

# SENIORS HOUSING STRATEGY

## Background and Trends

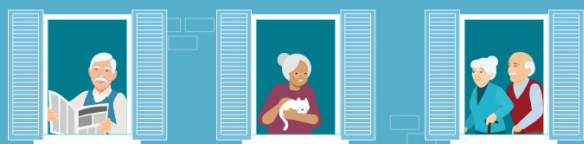
### INTRODUCTION

This document provides a high-level summary of population-level data on housing for seniors, Elders, and older adults aged 55+ in the City of Vancouver. The data is primarily sourced from Statistics Canada 2016 and 2021 Census, noting that some 2021 data is not available yet. Additional population data can be found on the City of Vancouver's [Social Policy Research and Data webpage](#).

A nuanced and intersectional approach is especially important when analyzing and interpreting data on older residents. Considerations and caveats when reading this document include:

- » Population data necessarily places people into categories based on their numerical age. For example, many datasets disaggregate information for people 65 and over, reflecting a common age of retirement. But people reach this transition at many different ages, and employment is not the only factor in shaping how people perceive their own aging. Many people continue the same level of activity into older ages.
- » Conversely, intersecting inequities and barriers can create a younger threshold for aging: in the Downtown Eastside, for example, some seniors programs are targeted to people age 45 or older. As noted in the Accessibility Strategy, the experience of aging for persons with disabilities often occurs more quickly than for other groups.
- » In aggregate, many datasets on older persons show positive socioeconomic outcomes compared to younger age groups. However, other factors show a more nuanced picture: for example, older persons are more likely to be homeowners and less likely to experience housing affordability challenges. However, older renters often face more acute affordability challenges than younger people, and the risks and health consequences of insecure housing can be more acute when they intersect with age.

Population-level data is important for understanding broad trends and informing policy interventions, but it should be complemented with other data sources, understood in the context in which it was collected, and interpreted collaboratively with members of the community.



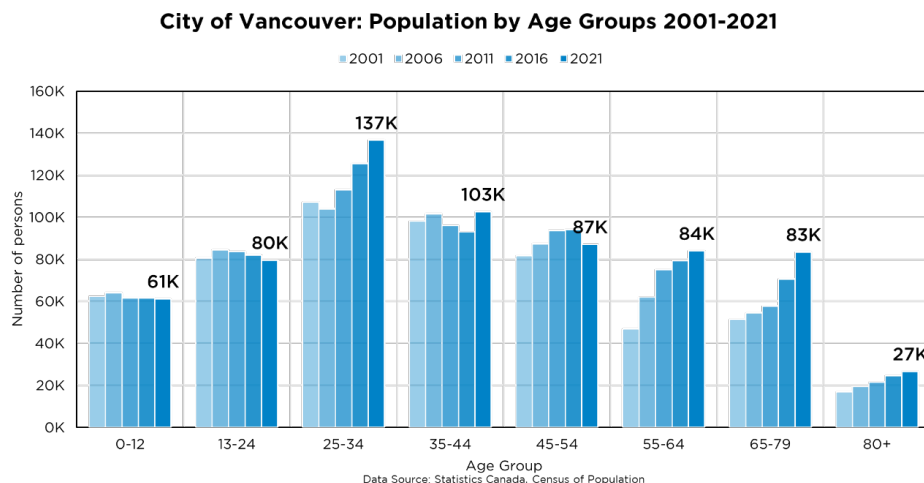
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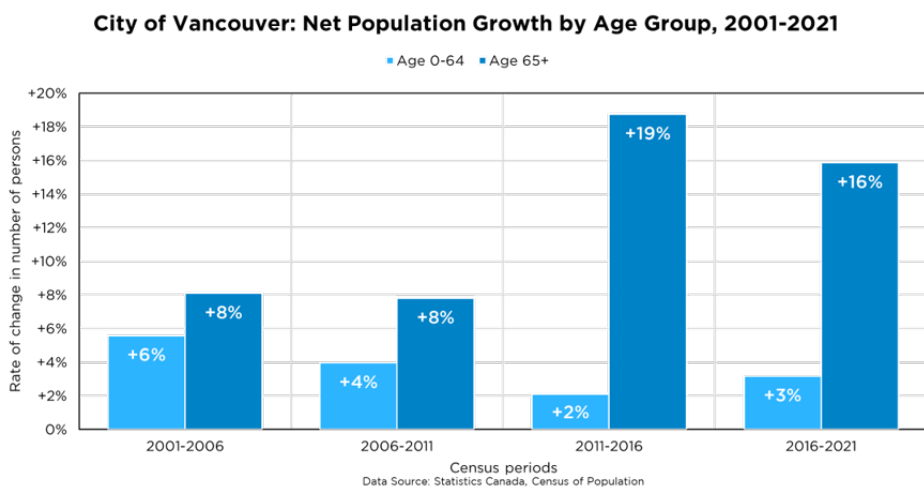
### POPULATION GROWTH AND TRENDS

- » As we all age, the number of older residents in Vancouver and the region continues to increase. As shown in Figure 1, there has been consistent growth in older age categories in recent years.
- » As of the 2021 Census, 194,000 Vancouver residents are 55 years or older, representing about 30% of the city's population.
- » 106,000 people are aged 65 or older, making up 17% of the city's population. The number of people in this group grew at five times the rate of the under-65 population from 2016 to 2021 (see Figure 2).
- » Another 84,000 people, or 13% of the population, are aged 55 to 64.

**Figure 1: Vancouver Population by Age Group 2001-2021**



**Figure 2: Vancouver Net Population Growth by Age Group 2001-2021**

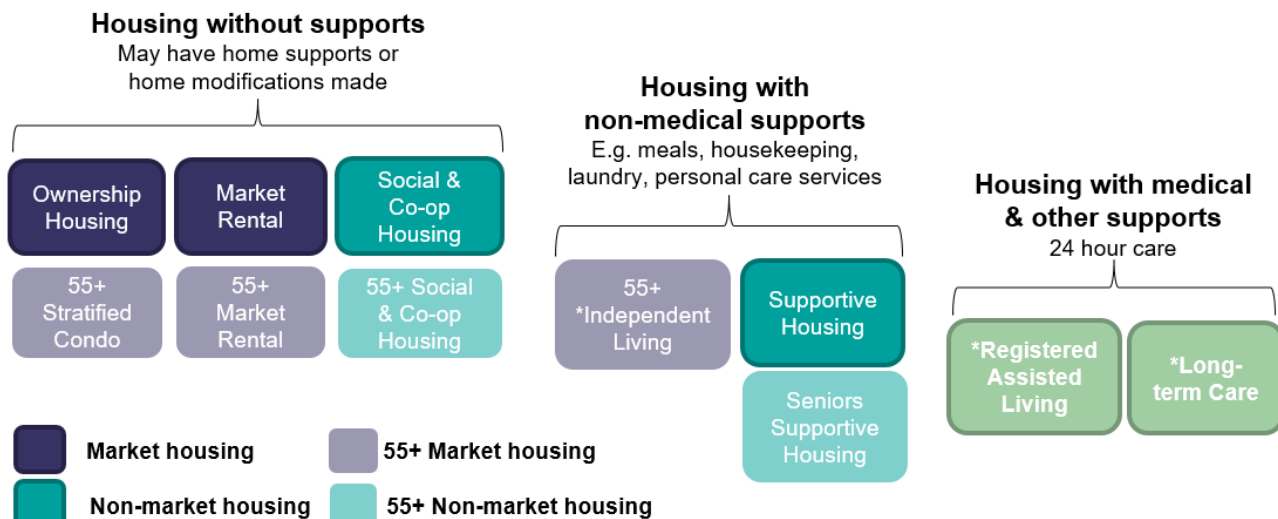


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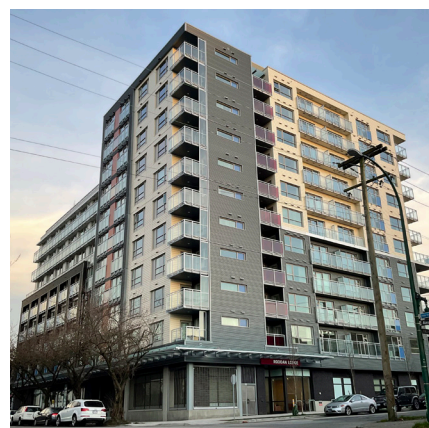
### SENIORS HOUSING CONTINUUM

- » Seniors and older adults live in many types of housing and their needs change as they age.
- » The draft housing continuum shows the types and tenures of housing seniors may live in. The level of supports received increases as you move to the right of the continuum.



**Seniors residence** - Owned by private operators or non-profit or government organizations. They may have subsidized or private pay units or a mix of both. These uses are regulated by the Provincial Community Care & Assisted Living Act.

*\*These types of housing may be co-located with each other within one building (i.e. campus of care model)*



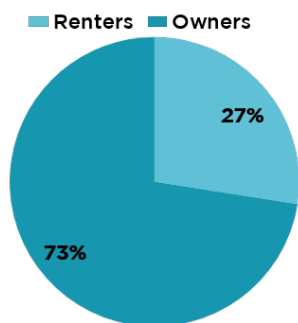
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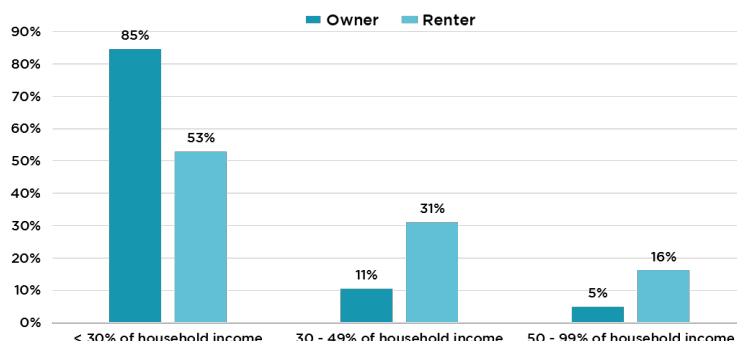
### HOUSING TENURE AND AFFORDABILITY

- » The majority of seniors and older adults aged 65+ are homeowners (73%). Of ownership households aged 65+, nearly 74% no longer have a mortgage on their home (StatsCan 2021).
- » Only 27% of Vancouver residents aged 65+ are renters, compared to 55% of the overall city population. However, seniors 65+ who rent their homes are facing greater affordability challenges
  - » Nearly 50% of households pay more than 30% of the income on housing costs, compared to just over 15% of owner households (StatsCan 2016)
  - » Nearly 31% of renter households aged 65+ live in subsidized rental housing (StatsCan 2021)
  - » 40% of seniors 65+ who rent experience core housing need—that is, an inability to find housing that is affordable based on their income; or experiences of housing unsuitability or adequacy, such as a need for major repairs.
- » Across Vancouver, the 2021 Census estimates that there are at least 5,100 seniors living in collective dwellings (including long-term care, assisted living and independent living), which is just under 5% of the total 65+ population.

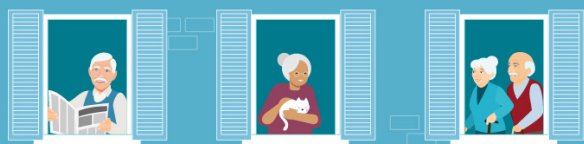
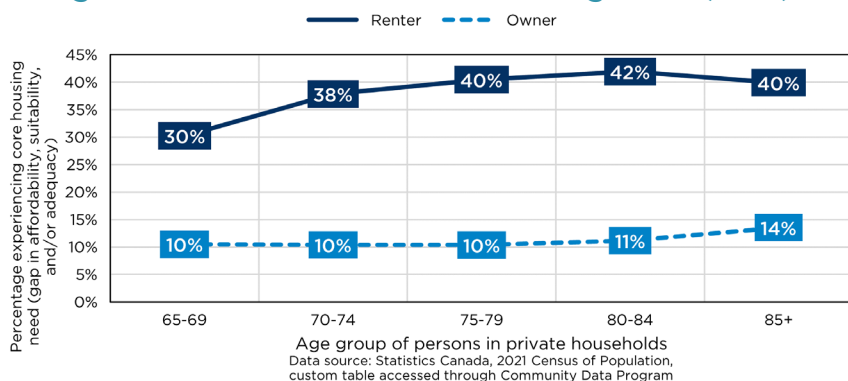
**Figure 3: Vancouver 65+ Housing Tenure (2021)**



**Figure 4: Vancouver 65+ Shelter to Income Ratio (2016)**



**Figure 5: Vancouver 65+ Core Housing Need (2021)**





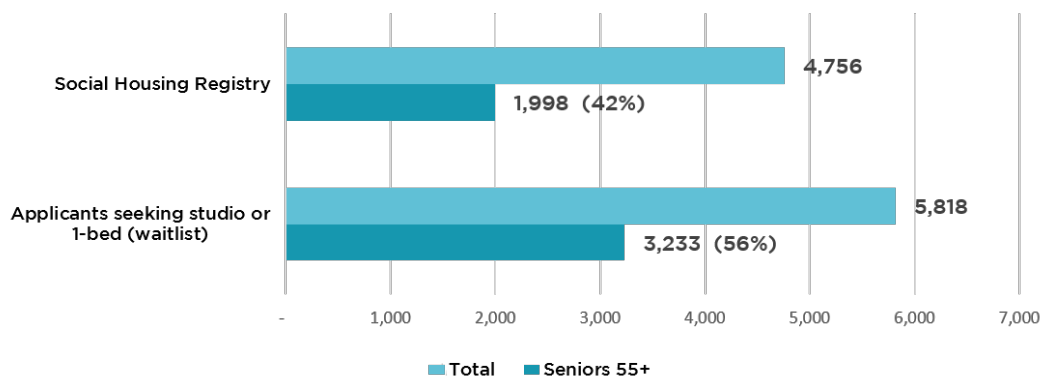
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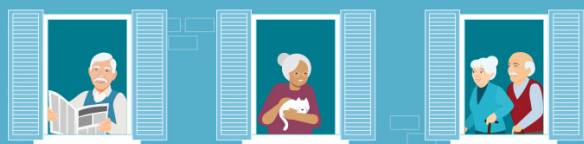
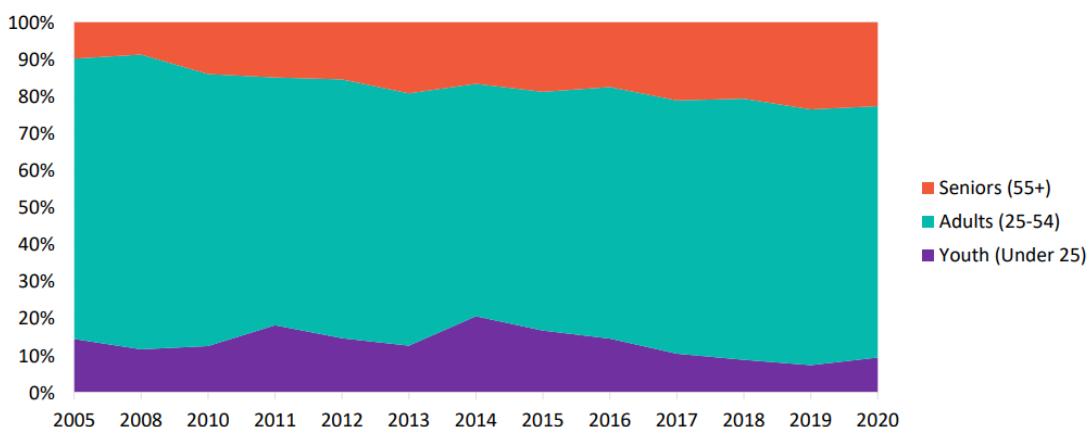
### NON-MARKET HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

- » Seniors and older adults are overrepresented on the social housing registry and of those on the waitlist.
  - » 42% of people on the social housing registry are aged 55+, whereas seniors 55+ made up 30% of the city population in 2021.
  - » 56% of people on the social housing waitlist for a studio or one-bed were 55 or older as of March 2022.
- » In the 2020 Vancouver Homeless Count, 23% of people counted were age 55 or older, and older residents have been making up an increasing share of the population counted.
  - » In 2020, 10% of people counted reported that they first experienced homelessness at age 55 or older. The health consequences of homelessness can be especially acute for older residents.
- » Further, there are a significant number of seniors living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SROs), many of them in inadequate conditions.

**Figure 6: Seniors as a Proportion of BC Housing Waitlist & Registry in Vancouver 2021/2022**



**Figure 7: Homeless Count Demographics by Age Group 2005- 2020**



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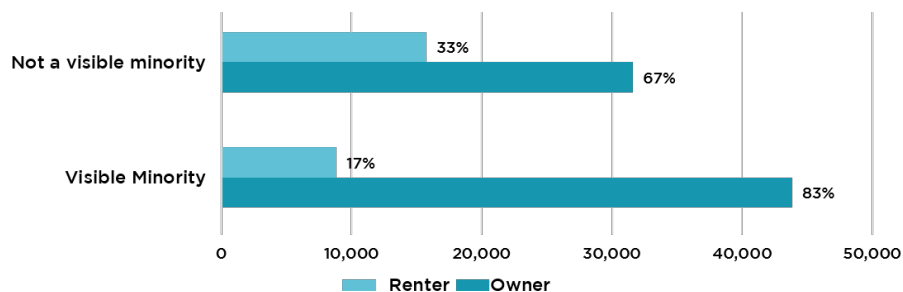
## Background and Trends

### IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

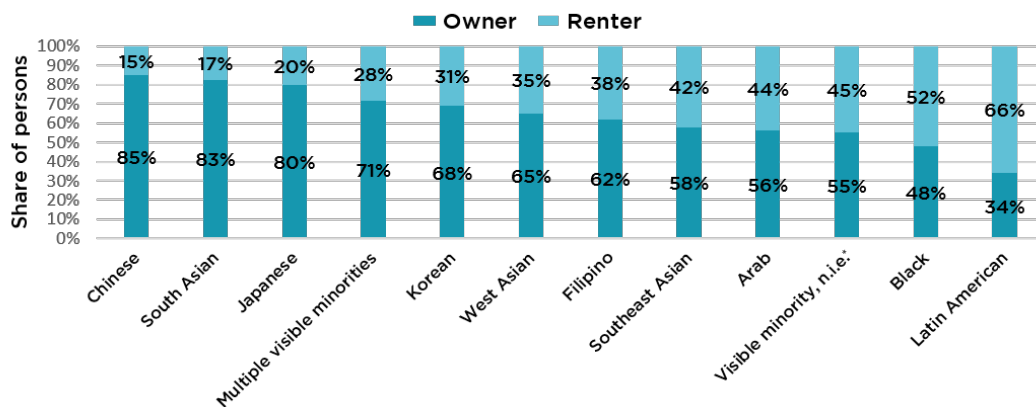
Vancouver's racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity are reflected across all age groups. Older persons in Vancouver come from a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and experiences.

- » Vancouver is home to a large and diverse Indigenous population, including many people considered to be Elders. While there is not a statistical definition of an Elder, the 2021 Census estimates about 2,900 people age 55 or older with Indigenous identity who are living in Vancouver. This estimate is only for the Urban Indigenous population living in Vancouver; it does not include the 225 Indigenous people age 55 or older who are living at Musqueam, or a much larger number of older persons and Elders living elsewhere who may be connected to communities, services, organizations, or supports in the city.
- » A majority of people of all age groups in Vancouver are identified with racialized (“visible minority”) groups, including 52% of seniors aged 65+.
- » About 17% of senior-led racialized households rent their home, compared to 33% of non-racialized households
- » There are a significant number of white senior-led households aged 65+, followed by Chinese, South Asian, and Filipino senior-led households.
- » The tenure of senior-led households differs by racial identity, with a significant proportion of Chinese and South Asian seniors owning their home, while Black and Latin American seniors are more likely to rent their homes.

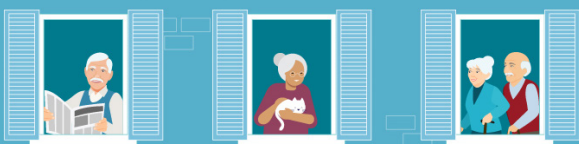
**Figure 8: Vancouver Seniors 65+ by Tenure and Visible Minority (2016)**



**Figure 9: Vancouver 65+ by Visible Minority and Tenure (2016)**



\*not included elsewhere



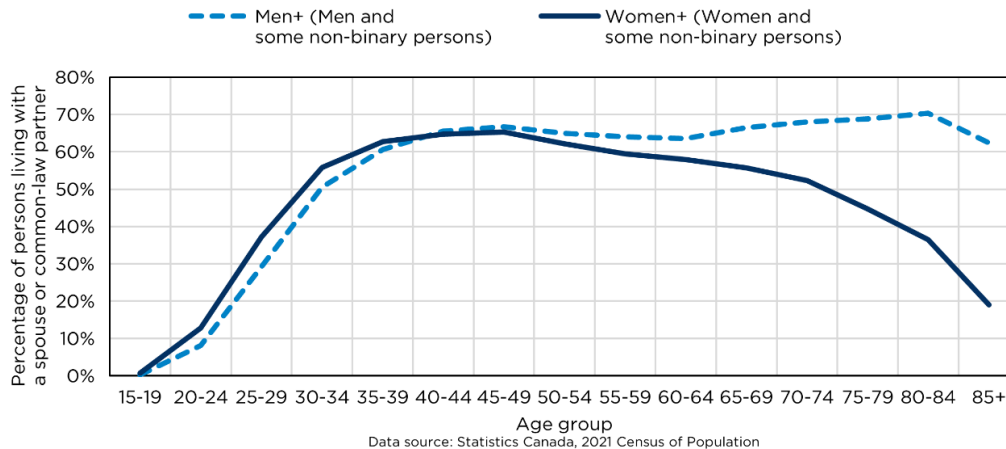
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### FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

- » Overall, 58% of Vancouver residents aged 55 or older live with a spouse or common-law partner.
  - » However, the percentage of women+ living with a partner decreases substantially in older age groups. Older women+ are more likely to have experienced separation or divorce, and much more likely to experience being widowed, compared to older men+. A corollary of this is that older women+ are more likely to live alone.
  - » Older residents living alone are much more likely to be renters than those living with others.
- » Across Metro Vancouver, 16% of children age 0-14 live with a grandparent. While most of these children also live with a parent, 0.4% of children—and 2.3% of Indigenous children—in Metro Vancouver live only with their grandparent(s).

**Figure 10: Vancouver Residents Living with a Partner by Age Group (2021)**



### GEOGRAPHY

- » Seniors and older adults live in neighbourhoods across Vancouver; however some areas have come to be dominated by older residents as they age in place.
- » If these areas are located in areas with less diversity in housing or access to services it can be challenging to meet the needs of aging residents. As shown in Figure 11, many lower-density areas of Vancouver have a substantial proportion of resident aged 55 or older.

**Figure 11: Geographic Concentration of 55+ Residents (2021)**

