

NO: R023

COUNCIL DATE: March 6, 2023

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 2, 2023**

FROM: **General Manager, Community Services**

FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Application for a Union of BC Municipalities Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program Grant**

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Services Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to submit an application, before the application deadline of March 17, 2023, to the Union of BC Municipalities (“UBCM”) Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program for a grant in the amount of \$50,000 to develop a program focused on identifying challenges people with disabilities face in accessing income benefits.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to submit an application to the UBCM’s Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program in the amount of \$50,000 (the “Grant”). The project will be conducted in partnership with the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition (the “SPRC”) and will focus on the challenges people with disabilities (“PWD”) face in accessing income benefits and supports. The application deadline is March 17, 2023.

BACKGROUND

The SPRC was established in 2012 to champion the implementation of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. The City has been an active member of the SPRC since its inception. In March 2022, SPRC finalized *Coming Together: A Collaborative Approach to Ending Poverty in Surrey* (attached as Appendix “I”).

At a community forum held by the SPRC in December 2022, homeless outreach workers raised concerns around the challenges faced by PWD who they work with when trying to find a doctor or nurse practitioner to complete the paperwork needed to access disability benefits and supports. PWD often live in deep poverty and experience homelessness.

The goal of this project is to understand the issues/barriers for PWD who are not accessing disability benefits. Additional information on the proposed project is provided in Appendix “II”.

DISCUSSION

If the grant application is successful, the main activities will include:

- *Background Work* (summer of 2023): Research and Data collection to inform the project.
- *Community Engagement* (fall 2023):
 - One -on-one and small group interviews with stakeholders in order to understand the issues and challenges from multiple perspectives.
 - Stakeholder workshop to share information from the research and consultation, clarify viewpoints, develop a shared understanding of the issue, and identify solutions.
- *Development of Resources* (winter/spring 2024)
 - Preparing a project report that will outline the issue and provide recommended action.
 - Preparing fact sheets targeted for different audiences, including health care providers, outreach workers and for PWD, to raise awareness of the issue and actions to increase access and/or remove barriers for PWD to secure benefits.

Funding

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$50,000. The Grant will cover 100% of the cost of eligible activities.

CONCLUSION

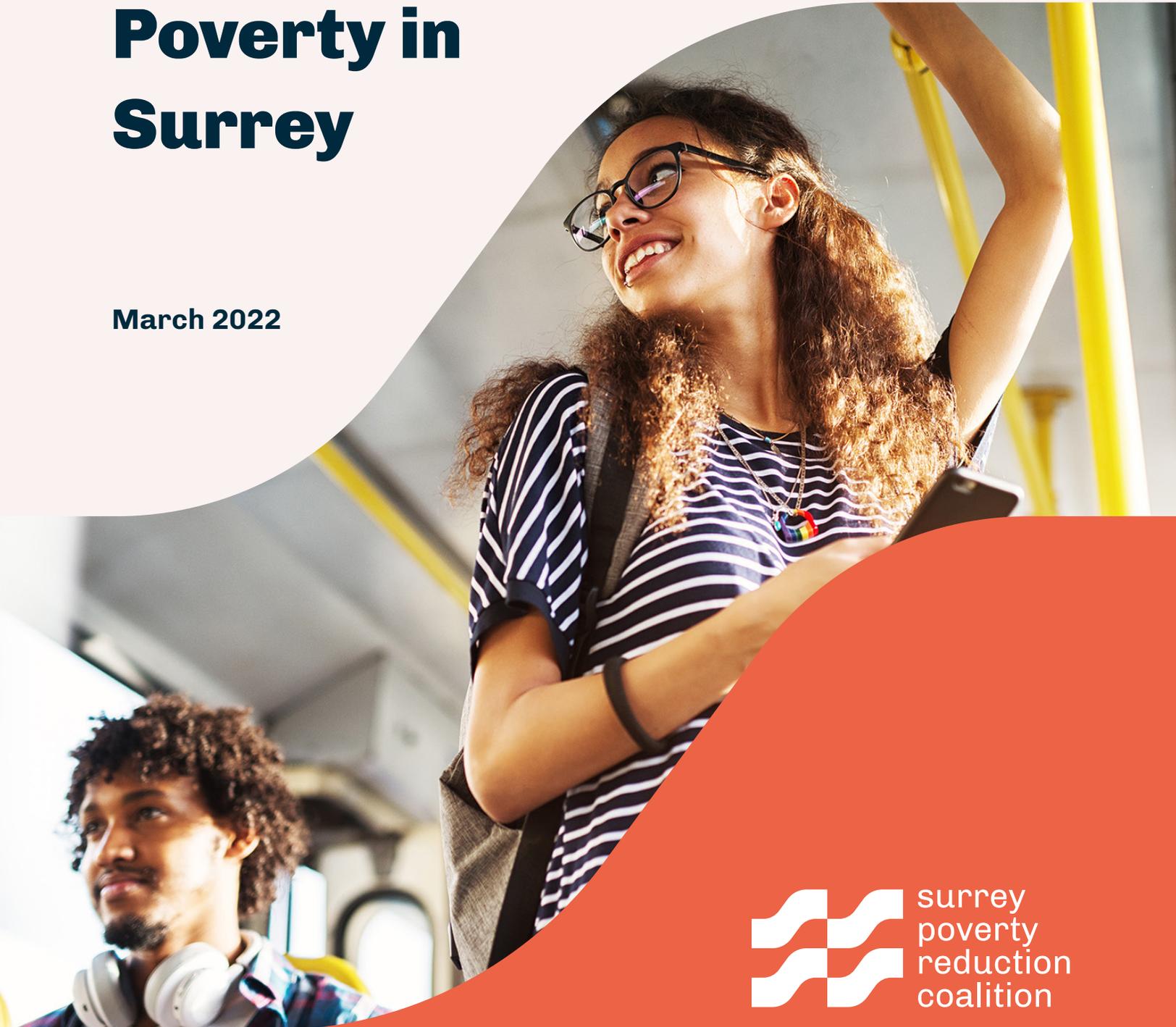
It is recommended that Council authorize the submission of an application to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program for a grant in the amount of \$50,000. The proposed activity outlined in this report meets the grant priority areas outlined by UBCM and will aim to have a positive impact on PWD who are experiencing challenges in accessing the appropriate benefits and supports.

Terry Waterhouse
General Manager, Community Services

Appendix "I": Coming Together: A Collaborative Approach to Ending Poverty in Surrey
Appendix "II": Additional Information on the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program Grant

COMING TOGETHER: **A Collaborative Approach to Ending Poverty in Surrey**

March 2022



Acknowledgments

Land Acknowledgement

The work of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition takes place on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Semiahma (Semiahmoo), Kwantlen, sq̓əc̓'iy̓'aʔt̓ təməxʷ (Katzie), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem), Qayqayt, and sc̓əwaθenaʔt̓ təməx (Tsawwassen) Nations.

The Project Advisory Committee

The development of this plan was guided by the Project Advisory Committee members who graciously shared their time and expertise to re-energize and re-invigorate the work of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition. The Project Advisory Committee includes:

Penny Bradley	Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Tabitha Naismith	BC ACORN
Carmen Hall	BC Housing
Aileen Murphy	City of Surrey
Vera Lefranc	Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
Ewa Karczewska	Surrey Local Immigration Partnership / Immigrant Services Society of BC
Steve Cardwell	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Steve Lamothe & Jassy Pandher	Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Mainu Ahmed & Saleem Spindari	Muslim Food Bank & Community Services
Christine Mohr	Options Community Services
Steve Dooley, Chair	Simon Fraser University
David Young	Sources Community Resources Society
Feezah Jaffer	Surrey Food Bank
Surinder Bogal	Surrey Libraries
Sheldon Tetrault	Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee
Mike Musgrove	Surrey Urban Mission Society
Doug Tennant	UNITI

The Union of BC Municipalities

Following the release of *TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy* in 2019, the Union of BC Municipalities received funding from the Province to create a Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level. The City of Surrey, on behalf of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition (SPRC), received funding to refresh the SPRC's 2012 poverty reduction strategy - enabling us to re-envision how the SPRC can move the dial on poverty reduction in the city.

For more information on the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition please visit www.surreyprc.ca.



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01 Executive Summary

It is encouraging to see a marked decrease in poverty levels at both the provincial and federal levels over the past two decadesⁱ. But this doesn't mean our work is finished.

In 2016, Surrey's poverty rate was 14.8%; a number that was comparable – and lower – than the poverty rate for Metro Vancouver (16.5%) and for the Province as a whole (15.3%) in the same year.

The story of Surrey's poverty, however, is one of people and places at the neighbourhood-level; there are specific geographic areas and some demographics disproportionately at-risk of, or experiencing, high levels of poverty. It is also a story of numbers. In 2021, Surrey's population was 568,322ⁱⁱ. Even relatively small proportions can represent large numbers of people in our community. While poverty rates in Canada and BC have been declining, still amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we wonder if these rates will increase as we come to understand the breadth and depth of economic impacts from public health measures and the pandemic itself. Indeed poverty is both a deeply personal issue and a public issue with significant impacts on the economy and public health.

After nearly a decade of work in the community, we have heard that there is still a valuable role for the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition (SPRC) at the local level. This plan marks the beginning of the renewal of the SPRC as we apply the outcomes and insights from our first ten years to re-envision how we work together, and how we work in the community in the coming years. We are grateful for this opportunity to pause and reflect on our achievements and strengths as a coalition and consider how our local work fits into the provincial and federal poverty reduction initiatives, while maintaining Surrey's unique needs top of mind.

Our Research

The process of developing this plan involved statistical research, spatial mapping research, and community engagement through our Project Advisory Committee and online community forum. Through these methods, we have identified the following four local priorities to focus on:

Housing

Transportation

Child Poverty

Community-Based Research

We are excited to share the findings of a small research project spatially mapping various Census 2016 data at the neighbourhood level. While this research project is just the beginning of the equity-focused work we plan to undertake, the findings will influence how we understand poverty in our community and where we focus our efforts as we take action.

Our Plan

Our Vision:

Surrey is a place where people live with dignity, respect, and an equitable opportunity to thrive.

Our Mission:

To facilitate collective action on eliminating poverty and inspire systemic change in Surrey.

Guiding Principles

- Work Towards Reconciliation
- Listen & Amplify
- Collaborate Across Sectors
- Be Inclusive
- Remain Action-Oriented
- Act with Mindfulness
- Innovate & Create
- Consider Equity
- Go Upstream
- Stay Focused on Surrey

Action Area	 Speak Out	 Plan & Pilot	 Research	 Convene
Mandate	The SPRC will support and amplify the poverty-related initiatives and calls to action of other local tables and coalitions in Surrey.	The SPRC will consider the local, regional, provincial, and national contexts when planning action. The SPRC's plans will ensure that its activities do not duplicate or compete with the work of local agencies and/or other coalitions in Surrey.	The SPRC will collect, analyze, and report, in a variety of formats, quantitative and qualitative information on poverty in Surrey; this will help others to understand local poverty and inform and mobilize action.	The SPRC will bring stakeholders together across sectors and create opportunities for meaningful collaboration and cooperation.
Goal	The SPRC provides a collective voice around local priorities related to poverty.	The SPRC takes strategic collective action on local priorities, including conducting pilot projects that may be outside the mandate of member organizations, require a collaborative effort, and/or test out an innovative approach.	The SPRC provides current and relevant information on poverty and local priorities in Surrey; this information increases understanding and awareness, mobilizes action, and increases investment in Surrey.	The SPRC increases Surrey's community-based capacity and ability to impact poverty reduction by working together.

In order to remain nimble and responsive to changing contexts and emerging priorities, our plan will be a true living document that is regularly updated to ensure that we are working in the most effective and efficient way. To monitor and evaluate our work we will regularly produce progress reports detailing our activities, and assessing our work.

We know the solutions to end poverty are complex and we need to recognize the key role of the provincial and federal governments as we take action. We also understand that it will be challenging, but we also believe that it is worth it; every Surrey resident deserves to have the means, support, and opportunity to thrive.

02 Introduction

In 2021, the City of Surrey was home to 568,322 people. Historically viewed as a suburb or a bedroom community to Vancouver, Surrey is now outpacing other municipalities in population growth and is anticipated to be the largest city in BC by 2041.

According to the 2016 Census, 14.8% of Surrey residents were considered low-income. This rate was slightly lower than regional (16.5%) and provincial poverty rates (15.5%). Provincially, the poverty rate decreased from 15.3% in 2016 to 10.8% in 2019ⁱⁱⁱ – a positive trend although the impacts that the global pandemic will have on poverty rates in the coming years is unknown. The SPRC's workplan for the coming year includes compiling more up-to-date local data, including 2021 Census data that will be released in 2022, so that we understand the trends and current situation of poverty in Surrey.

Poverty in Surrey reveals the inequity between demographics and neighbourhoods. Indigenous communities, racialized people, newcomers, and children in lone parent families all disproportionately experience poverty; some neighbourhoods in Whalley, Newton, and Guildford have disproportionate numbers of low-income households.

The added stressors for Surrey households struggling with poverty are immense; people are forced to make impossible decisions everyday, like choosing to pay rent or provide food to their family. It means that by just struggling to get by, these families cannot even dream about getting ahead. But the impacts of poverty affect all of us. Poverty increases healthcare costs, policing burdens, and leads to diminished educational outcomes. It impacts both the social and economic health of our community.

After a decade of work in the community, we have heard there is still an important role for the SPRC to play. This plan outlines a framework for the next 3 years of where we will focus our efforts, how we will approach our work, and how we will measure our success as a collective as we act strategically and intentionally to influence individuals and decision-makers to prioritize eliminating poverty. Our hope is that our work will impact policies and programs, and the investments that Surrey receives to move the dial at the local-level, so that all of its residents have the means, opportunities, and support to truly thrive.

We know that it will take a serious level of commitment from every level of government to first reduce, and then eradicate poverty in our communities. The Government of Canada and the Province of BC released their first-ever poverty reduction strategies in the past few years, making it a crucial time for collective action at the local level on this issue.

History of the SPRC

In 2012, the SPRC — a multi-sectoral, non-partisan coalition of representatives from a range of organizations and government agencies — was established to implement the *THIS is How We End Poverty in Surrey (THIS)* poverty reduction strategy. *THIS* focused on four policy areas — Transportation, Housing, Income and Supports — and included 75 recommendations for action.

Over the past decade, dozens of local organizations and people have worked in partnership with, or in support of, the SPRC to undertake research, advocate on key priorities, host community events, conduct

pilot projects, and implement key actions in support of the recommendations outlined in the *THIS* strategy.

The 2012 poverty strategy is out of date, especially given new federal and provincial poverty reduction plans that have been released in recent years. Non-profit and government leaders in the community have confirmed the need for the SPRC to continue its work on poverty. This plan marks the beginning of the renewal of the SPRC as we apply the outcomes and insights from our first ten years of work to re-envision how we work together, and how we work in the community.

CLIC: Community Leaders Igniting Change

The Community Leadership Igniting Change (CLIC) is a community leadership development program for those who live or work in Surrey and other South of the Fraser neighbourhoods. The program is a partnership of Simon Fraser University - Surrey campus, Envision Financial, and the SPRC. The inspiration for the CLIC program was the Hamilton Community Foundation's Neighbourhood Leadership Institute – a leadership and skill building program for emerging resident leaders of all ages in Hamilton.

Over the course of the 12-week CLIC program, participants are engaged in sessions that cover a diversity of ideas and skills. Along the way, CLIC participants come to better understand themselves, one another, and the needs and possibilities of their communities.

The program was piloted in 2015 and to date, we are proud that we have watched over 100 incredible participants take part in this unique leadership program over nine Cohorts. We cannot wait to see what the 2022 Cohort will do!

SPRC Pilot Project: Connecting Community to Surrey Youth Aging Out of Care

In 2017, the SPRC set out to explore ways to “wrap the community” around youth 19+ with government care experience, understanding the additional barriers these youth face as they transition from government care to independent living in the community when they turn 19.

Between 2017 and 2020, we worked hard to support these young people in our community — taking action by planning youth retreats, hosting Holiday Dinners, creating and supporting a Surrey Youth Advisory Committee, setting up a special Youth Fund and so much more. Details on that work can be found in the Connecting Community to Surrey Youth Aging Out of Care reports on our website.

In 2020 we received a generous Systems Change Grant from the Vancouver Foundation to continue this work through the development and launch of two pilot projects: Fireside Youth Leadership Program and Fundementors. These pilots reflect the years of work and engagement with Surrey youth from care that helped to identify their specific needs during the transition from government care to independent living, and specifically their desire for more adult support and mentorship and opportunities for leadership development. At the time of this report, both pilot projects were underway and we look forward to reporting back on the impacts and insights after the pilot phase wraps up in mid-2022.



03 Our Planning Process

Planning Context

Eliminating poverty will require commitment and cooperation from all levels of government and the community. In 2018 and 2019, the Government of Canada and the Province of BC released their first-ever poverty reduction strategies. It is important

that we consider these plans in order to strategically align our efforts and increase the opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation and investment in Surrey.

Government	Strategy	Goal	Priorities
Government of Canada	<i>Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018)^{iv}</i>	To reduce the poverty rate in Canada from 12% down to 10% by 2020 and to 6% by 2030.	<p>Three pillars to focus government actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity: lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs are met • Opportunity and Inclusion: helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity • Resilience and Security: supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience
Province of British Columbia	<i>TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019)^v</i>	To reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by 25%, with a 50% reduction in the child poverty rate by 2024.	<p>4 Key Themes: Affordability, Opportunity, Reconciliation & Social Inclusion</p> <p>12 Key Priority Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and Homelessness • Supports for Children & Families • Financial Security & Income Supports • Mental Health & Addictions Services • Food Security • Access to Health Care • Education & Training • Employment & Jobs • Access to Services • Safe, Affordable Transportation • Access to Justice • Discrimination & Stigma



“ Canada’s first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy is built on the belief that all Canadians deserve to be treated fairly and to have the means and the abilities to grow and fully participate in the development of their communities...”

- The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children & Social Development, (Opportunity for All)

“ Poverty reduction is about more than numbers: it’s about people. While our targets are expressed as statistics, an effective poverty reduction strategy needs to be rooted in empathy, understanding and inclusion.”

- TogetherBC

Regional Voices

Within the province and the region there are a number of additional community-mobilizing groups with policy recommendations related to poverty. In the search for synergies and opportunities for collaboration, the SPRC may consider how these calls to action relate to our work locally. Some examples of these key groups are:

\$10/a Day Campaign (child care)

All on Board (transit)

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition

First Call (child poverty)

Fostering Change (children and youth in/from government care)

Fresh Voices (newcomer youth)

Living Wage for Families Campaign

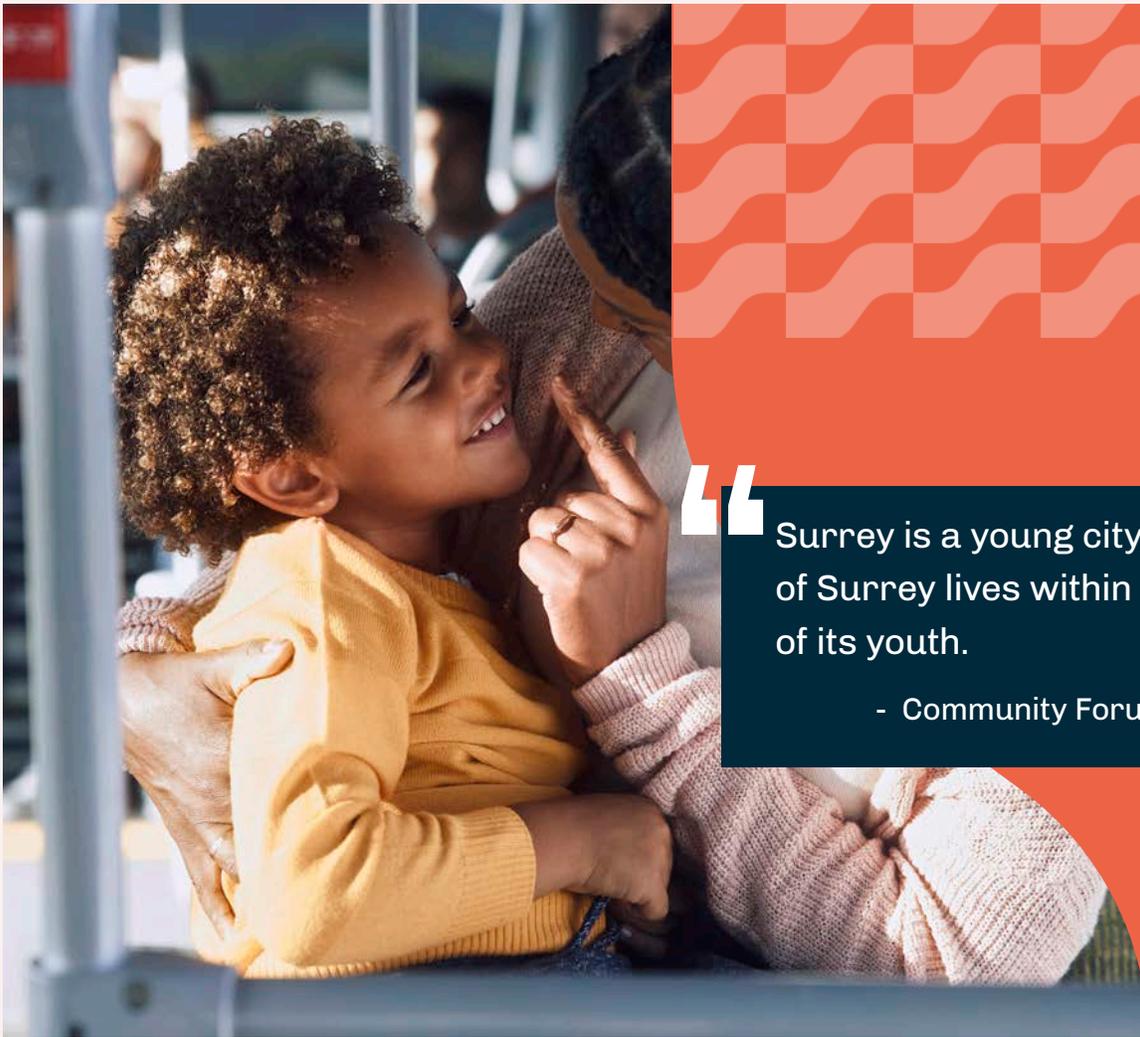
Raise the Rates (income and disability assistance)

And others...

Local Knowledge

There are a number of local community tables working on issues that relate to poverty and equity in our community. Many of these tables have strategic plans that outline recommended actions. Whenever possible and appropriate, the SPRC will amplify — or take action on — these calls to action. We know the tables highlighted below is not an exhaustive list and we are committed to working with additional tables beyond the examples below, that wish to partner with us on poverty reduction.





“ Surrey is a young city. The future of Surrey lives within the hearts of its youth. ”
 - Community Forum Participant

Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

- All Our Relations Strategy
- Skookum Lab Child Poverty and Housing Reports
- www.surreyindigenousleadership.ca

Seeds of Change Surrey

- Food Insecurity: What Can We Do
- www.surreywhiterockfoodactioncoalition.ca

Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group

- In Their Own Words
- Surrey: Surviving the Night
- SVWG Briefing Doc: Gendered Homelessness
- www.surrey.ca/about-surrey/social-planning/vulnerable-women-and-girls-working-group

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

- Immigrant Integration Strategy: Everyone in Surrey Belongs!
- Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy: Surrey our New Home
- <https://www.surreylip.ca/>



COVID-19

When we started this planning process, no one could have predicted a global pandemic was on the horizon. Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 had a significant impact on the process, our timeline, and our ability to engage with the community in a safe and efficient way.

The additional stressors and pressures for people experiencing poverty through the pandemic continue to be exponential and thus we made an intentional decision not to duplicate the surveys and interviews that others have already done with people with lived experience; instead we looked to our Project Advisory Committee members and other community tables who have deep and meaningful connections with a diversity of community members and have conducted extensive community consultations for their insight. In the Fall of 2021, we brought our initial findings for additional feedback and dialogue to a diverse group at our online community forum.

Methods

Community Assets

We acknowledge and honour the vast work underway throughout Surrey on issues that are connected to poverty reduction. Organizations and community coalitions provided us with rich data and insight on local poverty. Respecting the work that community tables, such as the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee and the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, have done in identifying community needs - and not wanting to duplicate their efforts - we looked to them to share their expertise on local priorities to inform our goals and actions.

Kick-Off Engagement Session

In February 2021 we convened a core group of decision-makers in the community to provide feedback on the role and focus of the SPRC. These local “systems entrepreneurs” have a strong understanding of systems and represent a diversity of equity-denied groups across the city. In total, 24 executive directors and senior managers convened to discuss key priorities in Surrey and the role of the SPRC in the community. Participating organizations were:

Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Atira Women’s Resource Society
BC ACORN
BC Housing
The Centre for Child Development
City of Surrey
DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
Immigrant Services Society of BC
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Phoenix Society
Progressive Intercultural Community Services
Lookout Housing & Health Solutions
Ministry of Children & Family Development
Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
Muslim Food Bank & Community Services
Options Community Services
Simon Fraser University
Sources Community Resources Society
Surrey Food Bank Society
Surrey Libraries
Surrey School District
Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership
Committee
Surrey Urban Mission Society
Surrey Women’s Centre
UNITI

Project Advisory Committee

Capitalizing on the excitement and passion of the February stakeholder engagement session, we invited the same organization representatives to become the Project Advisory Committee; this committee would provide feedback and support throughout the planning process at key milestones. The Project Advisory Committee convened seven times throughout the year to determine the SPRC’s vision and mission, advise on key activities, and determine which actions the SPRC was prepared and positioned to take on.

Research

We primarily used the 2016 Canadian Census to compile key data points related to poverty in Surrey, supplemented with some additional data from reliable sources. Unfortunately, the new 2021 Census data was not available during our planning process; we intend to update our data as it becomes available in the coming year.

Inspired by the *Metro Vancouver Social Equity & Regional Growth Study*, we completed a small research project spatially mapping various 2016 Census data tracts at the local level¹. While this research project is just the beginning of the equity-focused research we plan to undertake, the findings will influence how we understand poverty in our community and where we focus our efforts as we take action.

Community Forum

In November 2021, we brought 50 local decision-makers and community ambassadors together through a virtual community forum. Community ambassadors are local leaders who represent various population groups impacted by poverty including low-income renters, racialized youth, youth from government care, people with developmental disabilities and residents of low-income neighbourhoods. The forum participants engaged in meaningful dialogue on the research findings on equity, local priorities, and on possible solutions or actions moving forward. These reflections informed the actions outlined in our action plan.

¹ A summary report on this research is in Appendix A



“

This information isn't accessible for all unless it's in plain language, so many people are automatically discriminated from this conversation if the information isn't communicated clearly.

”

- Community Forum Participant

04 Our Research

Our research findings show that while Surrey may have similar — or even lower — rates of poverty relative to other municipalities in Metro Vancouver, poverty in Surrey has a disproportionate impact on particular people and particular places. Poverty in Surrey must be understood — and addressed — at the neighbourhood level and/or for specific population groups.

Another key feature of poverty in Surrey are the absolute numbers. Though the poverty rate is comparable regionally, Surrey has a large population making relative percentages translate into a larger absolute number of people. If we consider that Surrey has the largest population of children and youth in the province, similar rates of child poverty translates to many more children being impacted, as compared to other communities.

Poverty is multi-faceted and challenging to define. In the following section we outline the income measurement we used to define poverty for the purpose of this plan, what the quantitative data tells us, what the community has identified as key priorities, and how we have attempted to explore the idea of equity through the use of bivariate spatial maps to help identify which residents and which neighbourhoods are most impacted across the City. All of this information offers a foundation to understand where and how the SPRC can make the most impact in the coming years.

The Scope of Poverty

Poverty is both a deeply personal issue and a public issue with significant impacts on the economy and public health.

As a public issue, "...poverty is one of the biggest burdens on the economic, healthcare, and criminal justice systems in Canada."^{vi} In 2011, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a report on the cost of poverty in British Columbia; with a total societal cost landing somewhere between \$8.1 and \$9.2 billion dollars each year.^{vii} The takeaway message from that report was clear: inaction on poverty costs far more than action to end poverty.

Personally, poverty has a huge impact on people's lives. In 2020, the United Nations Development Programme developed the "The 2020 Multidimensional Poverty Index" to measure poverty across three dimensions: health, education, and living standards. Indicators such as suitable and affordable housing, food security, and access to education affect many people in Surrey, stretching the definition of poverty beyond financial instability and income levels alone.

Beyond the indicators listed above, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified and highlighted inequity in our communities, and the social isolation has been particularly impactful on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of people living in poverty. Poverty is indeed a common thread or root cause of many of the social issues we see in our communities — from personal and public health outcomes to the economy.

A Note from Fraser Health's Community Health Specialist

Presently, we understand poverty as individuals and families having insufficient access to prerequisites of health such as housing, nutritious food, and education. Due to these factors, poverty is a critical determinant of both personal and social health. Further, it must be stated that poverty disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples, people of colour, immigrants, single parents, persons with disabilities, and other systematically marginalized populations.^{viii}

Poverty holds a significant impact on personal wellness, as through research we have learned that individuals and families living in poverty face more barriers when seeking care. Canadians experiencing low-income are more likely to report that they have not received needed health care in the past 12 months.^{ix}

A successful poverty reduction intervention must include opportunities for individuals and families to actualize their full potential and to live healthy, meaningful lives.^x This means ensuring folks experience the following through culturally competent providers and resources: economic and social inclusion, experience food security, and have access to healthy housing, high quality child care, education opportunities, and necessary health services.^{xi}

The lived experience of poverty is highly contextual and personal — there is no single definition that encompasses the nuance and complexity of the social or economic inequity that people experience. Respecting this, we can look to Opportunity for All - Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy, for a high-level definition of poverty:

“ The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society. ”

Measuring Poverty

Income level measures, while not the only determining factor in measuring poverty, provide a shared metric for understanding the number of people in our community without the economic means they require to meet a modest standard of living.

There are three metrics currently used by Statistics Canada to assess poverty levels in communities: Canada's Official Poverty Line, Low-Income Measure, and Low-Income Cut-Offs. The Official Poverty Line and the Low-Income Measure are outlined here, as the SPRC uses both measures to assess poverty in Surrey.

Canada's Official Poverty Line

In *Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*, the Government of Canada outlines an absolute measure of poverty based on what is currently known as the Market Basket Measure (MBM). "Canada's Official Poverty Line" reflects the cost of living across 50 different regions in Canada, highlighting that poverty is highly relative and varies by geographic location. Broadly, Canada's Official Poverty Line reflects the combined costs of a basket of goods and services that families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living; including healthy food, appropriate shelter and home maintenance, clothing, transportation, and other goods and services that support engagement in a person's community. This measure is currently being used by the Government of Canada using a variety of data sources, and reported on regularly as per the guidelines in *Opportunity for All*. As this measure is based on different regions in Canada, we will continue to monitor the information for Metro Vancouver.

The MBM threshold in Metro Vancouver for a family of 2 adults and 2 children was \$50,055 in 2019.

Low-Income Measure – After Tax (LIM-AT)

Canada's Official Poverty Line will now be the official measure of poverty in Canada, however Statistics Canada will continue to measure low-income based on the Low-Income Measure (LIM). A household is considered to be low-income if its income is below 50% of median household incomes, accounting for household size. As this measure moves according to the changing incomes of the total population, it is a relative measure of poverty. Most of the poverty-related data currently available to our communities via the Census uses the LIM-AT (Low-income Measure After Tax), and we use this measurement throughout this plan.

According to the 2016 Census, the low-income thresholds for private households in Canada in 2015 are as follows:

Household Size	After-Tax Income
1 person	\$22,133
2 person	\$31,301
3 person	\$38,355
4 person	\$44,266
5 person	\$49,491
6 person	\$54,215
7 person	\$58,558



The Inequity of Poverty²

The City of Surrey is diverse, young, and growing rapidly.

The story of Surrey's poverty is one of people and places at the neighbourhood-level; there are specific geographic areas and some demographics disproportionately at-risk of, or experiencing, high levels of poverty. It is also a story of numbers. In 2021, Surrey's population was 568,322; making even relatively small proportions represent large numbers of people in our community.

Surrey is rich in its cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity. In 2016, 61% of residents identified as racialized — selecting either First Nation, Métis, Inuit or "Visible Minority"³ on the Census. Racialized people in Surrey — in particular Indigenous people and newcomers — experience poverty at much higher rates than the general population.

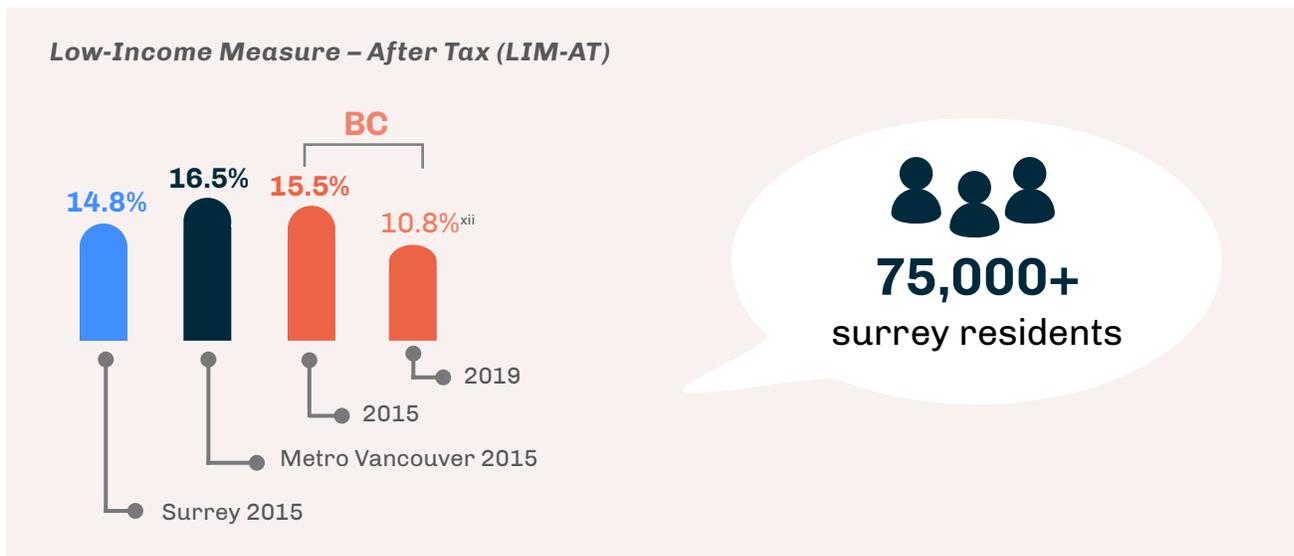
According to 2016 Census data, Surrey has a higher proportional immigrant population (43%) than both the province (28%) and region (41%). Recent immigrants, arriving between 2011-2016, make up a significant proportion of Surrey's immigrant population and in 2016, 25% of all recent immigrants in Metro Vancouver called Surrey home.

Surrey is estimated to have the largest urban Indigenous population in the province. In 2016, Surrey was home to 13,460 Indigenous people, making up 3% of the City's population; this demographic is young and growing quickly.

Exploring Equity

Even when we examine the discrepancies between overall poverty rates and poverty rates for specific demographics such as racialized and Indigenous residents, newcomers, or lone parents, we are still prone to simplify the complexity of how poverty is experienced in Surrey.

Race, gender, citizenship, ability, language, and age are just a few examples of identity that impact a person's lived experience of poverty and that affect their access to resources and opportunities. If we also consider geographic location, this potential access is further impacted along with the relative cost of living, impact from environmental impacts and climate change, and/or contextual situations like rapid development and gentrification. Grappling with this complexity enables us to better understand the needs of particular demographics or neighbourhoods, and it enables decision-makers to assess the limitations and possibilities of their proposed policy solutions. The idiom "one size fits all" clearly doesn't pertain to the actions required to eradicate poverty, and it is pertinent to continue this equity-focused research through further data analysis and to balance this quantitative and spatial data with the voices of people experiencing poverty.



² All data in this section is sourced from the 2016 Census, unless otherwise specified.

³ The term "Visible Minority" is used by Statistics Canada and so will be referenced here, though we prefer to use the term "racialized" when possible.

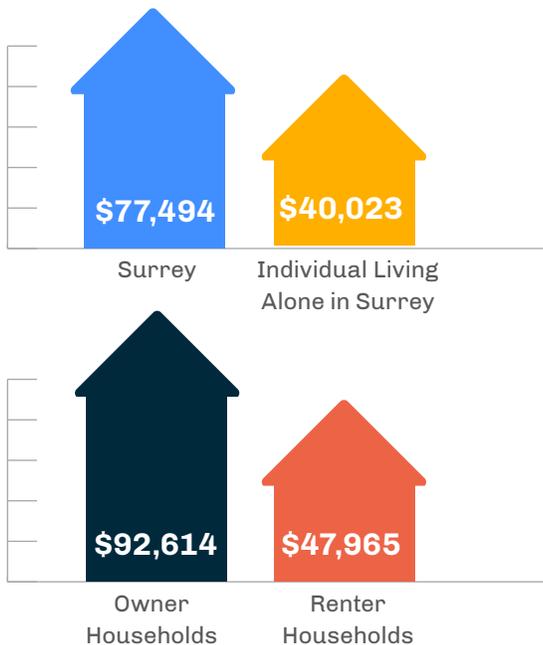
Understanding Equity

Many people are familiar with the image of three people standing behind a fence watching a sports game. Depending on their height, where they are located along the fence, how sloped or bumpy the ground is beneath them, each person requires a different stool to be able to view what is happening. Receiving the unique stool they require is offered as an example of equity, as opposed to equality where each person would receive the same stool regardless of their need.

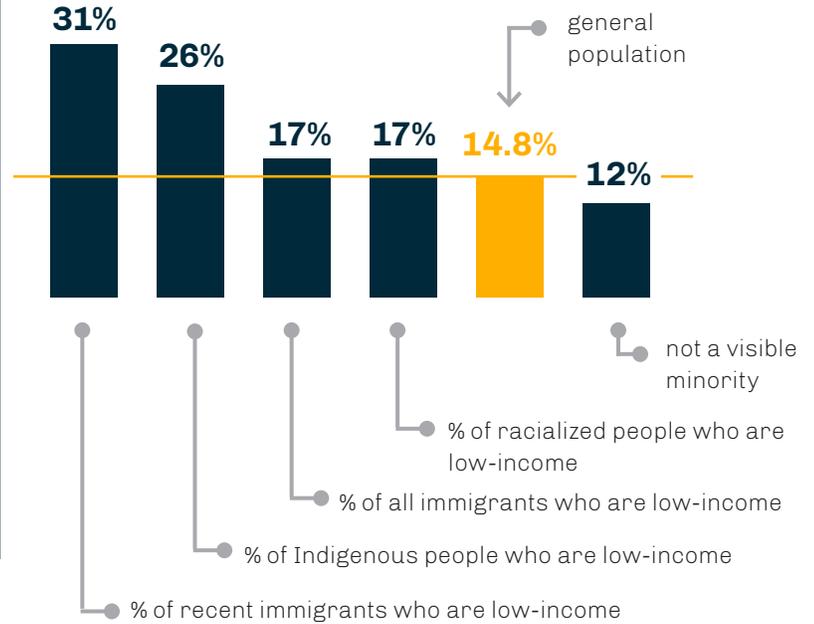
Recognizing inequity requires us to identify and acknowledge the barriers and systems in place that create differences in access to resources and opportunities, resulting in an uneven playing field for residents.

In 2015
3,550 Indigenous people in Surrey were living in poverty

Median Household Income⁴



People Matter



“ PWD (People with Disabilities) rates are well below the poverty limit. I'll be trapped in poverty no matter what I do. I'm a health care worker. I can't work more than I want to because I could lose my income, never save or go back to school, all those avenues are closed to me. ”
 - Community Forum Participant

“ If my landlord ever sells, I will be homeless. I've been priced out of my community, and town, and at this point the whole province ”
 - Community Forum Participant

⁴ Median income data is before tax. The Low Income Measure data is after tax (LIM-AT).

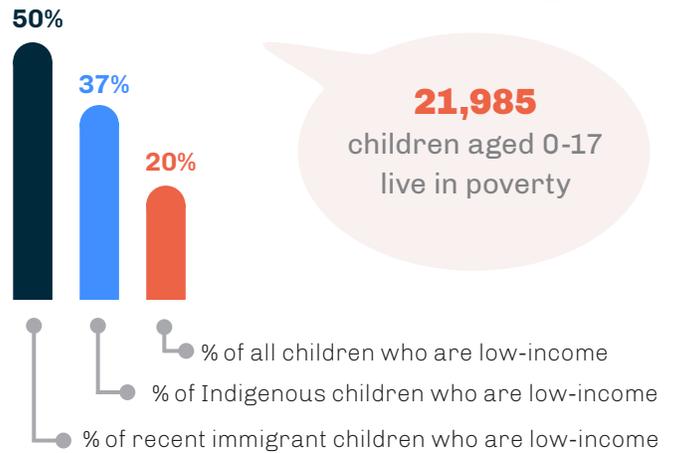
Intergenerational Income Mobility

Across the country we are not only seeing a growth in income inequality, but an trend of declining income mobility. In 2021 Statistics Canada released a report entitled *Trends in Intergenerational Income Mobility and Income Inequality in Canada* containing a statistical analysis of income mobility across birth cohorts from 1963 to 1982.^{xiii}

Their findings show that over the span of five cohorts, Canada has been “going up” the statistical measurement known as the Great Gatsby Curve, characterized by an increasing degree of income inequality among parents and a decreasing degree of income mobility among children. The findings show that children born in families with a total family income in the bottom 20% of the income distribution have become less likely to exit the bottom quintile themselves and less likely to transition into the middle class. In specific terms, children born in 1982 had 22% less chance of exiting the bottom quintile than those born in 1963.

In 2015, Surrey’s child poverty rate was:

20%

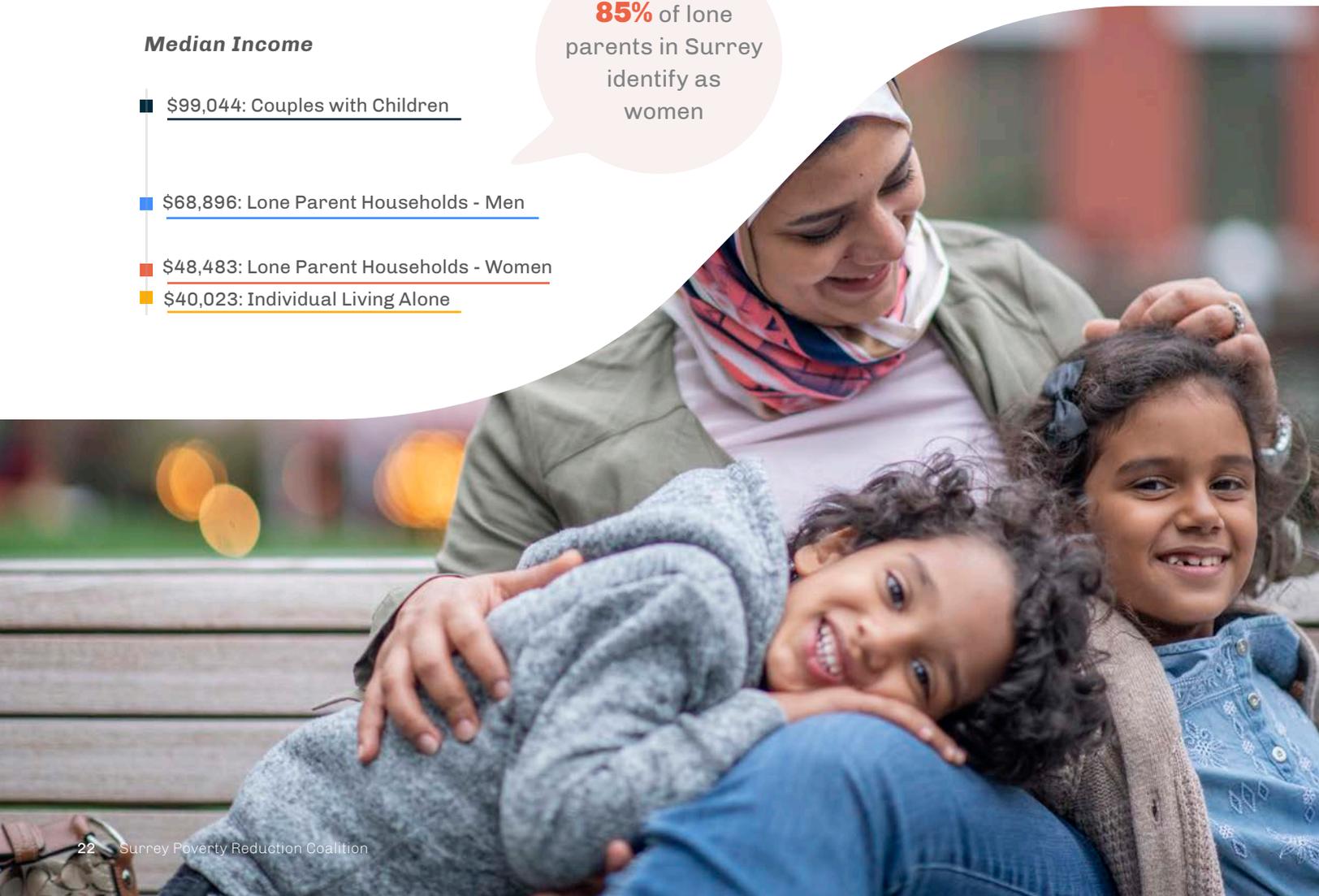


28% of lone parent households are low-income.
This is 5,975 families.

Median Income

- \$99,044: Couples with Children
- \$68,896: Lone Parent Households - Men
- \$48,483: Lone Parent Households - Women
- \$40,023: Individual Living Alone

85% of lone parents in Surrey identify as women

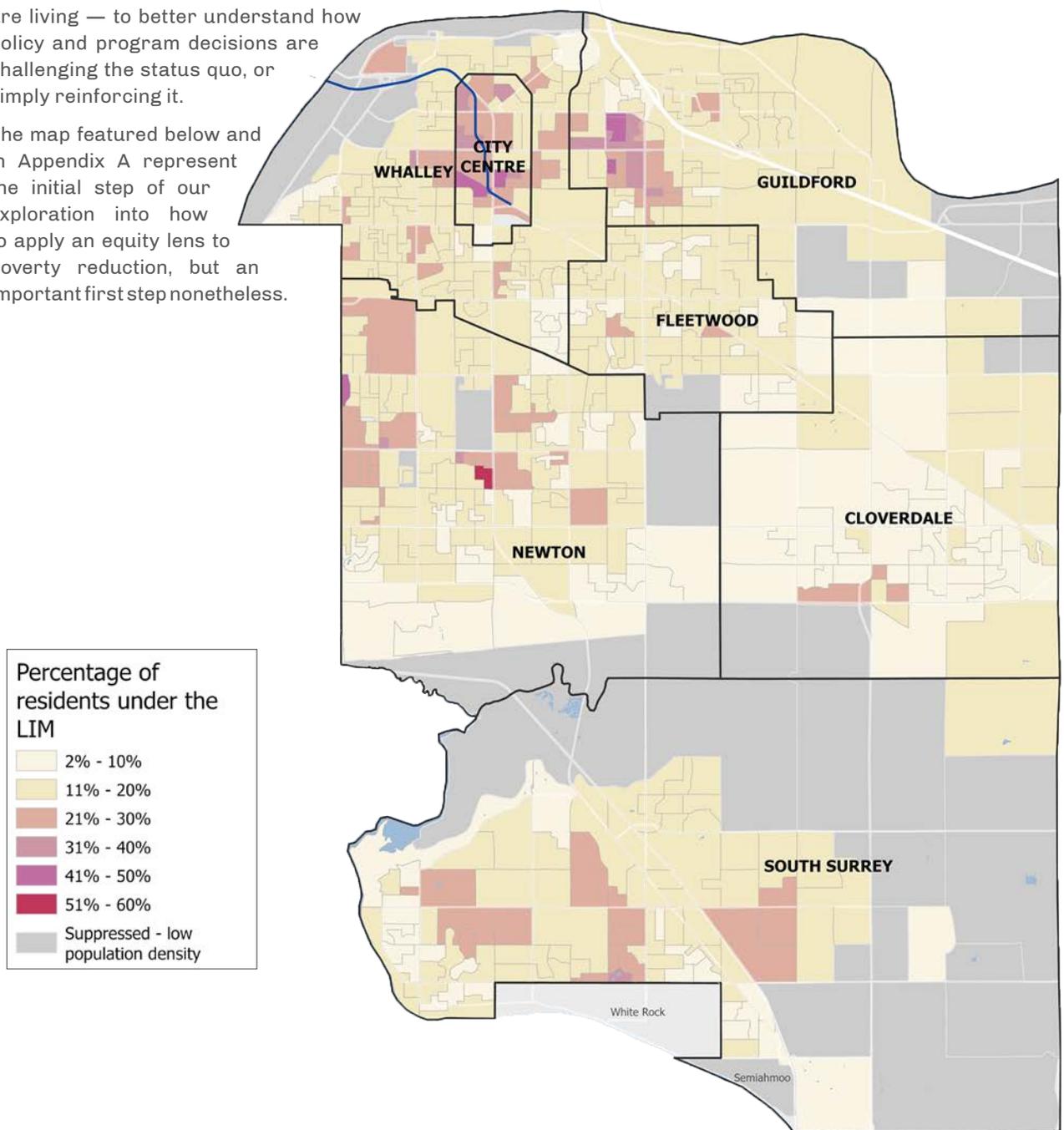


Place Matters

We set out to map Census data to assist us in peeling back these layers and challenge our assumptions and/or validate what we are hearing anecdotally from the community about who and how people are impacted by poverty at the neighbourhood-level across the City. We will be cautious in how we present and use this data, so that we aren't reinforcing a discriminatory narrative about particular communities, or contributing to their further marginalization. Conversely, it is important to understand the lived realities of people in Surrey — which includes where people are living — to better understand how policy and program decisions are challenging the status quo, or simply reinforcing it.

The map featured below and in Appendix A represent the initial step of our exploration into how to apply an equity lens to poverty reduction, but an important first step nonetheless.

Overall, 14.8% of Surrey residents were considered low-income in 2015. This map uses data from the 2016 Census to show the proportion of people in low-income in neighbourhoods across Surrey. The darker coloured areas are neighbourhoods with higher proportions of low-income households. The majority of Surrey's residents (84%) live in neighbourhoods where 20% or less residents are low income; 3% (approximately 19,000 residents) live in neighbourhoods where over 30% of residents are low income.



Census 2021

It is likely that statistics around poverty in Surrey (most notably, income) will have shifted since the 2016 Census, making the data presented here less current. The SPRC is committed to amending our statistics and information when more current 2021 Census data is available, and to disseminating that information throughout the community so that organizations can more effectively respond to emerging and priority issues and plan for future action.





Local Priorities

The quantitative and qualitative data we collected through our planning process has helped to inform our understanding of the specific challenges, needs, and opportunities when it comes to eliminating poverty in Surrey. Based on this work we have identified four initial key priorities — housing, transportation, child poverty, and community-based research.

It goes without saying that every aspect of poverty is urgent and requires immediate action. Knowing that we cannot tackle everything, our focus will shift annually to respond to emerging needs and opportunities, or to fill a gap not being addressed at the community-level.

Housing

It is no secret that Metro Vancouver is in the midst of a housing crisis. Housing costs are skyrocketing, forcing many people, especially renters, to spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, or find unsuitable, inadequate housing. Homelessness across the region continues to be a significant issue.

We recognize the importance of secure, affordable housing as a first step to help people find stability and safety in their lives. The City of Surrey has prepared a Housing Needs Report that confirms and quantifies what we learned in both our qualitative

and quantitative research. There are a number of local agencies and groups committed to working on housing-related issues. To ensure that we are not duplicating the work, and that we bring additional value to the work already underway, the SPRC will amplify and support their work when called to do so.

Transportation

The connection between transportation and poverty is multi-faceted and needs targeted solutions that reflect the unique transportation needs of a city as geographically expansive as Surrey. The transportation cost burden of low and moderate-income households impacts both transit users and those with vehicles, often off-setting the affordability of housing that some residents sought in moving South of the Fraser. Transportation not only impacts the cost of living, but the ability for some residents to access services they require.

Access to affordable and accessible transportation is also a matter of equity; lack of transit access can impact some neighbourhoods and demographics more acutely. As we advocate for increased affordable transportation options, it will be important to consider who and where residents in Surrey are most impacted by the lack of access to transit, and/or the high costs of public transportation.

Child Poverty

In 2016, Surrey's child poverty rate exceeded the City's overall poverty rate by almost 5%. Approximately one in five Surrey children and youth live in low-income households, representing thousands of Surrey children. We know that a disproportionate percentage of these children are racialized and/or live in women-headed, lone-parent families.

Surrey is a young City with the largest school district in the province. We need to understand the unique experience and needs of Surrey children living in poverty to ensure that they have access to education opportunities that will help them find income mobility and economic and social security as they age. Children do not live in poverty alone: they live with families. This means that the actions we take to support the accessibility and affordability of living costs like transportation and housing will impact the children who live in those households.

Community-Based Research

While it is not specifically a poverty-related issue, the desire to conduct community-based research emerged as a leading priority for the SPRC. Members of our Project Advisory Committee, along with many of the community forum participants, identified this knowledge gap as a key area through which the SPRC can support the work of other community tables and local organizations. We know that statistics, maps, and other quantitative data sets only depict part of the story of poverty in Surrey. Not only do numbers fail to capture the lived human experience, many people are just not represented in the data for a number of reasons.

To better understand the intersectional impacts of poverty, and to consider possible equitable solutions, we need to continuously engage with those most impacted to collect their stories, insight, and knowledge. People are experts in their own lives and we know that the best approaches to eliminating poverty will come from the communities the most impacted.

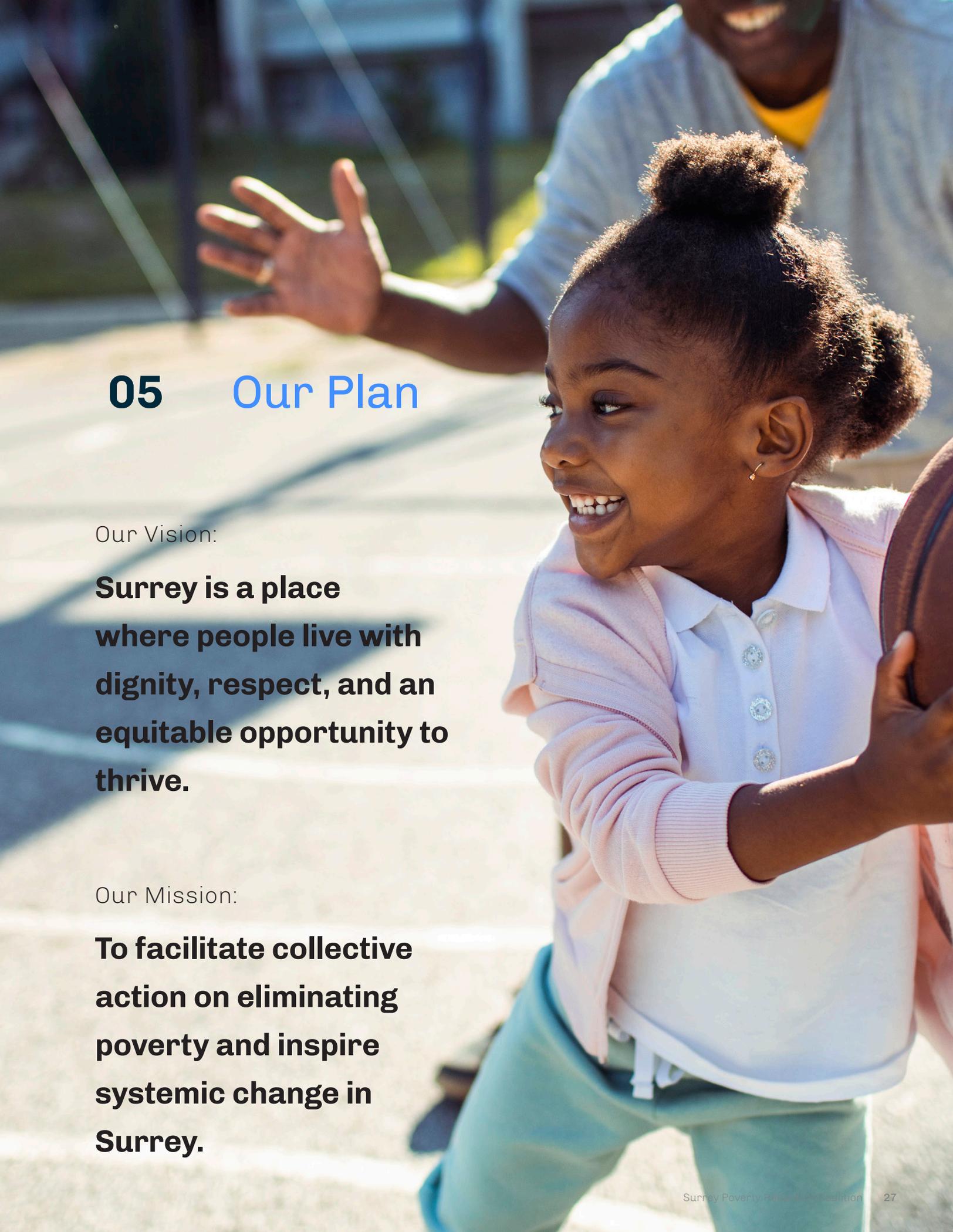
TogetherBC Public Engagement

Throughout 2017 and 2018, the Provincial Government ran a number of public consultation activities across BC to inform the TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy. Participating community members from Surrey identified the following high-level local priorities:

- Children and Childcare
- Education
- Addictions and Mental Health
- Health Care
- Employment
- Transportation
- Food Security
- Government
- Income and Income Support
- Services and Support
- Discrimination and Stigma

A detailed summary of the engagement sessions held in Surrey are summarized in the SPARC report *Summary of Community Conversations for TogetherBC*.





05 Our Plan

Our Vision:

Surrey is a place where people live with dignity, respect, and an equitable opportunity to thrive.

Our Mission:

To facilitate collective action on eliminating poverty and inspire systemic change in Surrey.

Guiding Principles

What we do matters, but **how** we do our work matters just as much. We are constantly learning, adapting, and improving our approaches - always mindful to remain accountable and responsive to the communities we work with.

As we work collectively to end poverty, the SPRC will:

2

Listen and Amplify: There are many groups doing valuable work related to poverty in Surrey, and it is important that we don't duplicate their efforts. We will listen to the voices of people with lived experience of poverty and amplify the calls to action of other community tables and organizations.

3

Collaborate Across Sectors: Poverty impacts everyone and we are committed to working in partnership across sectors to create a unifying vision for ending poverty in Surrey. We want to expand our reach to identify and collaborate with new stakeholders beyond the social service sector to find shared priorities across specific interests.

1

Work Towards Reconciliation: The SPRC is committed to the long and winding path towards reconciliation – including taking the lead from Indigenous people on how to outline a collective path forward.

4

Be Inclusive: We will strive for full and direct participation of people with lived experience of poverty in all our work – from planning to action – and do our best to identify and eliminate whatever roadblocks we can to ensure that the SPRC events, process, and table remain as inclusive and person-centered as possible.

5

Remain Action-Oriented: As a coalition we are focused on being action-oriented, finding a balance between short-term impacts and long-term solutions. We will capture lessons learned along the way and continue to improve our processes and approaches as we continue to learn and unlearn more about poverty in our community.

6

Act with Mindfulness: We will continue to check our individual and collective positionality, privilege, and our internalized bias around the circumstances and systems that create and perpetuate poverty.

7

Innovate and Create: The SPRC table will be a space where community and organizational leaders can bring creativity to their approaches to eliminating poverty: both through our actions and also how we reimagine working together.

8

Consider Equity: We will strive to ensure our recommendations and actions support equitable outcomes, acknowledging the barriers and systems in place that create inequity, and understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to ending poverty in our community.

9

Go Upstream: Our focus is not to alleviate poverty: we want to reduce the number of people living in poverty. This important shift sends us upstream to identify and take action on the systems that create and maintain poverty to ensure that we aren't just making poverty more comfortable - we eliminate it completely.

10

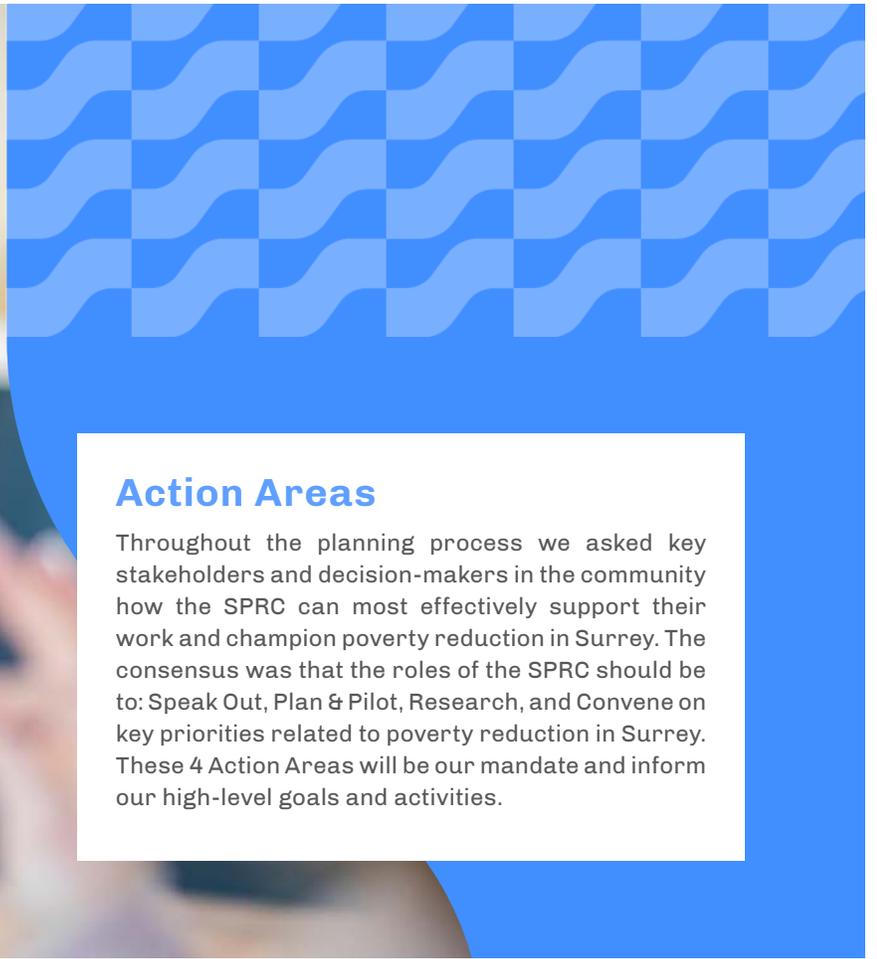
Stay Focused on Surrey: Our top priority is to understand and take action on key issues in Surrey - assisting decision-makers at all levels of government to better understand our city's unique issues and ensure that Surrey receives its fair share of resources to tackle poverty at the local level.

A Note About Reconciliation

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee believes these four tenants are crucial considerations in our work and we commit to supporting each through our action and/or by amplifying the work of Indigenous-led organizations in the City.

- Actively engage in education and learning on how colonial systems and structures continue to impact Indigenous people in our community.
- Seek to be in a good relationship with Land-Based First Nations starting with the acknowledgement of their traditional territories.
- Acknowledge that Indigenous people should design and deliver Indigenous services.
- Support the growing capacity of Indigenous organizations to deliver Indigenous services to Indigenous people.





Action Areas

Throughout the planning process we asked key stakeholders and decision-makers in the community how the SPRC can most effectively support their work and champion poverty reduction in Surrey. The consensus was that the roles of the SPRC should be to: Speak Out, Plan & Pilot, Research, and Convene on key priorities related to poverty reduction in Surrey. These 4 Action Areas will be our mandate and inform our high-level goals and activities.



Speak Out



Plan & Pilot



Research



Convene

Action Area	Speak Out	Plan & Pilot	Research	Convene
Mandate	The SPRC will support and amplify the poverty-related initiatives and calls to action of other local tables and coalitions in Surrey.	The SPRC will consider the local, regional, provincial, and national contexts when planning action. The SPRC's plans will ensure that its activities do not duplicate or compete with the work of local agencies and/or other coalitions in Surrey.	The SPRC will collect, analyze, and report, in a variety of formats, quantitative and qualitative information on poverty in Surrey; this will help others to understand local poverty and inform and mobilize action.	The SPRC will bring stakeholders together across sectors and create opportunities for meaningful collaboration and cooperation.
Goal	The SPRC provides a collective voice around local priorities related to poverty.	The SPRC takes strategic collective action on local priorities, including conducting pilot projects that may be outside the mandate of member organizations, require a collaborative effort, and/or test out an innovative approach.	The SPRC provides current and relevant information on poverty and local priorities in Surrey; this information increases understanding and awareness, mobilizes action, and increases investment in Surrey.	The SPRC increases Surrey's community-based capacity and ability to impact poverty reduction by working together.



“ Growing up in poverty is a shared experience... [us] and our parents growing up in other countries in harder times [moved] to Surrey to live a better life. ”

- Community Forum Participant

Work Plan

Action Area	2022 Actions <small>*funding secured</small>	2022-2025 Actions <small>*additional actions to be added pending funding</small>
 <p>Speak Out</p>	<p>Create a series of information sheets focused on how to apply an equity lens to planning and policy-making</p> <p>Re-design and update website</p> <p>Create social media channels to share poverty-related facts and information</p> <p>Amplify and share selected calls to action by other local and regional groups</p>	
 <p>Plan & Pilot</p>	<p>Seek funding for backbone support and apply for grants as available</p> <p>Report on the <i>Connecting Community to Youth Pilot Projects</i> and determine next steps and/or additional project activities</p>	<p>Launch pilot projects on emerging priorities</p>
 <p>Research</p>	<p>Create Fact Sheets on Poverty in Surrey</p> <p>Research and create recommendations for coordination of regional Youth Advisory Committees</p> <p>Initiate phase 2 of equity research</p> <p>Provide federal, provincial, and regional poverty reduction plan summaries</p>	<p>Update the Fact Sheets to reflect updated 2021 Census statistics (to be released in 2022)</p> <p>Review key indicators in 2025 to identify any changes in poverty levels and assess what may or may not have influenced the shift</p> <p>Assess the impact of new governmental programs and/or policies launched between 2022-2025 on Surrey residents specifically</p> <p>Engage in a community-led research project focused on poverty in Surrey</p>
 <p>Convene</p>	<p>Revise the SPRC Terms of Reference</p> <p>Recruit new members as per the new TOR</p> <p>Convene regular SPRC meetings and working group meetings as determined by the new TOR</p> <p>Determine/formalize relationship with other key community tables</p> <p>Host leadership development event with and for youth from care and other youth demographics</p> <p>Hold annual SPRC Community Forum</p>	<p>Hold annual Community Forums on emerging priorities and themes</p>



Implementation

Currently the SPRC has no sustained funding for “backbone” support; backbone refers to the tasks necessary for keeping a coalition functioning and productive. This includes activities such as organizing meetings, keeping contact lists and the Terms of Reference updated, editing the website, applying for funding etc. Going forward, the SPRC will continue to pursue opportunities to secure backbone support. In addition, the SPRC will seek out funding to support specific initiatives.

In order to remain nimble and responsive to changing contexts and emerging priorities, our plan will be a true living document that is updated regularly to ensure that we are working in the most effective and efficient way. The actions outlined in this three year workplan represent the scope of what may be possible within our mandate, rather than a set plan of activities. The SPRC will review the workplan annually and commit to specific actions dependent on available resources and opportunities.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Evaluating the direct impact and influence of our work on poverty levels in Surrey is challenging. With this understanding, we have developed various

strategies to monitor progress towards our goals and report on our work to ensure transparency and opportunities for feedback.

The SPRC will produce regular progress reports detailing our activities and assess our work according to our guiding principles and goals.

Outcomes

Evaluating our outcomes helps us to determine our impact on individuals, organizations, policy, and systems. Additionally, looking at outcomes helps us to identify ways that we have expanded our own capacity, or the capacity of the community, to take action and/or impact poverty reduction efforts. To evaluate our outcomes, we will reflect on the following high-level questions, as well as the performance indicators listed in the Monitoring & Evaluation framework found in Appendix B.

- To what extent has the SPRC made progress towards its four goals?
- What has helped or hindered progress towards its goals?
- What are the changing contextual or systemic factors influencing our work?

Process

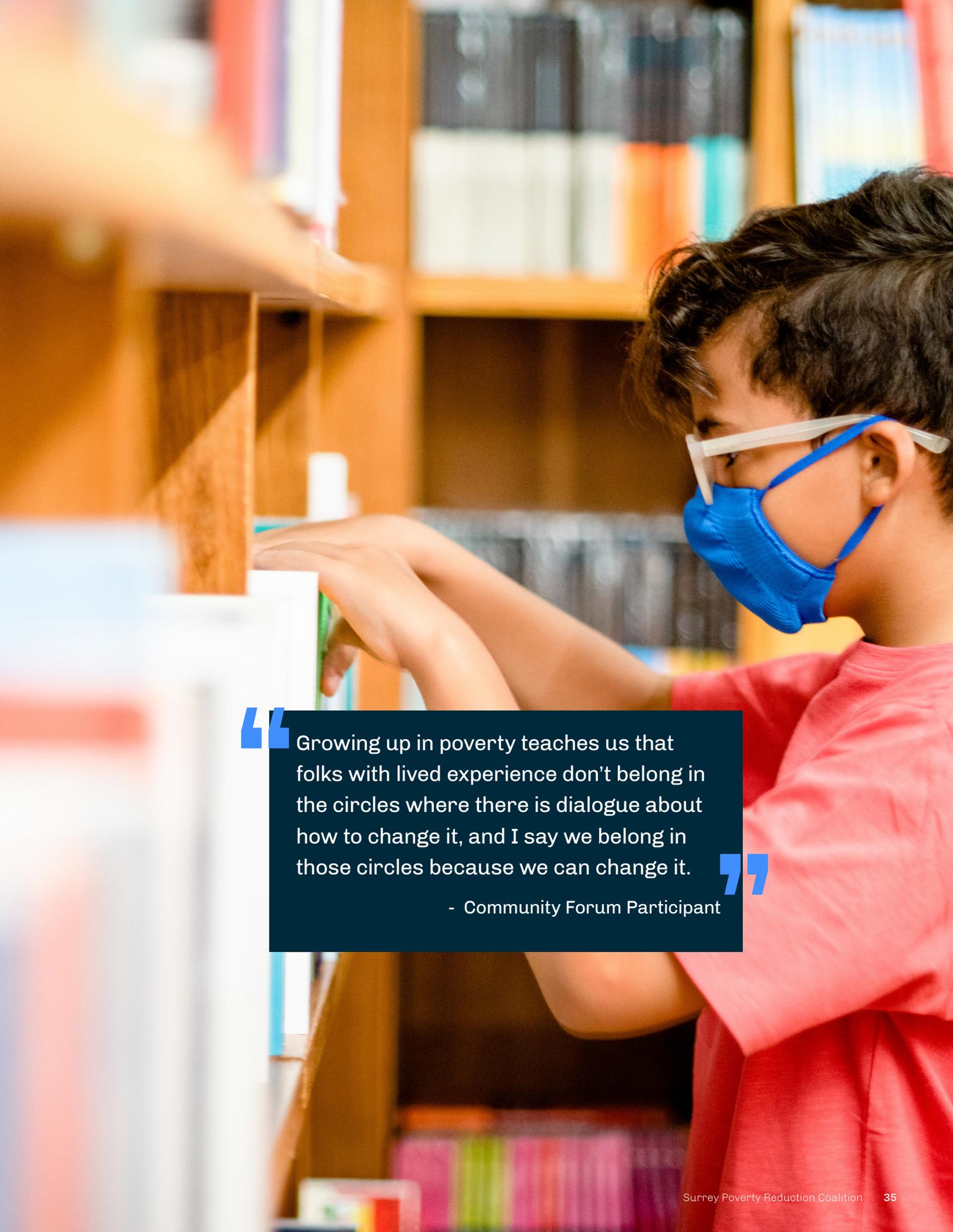
Evaluating our process ensures that the SPRC is demonstrating its Guiding Principles in practice, and assists us to identify important insights and understand where and how we can continue to refine our approach to embody key principles of inclusion and equity. To evaluate our process, we will reflect on the following high-level questions, as well as the performance indicators listed in the Monitoring & Evaluation framework found in Appendix B.

- To what extent has the SPRC demonstrated its Guiding Principles in practice?
- What has helped or hindered the practice or consideration of these principles?
- How can we undertake our work to better meet our Guiding Principles?

“ Covid-19 is a collective trauma that we are all living through that will need a dedicated response... those living in poverty are in the worst of it. ”

- Community Forum Participant





“ Growing up in poverty teaches us that folks with lived experience don't belong in the circles where there is dialogue about how to change it, and I say we belong in those circles because we can change it. ”

- Community Forum Participant



Conclusion

Our vision is that Surrey is a place where people thrive with dignity, respect, and equity.

We know that the path to end poverty is long, winding, often uphill, and most importantly that it cannot be done alone. Working collaboratively as the SPRC is an important step on this path, but eliminating poverty ultimately takes coordination and commitment from every corner of our City — from individual residents and elected officials at every level — along with critical provincial and federal policies and programs that will benefit those who need it most.

Eradicating poverty is a long-term commitment. We know that it won't be easy, to expect setbacks, and that we will make mistakes as we learn and unlearn along the way. We will celebrate the wins we achieve — no matter how small — without losing sight of our larger vision. While this work is often messy, difficult, and extremely complex, we believe it is worth it; every Surrey residents deserves to thrive.

Let's get to work.

“ I'm not greedy. I'm an honorable woman. I don't want a hand out, I want a hand up. ”

- Community Forum Participant

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Appendix A:

Equity Maps



Surrey Equity Maps

The eight maps featured here represent the initial step of SPRC's exploration into how to apply an equity lens to poverty reduction. The maps can be used alone to understand specific indicators, or in comparison to understand the intersections of indicators as they pertain to poverty in Surrey.

Map 1. Low-Income Measure

Map 2. Income Equality Ratio

Map 3. Low-Income and Seniors

Map 4. Low-Income and Single Parent Families

Map 5. Low Income and Racialized Individuals

Map 6. Housing Spend Burden

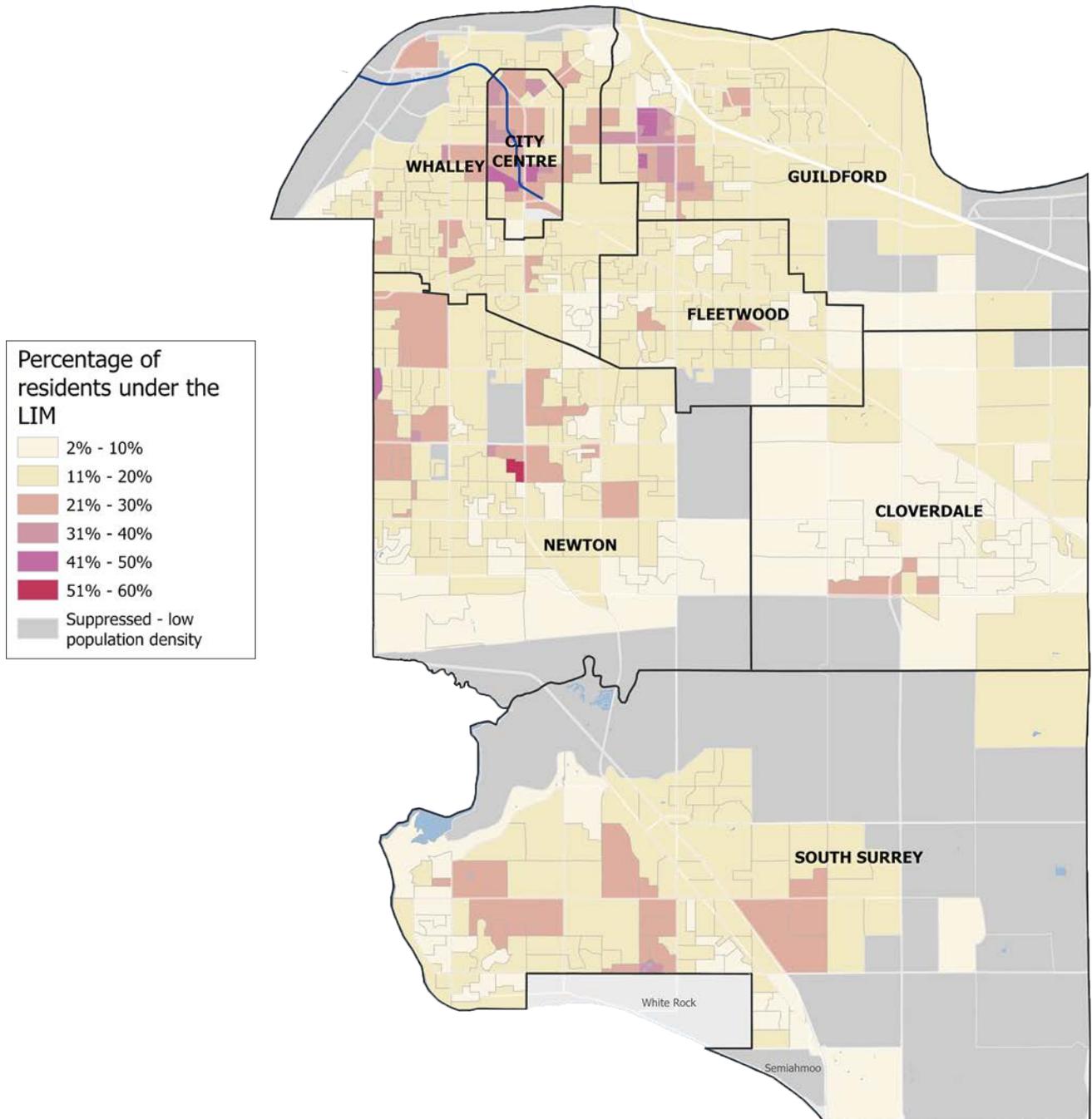
Map 7. Transportation Spend Burden

Map 8. Relative Transit Access

Map 1. Low-Income Measure

Overall, 14.8% of Surrey residents were considered low-income in 2015. This map uses data from the 2016 Census to show the proportion of people in low-income in neighbourhoods across Surrey. The darker coloured areas are neighbourhoods with higher proportions of low-income households.

The majority of Surrey's residents (84%) live in neighbourhoods where 20% or less residents are low income; 3% (approximately 19,000 residents) live in neighbourhoods where over 30% of residents are low income. The neighbourhoods in which a high proportion of residents are low income (over 40%) are located in Newton, City Centre and Guildford.

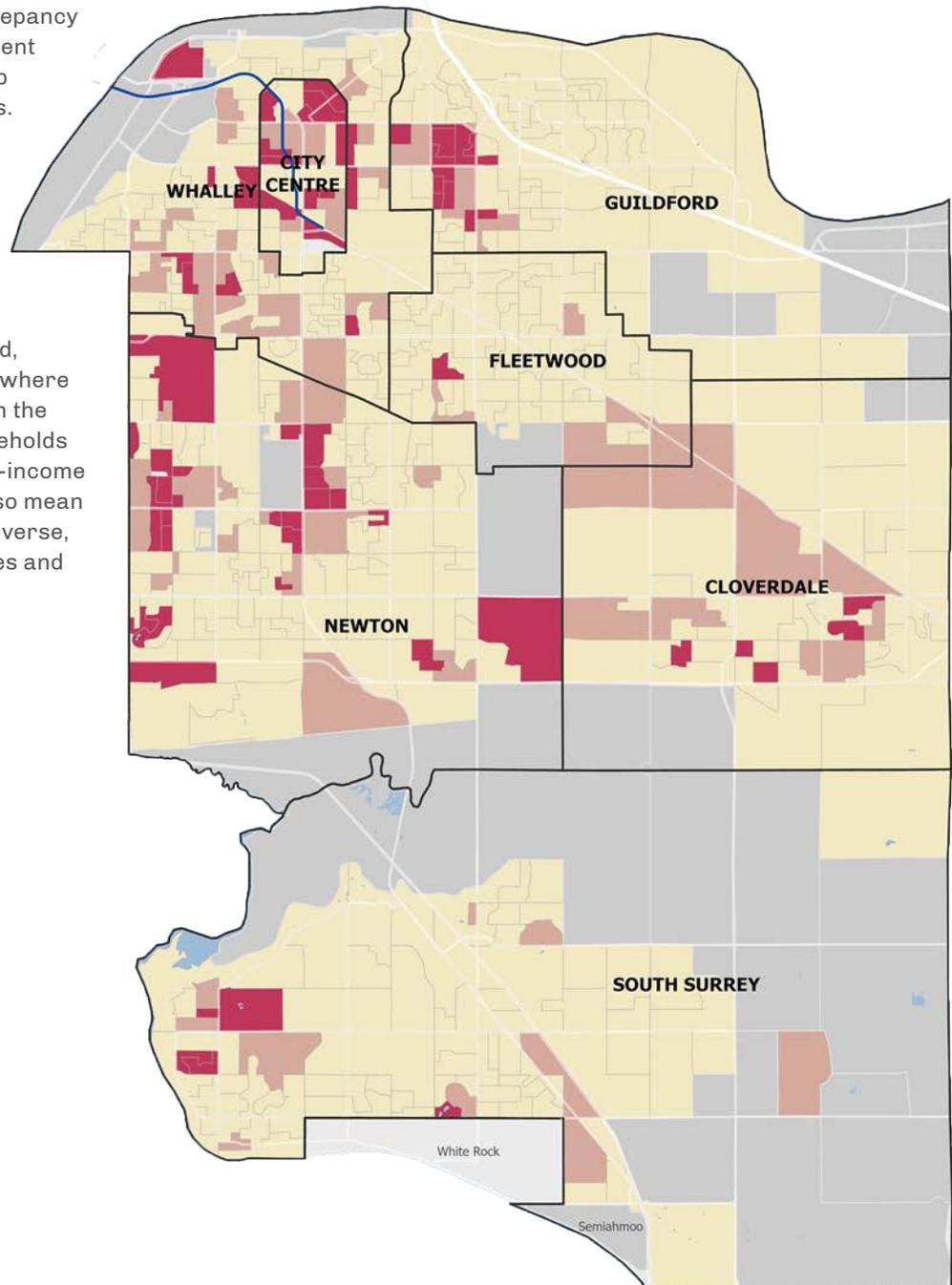
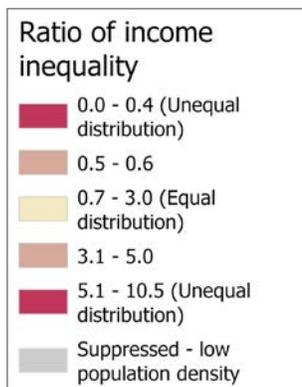


Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

Map 2. Income Equality Ratio

The Income Equality Ratio is a measure of the dispersion of incomes within the community. The total population is divided into 10 equal parts (deciles), with the 1st decile being households with the lowest 10% of household income and the 10th decile being households with the highest 10% of household income. The Income Equality Ratio uses the 2016 Census data to compare the 8th income decile to the 2nd income decile, creating a score indicating the relative proportions of highest and lowest earners.

Areas that are red indicate areas where there is a large discrepancy between the two measurement points, meaning a larger gap between household incomes. Areas that are yellow indicate that there is little difference between household incomes, with most households in a similar income bracket. A higher income inequality ratio could, for example, indicate areas where gentrification is occurring in the City, with high-income households moving to historically lower-income neighbourhoods; it could also mean that the neighbourhood is diverse, with a mix of household types and incomes.

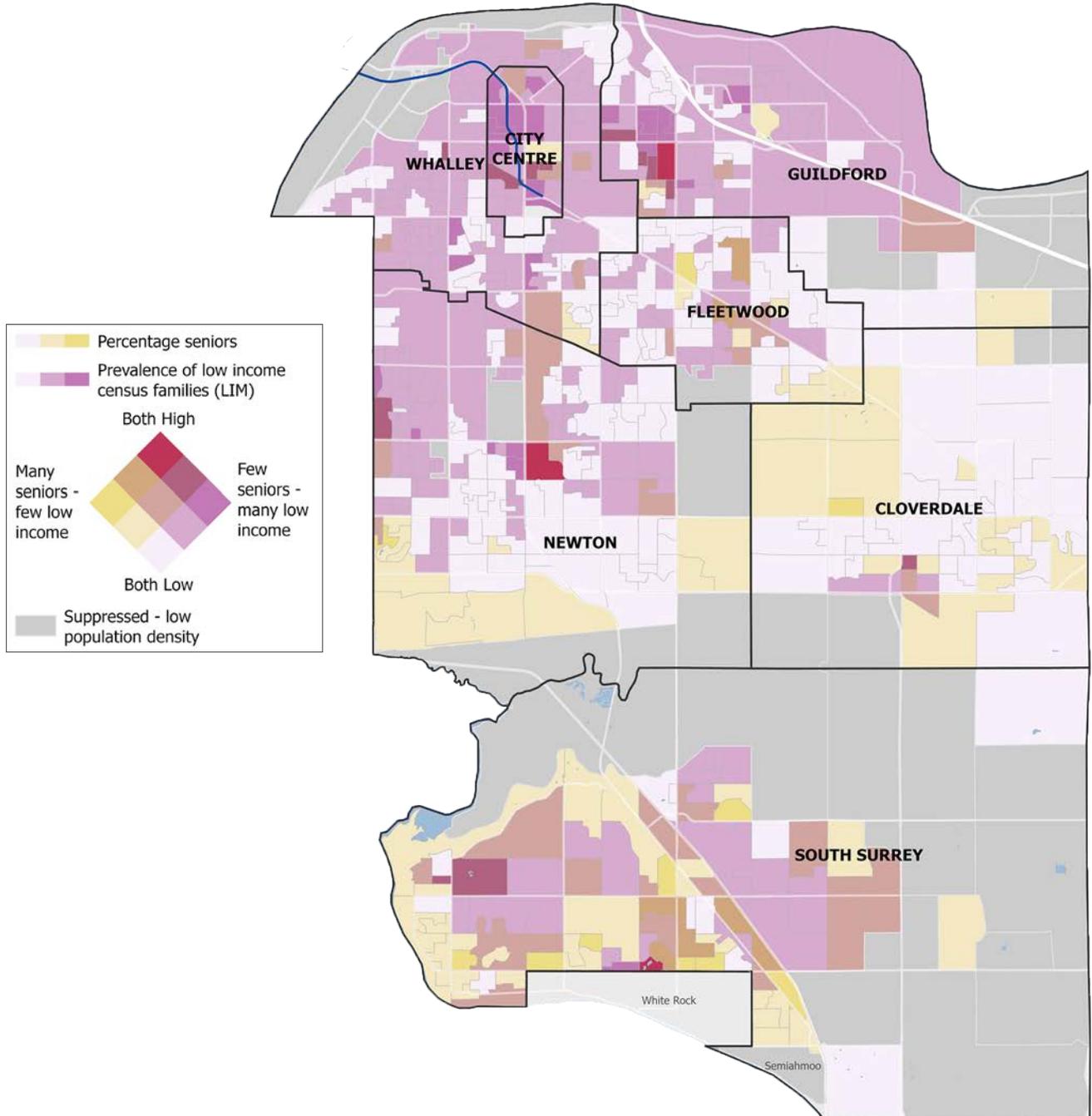


Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

Map 3. Low-Income and Seniors

Seniors¹, especially those who live alone, are often on limited or fixed incomes and at a higher risk of poverty. This map shows both the proportion of seniors and the proportion of low income households by neighbourhood. The red areas are where there is both a high concentration of seniors and a high concentration of people who are low-income. The overlap of the highest pockets of both factors represents almost 4,500 residents, or 1% of the population of Surrey.

Neighbourhoods in Guildford Town Centre and central Newton are areas where there is a high concentration of both seniors and people who are low-income. While South Surrey has a higher concentration of seniors than other places in Surrey, many neighbourhoods have few low-income households (yellow areas).



¹ Residents aged 65+

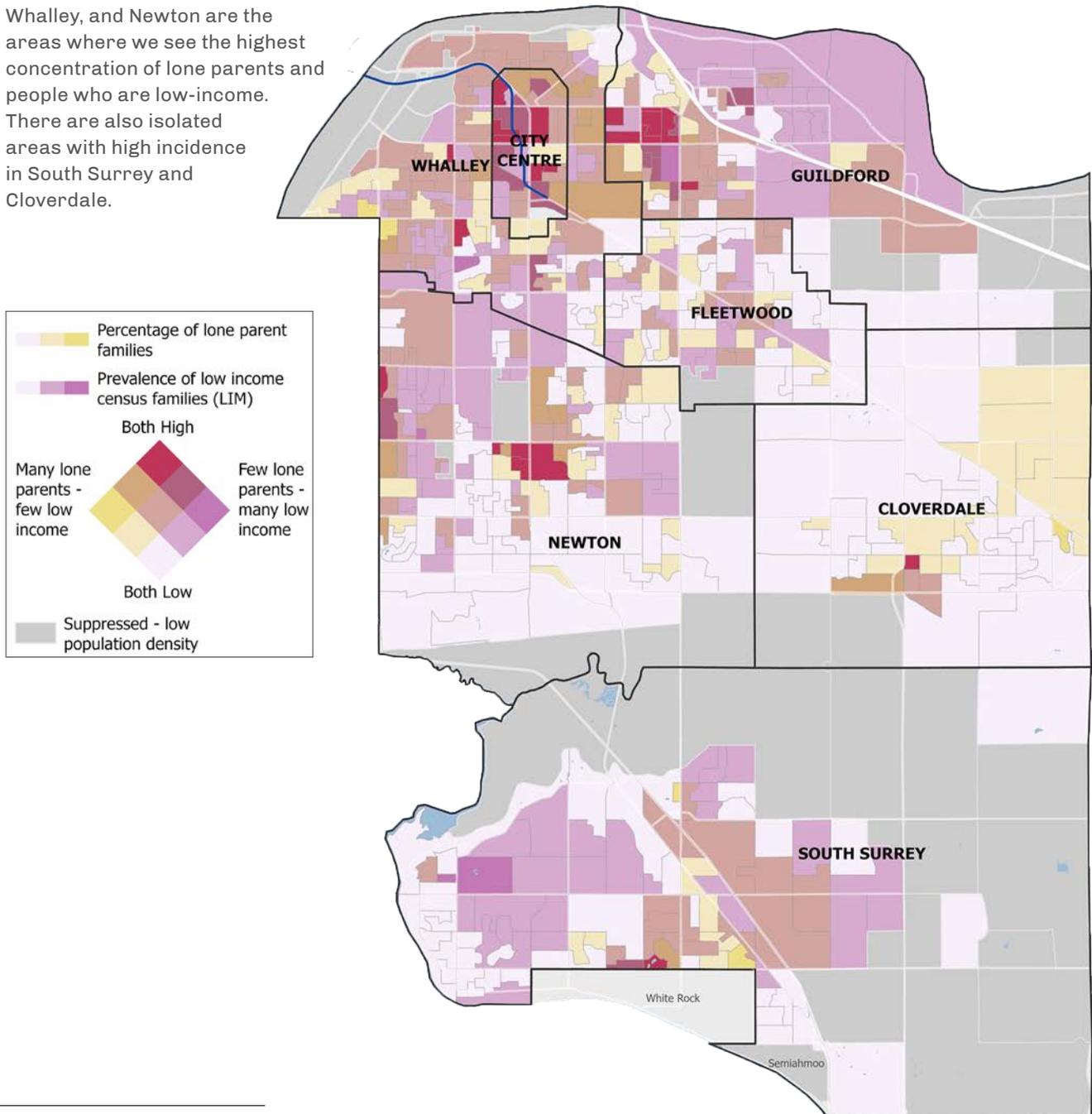
Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

Map 4. Low-Income and Single Parent Families

Single, or lone parent families, have a reduced earning potential in comparison to a two-parent family. In 2015, 28% percent of lone parents², or 5,975 people, were considered low-income in Surrey; 85% of whom were women.

This map shows both the proportion of lone parents and the proportion of low-income households by neighbourhood. The red areas are where there is both a high concentration of lone parents and a high concentration of people who are low-income. The overlap of the highest pockets of both factors represents almost 22,000 residents, or 4% of Surrey’s population.

City Centre, Guildford Town Centre, Whalley, and Newton are the areas where we see the highest concentration of lone parents and people who are low-income. There are also isolated areas with high incidence in South Surrey and Cloverdale.



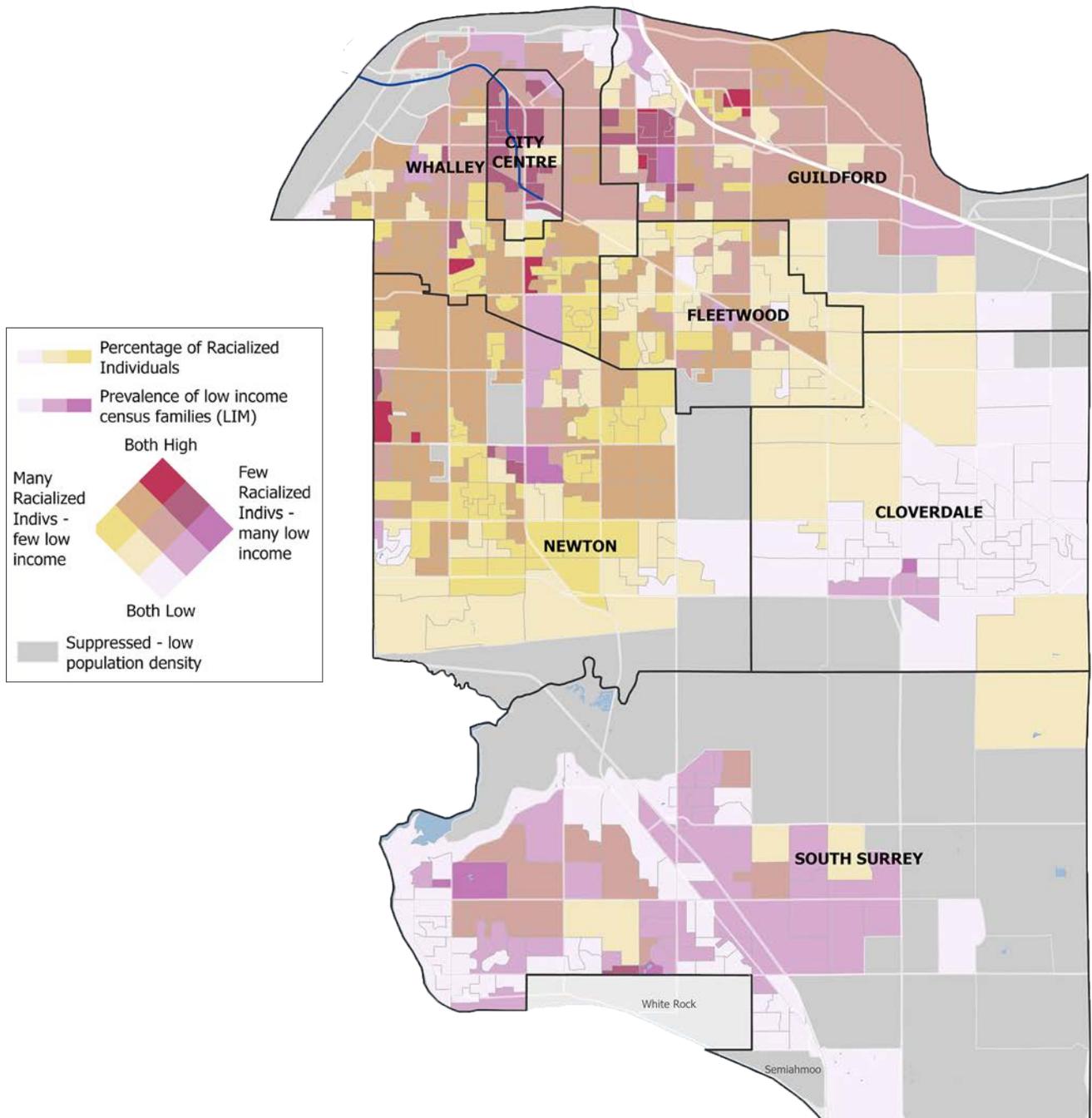
² A single or lone parent is defined as an individual of any marital status with at least one child living in the same dwelling.

Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

Map 5. Low Income and Racialized Individuals

According to the 2016 Census, racialized people experience poverty at greater rates than White residents in Surrey. This map shows both the proportion of racialized people (or “visible minority”, according to the Census classification) and proportion of low-income households by neighbourhood. The red areas are where there is both a high concentration of racialized people and a high concentration of people who are low-income. The overlap of the highest pockets of both factors represents about 6000 residents, or 1% of the population of Surrey.

Newton and Fleetwood have proportionately high concentrations of racialized residents but Whalley and West Newton are the areas where there is both a high concentration of racialized residents and a high prevalence of low-income households.

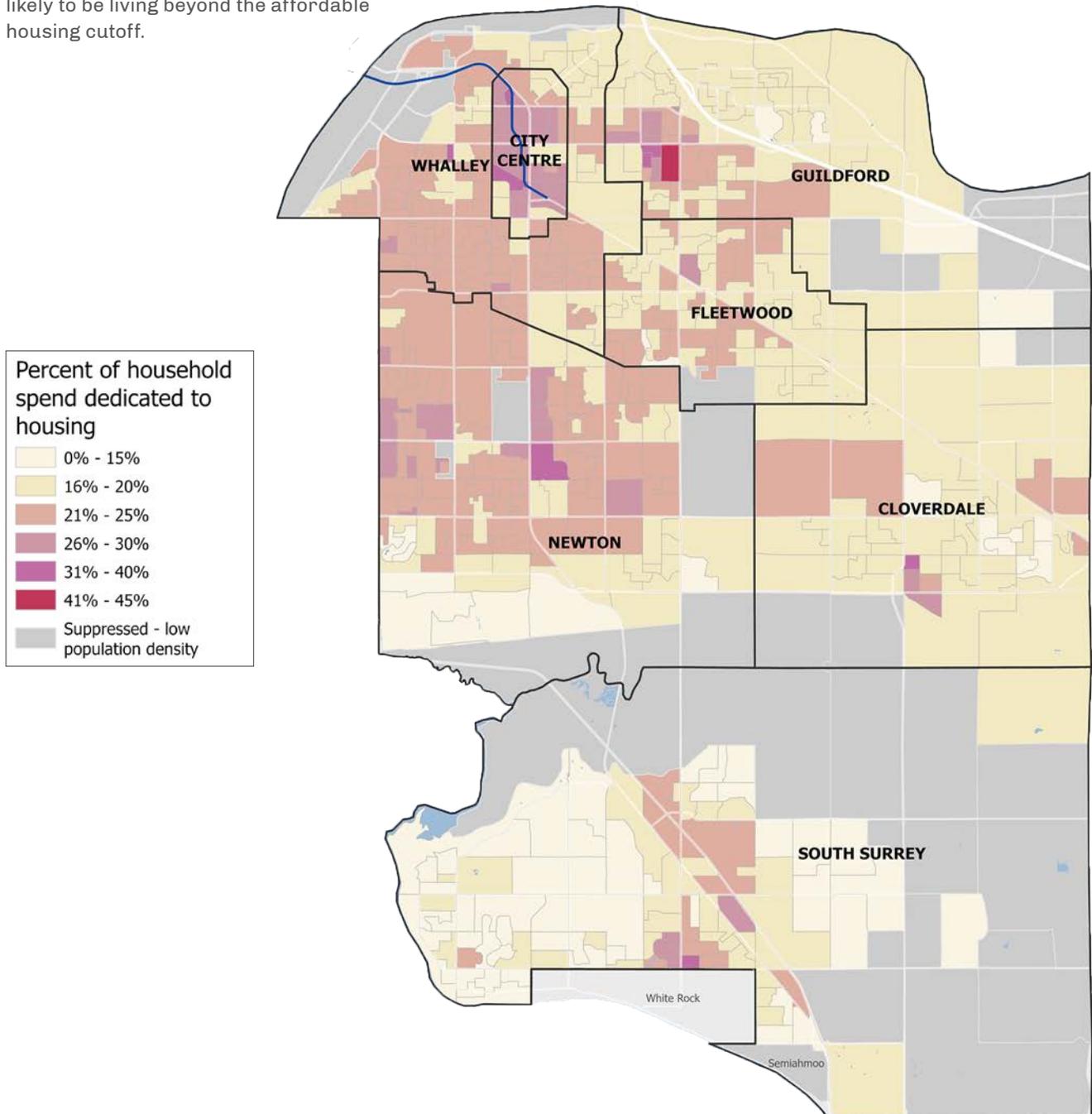


Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population

Map 6. Housing Spend Burden

The “Housing Spend Burden” is the proportion of a household’s income that is devoted to housing-related costs, including mortgage or rent, utilities, etc. It is generally accepted that housing costs should not exceed 30% of a household’s income so that households are able to cover other costs of living such as childcare and transportation.

The highest proportion of households spending 30% or more of income on housing costs is found in a Guildford Town Centre area neighbourhood. Several other areas in Surrey showing a housing cost burden exceeding the 30% affordability threshold are in: City Centre, Newton, South Surrey, and Cloverdale. 11,000 residents (or 2.4% of Surrey’s population) live in areas that are colour-coded red and purple on this map; these residents are more likely to be living beyond the affordable housing cutoff.

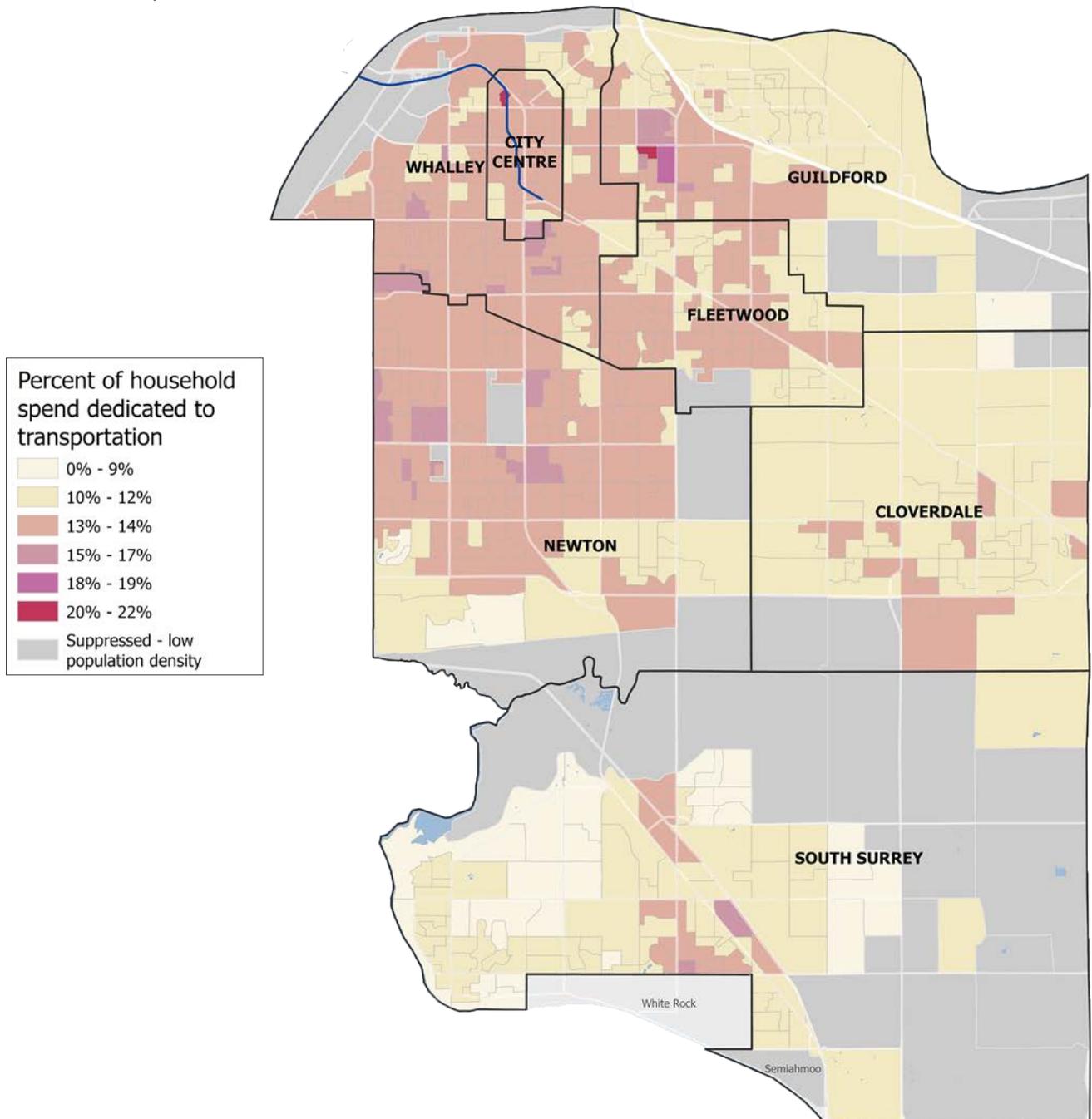


Enviroics Analytics, 2021

Map 7. Transportation Spend Burden

The “Transportation Spend Burden” measures the proportion of a household’s income that is spent on transportation-related costs; these may include public transportation, car payments, or ride shares^[iii].

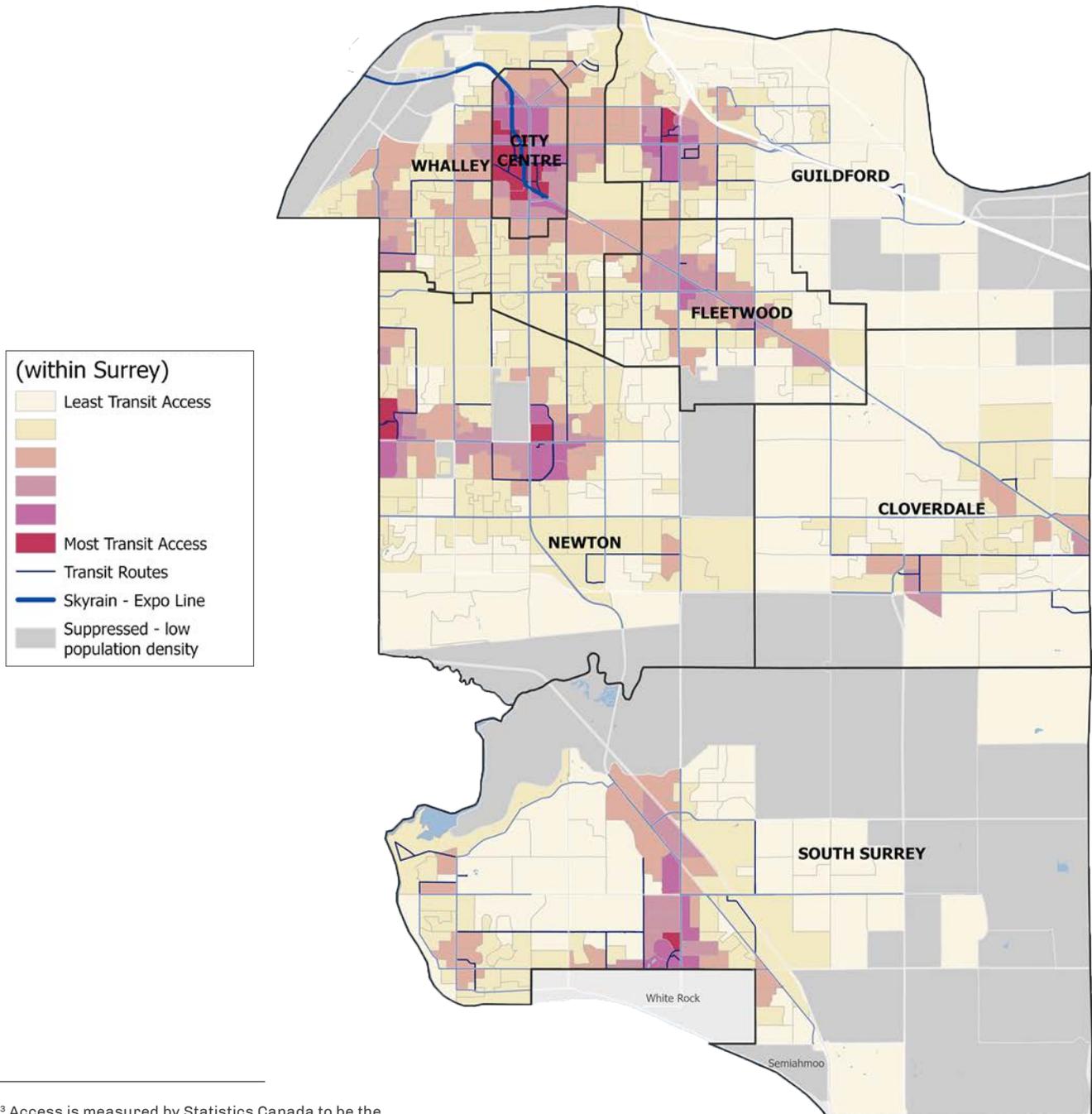
Interestingly, the households with the highest Transportation Spend Burden are in City Centre and Guildford Town Centre, neighbourhoods in close proximity to Skytrain stations and frequent public transportation. Almost 10% of Surrey’s population, or 50,000 residents, spend 18-22% of their household budget on transportation. Comparing this map to the distribution of LIM households generally makes a compelling case for finding ways to ease transportation costs for low-income households, who are spending a significant amount of their income on transportation, despite their access to public transit.



Data source: Environics Analytics, 2021

Map 8. Relative Transit Access

Looking at the City's access to public transit³ matters in urban planning, but also in terms of equity as we consider where there is a high prevalence of lower-income households who may benefit the most from increased access to public transportation. Comparing this map to the distribution of LIM households may help to identify key areas that are currently underserved by transit, and where increased access points would represent an equitable approach to transportation planning.



³ Access is measured by Statistics Canada to be the closeness of a dissemination area to any source of public transit within 1 km of walking distance.

Data source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population



Appendix B:

SPRC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

Appendix B: SPRC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework 2022-2025

Action Area	Goal	Performance Indicators
 <p>Speak Out</p>	<p>The SPRC provides a collective voice around local priorities related to poverty.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of SPRC's work amongst public and stakeholders</p> <p>Regular participation in advocacy campaigns</p>
 <p>Plan & Pilot</p>	<p>The SPRC takes strategic collective action on local priorities, including conducting pilot projects that may be outside the mandate of member organizations, require a collaborative effort, and/or test out an innovative approach.</p>	<p>The SPRC undertakes actions that reflect Surrey-specific quantitative and qualitative data and qualitative data</p> <p>Members develop new ideas to test and pilot when/if funding permits</p> <p>The SPRC Plan is a living document and updated to reflect the unique needs of Surrey</p>
 <p>Research</p>	<p>The SPRC provides current and relevant information on poverty and local priorities in Surrey; this information increases understanding and awareness, mobilizes action, and increases investment in Surrey.</p>	<p>Increased understanding of poverty in Surrey amongst members and in the community at-large</p> <p>Members feel they have access to timely and relevant data that help their program delivery</p> <p>Member and other organizations use the research and reports shared by the SPRC</p>
 <p>Convene</p>	<p>The SPRC increases Surrey's community-based capacity and ability to impact poverty reduction by working together.</p>	<p>Strong attendance and engagement by members at SPRC meetings and events</p> <p>Sustainable, consistent backbone support for SPRC</p> <p>SPRC membership is diverse and cross-sectorial</p> <p>Regular community forums organized by the SPRC are well-attended and found to be worthwhile by attendees</p> <p>Poverty reduction is reflected in organizational strategic plans</p> <p>Poverty is discussed by other community tables in connection to their special interest</p> <p>Opportunities to engage with people with lived experience are built into every stage of planning, implementation, and evaluation</p>

Appendix B: SPRC Monitoring & Evaluation Framework 2022-2025

Guiding Principle	Performance Indicators
Listen & Amplify	<p>The SPRC amplifies and shares the work of other tables</p> <p>The voices of people with lived experience are included in our work either through direct participation or via community tables</p>
Be Inclusive	<p>People with lived experience of poverty are engaged in an ethical and meaningful way</p> <p>People with lived experience of poverty are compensated for their time and participation</p> <p>The SPRC identifies, documents, and addresses barriers to participation</p> <p>The SPRC follows wise practices in accessibility and inclusion</p> <p>Anyone involved in SPRC activities are invited to evaluate the accessibility and inclusivity of each activity</p>
Act with Mindfulness	<p>The SPRC amends its internal process and procedures as necessary to align with wise practices on decolonization and equity</p> <p>Members discuss and/or explore how privilege and unconscious bias may show up in our work</p>
Consider Equity	<p>Project activities are considered through an lens of equity and intersectionality</p> <p>The SPRC applies wise practices on equity-based research</p>
Stay Focused on Surrey	<p>The SPRC undertakes actions that reflect Surrey-specific quantitative and qualitative data and qualitative data</p> <p>Pilot projects are locally-based</p>
Collaborate Across Sectors	<p>SPRC membership is diverse and cross-sectorial</p>
Remain Action-Oriented	<p>The SPRC continually seeks funding opportunities for short and long-term activities</p>
Innovate and Create	<p>Members develop new ideas to test and pilot when/if funding permits</p> <p>Activity/project evaluations are completed after every activity to capture learnings and outcomes</p> <p>The SPRC considers wise practices from other jurisdictions when developing new action ideas</p>
Go Upstream	<p>SPRC actions remain focused on eliminating poverty</p>
Reconciliation	<p>Members actively engage in education and learning on colonial systems and structures</p> <p>The SPRC amplifies the calls to action by Indigenous-led organizations</p> <p>As requested, the SPRC supports the work of local Indigenous-led organizations</p> <p>The SPRC seeks to be in good relationships with the Land-Based Nations</p> <p>The SPRC acknowledges the traditional territories on which it does its work</p>



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition (the SPRC”) is a multi-sectoral, non-partisan coalition of representatives from a range of organizations and government agencies in Surrey. Its purpose is to facilitate the strategic development of initiatives and activities that aim to eliminate poverty in Surrey.

Since 2012, the SPRC has undertaken a number of activities to mobilize and inspire the community to take action to reduce poverty. These activities have included: convening community forums; sharing knowledge using fact sheets and maps that highlight the distribution and concentration of poverty throughout the City; piloting projects with non-profit partners; and advocating for change.

UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program

In March 2019, the Province of BC released *Together BC: British Columbia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy* and passed the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act in November 2019. Recognizing that local governments are crucial partners in implementing Together BC, the Province provided \$5 million over three years to the UBCM to administer the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program to support local efforts.

The UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program includes two funding streams:

- “Stream 1: Poverty Reduction Plans and Assessments” is to support communities to develop or update plans to reduce poverty at the local level. As described above, a Stream 1 grant funded the development of Surrey’s new 2022 Plan; and
- “Stream 2: Poverty Reduction Action” is to support communities to undertake projects to reduce poverty at the local level. The funding maximum under Stream 2 is \$50,000 per single applicant. In order to be eligible for Stream 2 funding, applicants are required to have completed a poverty reduction plan.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project will focus on people with disabilities (“PWD”), and specifically increasing access and dismantling barriers that some PWD face in applying for benefits for people with disabilities. This has been identified by the SPRC as an action that could reduce the extreme levels of poverty among PWD who are experiencing homelessness and/or precariously housed and struggling with significant mental health issues.

Rationale

At a community forum held by the SPRC in December 2022, homeless outreach workers raised concerns around the challenges faced by PWD who they work with when trying to find a doctor or nurse practitioner to complete the paperwork needed to access disability benefits and supports. These PWD are living in deep poverty and are experiencing homelessness or precariously housed and have significant mental health issues which may be concurrent with substance use disorders.

The 2020 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count data showed that 644 individuals in Surrey were experiencing homelessness. Of those that were counted, 87% of respondents reported at least

one health condition and 63% reported two or more health conditions. 60% reported that they had an addiction, 46% reported a medical condition or illness, 46% reported a mental health issue, 36% reported a physical disability, 23% reported a learning disability or cognitive impairment, and 27% reported that they had an acquired brain injury.

Although 81% of respondents indicated that they accessed income assistance or disability benefits, there is no information as to what percentage of people are collecting which benefit.

For a PWD, getting access to disability benefits could be life changing as it would provide them:

- An additional \$500/month (approximately, for a single person) as compared with income assistance rates which could be put towards more stable housing and other living costs; and
- Access to benefits such as dental services, medical equipment and health supplements.

People receiving disability benefits also do not have to complete the monthly form to demonstrate that they are searching for employment that is required for people on income assistance. This is often a challenge for PWD who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Activities & Timeline

This project will take place over a one year period, starting in the summer of 2023 (estimated approval of the grant is June 2023). The project will be guided by the SPRC.

Background Work (summer of 2023)

- Research and data collection including: any available data on people receiving PWD in Surrey; the criteria and application process for PWD; and other relevant information to inform the project.

Community Engagement (fall 2023)

- Conducting one-on-one and small group interviews with stakeholders (e.g. Fraser Health staff, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction staff, community social service providers who serve people who are vulnerable, people with lived experience, and the Division of Family Practice) in order to understand the issues and challenges from multiple perspectives.
- Convening a stakeholder workshop to share information from the research and consultations, clarify viewpoints, develop a shared understanding of the issue, and identify solutions.

Development of Resources (winter/spring 2024)

- Preparing a project report that will outline the issue and provide recommended actions.
- Preparing fact sheets targeted for different audiences, including health care providers, outreach workers and for PWD, to raise awareness of the issue and actions to increase access and/or remove barriers for PWD to secure benefits.