

NO: **R062**

COUNCIL DATE: **APRIL 27, 2015**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **April 27, 2015**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Update on the Implementation of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the implementation of ***This is How We End Poverty in Surrey: Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan*** (the "Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan") that was adopted by Council in July 2012.

BACKGROUND

In September 2010, the Social Policy Advisory Committee ("SPAC") identified poverty as one of the priority social issues for the SPAC to focus on. At that time, the SPAC determined that the best approach was to work collaboratively with Vibrant Surrey, a non-profit organization that was engaged in conducting research on poverty in Surrey.

On April 23, 2012, Council received an update on the research that had been completed and the work that was underway to develop a Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan (Corporate Report No. R086;2012).

On July 9, 2012, Council adopted the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan (Corporate Report No. R160;2012). The Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan provides a comprehensive set of 75 recommendations that are organized into four key policy areas: transportation, housing, income and support.

On February 3, 2014, Council received a report on *Low Cost and Free* – a brochure series and inter-active web pages providing information on a range of resources that are available at a low cost or at no cost in Surrey (Corporate Report No. R021;2014). *Low Cost and Free* was developed by Surrey Libraries. The City developed and maintains the web-based map of resources. *Low Cost and Free* responds to recommendations in the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan related to increasing awareness about the services, programs and opportunities available to low-income residents in Surrey.

DISCUSSION

After the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan was adopted in July 2012, the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition ("SPRC") was established to champion its implementation. The SPRC has taken the lead on a number of actions that include:

- convening community forums;
- developing and disseminating user-friendly information on poverty in Surrey;
- piloting innovative projects;
- advocating for the elimination of the refugee transportation loan program; and
- evaluating the impact of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan.

These activities are described below.

Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition

The SPRC was established in 2012 to promote the implementation of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. According to its Terms of Reference, the role of the SPRC is to:

- Promote and disseminate the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan;
- Mobilize and inspire the community to take actions to reduce poverty; and
- Monitor and measure achievements/progress/outcomes in implementing the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan.

Co-chaired by Councillor Judy Villeneuve and Stephen Dooley, Executive Director of SFU Surrey, the SPRC consists of representatives from relevant sectors, including government, business, health services, community service agencies, and population groups impacted by poverty. With 20 members, the SPRC balances representation with the need to be productive and effective. The current membership list is attached as Appendix I to this report.

The Vancity Foundation administers the SPRC's funds. To date, the Vancouver Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society and United Way of the Lower Mainland have provided grants to support the facilitation of the SPRC. All SPRC member agencies provide in-kind support.

Convening the Community

Three forums have been held as a means of engaging and inspiring the community to implement the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan as follows:

- The first forum, held in March 2012, involved the community in developing the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan;
- The second forum, held in November 2013, focused on sharing what was already happening to reduce poverty in Surrey and discussing additional actions that could be taken. The keynote speaker was James Hughes who was instrumental in the development and implementation of New Brunswick's provincial poverty reduction plan; and

- The most recent forum was held on February 16, 2015 at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Approximately 60 community leaders who are engaged in poverty reduction work in Surrey were invited to attend.

The focus of the 2015 forum was "collective impact", which is an innovative approach for tackling complex social issues. The keynote speaker and forum facilitator was from the Tamarack Institute in Ontario. In addition to learning about collective impact, forum participants identified a number of priority issues/projects including:

- encouraging Surrey employers to adopt a living wage policy;
- engaging private sector landlords in addressing homelessness through a Housing First approach;
- implementing a pilot project in a neighbourhood(s) that has a high child poverty rate;
- promoting a "yes" vote on the Transportation Referendum;
- supporting access to healthy food for low income residents; and
- addressing mental health issues.

The SPRC has started to plan the next steps for following up on the ideas that emerged at the forum.

The community forums have been funded by the Vancouver Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, and City of Surrey. Kwantlen provided the venue at no cost for the 2013 and 2015 forums and its Faculty of Arts funded the catering at the 2015 forum.

Sharing Knowledge

To ensure that decisions made and actions taken to reduce poverty are evidence-based, the SPRC has compiled and disseminated information on poverty in Surrey.

A series of fact sheets, using the 2006 census and other data sources, were prepared as part of the process of developing the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. These fact sheets were recently updated using 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) data by Jacopo Miro, a UBC School of Community and Regional Planning student. Surrey Libraries staff assisted in collecting the information. A fact sheet was prepared on each of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan's four themes – transportation, housing, income and support (see Appendix II).

The 2011 NHS was also used to prepare a set of maps that show low income by census tract for all of Metro Vancouver and in Surrey. Maps are available showing low income for all ages, seniors, children and youth (17 years and less) and young children (five years and less).

The information on poverty shows that Surrey's poverty rate is the same as the Metro Vancouver average (16% which represents 72,000 Surrey residents living in low income). Of note is the information on child poverty. Of the 20 Metro Vancouver neighbourhoods with the largest number of children and youth living in poverty, 11 neighbourhoods are in Surrey.

The SPRC has recently developed a new website where the fact sheet and maps are available for downloading at www.surreyprc.ca. The fact sheets and maps of 2011 data are attached as Appendix II to this report.

Piloting Projects

The SPRC has undertaken pilot projects to test new and innovative approaches to reducing poverty at the local level. Three of these projects are described below.

Somali Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Pilot Project

The Somali Women's Economic Self Sufficiency Project is assisting a group of Somali women to build their skills and confidence in order to pursue employment and/or to develop a socially/culturally relevant business together. The project stemmed from a delegation to the SPAC in February 2013. The delegation included representatives from the Surrey School District's Welcome Centre, Common Thread Cooperative, and three Somali women from the Welcome Centre's ESL Class. The Somali women expressed a strong desire to be engaged in paid work.

Phase I of the project (April to June 2013) included three workshops to give the Somali women a chance to hear about different cooperative models of employment and gauge their initial interest in the possibility of working together to develop a cooperative or social enterprise.

In Phase II (May to December 2014) two facilitators, one with expertise in community economic development and one Somali speaker, were contracted to work with the group. The facilitators conducted weekly skill building workshops focusing on employment as well as topics such as women's health and basic first aid. Due to the marginalization of these women, activities to increase their social connections to the community were also undertaken (e.g., signing up for library cards and recreation passes, setting up a stall in the Surrey Farmer's Market and taking a field trip to Dress for Success). In December 2014, a celebration/graduation was held at City Hall to recognize the women's progress. In January 2015, the Somali women's group appeared as a delegation to the SPAC to provide an update.

Phase III of the project will begin in April 2015 with the same facilitators and cohort of Somali women. It will focus on employment through individualized employment plans and continued exploration of a group cooperative model.

The Somali Women's Project has/is being funded by grants from the Vancity Credit Union. Surrey Libraries provides the space for the weekly sessions at no cost. The Surrey Women's Centre is the project lead with women from Vancity Credit Union, Vancity Community Foundation, Surrey School District and Planning and Development (Social Planning) serving as project advisors.

Community Leaders Igniting Change (CLIC)

Inspired by the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute in Hamilton, CLIC is a free education program for Surrey residents who are interested in making positive changes in their neighbourhoods. Its main objectives are to:

- enhance community leadership and engagement;
- increase community connectedness through strong social networks;

- develop a sense of "place" within the distinct neighbourhoods of Surrey; and
- build our capacity to engage more citizens more meaningfully in poverty reduction and developing social capital within their communities of interest.

Led by Dr. Katherine Burke of the SFU Beedie School of Business, the program covers concepts such as inclusion, compassion, listening, strategizing, relationship building, self and other awareness, engagement and critical thinking.

Eighteen students were selected to participate in the pilot CLIC program. The 12 week program started on February 26, 2015 and will end May 14, 2015. Students will continue to meet monthly for six months following the completion of the education program.

CLIC is being supported by funding from SFU, Vancity Credit Union and the Vancouver Foundation.

Housing First Landlord Project

Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that is based on providing permanent affordable housing with supports to people who are chronically or episodically homeless. The Housing First model has proven to be highly effective. A recent Canada-wide study provided evidence that the vast majority (85%) of homeless people who participated in a Housing First model remained successfully housed after one year. The model relies on a supply of rental housing in the private and public sectors, which is a challenge in Surrey.

The SPRC's Housing First Landlord Project is intended to facilitate the connection between private landlords and the health and service agencies that are using a Housing First approach to support people who are homeless.

The first Landlord project event was a breakfast networking and education event entitled *Engaging Landlords - Homes for Good: A Dialogue for a Vibrant Surrey* held on June 5, 2014. The event was co-sponsored by the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC, Landlord BC, Surrey Board of Trade and SPRC. The breakfast was an opportunity for Surrey landlords to have an open dialogue about homelessness, the Housing First approach and how landlords can benefit by being part of the solution.

The SPRC is currently preparing to offer a workshop in late May to Surrey landlords, both apartment owners and those with secondary suites. The workshop will inform landlords about Housing First and invite them to be part of the solution by offering their rental units to Surrey-based agencies serving homeless people. To enhance attendance, the workshop will also promote opportunities to improve energy efficiencies through BC Hydro's and Fortis BC's Energy Conservation Assistance Program, available only to low-income households. In partnership with LandlordBC, those who attend the workshop will also learn about tools and partnerships to help them address challenging tenants.

Advocating for Change

The Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan includes a number of recommendations that are the responsibility of the federal and provincial levels of government. While the SPRC is primarily focused on local actions, the SPRC is a member of the *BC Poverty Reduction Coalition* and supports their advocacy calling for a provincial poverty reduction plan. BC is one of only two provinces without a provincial Poverty Reduction Plan.

The SPRC has recently become of a member of *Cities Reducing Poverty*, a connected learning Institute in Ontario, the community of Canadian cities with multi-sector roundtables. An initiative of the Tamarack goal of *Cities Reducing Poverty* is "to align poverty reduction strategies in cities, provinces and the federal government resulting in reduced poverty for 1 million Canadians".

The SPRC is continuing to work with the SPAC on advocacy to eliminate the federal government's requirement for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) to repay the cost of their transportation to Canada. This federal requirement is further impoverishing GARs in Surrey, about half of whom are children and youth, who face significant challenges in settling in Canada. The SPAC is currently circulating a petition calling on the Government of Canada to eliminate the refugee transportation loan program.

Evaluating the Impact

The impact of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan and work of the SPRC was recently evaluated using a "ripple effect mapping" (REM) methodology. REM is an innovative mind mapping technique used to assess both intended and unintended impacts of a program. The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Natalie Gagnon and Etta Brodersen of Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The ripple effects of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan were categorized into three themes: knowledge sharing, partnerships and new initiatives.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan is assisting in achieving the Sustainability Charter's Action Item SC5, which is focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents.

CONCLUSION

The 2011 NHS indicates that poverty continues to be an issue in some neighbourhoods and among some population groups in Surrey, especially children and youth. The City of Surrey adopted the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan in 2012 to provide strategic direction for tackling poverty in Surrey. Since then, Council members and staff have been actively involved as part of the SPRC in promoting the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan and implementing its recommendations. These efforts have included:

- developing strong partnerships among various agencies and sectors in the community and with funders;

- sharing knowledge and information on poverty in Surrey and increasing awareness about the resources available for low-income residents; and
- undertaking innovative local pilot projects that promote the economic inclusion of all Surrey residents.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager, Planning and Development

AM:saw

Attachments:

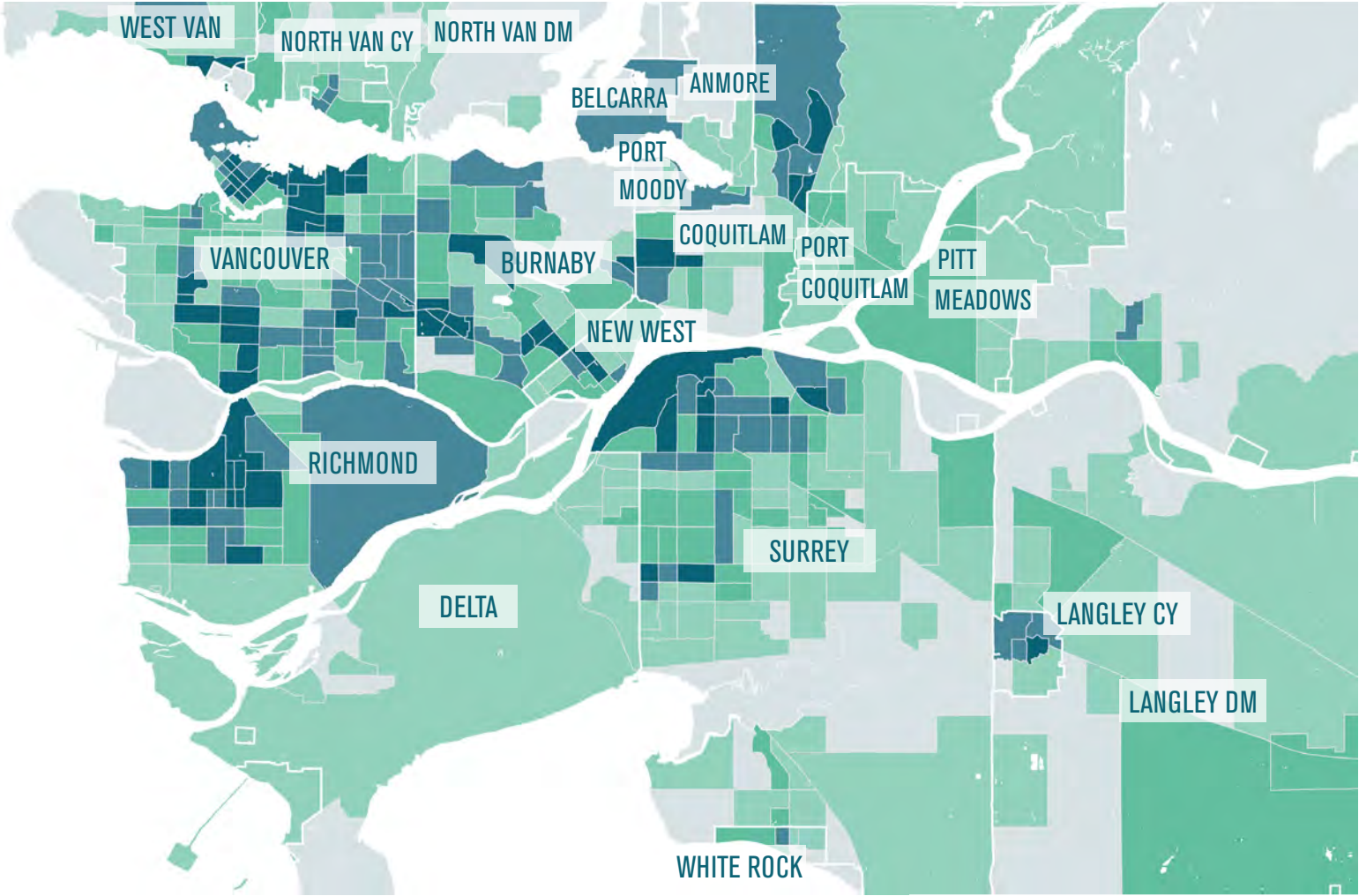
Appendix I Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition Membership

Appendix II Fact Sheets and Maps

Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition Membership		
Name	Organization	Sector
Co-Chair: Councillor Judy Villeneuve	City of Surrey	Municipal Government
Co-Chair: Steve Dooley	SFU and SPAC	Education/Social Policy Advisory Committee
Morten Bisgaard	Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation	Provincial Government
Karen Blackman	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Provincial Government
Denise Darrell	Sources Community Resource Society	Women/Seniors
Trish Garner	BC Poverty Reduction Coalition	
Connie Hong	Options/ LIP Table	Immigrant settlement
Pat Horstead	Surrey School District	Education
Melanie Houlden	City of Surrey Libraries	Libraries
Njeri Kontulahti	Vancity Credit Union	Business
Councillor Vera LeFranc	Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society / Vancity Community Foundation / City of Surrey	Homelessness / Foundation / Municipal Government
Marlis McCargar	City of Surrey	Municipal Government
Amelia McComber	Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Assoc.	Aboriginal
Jacopo Miro	UBC	PhD student
Margaret Mubanda	Community Member	Community Member
Aileen Murphy	City of Surrey	Municipal Government
Anne Peterson	Surrey Board of Trade	Business
Michelle Shaw	Pacific Community Resources Society	Youth/Social Policy Advisory Committee
Alice Sundberg	Coordinator, SPRC	
Joe Woodworth	Options/ Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force	Homelessness

All AGES: Percentage of people of all age groups in low income*

2011



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011

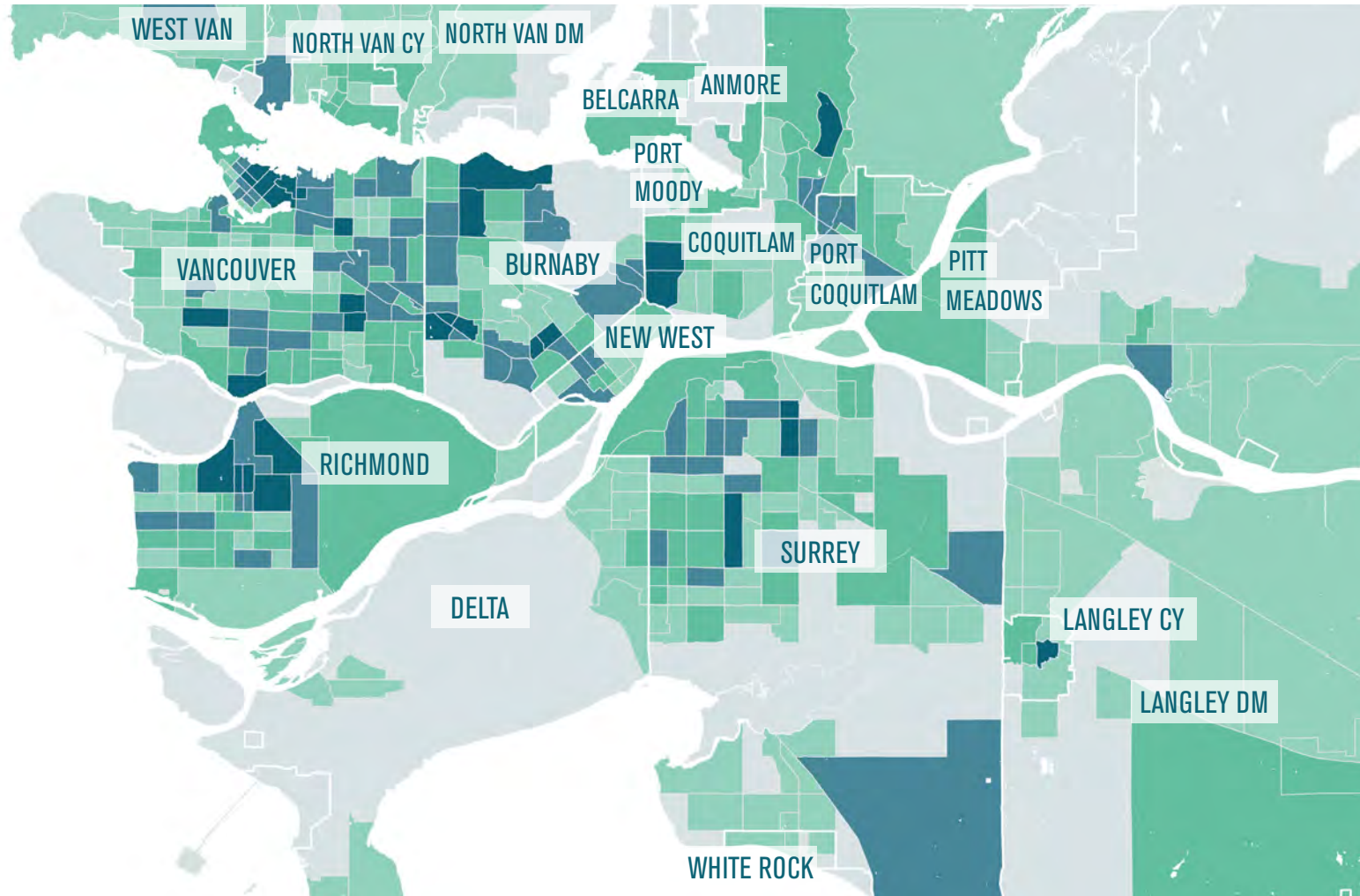


*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
Note: Income information on UBC and SFU is excluded from this map

ALL AGES:

2011

Number of people of all age groups in low income*



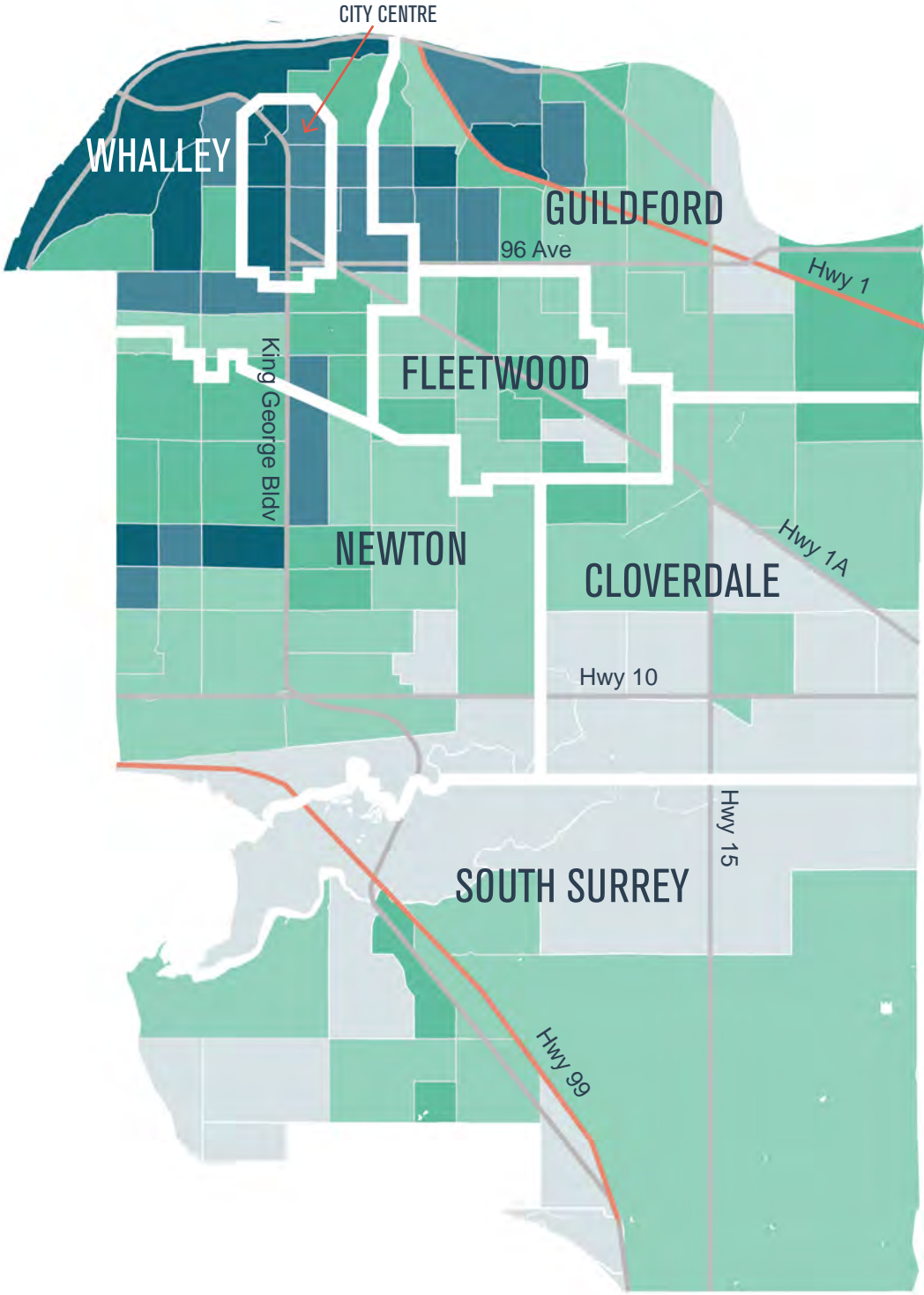
Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition
www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
Note: Income information on UBC and SFU is excluded from this map

ALL AGES: Percentage of people of all ages in low income*

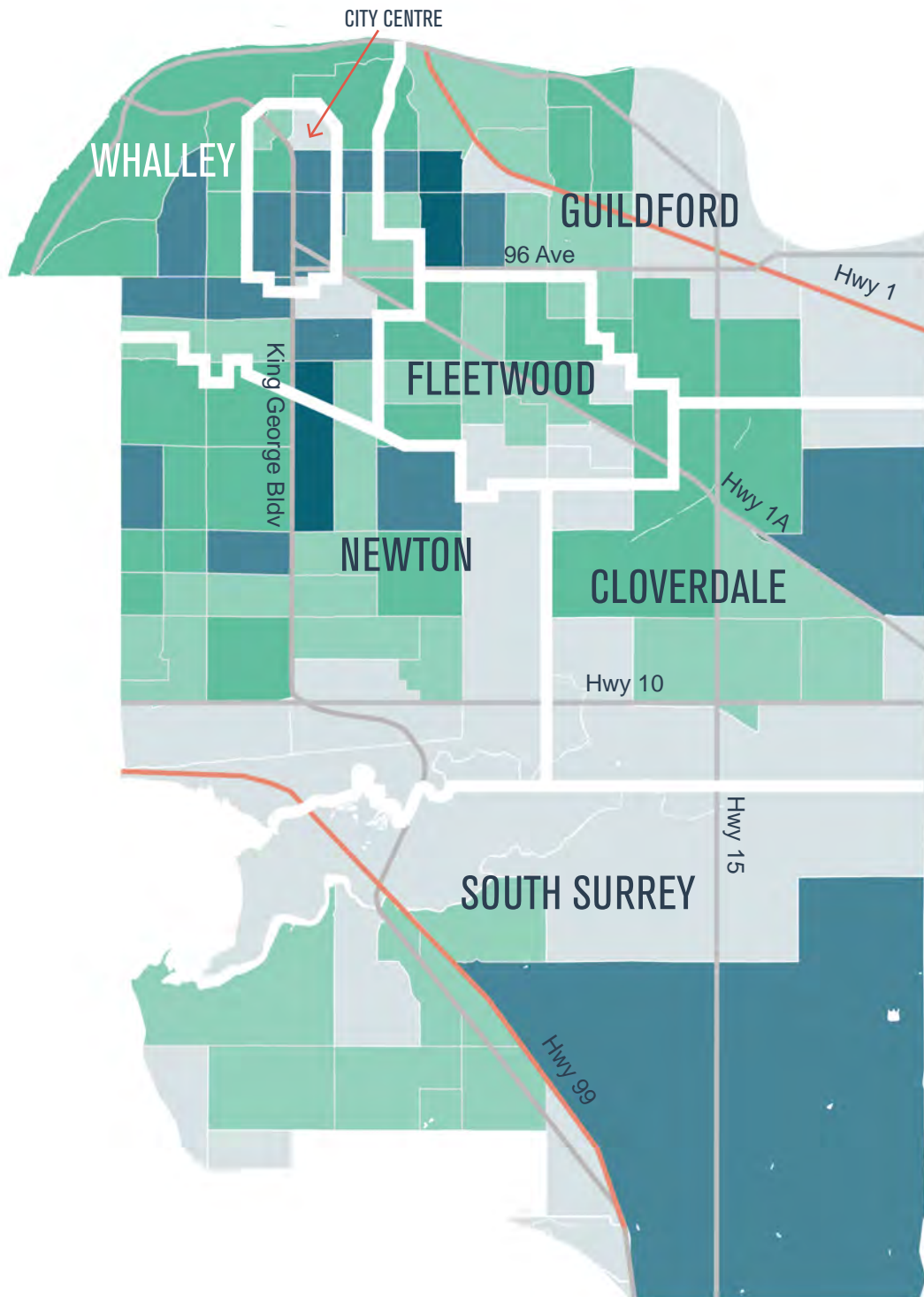


Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

ALL AGES: Number of people of all ages in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011

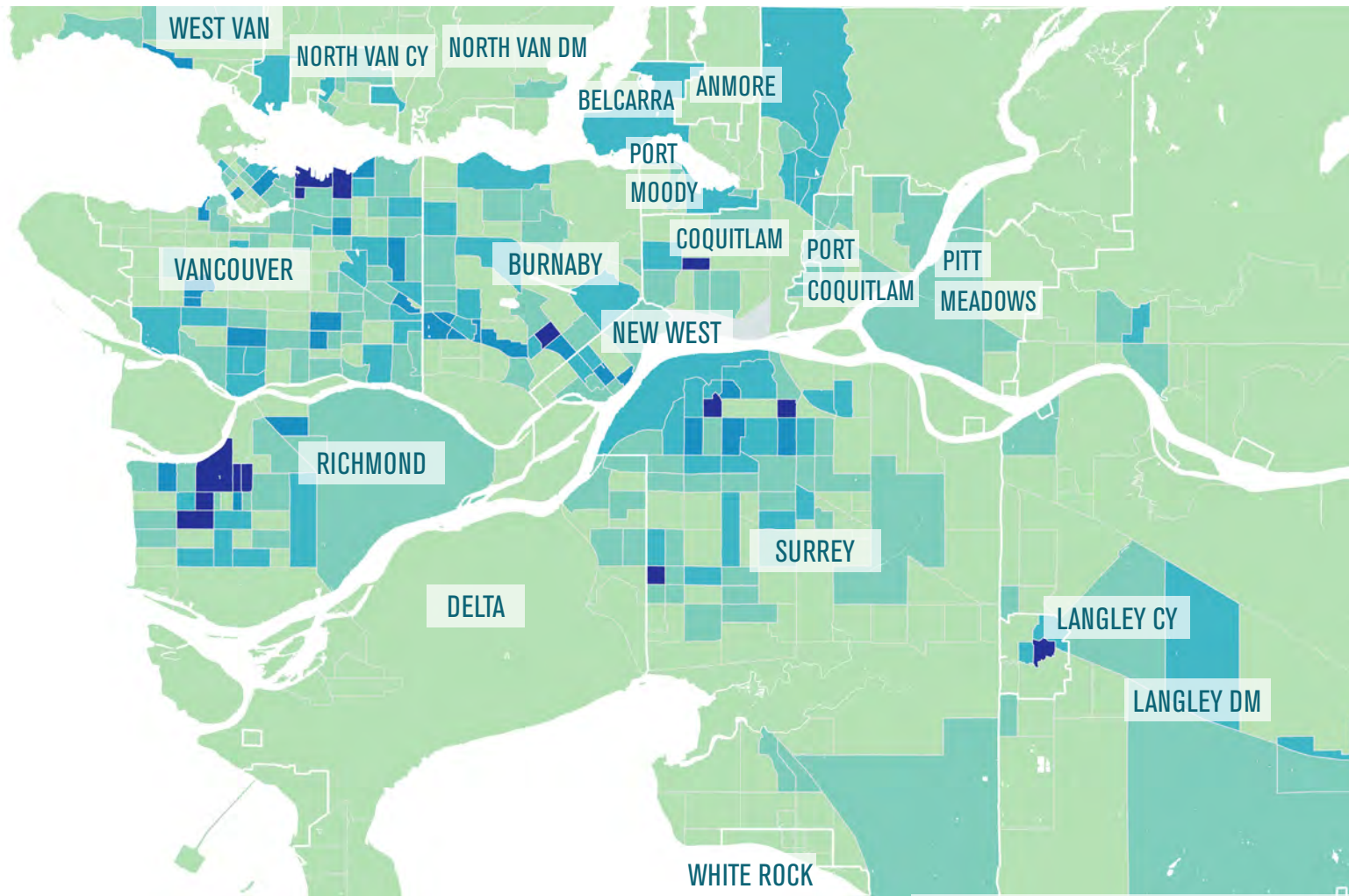


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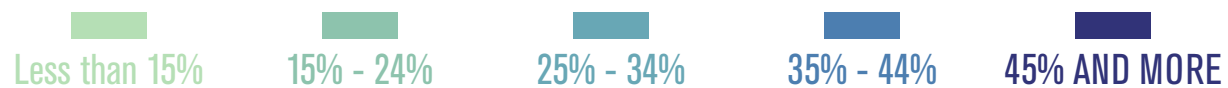
CHILDREN:

2011

Percentage of children 5 years and younger in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



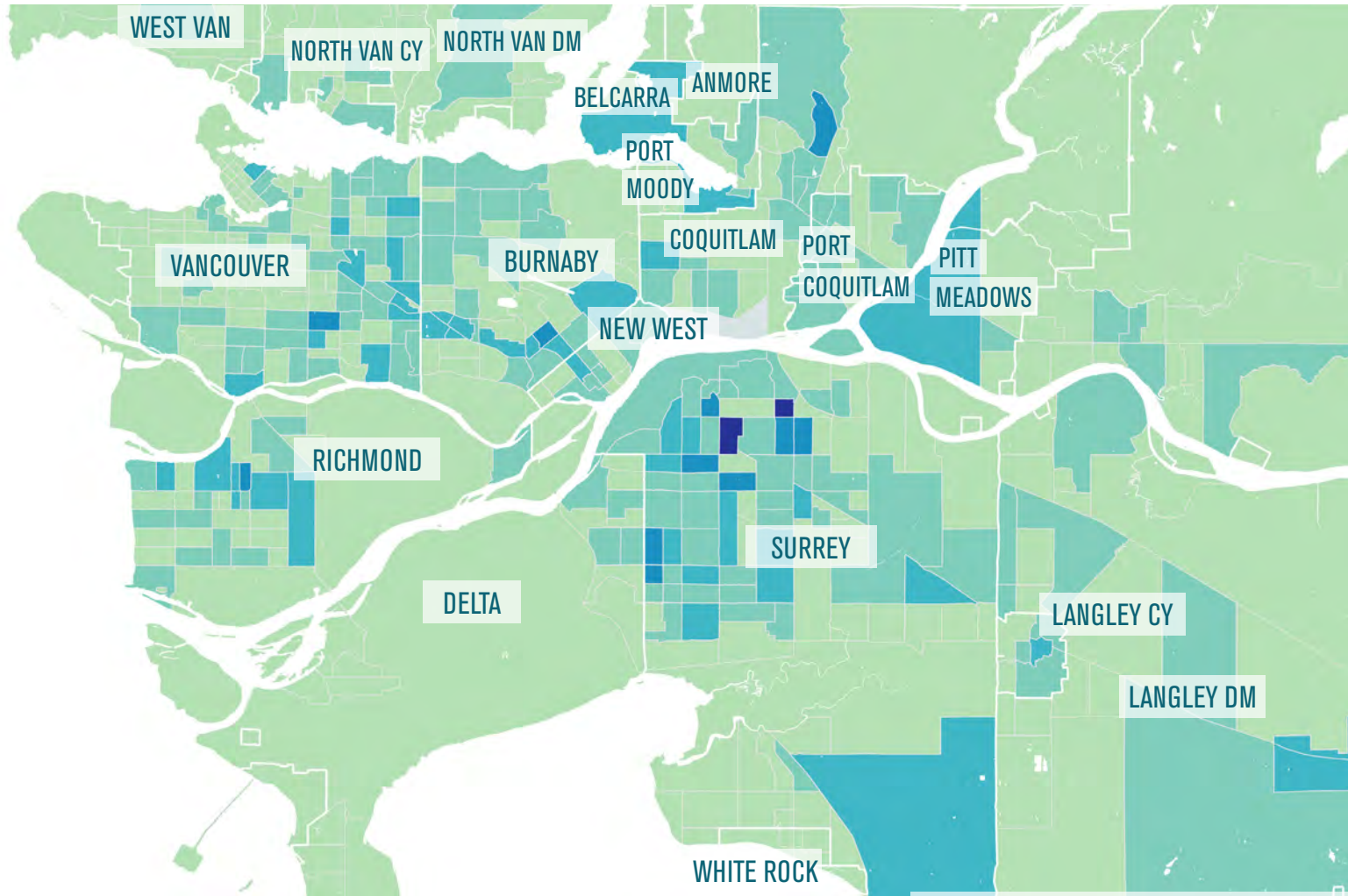
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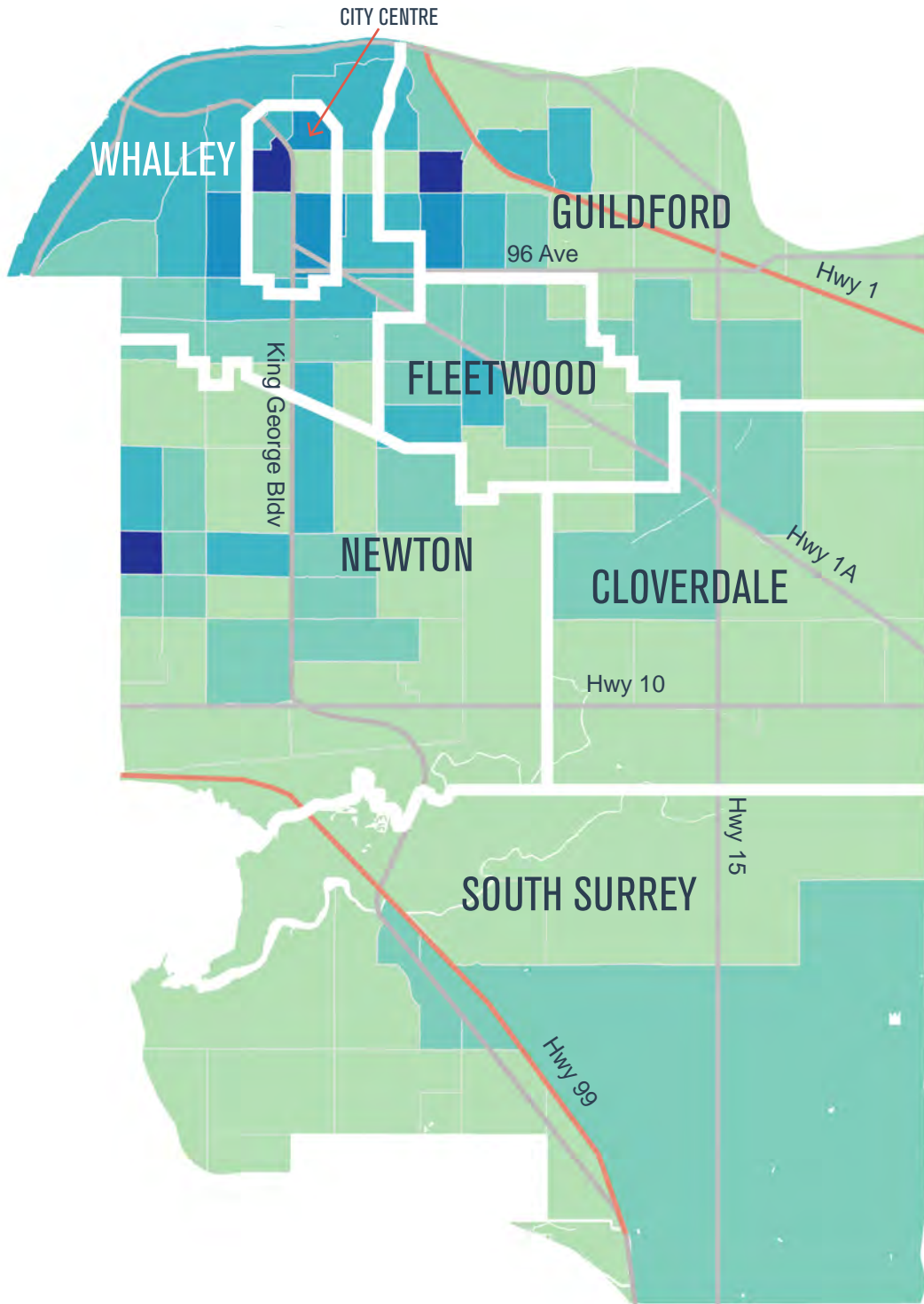
Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



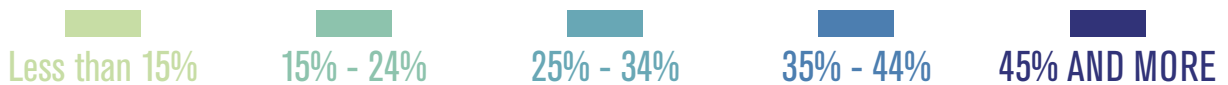
CHILDREN:

2011

Percentage of children 5 years and less in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011

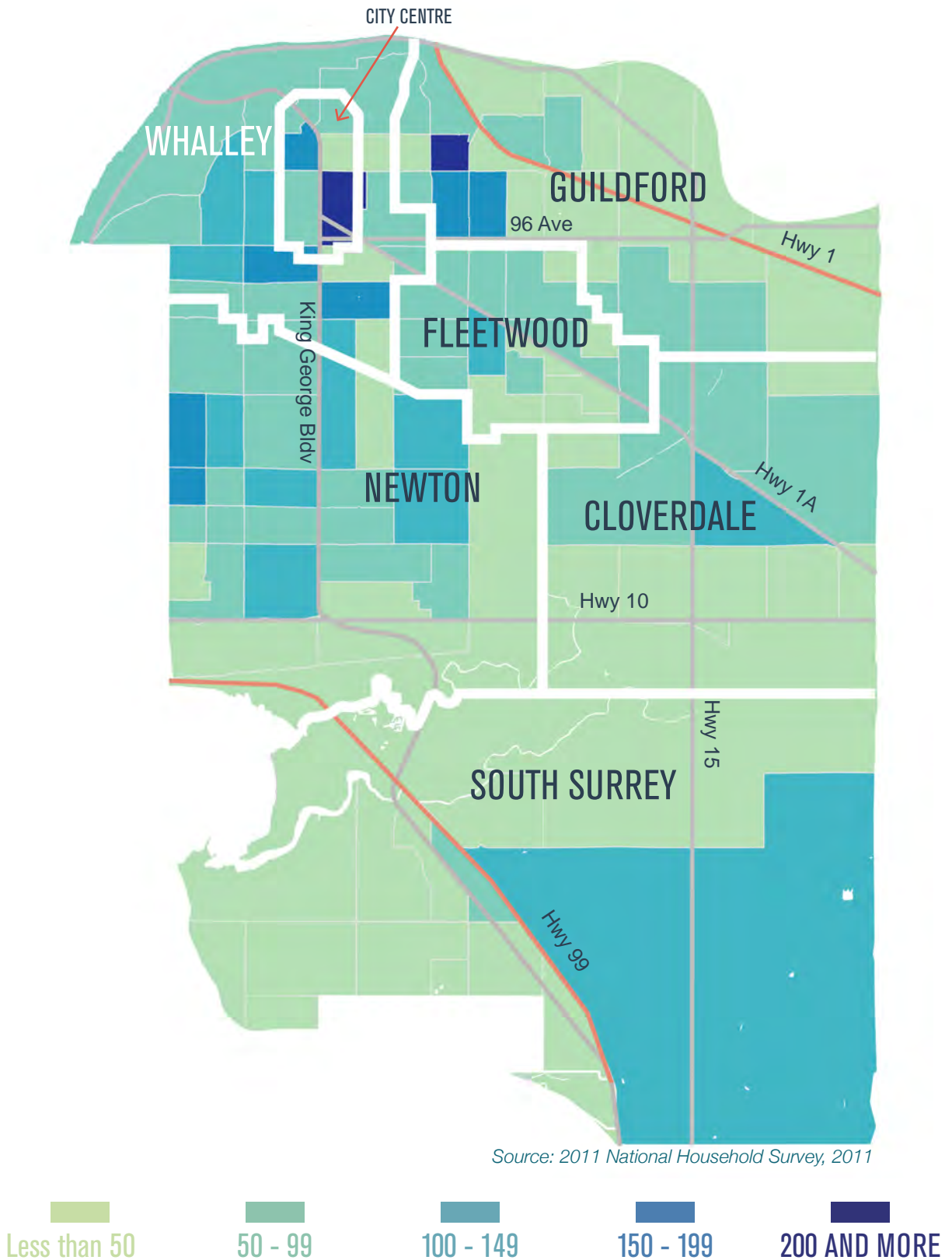


*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

CHILDREN:

2011

Number of children 5 years and less in low income*



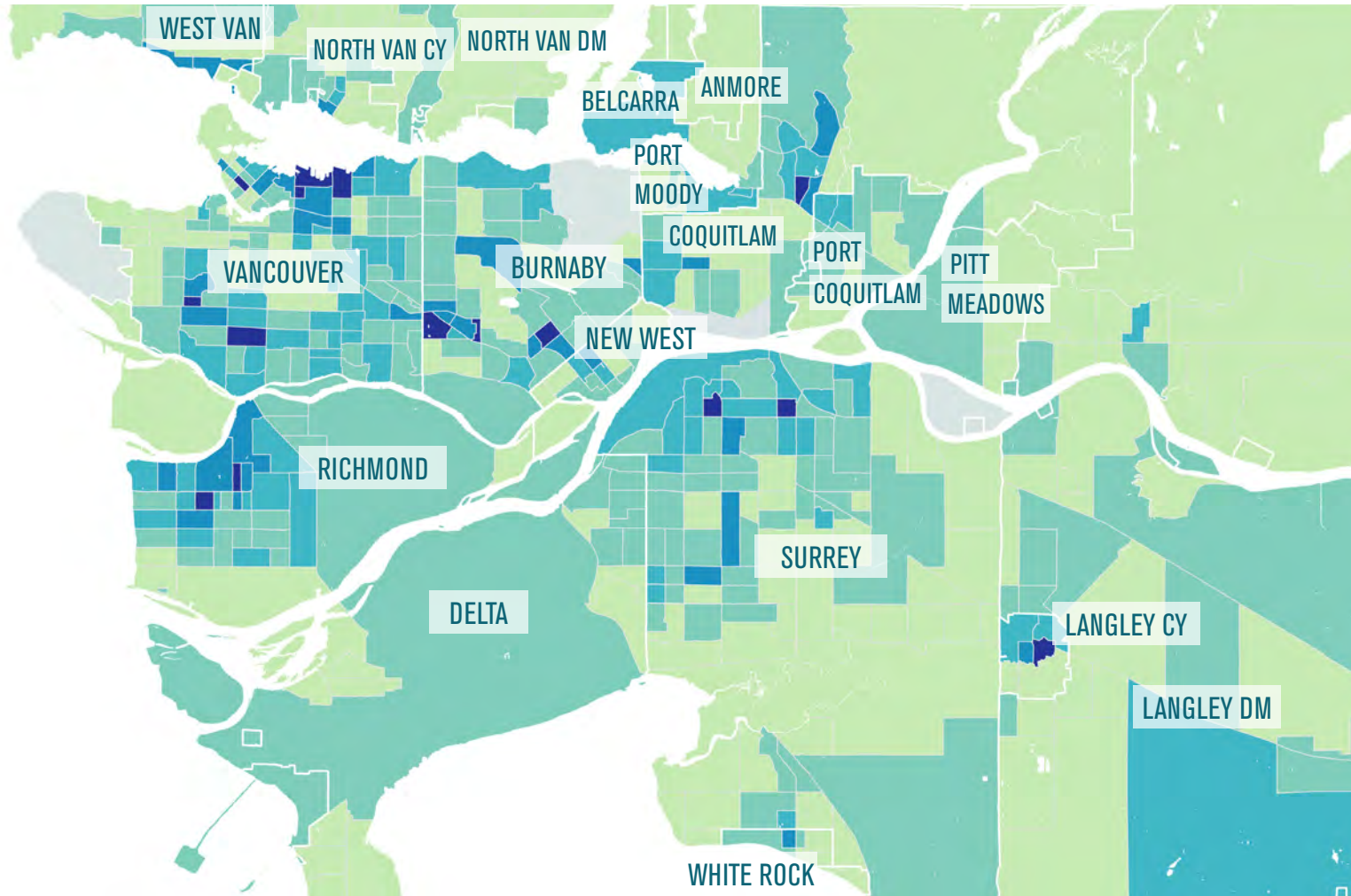
Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011

*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
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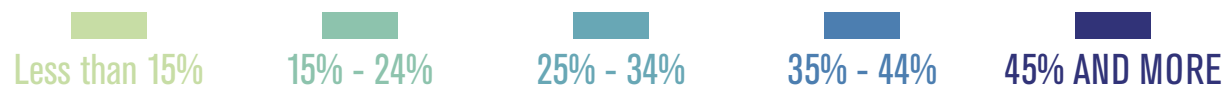
CHILDREN & YOUTH:

2011

Percentage of children and youth 17 years and younger in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



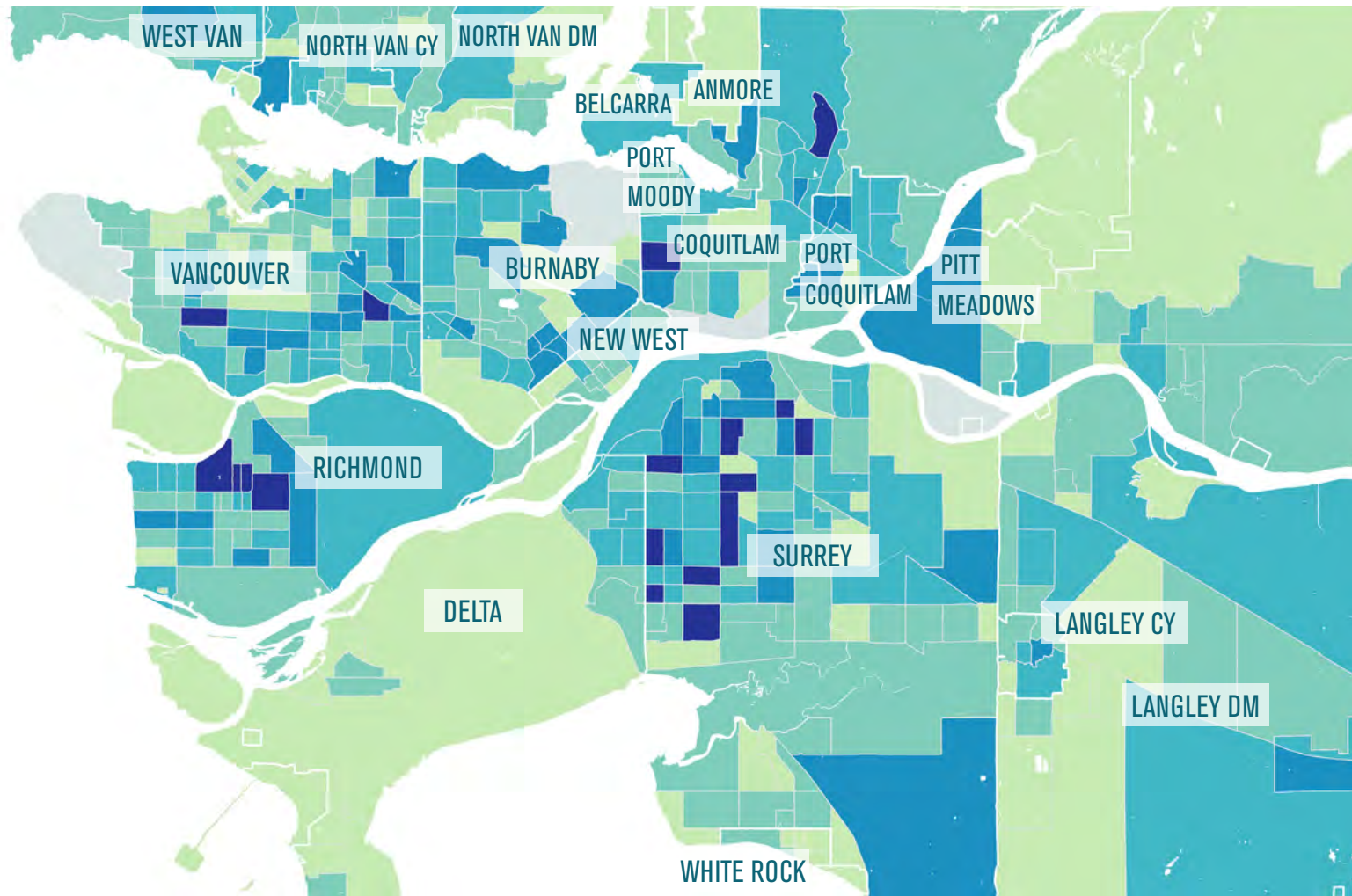
Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition
www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

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Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



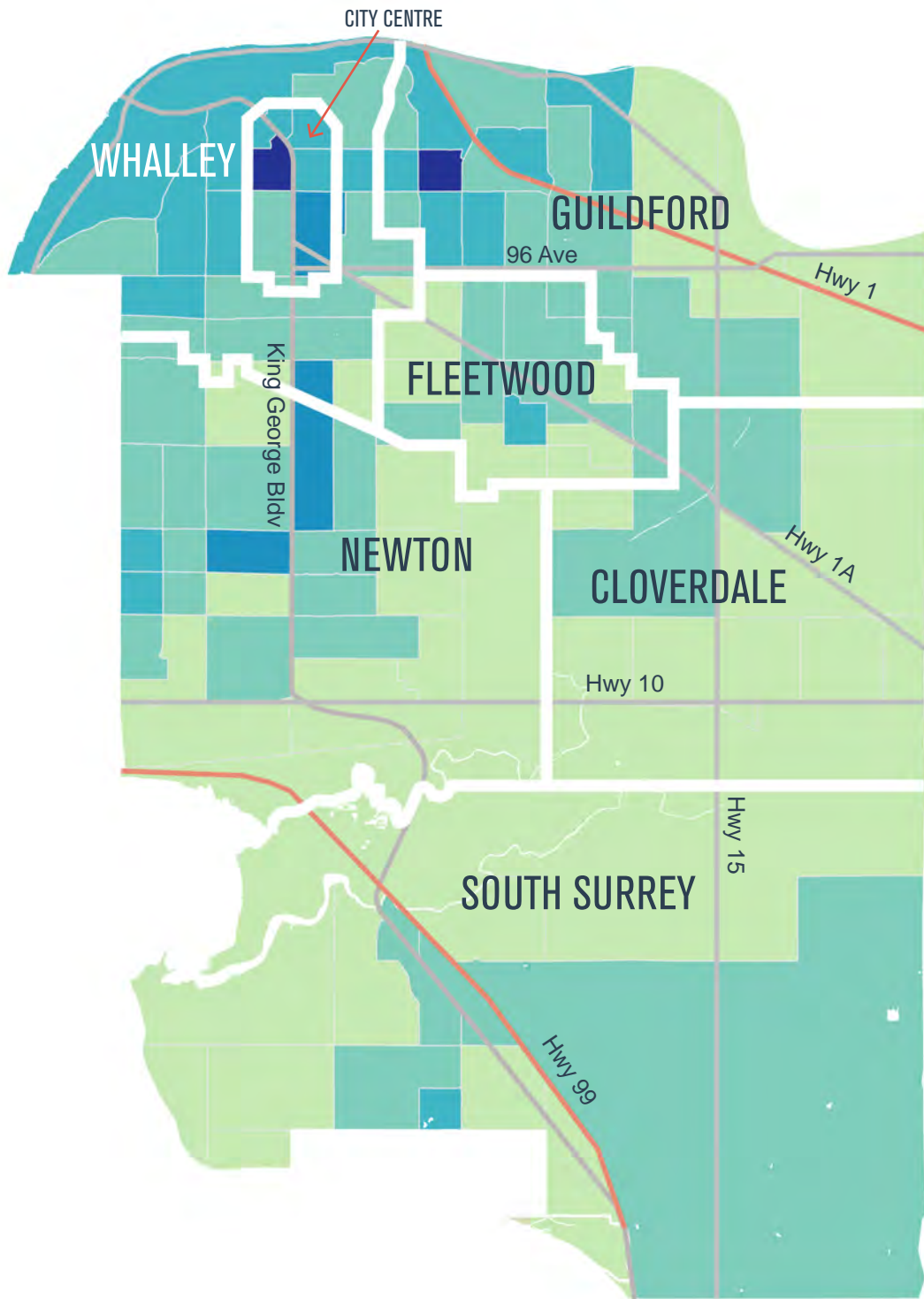
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*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
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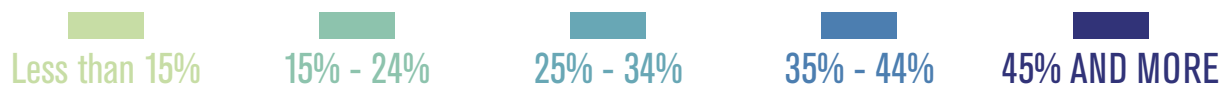
CHILDREN & YOUTH:

2011

Percentage of children and youth 17 years and younger in low income*



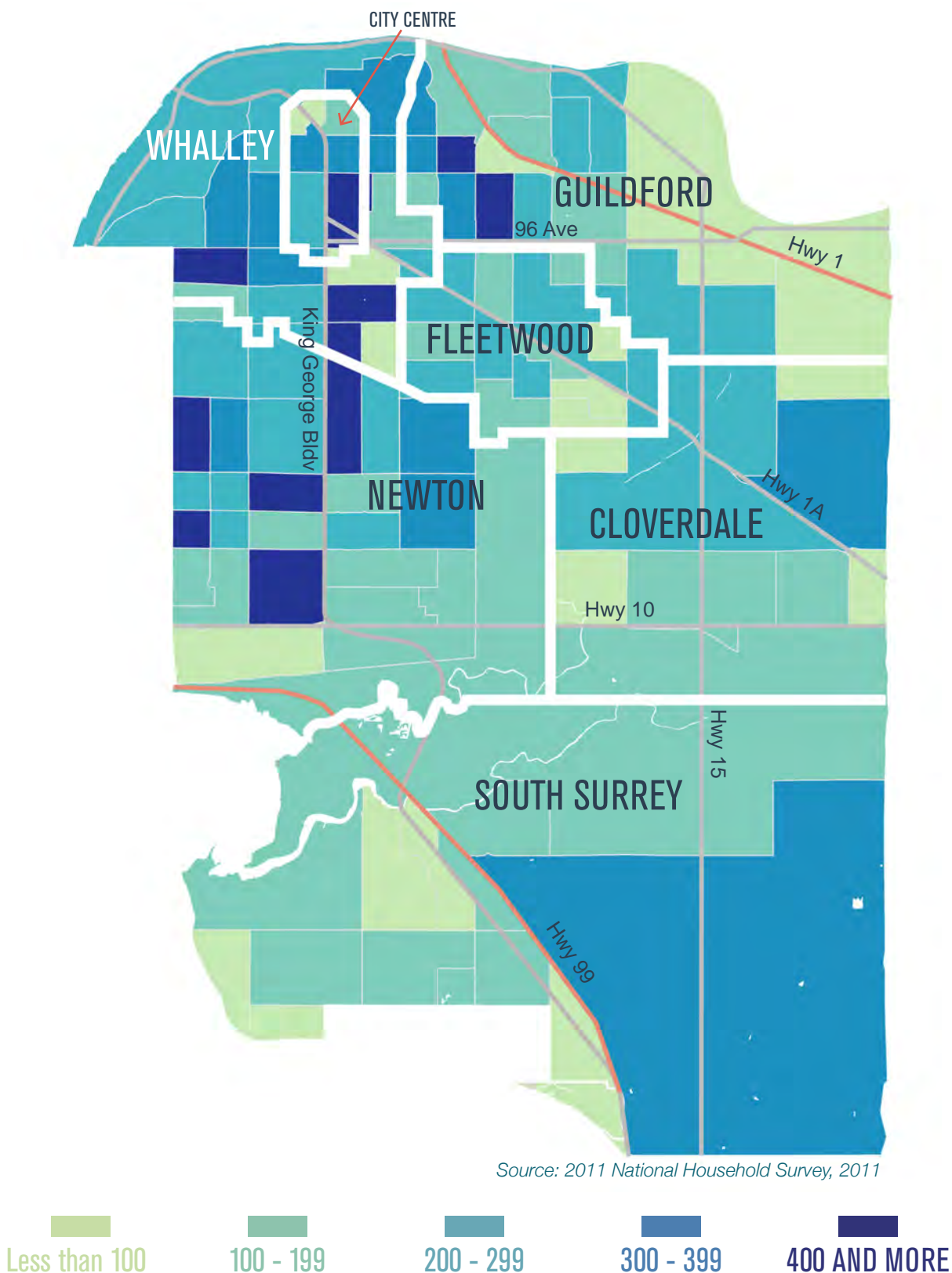
Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
 Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

CHILDREN & YOUTH:

Number of children and youth 17 years and younger in low income*

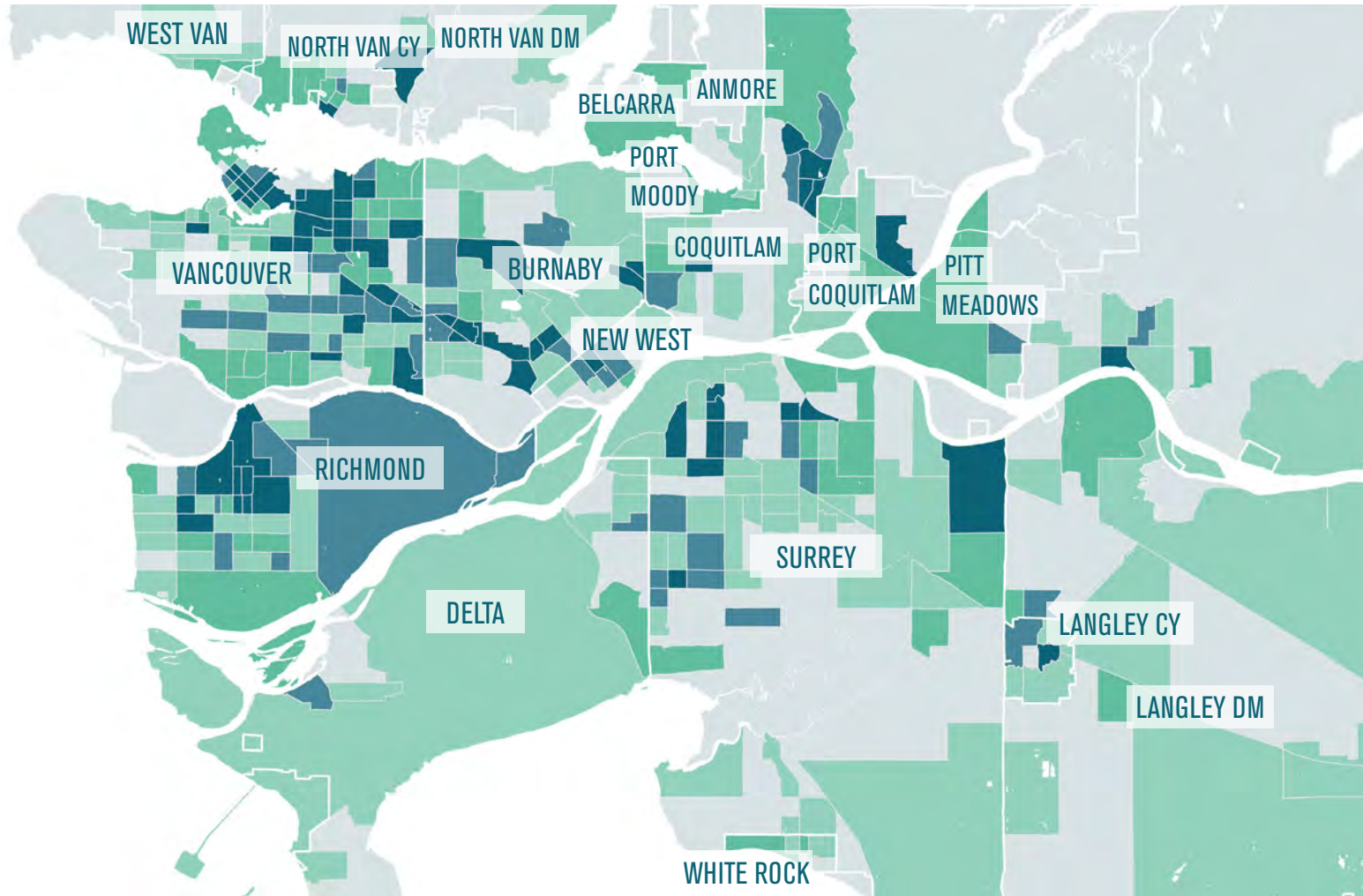


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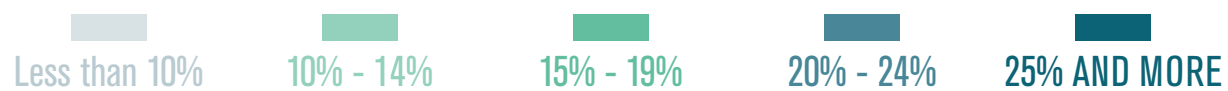
SENIORS:

2011

Percentage of seniors 65 years and over in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



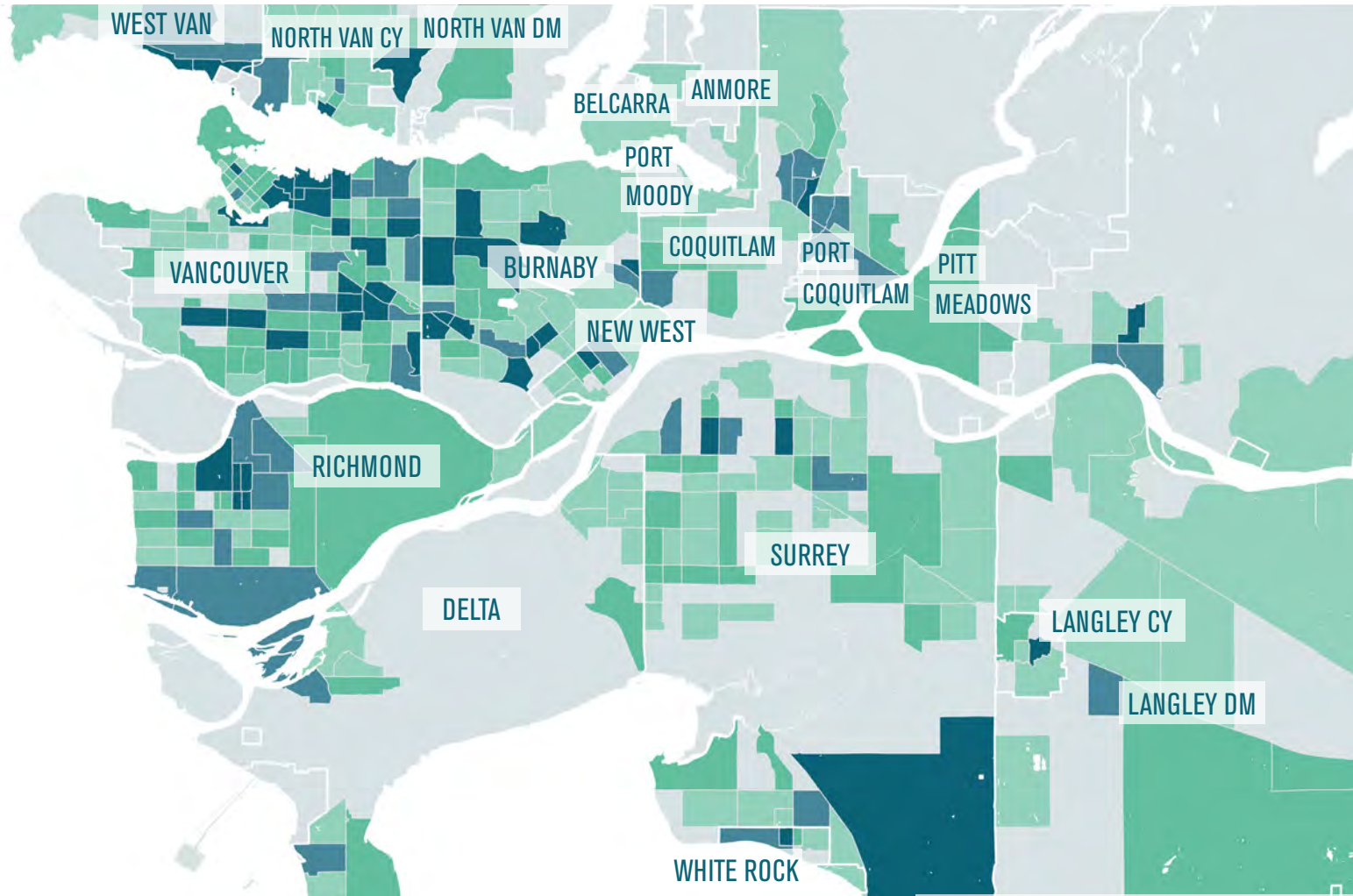
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*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)

SENIORS:

2011

Number of seniors 65 years and over in low income*



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



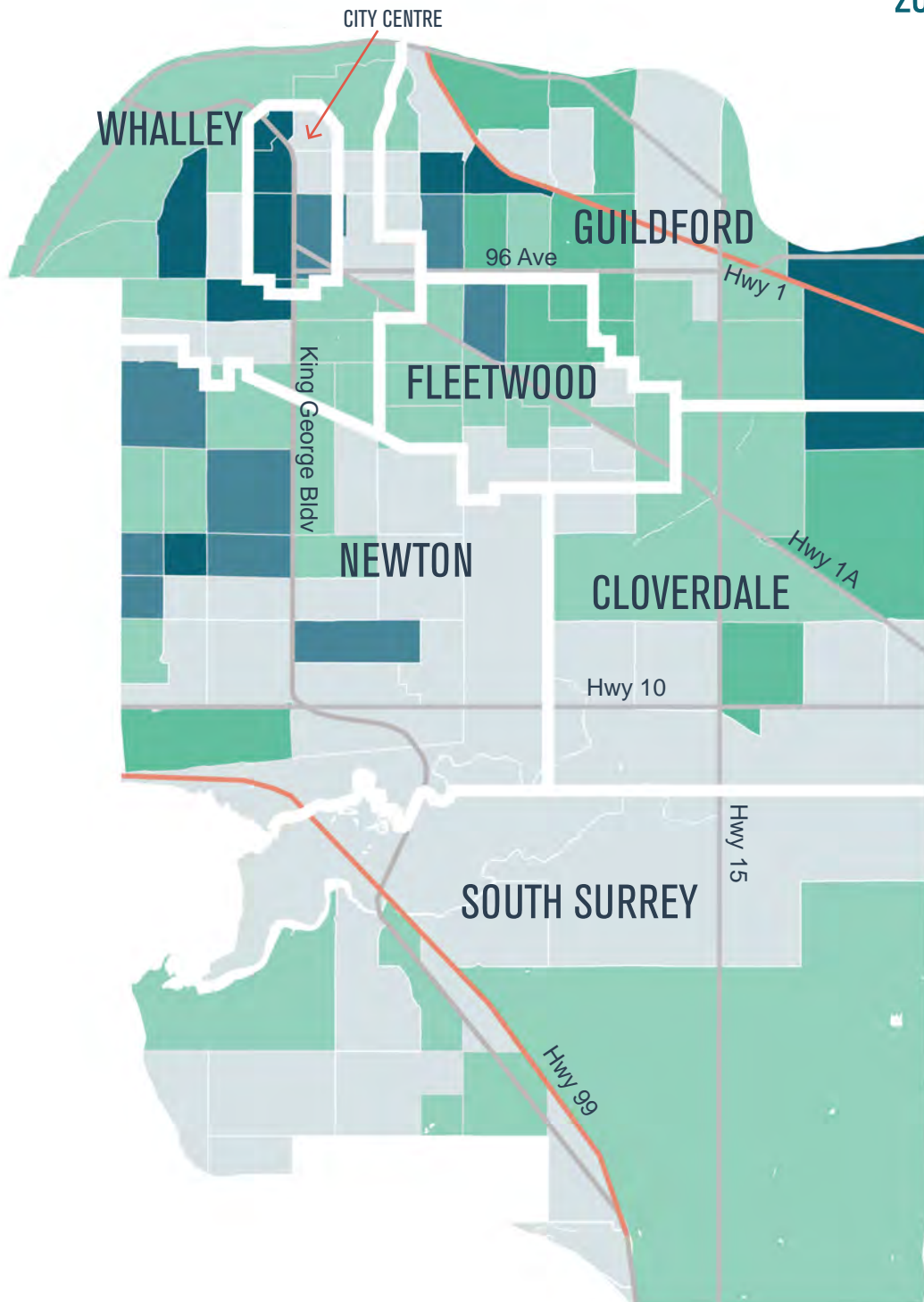
Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition
www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)

SENIORS:

Percentage of seniors 65 years and over in low income*

2011



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011

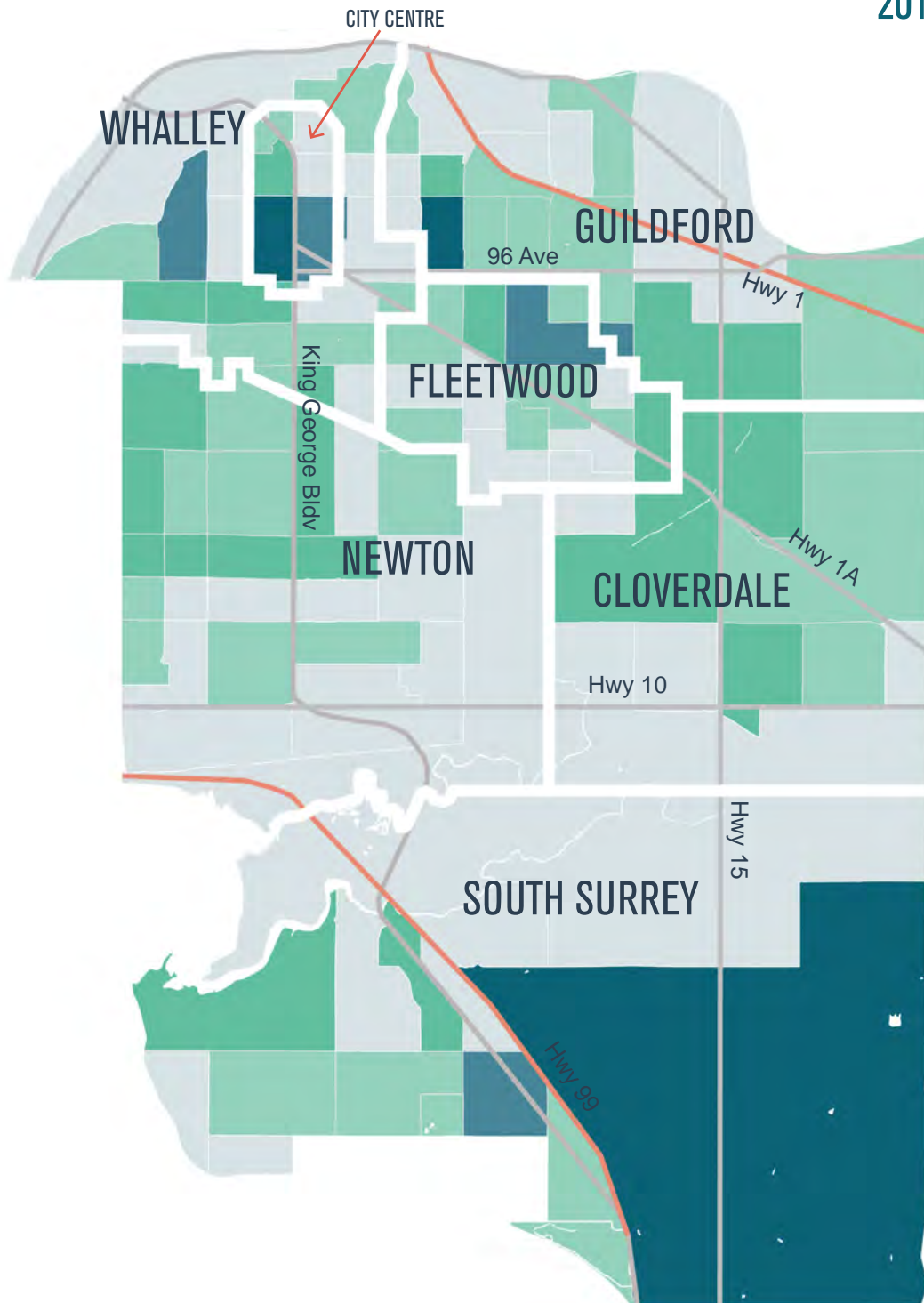


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SENIORS:

Number of seniors 65 years and over in low income*

2011



Source: 2011 National Household Survey, 2011



*According to Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT)
Produced by the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition www.surreyprc.ca Jan 2015

NHS DATA AND LOW-INCOME RESEARCH: A PRIMER

Produced by the [Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition](#) January 2015

Find us at www.surreyprc.ca

MEASURING POVERTY

THE NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

In 2010, Statistics Canada introduced sweeping alterations to its census design and methodology, effectively splitting the Population Census into two distinct products: the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS), and the mandatory short-form Census. The NHS replaced what was known, prior to 2010, as the long census questionnaire, also widely known as Census Form 2B.

The NHS provides comprehensive information about the social, demographic and economic profile of Canadians and the dwellings in which they live. Like its predecessor, the NHS is a random sample survey administered to roughly 30% of all households in Canada.¹ But unlike the long-form census, the NHS is a voluntary survey and is thus subject to higher and more varied non-response rates.

At every stage of the data collection and reporting process, Statistics Canada has made considerable effort to ensure that 2011 NHS estimates are representative of the actual population, and in line with established data quality standards.² Nonetheless, there are a few points that need to be considered when using NHS statistics.

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE 2011 NHS

- 1) The 2011 NHS is prone to higher *non-response bias* than previous census years. Non-response bias occurs when a survey's non-respondents are different from its respondents.
- 2) Generally, the risk of error increases for lower levels of geography and for smaller populations. This is especially true for census-tract level data, and for minority groups.
- 3) Statistics Canada uses the *Global Non-response Rate* (GNR) as its primary tool for calculating the quality of NHS data. The GNR is a statistical weighted measure used to ascertain the level of non-response to the voluntary survey.

4) Users should always cite GNR measures when using NHS statistics, and read any quality notes that may be included in Statistics Canada dissemination products.

5) Statistics Canada finds it necessary to publicly suppress NHS data where the global non-response rate is 50% or more. Such data is deemed of insufficient quality. Note, however, that prior to 2011, thresholds for publication were set at 25% GNR (a more rigorous standard).³

6) The changes made to survey method and content affect the comparability of 2011 NHS data over time. Users must exercise great caution when comparing 2011 NHS data with previous census years, as *"it is impossible to determine with certainty whether, and to what extent, differences in a variable are attributable to an actual change or to non-response bias."*⁴

7) After a rigorous and complex assessment of the risk bias associated with NHS data, Statistics Canada ensures users that all published 2011 standard products do in fact meet statistical quality standards.

THE LOW-INCOME CUT-OFF (LICO)

LICO statistics are no longer available as a standard product from Statistics Canada, but are only being released upon request. Statistics Canada is discouraging users from using LICO for low-income analysis.⁴ The reasons provided include:

- LICO measures cannot be adequately compared to other household surveys such as the Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) or the T1 Family File (T1FF), making attempts at data triangulation and validation impossible.
- 2011 LICO data suggest markedly different trends than those derived from other government surveys, but this difference cannot be properly validated or explained.
- To prevent misleading conclusions arising from comparisons of 2011 LICO data with earlier censuses.

¹ Statistics Canada (2013) *The 2011 NHS User Guide* Catalogue no. 99-011-x2011001.

² A variety of measures were taken to minimize inaccuracies, including follow-ups with non-respondents, imputation techniques that replaced invalid and missing responses with plausible values, weighted functions to calibrate sampled data against census totals, and a complex quality assessment process to test the reliability and consistency of NHS results. For more see Statistics Canada (2013) *The 2011 NHS User Guide* and Statistics Canada (2013) *The 2011 NHS: Data Quality and Confidentiality Standards and Guidelines* www12.statcan.gc.ca

³ Statistics Canada has increased the GNR threshold from 25% in 2006 to 50% in 2010 in light of the higher incidence of non-response which has resulted with having a voluntary survey. See Statistics Canada (2013) *The 2011 NHS User Guide* and Statistics Canada (2010) *The 2006 Census Dictionary* Catalogue no. 92-566-x.

⁴ Statistics Canada (2013) *The 2011 NHS User Guide*.

⁵ Statistics Canada (2013) *NHS 2011: Persons Living in Low-Income Neighbourhoods* Catalogue no. 99-014-x2011003.

NHS DATA AND LOW-INCOME RESEARCH: A PRIMER (CONT'D)

THE LOW-INCOME MEASURE (LIM)

With the new methodology of the NHS, Statistics Canada has identified the Low-Income Measure (LIM) as the best tool for the analysis of low income in Canada. This marks a significant change from previous census years when the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) was used as the standard measure for studies on poverty.⁶

According to Statistics Canada, the Low Income Measure (LIM) is better suited to the analysis of low income in the NHS because the threshold level of income below which one is considered to have low income is itself derived from the households that responded to the survey.⁷

Three key characteristics help describe the LIM:

- *A household has low income if its income is less than half of the median income of all households.*
- The LIM is adjusted for household size but not for geographic area.
- The LIM comes in two measures “after tax” and “before tax” (LIM-AT and LIM-BT).

THE LIMITS OF NHS DATA FOR LOW-INCOME STUDIES

Statistics Canada explicitly states that, in light of the changes made to census methodology, “2011 NHS data on low-income is **not** comparable to census data of previous years.”⁸ However, Statistics Canada does ensure that it is statistically valid to compare 2011 low-income data across population groups and across geographic areas for that same year, that is for 2011.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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⁷ Statistics Canada (2013) *NHS 2011: Persons Living in Low-Income Neighbourhoods*.

⁸ Statistics Canada (2013) *NHS 2011: Income Reference Guide* Catalogue no. 99-014-x2011006.

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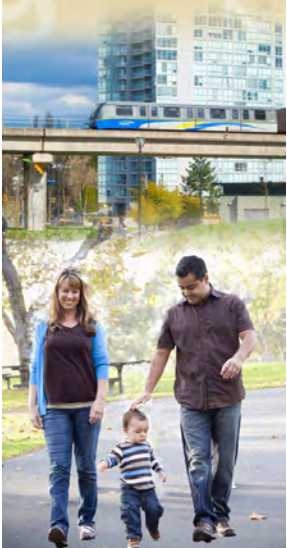
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Homelessness

Across Surrey, there were also 403 individuals who were identified as homeless on the night of the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, representing 15% of the total Metro Vancouver homeless population. This includes 140 people who were sleeping outside, or unsheltered. The other 263 homeless individuals were sleeping in emergency shelters, transition houses, hospitals or jails.

Social housing

Data available through the 2011 National Household Survey reports that 11% (4,600) of tenant households lived in social housing units in Surrey, compared to a metropolitan average of 14%.

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housing

Metro Vancouver is recognized as having high housing costs. While housing in Surrey is more affordable when compared to other parts of the region, our research shows that there are still too many low-income families and individuals struggling to find housing that they can afford.

We also know that access to affordable housing plays a critical role in helping to provide low-income families and individuals with the foundation that they need for their overall well-being. We are interested in exploring strategies to provide low-income families and individuals with increased stability in their housing situation and an expanded range of housing options.

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Jan 2015



What we know from our research

Many families and individuals in Metro Vancouver are renters

Renter households account for approximately 35% of all households across Metro Vancouver. Within the City of Surrey, approximately 27% of all households are renters. While many households will aspire to be owners, there are also many households for whom owning might not be possible and renting is their only option.

Average rental housing costs

Rental market data published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Fall 2013) reported average monthly rents of \$1,067 across the Metro Vancouver region. Within the City of Surrey, the average monthly rent was \$846. An average market rent of \$846 is approximately 21% below the average market rent for the region.

Average housing cost for a bachelor and 1-bedroom unit (2013)

CMHC reports that the average monthly rent in Metro Vancouver for a bachelor unit is \$876 and the average monthly rent for a 1-bedroom unit \$1,005.

In Surrey, the average monthly rent for a bachelor unit is \$630 and the average monthly rent for a 1-bedroom unit is \$750. The average rent for a bachelor and 1-bedroom unit in Surrey is affordable to a household with an annual income of between \$25,280 and \$30,000. These rents are above the level that is affordable to a single person or 2 person household living at the poverty line.

Average housing cost for 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom units (2013)

CMHC reports that the average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom unit in Metro Vancouver is \$1,281 and the average monthly rent for a 3-bedroom unit is \$1,498.

In Surrey, the average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom unit is \$920 and the average rent for a 3-bedroom unit was \$1,080. These rents are affordable to households with annual incomes of between \$36,840 and \$43,200 and are above the levels that would be affordable to three and four person households living at the poverty line.

The affordability of the rents in Surrey

While the average rent in Surrey is 21% below the average market rent for the region, the rents are still unaffordable to many lower income households, especially those living in poverty. Even with the higher levels of affordability when compared to rents across the region, the average rent in Surrey is between \$100 and \$150 per month above the level that is affordable to a household living at the poverty line.



TABLE 1 AFFORDABILITY OF RENTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN LOW INCOME

Household Size	Low-Income Measure (After Tax)	Affordable Rent Levels	Surrey Rent Levels	Difference
1 person	\$19,460	\$487	\$630	\$143
2 persons	\$27,521	\$688	\$750	\$62
3 persons	\$33,706	\$843	\$920	\$77
4 persons	\$38,920	\$973	\$1080	\$107

Core housing need and 'shelter-to-income' ratio

Core Housing Need refers to households spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs, or unable to find housing in their community that is suitable in size and that is in good repair with the resources they have available. Issues of housing affordability can be related to both a shortage of affordable units and rents which are not affordable to households with incomes at the lower end of the income distribution. Data from the CHMC shows that there are 85,700 renter household in core housing need in Metro Vancouver representing approximately 1 in 3 renter households.

Core housing need data at the municipal level is yet to be released for 2011. However, the National Household Survey shows that approximately 38% (15,500) of renter households in Surrey spend 30% or more of household total income on shelter. NHS data further reports that 11% of all households in Surrey live in 'unsuitable/overcrowded' dwellings, as defined by the National Occupancy Standard (NOS).

These two metrics, 'shelter-to-income' ratio and 'housing suitability' are different than Core Housing Need, but given the lack of available data, they serve as useful alternatives for thinking about housing vulnerability in the city.

TABLE 2 PROFILE OF HOUSEHOLDS IN CORE NEED

	Renter Households	Renter Households spending 30% or more of household income on shelter	%	Households living in unsuitable dwellings	%
Metro Vancouver	306,105	136,800	45	83,300	9
Surrey	41,185	15,500	38	16,800	11

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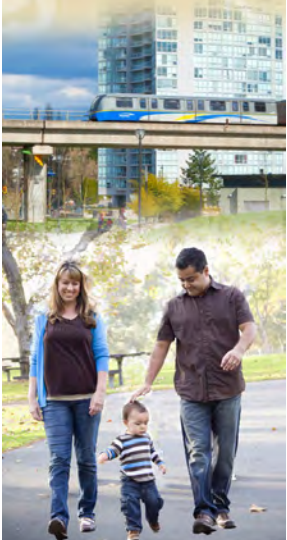
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Making Work Pay

The table below shows the median income reported across those who worked full year, full time and includes comparative information by gender.

	Total Population with Income from Employment	Median Income All Full-Time Workers	Median Income (Male)	Median Income (Female)
Metro Vancouver	631,975	\$50,016	\$55,401	\$44,641
Surrey	121,825	\$45,462	\$50,737	\$40,481

The importance of a strong social safety net

Information from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation also shows that there were approximately 14,632 households and 20,610 individuals in Surrey relying on income assistance (April 2011). This represents approximately 23% of the 62,512 income assistance cases across Metro Vancouver. For a single person household, the assistance available is approximately \$610 per month, while the assistance available for a couple with two children is approximately \$1,101 per month. These translate into an annual income of \$7,320 for a single person and \$13,212 for a couple with two children; income levels significantly below the low income measure threshold for a single person household (\$19,460) and the low income measure threshold for a family of four (\$38,920).

The importance of a strong social safety net

There has been a patchwork of programs introduced to respond to emerging needs and pressures. Some have included enhancements to existing programs. Others have been in the form of one-time or time-limited funding. The federal government provided a list of programs and initiatives that address poverty in the *Government Response to the Final Report on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on Cities entitled "In from the Margins: A call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness"*. These programs include apprenticeship grants, Aboriginal skills and employment training strategies and funding, a variety of tax measures aimed at families with children and people with disabilities, employment insurance, student grants and summer jobs programs, and literacy programs.

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income

Income is about economic security and access to opportunities. Too many families and individuals are living from pay cheque to pay cheque, earning too little to let them get ahead

Based on the current low-income measure (LIM), a single person is considered to be living in poverty if their income is below \$19,460 (after tax). Similarly, a two person household is considered to be living in poverty if their income is below \$27,211. For a family of four, the poverty line is \$38,920.

What we know from our research

An individual working full year, full time at the minimum wage lives on the cusp of poverty

In May 2012, the minimum wage in BC increased from \$9.50 per hour to \$10.25 per hour. A minimum wage of \$10.25 per hour translates into approximately \$384 per week assuming a 37.5 hour week. Annually this translates into an income of \$19, 988 which is marginally above the poverty line for single parents. A single-parent family with the parent working full time at the minimum wage would effectively be living in poverty.

Working poor couples earning minimum wage also face challenges

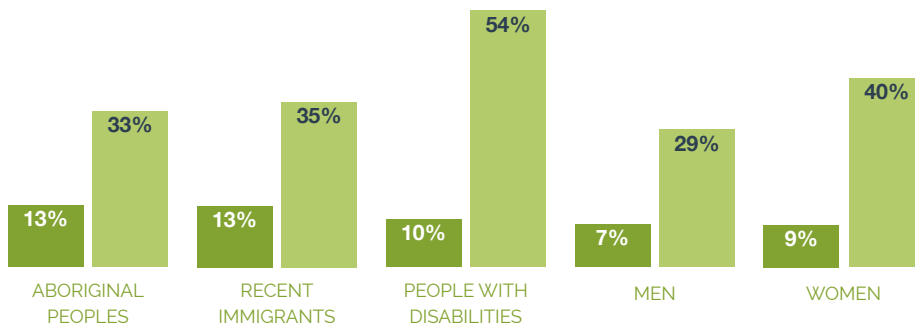
A family of four, where both of the heads of the household are working full-time and earning minimum wage will earn just enough to move them out of poverty based on the established income cut-offs. At the same time, even though their income has allowed them to move out of poverty, they would not be able to afford the average 3 bedroom rent in Surrey (\$1,080) without spending more than 30 per cent of their income on their housing costs. As well, these households remain among those who are considered to be the near poor and who face the risk of falling back into poverty.

The unemployment rate among people in Surrey ranged from 7% for men to 13% for recent immigrants and Aboriginal people.



Who's looking for work?

UNEMPLOYMENT VARIES FROM GROUP TO GROUP



Access to employment and opportunities

Through our research we observed that there is significant variation in the employment and economic opportunities available to different groups and sectors of the community. Among people who were in the labour force, the following general patterns and trends emerged.

WOMEN Approximately 28% of all women 15 and older living in Surrey worked part-time while 65% worked full year, full-time. Of those working full-time, the median hourly earnings were \$22.49 in 2011.

MEN Approximately 12% of all men 15 and older living in Surrey worked part-time while 83% worked full year, full-time. Of those working fulltime, the median hourly earnings were \$28.19.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE Approximately 22% of all Aboriginal people 15 and older living in Surrey worked part-time while 69% worked full year, fulltime. Of those working full-time, the median hourly earnings were \$22.14.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS Approximately 18% of all recent immigrants 15 and older living in Surrey worked part-time while 70% worked full year, full-time. Of those working full-time, the median hourly earnings were \$18.70.

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH AND ACTIVITY LIMITATIONS Approximately 21% of all people with health and activity limitations in Surrey 15 and older worked part-time while 72% worked full year, full-time. Of those working full-time, the median hourly earnings were \$24.80.

Some populations earn significantly less than others. On average, men earned more than 1.5 times what recent immigrants earned.

What are people earning?

HOURLY WAGES VARY BETWEEN POPULATION GROUPS



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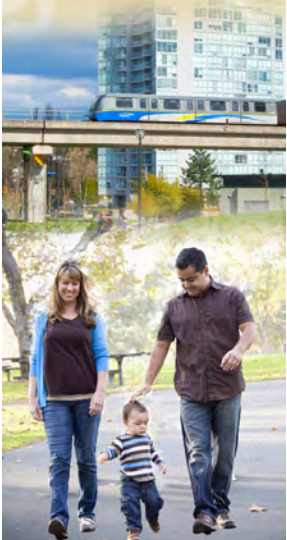
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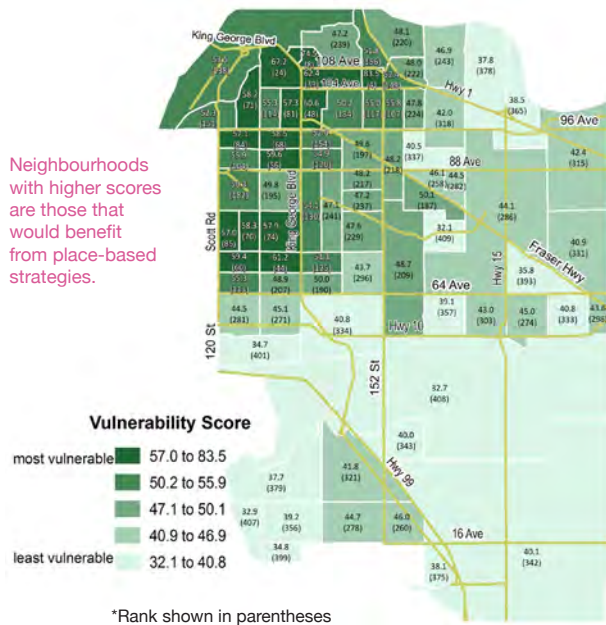
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Our research shows that some neighbourhoods can face a combination of challenges which can put pressure on the community. Research pioneered by the *Globalization and Health Project* funded by the Canadian Institute of Health developed a measure which looked at different pressures and the potential implications for affected neighbourhoods. They mapped the results to identify specific neighbourhoods or communities which would benefit from targeted or place-based strategies. Among the specific measures were:

- The share of the population living below LICO;
- The share of the population 6 or under living below LICO;
- The rate of unemployment;
- The share of the population 15+ with less than high school education;
- The share of families that are single parent families;
- The share of the population that are recent immigrants;
- The share of renter households spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs.

GRAPH 3 VULNERABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS



Neighbourhoods with higher scores are those that would benefit from place-based strategies.

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THE FACTS ON POVERTY IN SURREY

support

It is difficult to escape poverty without targeted strategies and supports. For many families and individuals living in poverty, choices are constrained, and trade-offs difficult.

This fact sheet looks at the potential benefits of developing place-based strategies to help address the challenges of poverty, by focusing on the specific needs of the most vulnerable Surrey neighbourhoods. This fact sheet also looks more closely at the importance of access to affordable child care, and access to education and other opportunities as a way to help families and individuals overcome poverty.



What we know from our research

Access to affordable and appropriate childcare

Affordable child care is essential in terms of supporting families. In particular, our research shows that dependable and affordable child care is essential in helping families to gain access to employment, while at the same time allowing parents to feel confident that their children's needs are being met. Over time, different types of child care arrangements have evolved with many lower income households facing fewer choices in the child care options available to them.

Access to education

Access to education also plays an essential role in helping address poverty. This includes measures to ensure that low income families and individuals have access to the types of opportunities and training they need for achieving success. The following provides an overview of the level of education attained across different groups and sectors of the community.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE Approximately 19% of Aboriginal people in Surrey age 24 to 64 did not have any certificate, diploma or degree in 2011, while 28% had a high school diploma or the equivalent. Approximately 52% had a certificate, diploma, or degree from a college, university, apprenticeship, or trades program.

RECENT IMMIGRANTS Approximately 16% of recent immigrants in Surrey age 24 to 64 did not have any certificate, diploma or degree in 2011, while 21% had a high school diploma or the equivalent. Approximately 64% had a certificate, diploma, or degree from a college, university, apprenticeship, or trades program with 64% in this category having a university degree.

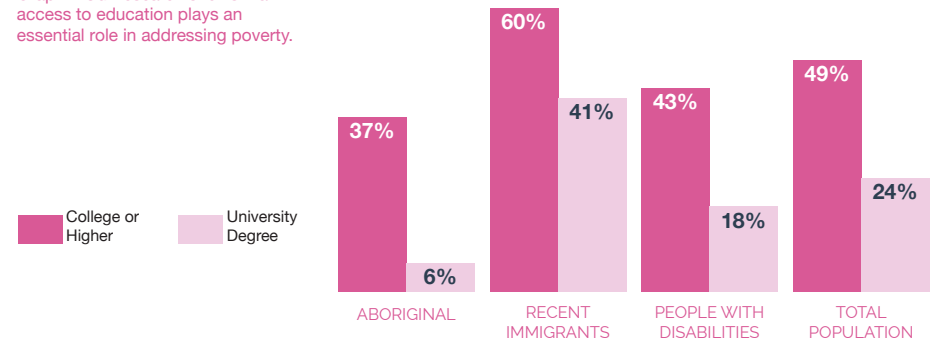
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES Approximately 19% of people with health and activity limitations in Surrey age 24 to 64 reported that they did not have a certificate, diploma or degree in 2011 while 26% had a high school diploma or the equivalent. Approximately 54% had a certificate, diploma, or degree from a college, university, apprenticeship, or trades program with 32% in this group having a university degree.



How many people in Surrey finish college or get a university degree?

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IN SURREY (AGES 25 TO 64)

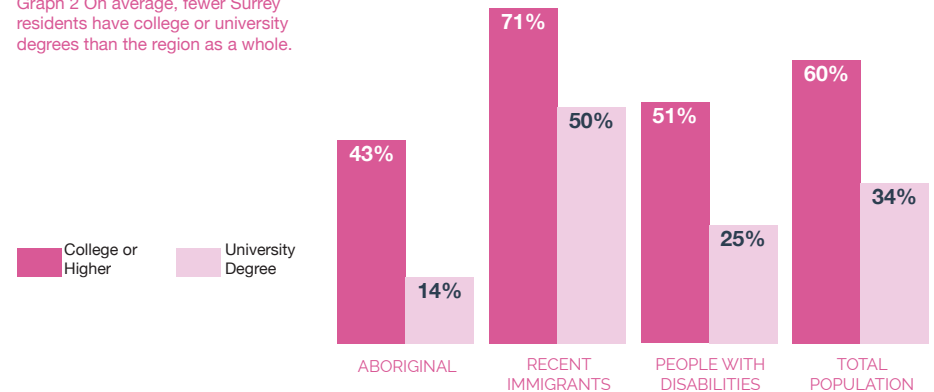
Graph 1 Our research shows that access to education plays an essential role in addressing poverty.



How many people in Metro Vancouver finish college or get a university degree?

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IN SURREY (AGES 25 TO 64)

Graph 2 On average, fewer Surrey residents have college or university degrees than the region as a whole.



Place-based strategies can make a difference

Effective strategies for responding to the need of families and individuals living in poverty should incorporate place-based strategies that seek to respond to specific limitations or neighbourhood pressures. This can include appropriate access to transit, neighbourhood and community amenities as well as quality schools and affordable housing. Effective place-based strategies target neighbourhoods with a high proportion of households living in poverty.

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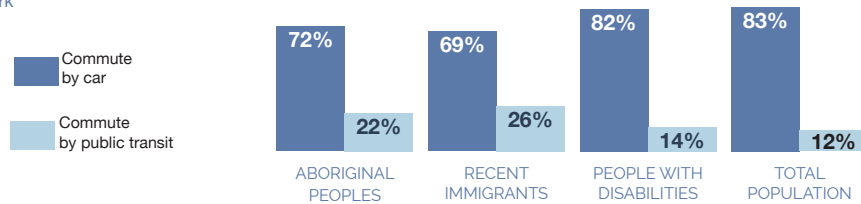
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How do people get to work?

COMMUTING PATTERN FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, RECENT IMMIGRANTS, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Our research shows that of these groups the majority use a car to go to work



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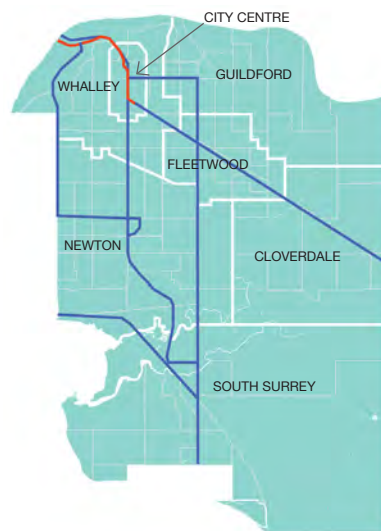
Discounted transit passes

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation provides discounted transit passes for low-income seniors and people with disabilities. This program can make a real difference in helping seniors and people with disabilities who are in low income and struggling to make ends meet.

SURREY'S FREQUENT TRANSIT NETWORK

In order to make transit accessible and affordable for low-income populations it needs to be close to where people live, work and need to go. Given Surrey's geography and population distribution, the city's Frequent Transit network does not currently achieve these goals.

FREQUENT TRANSIT NETWORK: SURREY



THE FACTS ON POVERTY IN SURREY

transportation

Many people in Surrey continue to rely on their cars to get to and from work. This is not unlike other communities. However, for many low income households, the cost of transportation can be significant.

Our research shows that investments in and proximity to public transit can make a significant difference in reducing the cost of travelling to work as well as providing low income families and individuals with better access to jobs and employment.

Taking this into consideration, we are interested in exploring choices that can help to reduce the cost of transportation for low-income families and individuals, while helping to facilitate greater mobility within and across the region to allow people to shop, access services and participate in their community.

Produced by the **Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition**
www.surreyprc.ca

Jan 2015



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Where Surrey has public transit, it works. Let's ensure that housing, employment, health care and other services are integrated with transit.

What we know from our research

Accessible and affordable transportation is important

We know that affordable and accessible transportation plays an important role in helping to access employment, services and other opportunities. Our research shows that, for many households, the cost of owning and operating a vehicle is a major household expense.

The Survey of Household Spending (SHS) reported that BC households spend an average of \$10,319 annually on transportation-related expenses. This includes an average annual expenditure of \$5,511 for the operation of a vehicle including maintenance and fuel as well as other costs (See Table 1).

TABLE 1 TRANSPORTATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household Size	Low-Income Measure (After Tax)	Average Annual Cost (2012)	Average Monthly Cost (2012)	% of Household Income
1 person	\$19,460	\$10,319	\$860	53%
2 persons	\$27,521	\$10,319	\$860	37%
3 persons	\$33,706	\$10,319	\$860	31%
4 persons	\$38,920	\$10,319	\$860	27%

Sources: Statistics Canada, NHS Dictionary 2011, Catalogue no. 99-000-X201100
Statistics Canada, Survey of Household Spending, Table 203-0022

Transportation-related expenditures have continued to increase

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for British Columbia shows that transportation-related costs have continued to increase by approximately 2.5% per year or 22% over the past 10 years. A lot of this increase can be attributed to the rising cost of fuel which has increased at a rate of approximately 8% per year or 70% between 2003 and 2013.

Public transit can reduce transportation costs

An annual transportation cost of \$10,319 translates into a weekly cost of \$198. At the same time, a monthly 3-zone transit pass costs \$170 per month or approximately \$43 per week.

For a family of three living at the poverty line, access to public transit can represent a significant savings. If a household is able to access suitable transit options, their monthly transportation costs could be cut by more than half — going from approximately \$860 per month to \$392 per month, representing between 10% and 15% of the annual budget for a household living in poverty (See Table 2).



TABLE 2 PUBLIC TRANSIT COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household Size	Low-Income Measure (After Tax)	Public Transit Cost (Annual)	Public Transit Cost (Monthly)	% of Household Income
1 person	\$19,460	\$2,040	\$170	10%
2 persons	\$27,521	\$4,080	\$340	15%
3 persons	\$33,706	\$4,704	\$392	14%
4 persons	\$38,920	\$5,328	\$444	14%

Sources: Statistics Canada, NHS Dictionary 2011, Catalogue no. 99-000-X201100

NOTE: Note: Based on a 3-zone monthly transit cost of \$170 per month for each adult and a concession fare of \$52 for each child. This includes 2 adults and 1 child in the three (3) person household and 2 adults and 2 children in the 4 person household.

Patterns of transit use across different groups

Our research shows different patterns of transit use across different groups.

WOMEN Of the 98,050 women 15 and older in Surrey, 15,110 (15%) reported that they take public transit to work while 80% take a vehicle, either as a driver (72%) or as a passenger (8%).

MEN Of the 113,670 males 15 and older in Surrey, 11,930 (10%) reported they take public transit to work while 88% reported that they take a vehicle, either as a driver (81%) or as a passenger (5%).

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE Of the 4,330 Aboriginal peoples 15 and older in Surrey, 955 (22%) reported that they take public transit to work while 72% reported that they take a vehicle, either as a driver (63%) or as a passenger (9%).

RECENT IMMIGRANTS Of the 15,430 recent immigrants 15 and older in Surrey, 4,035 (26%) reported taking public transit to work while 69% take a vehicle, either as a driver (53%) or as a passenger (15%).

PEOPLE WITH HEALTH AND ACTIVITY LIMITATIONS Of the 31,105 people with health and activity limitations 15 and older in Surrey, 4,305 (14%) reported taking public transit to work while 82% reported that they take a vehicle to work either as a driver (75%) or as a passenger (7%).

TABLE 3 PATTERNS OF TRANSIT USE COMPARED TO OTHER MODES OF TRAVEL

	Private Vehicles	Public Transit	Walking	Biking	Other
Metro Vancouver	71%	20%	6%	2%	1%
Surrey	83%	13%	3%	0.3%	1%