

Langley City Housing Needs Report



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Prepared for: City of Langley

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Preface

In 2018, British Columbia's Local Government Act was amended to require local governments to prepare 'housing needs reports' every five years. Since Langley City is in the process of updating its Official Community Plan, it must now develop a housing needs report and consider its findings as part of that process. This is to help ensure updated housing policies and land use designations can best respond to the community's housing needs.

For the housing needs report to align with the requirements in the Local Government Act, the report must collect:

- statistical information about current and project population;
- statistical information about household income;
- information about significant economic sectors;
- information about currently available housing units and housing units that are anticipated to be available, including information about types of housing units; and
- any other prescribed information.

The housing needs report must be based on the information collected above and include:

- for each type of housing unit, the number of housing units required to meet current housing needs;
- for each type of housing unit, the number of housing units required to meet anticipated housing needs for at least the next 5 years; and
- any other prescribed information.

Housing needs reports are also required to identify areas or 'statements of need' that apply to each local government's specific housing context. Statements of need for the City of Langley are identified at the end of this document.

Once completed, Langley City's Council must receive by resolution the housing needs report at a meeting that is open to the public. Then, the housing needs report must be published on the City's website for it to be publicly and freely accessible.

Executive Summary

Over the last decade, Metro Vancouver and much of British Columbia's Lower Mainland have seen dramatic increases in the cost of living for residents. At the core of the issue are skyrocketing land values and housing costs. Affordability and housing are thus a significant part of a broader discussion about how Langley City will evolve over the next few decades. With work on an update to its Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw, and the creation of a Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan, it's an ideal moment to explore future housing needs and build consensus around what the community can do to address this challenge.

As a first step to complete this report, a significant amount of data collection and research was completed to gain an understanding of Langley City's existing context. Then, interviews were scheduled with housing organizations, community services, neighbouring local government, major institutions, and those in the development community. These interviews were supplemented by engagement held as part of Langley City's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw update. Together, they provide a full picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the housing system in Langley City. Finally, using population, household, and income projections into the future, housing needs in terms of unit cost and sizes were determined.

It is projected that by 2024, the following unit numbers will be required in Langley City to meet the need of its projected population:

2024 Units Required by Size

	Total Units Required in Langley City	Additional Supply Required from 2016 Baseline
0- 1 bedroom	3,365	+575
2 bedrooms	5,167	+442
3 bedrooms	2,784	+169
4 or more bedrooms	1,872	+167

In addition to these numbers, and according to this report's Statements of Need, it is suggested the City encourage the development of townhouse and/or rowhouse units to help fill a significant and crucial gap in Langley City's current housing market. Vulnerable demographic groups who will require particular attention to meet housing needs over the next 5 years and beyond include seniors, people with disability or limited mobility, single parent families, and youth. Housing that could help these groups include garden and basement suites, accessible housing units, co-ops, and rental options with 3+ bedrooms.

Finally, housing providers have noted that one of the largest barriers to supplying affordable housing units in Langley City is the cost of land. This means opportunities to build new housing projects are few and far between and in the future may rely heavily on creative partnerships between providers, senior levels of government, the City, and/or the private sector.

Introduction

A Growing City with Big Plans

With a built-out urban area of 10 km² and a growing population, Langley City is facing significant challenges to adequately house existing residents and those wanting to move to this attractive and well-connected community. As it plans for the Surrey-Langley SkyTrain rapid transit line along the Fraser Highway, a closer look at housing and demographics is required to ensure future housing policy serves local needs.

Langley City's future is guided by the Nexus of Community vision, adopted by Langley City Council in 2018. It describes a Langley City that has affordable and diverse housing, is highly walkable, is attractive to the present and future tech economy, and is environmentally sustainable. Building off this vision Langley City is currently updating its Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Bylaw, while creating a new Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan. These important planning documents will shape the community for years to come and it's imperative they reflect the current and future needs of residents.

As such, this is an ideal time to research, analyze, and assess the housing system in Langley City. Much of the work completed in this report will feed directly into the policy and regulation that will form the updated OCP, Zoning Bylaw, and Neighbourhood Plan. The new OCP, in part informed by the results of this housing needs report, will create numerous opportunities to meet Langley's housing challenges through new and innovative land uses and policies.

A Comprehensive Process

In June 2019, a Council workshop on housing and affordability was held to gain insights from the Mayor and Councilors on the important topic of housing and affordability in Langley. As part of this workshop, preliminary research and an explorative policy recommendations report were completed. This laid the foundation for a more robust Housing Needs Assessment and initial community engagement with residents. Housing Needs Reports require the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to paint a full picture of the housing system. All legislatively required data has been collected to inform this report and additional figures and tables have been created to better communicate current and future needs. Data sources are outlined in the Future Housing Needs section of the report. Neighbouring local governments, housing organizations, and local stakeholders were also consulted in the creation of this report. These include:

- City of Surrey
- Township of Langley
- Langley Community Services Society
- YWCA Fraser Gardens
- Stepping Stone Community Services Society
- Salvation Army (Gateway of Hope)
- Ishtar Women's Resource Society
- Encompass Support Services Society
- Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
- Fraser Health
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Concosts Developers

Several other local governments and stakeholder groups were contacted but did not return requests for comments for interviews. The Kwantlen First Nation was also contacted but did not respond. It is presumed requests went unanswered because of the prioritizing of essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 & Uncertainty in the Housing Market

While this report was being completed, the COVID-19 global pandemic was running its course and economic conditions were in a state of hiatus with many schools and businesses closed down, employees laid off, and travel at a standstill. Many long-held assumptions about land economics, the housing market, and social policy in BC's lower mainland are being questioned and their efficacy in a post-pandemic world is unclear. There is no obvious precedent for this type of event which has wrought significant loss in terms of lives and livelihoods. Therefore, the economic recovery and the impact on land and housing costs is at this moment uncertain.

The virus has revealed many inequities in the labour force and in the housing market. Low-income earners designated as essential employees have had to show up in high risk environments to keep our cities functioning and women, who make up a large part of the service sector, have been the most impacted by layoffs. Households in small units or substandard housing have struggled to work from home, keep children entertained, and deal with the much smaller geographic radius in which they can carry out daily activities. Those living in overcrowded homes, in precarious housing situations, or facing homelessness may not have the ability to properly quarantine or maintain social distancing. Many living in supportive housing may not have their own kitchen and must share this space with other tenants. Proximity and access to green and public space has become increasingly precious and highly valued to escape the close confines of small units.

All of these circumstances will force us to think about how we build housing and how we allocate open space in the future. It gives us the opportunity to build new forms of housing that are better suited for a world that needs to respond to crisis situations, whether the crisis is related to health, affordability or climate.

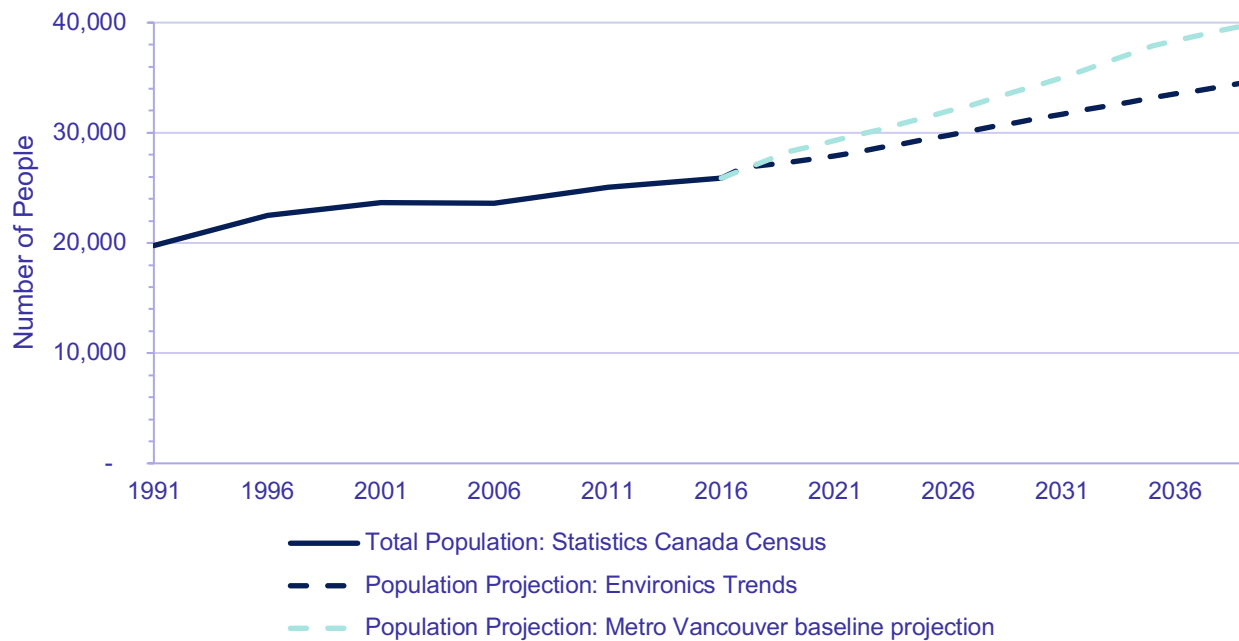


Langley City Profile

To understand housing needs, we first need to explore Langley City demographics today and in the future. This section also looks at current household and housing unit makeup, and dives into existing costs of housing. It paints a picture of the Langley City's housing market and lays the foundation for the work of projecting housing needs later on in this report.

Population & Growth

Total Population & Projected Population

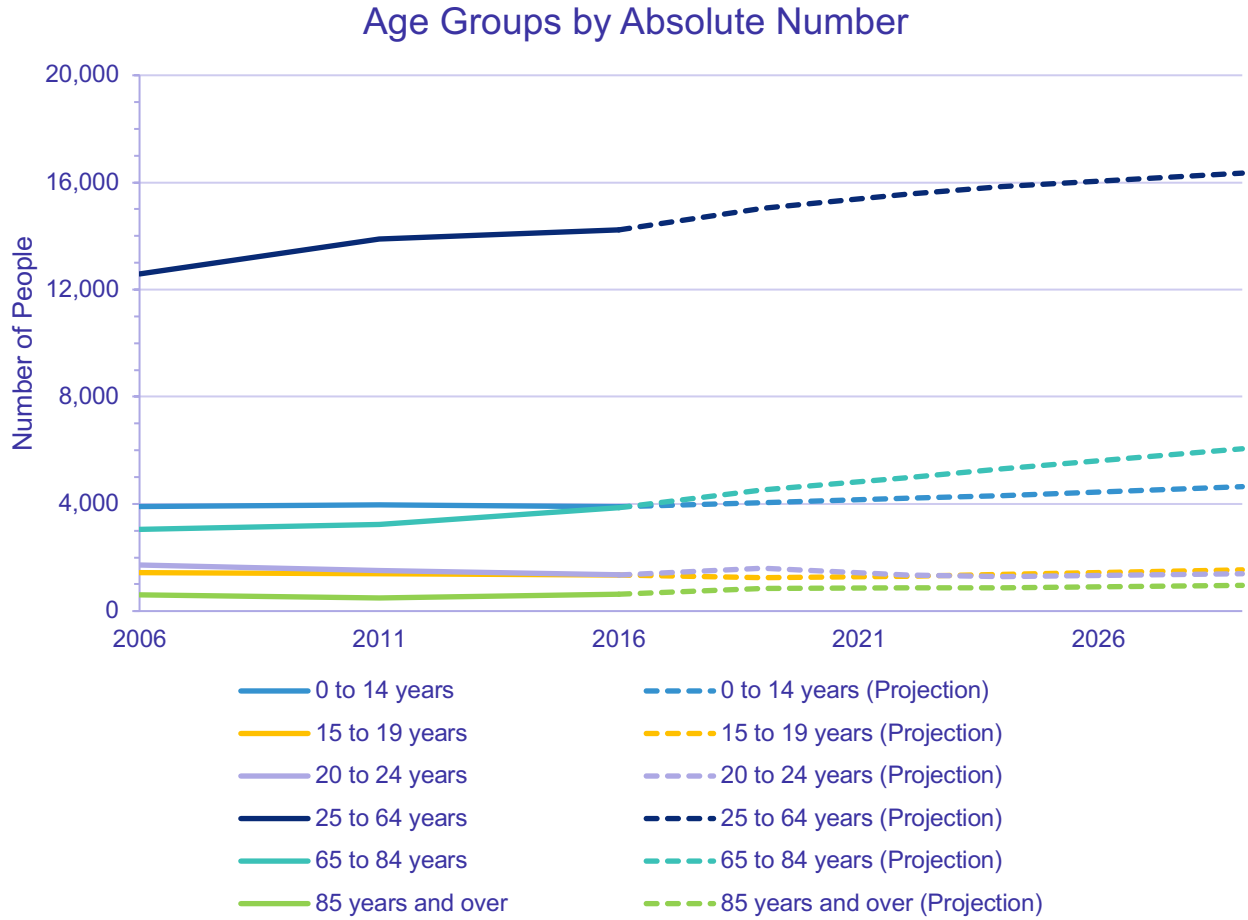


According to the 2016 Census, the City of Langley has a population of 25,888, a 3.2% growth from 2011. While steady growth has been apparent, the limited land base of the City has meant that population growth has generally lagged behind the larger, surrounding municipalities of the Township of Langley and the City of Surrey. This growth is not matching the growth projection in the current Official Community Plan, which projected a population of 28,085 for 2016.

The distribution of population growth has been focused in areas north of the Nicomekl River, and notably in the north-west quarter of the city. Higher density land use designations in the OCP have contributed to this condition. In contrast, designations for single detached housing forms south of the Nicomekl River, paired with smaller household sizes has led to a decline in population.

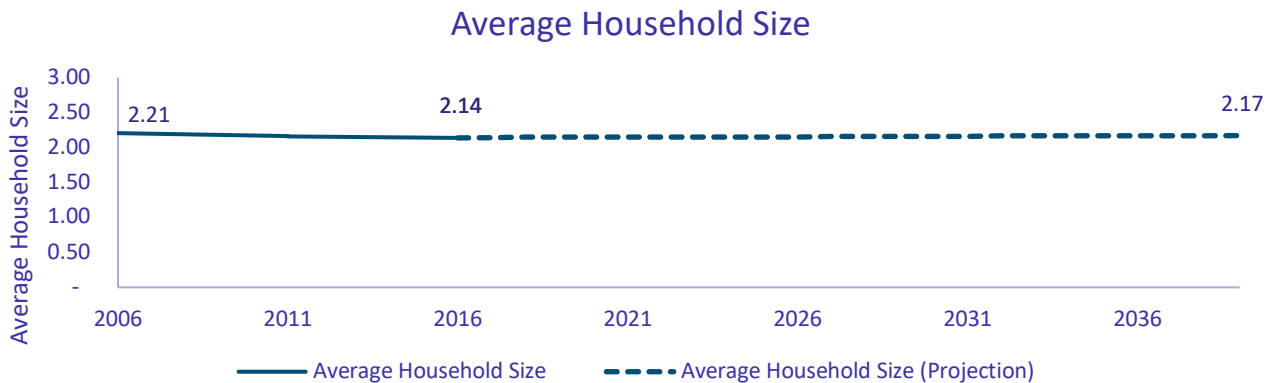
For consistency in the data being used to project incomes and thus housing needs into the future, the Environics Trends data was used.

Population Age



Langley City is home to many seniors. Approximately 19.2 % of the population is 65 years and over, which is several percentage points higher than the surrounding municipalities and the Metro Vancouver average. As a result, there are fewer residents in the working age population of 15-64 years, compared to its peers. The share of people aged 25-64 years old and seniors is expected to continue growing, while other age groups are projected to stay relatively stable.

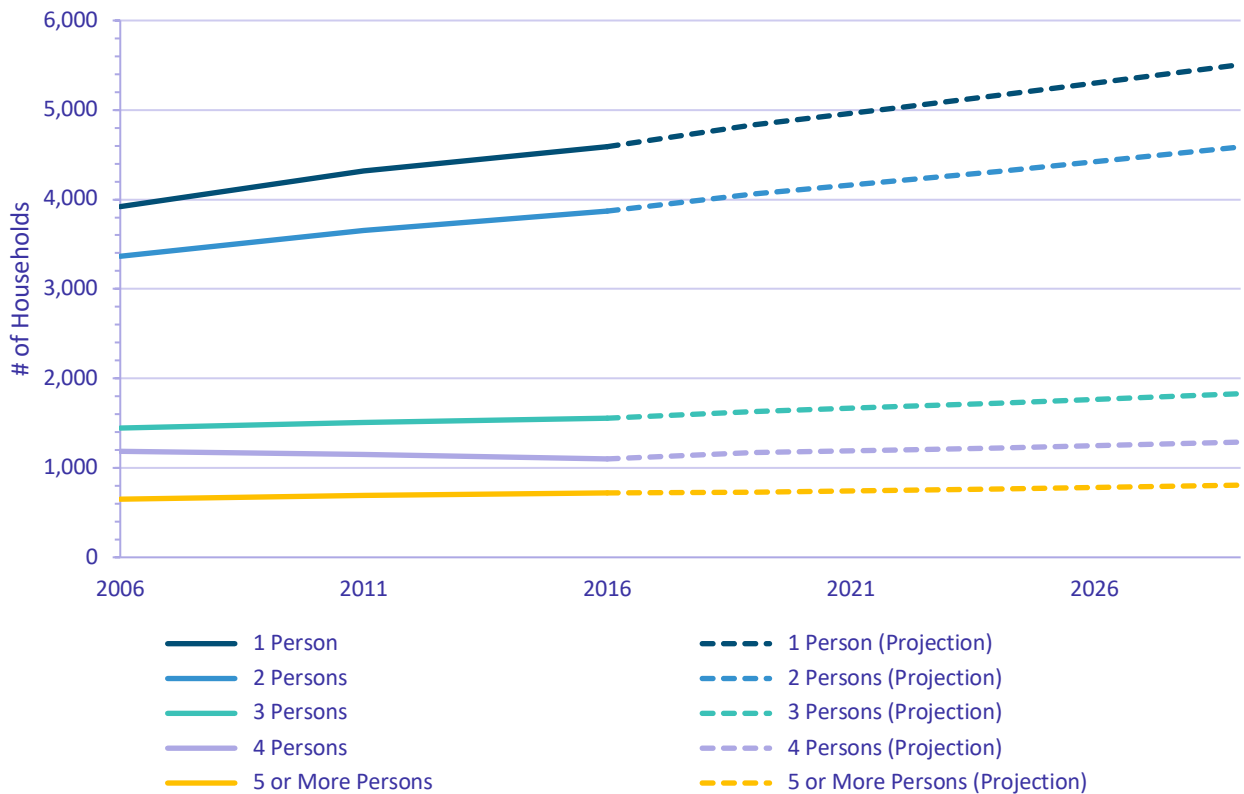
Household Size



From 1996-2016, average household size in Langley City has been decreasing, and is currently at 2.1 people per household (2016). The percentage of one-person households has been increasing, with the percentage of households with a couple (with or without children) has decreased, accounting for this household size change. Average household size is not projected to change significantly over the next couple decades. The total number of households as measured by the 2016 Census was 11,840 and is projected to have climbed to 12,427 in 2019.

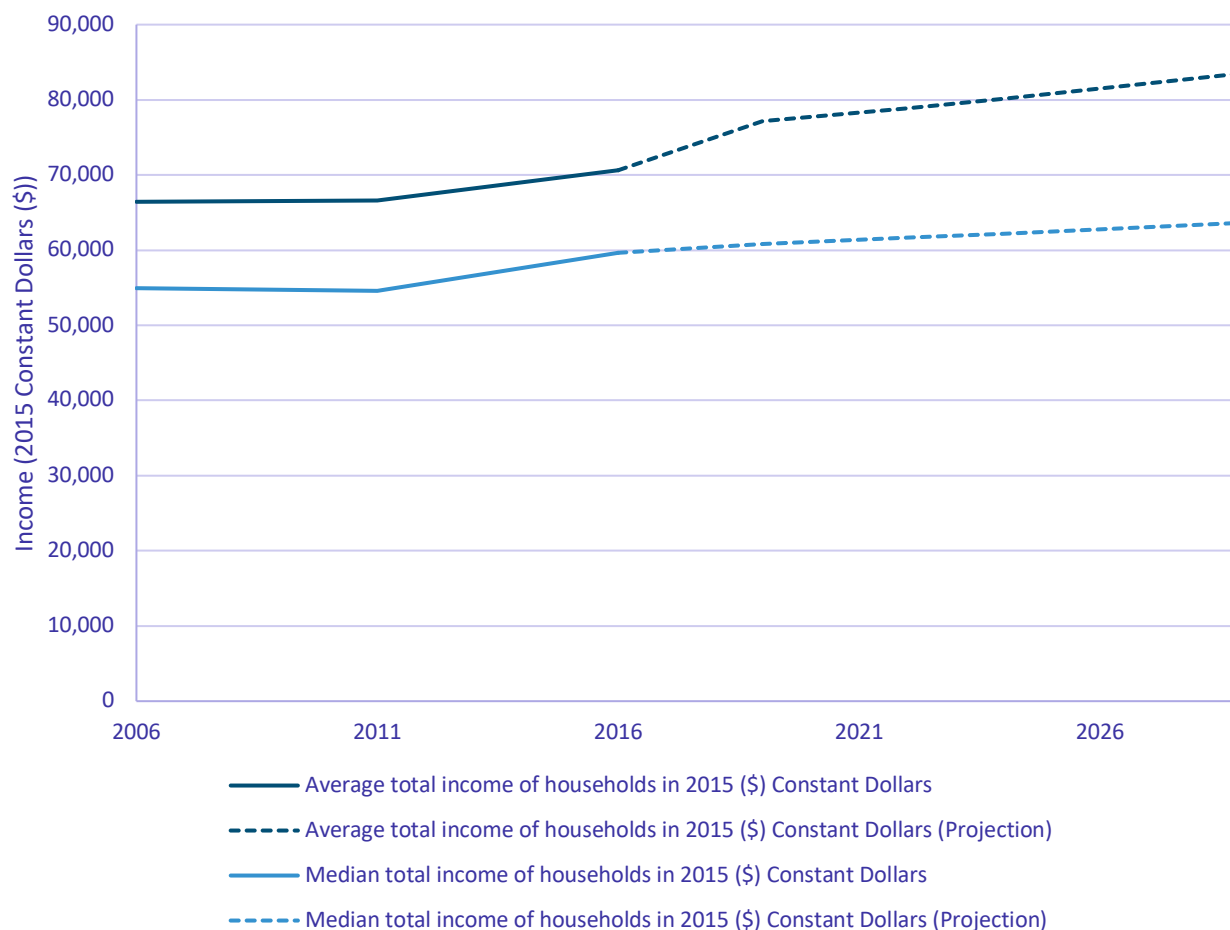
The most common household type is one-person households. The percentage of one-person households in Langley City in 2016 was 39%, far exceeding its peers (20% of households in the Township of Langley and the City of Surrey) and the region (29% of households across Metro Vancouver). The second most common household type in the City is couples without children, comprising 25% of households. This, however, is similar to Metro Vancouver, where couples without children comprise 27% of households. There are significantly fewer couples with children in the City (22% of households) compared to Metro Vancouver (33% of households).

Household Size



These two main household compositions (1 person and 2 persons) are projected to increase at a faster rate than other type of households. Factors that could be contributing to this include the lack of available land for new single detached homes, lack of family-sized units in multi-family residential buildings, and future growth that will have to be accommodated through multi-family residential housing units.

Average and Median Household Income



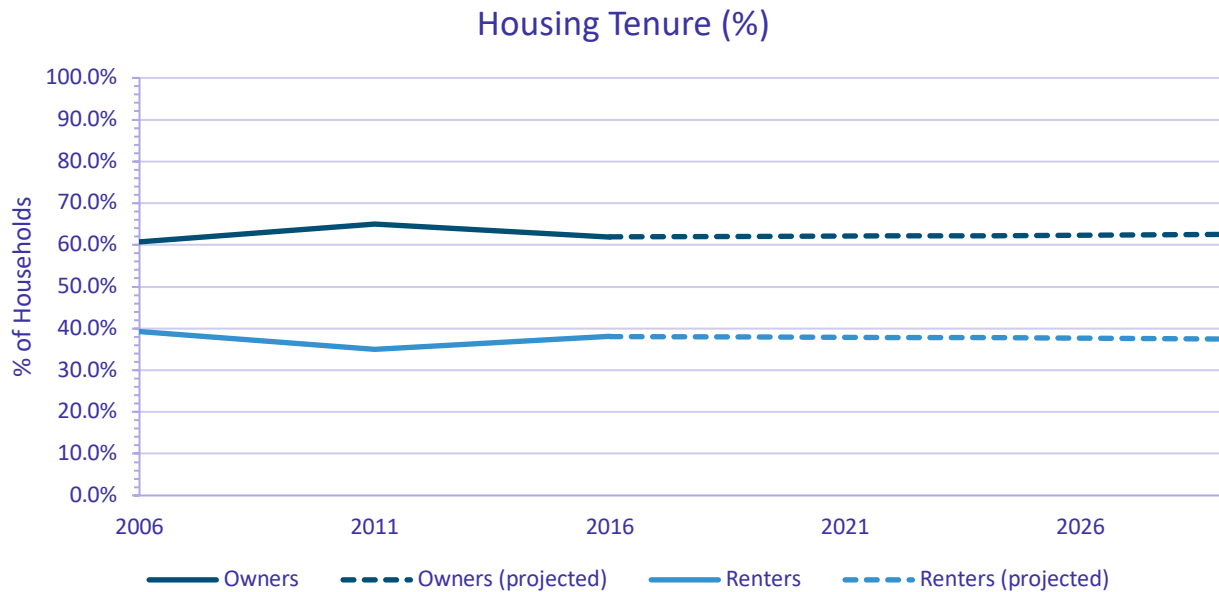
The median income across all households is \$59,645 (2015), which is lower than the median income across Metro Vancouver (\$72,662) and other South Fraser municipalities. Median household incomes have also declined relative to the City's peers. In 1995, median household incomes were 85% of the Metro Vancouver average. In 2015, this dropped to 82%. Smaller household sizes account for part but not all of this difference. The median income for renter households (\$38,380) is significantly lower than for owner households (\$73,676).

Langley City also has a higher proportion (17.3%) of its population with low incomes¹ compared to its peers - Township of Langley (9.7%) and Surrey (14.8%). Over one fifth of youth (17 and under) and seniors (65 and over) experience low incomes. While there are still a higher number of low incomes reported (14.4%) in the working age population compared to the Township of Langley (8.6%) and Surrey (13.6%), this is lower than the Metro Vancouver average of 15.8%.

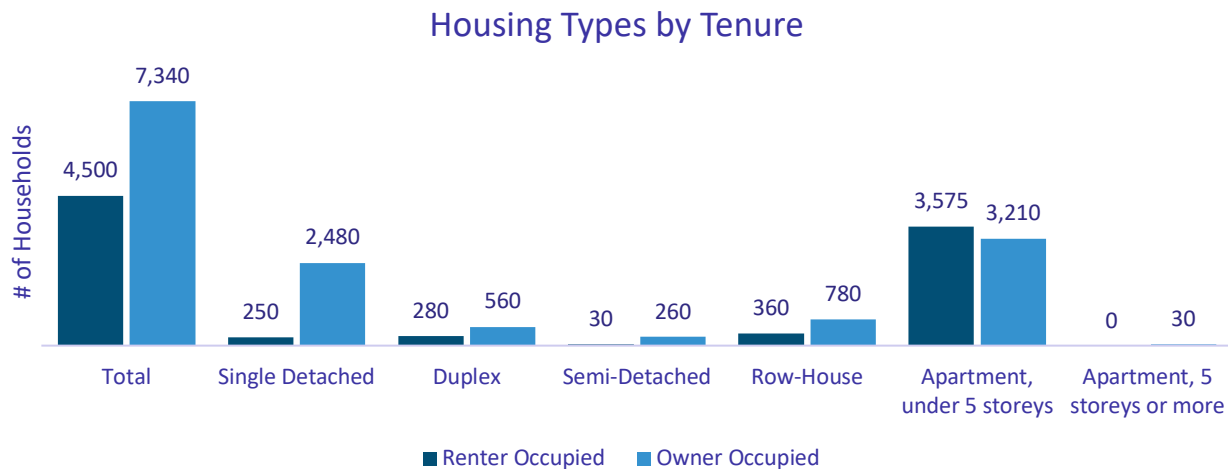
Nonetheless, both average and median household incomes are projected to increase over the next decade. If housing costs continue to rise across Metro Vancouver, as is projected, many will continue to seek more affordable ownership opportunities further afield from Vancouver into outlying communities like Langley City.

¹ Based on the Low-Income Measure, After Tax

Housing Tenure



In the City, 38% of households rent their homes, more than in the Township of Langley (17%) or the City of Surrey (29%), and slightly higher than Metro Vancouver (36%). The proportion of renters versus owners is not expected to change significantly over the next decade.

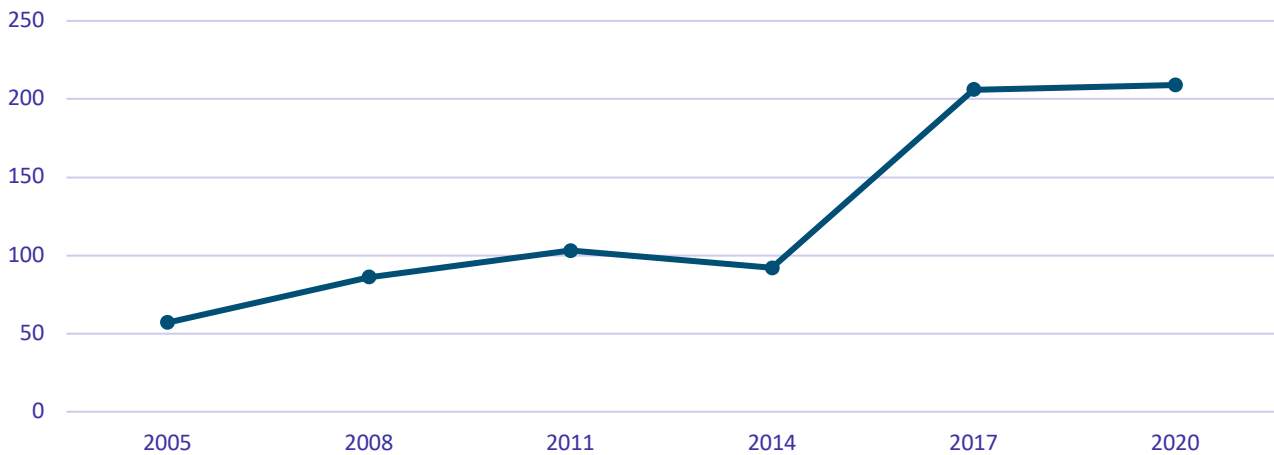


Renter households mostly live in apartments under five storeys (79%). Owner households typically live in apartments under five storeys (44%) or in single detached houses (33%). In 2016, there was a total of 11,840 households in Langley City.

Langley City currently does not regulate short-term rentals and some properties are undoubtedly used as such through companies like Airbnb. A cursory scan of Airbnb listings for various months and dates showed under 10 available units, some of which were private rooms within an occupied unit. Until Langley City becomes a more significant tourist destination, short-term rental units are not expected to have an impact on its rental housing stock.

Homelessness Count

Homelessness Count (City & Township)

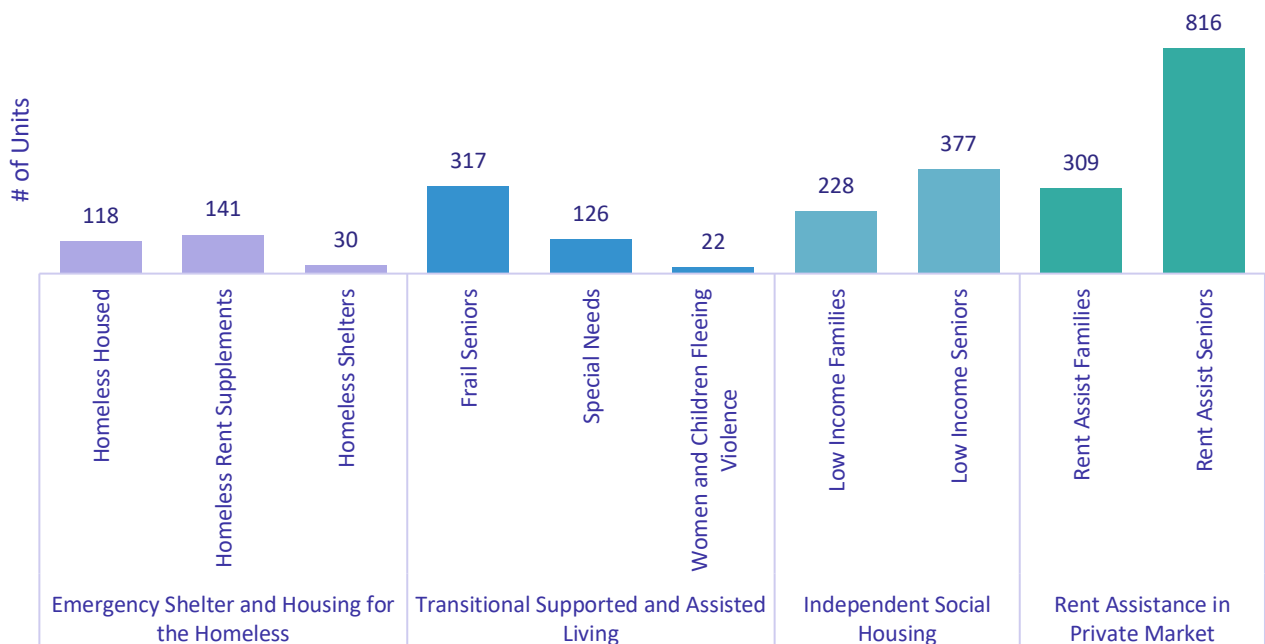


The Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count is completed every three years and seeks to obtain a reliable estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness. It is a moment-in-time survey that takes place at nighttime and for the purpose of the count it does not differentiate between the two Langleys. A 2020 count was performed on March 3-4th just before major economic impacts from COVID-19 were felt around the region.

Homelessness in the City and Township of Langley has been on the rise. Between 2014 and 2017, the number of people experiencing homelessness doubled according to these figures, and from 2017 to 2020 numbers appeared to have plateaued. However, given the timing of the count, it is unclear how big of an impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on local homelessness.

Subsidized Units

Subsidized Units in Langley City and Township (2019)



BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department keeps a tally of all subsidized housing units in the Metro Vancouver Region. In 2019, it combined the numbers between the City and Township, showing a total of 2484 units. In 2018, there were a total of 801 subsidized units exclusively located in Langley City. Those units were spread across:

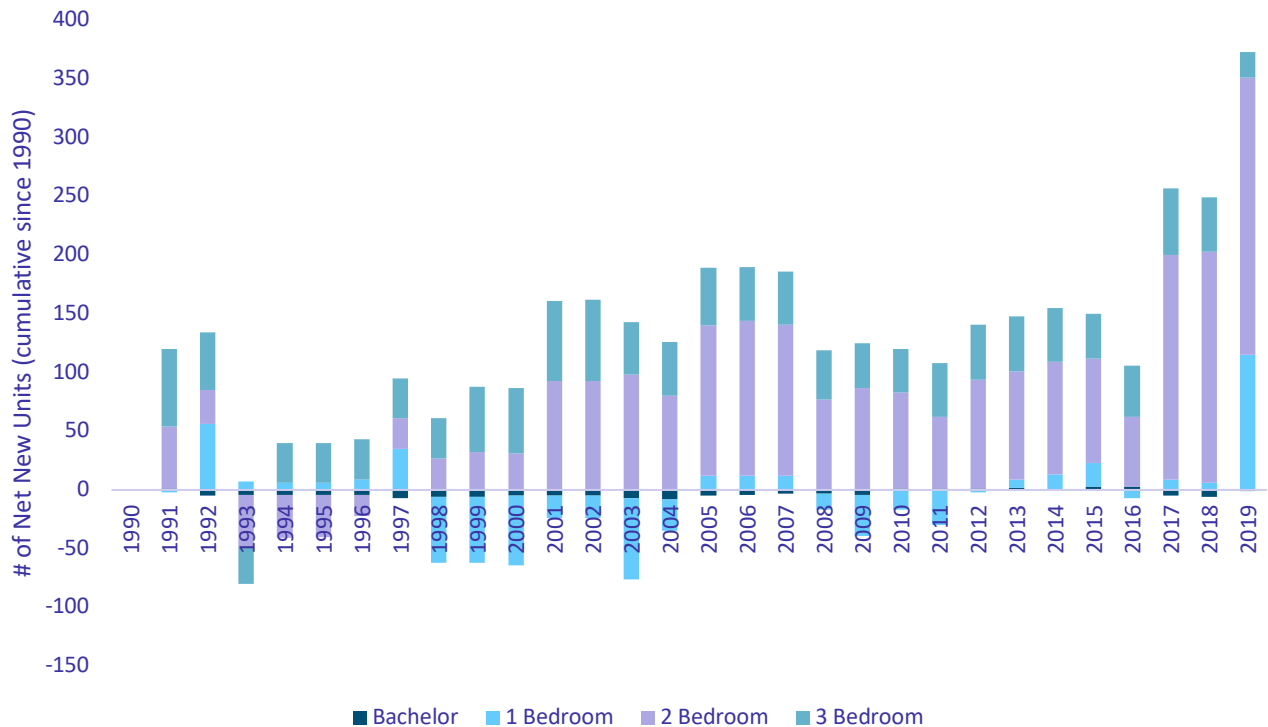
- Emergency Shelters and Housing for the Homeless (200 units);
- Transitional Supported and Assisted Living (235 units); and,
- Independent Social Housing (366 units).

The number of units within the private market but accommodating households with rent assistance in 2018 for Langley City was unknown.

Rental Housing

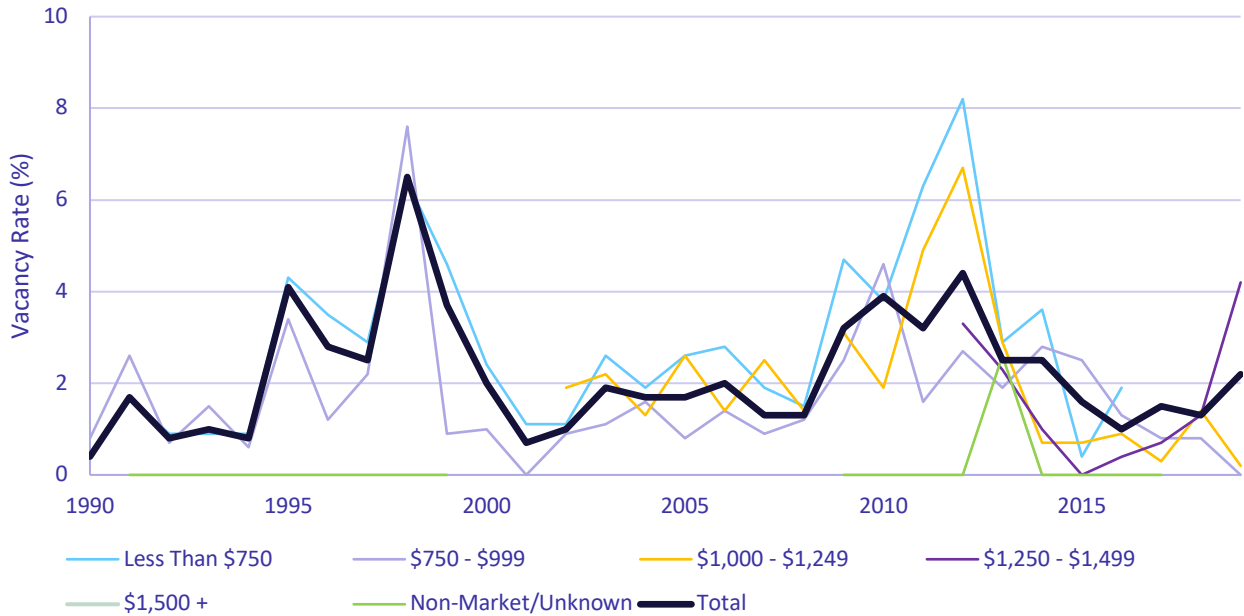
The rental market is an important indicator of a community's housing system. The next graphics depict trends and information in relation to Langley City's rental housing stock.

Net New Rental Units - Cumulative since 1990



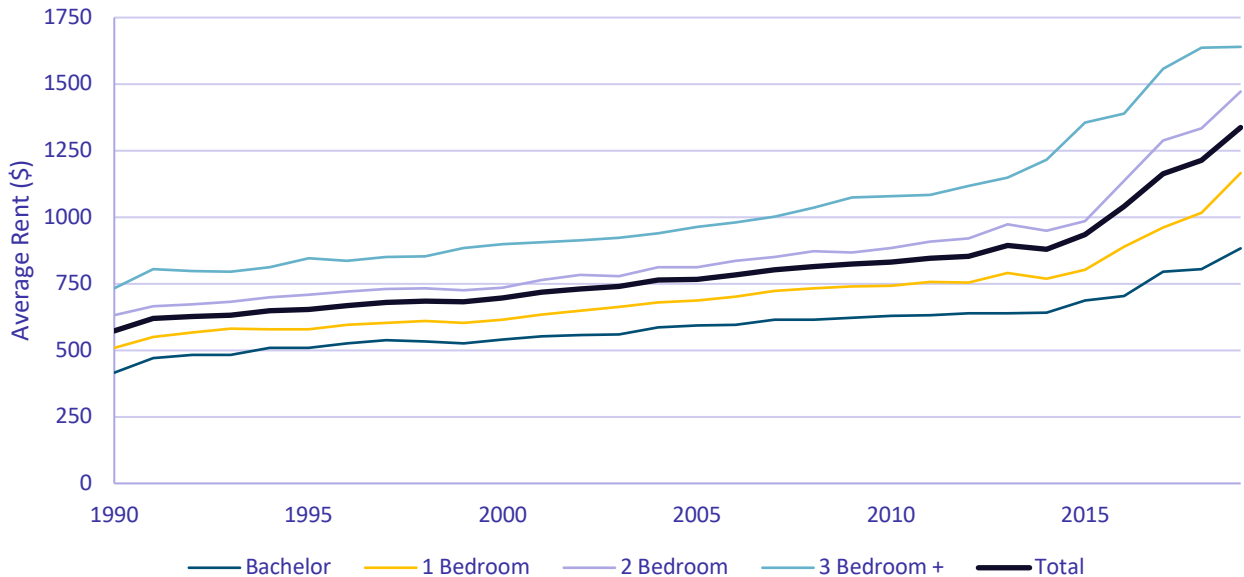
Many communities across Canada saw very low numbers of new rental units being built throughout the 1990s and Langley City was not immune. Construction picked up in the 2000s but dropped again in line with the 2008 economic downturn. Recently, Langley City has witnessed a major surge in new rental units coming onto market. Two bedroom units have been the most popular, often at the loss of one bedroom units. However, in 2019 and in a major shift, a significant portion of new rental units built were one bedroom units.

Vacancy Rates by Rent Range



Vacancy rates in the City have reached highs of about 6% in the late 1990s, but have otherwise mostly stayed between 2% and 4% putting pressure on the rental market and increasing rental prices.

Average Rent by Unit Size

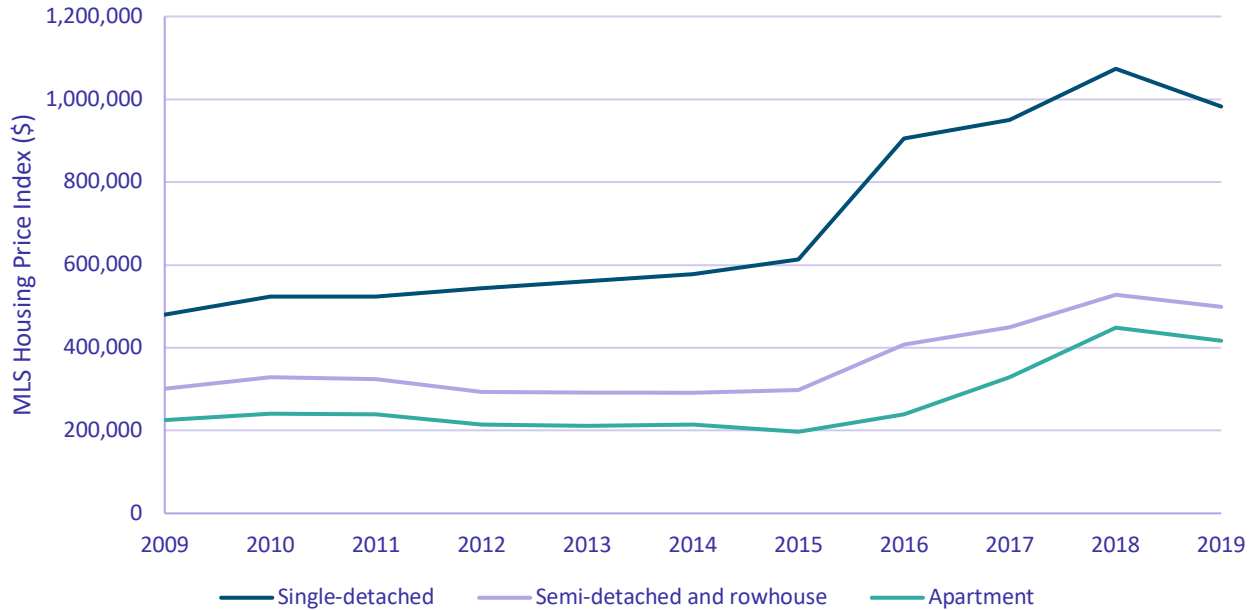


Average rent in Langley City has increased gradually since 1990 with a much steeper incline detected once the market had recovered from the 2008 economic recession. This increase in rent has been felt across all unit types. Average rents increased by 60.7% between 2010 and 2019. This compares with an average increase of household incomes of 15.9% during the same period.

Ownership Housing

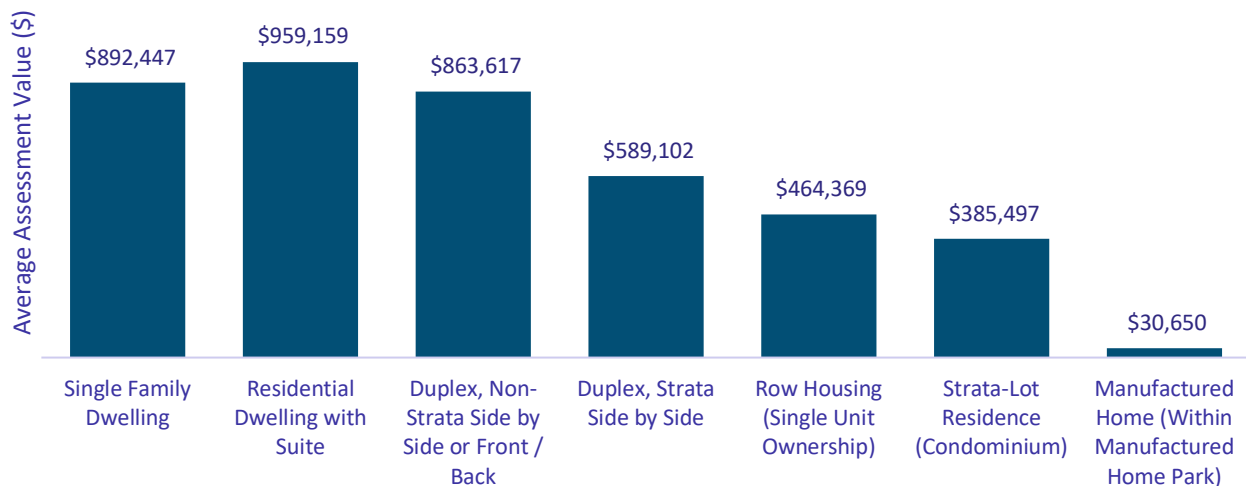
In relation to housing in the ownership market, the Housing Price Index (as defined on page 25 of this report) has increased significantly since 2015 as well. The five-year increase (2013-2018) was 92% for single-detached houses (74% in Greater Vancouver), 81% for semi-detached and rowhouses (88% in Greater Vancouver), and 112% for apartments (92% in Greater Vancouver).

Housing Price Index (includes Langley Township)



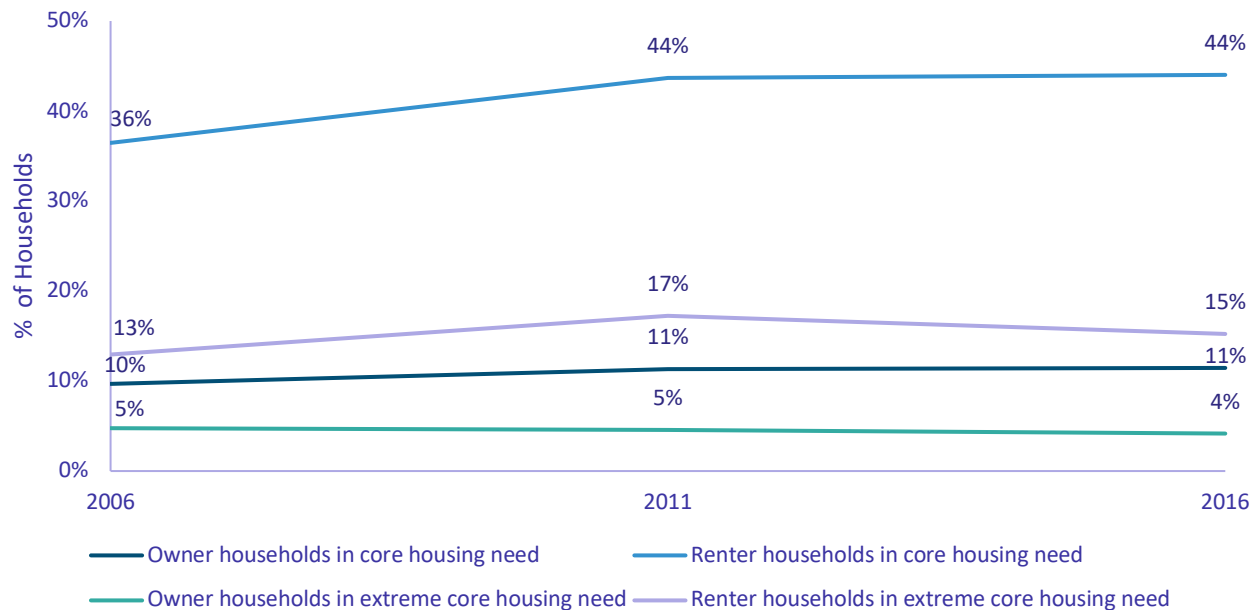
In 2019, prices dipped across all housing types. This is likely a reflection of several provincial and federal policies and initiatives that have sought to temper the dramatic increases in housing costs since 2015.

Average Ownership Costs by Type



Core Housing Need

Core Housing Need & Extreme Core Housing Need



A household is said to be in 'core housing need' if its 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 is acceptable (i.e. meets all three housing standards).

- 'Adequate housing' does not require any major repairs;
- 'Affordable housing' has shelter costs equal to less than 30% of total before-tax household income; and
- 'Suitable housing' has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard requirements².

'Extreme core housing need' has the same standards, but a household would have to spend 50% or more of its total before-tax income on shelter costs for housing that is acceptable.

Renter households in the city are much more likely to be struggling to afford shelter costs than owner households. In 2016, almost half (46.7%) of renter households are paying over 30% of their gross income before tax on shelter costs (standard CMHC definition of affordability), higher than adjacent municipalities and slightly higher than across Metro Vancouver (43.5%). A significant number (15.3%) of renter households were in extreme core housing need. This is the third highest in the region, behind just West Vancouver and White Rock.

The rate of owner households paying over 30% of their income on shelter is much lower - 21.5%. This is lower than the Metro Vancouver average (25.4% of households). The household types struggling the most on shelter costs are single-person households (14.7% are in extreme core need) and lone-parent families (11.6%).

² Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements. Enough bedrooms based on NOS requirements means one bedroom for: each cohabiting adult couple; unattached household member 18 years of age and over; same-sex pair of children under age 18; and additional boy or girl in the family, unless there are two opposite sex children under 5 years of age, in which case they are expected to share a bedroom. A household of one individual can occupy a bachelor unit (i.e. a unit with no bedroom). Definition from: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Housing in Canada Online: Definitions of Variables. Available from: https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwellings

Community Input

A significant component of the housing needs analysis is informed by engagement with residents, community stakeholders, housing organizations, and relevant government bodies. The following pages outline the engagement activities that were to help qualify Langley City's housing needs. The activities include:

- Community pop-ups
- Online survey
- Housing Needs Interviews

Community Pop-ups & Online Survey

Key takeaways from community engagement activities held through the summer of 2019 and early 2020 for Langley City's OCP & Zoning Bylaw update are as follows:

Transit-oriented development

Participants overwhelmingly agree with placing the highest densities, tallest buildings, and greatest mix of uses around SkyTrain stations. Developers currently struggle with building these types due to parking requirements, market conditions, and soil conditions.

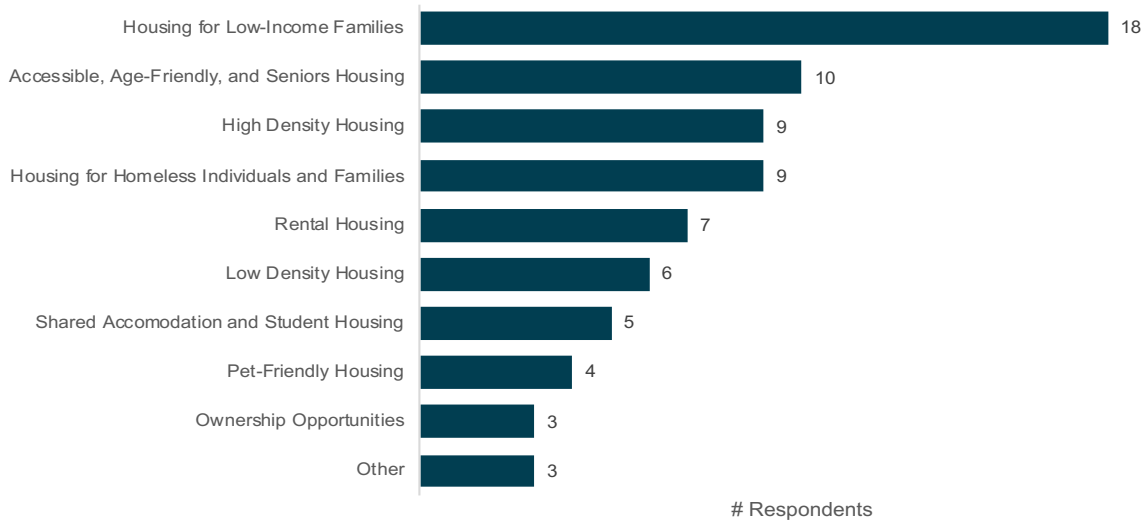
Gentle density south of the Nicomekl

Participants agree with allowing townhomes along future frequent transit routes (200 St. and 208 St.) south of the Nicomekl River. Developers point to the need for higher density along these routes to support neighbourhood commercial nodes and car-lite lifestyles. The majority of participants also supported gentle infill housing forms like secondary accessory units (garden suites, coach homes), and smaller single-detached lots in areas south of the Nicomekl River.

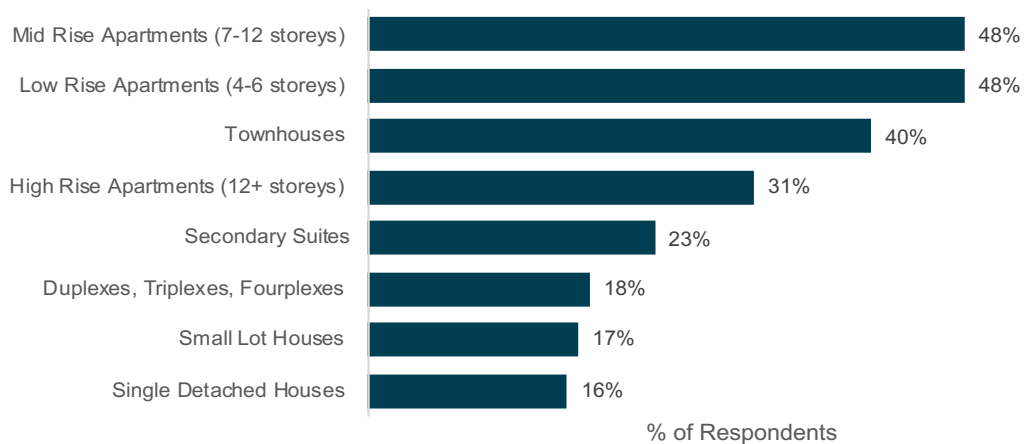
Provide affordable housing

Affordable housing for low-income residents and seniors is important to many participants. For community groups, affordable housing is the biggest challenge they see, and they are concerned about displacement of low-income residents and other marginalized groups during redevelopment.

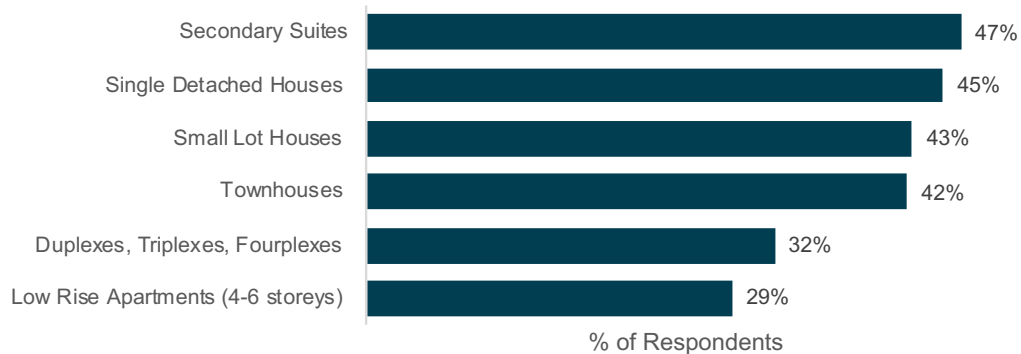
At community pop-ups, participants were asked: "In Langley City's future, what kind of housing are we living in?" The responses were categorized and are displayed on the following page.



In the online survey, we asked participants what types of housing forms should be prioritized north of the Nicomekl River and around future SkyTrain stations. Participants could select up to three housing forms. The results from 213 respondents are shown below. The two top housing forms, with 48% of participants prioritizing each, were mid rise apartments (7-12 storeys) and low rise apartments (4-6 storeys).

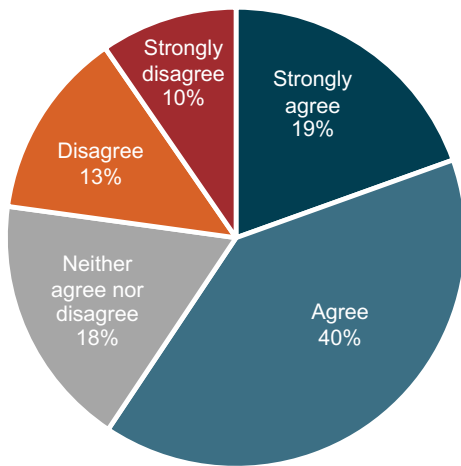


We also asked participants what types of housing forms should be prioritized south of the Nicomekl River. Participants could select up to three housing forms. The results from 213 respondents are shown below. The two top housing forms were secondary suites (47% of participants prioritized) and single detached housing (45% of participants prioritized).

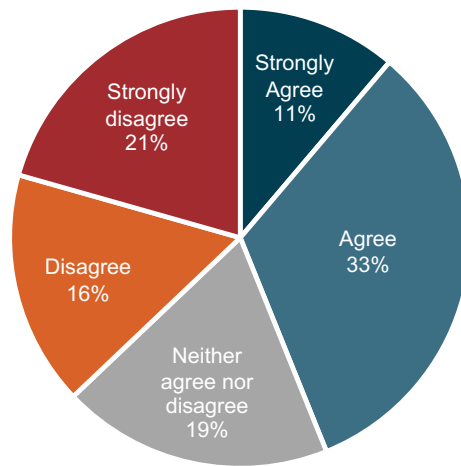


The online survey also revealed significant support for new “missing middle” forms of housing (i.e. townhomes, du-tri-fourplexes, secondary suites) and smaller lot sizes south of the Nicomekl River. We asked participants “How much do you agree with allowing townhomes along future Rapid Bus routes like 200 and 208 Streets?” and “How much do you agree with allowing townhomes in more areas south of the Nicomekl River, and not just along future Rapid Bus Routes like 200 and 208 Streets?”. With 394 respondents, the former gathered 59% support while the latter was also popular with 44%.

How much do you agree with allowing townhomes along future Rapid Bus routes like 200 and 208 Streets?

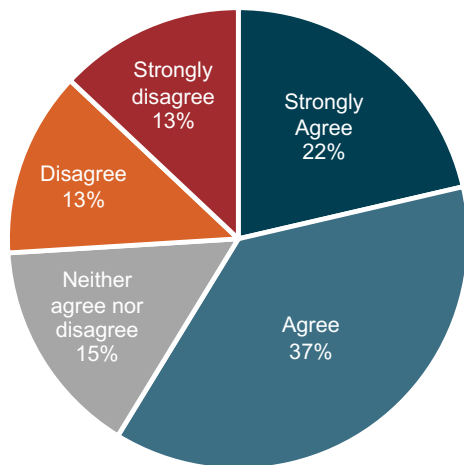


How much do you agree with allowing townhomes in more areas south of the Nicomekl River, and not just along future Rapid Bus Routes like 200 and 208 Streets?

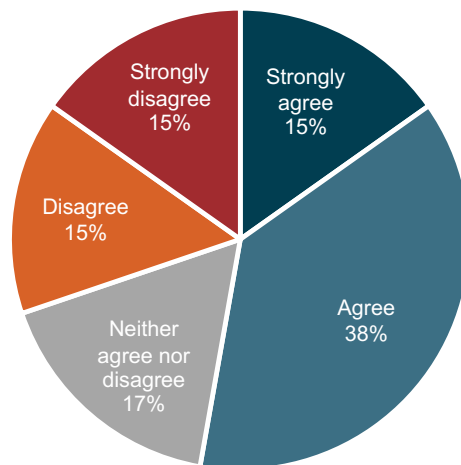


Support was also significant for gentle infill housing forms (59%) and smaller lot subdivision (53%).

How much do you agree with allowing gentle infill housing forms like secondary accessory units (garden suites, coach homes) south of the Nicomekl River?



How much do you agree with allowing smaller single family lot sizes south of the Nicomekl River?



The most common comment related to housing in the online survey was to “allow for a greater variety of housing types”. While these questions were more oriented towards land use and urban form they do give excellent insights into the general public’s appetite for new housing in neighbourhoods across the city.

Stakeholder Interviews

Between March 23rd and April 10th, MODUS conducted 10 stakeholder interviews with representatives from various housing organizations, public agencies, businesses and institutions. Through these interviews, we gathered valuable insight on the key challenges and opportunities related to housing in the City of Langley. Stakeholders included:

- Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
- Fraser Health
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Langley Community Services Society
- YWCA Fraser Gardens
- Stepping Stone Community Services Society
- Salvation Army (Gateway of Hope)
- Ishtar Women’s Resource Society
- Encompass Support Services Society
- Concosts Developers

Challenges with the local housing system

People are remaining in supportive housing longer than in the past.

Families and individuals are generally staying longer in housing services than in previous years. There is less turnover and thus less capacity for new people to come in. This results in longer waitlists than usual. Increased cost of rent was often cited as an important barrier to transitioning out of supportive or transitional housing.

There is difficulty with finding affordable and quality housing, especially for lower income households.

This means building housing that is accessible to all income groups, age levels and family sizes in good condition and in a safe location with access to transit and greenspace or public space. Cheaper accommodations are occasionally unsafe or inappropriate for the needs of vulnerable individuals. Energy efficient housing is also not typically accessible to those looking for affordable housing but is proven to have a large impact on environmental and individual health. Sub-standard housing is linked to a multitude of physical and mental illnesses while healthy housing can foster general improvement in quality of life³.

Housing issues are systemically tied to social challenges including mental health, substance abuse and homelessness.

Although many organizations provide a combination of social and housing services to address these complex challenges, these cases are often much harder to support as they take additional resources and staffing. Organizations are noticing people attached to formal services who are still homeless despite the added support. Additionally, successful social work often requires people to have an address so workers can follow-up with treatment. Data collected across Fraser Valley found 110 unique cases of individuals experiencing homelessness that came through Langley Health Services. This study also showed that the current housing

3 Krieger, J. and Higgins, D.L. (2002). Housing and Health: Time Again for Public Health Action. *American Journal of Public Health*. 92(5): 758–768.

stock is not sufficient to address these cases. If people are actively using drugs and are not able to make lifestyle changes, then it is much harder to house and support them.

There are not many supports for youth (aged 12-25) in the housing market.

In the City, there is no private market housing that is legal for youth to rent and that give youth a comfortable place to stay. Youth feel that they are not valued and are often placed in at-risk housing environments (i.e. shared accommodation with people they don't know, basement suites)

Tenancy protection will ensure success of future housing amidst rise in development.

The City needs protections for existing tenants when redevelopment occurs in order to reduce the impact of renovations and demovictions. This particularly affects a large portion of the population that are seniors in Langley living in older units.

Successes with the local housing system

Housing organizations are very well coordinated and engaged with each other.

The City of Langley is a close-knit community that enables organizations to work collaboratively with other service providers, government agencies and the private sector to share resources and stay engaged on community needs.

Implementation of the BCBC Adaptable Housing standard has seen success

By asking for a minimum of 5% of units in new apartment buildings to be built to the BCBC Adaptable Housing standard, Langley City has seen success in developing more accessible housing units for people with disabilities or limited mobility.

Supportive and affordable housing is proven to have a huge impact in the community.

Overall, there has been an increase in the number of rental units being built. Stepping Stone, for example, is working with many people who will never be homeowners and observe that increasing the rental housing stock in the community is important. In the City of Langley, many of these rental units are older apartment buildings that the City has maintained through a policy that prevents strata conversion when the vacancy rate is below 4%. The City helps prevent apartment redevelopment by designating large amounts of single detached housing land available for multi-unit housing forms. This reduces pressure on older and more affordable apartments.

The City has a relatively fast development application processing time.

This reduces the carrying costs for developers, allowing them to bring product to the market quicker and therefore at a lower cost. Those savings can also mean more affordable housing for potential buyers.

Langley now has a rent bank.

Sources Community Resource Centres, now offers a rent bank in the form of a loan people can take out and pay back in two years (for fixing a car, medical expenses, etc.) so they don't lose their housing because they had to spend money on other necessary expenses.

“A starter one-bedroom in the city is \$1000 or more. If people are on income assistance, they have to use their full income assistance cheque plus their child benefit to pay for that bedroom. This does not leave enough money for other things like food, transportation, etc.”

Gaps in existing housing stock

Secured affordable rental stock

Affordable purpose-built rental housing is challenging to get built. Although there may be newer rental housing, it is not guaranteed to be affordable and/or rates may still be out of reach for people on benefits or with lower incomes. The lack of affordable rental supply makes it challenging to stabilize people struggling to get into the private market. This also affects students who, in order to make enough money for rent, need to find a job in addition to schoolwork which affects physical and mental wellbeing.

The Township of Langley also acknowledged there is very little rental stock and next to no below-market housing supply being built in its community which, as part of an interconnected region, is likely having an impact on addressing affordability issues in Langley City as well.

“There is now a growing population of the ‘working poor’ as well. They are not our clients, but they will never afford a house or a condo. There needs to be housing for everyone. This is facing the younger generation especially. We want a diverse community with opportunities for all”

Co-op housing

Particularly for housing single women with families, co-op housing can provide a sense of community and opportunity for shared meal cooking, child-care and social interaction. There is currently no co-op housing in the City of Langley.

Family housing

There is a large gap in housing suitable for larger families (with 3+ children). The City of Langley currently does not have family-sized subsidized apartment housing (3+ bedrooms) which often requires larger families to rent out entire single detached homes in the private market.

Mixed income communities

Crucial to the housing challenge is distributing social and affordable housing across neighbourhoods, rather than focusing it in one area. This results in stronger social and community cohesion. The establishment of Creek Stone in Langley is a great example of how to facilitate mixed income communities. It is operated by Stepping Stone and has 49 units of supportive housing for people who are experiencing homelessness. This project was a collaboration between Stepping Stone, Fraser Health, BC Housing and the municipality.

“Social and below income housing is great but if it’s congregated in one space, you’re increasing the polarization between community groups and issues like stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination are made worse by that environment.”

Pet-friendly housing

None of the subsidized housing in the City of Langley currently allows pets. Pets are important for families and seniors and address many social isolation issues. Ishtar's house in Aldergrove is the only transition house locally that allows pets while the next pet-friendly transition house is in North Vancouver. This is also an issue for single women and families.

Single bed units for youth

For youth, single bedroom apartments are preferred over a shared basement suite. Youth are typically placed outside of Langley- in Clayton Heights (paying \$600-900 a month) because of the lack of single bedroom units that youth are legally able to rent on their own in the City.

Supportive housing

People who have fallen into difficult times can find it challenging to stabilize on their own especially if there is a lack of resources around them. Supportive housing can help with that.

The Township of Langley supplied 49 units for those that are harder to house or that the Salvation Army has been sheltering. Although this provided much needed supportive housing stock, the organization only saw a brief decline in client numbers before filling back up to capacity.

Short-term housing

This is relevant to students pursuing certification renewals and temporary staff at KPU who require a 3-6 month lease opportunity.

Underserved populations

Many stakeholders expressed that people with mental health and substance abuse issues are the hardest to help. Organizations typically offer services that fall outside of their mandate because clients are on a wait list for programs and they must offer support internally. If there is substance abuse involved, people cannot be housed with assisted living programs, which makes it very difficult to find appropriate housing for them.

Most organizations expressed that clients who they are unable to serve either do not fit within their mandate or are on the waitlist- although most stretch their mandate in order to accommodate them.

The populations most underserved as noted by stakeholders were, in no particular order:

- Seniors
- Indigenous people and families
- Older single women
- Women with large families (4+)
- Increasing number of people who have never been homeless
- Youth who have aged out the foster care system
- People with precarious legal status (do not qualify for subsidized housing without sponsorship, appropriate visas, etc.)
- People with mental health issues
- People who are active in substance abuse

Stakeholder needs

Cost of land

The cost of land to develop supportive and affordable housing is the main barrier for most if not all of housing providers.

Public-private (or public-not for profit) partnerships

Housing organizations expressed interest in building on the collaborative relationship with the City to seek out opportunities for unique housing developments. For example, in Vancouver, YWCA housing was built over a library and one over a fire hall. Specifically, for KPU, the best solution would include mixed-use buildings with shared civic/community function and a housing component, close to campus.

In 2019, the Township of Langley approved a new 82-unit affordable housing project for low-moderate income families and seniors in the Willoughby area. This was a partnership between the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church who provided the land, the Province who provided capital funding and financing, and the Township who waived development cost charges.

Supportive zoning

More permissive zoning regulations could help build more affordable or supportive types of housing. However, the Langley Chamber of Commerce expressed that additional residential land should not be at the expense of existing industrial/commercial land. This is important for the economy and job supply for the greater region, not only Langley. The developer community expressed a need for some avenue to entertain development applications that consider additional density or land use changes that are in line with the OCP's vision and help achieve what is identified in housing needs reports like this one.

Limited resources

Although organizations are well coordinated and often share resources, many expressed a limit to what they are able to do given their current funding, staffing capacity, access to social services support, housing supply, etc.

Coordination between organizations

Overall, housing organizations in the City of Langley are extremely well coordinated and supportive of each other. Many emphasized the uniqueness of Langley for facilitating this kind of collaboration and partnership between service providers. Strong coordination makes it possible for organizations to act quickly and efficiently to share resources and address client needs.

“Langley is unique in that organizations are super supportive and not competitive. We usually end up stretching our mandate because of that support and willingness to help other agencies out because they know it goes both ways”

Some stakeholders suggested that a central intake service would strengthen the collaboration between organizations and make the system more efficient, giving clients one central place to go to access help faster.

Encompass expressed a need for better coordination between the City and youth housing organizations. In comparison to the Township of Langley, the City does not currently have a representative liaison for issues specific to youth, although city staff were praised for, nonetheless, working in that capacity.

Financial stability

Although funding is limited for most organizations, most said they feel financially secure and resilient to change. Many receive funding from BC Housing, BC Ministry of Housing, Fraser Health and private donations.

Rent or housing subsidies are therefore determined by the funding agencies and vary in rate. Some examples include:

- \$375 CAD or 30% of gross income is the rent cost. That is considered affordable housing by BC Housing. (Gateway of Hope)
- For Fraser Health, the maximum amount is \$450 which is more substantial, but considering a 1-bedroom apartment is around \$1,200/month, it's still not enough to cover rent (Stepping Stone Community Services Society)
- Private market sets the rent and Encompass coordinates between the landlord and youth. The organization pays an annual honorarium to "friendly landlords" as a thank you (Encompass)

“We rely heavily on government funding, but our services are high in value. We can provide a lot more service with less money than the government can. The value of our services is recognized, so I feel it would be a big detriment to the community to not fund us and other non-profits”

Other considerations

Plan alignment

Many stakeholders expressed a need for flexibility and adaptability in housing plans. It is important to connect housing strategies and housing programs between the City of Langley and the Township, so they are not siloed. Also, in updating the OCP, the City has a great opportunity to express housing needs and connections to health needs.

Future Skytrain extension

With SkyTrain coming, density will be key. The City will need to provide easy access to transit as part of its housing agenda. The representative from the Chamber of Commerce pointed out that land around SkyTrain is currently industrial and is therefore at risk of rezoning to residential but should be mixed-use instead. The KPU representative also emphasized opportunity for high density housing near campuses to better serve students and promote future rapid transit and walkability.

COVID-19

Some housing organizations mentioned that they have already had to change how services are delivered due to social distancing measures from covid-19. This raises concern for clients' wellbeing during social isolation as they rely on organizations for community contact that a phone call cannot necessarily provide.

“This health crisis amplifies the situation that many are in, and for those who do not have homes. It spotlights the issue of unstable housing, inappropriate housing and lack of accessible housing. Our current situation underscores the importance of housing as a safety net and as an escape in this difficult period.”



Future Housing Needs

The methodology to analyze current demographics and housing supply, and project housing needs and gaps, is described below. Data was collected from:

- Statistics Canada Census, custom tabulation prepared for BC Housing Needs Reports with required data from 2006, 2011, and 2016 censuses.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), via the Housing Market Information Portal.
- BC Assessment.
- BC Housing.
- Homeless Counts in Metro Vancouver.
- Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (AEST).
- Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2019).
- MLSLink® Housing Price Index (HPI) (from the Fraser Valley Real Estate Boards).
- Environics Analytics.

Step 1: Analyze Current Population and Housing

First, we analyzed current demographics and housing supply, in accordance with the legal requirements for Housing Needs Reports. This included the following topics:

- Population
- Households
- Household Income
- Economic Sectors & Labor Force
- Housing Units (currently occupied/available)
- Housing Units (housing stock increase/decrease)
- Housing Values (ownership and rental)
- Households in Core Housing Need

Step 2: Forecast Anticipated Population

Environics Analytics data projects the population in Langley City by income group. This becomes the basis of calculating housing demand in Langley City.

Step 3: Project Housing Values

Using the data sources described below we found housing values for 2019 for both ownership and rental housing.

For ownership housing, we used the MLSLink® Housing Price Index (HPI) (from the Fraser Valley Real Estate Boards, as collected in the Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book), segmented by type (single detached, semi-detached and rowhouse, and apartment condominium). The Housing Price Index, established in 1995, is modeled on the Consumer Price Index. Instead of measuring goods and services, the HPI measures the change in the price of housing features. Thus, the HPI measures typical, pure price change (inflation or deflation). The HPI benchmarks represent the price of a typical property within each market. The HPI takes into consideration what averages and medians do not – items such as lot size, age, number of rooms, etc. These features become the composite of the ‘typical house’ in a given area. Each month’s sales determine the current prices paid for bedrooms, bathrooms, fireplaces, etc. and apply those new values to the ‘typical’ house model.

For rental housing, we used average rent from the Rental Market Survey from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (collected in October of each year). To show the range of rental available in

Langley, we segmented the rental market by the year of construction of the building. The Rental Survey covers average market rent for Primary Rental Units. We assumed Secondary Rental Units would have similar average rents to Primary Rental Units available. In Langley City, data for units built before 1960 is suppressed by CMHC to protect confidentiality or because the data is not statistically reliable. For projections beyond 2019, the values for ownership housing and rental housing were projected to increase by the same percentage as income.

Step 4: Calculate Income Needed to Afford Housing by Type

Using the Housing Price Index for ownership housing (segmented by housing type: single detached, attached, and strata condominium) and average monthly rent for rental housing (segmented by age of building: 1960 – 1979, 1980 – 1999, 2000 or later), we calculated the household income required to afford that housing type. We use the 30% shelter-cost-to-income ratio commonly used as a benchmark for affordability.

For ownership housing, we assume a household will require a mortgage, and calculate the minimum income required to afford the appropriate mortgage. We assume a 20% down payment and a 5-year fixed mortgage. We use a historical discounted 5-year mortgage rate⁴ for the appropriate year, with the 2019 rate used for projections. The calculation includes BC Land Transfer Tax and estimated property taxes⁵.

For rental housing, we assume the average rent (from CMHC) applies to the entire year and calculate the minimum income where the rent requires 30% of income.

Note that these calculations do not include additional shelter costs, such as utilities or strata fees, and as such should be considered as lower/conservative estimates for income required.



⁴ From ratehub.ca. They combined proprietary data with discount brokerage data from 2006-2010. This provides monthly data from April 2006 - 2020. For the years calculated, we use the average over all months for the year. For all years except 2006, this includes all 12 months. For 2006, data is from April-December. See: <https://www.ratehub.ca/5-year-fixed-mortgage-rate-history>

⁵ Estimated property taxes are by ratehub.ca, and would correspond to present-day taxes (not historical).

Step 5: Calculate Percentage of Households Who Can Afford Each Type

We then combine the population, segmented by income group, with the income required to afford each type, and calculate the percentage of population able to afford each type.

Tables for 2019 and 2024 (projected) are shown below.

Table 1: Affordability by Income Segment, 2019

	Number of Households in Income Segment (total: 12,427)	Ownership			Rental		
		Single-detached	Attached ⁶	Strata Condo	Rental (2000 or later)	Rental (1980-1999)	Rental (1960-1979)
Under \$20,000	1,211	no	no	no	no	no	no
\$20,000 to \$39,999	2,359	no	no	no	no	no	no
\$40,000 to \$59,999	2,001	no	no	no	no	some	some
\$60,000 to \$79,999	1,759	no	no	some	some	yes	yes
\$80,000 to \$99,999	1,448	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$100,000 to \$124,999	1,302	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$125,000 to \$149,999	921	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$150,000 to \$199,999	807	some	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$200,000 and over	619	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Income Required to Afford Type		\$156,575	\$79,475	\$66,450	\$65,400	\$50,480	\$47,800
# Households Who Can Afford Type		1,320	5,143	6,289	6,381	7,808	8,077
% Households Who Can Afford Type		11%	41%	51%	51%	63%	65%
% Households Without Affordable Option in Market							35%

⁶ "Attached" is a composite of One-, Two-storey attached single family homes and attached townhouses, as defined in the MLS Home Price Index Methodology (June 2019). Available from: https://www.crea.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HPI_Methodology-1.pdf

Table 2: Projected Affordability by Income Segment, 2024

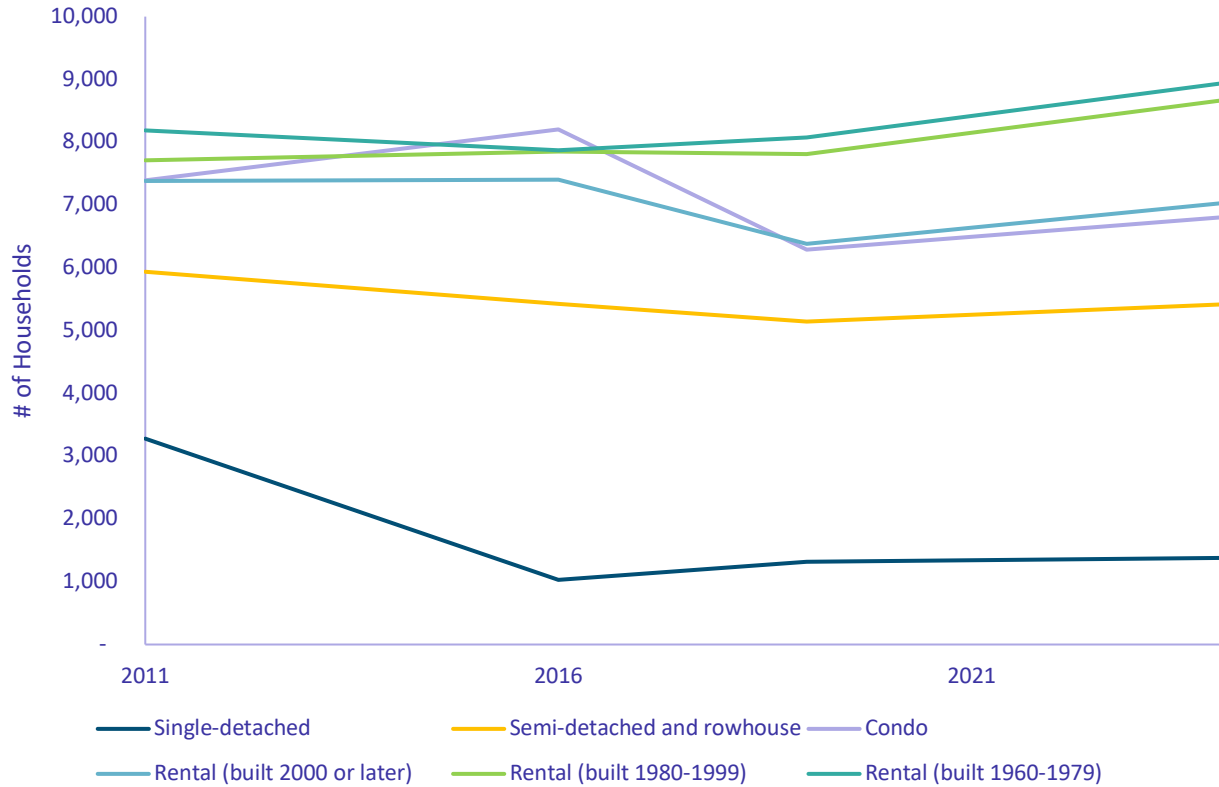
	Number of Households in Income Segment (total: 13,188)	Ownership			Rental		
		Single-detached	Attached	Strata Condo	Rental (2000 or later)	Rental (1980-1999)	Rental (1960-1979)
Under \$20,000	635	no	no	no	no	no	no
\$20,000 to \$39,999	2,309	no	no	no	no	no	no
\$40,000 to \$59,999	1,766	no	no	no	no	some	some
\$60,000 to \$79,999	1,935	no	no	some	some	yes	yes
\$80,000 to \$99,999	1,814	no	some	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$100,000 to \$124,999	1,490	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1,243	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$150,000 to \$199,999	959	some	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$200,000 and over	1,037	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Income Required to Afford Type		\$182,157	\$92,460	\$77,310	\$75,042	\$57,923	\$54,848
# Households Who Can Afford Type		1,379	5,413	6,803	7,023	8,661	8,933
% Households Who Can Afford Type		10%	41%	52%	53%	66%	68%
% Households Without Affordable Option in Market							32%

If an income segment is able to afford a type, that cell is marked with “yes”. If an income segment is not able to afford a type, that cell is marked with “no”. For some housing types, the income threshold is in the middle of an income segment. In the above table, these are listed as “some” in the table.

In these cases, we calculate a percentage of that segment which will be able to afford that housing type. For this calculation, we assume that within each income segment, the households have an even distribution across the segment. For example, an equal number of households will have an income of \$61,000 as an income of \$76,000, as both of these incomes are within the segment \$60,000 to \$79,999.

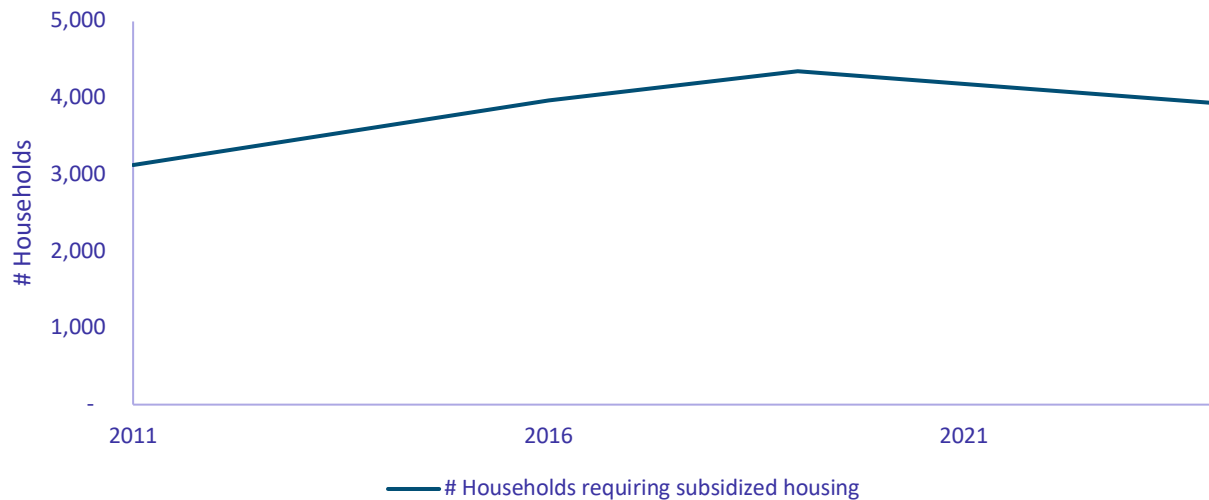
Based on this, we calculate the number and percentage of households who are able to afford a type. We assume any household who is not able to afford a rental built 1960 – 1979 do not have an affordable option in the housing market. Note that a rental built 1960 – 1979 typically requires the lowest income out of all housing types. In 2016, a lower income was required to afford a strata condominium. However, not all households may have required savings or access to a mortgage for ownership, and hence rental housing is considered the lowest barrier housing in the market.

Households Who Can Afford Each Type of Housing



From 2019 onwards, projections indicate a greater number of households will be able to afford nearly every type of housing unit except those in a single-detached category. Due to rising incomes, it is also anticipated that slightly fewer households may require subsidized housing. It's important to note this data does not and cannot predict how the economic recovery from COVID-19 will impact these numbers.

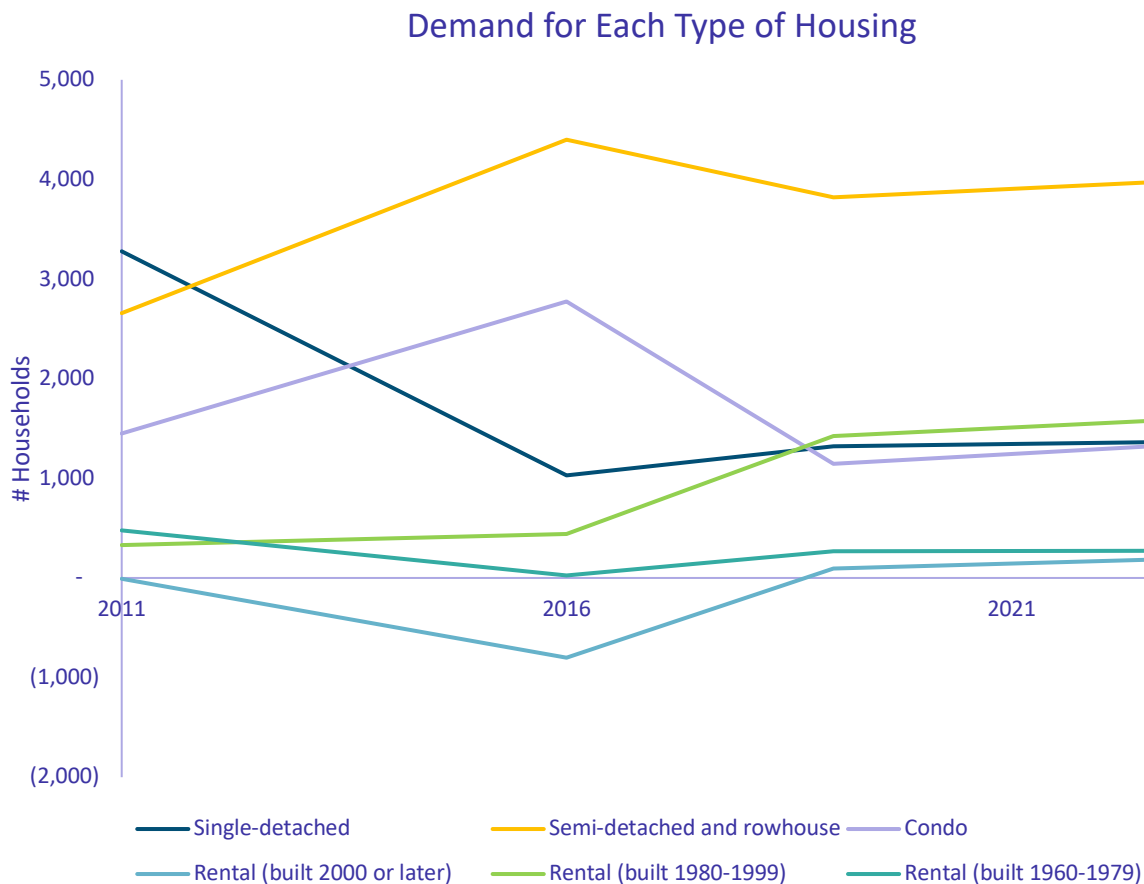
Households requiring subsidized housing



Step 6: Calculate Demand For Each Type

We calculated theoretical demand for each type of housing. To do this, we assume each 2024 household will desire the “highest” level of housing that they can afford. That is, if they are able to afford a single-detached house, that is what they will want. If they are able to afford a strata condominium, that is what they will want. Note that this does not take into consideration location or other considerations. For example, a household may have a strong desire to live close to downtown and may prefer a strata condominium close to downtown over a single detached house far from downtown, even if they would be able to afford a single detached house.

The table below illustrates that many people who could potentially afford a semi-detached or rowhouse unit (which is in high demand, but in short of supply) are likely living in condo or rental units instead (which are in lower demand, but are supplied in much greater quantities across Langley City).



Step 7: Calculate Supply

For ownership units, we calculated supply using BC Assessment data. We segmented the data by the types used above (single-detached house, attached, strata condominium).

For primary rental units, we calculated supply using Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) data, using their Rental Market Survey. We segmented the data by the types used above (built 1960 – 1979, 1980 – 1999, and 2000 or later).

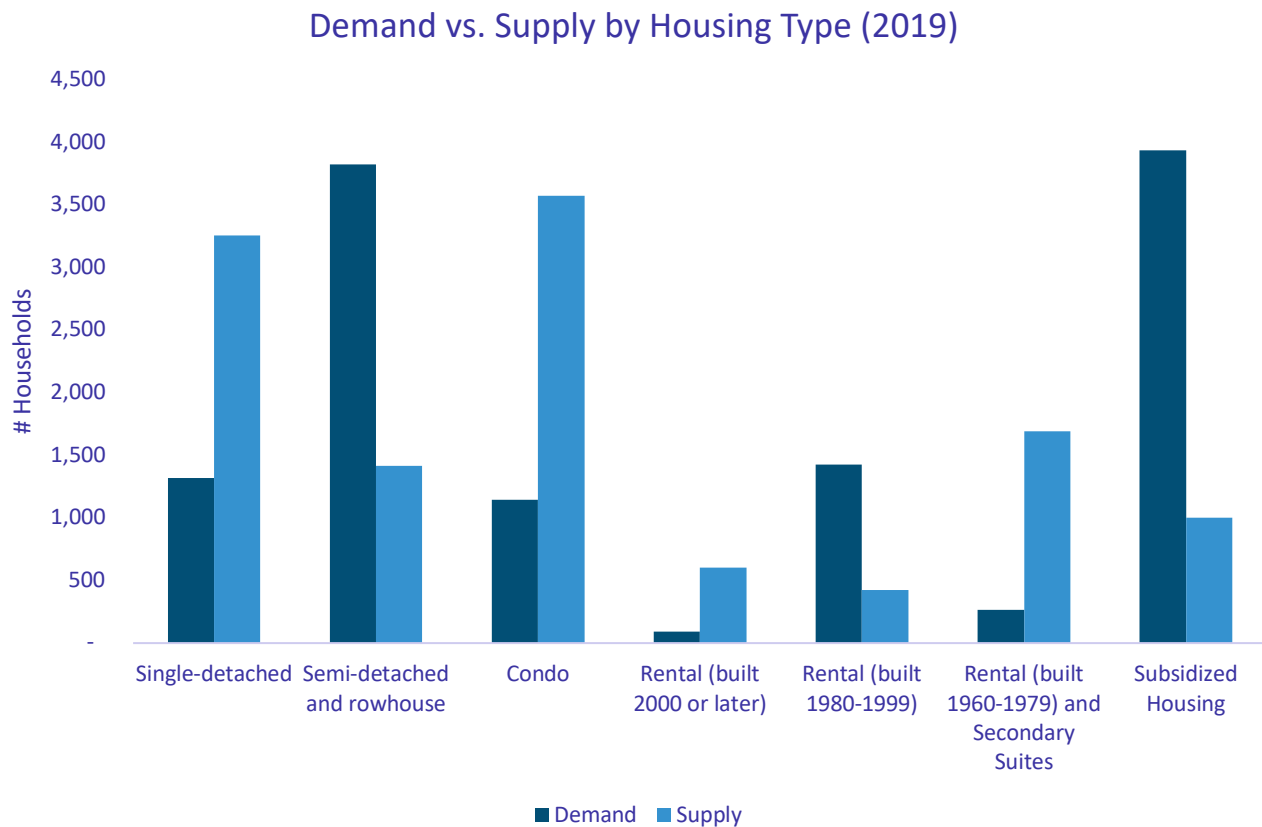
For secondary suites, we calculated supply using the 2016 Census. Where renter households were living in a duplex (top/bottom split) or semi-attached housing (side-by-side split), we assumed these units were secondary

suites. This provides an approximation of the secondary suite supply at 310 units. This is slightly above the 287 legal secondary suites within the City of Langley (2020, from building permit data). Note that this does not capture the full breadth of the secondary rental supply (e.g., where an owner rents an entire house).

For subsidized housing, we calculated supply using units tracked by BC Housing. In 2019, data included both Langley City and the Township of Langley and includes all units as well as rent subsidy in the private market. In 2018, data included Langley City, but did not include rent subsidy in the private market. The total supply was calculated by including the number of units in Langley City in 2018, as well as the number of rent subsidy in the private market (from 2019) proportional to Langley City’s population compared to the Township of Langley’s population.

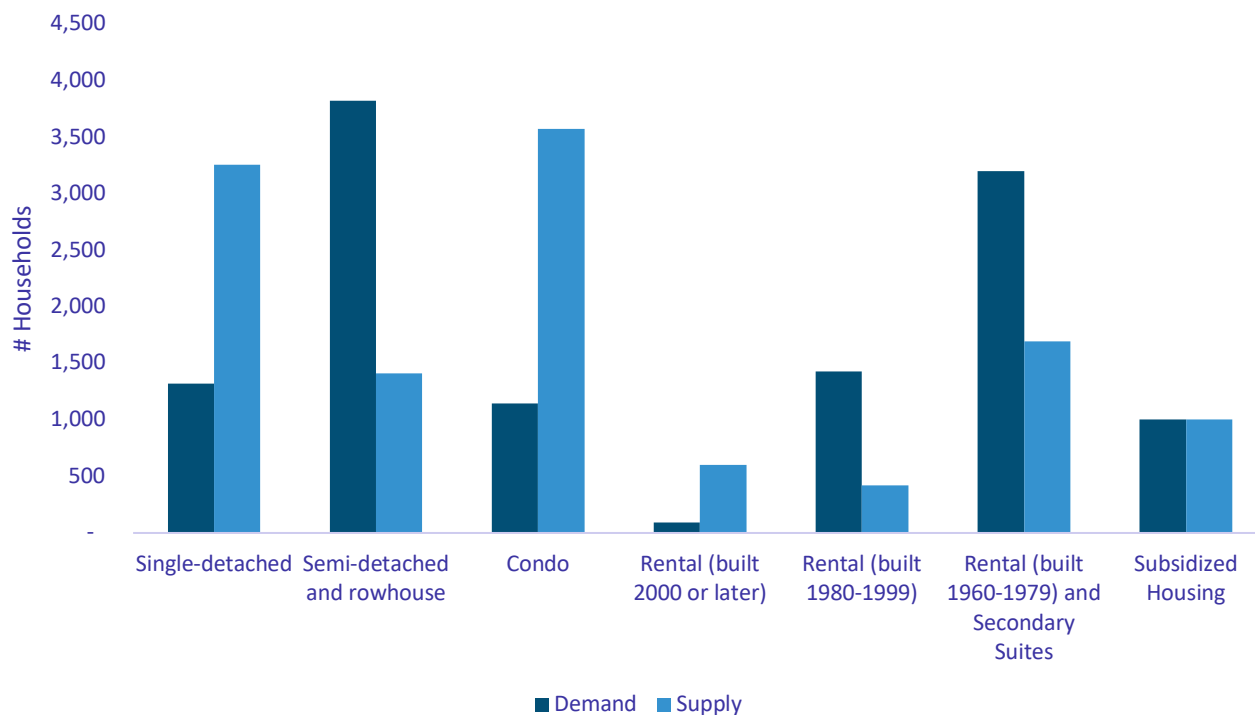
Step 8: Compare Demand to Supply to Determine Gaps

Then, we can compare current supply (by type) to the theoretical demand (by type) to determine where gaps may exist in the housing supply as compared to the housing demand. An example for 2019 is shown below.



The supply of subsidized housing is constrained by the number of units on the market and the number of rent subsidies provided by BC Housing. Households that do not qualify or are not provided subsidized housing will require housing through the rental market. To garner a better sense of the additional pressures this places on the rental market, we produced the following chart, which matches the demand for subsidized housing to the calculated supply, and shifts the rest of the demand for subsidized housing into the cheapest form of rental (built 1960-1979 and secondary suites).

Demand vs. Supply by Housing Type (2019, Subsidized Housing Demand Shifted to Rental)



Step 9: Calculate Number of Units Required by Size

To add another layer to the housing gap analysis, we calculated the difference in the demand and supply by housing unit size. This is calculated based off of household size and size of units currently occupied, both from the 2016 census. The number of people in a household is assumed to be the number of bedrooms required (i.e., if a household is three people, it is assumed to require three bedrooms).⁷

2016 Units Required by Size in Langley City

	Demand	Supply	+/-
0- 1 bedroom	4,590	2,790	-1800
2 bedrooms	3,870	4,725	+855
3 bedrooms	1,555	2,615	+1060
4 or more bedrooms	1,820	1,705	-115

⁷ This does assume more bedrooms than would be required to meet National Occupancy Standards, as couples only require one bedroom, same sex dependents aged under 18 can share a room, and opposite sex dependents aged under 5 can share a room. However, many households are likely to desire one or more bedrooms than what would be required to meet Occupancy Standards.

2024 Units Required by Size in Langley City

	2016 Demand	2024 Demand	Change in # Households	2016 Supply	Units Required
0- 1 bedroom	4,590	5,165	+575	2,790	3,365
2 bedrooms	3,870	4,312	+442	4,725	5,167
3 bedrooms	1,555	1,724	+169	2,615	2,784
4 or more bedrooms	1,820	1,987	+167	1,705	1,872

The “units required” was calculated by taking the change in demand from 2016 to 2024, and adding that to the 2016 supply. This assumes that, although the existing supply may not match the existing demand, these households are finding housing in the existing supply. This calculation assumes there is no mismatch, and therefore does not correct it.

It is important to understand these projections as a point in time analysis within a dynamic housing and demographic environment. While the number of units required from 2016 to 2024 does not take into account the units that have been built over the last three years, as neighbourhoods and their residents change, the demand for different unit types does as well. This makes comparing the supply of one year to the demand of another slightly misleading. Nonetheless, when the results of the 2021 Census become available, updated datasets can be evaluated to record progress and reassess projections.

Additionally, building more than what the projections require may help reduce the cost of housing within the community by increasing the supply and vacancy rates of units, and providing residents more choice in their selection of housing types.

Statements of Need

Housing needs reports are required to include brief statements of need related to seven key housing areas listed below. These statements draw on the quantitative and qualitative analysis and outcomes involved in preparing this report.

Affordable Housing

To impact housing affordability, all gaps in the housing spectrum must be addressed. For Langley City this includes building a greater variety within the ownership spectrum, with an emphasis on townhouses. Affordable rental options are also in great need, especially within the primary (purpose built) rental market. There is today and will remain in the future a need for more below-market housing options and supportive housing.

Rental Housing

There is a significant need for more rental housing. This is particularly the case for family-sized (3+ bedrooms) and one-bedroom units.

Special Needs Housing

While not identified as a specific challenge through stakeholder interviews, an adaptable homes program that upgrades and retrofits housing for people with disabilities or limited mobility would help bring more special needs housing to Langley City's housing stock.

Housing for Seniors

A significant number of seniors housing units have recently been approved for development in Langley City for the Langley Lions Housing Society. Nonetheless, the 65-84 years old age group is projected to increase both in number and in share of population over the coming years. More age-in-place options could help house the aging population through a greater diversity of housing options like secondary suites (basement suites and garden suites) and condominiums.

Housing for Families

There is a need for family-sized (3+ bedroom) subsidized apartments, which currently do not exist in Langley City. A greater number of townhouses (2-3 bedrooms) is also key in addressing housing for families as the single detached form is not attainable anymore for most income groups.

Shelters for People Experiencing Homelessness and Housing for People at Risk of Homelessness

The latest survey identified 209 people across both the City and Township of Langley who are homeless. Also, 110 unique cases of individuals experiencing homelessness came through Langley Health services. Trends show these numbers increasing. Though the Salvation Army's Gateway of Hope helps address part of this gap in Langley City, there is a need for more shelters for people experiencing homelessness across the region.

Any Other Population Groups with Specific Housing Needs

Youth (age 12-25) were identified as needing more housing options as there currently are no private rental market units available to youth. Co-op housing for single women with children, short-term housing for women fleeing from unsafe situations, and pet-friendly below-market housing could also make an impact for those who are most vulnerable.

Conclusion

As Langley City contemplates its future and prepares to welcome the planned SkyTrain extension, housing needs will have to be considered as an essential component of creating a complete, attractive and equitable community.

Key conclusions to consider in this report include:

- Single detached homes are not attainable for a large majority of Langley City resident income groups.
- Need for a greater variety of ownership housing, with an emphasis on townhouses and other missing middle housing types (i.e. secondary suites, du-tri-fourplexes, cottage homes, etc.).
- Need for affordable rental options, especially within the primary rental market and for family-sized (3+ bedroom) and 1 bedroom units.
- More below-market and supportive housing, along with shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness.

It is worth noting the federal government's National Housing Strategy is providing significant funds, including grants and loans, towards the construction of affordable housing in municipalities throughout Canada. One of its primary focus areas is the community housing sector with non-profit and co-operative housing providers. Given the strong alignment between the strategy's objectives and the needs identified in this report, it would be advantageous to identify potential housing projects and raise awareness in the non-profit and local development community about available funds. Whether through the National Housing Co-investment Fund or the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, the federal government could help the City of Langley and developers build the types of housing units that are more challenging to achieve, like housing co-operatives and below-market options.

The information and data presented in this document thus forms a strong foundation for new land use designations and housing policy development for the City's new Official Community Plan process, and complements the work completed to date as a part of this process.