

6 Key Statements of Need

This section contains a summary of this report's analysis of current and future housing needs focused on the entire housing continuum. It summarizes content of the previous sections to prepare the required key statements of need for the City of Coquitlam.

6.1 Rental Housing

- > Twenty-eight percent or 14,540 of the city's dwelling units were rentals according to the 2016 census. Between 2021 and 2031 the city could see a **28% increase in renter households** to a new total of 21,961 renter households. This is a conservative estimate.
- > **Seventy-three percent (73%) of rental units were rented in the Secondary Rental Market.** The purpose-built rental housing stock has declined from 4,082 units in 2016 to 3,423 units in 2020 due to redevelopments. The replacement of older, protected stock creates additional pressure on existing affordable rental housing stock.
- > As of December 31, 2021 construction is ongoing (received Building Permits) on 9 developments 437 purpose-built rental units – including 24 below-market units. Also, the City currently has another 2,726 units of purpose-built rental – including 175 units of below-market unit near rezoning or development permit approval.
- > Family-sized units that include three or more bedrooms are primarily found in single-detached dwellings, homes with a primary and secondary suite or row/town houses – neither of which exist as protected primary rentals. **Families who rent and require larger units need to find housing almost exclusively in the secondary rental market.** Secondary rentals do not provide the same tenure security as protected market rentals and are, on average, more expensive.
- > In Coquitlam, **35% of renters were in core housing need** in comparison to 11% of owners. Moreover, 15% (1,925 households) of all renter households were in extreme core housing need, spending more than 50% of their income on rent. Should current trends continue, **an additional 1,697 new renter households are expected to be in core housing need by 2031.**
- > People who live on single incomes, be it individuals living alone or with roommates (non-census families) or lone-parent families, face the greatest challenges with affording appropriate rental housing in the city.
- > With the continuously increasing cost of renting in the community, **the demand for greater affordability and additional rental supply is significant.**

6.2 Affordable Housing

- > The cost of renting and owning has drastically increased in recent years while incomes have only risen moderately in Coquitlam, the region and beyond. **40% of renter households in the city experienced affordability issues**, spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs. While a lower **share of owners (22%)** experience affordability issues, they constitute a greater absolute number compared to renters (7,715 vs. 5,105).
- > **Rentals** (see Section 3.6 and Key Statement above) are largely unaffordable for individuals renting alone or lone parents.
- > **Home ownership** is out of reach for most households earning a median income (see Section 3.7). Even median-earning couples with children had to spend 46% of their income to afford an average priced single-detached home, the most common type of home in the city. Average priced apartments (\$509,575) on the other hand were affordable to all household types, except lone-parent households and people living alone, both of whom would have to pay between 45% and 55% of their income respectively. However, it needs to be considered that **newer, and larger stock that would be suitable for families, is not affordable to buy even for double-income earning family households with children.**

WHAT WE HEARD: AFFORDABILITY

Stakeholder and survey feedback highlighted that affordability challenges are felt deeply by those with single income streams, seniors with fixed incomes, those on disability or income assistance, those living with physical health or mobility issues, and young people looking to enter the housing market and/or start a family.

- > Eleven percent (11%), or 3,935, of owner households were in core housing need in 2016. Assuming historic trends continue, there will be an additional 1,529 owner households in core housing need by 2031. As with renters, a **priority population in need will be seniors** (see below).
- > Recent **immigrants and non-permanent residents** experienced the highest rates of core housing need in 2016, representing 45% (960 households) and 40% (240 households) of immigrant and non-permanent resident households respectively.
- > Over 60% of the 4,000 students enrolled at Douglas College in Coquitlam lived with their parents or relatives. Of those students who looked for rental housing, **over half experienced difficulty finding a place to rent** within an acceptable distance from campus.

6.3 Housing for Seniors

- > **Coquitlam's population is aging.** Between 2006 and 2016 Coquitlam's younger population (under 24 years) decreased by 3%, while the percentage of seniors aged 65 and older increased by 3%.
- > The share of seniors is projected to increase over the coming decade, while younger age groups are projected to remain similar in size or decline. **Seniors will make up 19% of the population in 2031 – increasing from 15.2% in 2021.** As a result, the median age in the City will increase from 40.8 to 42.8 years by 2031.
- > Senior-led households (65+) represent the **largest group of new households in the next 10 years with 43.5% (7,983) of new households**, including 846 households who will be led by a senior 85 and over. While many of these seniors will continue to live independently, **additional assisted living and residential care beds will be needed over the projected growth period** to adequately care for seniors who will require supports.
- > Notably, in 2016, 50% of renter households with at least one senior were considered in core housing need. Across both tenures, **by 2031 there will be 4,262 new senior households (65 or older) in core housing need.** This group has the largest share of households in core housing need by age group and will see the largest growth.

WHAT WE HEARD: SENIOR-FRIENDLY HOUSING

For seniors and other demographic groups, the presence of neighbourhood amenities plays a key role in determining housing suitability. When looking to move, it is important for seniors to have access to public transportation and remain in areas that enable them to maintain relationships with primary care services such as family doctors.

Seniors may also require specialized resources and knowledge to help them remove barriers and enable access appropriate housing.

Resident Profile: Sandy and her two Children

A single parent looking for affordable family housing in a walkable area.

Sandy is a 44-year-old single parent living with her two young children in a 2-bedroom rental apartment in Coquitlam. She has lived in the city for almost a decade after having moved from Vancouver to be closer to family connections. Sandy found her current housing within 2 weeks of searching social media platforms such as Facebook Marketplace and Craigslist.

Her biggest challenge looking for housing in the city has been finding affordable housing. In the City and broader Metro Vancouver area, the housing costs are equal or greater to what Sandy currently pays for rent, which is quite substantial in her opinion. The lack of affordability is worrying, as **she knows that soon her children will need rooms of their own**. As her children age, Sandy will want to have a larger apartment, but she fears being unable to afford one in Coquitlam. Her **income has not been keeping pace** with the rents and she wonders how, or if she will be able to afford a different apartment for herself and her family in Coquitlam.

When looking for rental apartments, she **also tried to find a unit in co-op housing** but soon understood that there are long wait times and limited availability throughout the Tri-City area.

Ultimately, she would like to live in housing that is a **newer build and better quality** than her existing rental. It is also important to her to be **close to public transit** that will enable herself and her kids to move around independently for their daily needs.

In her search for housing, Sandy encountered needing to provide extensive information to prove that she was capable of affording her housing as a single parent. She got the feeling potential landlords were uncomfortable renting to her. This resulted in a lost housing opportunity which would have been a good fit for herself and her child.

If the City is serious about wanting to keep young families in the area, Sandy feels they must consider having **more affordable and family friendly rental options** such as 2- and 3-bedroom apartments. There should be more localized supports within communities to help people find housing where they are.

Sandy knows that her current housing is only temporary. Ideally, she would like to live in a place where she can stay for the longer term without the pressure of knowing she will have to leave. For Sandy, conversations about housing are not just about a place to live, but about a decent quality of life, equity and health.



6.4 Housing for Families

- > There were **30,030 units in the housing stock with three or more bedrooms**.
- > With only 3,630 rental homes having three or more bedrooms compared to 26,405 that were owned, there was a **very small number of larger family-sized units (3+ bedrooms) in the rental housing stock** in Coquitlam. These units were almost exclusively in detached housing. Only 212 primary rental market units had 3+ bedrooms in the City as of 2020.
- > As family-sized housing units – both rented and owned - were found almost exclusively in single-detached dwellings, duplexes or row houses, the high cost of renting or buying these family-sized units puts **access to suitable housing out of reach for many families with children**.
- > Among rented homes, **lone-parent families, face the greatest challenges with affording appropriate rental housing** in the city and cannot even afford a 1-bedroom apartment without paying more than 43% of their income on rent. While couples with children can draw on more income and only have to spend 31% of their income on a 3-bedroom rental unit, they will be severely hampered to find suitable rentals due to the lack of supply.
- > **There is a significant need for greater numbers of family homes in the new housing supply, that are larger and affordable to family households**. Noting the high cost of detached housing in the city, much of this growth will have to originate in the supply of higher-density housing.
- > Until 2031 **couples with children will make up 27.5% (5,043) of new households** – especially those with household heads aged 35 to 54 – who will see an increase of 3,221 households.

6.5 Special Needs Housing

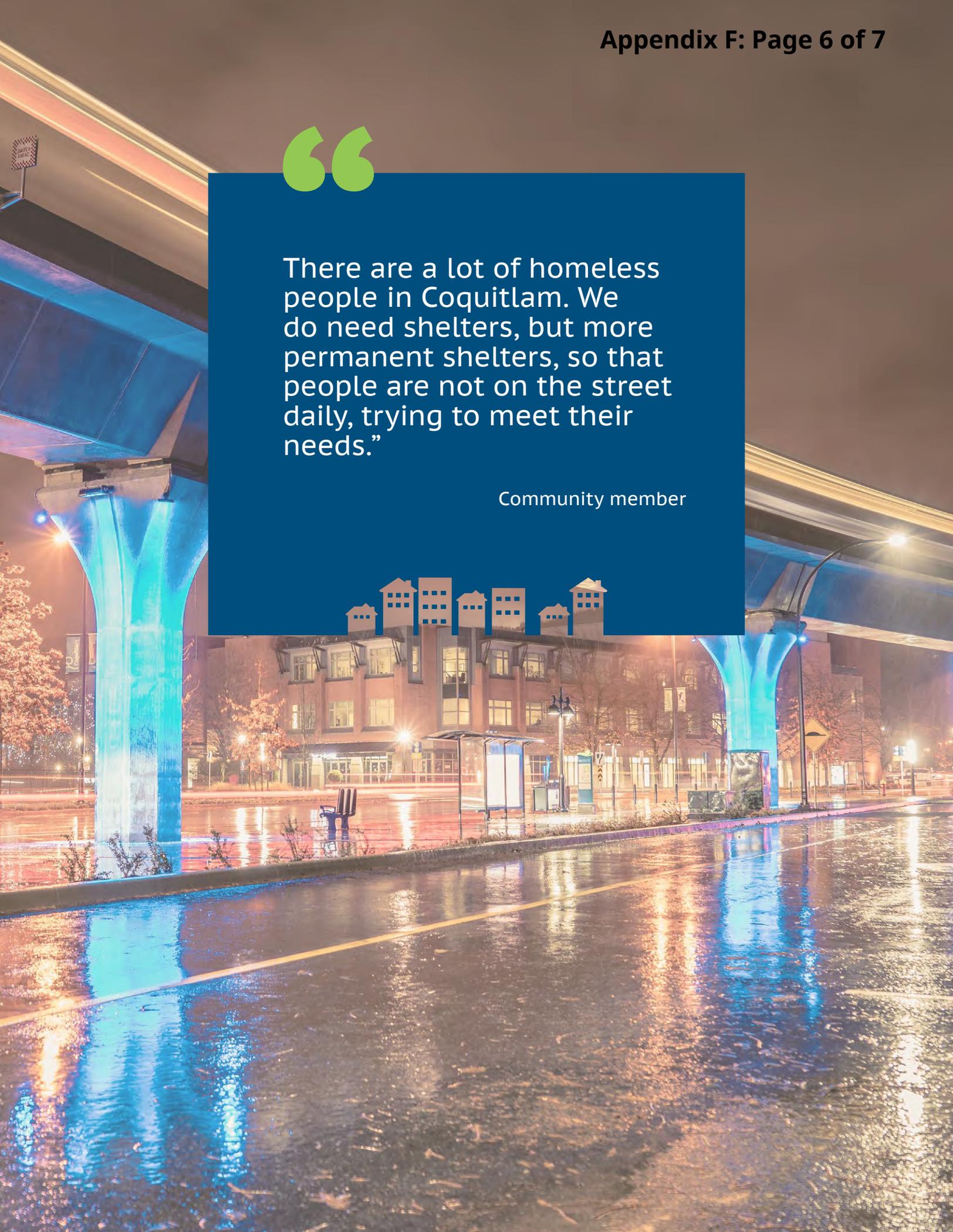
In Coquitlam, this housing type is defined as non-market housing with supports for seniors and people with disabilities, which is different from non-market housing which includes ongoing support services (e.g., mental health, addiction). Both are included in this statement of need.

- > There is limited quantitative data on the needs of people with physical or mental health challenges, addictions, or people living with developmental disabilities who may require housing that offers special supports.
- > The demand for non-market housing in Coquitlam is high with 921 households on BC Housing's Housing Registry waitlist – including 122 People with Disabilities and 31 households requiring a wheelchair-modified unit.
- > Stakeholders shared that those living on a fixed income – many of whom are people with disabilities and/or seniors – require access to deeply affordable housing charging Rent Geared to Income with accessibility supports. Many people who are experiencing homelessness live with untreated health issues and require ongoing health supports that are not currently available. In these situations, illegal, unsafe or unhealthy housing is, at times, the only option that is affordable.
- > As people with complex disabilities become older than ever, parents and caregivers worry about their long-term housing options.



There are a lot of homeless people in Coquitlam. We do need shelters, but more permanent shelters, so that people are not on the street daily, trying to meet their needs.”

Community member



6.6 Homelessness

- > There were 60 shelter units and beds available on an ongoing basis to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Coquitlam. An additional 30 beds or mats were made available during periods of extreme winter or on a seasonal basis.
- > The number of people experiencing absolute homelessness is estimated to be around 80-140 people.
- > The needs of those experiencing homelessness are varied, and while some need supports to achieve and maintain housing stability, others just require subsidized low-income housing.
- > The number of seniors in shelters has been increasing. Some people experiencing homelessness are showing increasingly complex support needs due to mental health challenges, brain injuries and addiction.
- > There are no shelter or Housing First options available exclusively for youth.

WHAT WE HEARD:

HOUSING + HOMELESSNESS

Those experiencing homelessness while living with ongoing mental health and substance use challenges need housing with services and supports.

The lack of supportive housing leads some to turn to illegal and unsafe housing options.

“ There are a lot of homeless people in Coquitlam. We do need shelters, but more permanent shelters, so that people are not on the street daily, trying to meet their needs. ”