suppression.

Overall, 72 percent of non-market options are found or directed to the City of Courtenay. In total, BC Housing provides support to 1,183 households in CVRD, 126 for emergency shelter or homeless housing, 156 for transitional supported and assisted living, 293 for independent social housing, and 608 for rental assistance.

There is a present need for more non-market housing across CVRD. As of January 2020, the BC Housing wait list for subsidised units had 270 applications, specific to: 73 families, 82 residents with disabilities, 74 seniors, 12 persons requiring wheelchair modified housing, 25 singles, and 1 rent supplement applicant. As the largest centre and the community with the most non-market housing options, Courtenay also has the most applications at 214 (79.3 percent). For details, please see **Table 36 on page 126**.

Figure 36. Non-Market Housing, March 2019. Source: BC Housing.

	Comox Valley	Courtenay	Comox	Cumberland	Electoral Area A	Electoral Area B	Electoral Area C	K'ómoks First Nation
Emergency Shelter / Homeless Housing								
Homeless Housed	52	52	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homeless Rent Supplements	60	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homeless Shelters	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transitional Supported / Assisted Living								
Frail Seniors	111	111	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Needs	31	26	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women and Children Fleeing Violence	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independent Social Housing								
Low Income Families	235	235	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Income Seniors	58	20	0	15	23	0	0	0
Rent Assistance in Private Market								
Rent Assist Families	191	103	32	12	13	12	19	0
Rent Assist Seniors	417	222	97	9	46	18	23	0
Community Total	1,183	857	129	37	82	34	42	2

27. Subsidized Rental Housing

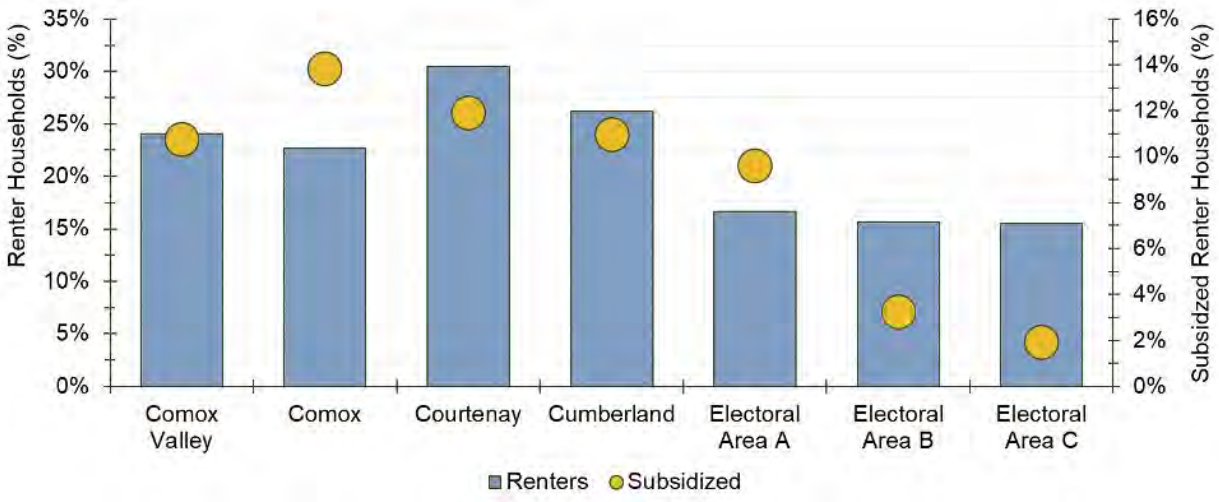
In 2016, 10.8 percent of renter households in the CVRD received a form of subsidy to help pay for their rental accommodation. The highest was in Comox, with 13.8%. Of the 6,210 Comox households, about 22.7 percent were renters. This is a slight proportional decrease since 2006, but an actual household increase of 205 since the same year. Only Electoral Area B and C had a subsidy rate below 4 percent (see **Figure 37** below and **Table 37 on page 127** of the Appendix).

Rental subsidies are an effective tool to help individuals or households afford evolving market rents; however, to ensure their effectiveness, subsidies must also evolve since the purchasing power of the amount provided in one year may not match that of a future year.

In British Columbia, the level of income assistance has not changed for at least the last decade across all family sizes. For instance, a 1-person family can potentially receive a maximum of $375 to put towards their rent. In 2010, this covered approximately 68 percent of the cost of the median bachelor apartment.

If we remove the inflation that occurred from 2010 to 2019 to establish a constant 2010 dollar figure across time, we see that the purchasing power of that 1-person allotment decreases

Figure 37. Renter Households versus Subsidized Households, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



while the cost of housing increases. Specifically, the $375 in 2010 would be equivalent to $338 in 2019 while a 1-bedroom apartment increases from $625 to $699 (with inflation, it is $775 in 2019). **Figure 38** illustrates how the value of Income Assistance has changed relative to the value of a bachelor or 1-bedroom unit. It does so by indexing each by its 2010 value (that is, dividing each year by the value in 2010); a number below 1 indicates a decrease in value while above 1 is an increase.

Removing inflation, the price of a bachelor unit has remained relatively the same over the last ten years; 1-bedroom units increased just above 10 percent since 2010. Conversely, the value of the $375 decreased steadily from 2015 to 2019 to about 90 percent of its 2010 value. Overall, the gap between 1-bedrooms and the maximum Income Assistance for 1-person increased by about 20 percent.

28. Homelessness

As of 2018, 117 people identified as experiencing homelessness, 58 percent of which were unsheltered. Thirty-two percent identified as being Indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total population identifies as Indigenous. Of all respondents to the 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, 29 percent were above the age of 54, while 6 percent were below 26. An explanation of these totals is at the end of this section.

Figure 38. Renter Households versus Subsidized Households, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

Fifty-nine percent reported having two or more of the following health problems:

- addiction;
- medical condition;
- mental illness; and/or
- physical disability.

Reported income sources among unhoused individuals:

- 38 percent received a disability benefit;
- 38 percent received income assistance;
- 23 percent were self/informally employed; and
- 21 percent were employed.

Reported barriers to housing access:

- About 65 percent of the homeless considered high rent as the primary barrier;
- 61 percent reported low-incomes as their main barrier; and
- 30 percent reported lack of availability.

About 45 percent of the 2018 homeless population had been homeless for a year or more, of which 17 percent had lived in their community for less than a year, suggesting that about 8 percent of all homeless people had recently moved from another community. Notwithstanding, 49 percent reported living in their community for at least 10 years.

These figures are Point-in-Time (PiT) counts of persons experiencing homelessness. These were produced in 2018 by the Government of British Columbia and several partners. The data illustrates what is occurring over the entirety of the Comox Valley Regional District, inclusive of the communities of Comox, Courtenay, Cumberland, and Denman and Hornby Islands. An individual was defined as experiencing homelessness if they did not have a place of their own where they paid rent and could expect to stay for at least 30 days. PiT totals are undercounts – much of the homeless population is difficult to find – and represents only those individuals identified during a 24-hour period.

29. Anticipated Market Household Demand

Estimates anticipate that the Comox Valley Regional District may demand 33,260 housing units in 2025 (inclusive of the Kómoks First Nation), an increase of 2,285 over the 2020 estimate, for an average of 457 units annually (see **Figure 39 on page 80**). Overall, about 23 percent of this demand may be for rental-tenured units. Furthermore, anticipated housing demand versus total population could translate to marginally declining household sizes, from 2016's 2.2 to just about 2.1 in 2025.

Demand for rental units is not evenly distributed through the total unit type projections. It is evident that rental demand is highly concentrated in smaller unit sizes. However, a sizable portion of larger, family-friendly rental units will also be required. This was calculated by applying the historical breakdown of owners and renters by unit type to the projected demand (see **Figure 40 on page 80**).

Figure 39. Projected Population and Housing Demand by Unit Type, 2016 to 2025.

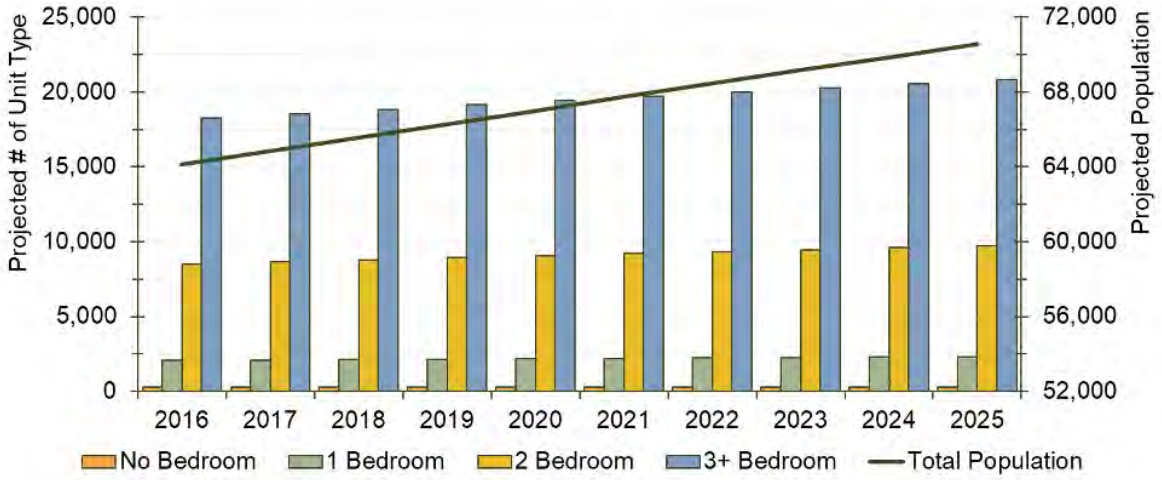
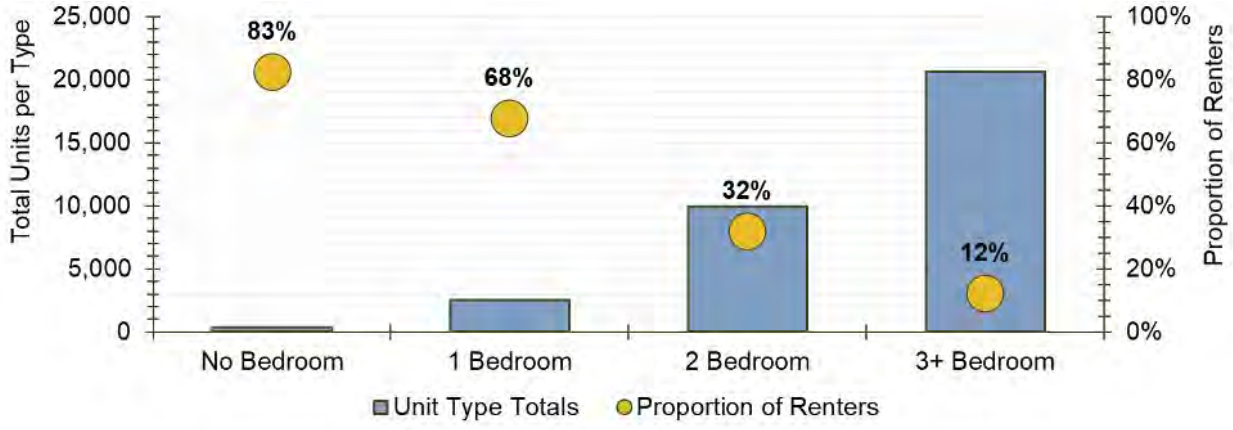


Figure 40. Projected Demand and Proportion of Rental Tenure in 2025 by Unit Type.



No-bedroom units (bachelor/studio style apartments or movable dwellings) are a very minor segment of the current housing stock and are expected to remain as such. Most (83 percent) are anticipated to be rentals in 2025.

Projected demand for housing is derived from the population projections discussed in the Demographic section of this report. Using data for age-specific household sizes, the projected number of people in the CVRD is translated into a projected number of households. This method considers changes in the total number of people, as well as changes to the age profile of that population. Each household is anticipated to create demand for one dwelling unit, and the distribution of unit types and tenures is based on trends in the observed proportional breakdown of the housing stock for these factors. Finally, the total number of demanded units is adjusted to account for units required to house non-usual residents (e.g. student housing or second homes).

Housing demand is directly related to the growth of the respective community population and the anticipated household size. Consequently, the data provided in **Table 39 on page 128** of the Appendix shows similar trends to what is presented in the Anticipated Population section, with notable exceptions for the Electoral Area A and B whose declining household sizes are commanding marginally higher housing demand, even with a lowering population.

Among the participating communities, the urban areas are projected to have greatest housing growth: Cumberland is projected to grow by 19.8 percent from 2020 to 2025 (the largest relative rise of all CVRD areas), followed by Comox at 10.7 percent and Courtenay at 7.8 percent. Housing demand in all electoral areas will grow, led by Electoral Area C whose population is the only one anticipated to increase. This growth is consistent with the growth management objectives of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy which directs new growth to core settlement areas. Please note the totals for Comox Valley in **Table 39** may slightly differ from **Table 38** due to rounding.

30. Anticipated Market Housing Supply

Projections of future housing supply are inherently more speculative than projections of demand based on growth. The delivery of housing supply is driven by a wider variety of factors than demographic trends (e.g. global and local economic trends, real estate and construction trends, government processes, material and labour markets, and overall capital market conditions), including many that are within the control of local authorities. Consequently, the following should be considered for discussion purposes and not as absolute fact.
Furthermore, it is important to note that speaking to housing supply only takes into consideration those units within the market; non-market options (i.e. transitional shelters or social housing) are not contemplated by the census and estimating future vulnerable

populations is complex. Consequently, currently occupied non-market accommodations, referred to in the Non-Market Housing section, are the best indicators of actual supply.

Projecting supply required a two-step process. First, historical building permit/construction activity was projected forward to obtain the overall supply up until 2025. Second, said overall supply was then broken down by unit type (no bedroom to 3 or more bedrooms) using historical proportions provided by the 2006 and 2016 censuses. In essence, these projections illustrate the supply trajectory of communities based on their past rates of development. It therefore informs whether current trends are sufficient, and broadly, what their longer-term implications may be. Based on this present-time outlook, communities can enact changes to development regulation to help course correct if deemed advisable. **Table 40 on page 128** of the Appendix summarizes the results for the entirety of the CVRD.

With projection for both housing supply and demand produced, there is an opportunity to compare the two to determine what housing types are currently on track and whether a surplus or deficit could occur by 2025. These surpluses or deficits are summarized in **Table 41 on page 129** and illustrated by **Figure 41 on page 83** Please note that this exercise assumes that the difference between supply and demand begins at equilibrium in 2016. Meaning, any deviations from this equilibrium are considered a variation from the "status quo." Establishing 2016 as the starting year is based on the availability of detailed data (specifically, the 2016 Census) and the replicability of the exercise in future report iterations.

If the supply and demand remain equal, then the CVRD market should generally maintain the same market characteristics (such as affordability, discussed in greater detail in the Affordability Gap section). Meaning, those households struggling to pay for housing would generally not be worse or better off than they were in 2016. If there is a surplus, housing and/or rent prices may decrease via market competition; whereas, the opposite may occur if there is a deficit. To sum, the comparison of supply and demand is a commentary on what can occur based on changes in market housing; non-market housing, and those accessing it, are not directly contemplated by this exercise.

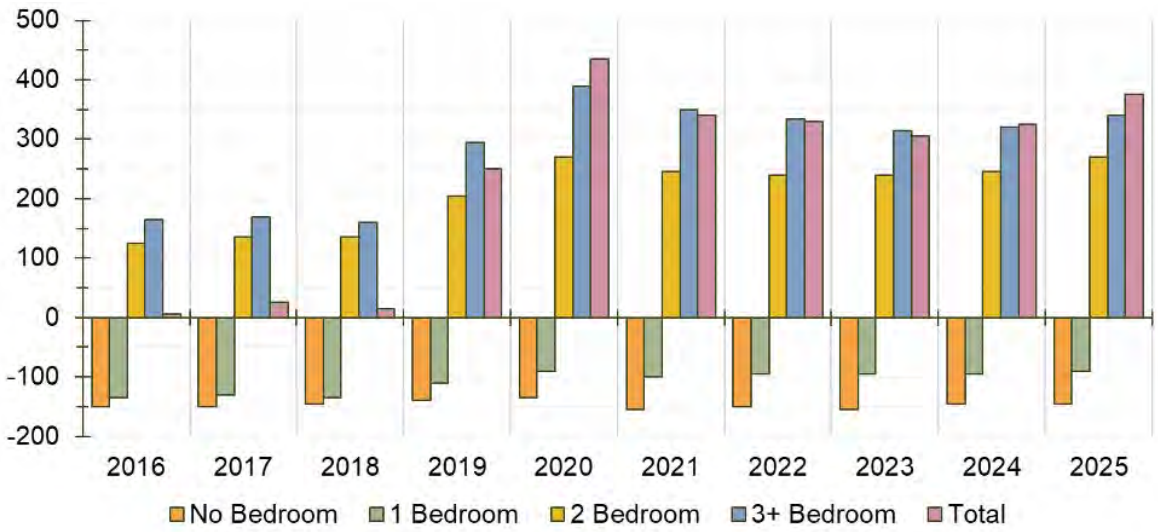
By 2025, the CVRD could potentially have an overall unit surplus of 375 units (33,545-unit supply versus 33,170 demand). The surplus is mostly due to an excess of 2- and 3 or more-bedroom units, attributed mostly to the electoral areas and the City of Courtenay. Conversely, there is a projected deficit of no- and 1-bedroom units, primarily within the urban communities.

Cumberland, via the combination of significant population growth and historical construction rates, may have a 2025

housing shortfall of approximately 50 units – most of which is for 2-bedroom dwellings (i.e. smaller low-density options like semi-detached or row houses). Its deficit represents 2.2 percent of Cumberland's overall 2025 demand. The Town of Comox is projected to have a possible housing shortfall of 555 units (7.2 percent of Comox's total 2025 demand), most of which are 3 or more-bedrooms large. Lastly, the City of Courtenay, based on historical construction, is on track to produce a potential surplus of housing (405 units); thus, satisfying 2025 demand. In Courtenay specifically, we note that current projects approved and in process are above the supply projections based on the last ten years of construction. This means that Courtenay is projected to exceed this near-term supply projection. Please refer to **Table 42 on page 129** of the Appendix for details.

It is important to reiterate that all CVRD housing markets are interrelated and can experience ebbs and flows in demand based on the circumstances of each community. Notably, the excess supply in Courtenay does not mean that units will stand vacant or that the community is building "too much". In reality, if supply and demand are not in sync, market forces will work to bring both into equilibrium. In other words, the housing surpluses and deficits can also be viewed as a forecast of housing price trends, as well as push/pull factors for the movement of households between communities. A surplus of units creates greater market competition may result in sellers/landlords reducing their prices

Figure 41. CVRD – Projected Housing Gaps, 2016 to 2025.



to attract buyers/tenants. These price signals and the location of available units may attract households to a community in lieu of a location with fewer available units and higher prices. In effect, supply itself can affect patterns of demand within the CVRD market. The final result is a balancing of residents needs with the available supply.

Again, estimates indicate Comox Valley may be on track to have a housing surplus of about 375 units, or 1.1 percent of overall demand. This suggests that on balance, the region is building enough housing for its growth trends and may see improved affordability compared to a tighter balance of demand and supply.

These gaps represent the CVRD market's ability to maintain the "status quo". If there is a surplus, housing and/or rent prices may decrease via market competition; whereas, the opposite may occur if there is a deficit. Notwithstanding, favourable changes in market housing can have positive ripple effects for those trying to access alternatives. For example, if the demand for 3-bedroom dwellings is fulfilled, then the burden on 2-bedrooms could be alleviated; if not, those who want a 3-bedroom but cannot find one may "compromise" and look for a smaller option, thus taking away stock from those who truly want a 2-bedroom. Supply for 2-bedrooms could also better meet its demand, lessening subsequent burdens on smaller options. These smaller options are often the most affordable and thus the most financially accessible for those vulnerable populations in greatest need.

31. Housing Condition (Adequacy)

In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that 5.3 percent of households lived in a dwelling inadequate for their needs. Statistics Canada defines "adequacy" as a structure that requires only minor repair or periodic maintenance. Accordingly, any unit that requires major repair is "inadequate." Adequacy is one of the components of Statistics Canada's definition of Core Housing Need (defined in the Core Housing Need section).

Housing adequacy is closely tied to a community housing stock's age. The older the dwelling, the more likely that major repairs are needed. Renter households tend to occupy older units, which translates to 7.2 percent of said households experiencing inadequacy (see **Figure 42 on page 85**).

Owner households, who often occupy newer supply, reported 4.7 percent. This trend is consistent across CVRD, with varying differences between the two tenures. The only community to report the opposite was Electoral Area C, which had 8.2 percent of its owner households reporting inadequacy, while 5.1 percent of renters did. Electoral Area B reported the lowest overall rate of inadequacy at 3.5 percent. This was down from 7.7 percent in 2006. Electoral Area A had the highest rate at 8.2 percent. This was driven by equivalent inadequacy for both owner and renter households. This marked an increase from 7.9 percent in 2006, due mostly to an increase in inadequate owner housing.

The Village of Cumberland reported the highest inadequacy for renter households at 11.1 percent, an increase from 7.9 percent. This was mostly due to the larger relative increase in renter households, coupled with Cumberland's significantly higher share of homes built prior to 1961.

It is important to note that for the CVRD, adequacy metrics are often calculated using small totals. Variations over time which are small in size may be amplified through percentages. As such, please consider the above information with that in mind.

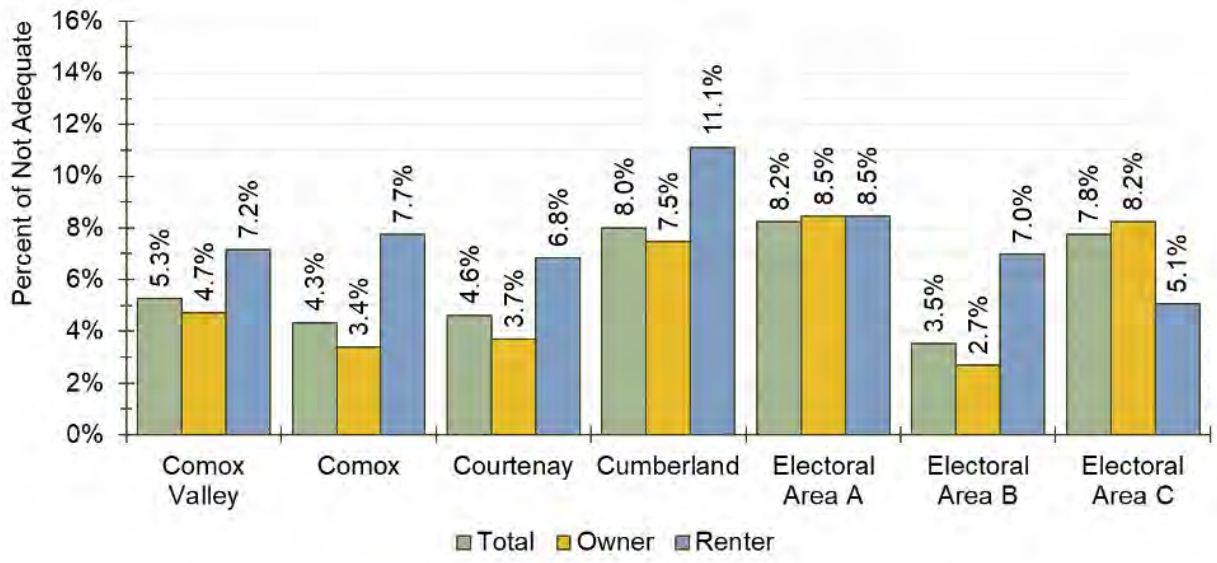
32. Overcrowding (Suitability)

In 2016, 1.9 percent of Comox Valley households living in an unsuitable dwelling. Statistics Canada defines "suitability" as whether a structure has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household. Any unit that does not have enough bedrooms is "unsuitable." Suitability is one of the components of Statistics Canada's definition of Core Housing Need (defined in the Core Housing Need section).

Both owner and renter households experienced decreases in their proportions of unsuitable housing since 2006 (see **Figure 43**). Owners dropped from 2.6 to 1.2 percent, while renters dropped from 6.9 to 4.2 percent. Unsurprisingly, households with 5 or more-persons were most likely to experience suitability challenges.

The Village of Cumberland had the highest rate of unsuitability

Figure 42. All Communities – Rate of Inadequate Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



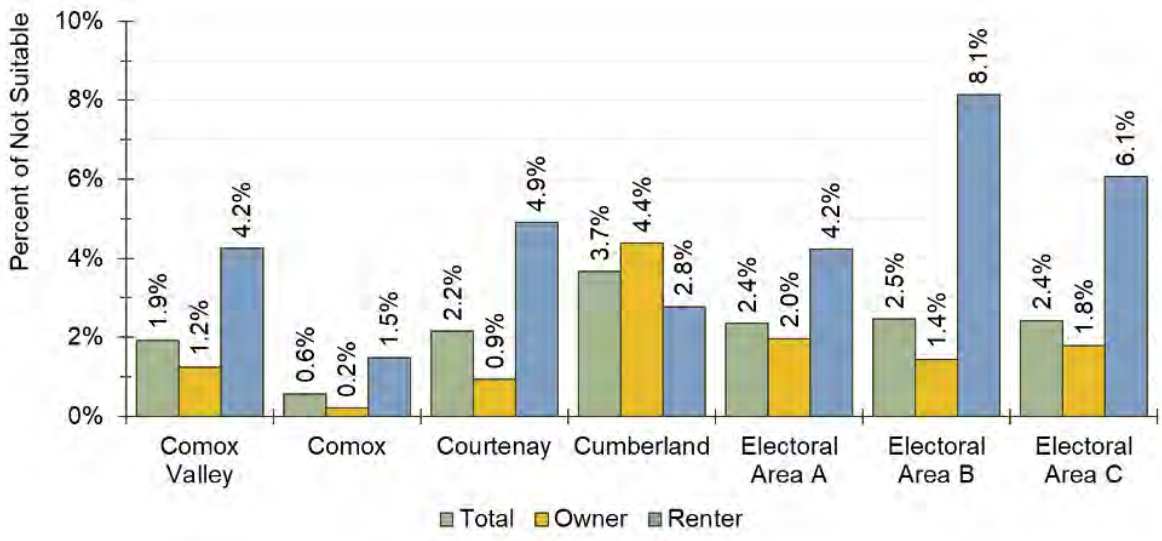
among CVRD communities (3.7 percent). It is also the only area to have a higher rate for owner households than for renters (4.4 versus 2.8 percent, respectively). Nevertheless, Cumberland improved over time, declining from 5.1 percent in 2006.
Most other areas had overall rates below 2.5 percent, coupled with owner rates below 2.0 percent. Electoral Area B and C stand out as having the highest percentage of renter households experiencing unsuitability – 8.1 and 6.1 percent, respectively. The former has improved over time, whereas the latter increased slightly from 5.5 percent.

It is important to note that for the CVRD, suitability metrics are often calculated using small totals. Consequently, variations over time which are small in size may be amplified through percentages. As such, please consider the above information with that in mind.

33. Affordability

Statistics Canada defines "affordability" as whether a household spends less than 30 percent of its overall income on shelter expenses. This includes rent, mortgage payments, utilities, taxes, or condo fees. Any household spending equal to or more than 30 percent is considered to be experiencing a housing affordability problem. Affordability is one of the components of Statistics Canada's definition of Core Housing Need (defined in the Core Housing Need section).

Figure 43. All Communities – Rate of Inadequate Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

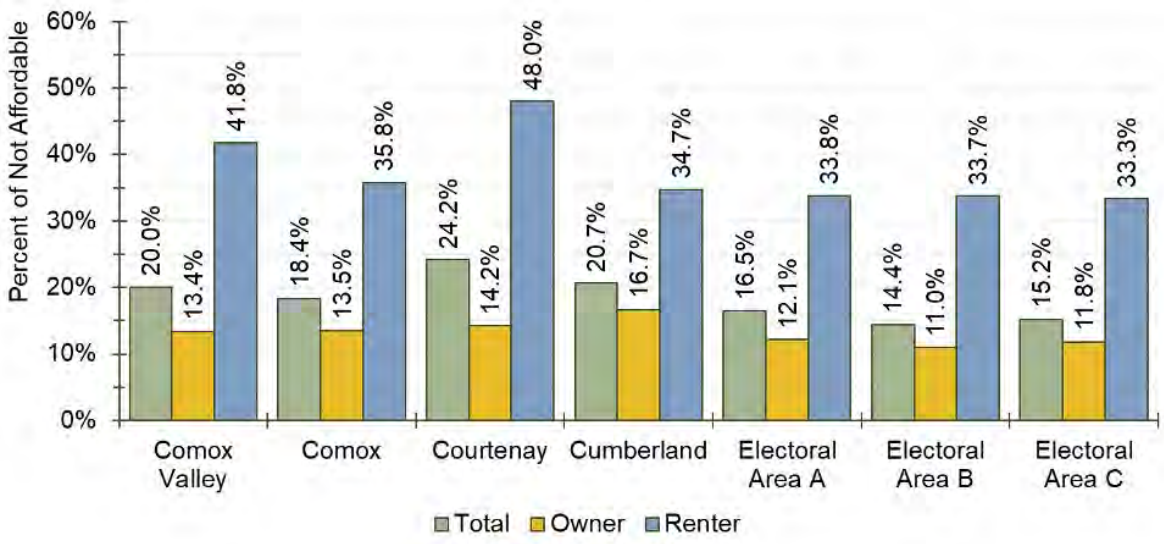


Between 2006 and 2016, the rate of households living in unaffordable accommodation declined slightly from 20.4 to 20.0 percent (5,455 households). Owner and renter households were marginally better off in 2016 (see **Figure 44**). The price of owner and rental market housing has been increasing over time. Large appreciations in housing prices over the last decade have made owner housing more expensive. The more expensive housing is driven by higher mortgage principals and associated mortgage payments. For further details, please see **Table 45 on page 131** of the Appendix.

Based on the affordability threshold, the most affordable community is Electoral Area B. It has the lowest owner unaffordability rate (11.0 percent) and second lowest renter unaffordability rate (33.7 percent). However, its affordability has (likely) less to do with the cost of housing, and more with its population's available income; Electoral Area B had the highest before-tax median income and highest share of households earning more than $100,000.

The City of Courtenay was least affordable. Nearly a quarter of its households were paying over 30 percent of their before-tax income. A major contributor is the significant rate of renter households living in an unaffordable situation, as well as the higher proportions of single person households and their subsequently lower incomes.

Figure 44. All Communities – Rate of Inadequate Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



Cumberland was least affordable for owner households (16.7 percent), which is probably due to young couples and/or families entering the market and obtaining mortgages on appreciated homes.

It is important to note that, for the CVRD, affordability metrics are often calculated using small totals. Consequently, variations over time which are small in size may be amplified through percentages. As such, please consider the above information with that in mind.

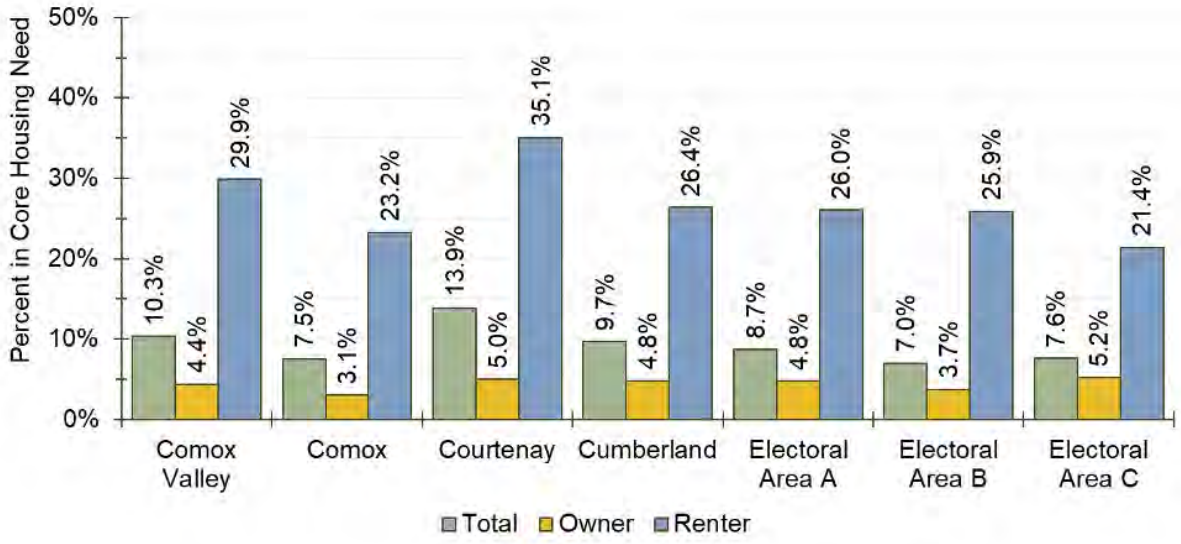
34. Core Housing Need

Statistics Canada defines "Core Housing Need" as a household whose dwelling is considered inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable, and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative housing in their community.

In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that 2,815 households (10.3 percent) were in Core Housing Need. This is an increase of 735 households since 2006. Proportional to their respective totals, both owners and renters are now worse off than they were in 2006.

Owners in Core Housing Need rose from 4.2 to 4.4 percent. Renters in Core Housing Need increased from 26.1 to 29.9 percent; 60.5 percent of the overall change was in 1-person

Figure 45. All Communities – Rate of Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.



renter households (see **Figure 45 on page 88**). This was the highest increase, from both a household total and percent change perspective.

Overall, all communities had worsening rates of Core Housing Need from 2006 to 2016. Courtenay reported the greatest Core Housing Need, both overall and for renter households (13.9 and 35.1 percent, respectively). The community least in need was Electoral Area B (7.0 percent). This is likely attributed to higher available incomes. Comox reported the lowest owner household need (3.1 percent), while Electoral Area C had the lowest renter household need (21.4 percent).

Core Housing Need and Income

The median household income of those in Core Housing Need in 2016 was $20,241. For comparison to all households in the Comox Valley, median income was $38,394 for renter households and $73,367 for owners, resulting in an overall median household income of $64,379. This helps illustrate why the majority of all Core Housing Need is related to affordability challenges, with dwelling size and condition being comparatively smaller issues.

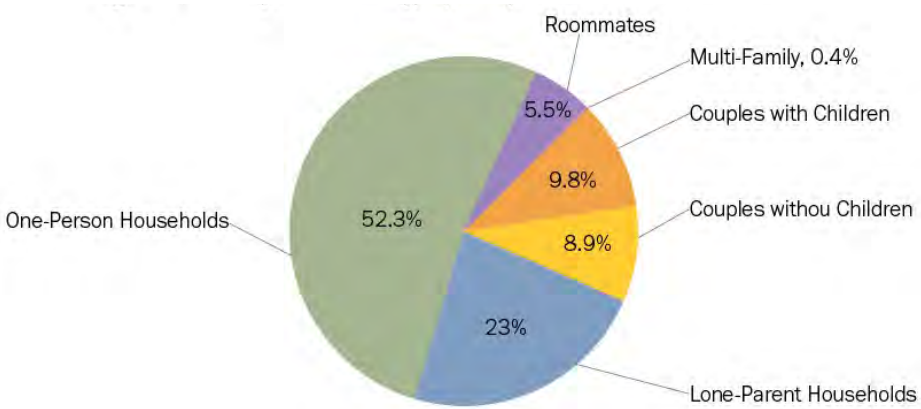
Core Housing Need by Household Type

In 2016, the largest proportion of the CVRD's households in Core Housing Need were one-person households at 52.3 percent, followed by lone-parent households at 23.0 percent (see **Figure 46**). Households with children represented 32.8 percent of households in Core Housing Need including lone-parents and couples with children.

Within the Comox Valley, 50.5 percent of all lone-parent renter households fall within Core Housing Need (see **Figure 47**). This is compared to 12.8 percent of owner lone-parent households. For one-person households, 38.9 percent of all renter one-person households fall within Core Housing Need compared to 9.6 percent of all one-person owner households. Similarly, 24.0 percent of all renter households with roommates or other non-related individuals fall within Core Housing Need, this is compared to 5.1 percent of owner households of the same type.

Lone-Parent Households in Core Housing Need

Figure 46. Households in Core Housing Need, 2016 by Households Type. Source: CMHC.



Looking more closely at lone-parent households we see that 55.6 percent of all female-lone parent renter households within the region and 29.4 percent of renter male lone-parent households are in Core Housing Need.

Indigenous Households in Core Housing Need

Indigenous groups have faced systemic discrimination since Canada was colonized. In the past, the term "Aboriginal" was used to refer to the original peoples of North America and their descendants, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada, such as in data from CMHC and Statistics Canada. More recently, the term "Indigenous" is increasingly used instead, such as in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Figure 48. Households in Core Housing Need, 2016 by Households Type. Source: CMHC.

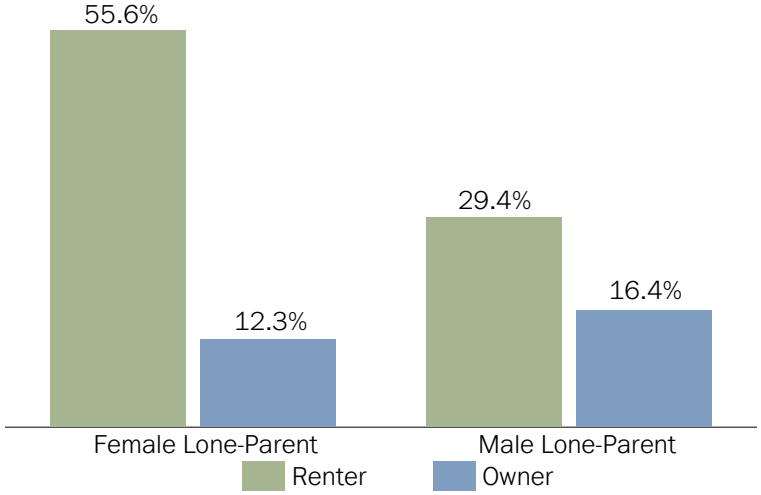
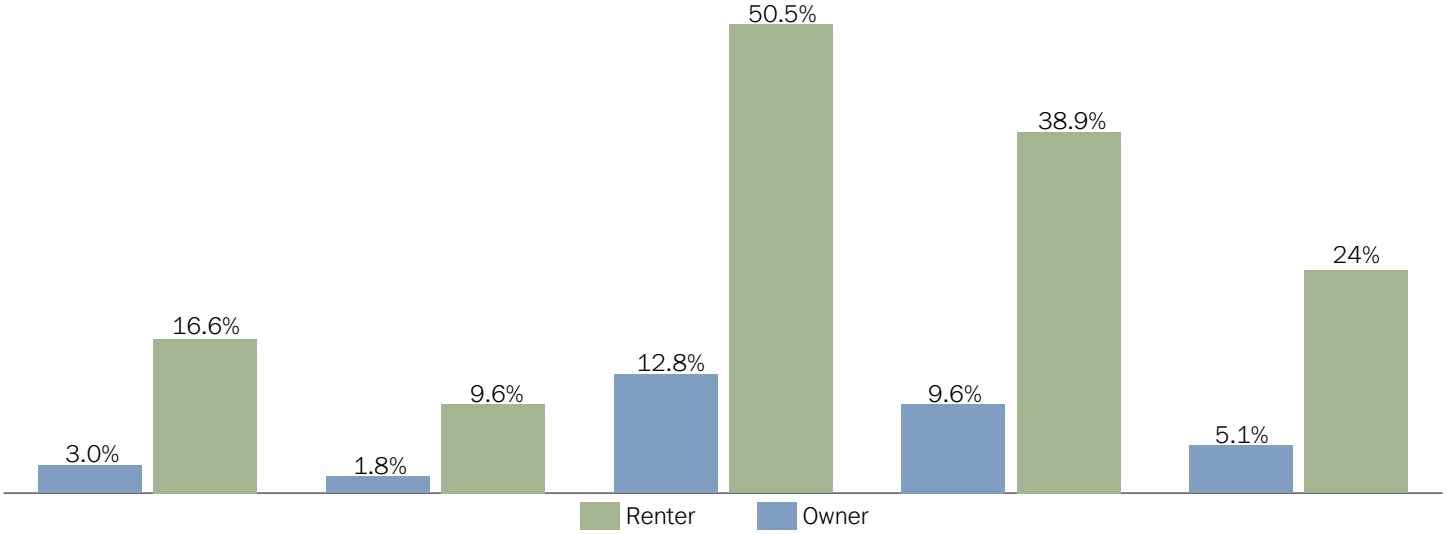


Figure 47. All Communities – Rate of Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

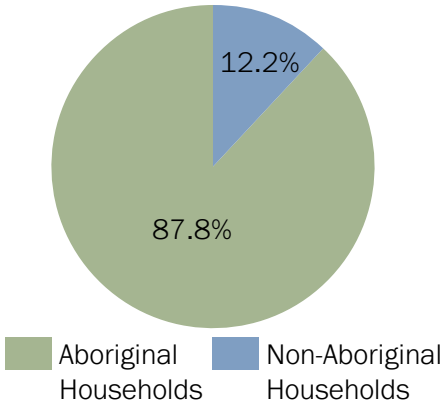


Today, more than 70 percent of the Indigenous population of BC lives off-reserve, in communities throughout the province. Indigenous people are disproportionately represented among the homeless population in many areas of Canada and over the last three Census periods, the number of Indigenous households in Core Housing Need has grown. Racial discrimination can affect the ability of Indigenous people to access affordable, suitable, and adequate housing.[12] Recognizing these trends, improving Indigenous housing conditions and working with Indigenous communities to build culturally appropriate housing was recognized as a priority in both the Federal and Provincial housing strategies.[13]

Individuals who self-identify as Indigenous represent 6 percent of the Comox Valley's total population, while data from the 2016 Census shows that 12.2 percent of all households in Core Housing Need, identified as Aboriginal households.

Figure 50 shows the proportion of households who were in Core Housing Need in 2016, broken down by tenure, and compared to non-aboriginal households. Of all aboriginal renter households 42.7 percent fall within core housing need, this is compared to 30.0 percent of all non-aboriginal renter households.

Figure 49. Households in Core Housing Need, 2016 by Households Type. Source: CMHC.



Senior Households in Core Housing Need

In 2016, seniors (those over the age of 65) represented 25.2 percent of the total population. Of all households in Core Housing Need 31.6 percent have at least one senior (see **Figure 51**).

Figure 52 on page 93 illustrates the rate of households in Core Housing Need by age of the primary maintainer and by tenure type.

12 From the Government of BC's Human Rights in BC, available at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/human-rights/human-rights-protection/racial-discrimination.pdf
13 From the Government of BC's Homes for BC, available at: https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018_homes_for_bc.pdf

Figure 50. Rate of Core Housing Need in Aboriginal Households by Tenure, 2016. Source: CMHC.

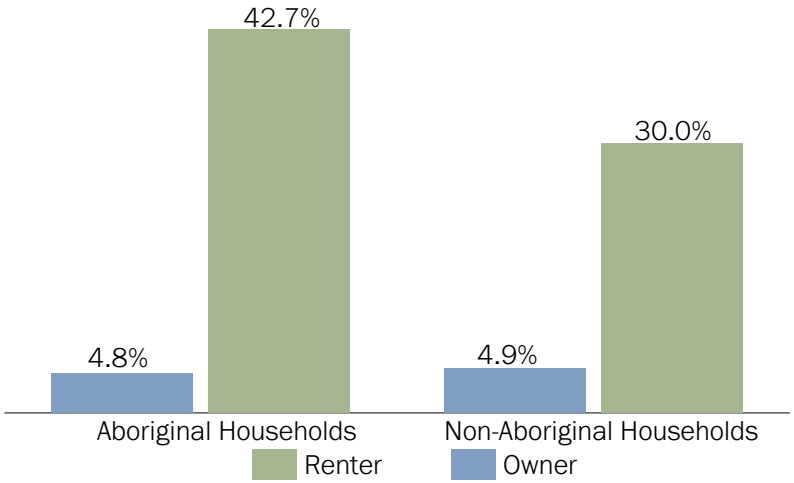
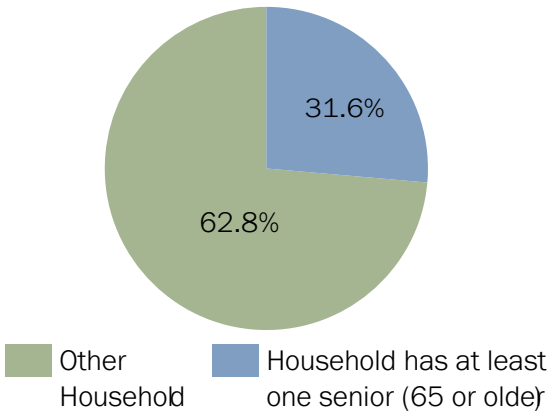


Figure 51. Households in Core Housing Need, 2016, by Households with at Least One Senior and Other Household. Source: CMHC.



In 2016, 41 percent of all senior led renter households were in Core Housing Need. This is the highest rate of Core Housing Need by age of primary maintainer. For owner households, those with a primary maintainer between the ages of 15 to 24 had the highest rate of Core Housing Need at 11.1 percent. Renter households are more likely to be in Core Housing Need then owner and this trend is consistent across the age groups.

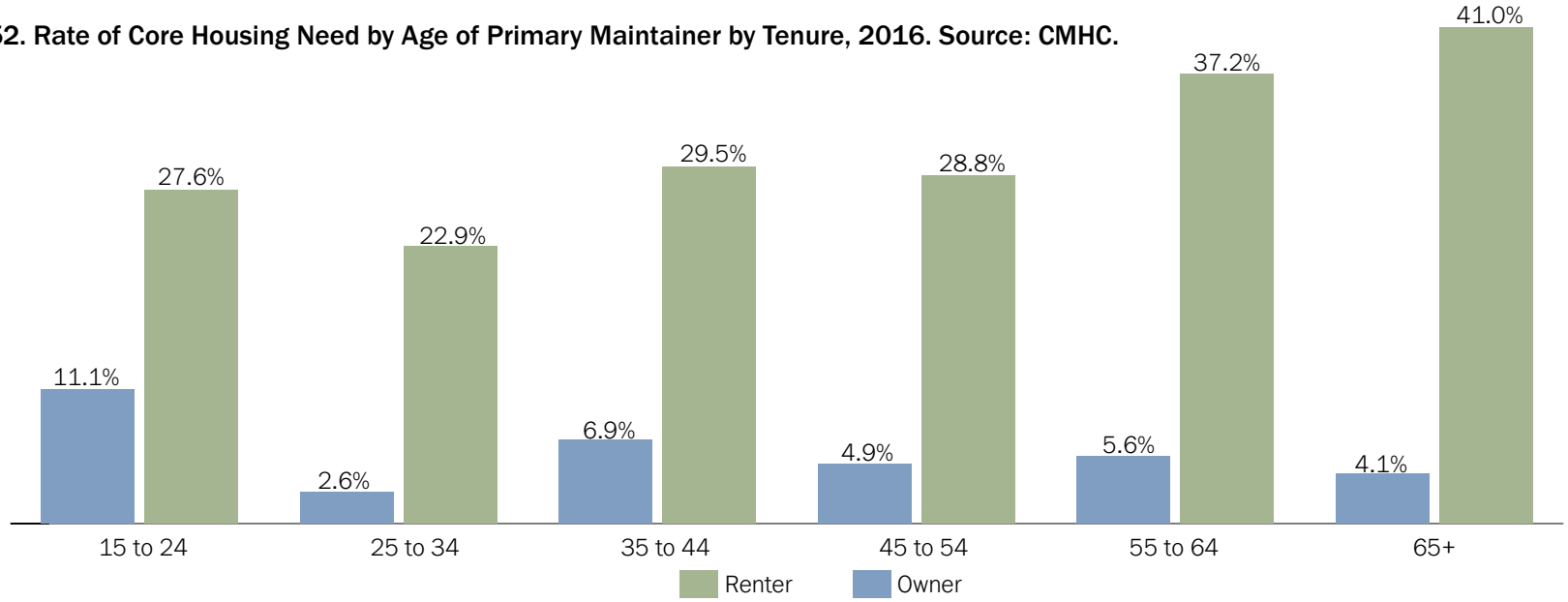
Households in Core Housing Need with at Least One Person with an Activity Limitation

People whose everyday activities are limited due to a long-term condition or health-related problem are considered to have an activity limitation.

Activity Limitation

Activity limitation refers to difficulties that people have in carrying out daily activities such as hearing, seeing, communicating, or walking. Difficulties could arise from physical or mental conditions or health problems. It is important to recognize that activity limitations may encompass some forms of mental health issues. Source: Statitics Canada.

Figure 52. Rate of Core Housing Need by Age of Primary Maintainer by Tenure, 2016. Source: CMHC.



People with activity limitations may experience systemic barriers to full participation in society, such as physical challenges navigating infrastructure, services, and facilities that were not designed to be accessible. They may be more likely to experience bullying, work place discrimination, and housing insecurity or homelessness.[14] Statistics Canada encourages governments and private organizations to "identify and address the barriers faced by Canadians with activity limitations in all areas of daily life, whether at home, at work, at school or in their communities".[15]

have lower incomes, related to discrimination or systemic barriers in the workplace. They may face additional challenges finding housing that is affordable, suitable, and adequate.

Key Fact:

In the Comox Valley, 72.9 percent or almost three-quarters, of all households in Core Housing Need have at least one person with an activity limitation (see **Figure 53***).*

14 From Canadian Human Rights Commission Disability Rights, available at https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/persons-disabilities
15 From Canadian Survey on Disability, available at https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3251&dis=1

Renter households with at least one person with an activity limitation were more likely to fall within Core Housing Need, then renter households without an activity limitation or owner households. Thirty-seven point three percent (37.3 percent) of all renter households with at least one person with an activity limitation fell within Core Housing Need (see **Figure 54**).

35. Extreme Core Housing Need

Extreme Core Housing Need modifies the definition of Core Housing Need by altering its affordability metric; it uses 50 percent as a threshold instead of 30 percent. The result is a demonstration of how many households are experiencing truly dire housing circumstances.

Figure 53. Households in Core Housing Need with at Least One Person with an Activity Limitation and Other Households, 2016. Source: CMHC.

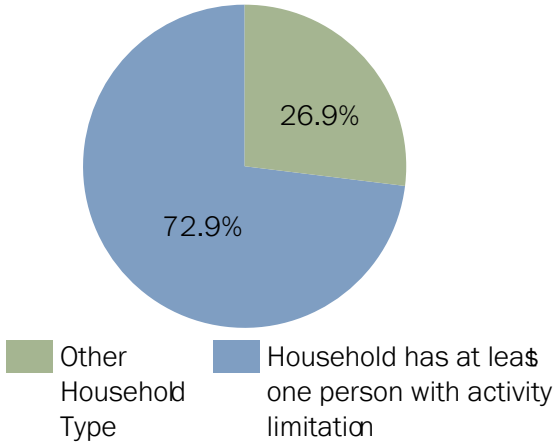
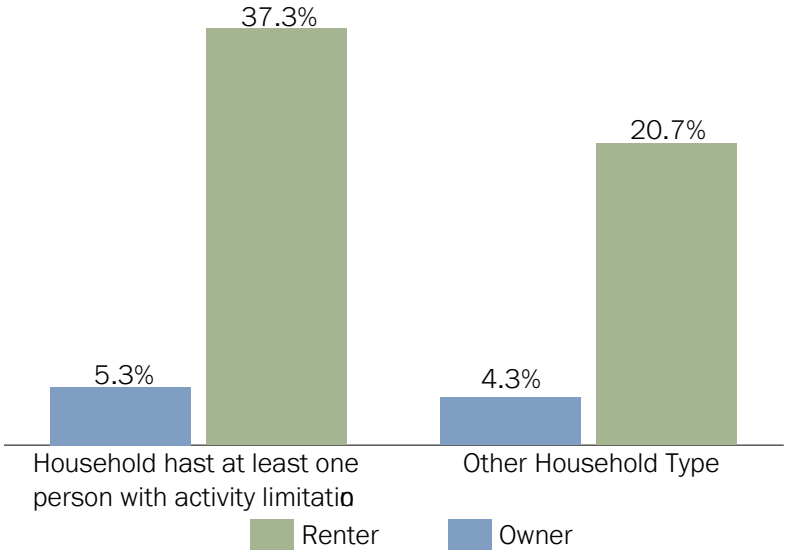


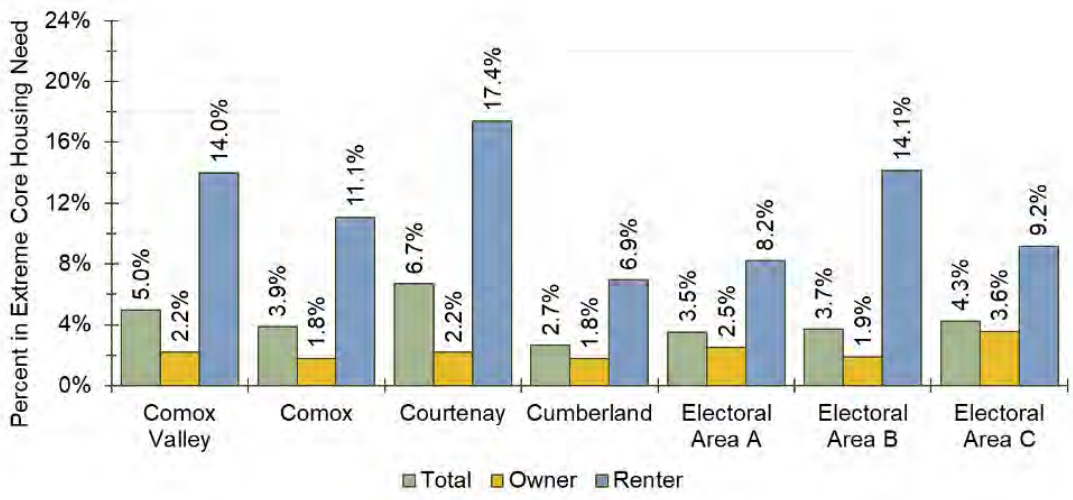
Figure 54. Rate of Core Housing Need in households with at Least One Person with an Activity Limitation by Tenure Type, 2016. Source: CMHC.



In 2016, Comox Valley reported that 5 percent of households (1,355) were in Extreme Core Housing Need. This is down from 5.3 percent in 2006. CVRD renters are about six times more likely to experience Extreme Core Housing Need. Extreme Need for owners dropped from 2.4 in 2006, to 2.2 percent in 2016. Renter extreme need decreased from 15.5 to 14.0 percent. Proportional to their respective totals, both owners and renters are marginally better off than they were in 2006.

Courtenay had the highest rate of Extreme Core Housing Need (6.7 percent). This is down from 8.4 percent in 2006. Renter

Figure 55. All Communities – Rate of Extreme Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016 . Source: Statistics Canada.



households are the main driver of extreme need, reaching 17.4 percent – the highest renter need among all communities (see **Figure 55**).

The highest extreme need for owner households was in Electoral Area C, at 3.6 percent. This is a slight rise from 2006. Only Courtenay and Cumberland reported improving conditions of extreme need.

36. Affordability Gap

Since it is impossible to express every household's experience, this report developed specific income categories based on the regional median income. The household income categories are defined as follows:

- ***Very low income – making less than 50 percent of median income***
- ***Low income – making between 50 and 80 percent of median income***
- ***Moderate income – making between 80 and 120 percent of median income***
- ***Above moderate income – making between 120 and 150 percent of median income***
- ***High income – those making above 150 percent of median income***

The share of households earning a high-income increased by

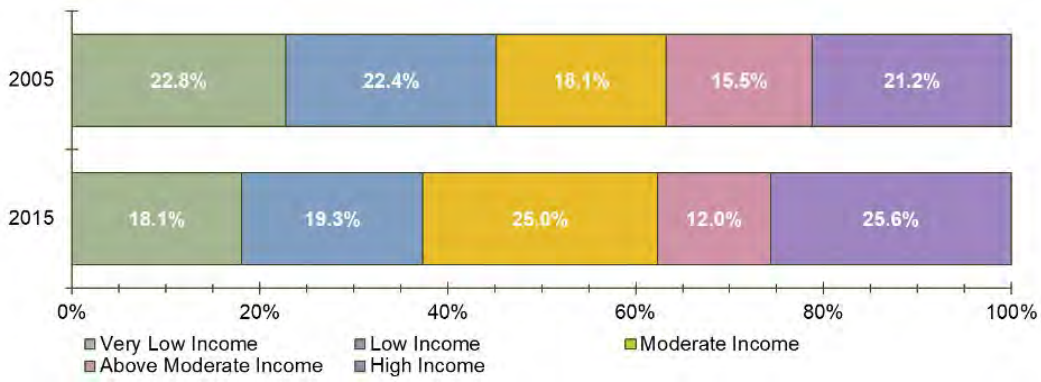
about 4.4 percent since 2005 (**Figure 56**). The only other category to rise (proportionally) were those in moderate-income, up 6.9 percent over the same period.

Households in very low income decreased over the 10-year period by 4.7 percent. This would normally be indicative of a positive trend; however, the actual change in total very low-income households was negligible (only 60 households). This shows that the variation is mostly due to an increase in total households that earn higher incomes. Notably, the number of high-income households grew 50.5 percent, exceeded only by moderate income growth of 72 percent.

Decreases in low- and above-moderate-income households suggests there has been movement in the amount of before-tax income that households are earning. The changes can be due to individuals having worked longer and commanding greater salaries; or by people retiring, thereby (typically) reducing annual earnings. Regardless, the greatest impact appears to be from the 5,610 new households entering the market (see **Table 48 on page 132** of the Appendix).

As discussed above, the chosen income categories are defined by thresholds related to median income (e.g. very low is below 50 percent of the median). Based on these thresholds, we can do the following:

Figure 56. Historical Before-Tax Income Categories, 2015 dollars . Source: Statistics Canada.



1. determine the maximum income achievable by a particular group;
2. calculate what an affordable monthly payment or dwelling price would be (based on the 30 percent affordability threshold); and
3. compare these calculations to median market rents and median house prices.

NOTE: This section uses primary market rental prices. As shown in section 24, primary market rental data from CMHC may significantly underrepresent the price an individual would expect to pay for units available today.

Please note that this exercise uses rounding for simplicity; that rental rates are based on information gathered from the primary rental market; that affordable dwelling values assume a 10 percent down payment, a 3 percent interest rate, and a 25-year amortization period; and that median income will grow by the historical growth rate until 2019 to facilitate a comparison. These calculations do not consider the added cost of utilities, taxes, or insurance. All of these can quickly change an accommodation from affordable to not, especially for owner households. Furthermore, the analysis considers only the median rents across the entire market, and not actual asking rents that prospective renters may find online, which tend to be much higher.

The results of **Table 49 on page 133** of the Appendix illustrate which income categories can or cannot afford certain accommodation types, and by how much, based on the maximum possible income attainable within each category. Red indicates that the household would exceed their affordable budget for that unit by the dollar value provided. Green indicates when the unit is below budget.

A very-low-income household (of which there are a maximum of 5,135) could potentially afford a bachelor or 1-bedroom unit but cannot afford any other rental size. Bachelor and 1-bedroom rental units are the least common in the market, making acquiring one more difficult. That household could not reasonably afford any traditional dwelling type except for a condominium apartment. All other income groups can reasonably afford all rental types (based on their maximum attainable incomes). For home ownership, very-low- and low-income households cannot reasonably afford all dwelling type prices. All higher categories can afford to own.

Figure 57 graphically represents the result of **Table 49**. The left graphic represents ownership costs and the right represents the cost to rent.

The ownership graphic shows that a moderate-income household could potentially afford to purchase all dwelling types at the

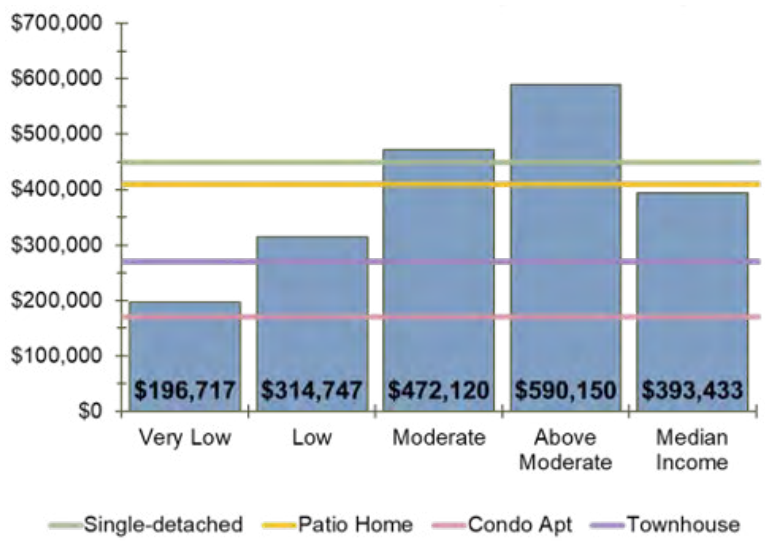
affordable purchase price made possible by the associated maximum income for that category since it surpasses all horizontal lines attributed to a dwelling type.

Please note that dwelling prices are based on 2019 sale values available through the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board. Furthermore, high-income households are not displayed in either the table or graph since no maximum can be reasonably set for this category.

We can calculate which specific economic family types can or cannot afford certain types of accommodation based on the same approach used previously . For specifics on the calcuation procedures, please see **Table 50 on page 133** of the Appendix.

At least 50 percent of non-economic families can only afford a bachelor unit within the overall market. However, they are relatively close to affording the median rent of a 1-bedroom apartment. About half of lone parents can afford all rental units, except for a 3-bedroom. This group cannot reasonably afford any of the defined dwellings within the ownership market. Nevertheless, condominium apartments do remain an option, and townhouses are almost exactly within the calculated budget. Couples with or without children can generally afford any unit or dwelling. This does not include insurance, utilities, and other shelter costs.

Figure 57. Affordable Prices (blue) by Income Level versus Home Ownership (left) & Rental (right) Costs, 2019 dollars. Source: Statistics Canada, VIREB, CMHC.



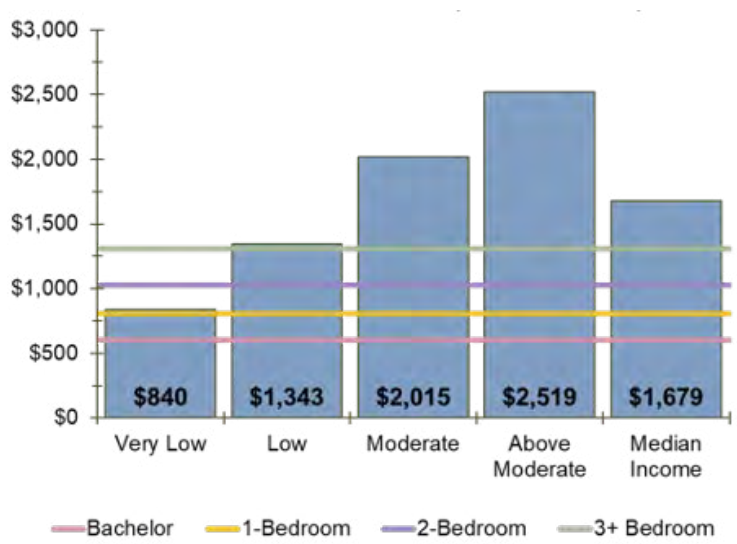
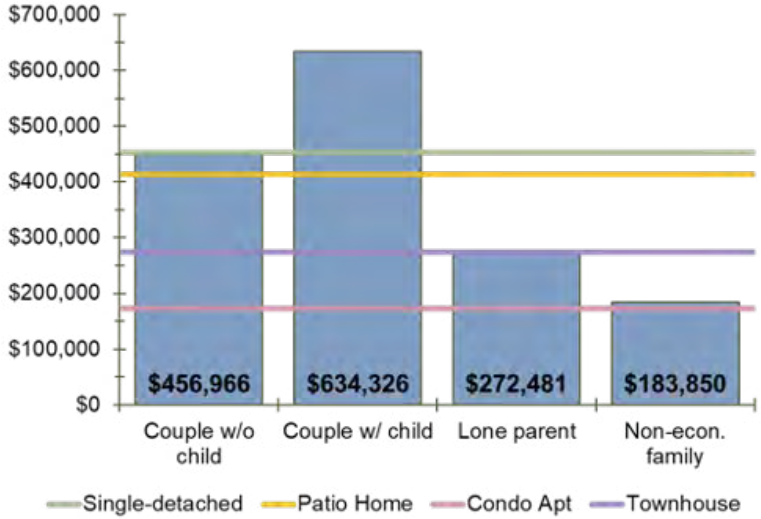


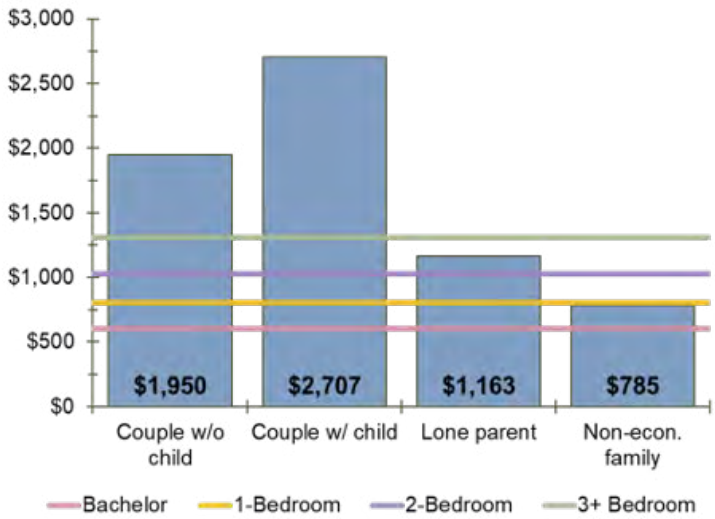
Figure 58 graphically represents the result of **Table 50** of the Appenidx. The left graphic represents ownership costs and the right represents rental costs.

The graphic for ownership shows that half of non-economic family households (because median defines the midpoint) cannot afford any unit but a condominium apartment. The affordable house price (in blue) associated with their maximum potential incomes only surpasses the horizontal line associated with an apartment. Conversely, the right shows that at least half of lone parent families can afford all rental types except a 3-bedroom unit. Please note that this discussion considers "reasonable affordability" as not paying more than 30 percent of before-tax household income. It is still possible for the defined categories or families to rent or purchase a unit; however, the greater the discrepancy between the affordable budget and said prices, the greater the financial impact on that household.

Renting across the Comox Valley Regional District is significantly more accessible than owning. This is indicated by individual affordability gap analyses, and driven by the dramatic increases in housing prices relative to the increase in rents. Specifically, bachelor or 1-bedroom units are reasonably affordable for even very low income and non-economic families, but these are some of the least common housing types in the region (see section 18). All but condominium apartments put a financial burden on households that are not making the higher end of moderate incomes, or are not a couple relationship.

Figure 58. Affordable Prices (blue) by Economic Family Type versus Home Ownership (left) & Rental (right) Costs, 2019 dollars. Source: Statistics Canada, VIREB, CMHC.





The intent of this exercise is to facilitate discussions around groups of households with different financial capacity. Each individual or household has a different financial relationship with the accommodation that they occupy. Some live in dire financial circumstances that cannot be avoided due to the market. Others voluntarily choose a type of dwelling that exceeds typical thresholds of affordability, despite having access to less expensive options, if they feel it is a compromise that meets their lifestyle.

Please note that the preceding analysis considers the CVRD as a whole and does not discuss each individual community in great detail. For specifics related to a municipality or electoral area, please visit their corresponding Housing Needs Report.

Glossary

"**activity limitation**" refers to difficulties that people have in carrying out daily activities such as hearing, seeing, communicating, or walking. Difficulties could arise from physical or mental conditions or health problems.

"**bedrooms**" refer to rooms in a private dwelling that are designed mainly for sleeping purposes even if they are now used for other purposes, such as guest rooms and television rooms. Also included are rooms used as bedrooms now, even if they were not originally built as bedrooms, such as bedrooms in a finished basement. Bedrooms exclude rooms designed for another use during the day such as dining rooms and living rooms even if they may be used for sleeping purposes at night. By definition, one-room private dwellings such as bachelor or studio apartments have zero bedrooms;

"**census**" means a census of population undertaken under the Statistics Act (Canada);

"**census division (CD)**" means the grouping of neighbouring municipalities, joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services – Comox Valley Regional District is a census division;

"**census family**" is defined as a married couple and the children, if any, of either and/or both spouses; a couple living common law

and the children, if any, of either and/or both partners; or a lone parent of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children. All members of a particular census family live in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex;

"**census subdivision (CSD)**" is the general term for municipalities (as determined by provincial/territorial legislation) or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes (i.e. electoral areas);

"**commuting destination**" refers to whether or not a person commutes to another municipality (i.e., census subdivision), another census division or another province or territory. Commuting refers to the travel of a person between his or her place of residence and his or her usual place of work;

"**core housing need**" is when housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three housing standards;

"**adequate housing**" means that, according to the residents within the dwelling, no major repairs are required for proper use and enjoyment of said dwelling;

"**affordable housing**" means that household shelter costs equate to less than 30% of total before-tax household income;

"**suitable housing**" means that a dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements;

"**dissemination area (DA)**" refers to a small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 persons based on data from the previous Census of Population Program. It is the smallest standard geographic area for which all census data are disseminated. DAs cover all the territory of Canada;

"**dwelling**" is defined as a set of living quarters;

"**dwelling type**" means the structural characteristics or dwelling configuration of a housing unit, such as, but not limited to, the housing unit being a single-detached house, a semi-detached house, a row house, an apartment in a duplex or in a building that has a certain number of storeys, or a mobile home;

"**economic family**" refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption or a foster relationship. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. By definition, all persons

who are members of a census family are also members of an economic family;

"**employment rate**" means, for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, geographic area, etc.), the number of employed persons in that group, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that group;

"**equity seeking groups**" are communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation;

"**extreme core housing need**" has the same meaning as core housing need except that the household has shelter costs for housing that are more than 50% of total before-tax household income;

"**family size**" refers to the number of persons in the family;

"**household**" refers to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad;

"**household maintainer**" refers to whether or not a person residing in the household is responsible for paying the rent, or the mortgage, or the taxes, or the electricity or other services or utilities. Where a number of people may contribute to the payments, more than one person in the household may be identified as a household maintainer;

"**household size**" refers to the number of persons in a private household;

"**household type**" refers to the differentiation of households on the basis of whether they are census family households or non-census-family households. Census family households are those that contain at least one census family;

"**immigrant**" refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities;

"**indigenous identity**" refers to whether the person identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/

or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band;

"**labour force**" refers to persons who, during the week of Sunday, May 1 to Saturday, May 7, 2016, were either employed or unemployed;

"**low-income measure, after tax,**" refers to a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of private households. The household after-tax income is adjusted by an equivalence scale to take economies of scale into account. This adjustment for different household sizes reflects the fact that a household's needs increase, but at a decreasing rate, as the number of members increases;

"**migrant**" refers to a person who has moved from their place of residence, of which the origin is different than the destination community they reported in. Conversely, a non-migrant is a person who has moved within the same community;

"**mobility status, one year**" refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier;

"**NAICS**" means the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada 2012, published by Statistics Canada;

"**NAICS industry**" means an industry established by the NAICS;

"**participation rate**" means the total labour force in a geographic area, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the geographic area;

"**primary rental market**" means a market for rental housing units in apartment structures containing at least 3 rental housing units that were purpose-built as rental housing;

"**precarious housing**" means housing that is not affordable, is overcrowded, is unfit for habitation, or is occupied through unstable tenancy;

"**secondary rental market**" means a market for rental housing units that were not purpose-built as rental housing;

"**shelter cost**" refers to the average or median monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households that own or rent their dwelling. Shelter costs for owner households include, where applicable, mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include, where applicable, the rent and the costs of electricity, heat, water

and other municipal services. “short-term rental” means the rental of a housing unit, or any part of it, for a period of less than 30 days;

“**subsidized housing**” refers to whether a renter household lives in a dwelling that is subsidized. Subsidized housing includes rent geared to income, social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit housing, rent supplements and housing allowances;

“**tenure**” refers to whether the household owns or rents their private dwelling. The private dwelling may be situated on rented or leased land or be part of a condominium. A household is considered to own their dwelling if some member of the household owns the dwelling even if it is not fully paid for, for example if there is a mortgage or some other claim on it. A household is considered to rent their dwelling if no member of the household owns the dwelling;

“**unemployment rate**” means, for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, geographic area, etc.), the unemployed in that group, expressed as a percentage of the labour force in that group;

“**visible minority**” refers to whether a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

Appendix

Table 1. All Communities – Historical Population, 2006 to 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	2006	2011	2016	%Δ06-16
Comox Valley	56,645	61,575	64,355	13.6%
Comox	12,300	13,625	14,020	14.0%
Courtenay	22,385	24,310	25,605	14.4%
Cumberland	2,765	3,395	3,770	36.3%
Electoral Area A	4,690	4,710	5,030	7.2%
Electoral Area B	7,065	6,945	7,075	0.1%
Electoral Area C	7,440	8,335	8,620	15.9%
K'ómoks First Nation	265	255	235	-11.3%

Table 2. All Communities – Population Distribution. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	< 14 years	15 to 19 years	20 to 24 years	25 to 64 years	65 to 84 years	85 years or older	Total
Comox Valley	9,020	3,330	2,795	32,995	14,285	1,930	64,355
Comox	1,970	785	490	6,690	3,435	650	14,020
Courtenay	3,660	1,280	1,335	12,650	5,800	880	25,605
Cumberland	690	185	140	2,190	485	80	3,770
Electoral Area A	585	205	175	2,695	1,270	100	5,030
Electoral Area B	890	430	270	3,750	1,615	120	7,075
Electoral Area C	1,195	430	370	4,895	1,630	100	8,620
K'ómoks First Nation	30	15	15	125	50	0	235

Table 3. All Communities – Historical Median Age. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	2006	2011	2016
Comox Valley	44.9	47.7	50.3
Comox	45.9	48.5	51.0
Courtenay	42.4	45.8	47.5
Cumberland	40.4	37.2	37.9
Electoral Area A	48.8	52.7	55.3
Electoral Area B	47.1	50.1	53.0
Electoral Area C	44.2	48.2	51.2
K'ómoks First Nation	40.5	44.3	49.4

Table 4. All Communities – Senior (65+) Population. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	2006	2011	2016	%Δ06-16
Comox Valley	18.1%	21.1%	25.2%	58.2%
Comox	23.2%	25.8%	29.1%	43.0%
Courtenay	18.3%	21.9%	26.1%	62.7%
Cumberland	13.2%	13.4%	15.0%	54.8%
Electoral Area A	19.1%	22.2%	27.2%	53.1%
Electoral Area B	16.0%	19.6%	24.5%	53.8%
Electoral Area C	12.1%	15.2%	20.1%	92.2%
K'ómoks First Nation	13.2%	15.7%	21.3%	42.9%

Table 5. Persons with a Disability. Source: 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability.

COHORT	# of Persons w/ a Disability (Province)	% of Persons w/ a Disability (Province)	# of Persons w/ a Disability (CVRD estimate)
15+ yrs	926,100	24.7%	13,680
15 to 64 yrs	614,630	20.5%	8,015
15 to 24 yrs	70,730	13.4%	820
25 to 44 yrs	200,520	17.2%	2,220
45 to 64 yrs	343,370	26.3%	5,290
65+ yrs	311,480	41.7%	6,760
65 to 74 yrs	166,210	35.9%	3,385
75+ yrs	145,260	51.1%	3,465

Table 6. Labour Force Metrics for Persons with a Disability . Source: 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability.

COHORT	Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
25 to 64 yrs	65.9%	60.4%	8.4%
25 to 44 yrs	79.4%	73.7%	7.3%
45 to 64 yrs	57.9%	52.6%	9.2%

Table 7. All Communities – Anticipated Population, 2016 to 2025. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	%Δ '16-'25
Comox Valley	64,355	65,085	65,815	66,545	67,245	68,015	68,730	69,445	70,160	70,875	10.1%
Comox	14,020	14,230	14,440	14,650	14,860	15,070	15,300	15,530	15,760	15,990	14.1%
Courtenay	25,605	25,940	26,275	26,610	26,945	27,295	27,585	27,875	28,165	28,455	11.1%
Cumberland	3,770	3,885	4,000	4,115	4,230	4,370	4,510	4,650	4,790	4,930	30.8%
Electoral Area A	5,030	5,025	5,020	5,015	5,010	5,030	5,015	5,000	4,985	4,970	-1.2%
Electoral Area B	7,075	7,050	7,025	7,000	6,975	6,930	6,890	6,850	6,810	6,770	-4.3%
Electoral Area C	8,620	8,710	8,800	8,890	8,980	9,075	9,170	9,265	9,360	9,455	9.7%
K'ómoks First Nation	235	245	255	265	245	245	260	275	290	305	29.8%
Overall Median Age	49.9	50.4	50.8	51.3	51.8	52.3	52.1	51.9	51.8	51.6	
Overall Averag Age	45.8	46.2	46.6	47.0	47.4	47.8	48.1	48.4	48.7	49.0	

Table 8. All Communities – Historical Population by Tenure. Source Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Owners 2006	Owners 2011	Owners 2016	%Δ '06-'16	Renters 2006	Renters 2011	Renters 2016	%Δ '06-'16
Comox Valley	18,800	20,815	21,625	15.0%	5,440	6,045	6,775	24.5%
Comox	4,000	4,655	4,800	20.0%	1,205	1,320	1,410	17.0%
Courtenay	6,770	7,575	8,135	20.2%	2,980	3,315	3,565	19.6%
Cumberland	910	1,150	1,150	26.4%	225	255	410	82.2%
Electoral Area A	1,880	1,910	1,850	-1.6%	265	290	370	39.6%
Electoral Area B	2,600	2,560	2,560	-1.5%	350	375	470	34.3%
Electoral Area C	2,545	2,890	3,030	19.1%	395	485	540	36.7%
K'ómoks First Nation	90	80	95	5.6%	15	10	10	-33.3%

Table 9. All Communities – One-Year Mobility. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Non-Migrant	Intraprov. Migrant	Interprov. Migrant	External Migrant
Comox Valley	4,215	3,265	1,505	275
Comox	850	635	475	50
Courtenay	2,240	1,300	610	135
Cumberland	320	375	55	25
Electoral Area A	125	215	65	55
Electoral Area B	415	255	135	10
Electoral Area C	265	460	160	15
K'ómoks First Nation	0	25	0	0

COMMUNITY	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5+ person	Average
Comox Valley	8,265	12,020	3,740	2,905	1,460	2.2
Comox	1,830	2,610	815	670	290	2.2
Courtenay	3,880	4,740	1,515	1,055	520	2.1
Cumberland	440	570	240	210	100	2.4
Electoral Area A	565	1,065	265	205	105	2.2
Electoral Area B	700	1,405	380	345	195	2.3
Electoral Area C	810	1,590	515	410	245	2.4
K'ómoks First Nation	40	40	10	10	10	2.1

COMMUNITY	15 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85+
Comox Valley	635	2,725	3,690	5,095	6,380	5,725	3,075	1,085
Comox	85	500	825	1,090	1,265	1,260	815	365
Courtenay	435	1,355	1,485	1,985	2,350	2,310	1,340	440
Cumberland	45	280	365	285	255	225	90	20
Electoral Area A	0	150	240	380	630	500	235	90
Electoral Area B	30	170	315	600	850	655	310	100
Electoral Area C	35	265	440	735	1,010	740	275	70
K'ómoks First Nation	0	10	15	20	30	30	0	0

COMMUNITY	Overall	%Δ05-15	Owner	%Δ05-15	Renter	%Δ05-15
Comox Valley	$64,379	11.2%	$73,367	11.1%	$38,394	17.6%
Comox	$69,254	4.0%	$76,595	4.4%	$46,762	3.2%
Courtenay	$57,463	14.6%	$69,537	13.4%	$34,367	25.5%
Cumberland	$65,203	26.6%	$72,740	18.8%	$39,146	27.2%
Electoral Area A	$69,471	18.7%	$71,516	20.1%	$40,444	26.1%
Electoral Area B	$74,701	10.4%	$81,432	11.4%	$46,782	4.3%
Electoral Area C	$70,341	5.6%	$76,366	10.7%	$41,991	10.6%
K'ómoks First Nation	$39,424	9.6%	-	-	-	-

Table 12. Proportion of Households per Before-Tax Income Bracket . Source: Statistics Canada.

	Comox Valley	Comox	Courtenay	Cumberland	Electoral Area A	Electoral Area B	Electoral Area C	K'ómoks First Nation
Total Households	28,400	6,205	11,700	1,565	2,220	3,025	3,575	-
< $5,000	1.0%	0.6%	1.2%	1.0%	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%	-
$5,000 - $9,999	1.1%	0.6%	1.2%	1.3%	0.7%	0.8%	1.8%	-
$10,000 - $14,999	2.6%	1.4%	3.7%	1.9%	2.5%	2.0%	2.1%	-
$15,000 - $19,999	4.3%	2.9%	5.3%	5.4%	3.8%	3.8%	3.2%	-
$20,000 - $24,999	4.6%	3.3%	5.7%	4.2%	3.2%	2.8%	5.6%	-
$25,000 - $29,999	4.5%	4.4%	5.4%	5.1%	3.4%	2.6%	3.9%	-
$30,000 - $34,999	5.0%	4.6%	5.8%	4.5%	5.4%	5.0%	3.1%	-
$35,000 - $39,999	5.1%	4.8%	5.1%	6.7%	5.4%	4.3%	4.9%	-
$40,000 - $44,999	4.1%	3.7%	4.6%	5.1%	4.3%	3.6%	3.1%	-
$45,000 - $49,999	5.1%	5.1%	5.5%	5.8%	5.0%	5.0%	4.1%	-
$50,000 - $59,999	9.0%	10.2%	9.1%	8.9%	7.7%	7.6%	8.8%	-
$60,000 - $69,999	8.3%	9.0%	8.2%	6.4%	9.2%	7.6%	7.8%	-
$70,000 - $79,999	7.8%	8.1%	7.9%	7.0%	7.9%	7.8%	6.6%	-
$80,000 - $89,999	6.8%	7.4%	6.1%	4.8%	7.9%	6.8%	8.0%	-
$90,000 - $99,999	5.2%	5.6%	4.7%	6.4%	5.0%	5.0%	6.3%	-
$100,000+	25.7%	28.3%	20.6%	25.9%	28.8%	33.9%	29.4%	-
$100,000 - $124,999	10.1%	11.9%	8.2%	13.7%	9.7%	10.7%	11.5%	-
$125,000 - $149,999	6.5%	7.6%	5.3%	6.7%	7.2%	8.8%	6.7%	-
$150,000 - $199,999	5.3%	5.4%	4.7%	4.5%	5.4%	6.8%	5.7%	-
$200,000+	3.7%	3.4%	2.4%	1.0%	5.9%	7.4%	5.5%	-
Median Income	$64,379	$69,254	$57,463	$65,203	$69,471	$74,701	$70,341	$39,424
Average Income	$77,628	$82,032	$69,468	$70,683	$85,039	$91,792	$83,883	-

Table 13. All Communities – Prevalence of LIM After-Tax Status by Age, 2016. Source Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Total	0 - 17	0 - 5	18 - 64	65+
Comox Valley	15.2%	21.3%	23.4%	14.8%	11.8%
Comox	10.4%	14.8%	15.8%	9.9%	8.9%
Courtenay	18.2%	26.8%	30.2%	18.0%	12.7%
Cumberland	14.8%	20.5%	15.8%	12.4%	17.2%
Electoral Area A	20.1%	29.0%	32.2%	21.0%	14.8%
Electoral Area B	11.3%	13.5%	17.3%	11.1%	10.1%
Electoral Area C	13.3%	17.7%	16.7%	12.5%	11.9%

Table 14. All Communities – Local Labour Metrics. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	In Labour Force	Employed	Unemployed	Not Labour Force	Part. Rate (%)	Emp. Rate (%)	Unemp. Rate (%)
Comox Valley	30,815	28,380	2,435	23,385	56.9	52.4	7.9
Comox	6,300	5,845	455	5,440	53.7	49.8	7.1
Courtenay	11,880	10,875	1,005	9,465	55.7	51.0	8.5
Cumberland	2,065	1,915	150	905	69.4	64.4	7.5
Electoral Area A	2,315	2,095	215	2,065	52.8	47.8	9.3
Electoral Area B	3,530	3,285	250	2,665	57.0	53.0	7.1
Electoral Area C	4,610	4,255	350	2,760	62.6	57.8	7.7
K'ómoks First Nation	115	105	10	80	59.0	53.8	13.0

Table 15. NAICS Industry Employment Totals by Tenure, 2006 to 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

	Total			'16 % of	Owners			Renters		
	2006	2011	2016	Total	2006	2011	2016	2006	2011	2016
Labour Force	27,465	30,350	30,335	100.0%	21,910	24,035	23,365	5,550	6,310	6,970
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2,055	1,795	1,890	6.2%	1,720	1,355	1,505	330	440	385
21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	235	405	380	1.3%	215	390	315	15	15	65
22 Utilities	125	155	65	0.2%	110	145	65	20	0	0
23 Construction	2,430	2,570	2,955	9.7%	1,875	2,040	2,260	555	575	705
31-33 Manufacturing	1,180	785	1,060	3.5%	1,010	630	835	180	160	225
41 Wholesale trade	515	655	460	1.5%	365	575	350	155	75	105
44-45 Retail trade	3,960	4,490	4,170	13.7%	2,885	3,440	3,000	1,065	1,060	1,170
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	1,090	1,180	1,335	4.4%	865	965	1,025	225	225	300
51 Information and cultural industries	440	410	370	1.2%	320	325	305	120	85	70
52 Finance and insurance	750	665	775	2.6%	675	580	690	85	80	85
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	595	665	485	1.6%	495	530	415	105	135	90
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	1,335	1,655	1,495	4.9%	1,165	1,400	1,240	175	260	260
55 Management of companies and enterprises	10	0	15	0.0%	15	0	15	0	0	0
56 Administrative and support, waste management	1,115	1,335	1,260	4.2%	815	925	885	300	420	385
61 Educational services	1,895	2,510	2,180	7.2%	1,695	2,205	1,945	205	305	235
62 Health care and social assistance	3,180	3,925	4,290	14.1%	2,710	3,145	3,405	475	800	890
71 Arts, entertainment and recreation	620	820	810	2.7%	510	605	630	110	270	185
72 Accommodation and food services	2,310	2,065	2,465	8.1%	1,555	1,430	1,465	760	635	995
81 Other services (except public administration)	1,245	1,370	1,305	4.3%	1,025	1,115	970	230	255	335
91 Public administration	2,380	3,045	2,550	8.4%	1,905	2,405	2,020	470	680	530

Table 16. All Communities – Commuting Patterns for Usual Workers, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Within Community	Within CVRD	Outside District	Outside Province
Comox Valley	8,170	9,760	2,545	455
Comox	1,895	2,200	365	105
Courtenay	5,250	2,375	735	200
Cumberland	240	955	185	10
Electoral Area A	220	925	190	45
Electoral Area B	235	1,820	225	20
Electoral Area C	330	1,420	835	80
K'ómoks First Nation	10	65	0	0

Table 17. All Communities – Dwelling Types, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Single	Apartment	Semi	Row	Duplex	Movable	Total	%Δ '06-'16
Comox Valley	19,135	3,185	2,665	1,525	640	1,225	28,375	17.1%
Comox	4,150	715	600	565	105	80	6,215	19.3%
Courtenay	5,970	2,340	1,870	850	275	395	11,700	20.1%
Cumberland	1,175	55	75	80	120	45	1,550	37.3%
Electoral Area A	2,070	10	30	10	20	70	2,210	3.5%
Electoral Area B	2,545	40	35	15	70	325	3,030	2.4%
Electoral Area C	3,165	25	55	10	45	270	3,570	21.8%
K'ómoks First Nation	60	0	0	0	0	40	100	-8.7%

Table 18. All Communities – Dwelling Age, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	< 1960	1961 to 1980	1981 to 1990	1991 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2016
Comox Valley	3,580	7,725	4,575	6,135	4,805	1,575
Comox	545	1,940	995	1,295	1,105	335
Courtenay	1,135	2,630	1,735	3,150	2,435	625
Cumberland	560	220	110	190	330	160
Electoral Area A	525	670	380	320	230	90
Electoral Area B	390	925	655	545	315	190
Electoral Area C	415	1,310	680	615	380	170
K'ómoks First Nation	10	30	25	20	10	0

Table 19. All Communities – Units by Number of Bedrooms, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	No Bedroom	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom	Total
Comox Valley	130	1,855	8,430	18,000	28,415
Comox	0	375	1,470	4,365	6,210
Courtenay	85	760	4,200	6,655	11,700
Cumberland	0	140	405	1,015	1,560
Electoral Area A	20	165	600	1,450	2,235
Electoral Area B	15	180	770	2,065	3,030
Electoral Area C	10	230	950	2,390	3,580
K'ómoks First Nation	0	10	30	70	110

Table 20. Historical Unit Completion Estimates by Dwelling Type. Source: BC Stats.

Dwelling Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Total	371	356	262	204	268	361	434	446	665	588
Singles	263	211	169	139	195	163	271	281	264	258
Rows	5	62	9	3	6	3	15	18	11	134
Apartments	103	83	84	62	67	195	148	147	390	196

* data was available only for the first half of 2019, annual total is estimated based on partial data

Table 21. Historical Completions by Dwelling Type. Source: BC Stats.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*	Total	Average
Comox Valley	303	371	356	262	204	268	361	434	446	665	588	4,258	387
Electoral Areas	75	85	84	93	68	83	66	104	122	94	104	978	89
Comox	110	125	110	49	38	48	68	57	39	116	12	772	70
Courtenay	88	123	137	103	91	105	212	243	217	349	388	2,056	187
Cumberland	30	38	25	17	7	32	15	30	68	106	84	452	41

* data was available only for the first half of 2019, annual total is estimated based on partial data.

Table 22. Primary & Secondary Rental Market Units, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada & CMHC

	Total	Rental	Primary Market	% of Total	Secondary Market	% of Total
Total	29,575	6,980	2,095	100%	4,885	100%
No Bedroom	160	125	134	6%	*see note*	0%
1 Bedroom	2,060	1,470	475	23%	995	20%
2 Bedroom	8,910	3,005	1,222	58%	1,783	36%
3+ Bedroom	18,445	2,380	264	13%	2,116	43%

* Data for No Bedroom units is inconsistent between CMHC and Statistics Canada due to methodological differences between the two sources. We assume that virtually 100% of these unit types were accounted for by the Primary market.

Table 23. Historical Rental Housing Vacancy by Unit Type, Courtenay CMA. Source: CHMC.

Unit Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**	**	**	2.2	1.8	0.5	1.0	2.4	0.6	1.3
Bachelor	**	**	**	4.4	0.7	**	9.1	3.3	0.0	0.0
1 Bedroom	**	**	**	1.4	1.9	0.7	0.5	5.0	0.3	1.3
2 Bedroom	**	**	**	2.5	2.0	0.3	0.5	1.9	0.9	1.4
3+ Bedroom	**	**	**	1.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8

**denotes data suppression by CMHC.

Table 24. Historical Median Market Rents by Unit Type, Courtenay CMA, 2019 dollars. Source: CHMC.

Unit Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**	**	**	$830	$824	$824	$856	$864	$870	$959
Bachelor	**	**	**	$636	$642	$643	$634	$618	$589	$615
1 Bedroom	**	**	**	$719	$714	$731	$732	$740	$768	$790
2 Bedroom	**	**	**	$830	$840	$852	$888	$898	$921	$1,027
3+ Bedroom	**	**	**	$968	$972	$973	$1,046	$1,056	$1,037	$1,280

**denotes data suppression by CMHC.

Table 25. Historical Average Market Rents by Unit Type, Courtenay CMA, 2019 dollars. Source: CHMC.

Unit Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	**	**	**	$839	$842	$854	$882	$881	$898	$996
Bachelor	**	**	**	$612	$618	$637	$612	$603	$587	$640
1 Bedroom	**	**	**	$753	$758	$770	$774	$767	$782	$828
2 Bedroom	**	**	**	$887	$887	$900	$932	$929	$953	$1,038
3+ Bedroom	**	**	**	$918	$918	$934	$985	$1,022	$1,030	$1,166

**denotes data suppression by CMHC.

Table 26. Historical Average Annual Days on Market by Dwelling Type. Source: VIREB.

COMMUNITY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Comox Valley	88	100	95	87	86	76	68	42	35	55
Comox	83	96	88	83	83	59	56	33	31	35
Courtenay	107	94	119	89	94	74	71	37	34	58
Cumberland	80	99	110	93	56	56	33	36	29	63
Electoral Areas	85	106	85	88	90	92	79	49	40	63

Table 27. Historical Annual Sales Volume by Dwelling Type. Source: VIREB.

COMMUNITY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Comox Valley	979	985	983	980	1,042	1,181	1,480	1,454	1,311	1,155
Comox	320	295	259	317	289	365	434	340	319	282
Courtenay	184	198	207	184	192	217	301	355	327	282
Cumberland	76	78	70	68	80	84	81	87	160	102
Electoral Areas	399	414	447	411	481	515	664	672	505	489

Table 28. Historical Year/Year Housing Price Change by Dwelling Type. Source: VIREB.

COMMUNITY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Comox Valley	-10%	6%	-4%	1%	3%	0%	12%	9%	0%	14%
Comox	1%	4%	-4%	-2%	4%	0%	7%	19%	13%	4%
Courtenay	3%	-6%	0%	-1%	8%	-2%	13%	22%	9%	10%
Cumberland	6%	0%	-8%	4%	5%	-3%	29%	24%	-1%	13%

Table 29. Historical Median Sale Price by Dwelling Type, 2019 Dollars. Source: VIREB.

COMMUNITY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Comox Valley	$276,240	$290,033	$278,568	$282,692	$288,992	$289,246	$318,983	$340,047	$330,913	$369,652
Comox	$358,259	$368,868	$354,780	$350,039	$362,608	$363,293	$383,108	$443,763	$487,355	$495,115
Courtenay	$272,068	$254,145	$253,751	$253,495	$270,858	$264,609	$294,847	$350,966	$371,036	$400,430
Cumberland	$323,921	$320,249	$296,406	$311,319	$324,893	$314,272	$399,006	$483,243	$462,532	$511,925

Table 30. Historical AirBnB Market – Total versus Commercial Market. Source: AirDNA.

				2016				2017				2018				2019
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Total Market	1	15	31	193	207	197	295	283	289	318	431	403	401	416	510	457
Entire Unit	1	10	21	128	138	134	210	211	219	245	345	318	328	336	423	371
Other	0	5	10	65	69	63	85	72	70	73	86	85	73	80	87	86
Commercial Market	1	15	29	175	169	173	250	254	249	291	364	368	324	355	416	390
Entire Unit	1	10	19	116	112	118	170	185	188	222	291	288	267	288	341	317
Other	0	5	10	59	57	55	80	69	61	69	73	80	57	67	75	73

Table 31. Historical AirBnB Occupancy & Revenue – Total versus Commercial Market, October 2019 dollars. Source: AirDNA.

				2016				2017				2018				2019
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Total Market																
Occupancy	7%	40%	45%	30%	41%	46%	77%	41%	45%	44%	81%	50%	42%	47%	81%	50%
Median Rate	$136	$70	$98	$99	$106	$106	$111	$105	$104	$108	$120	$107	$122	$113	$121	$106
Median Revenue	$272	$663	$1,128	$767	$1,077	$1,164	$2,116	$1,024	$1,109	$1,180	$2,376	$1,262	$1,075	$1,376	$2,342	$1,111
Commercial Market																
Occupancy	7%	40%	46%	29%	36%	45%	74%	38%	42%	43%	78%	48%	38%	45%	79%	48%
Median Rate	$136	$70	$97	$100	$106	$110	$114	$105	$106	$109	$120	$106	$122	$114	$121	$107
Median Revenue	$272	$663	$1,083	$736	$1,051	$1,252	$2,083	$1,012	$1,109	$1,184	$2,387	$1,270	$1,091	$1,378	$2,362	$1,150

Table 32. Median Assessments, 2012 – 2019, 2019 dollars. Source: BC Assessment.

				2016				2017				2018				2019
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Total Market																
Occupancy	7%	40%	45%	30%	41%	46%	77%	41%	45%	44%	81%	50%	42%	47%	81%	50%
Median Rate	$136	$70	$98	$99	$106	$106	$111	$105	$104	$108	$120	$107	$122	$113	$121	$106
Median Revenue	$272	$663	$1,128	$767	$1,077	$1,164	$2,116	$1,024	$1,109	$1,180	$2,376	$1,262	$1,075	$1,376	$2,342	$1,111
Commercial Market																
Occupancy	7%	40%	46%	29%	36%	45%	74%	38%	42%	43%	78%	48%	38%	45%	79%	48%
Median Rate	$136	$70	$97	$100	$106	$110	$114	$105	$106	$109	$120	$106	$122	$114	$121	$107
Median Revenue	$272	$663	$1,083	$736	$1,051	$1,252	$2,083	$1,012	$1,109	$1,184	$2,387	$1,270	$1,091	$1,378	$2,362	$1,150

Table 33. Average Assessments, 2012 – 2019, 2019 dollars. Source: BC Assessment.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Single Family	$396,000	$399,500	$385,500	$390,500	$395,500	$426,500	$480,000	$506,000
Duplex	$261,500	$263,500	$252,000	$254,000	$260,000	$273,000	$319,500	$343,500
Row	$258,500	$260,500	$253,500	$254,000	$252,500	$267,000	$321,500	$276,500
Multi-Family	$1,700,000	$1,713,500	$1,750,000	$1,699,000	$1,737,000	$1,694,000	$1,919,500	$1,453,000

Table 34. Median & Average Sales, 2019. BC Assessment.

	Sales	Average	Median
Single Family	952	$510,000	$472,500
Duplex	88	$341,500	$370,700
Row	260	$277,000	$334,900
Multi-Family	1	$1,084,500	$4,110,000

Table 35. Non-Market Housing Waitlist, January 2020. Source: BC Housing.

	Comox Valley	Courtenay	Comox	Cumberland	Electoral Area A	Electoral Area B	Electoral Area C	K'ómoks First Nation
Total Applicants	270	214	31	11	6	1	5	-
Families	73	57	8	4	1	0	3	-
People with Disabilities	82	63	12	3	1	0	1	-
Seniors	74	58	9	3	4	0	0	-
Wheelchair Modified	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	-
Singles	25	21	2	0	0	1	1	-
Rent Supplements	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-
Transfers	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	-

Table 36. Historical Median Shelter Cost & Renter Subsidized Housing. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Renters	Subsidies	% Subsidized
Comox Valley	6,740	725	10.8%
Comox	1,410	195	13.8%
Courtenay	3,565	425	11.9%
Cumberland	410	45	11.0%
Electoral Area A	365	35	9.6%
Electoral Area B	460	15	3.3%
Electoral Area C	525	10	1.9%

Table 37. Projected Housing Demand by Unit Type & Rental Proportion, 2016 to 2025.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Population	64,355	65,085	65,815	66,545	67,255	68,015	68,730	69,445	70,160	70,875
Total Households	29,175	29,625	30,075	30,525	30,975	31,480	31,925	32,370	32,815	33,260
No Bedroom	260	260	260	260	260	280	285	290	295	300
1 Bedroom	2,050	2,080	2,110	2,140	2,170	2,205	2,235	2,265	2,295	2,325
2 Bedroom	8,525	8,660	8,795	8,930	9,065	9,220	9,350	9,480	9,610	9,740
3+ Bedroom	18,340	18,625	18,910	19,195	19,480	19,775	20,055	20,335	20,615	20,895
Household Size	2.21	2.20	2.19	2.18	2.17	2.16	2.16	2.15	2.14	2.13
Renter Demand	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%	22.9%

Table 38. All Communities – Projected Population and Housing Demand by Unit Type, 2020 to 2025.

	2020					2025					
COMMUNITY	No Bedroom	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+Bedroom	Total	No Bedroom	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+Bedroom	Total	Total Growth
Comox Valley	12,240	950	4,300	13,465	30,955	13,325	1,010	4,565	14,335	33,235	7.4%
Comox	4,790	30	435	1,670	6,925	5,295	30	495	1,845	7,665	10.7%
Courtenay	7,380	160	975	4,505	13,020	7,950	190	1,040	4,850	14,030	7.8%
Cumberland	10	155	525	1,180	1,870	15	175	625	1,425	2,240	19.8%
Electoral Area A	10	160	640	1,495	2,305	10	160	640	1,505	2,315	0.4%
Electoral Area B	30	170	740	2,090	3,030	30	170	745	2,095	3,040	0.3%
Electoral Area C	20	265	970	2,465	3,720	25	275	1,000	2,555	3,855	3.6%
K'ómoks First Nation	0	10	15	60	85	0	10	20	60	90	5.9%

Table 39. CVRD – Projected Housing Supply, 2016 to 2025.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total	29,095	29,565	30,005	30,690	31,325	31,730	32,165	32,585	33,050	33,545
No Bedroom	110	110	115	120	125	125	135	135	150	155
1 Bedroom	1,905	1,940	1,965	2,020	2,070	2,095	2,130	2,160	2,190	2,225
2 Bedroom	8,635	8,780	8,915	9,120	9,320	9,445	9,570	9,700	9,835	9,990
3+ Bedroom	18,445	18,735	19,010	19,430	19,810	20,065	20,330	20,590	20,875	21,175

Table 40. CVRD – Projected Housing Gaps, 2016 to 2025.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total	5	25	15	250	435	340	330	305	325	375
No Bedroom	-150	-150	-145	-140	-135	-155	-150	-155	-145	-145
1 Bedroom	-135	-130	-135	-110	-90	-100	-95	-95	-95	-90
2 Bedroom	125	135	135	205	270	245	240	240	245	270
3+ Bedroom	165	170	160	295	390	350	335	315	320	340

Table 41. CVRD – Projected Housing Gaps 2025, Surplus (+) & Deficit (-).

COMMUNITY	No Bedroom	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+ Bedroom	Total Gap	% of Demand
Comox Valley	-145	-90	270	340	375	1.1%
Comox	-25	-60	-160	-310	-555	7.2%
Courtenay	-75	-75	300	255	405	2.9%
Cumberland	-10	10	-60	10	-50	2.2%
Electoral Area A	-5	30	45	150	220	9.5%
Electoral Area B	-15	25	105	175	290	9.5%
Electoral Area C	-15	-20	40	60	65	1.7%

Table 42. All Communities – Inadequate Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Total #	Total %	Owner #	Owner %	Renter #	Renter %
Comox Valley	1,435	5.3%	985	4.7%	455	7.2%
Comox	265	4.3%	160	3.4%	105	7.7%
Courtenay	525	4.6%	295	3.7%	230	6.8%
Cumberland	120	8.0%	85	7.5%	40	11.1%
Electoral Area A	175	8.2%	150	8.5%	30	8.5%
Electoral Area B	100	3.5%	65	2.7%	30	7.0%
Electoral Area C	255	7.8%	230	8.2%	25	5.1%

Table 43. All Communities – Unsuitable Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Total #	Total %	Owner #	Owner %	Renter #	Renter %
Comox Valley	525	1.9%	260	1.2%	270	4.2%
Comox	35	0.6%	10	0.2%	20	1.5%
Courtenay	245	2.2%	75	0.9%	165	4.9%
Cumberland	55	3.7%	50	4.4%	10	2.8%
Electoral Area A	50	2.4%	35	2.0%	15	4.2%
Electoral Area B	70	2.5%	35	1.4%	35	8.1%
Electoral Area C	80	2.4%	50	1.8%	30	6.1%

Table 44. All Communities – Unaffordable Housing by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Total #	Total %	Owner #	Owner %	Renter #	Renter %
Comox Valley	5,455	20.0%	2,790	13.4%	2,660	41.8%
Comox	1,120	18.4%	640	13.5%	485	35.8%
Courtenay	2,755	24.2%	1,140	14.2%	1,615	48.0%
Cumberland	310	20.7%	190	16.7%	125	34.7%
Electoral Area A	350	16.5%	215	12.1%	120	33.8%
Electoral Area B	410	14.4%	265	11.0%	145	33.7%
Electoral Area C	500	15.2%	330	11.8%	165	33.3%

Table 45. All Communities – Households in Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

COMMUNITY	Total #	Total %	Owner #	Owner %	Renter #	Renter %
Comox Valley	2,815	10.3%	920	4.4%	1,900	29.9%
Comox	460	7.5%	145	3.1%	315	23.2%
Courtenay	1,580	13.9%	400	5.0%	1,180	35.1%
Cumberland	145	9.7%	55	4.8%	95	26.4%
Electoral Area A	185	8.7%	85	4.8%	95	26.0%
Electoral Area B	200	7.0%	90	3.7%	110	25.9%
Electoral Area C	250	7.6%	145	5.2%	105	21.4%

Table 46. All Communities – Households in Extreme Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

	Total		Owner		Renter	
COMMUNITY	#	%	#	%	#	%
Comox Valley	1,355	5.0%	460	2.2%	890	14.0%
Comox	235	3.9%	85	1.8%	150	11.1%
Courtenay	760	6.7%	175	2.2%	585	17.4%
Cumberland	40	2.7%	20	1.8%	25	6.9%
Electoral Area A	75	3.5%	45	2.5%	30	8.2%
Electoral Area B	105	3.7%	45	1.9%	60	14.1%
Electoral Area C	140	4.3%	100	3.6%	45	9.2%

Table 47. Historical Households Before-Tax Income Categories, 2015 dollars. Source: Statistics Canada.

Year	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	High
2015	5,135	5,480	7,105	3,410	7,285
2010	5,395	5,495	4,700	3,780	5,925
2005	5,195	5,105	4,130	3,535	4,840

Table 48. : Income Level Ownership & Rental Cost Gaps, 2019 dollars.

		Affordable (30%)					Rent Gap				Sale Price Gap	
Income Category	Maximum Income	Monthly Payment	Dwelling Value	Bachelor	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+ Bedroom	Single Family	Condo Apt.	Patio Home	Town House
Very Low	$33,583	$840	$196,717	$220	$50	-$190	-$440	-$254,280	$24,220	-$214,280	-$75,780
Low	$53,732	$1,343	$314,747	$730	$550	$320	$60	-$136,250	$142,250	-$96,250	$42,250
Moderate	$80,598	$2,015	$472,120	$1,400	$1,220	$990	$730	$21,120	$299,620	$61,120	$199,620
Above Moderate	$100,748	$2,519	$590,150	$1,900	$1,730	$1,490	$1,240	$139,150	$417,650	$179,150	$317,650
Median Income	$67,165	$1,679	$393,433	$1,060	$890	$650	$400	-$57,570	$220,930	-$17,570	$120,930

Table 49. All Communities – Households in Core Housing Need by Tenure, 2016. Source: Statistics Canada.

		Affordable (30%)					Rent Gap				Sale Price Gap	
Economic Families	Median Income	Monthly Payment	Dwelling Value	Bachelor	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+ Bedroom	Single Family	Condo Apt.	Patio Home	Town House
Non-econ. family	$31,386	$785	$183,850	$170	-$10	-$240	-$500	-$267,150	$11,350	-$227,150	-$88,650
Lone parent	$46,517	$1,163	$272,481	$550	$370	$140	-$120	-$178,520	$99,980	-$138,520	-$20
Couple w/ child	$108,290	$2,707	$634,326	$2,090	$1,920	$1,680	$1,430	$183,330	$461,830	$223,330	$361,830
Couple w/o child	$78,012	$1,950	$456,966	$1,340	$1,160	$920	$670	$5,970	$284,470	$45,970	$184,470
Median Income	$67,165	$1,679	$393,433	$1,060	$890	$650	$400	-$57,570	$220,930	-$17,570	$120,930

We calculated which specific economic family types (shown above) can or cannot afford certain types of accommodation based on the same approach used in section XX to a by doing the following:

1. taking the before-tax median incomes provided earlier in this report;
2. adjusting them to 2019 dollars;
3. calculating affordable monthly payments and purchase values; and
4. comparing these to market rental and ownership prices.

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT
CITY OF COURTENAY
TOWN OF COMOX
Village of Cumberland
Incorporated 1898
Prepared by:
gather
PLANNING+
ENGAGEMENT