



A Vital Exploration

GREATER SEA-TO-SKY AND HOWE SOUND
COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

2020

WHISTLER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
SQUAMISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BOWEN ISLAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
WEST VANCOUVER FOUNDATION

The genesis of an idea:

Doing good better - together

The Greater Sea-to-Sky and Howe Sound region is renowned for its natural beauty and desirable lifestyle. Its communities are growing rapidly. Five of these communities – Whistler, Squamish, Bowen Island, the Sunshine Coast, and West Vancouver – have established community foundations to address a variety of community needs. Since 2017, the leadership of these foundations have been collaborating to share learnings and look for ways to work together for the mutual benefit of the communities we serve. The fact that we had each undertaken Vital Signs reports and shared a commitment to make information and valuable community insights more easily available to donors, funders, charities, residents, businesses, and decision-makers provided an opportunity to produce a shared publication comparing the realities in each of our communities.

A driving impetus for this study was recognition that our communities are increasingly connected, and that complex social, economic, and environmental priorities transcend our borders.

By better understanding the issues we have in common and the unique needs of certain communities, we can support each other and provide leadership in a considered, collaborative, and cooperative manner.



For the purposes of this report, the Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound region extends from Pemberton to North Vancouver and includes Bowen Island and the Sunshine Coast.


 Cover Photo: Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society - photo by Tim Turner

Table of Contents

A Vital Exploration	3	Economic Vitality and Local Economy	13
Methodology	4	Environment and Climate	14
Land Acknowledgment	5	Wellness and Health	15
Sustainable Development Goals	5	Youth and Young Adults	16
Villages of 100	6	Safety and Security	18
Housing	10	COVID-19 Pandemic	19
Getting Around (Transportation)	12	What Comes Next	19
Arts, Culture, and Recreation	12		

A Vital Exploration

The population centres of the Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound region differ significantly in size and demographic characteristics. However, the residents of the area share a strong connection to place and a common desire for a welcoming, liveable community where everyone can thrive. Residents move throughout the region, for work, recreation, shopping, services, or visiting family and friends. Many government agencies, health, and social services, as well as arts and cultural organizations, span the region with their programs, services, and participants.

Residents of the region also share pressures - incomes that don't keep up with living costs, lack of housing diversity and affordability, and concern about the effects of climate change. While the highway and ferries connect our communities, they also contribute to traffic congestion and affect air quality. And with limited public transportation options in the corridor, there are few alternatives to private vehicle use. Due to water and mountain barriers, the geography of the region also contributes to common challenges around emergency preparedness, with the potential to be isolated for a longer period in a natural or human-caused disaster.

While significant issues on their own, these concerns are closely inter-related within each community, as well as throughout the region. For example, lack of housing affordability in Whistler and West Vancouver contributes to population growth in Squamish, resulting in more people commuting throughout the region, pressures on childcare availability in Squamish, and fewer young families in West Vancouver. The Sunshine Coast and West Vancouver are challenged to attract sufficient numbers of caregivers for their aging populations when wages don't keep up with living costs. The rapid pace of development in Whistler, Squamish, and Bowen Island raises concerns about environmental pressures, such as water rationing, habitat destruction, and increased greenhouse gas emissions from more traffic and housing. Throughout the region, the impact of climate change is evident in such conditions as more extreme windstorms, poor air quality from forest fires, annual summer droughts, and die-off of species such as western red cedar.



In a province-wide Vital Signs survey conducted by Vancouver Foundation in 2016, the three most important issues identified by Sea to Sky residents for their community were: Housing (47%); Transportation (41%); and Environment (29%). Since that time, pressures in these areas have only increased throughout the region, and contributed to challenges in other spheres, such as employment and economic vitality, caregiving, and social connection and engagement.

There is much that transcends the borders of our communities, such as the spectacular natural environment; ecosystems and watersheds; sports leagues and arts programs; and transportation routes and business service areas, as well as family and social connections among residents. There are also common challenges faced by many of our residents. This report highlights some of the pressures experienced throughout the region, and is aimed at catalyzing conversations to better understand the issues, and identify potential solutions and region-wide responses.

Methodology

This Report builds on the work of the five community foundations in the region who have used Vital Signs reporting to identify and communicate key trends during the period 2015-2019. In addition, supplemental information was gathered from sources that had been previously utilized in one or more Vital Signs, but not all. The core statistical information is based on the most recent Canadian Census reporting. Youth statistics are based on the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (McCreary Centre Society) reports for SD 45, 46, 48.

For the purposes of this report, the Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound region extends from Pemberton to North Vancouver and includes Bowen Island and the Sunshine Coast. Indicators were selected and prioritized based on the following guidelines:

- Common indicators and sources across all municipalities
- Availability of reasonably current data and frequency of collection for future use
- Understandability and measurability
- Potential to inspire and engage individuals, organizations, or communities to act.

The report draws on several research studies and reports from different sources, issued over the past 48 months. For this reason, not all data aligns to the same date and readers are asked to consult the full data source file if additional verification is required.

We are grateful to the Vancouver Foundation for providing a grant to allow us to undertake this work and deepen our knowledge of the region through a shared examination of the collective Vital Signs learnings and supporting community conversations.

vancouver
foundation

About Vital Signs

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. The Vital Signs trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

List of Vital Signs Reports

Whistler Community Foundation

- Whistler's Vital Cafes 2019 Community Conversations
- Whistler's Vital Signs 2018 Connect + Engage
- Whistler's Vital Focus 2017
- Whistler's Vital Signs 2016 Uncovering Whistler

Sunshine Coast Community Foundation

- Sunshine Coast's Vital Signs 2019 - Celebrating 10 years of Vital Signs Reports
- Sunshine Coast's Vital Signs 2017 - A Vital Focus on Our Vulnerable Communities
- Sunshine Coast's Vital Signs 2016 - A community perception of where we live
- Sunshine Coast's Vital Signs 2014

Squamish Community Foundation

- Squamish Vital Signs 2017

Bowen Island Community Foundation

- Bowen Island's Vital Conversations 2017 - Powered by People

West Vancouver Foundation

- West Vancouver's Vital Signs 2019 - Vibrant & Liveable Community
- West Vancouver's Vital Signs 2017 - Creating connection. Building community.
- West Vancouver's Vital Signs 2016 - One Snapshot

Community-level Vital Signs reports have not yet been completed for Pemberton nor North Vancouver. These communities are included in the Villages of 100 profile for regional reference. While the report does not depict every community within the region, themes are felt to be overall representative.



VitalSigns®
Community foundations taking the pulse of
Canadian communities.

Land Acknowledgement



The Bowen Island, Squamish, Sunshine Coast, West Vancouver, and Whistler Community Foundations together acknowledge that we are situated on the traditional, unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples and the Interior Salish peoples, as represented by the Skwxwú7mesh [pronounced Skohomish] (Squamish), Tsleil-Waututh [pronounced slay-wa-tooth], Musqueam, shíshálh (Sechelt), and Líl'wat Nations.

Justa Jeskova

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal framework and plan to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. These goals address global challenges including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Global collaboration and local action aim to achieve each goal by 2030 in a pledge to ensure no one is left behind. Community foundations across Canada are committed to champion the SDGs through action and education.

The SDGs were considered in determining the areas of focus in this report. Look for the SDG icon associated with the topics that follow.

Community foundations operate at the ground level in communities and they are also part of regional, provincial, national, and international networks. Since 2016, we've seen how the SDGs and Agenda 2030 provide a unifying framework and language to connect and advance on the issues that matter to Canadians. Reports like this one are, put simply, vital. At CFC, we are heartened to see this work in action and look forward to continuing together on this journey to truly leave no one behind.

- Andrew Chunilall CEO, Community Foundations of Canada

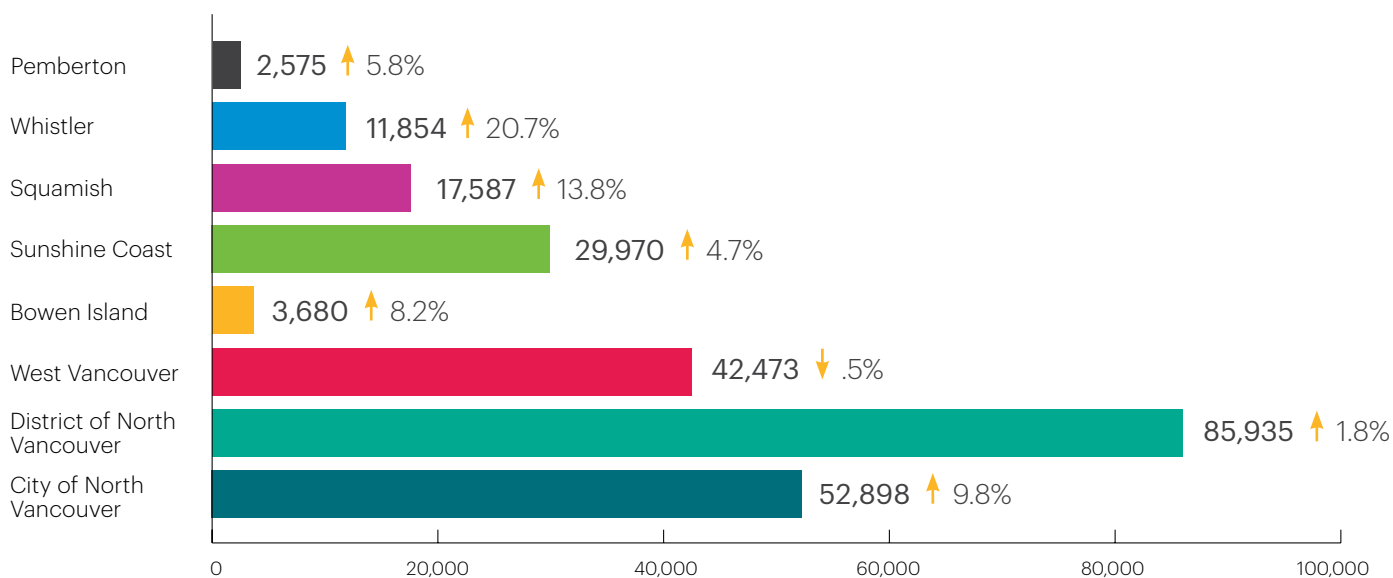


Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound Communities

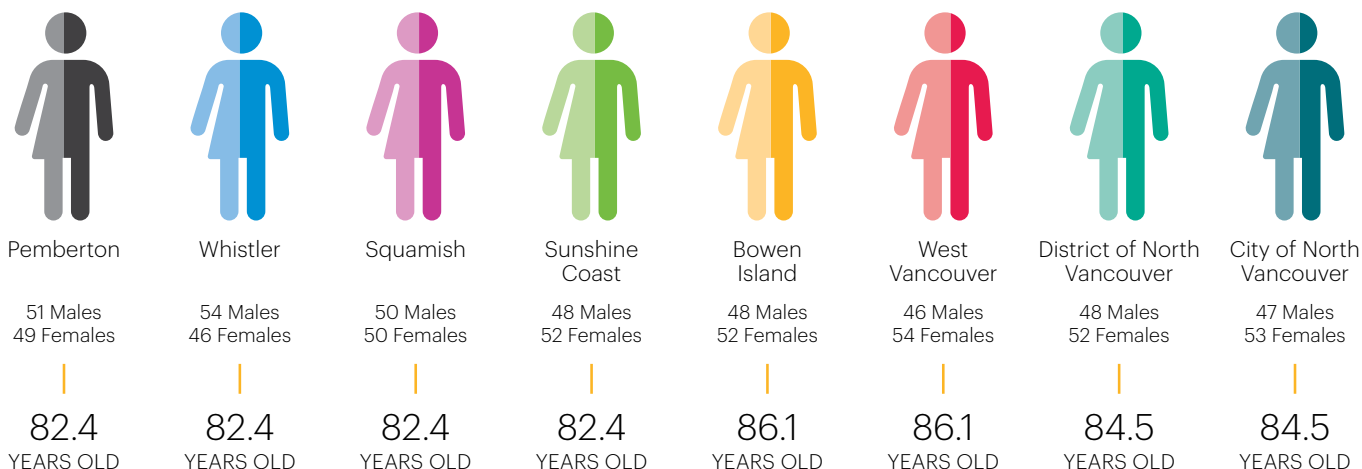
Villages of 100

Imagine that each community has 100 residents. The data on the following four pages show how many of those 100 embody certain characteristics or attributes, based on 2016 census data. This is an alternative way to presenting statistical information as percentages of a population.

Population (% change from 2011)



Gender & Life Expectancy

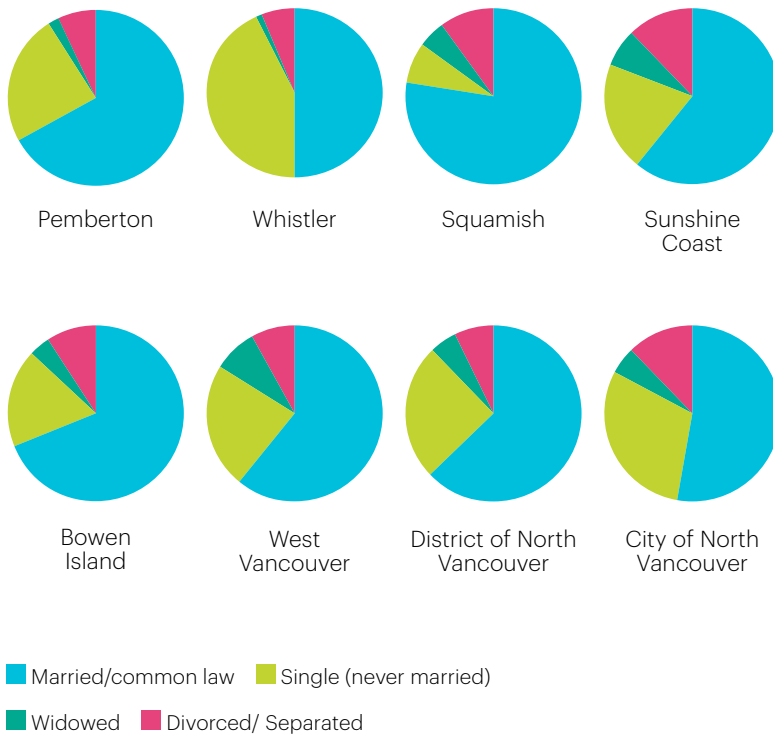


Inclusive identification has not been captured in Census reports previously. For 2016, Transgender, Transsexual, and Intersex persons were given the option to indicate gender they most associate with or leave the question blank.

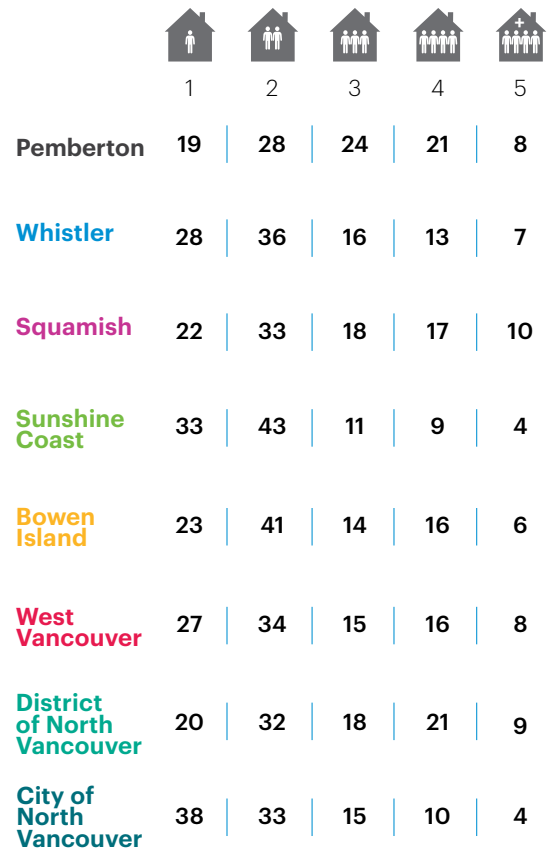
Age (Distribution by groupings)

Age:	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40-64	65-85	85+	Average Age	Median Age
Pemberton	9	8	6	4	31	36	5	1	34	36
Whistler	4	4	4	5	49	26	7	1	36	33
Squamish	7	7	5	5	30	34	10	2	37	38
Sunshine Coast	4	4	4	5	16	38	26	3	50	55
Bowen Island	4	6	7	5	15	42	20	1	45	49
West Vancouver	3	5	6	7	14	37	23	5	47	50
District of North Vancouver	5	6	6	7	20	38	15	3	42	44
City of North Vancouver	5	4	4	4	29	37	15	2	42	42

Marital Status



Household Size



Villages of 100 (cond)

Employment

People in the labour force. Person icon = 10 residents



Total Household Income

	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$99,999	\$100,000+	Median total household income
Pemberton	4	11	15	17	13	40	\$86,528
Whistler	8	13	16	15	13	35	\$79,752
Squamish	7	11	13	13	13	43	\$88,366
Sunshine Coast	12	20	18	15	10	25	\$60,279
Bowen Island	8	11	13	13	11	44	\$89,856
West Vancouver	10	14	12	10	8	46	\$89,808
District of North Vancouver	6	10	11	11	10	52	\$103,981
City of North Vancouver	11	17	16	14	11	31	\$67,119

Ethnicity

	Aboriginal	European (inc. UK)	East/ SE Asian	West/ Central Asian & Middle East	South Asian	Latin/ S. American	African	Other
Pemberton	7	81	7		1	1		3
Whistler	2	78	9		1	1		8
Squamish	8	77	7	1	7			
Sunshine Coast	8	85	5			1		1
Bowen Island	3	90	4	1		2	1	
West Vancouver	1	60	23	12	2	1	2	1
District of North Vancouver	2	71	14	8		4	2	
City of North Vancouver	3	64	15	10		4	2	2

Language – Mother Tongue

	English	Chinese dialects	Farsi	German	Korean	French	Tagalog	Punjabi	Slavic	Other
Pemberton	86			1		5	1		1	6
Whistler	80	5		2			2		2	9
Squamish	81	1		1		3	1	5		7
Sunshine Coast	88			2		2				8
Bowen Island	88			2		2			1	7
West Vancouver	60	15	9	2	2	1			2	9
District of North Vancouver	72	4	6	2	2	1	1		2	10
City of North Vancouver	64	3	8	1	2	1			3	18

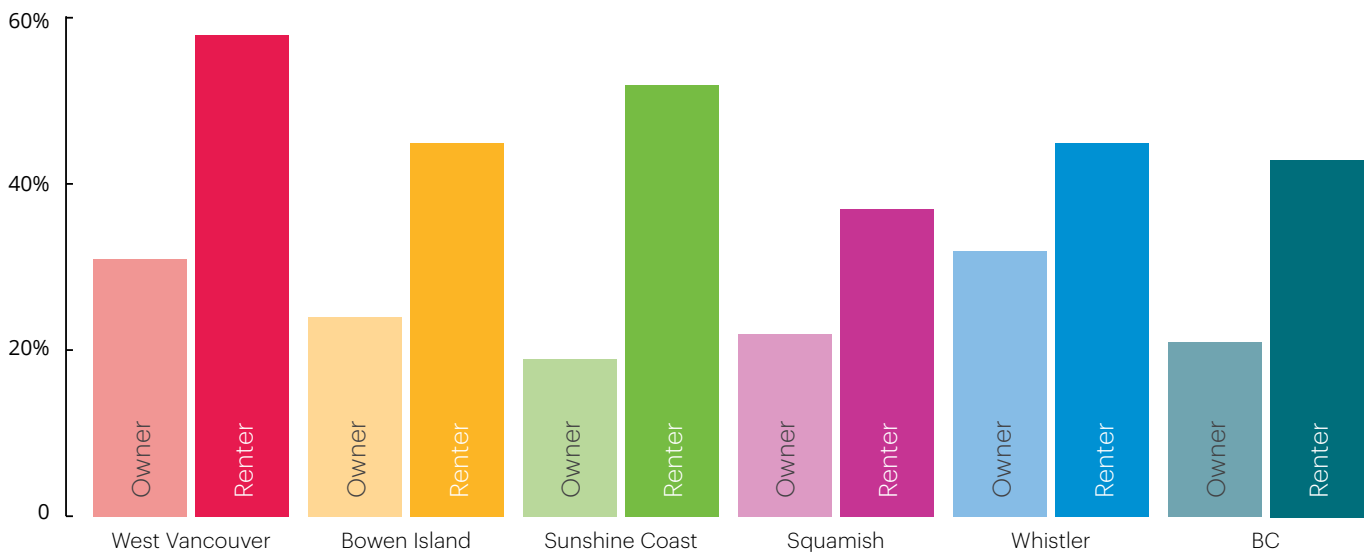
Housing



Although housing costs have stabilized as a result of recent government interventions, many residents throughout the region pay 30% or more of their income for shelter related costs, and are considered to be in “core housing need”. Many of these residents are renters, but there are also numerous owners who are challenged with high shelter costs.

Having affordable and adequate housing is critical to well-being and quality of life, for example, by helping a person to stay employed, succeed in school, and participate in society. For communities, suitable housing contributes to such factors as safety, inclusion, and economic growth – all important to community resiliency and sustainability.

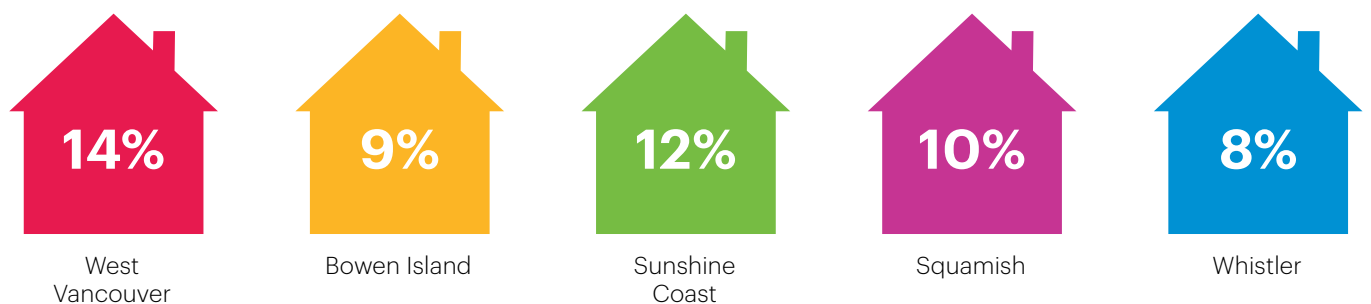
Owners and Renters in core housing need



A household is said to be in “core housing need” if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability, suitability standards, and the 30% housing expense threshold.

Social Housing

Percentage of tenant householders living in subsidized housing. Includes social, public, non-profit, and government-assisted housing, and those accessing rent supplements, housing allowances, and rent geared to income.



Occupation of Privately owned dwellings

Communities such as Whistler, Bowen Island, and on the Sunshine Coast, are attractive locations for non-locals to purchase second properties/vacation homes. West Vancouver appeals to out of country part-time residents.

By usual Occupants (Residents)	OWNER	RENTED		Unoccupied & Temporarily occupied homes*
91%	75%	25%	West Vancouver	9%
78%	80%	20%	Bowen Island	22%
80%	78%	22%	Sunshine Coast	20%
96%	73%	27%	Squamish	4%
39%	55%	45%	Whistler	61%
91%	68%	32%	BC	9%

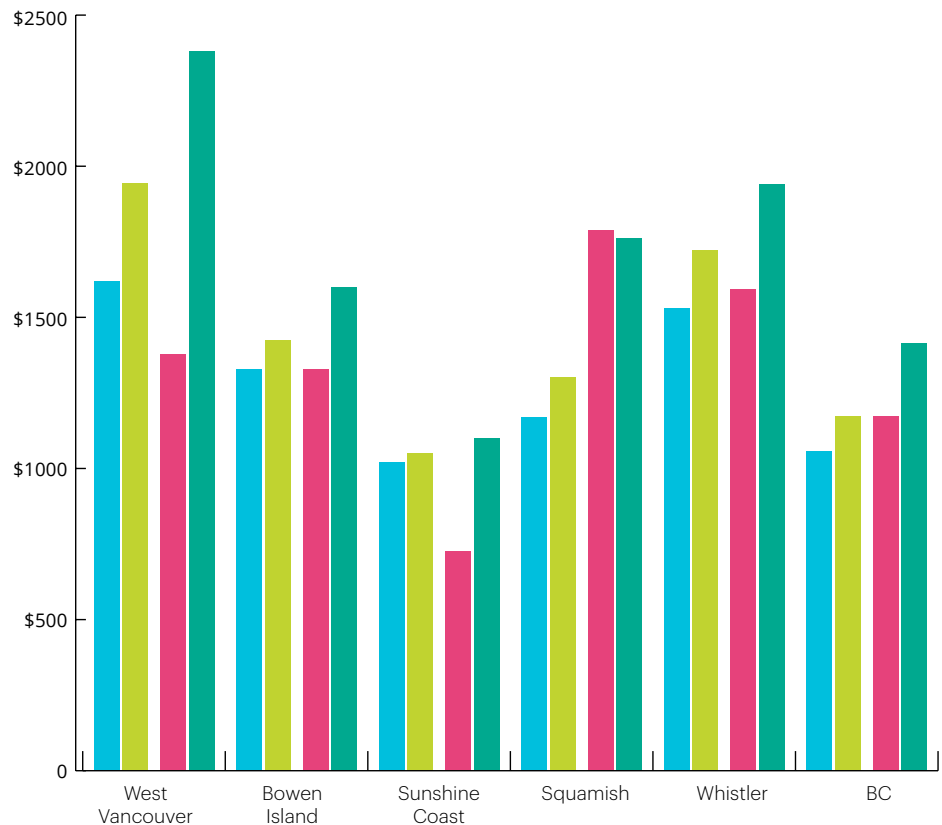
*Unoccupied home or occupied solely by foreign and/or by persons temporarily present

Housing and Affordability

(Cost per month)

- Median shelter cost (renter)
- Average shelter cost (renter)
- Median shelter cost (owner)
- Average shelter cost (owner)

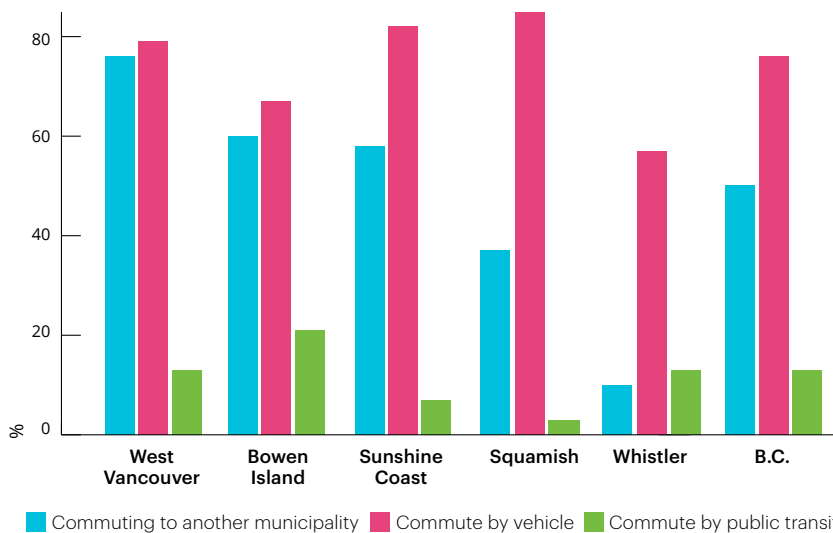
Shelter costs for owner households include mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include rent and costs of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services.



Getting Around



The region is home to many who commute both within and between communities, primarily by private vehicle. Geography, community design, and access to public transportation options are the main factors that contribute to increased private vehicle use, and consequently, traffic congestion. However, lack of affordable and appropriate housing options in some communities are also significant contributors to traffic throughout the region. As traffic increases, so too does its negative impact on air quality, road safety, productivity, and health.



More than **16%** of Squamish commuters spend 45 – 60 minutes traveling each way to work, and **15%** of them spend more than an hour – more than twice the provincial average.

Whistler and Sunshine Coast residents are more likely to get to work by active transportation than people in other parts of the province. 25% of commuters in Whistler and 13% on the Sunshine Coast either walk or cycle to work, compared to the BC average of 10%.



Arts, Culture, and Recreation



In addition to the higher than average proportion of area residents who are employed in arts, culture, recreation, and sport, hundreds more throughout the region contribute thousands of volunteer hours to help make their communities more vibrant and welcoming. Activities such as festivals, arts programs and events, sports, and recreation are essential to community liveability and fostering belonging and inclusion, and can't take place without volunteer support. These activities are integral to the local economy by supporting tourism, employment, and small businesses such as galleries, studios, shops, and restaurants.

Each community has signature events that support individual artists as well and enrich the community. For example, revenue to local artists from the *Sunshine Coast Arts Crawl* reached more than \$440,000 in 2018.

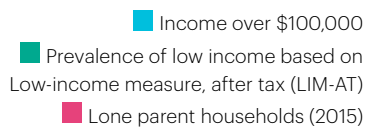
Employment in the arts, culture, recreation and sport sector

West Vancouver	6%
Bowen Island	8%
Sunshine Coast	6%
Squamish	5%
Whistler	7%
B.C.	3%

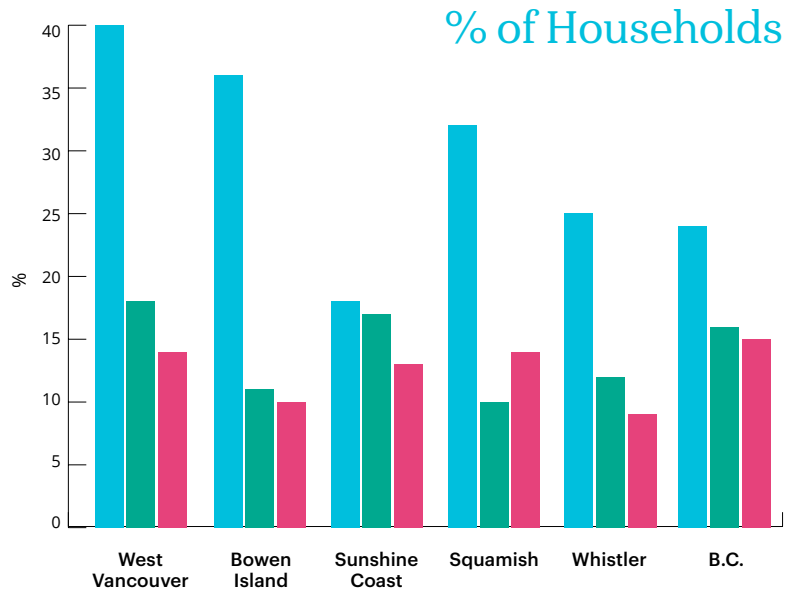
Vitality and Economy



Many residents throughout the region struggle with incomes that have not kept pace with living expenses. While the region is home to many high-income earners, more than one in ten people in our communities is considered low income. When there is significant income inequality in a society, there tends to be negative impacts on many of the key features of liveability, including public health, safety, social cohesion, education, and political equality.



The low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) allows a comparison between the relative resources in different households, adjusted for the number of household members. Low income is calculated as 50% of the median income for comparable households.



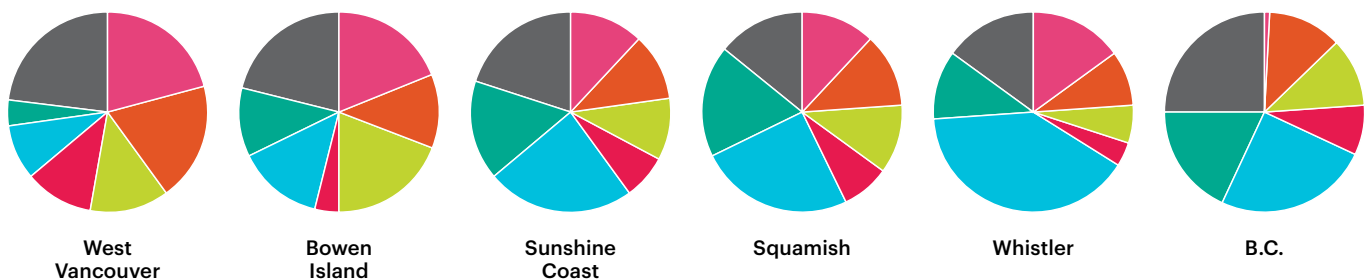
Median After Tax Income

	West Vancouver	Bowen Island	Sunshine Coast	Squamish	Whistler	B.C.
Individual income	\$35,398	\$34,816	\$28,513	\$34,604	\$29,595	\$29,783
Household income	\$76,687	\$76,617	\$53,727	\$75,801	\$65,849	\$61,280
Lone parent household income	\$47,356	\$51,712	\$42,731	\$54,273	\$45,312	\$46,668

% Self-employed

West Vancouver	31%
Bowen Island	33%
Sunshine Coast	25%
Squamish	16%
Whistler	15%
B.C.	14%

Primary Employment Sectors



■ Management
 ■ Business/Finance/Admin
 ■ Education, Law, Gov't, & Community Service
 ■ Health
 ■ Sales and Service
 ■ Trades, Transport
 ■ Other



Ancient Cedars, photo Bob Brett

Environment and Climate



Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound residents share an appreciation of the natural beauty of the region, along with concern for the environment. Our natural world, and its watersheds, ecosystems, plant and animal life, and weather, does not recognize the man-made borders that separate our communities.

Our cities, towns, and regional districts must each focus on conservation, stewardship, and energy and emissions management within their boundaries, but to be as effective as possible, they must also coordinate and act regionally.

At a regional level, provincial and federal government departments and agencies, along with many non-government organizations, are working to manage, support, coordinate, and/or inform community efforts in areas such as invasive species management, air and water quality, and habitat restoration.

The *Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society* has been leading a multi-year, multi-stakeholder initiative for the area to be designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, recognizing its global ecological significance. The final submission was sent off on July 27, 2020.

Locally

The population centres in the region all have or are working on a Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP), most have achieved carbon neutrality and the rest are working towards it, and several have declared climate emergencies.

Local government priorities and action includes Green House Gas (GHG) emission reduction targets to be achieved by focusing on priorities such as getting people out of cars (Whistler) or housing retrofits (West Vancouver).

Regionally

Howe Sound watersheds provide an estimated \$800M to \$4.7B in ecosystem services, such as clean water, food, a stable climate, protection from natural disasters, recreation, and places to connect with nature.

It is estimated that the benefits of filtering, retention, and storage of water that occurs in aquifers, forests, streams, and lakes of watersheds in Howe Sound is equivalent to \$300M to \$770M per year in ecosystem water supply services.

Howe Sound's intact forests are estimated to save taxpayers up to \$1.6B per year by reducing air pollution health costs, and providing erosion protection, water purification, climate change mitigation, and more.

The Ocean Watch Howe Sound Reports for 2017 and 2020 indicate some marine species and habitats are doing well but many others require consolidated, collaborative efforts to protect and restore them, and move towards a healthy state.

Wellness



Overall, residents in the region enjoy relatively good health and long life expectancies. However, for some, mental illness, caregiving, or being socially isolated are having significant effects on wellness and quality of life. When the health and wellness of many of our residents is compromised in these ways, our communities are challenged to provide the support and resources needed to help them deal with and improve their situations, while also working to address the underlying individual and societal causes of such conditions.

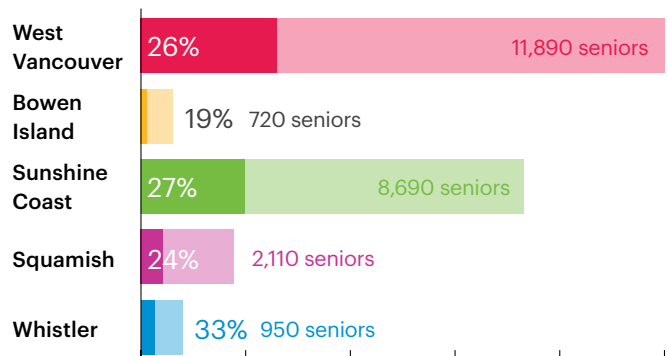
Some of the common transitions experienced later in life, such as retirement, reduced income, chronic illness, divorce, or loss of a spouse, can trigger mental health issues in some individuals. Although depression is less common among seniors than in younger age groups, seniors are at greater risk of suicide. There are strong links between social isolation, depression, and suicide, and the highest rate of suicide is among men 65 years and older, particularly those who are divorced or widowed.

Social connections play an important role in an individual's life satisfaction & health.

Risk factors for social isolation

- disabilities
- living alone
- aging
- place of residence
- low self-esteem
- gender
- loss of a spouse
- poverty
- reduced social networks
- transportation issues
- poor health

Seniors (65+) living alone



% of seniors living alone compared with the total number of seniors in the community
Canadian average 25.7%

Early Childhood

The provincial *Early Development Instrument (EDI)* measures five core areas of early child development that are known to be good predictors of adult health, education, and social outcomes: 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social competence; 3) emotional maturity; 4) language and cognitive development; and 5) communication and general knowledge. Working with schools, the EDI identifies vulnerability in kindergarten-age children and allows supports and services to be tailored for families and young children where and when they are needed.

Percentage of kindergarten-age children who are vulnerable on one or more of the five EDI scales

West Vancouver	32%
Bowen Island / Lion's Bay / Horseshoe Bay	42%
Sunshine Coast	38%
Squamish North	29%
Squamish South	36%
Whistler	20%
B.C.	33.4%

Child care offers opportunities for development and socialization. Results indicate that in BC approximately 58% of children aged 0-5 years participate in some type of child care arrangement, be that formal (e.g., daycare centre, 56%) or informal (e.g., care by a relative, 35%). Child care is also an important economic contributor, allowing parents to work and/to study. **In BC, 46.5% of parents indicated they had difficulty securing daycare vs 36.4% for Canada.** Across the region, family decisions are heavily influenced by available and affordable childcare options.



Youth and Young Adults



Combined, youth 15-19 and young adults 20-24 make up 10% or approximately 11,500 of our regional population. This group is connected through family, friends, school, recreation, issues, and social media.

The *BC Adolescent Health Survey* gathers self-reported information on the physical, mental, and emotional health of youth aged 12 to 18 in school districts throughout the province every five years. The most recent survey was completed in 2018. It reveals that youth are experiencing increasingly higher rates of anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders.

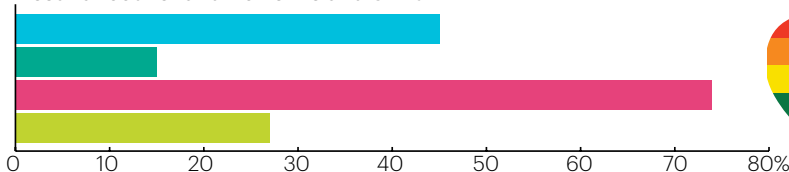
An estimated 84,000 children and youth in BC have a diagnosed mental disorder, yet fewer than one-third of those who seek help are receiving mental health services. That means that as many as 58,000 children and youth in BC are not receiving the treatment they need.

Reports by educators, social workers, and youth leaders indicate that young adults in our communities face similar emotional struggles compounded by the pressing challenges around education, employment, income, and housing.

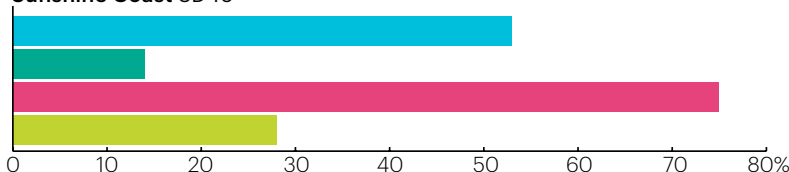
Protective Factors/predictors of good health

- Sleeping 8 or more hrs/night
- Meeting physical activity guidelines of 60 min/day moderate to vigorous activity for teens
- Relationships with supportive adults: Inside family
- Relationships with supportive adults: Outside family

West Vancouver and Bowen Island SD45



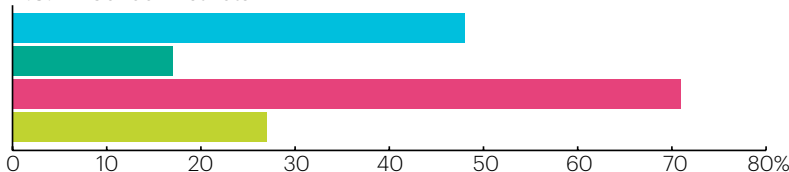
Sunshine Coast SD46



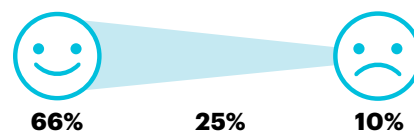
Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton SD48



B.C. All School Districts



Youth Happiness



25% Combined result. Represents a decrease of 5% in happiness vs 2013.



Sexual Orientation

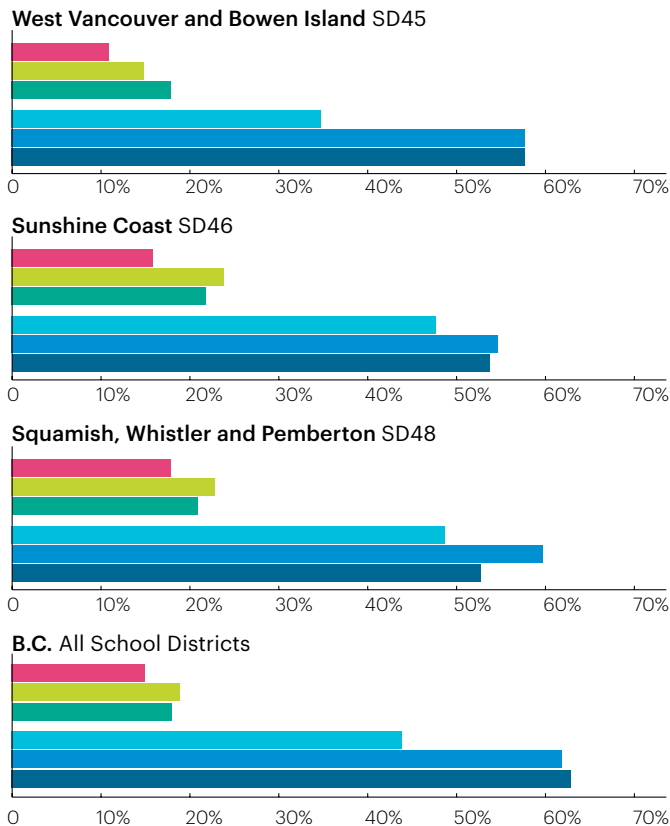
11% of youth in the Sea to Sky region, and throughout BC, identify as other than straight. Compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers, LGBTQ2S youth experience higher rates of mental and physical health challenges and social vulnerabilities, such as depression, substance use, and bullying.

A Growing Crisis

An estimated **68,000 youth** between the ages of 15 and 24 meet the criteria for a substance use disorder, yet BC has only 124 publicly funded treatment beds to serve our youth. In the North Shore Coast Garibaldi health services area, there have been 18 drug overdose deaths as of May 2020, nine involving fentanyl.

Youth Mental Health

Reflecting the provincial picture, there was a decrease of local students who rated their mental health as good or excellent, from 83% in 2013 to 73% in 2018.



- Youth reporting depression
- Youth reporting anxiety or panic attacks
- Youth reporting needing emotional or mental health services

But not getting them because:

- Didn't know where to go
- Didn't want parents to know
- Thought or hoped the problem would go away



Youth Self-Harm

For the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi region there was an increase in youth who had seriously considered suicide in the past year (from 10% in 2013 to 15%), but this is slightly less than the provincial average of 17%. Also, there was a local decrease in suicide attempts from the previous report (from 5% in 2013 to 4%).

However, females were more likely than males to have considered (24% vs 16%) or attempted suicide (5% vs 2%), and 15% of non-binary youth had attempted suicide. Youth in rural areas are more at risk with similar patterns between females and males. Lack of available and accessible youth mental health services is a contributing factor in all communities.

Substance Use



	West Vancouver Bowen Island SD 45	Sunshine Coast SD 46	Squamish Whistler Pemberton SD 48	B.C. All School Districts
Vaping without nicotine	15%	22%	25%	19%
Vaping with nicotine	26%	35%	31%	21%
Cannabis use	27%	37%	34%	25%
Alcohol use (Students who have tried alcohol)	50%	56%	55%	44%

Number of days had alcohol in past month (among students who had tried alcohol)

0 days	27%	29%	31%
3 to 5 days	20%	22%	21%
10 or more days	6%	8%	8%

Caregiving

Twenty-eight percent of B.C. residents age 15 and older are caregivers, providing unpaid care to family members or friends with a long-term health condition, disability, mental illness, or problems associated with aging. Among these caregivers, 39% care primarily for a parent, 8% for their spouse or partner, and 5% for their disabled child. The remaining 48% provide care to other family members or friends.

This unpaid caregiving by approximately 1,350,000 family and friend caregivers accounts for 80% of all caregiving in BC, and is estimated to contribute \$4.1 billion to the economy annually. Surveys have shown that 70% of caregivers are balancing jobs and caregiving, and 28% are “sandwiched” between caring for their parents and caring for their children. It is anticipated that the average person now turning 50 years old will spend more time caregiving for their elderly parent(s) than they spent caring for their children.

Although 92% of family and friend caregivers surveyed felt the caregiving experience was rewarding, caregiving can take a significant physical, emotional, and/or financial toll.

Thirty-one per cent of family caregivers in B.C. are in distress - the second-highest rate of caregiver distress in Canada, and an increase of 3.4% in the last five years. The strongest predictor of caregiver distress is the number of hours spent caring for someone, followed by the economic impact of caregiving.

If these figures hold true for the region (population approximately 120,000), then over 28,000 of area residents are caregivers, and almost 9,000 of them are under stress due to their caregiving role. As the region’s population ages, caregiving for many will become an even greater challenge. The number of seniors requiring support will increase, at the same time that both paid and unpaid caregivers will be less likely to live in or easily access the community due to housing costs and transportation challenges.

Security



Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound area residents are more likely to identify safety as a valued feature of their community than those in most other parts of the province. Safety involves much more than low crime rates. Staying safe on the roads, on the water, and in the back country, as well as being prepared for natural or human-caused disasters are key aspects of community safety and security.

Safety in the home is also important, and residents should take steps to keep their homes safe to prevent accidents and be prepared for emergencies. Yet for some residents, home is not a safe place due to intimate partner violence, a situation often made worse when there are increased financial pressures, or other stresses such as substance use, or mental health problems. An increased need for transition housing and support services is experienced throughout the region.

Assaults



Only **3 out of 10** incidents of intimate partner violence are reported to police, and on average, victims are assaulted by their partners 9 times before seeking help. In 2018/19, 132 West Vancouver and Bowen Island residents and 83 Squamish and Whistler residents accessed transition house services.

Studies indicate that, in Canada, only 5% of sexual assaults are reported to police, and in most cases, the victims are **young women age 15 to 24 years old who know their assailant**. Sexual assault is the only form of violent crime that is not decreasing. As an example, in Whistler the number of reported sexual assaults in recent years are as follows: 16 in 2016, 20 in 2017, 18 in 2018, and 29 in 2019.

For 2020 it is anticipated that intimate partner violence and assaults will be at heightened levels due to the social, emotional, and economic pressures of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Emergency Preparedness

Communities throughout the Greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound region share many of the same risks and vulnerabilities to natural and human caused disasters. The forest, marine, and mountain landscapes that make the area scenic and an attractor for residents, tourists, and recreation and nature enthusiasts also makes it more prone to hazards. The geography of the region also contributes to the potential for communities to be cut off from aid in the event of a disaster. Being prepared for a wide range of emergencies is the responsibility of local governments, businesses, and residents.

Potential disasters in the region that have been identified and are part of local government emergency management plans include:

- severe or extreme weather (including power failure, wind/rain/snow storms)
- forest fires and urban interface fires
- flooding
- debris flow, landslide, rockfall
- earthquake
- transport accidents (road, rail, air, marine)
- epidemic or pandemic

While many of the risks and vulnerabilities associated with disasters are specific to local areas or regions, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the health, social, and economic vulnerabilities of all our communities. It has shone a light on how precarious day-to-day life is for many, at the same time it has sharpened the focus on what's really important to most people, and what they value.

Most affected by the impact of the pandemic have been people experiencing challenges such as low income or unstable employment, food insecurity, mental illness, disability, chronic health conditions, social isolation, caregiver stress, and intimate partner violence. Their need for support has increased, which has put financial pressure on the health and social supports in communities to meet increased need, while also shifting methods of service delivery to ensure client, staff, and volunteer safety.

At the time of writing, the long-term ramifications on individuals, towns, cities, provinces, and the country are yet to be fully realized, but it is undeniable that the response and recovery will take years not months. This is a period of continuous learning and adjustment as we collectively face the threats to physical, social, mental, environmental, and economic well-being.

The need for lasting support and flexibility to address evolving issues as they emerge is the next priority. How we respond to the COVID crisis individually and collectively both now and going forward will shape our communities for generations to come.

What Comes Next



Our communities have far more in common than they differ. The many shared challenges create opportunities for a region-wide approach, or at least common approaches, to many of these issues. We encourage service providers, community members, and all levels of government to look at these findings and consider how they could work together to address these challenges.

Our Foundations are committed to work together to:

- Break down barriers to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized populations are understood, involved in decision-making, and have equal access to solutions
- Support those addressing housing needs through improved choices, partnerships, and diversity within our communities
- Help to find improved and dedicated health solutions for all ages, especially youth, young adults, and seniors.
- Support communities to address emergency preparedness, environmental protection, racial injustice, economic vitality, and sustainability
- Help build the capacities of charities and non-profits in our communities
- Advocate with government and others for improved transportation options connecting our communities, and progressive climate action initiatives and investments.

Community foundations contribute time, leadership, and financial support to local initiatives, helping people to give back where their communities need it most. Collectively, community foundations steward over \$6 billion in assets and are one of the largest contributors to charities in Canada, granting more than \$252 million in 2018. With an intimate knowledge of local priorities, community foundations champion what matters most by directing grants, expertise, leadership, and other investments towards everything from shelter, education, and care for those in need, to the arts, environment, and recreation.

Each of the community foundations involved in this study are members of Community Foundations of Canada. Together, we are building vibrant and caring communities across the North Shore, Sea-to-Sky, and Howe Sound, and exploring new ways to collaborate for community impact.

Whistler Community Foundation is the steward of money gifted to the community and provides grants in the areas of environment, arts & culture, social services and education. Our vision is to be impactful in supporting the charities and organizations that address evolving community needs.

**PO Box 1184 Whistler, BC | VM: 604.935.8080 | info@whistlerfoundation.com
whistlerfoundation.com**



Sunshine Coast Community Foundation provides stable and sustainable support to charitable organizations from Port Mellon to Egmont. It offers individuals, families, corporations, businesses, and groups the opportunity to pool charitable giving into a single Community Capital Fund that is responsive to the needs and concerns of the area's residents.

**PO Box 1343, Sechelt, BC | 604.741.7360 | admin@sccfoundation.com
sccfoundation.com**



The **Squamish Community Foundation** believes that our community is stronger when every member is valued and supported. Using the power of philanthropy, the Squamish Community Foundation (SCF) is committed to enriching the quality of life for those who live, work, and play here. Together, we can build a healthy and vibrant community.

**PO Box 555, Squamish BC | 604-848-8683 | info@squamishfoundation.com
squamishfoundation.com**



Bowen Island Community Foundation helps build a resilient community and strengthens Bowen Islanders sense of belonging by engaging citizens, organizations, and local government to work together and contribute their money, time, ideas, expertise, and energy to serve the community.

**P.O. Box 18, Bowen Island BC | info@bowenfoundation.com
bowenfoundation.com**



West Vancouver Foundation is a leader in community-based philanthropy across Vancouver's North Shore. We work with individuals, families, and corporate donors offering a range of fund and investment options; provide grants to support community initiatives; plus highlight the changing needs and vulnerabilities in our community through our Vital Signs reporting. West Vancouver Foundation is one of the top 30 Community Foundations in Canada and the largest in the greater Sea to Sky and Howe Sound region.

**775 15th Street, West Vancouver, BC | 604.925.8153 | info@westvanfoundation.ca
westvanfoundation.ca**

