
A Profile of Poverty in the City of Prince George 2019

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1: Introduction

Through the end of 2017 and beginning of 2018, the Government of British Columbia conducted engagement sessions with people living in poverty and the people supporting them.¹ Partly as a result of these consultations, several areas were identified as potential gaps preventing the reduction of poverty in BC. These gaps became key priorities in BC's poverty reduction strategy, titled *TogetherBC*. These priority areas include: housing and homelessness; supports for children and families; financial security and income supports; mental health and addictions services; food security; access to health care; education and training; employment and jobs; access to services; safe, affordable transportation; access to justice; and discrimination and stigma. The strategy also outlines four guiding principles which are designed to focus the strategy in reaching its goals. These guiding principles are affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion.

In early 2019, the City of Prince George also identified poverty reduction as one of its strategic priorities. The purpose of this profile is to support the City of Prince George in working toward the eradication of poverty in the community. It is a descriptive profile and lacks the in-depth consultation and analysis needed to best understand poverty in the community. However, it is a starting point for further conversation and consultation with City partners.

To structure the profile, the following sections mirror the guiding principles and key priorities outlined in *TogetherBC*. Of course, some of these priorities are better addressed by the municipal government than others. As such, some priorities were emphasized in this report; namely, the affordability of housing, childcare, transportation, and food security. To further frame the current state of poverty in Prince George, other *TogetherBC* priorities are detailed under the heading of 'Opportunity,' including education, employment, access to healthcare, and mental health and addictions. Given the multifactorial nature of poverty, it is important to consider the affordability priorities in the context of these additional opportunity factors. Continuing with the *TogetherBC* guiding principles, the final two sections of this profile are titled 'Social Inclusion' and 'Reconciliation.' As will be discussed, social inclusion, much like poverty, is multifaceted and difficult to conceptualize. Some

partial measures of social inclusion are reported at the level of large BC cities, as Prince George-specific data are lacking. However, they do provide some insight into how social inclusion may look in Prince George. Additionally, the foundational history of Indigenous people on the lands now named Canada, BC, and Prince George, along with the journey towards truth and reconciliation, cannot be fully encapsulated in such a profile. As such, the section titled 'Reconciliation' presents some areas where disparities may still exist between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population of Prince George. These disparities should be considered in the context of the larger field of knowledge and experience working toward truth and reconciliation.

1.1: Executive Summary

Based on Canada's Official Poverty Line, the prevalence of poverty (low-income) in Prince George is 10.6%, which is slightly lower than the provincial and national averages. However, depending on the measure of low-income used, this figure can range between 8.2% and 13.3%. Prince George youth are more likely to be living with low-income than adults, though this proportion is similar to or less than the provincial and national averages, depending on the measure used.

Some census dissemination areas within Prince George appear to be disproportionately impacted by multiple factors addressed in this profile, including low-income, unsuitable housing, housing needing repairs, high housing cost to income ratio, lone-parenting status, low educational attainment, and high unemployment. Such areas to be further considered include:

- the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent;
- the downtown area around Victoria Street; and
- the area around the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street.

Affordability

In Prince George, 19.5% of residents spend over 30% of their income on shelter costs, which is less than the provincial and national averages. However, renters are more likely to report spending over 30% of their income on housing (39.6%) than homeowners (10.4%). A smaller proportion of Prince George households are

unsuitable for their occupants (2.7%) than the provincial average, as well as the proportion in core housing need (10.2%). However, a greater proportion of houses need major repairs (7.3%) than the provincial average.

A greater proportion of Prince George residents are under the age of 15 (17.5%) than the provincial proportion, which may indicate a greater need for childcare in Prince George than observed provincially. However, childcare need statistics are not readily available for Prince George. Based on provincial and national data, it is expected that low-income households in Prince George rely on group childcare services more than other forms of childcare, partially due to lower associated costs. Depending on the source, the number of licensed childcare facilities in Prince George ranges between 140 and 143, with a total capacity between 1,825 and 2,152 children. Of these providers, 104 have been approved to be part of British Columbia's Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

There is a lack of data regarding transportation affordability in Prince George. More Prince George workers drive to work (83.6%) than the provincial average, with fewer than average taking public transit or walking. Those living on a public transit route may be more likely to use this service to commute to work, but comparisons of commute mode to areas of low-income concentration present unclear results.

The proportion of households in the Northern Interior Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA) that are food secure (89.0%) is slightly below the Northern Health average, which is also lower than the provincial average. The cost of the National Nutritious Food Basket is lower in the Northern Interior HSDA (\$992 per month) is lower than the Northern Health and provincial averages.

Opportunity

Educational attainment in Prince George is lower than the provincial average, with 19.9% of residents not having a certificate, diploma, or degree.

A greater proportion of the Prince George workforce is unemployed (5.2%) than the provincial average.

In 2009-2010, the Prince George Local Health Area (LHA) had more physicians per 100,000 people (120) than the provincial average, but fewer specialists and supplementary practitioners (81).

Mental health is strong in the Northern Interior HSDA, with 89.8% reporting at least good mental health; though this drops to 81.4% for the lowest household income group. Additionally, there has been a greater impact of illicit drug use on hospitalizations and deaths in the Prince George LHA than the provincial averages.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is a complex concept lacking objective measures. When looking to better understand social inclusion in Prince George, all factors addressed in this profile should be considered, along with additional factors that can give a better understanding of an individual's health, achievement, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling as part of their community, and quality of their local environment. Among BC residents in large communities, those in the lowest income groups are less likely to participate in outdoor activities, organized sports, and many social and cultural activities.

Reconciliation

A greater proportion of the Prince George population self-identifies as Indigenous (15.4%) than the provincial average. However, Indigenous residents in Prince George are disproportionately impacted by low-income and its effects than non-Indigenous residents. For instance, Indigenous residents are more likely to be in core housing need (25.9%) than non-Indigenous residents (10.2%). Indigenous residents of the Northern Interior HSDA are also more likely to face moderate and severe food insecurity (11.9% and 11.6%, respectively) than non-indigenous residents (5.8% and 4.0%, respectively).

When attempting to better understand social inclusion of the Indigenous population in Prince George, it is important to note that culture will have an impact on the measures that are used—what may be a good measure in the Indigenous population may be a poor measure in the non-Indigenous population, and vice versa. Language revitalization and preservation of culture may be important contributors to social

inclusion of the Indigenous population in Prince George, though further research and consultation with local elders and stakeholders is necessary to better understand social inclusion among Indigenous people in Prince George.

2: Defining Poverty

The Government of Canada had no official definition of poverty until 2018.^{2,3} This lack of official definition has made it difficult for government bodies and organizations to fully understand the prevalence and impact of poverty within Canada and its communities. To help overcome this problem, multiple measures were adopted to better understand poverty—with most being measurements of low-income. The three most commonly cited of these measures in Canada are low-income cut-offs (LICO); low-income measures (LIM); and the Market Basket Measure (MBM).

In 2018, the Government of Canada announced the first official measure of poverty in Canada: Canada's Official Poverty Line.³ The official measure of choice is the MBM. This measure was chosen, in part, due to its ability to adapt to the changing needs and priorities of Canadian families. As these needs change, Statistics Canada will regularly update the market basket to maintain a measure reflective of Canadian society.

Although the Market Basket Measure has been available since 2002, much of the available statistics for this profile originated prior to its adoption as

Measures of Low-Income

Low-Income Cut-Offs (LICO)

- A cut-off threshold based on a family's proportion of income spent on necessities and compared to the 'average family.'
- A family is low-income if they spend 20% more of their income on these necessities than the average family.
- For 2016 Census data, this average is taken from 1992 expenditure data and updated to 2015 dollars using the Consumer Price Index.

Low-Income Measure (LIM)

- A measure of income below a fixed percentage.
- A family is low-income if their household income is below 50% of the median household income.
- Considers that household needs increase at a decreasing rate as the number of family members increases.

Market Basket Measure (MBM)

- A market basket contains the hypothetical goods and services needed for a basic standard of living.
- A family is low-income if they do not have enough money to purchase this market basket.
- It takes cost of living into account better than the other measures.

Canada’s Official Poverty Line. Additionally, some organizations, including Statistics Canada, still report the other measures of low-income when comparing low-income between and within regions. As such, multiple measures of low-income are used throughout this profile.

2.1: Low-Income in Prince George

The most recent and accurate data reporting low-income in Prince George arise from the 2016 Census. The date of the census was May 10, 2016 and largely reports data for the previous year (2015). It should also be noted that interpretation of low-income statistics from the Census may be incorrect in areas where there are substantial in-kind contributions (e.g.: subsidized housing), and own production or barter economies (e.g.: hunting, fishing, and farming).⁴

The median total household income in the Prince George census subdivision

Table 1. Prevalence (%) of low-income (LICO-AT) in Prince George census subdivision [Overall (Male, Female)]

	Prince George	British Columbia	Canada
<i>All ages</i>	8.2 (8.0, 8.5)	11.0 (10.8, 11.2)	9.2 (9.1, 9.3)
<i>0-5 years</i>	11.3 (11.1, 11.3)	11.2 (11.2, 11.3)	10.6 (10.6, 10.6)
<i>0-17 years</i>	9.9 (9.9, 9.8)	12.1 (12.0, 12.1)	10.2 (10.2, 10.2)
<i>18-64 years</i>	9.0 (8.6, 9.3)	12.0 (11.8, 12.2)	9.9 (9.9, 10.0)
<i>65+ years</i>	2.0 (1.6, 2.4)	6.0 (5.4, 6.6)	5.1 (4.1, 5.9)

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

(Appendix 8.1) was \$75,690 in 2015, which was a 8.3% increase from \$69,891 in 2005.^{4,5} Table 1 reports the prevalence of low-income as a percentage of the total population using the LICO after tax adjustment (LICO-AT). Across all but the youngest age group (0-5 years), the Prince George census subdivision reports lower rates of low-income than provincial and national averages.⁴ It is estimated that 5,985 people, or 8.2% of the population, are living with low-income in Prince George, with a slightly smaller proportion of males (8.0%, $n = 2,905$) living with low-income than females (8.5%, $n = 3,080$). This disparity by sex is not apparent for youth but increases as age progresses. Of those aged 18-64, 8.6% of males ($n = 2,030$) and 9.3% of females ($n = 2,225$) are living with low-income; and, of those aged 65 or older, 1.6% of males ($n = 75$) and 2.4% of females ($n = 120$) are living with low-income. This disparity by sex mirrors the disparities seen at the provincial and national levels.

Table 2 reports the prevalence of low-income as a percentage of the total population

Table 2. Prevalence (%) of low-income (MBM) in Prince George census subdivision [Overall (Male, Female)]

	Prince George	British Columbia	Canada
All ages	10.6 (10.2, 11.0)	15.2 (14.8, 15.6)	12.9 (12.5, 13.2)
0-5 years	16.0 (15.6, 16.3)	17.7 (17.7, 17.7)	16.5 (16.6, 16.5)
0-17 years	14.3 (14.6, 14.0)	18.4 (18.3, 18.6)	15.6 (15.6, 15.6)
18-64 years	10.6 (10.1, 11.2)	15.9 (15.3, 16.4)	13.2 (12.9, 13.6)
65+ years	4.7 (3.7, 5.6)	9.2 (8.6, 9.7)	7.8 (6.8, 8.7)

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

using the MBM, Canada's Official Poverty Line. This measure provides estimates between the LICO-AT and LIM-AT estimates, with 9,000 people (10.6%) below the official poverty line, and a smaller proportion of males (10.2%, $n = 4,340$) living in poverty than females (11.0%, $n = 4,660$).⁶

As alluded, The LIM after tax adjustment (LIM-AT) provides the highest prevalence

Table 3. Prevalence (%) of low-income (LIM-AT) in Prince George census subdivision [Overall (Male, Female)]

	Prince George	British Columbia	Canada
All ages	13.3 (12.3, 14.2)	15.5 (14.8, 16.2)	14.2 (13.4, 14.9)
0-5 years	20.6 (21.0, 20.2)	18.0 (18.0, 18.1)	17.8 (17.8, 17.8)
0-17 years	17.8 (18.0, 17.7)	18.5 (18.5, 18.5)	17.0 (17.1, 17.0)
18-64 years	11.9 (10.9, 13.0)	14.8 (14.1, 15.5)	13.2 (12.5, 13.8)
65+ years	12.7 (9.8, 15.3)	14.9 (13.1, 16.5)	14.5 (12.0, 16.7)

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

estimates of low-income in Prince George. Table 3 reports the prevalence of low-income as a percentage of the total population using the LIM-AT. As also noted for the LICO-AT and MBM measures, low-income prevalence in Prince George is below the provincial and national averages across all but the youngest age group.⁴ It is estimated that 9,640 people (13.3%) are living with low-income in Prince George, with a smaller proportion of males (12.3%, $n = 2,905$) living with low-income than females (14.2%, $n = 3,080$). Again, as observed using the LICO-AT and MBM measures, this disparity by sex increases with age and is like the disparities seen at the provincial and national levels.

Figure 1 graphically presents the LIM-AT for 2015 by age group. The highest prevalence of low-income (20.9%) is observed for the youngest age group (0 to 4 years) and

generally decreases until about age 50 when the prevalence of low-income slightly rises in late adulthood to above average levels in the 75 and older age group (14.2%).⁵

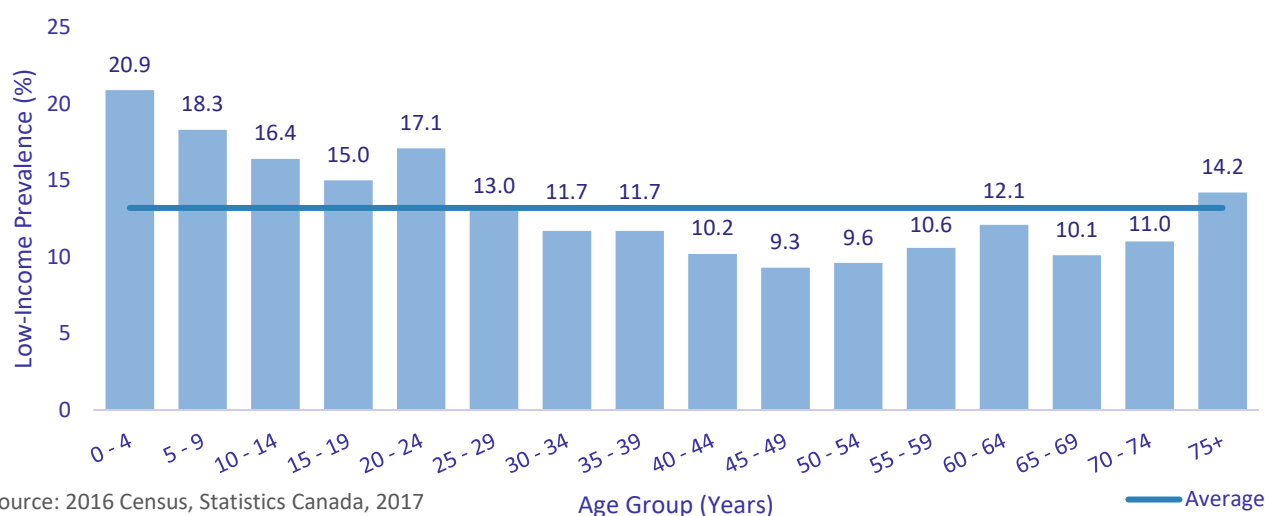


Figure 1. Prevalence of low-income (LIM-AT) by age group in the Prince George census subdivision

Figure 2 presents low-income prevalence (LIM-AT) by Prince George census dissemination areas. From this figure, it is readily apparent that some neighbourhoods face a greater prevalence of low-income. The greatest prevalence of low-income is encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent, with a low-income prevalence of 53.8%. The census dissemination areas with the next highest rates of low-income are around the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street, with low-income ranging from 41.0% to 47.4%. Other areas of elevated low-income prevalence are found interspersed throughout Prince George, such as the area to the southwest of the intersection of 5th Avenue and Highway 97 (40.8%). The Hart and College Heights neighbourhoods generally report limited prevalence of low-income, often not exceeding 10%. However, it should be noted that some dissemination areas have suppressed data due to low population and/or response. Notably, low income is not reported for the Downtown and commercial area between the CN Centre and Highway 97 (areas shaded in grey in Figure 2).

Low-Income Among Prince George Youth and Families

As noted above for both the LICO-AT and LIM-AT measures of the 2016 Census, a greater proportion of Prince George youth are living with low-income than the

provincial and national averages. Using the LICO-AT, 11.3% of youth aged 0-5 years are living with low-income, compared to the 11.2% and 10.6% provincial and national averages, respectively. Using the LIM-AT, the difference increases, with 20.6% of youth aged 0-5 years living with low-income, compared to the 18.0% and 17.8% provincial and national averages, respectively.

In 2018, a revised variant of the LIM was used to calculate childhood low-income rates, the Census Family Low-Income Measure (CFLIM). This measure calculates low-income status at the census family level adjusting for family size.⁷ Using this measure, Prince George was reported to have a childhood low-income rate of 19.7% in 2016, which was slightly below the provincial average of 20.3% and on par with the national average of 19.6%. However, there are great disparities between dissemination areas within Prince George, with 25% of dissemination areas reporting childhood low-income between 30% and 40%. The highest childhood low-income rate was reported near Downtown Prince George, with one dissemination area reporting 60.6% prevalence of childhood low-income.

Using the same LIM-AT measure reported in Figure 2 for the overall Prince George population, Figure 3 presents low-income prevalence by Prince George census dissemination areas for those aged 0 to 17. Like the overall figure, the dissemination areas with the highest proportions of youth living with low-income are distributed throughout Prince George. Again, the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent reports the highest low-income prevalence at 72.2% of youth. Similarly, the census

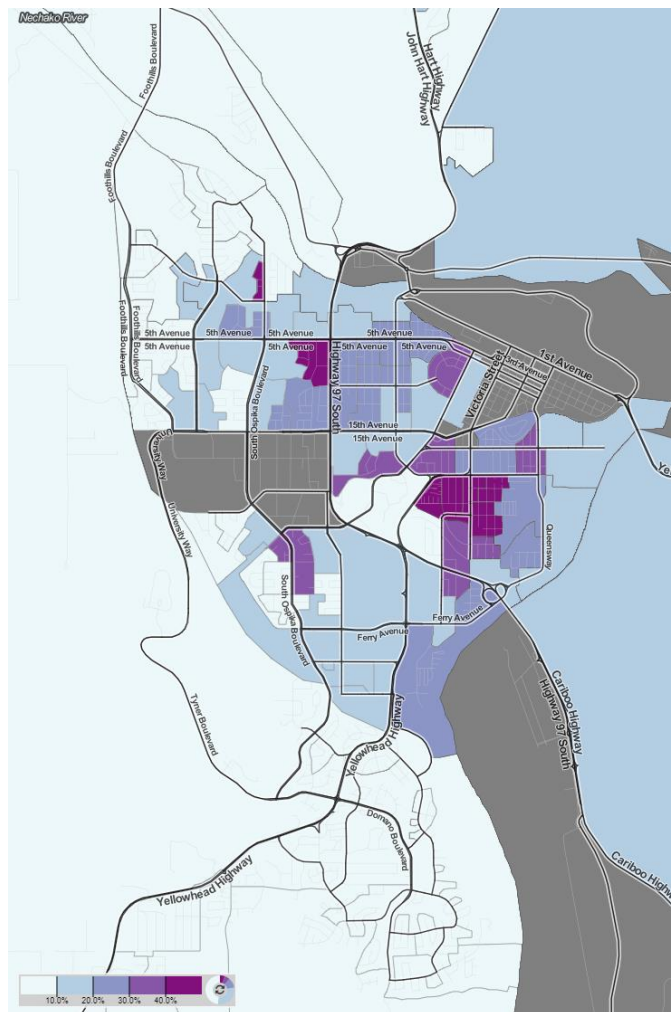


Figure 2. Prevalence of low-income (LIM-AT) by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

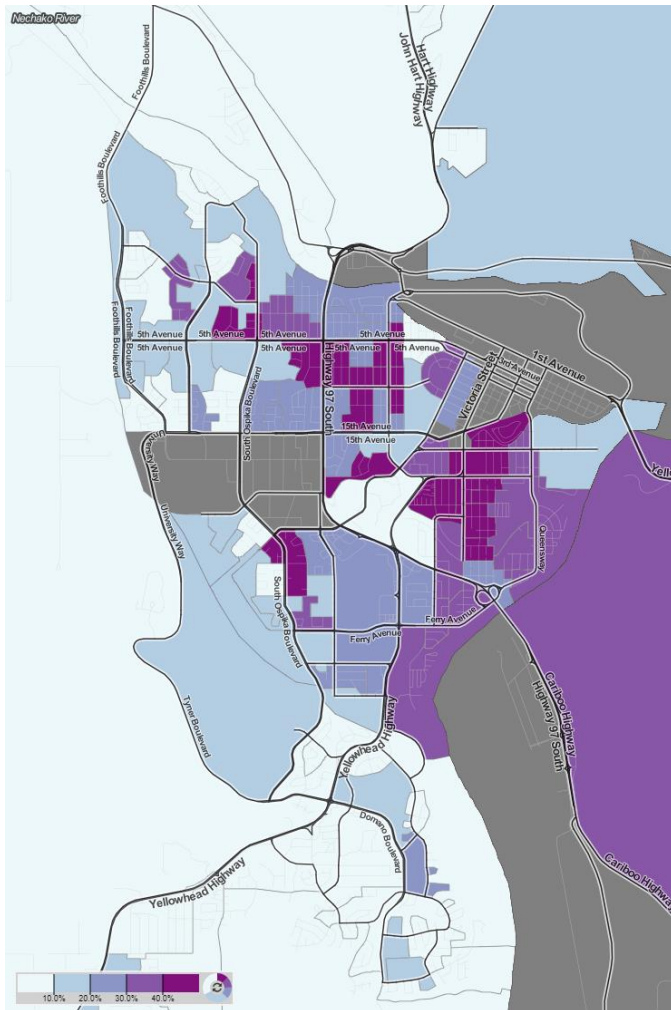


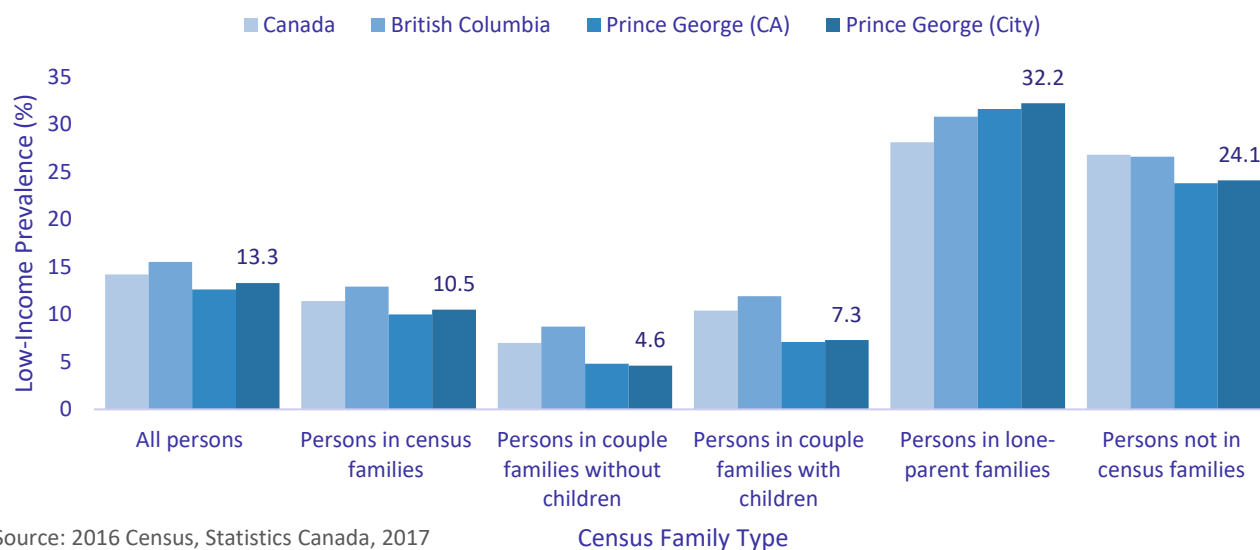
Figure 3. Prevalence of low-income (LIM-AT) by Prince George census dissemination areas among those aged 0 to 17. Source: CensusMapper.ca

dissemination areas with the next highest rates of low-income are around the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street, with low-income ranging from 45.0% to 70.0%. However, unlike the overall proportions, there are multiple dissemination areas reporting youth low-income prevalence above 40%. Some neighbourhoods with relatively low prevalence of overall low-income also report elevated youth low-income, such as one dissemination area in North Nechako (not imaged in Figure 3) with a youth low-income prevalence of 30.4%, and an area in College Heights with a youth low-income prevalence of 20.0%. Again, it should be noted that the areas shaded grey in Figure 3 lack LIM-AT data due to suppression.

Figure 4 presents the effect of census family type on low-income prevalence

as also measured by the LIM-AT. Census families consist of a couple, with or without children, and lone-parent families, while non-census-families are one-person households and households with two or more people not living as a couple. People living in lone-parent families (32.2%) and people living in non-census-families (24.1%) are more likely to be living with low-income as compared to the Prince George average (13.3%), while people living in census families with children (7.3%) and without children (4.6%) are less likely to be living with low-income.⁵ As noted for the general LICO-AT, MBM, and LIM-AT measures above, the low-income prevalence for most census and non-census-family groups in Prince George are below the provincial and national averages. However, there is a disproportionately larger proportion of people living with low-income from lone-parent families, as compared to the provincial and national averages. It is important to note that lone-parent families are already

disproportionately represented in low-income measures as compared to the other census family groups, meaning this disadvantaged group is disadvantaged to an even greater extent living in Prince George.



Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Census Family Type

Figure 4. Prevalence of low-income (LIM-AT) by census family type and geography

2.2: The Living Wage

The living wage is a statistic calculated and released by the BC Branch of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. It is calculated as an hourly rate at which a resident would have to be paid in order to meet their basic needs. These basic needs include food, clothing, shelter, transportation, childcare, Medical Services Plan premiums and other healthcare costs, parent’s education, contingency, and other household expenses.⁸ The living wage is based on a two-parent family with two children aged four and seven, with both parents working full-time, 35-hour work weeks. The statistic also factors in minimum vacation time, no sick time, income deductions, and government subsidies.

The living wage for northcentral BC, including Prince George, Quesnel, Vanderhoof, and Fort St. James, is \$14.03 per hour for 2019, which is a decrease from the living wage of \$16.51 for 2018.^{8,9} This decrease is largely attributed to the increase in childcare benefits implemented by the BC government, which decreased out-of-pocket spending on childcare services. The authors of the report speculated that the living wage would have increased in 2019 if it were not for these childcare subsidies.

2.3: Summary Points

- According to Canada's Official Poverty Line (the MBM), the prevalence of low-income in Prince George is 10.6%.
 - Other measures of low-income estimate the prevalence between 8.2 and 13.3%.
 - These estimates are below the provincial and national averages.
- Above age 18, females report disproportionately higher rates of low-income than males, with the disparity increasing with age.
- The prevalence of low-income is greatest among the youngest age groups (0 to 24 years) and progressively decreases until mid- to late-adulthood where it progressively increases (Figure 1).
 - Using the LICO-AT and LIM-AT, youth aged 0 to 5 years have higher than provincial and national average prevalence of low-income.
 - Using the CFLIM, adjusting for family size, the childhood low-income prevalence is 20.3%, which is only slightly greater than the national average (19.6%).
- Lone-parent families are associated are more likely to be living with low-income (32.2%) as compared to the Prince George average.
- Certain census dissemination areas report higher prevalence of low-income than others.
 - Low-income prevalence is notably elevated in the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent and around the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street.
 - Other areas reporting elevated prevalence of low-income are found throughout Prince George (Figures 2 and 3).
- The living wage for northcentral BC decreased from \$16.51 per hour in 2018 to \$14.03 per hour in 2019.
 - This decrease is largely attributed to increases in childcare benefits.

While there are many definitions of poverty, it can be understood as 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.

– Government of Canada, 2018

3: Affordability

3.1: Housing

A total of 30,235 occupied private houses were recorded in the Prince George census subdivision in the 2016 Census. From Table 4, the most common house types found in

Table 4. Dwelling numbers by structural type in the Prince George census subdivision

	Number of Dwellings (% of total)
<i>Single-detached house</i>	17,995 (59.5)
<i>Apartment in a building < 5 storeys</i>	4,335 (14.3)
<i>Apartment or flat in a duplex</i>	2,305 (7.6)
<i>Movable dwelling</i>	2,170 (7.2)
<i>Row house</i>	1,685 (5.6)
<i>Semi-detached house</i>	1,285 (4.3)
<i>Apartment in a building ≥ 5 storeys</i>	430 (1.4)
<i>Other single-attached house</i>	30 (<0.1)

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Prince George are single-detached houses (59.5%), followed by apartments in buildings less than five storeys tall (14.3%), apartments in duplexes (7.6%), and movable homes (7.2%).⁴ Most private homes are occupied by two people (35.3%), followed by one person (28.3%), three people (15.5%), four people (13.5%), and five people (7.4%); with the average household size being 2.4 people—identical to the provincial average.

Housing Costs

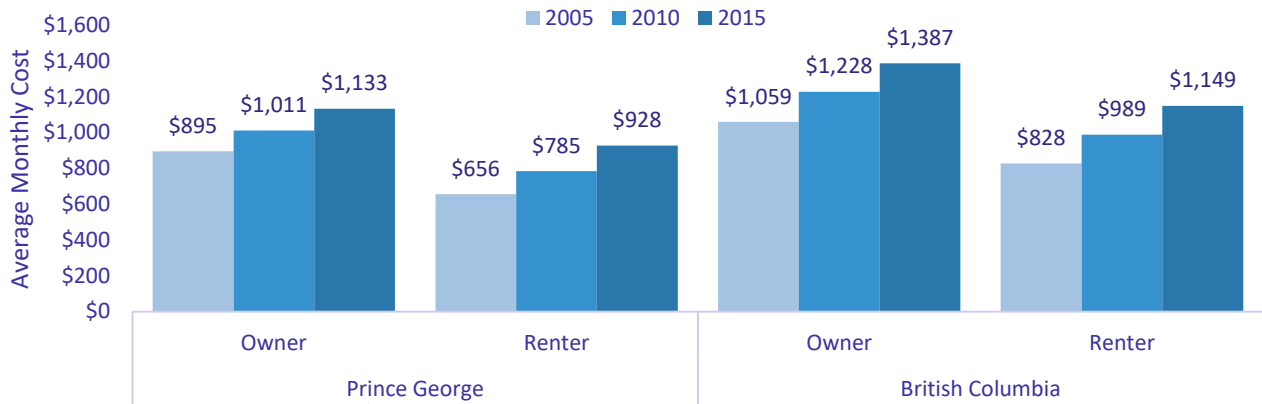
Most private houses in Prince George are owned (68.8%) rather than rented (31.2%) with ownership slightly greater than the provincial and national averages (Table 5).⁴ Average

Table 5. Tenure of private households as a proportion of total households (%)

	Prince George	British Columbia	Canada
<i>Owner</i>	68.8	68.0	67.8
<i>Renter</i>	31.2	31.8	31.8
<i>Band Housing</i>	0.0	0.2	0.4

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

monthly homeownership (\$1,133) and rental costs (\$928), including taxes, fees, and utilities, are also lower than the provincial averages (\$1,387 and \$1,149, respectively), with costs increasing at a rate similar to the provincial average over the past 10 years (Figure 5).⁵



Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 6. Change in monthly homeownership and rental costs from 2006 to 2016 Census for Prince George and BC.

When rental costs are compared between Prince George dissemination areas, there are some areas that stand out as particularly high cost. The highest average monthly rent is found in the southern portion of College Heights at \$1,590 in one area, followed by a section of housing on the intersection of Foothills Boulevard and 5th Avenue at \$1,510 (Figure 6). The lowest cost rent was reported for the area where 5th Avenue forks into 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue at \$625, and the Downtown area around Victoria Street at \$573, with no dissemination area of Prince George reporting average rent less than \$500 per month. It should be noted that areas of Figure 6 shaded in the lightest grey do not have available monthly rent averages in the 2016 Census.

The low rent costs in some dissemination areas of Prince George are maintained by subsidized housing. By census definition, subsidized housing includes social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit

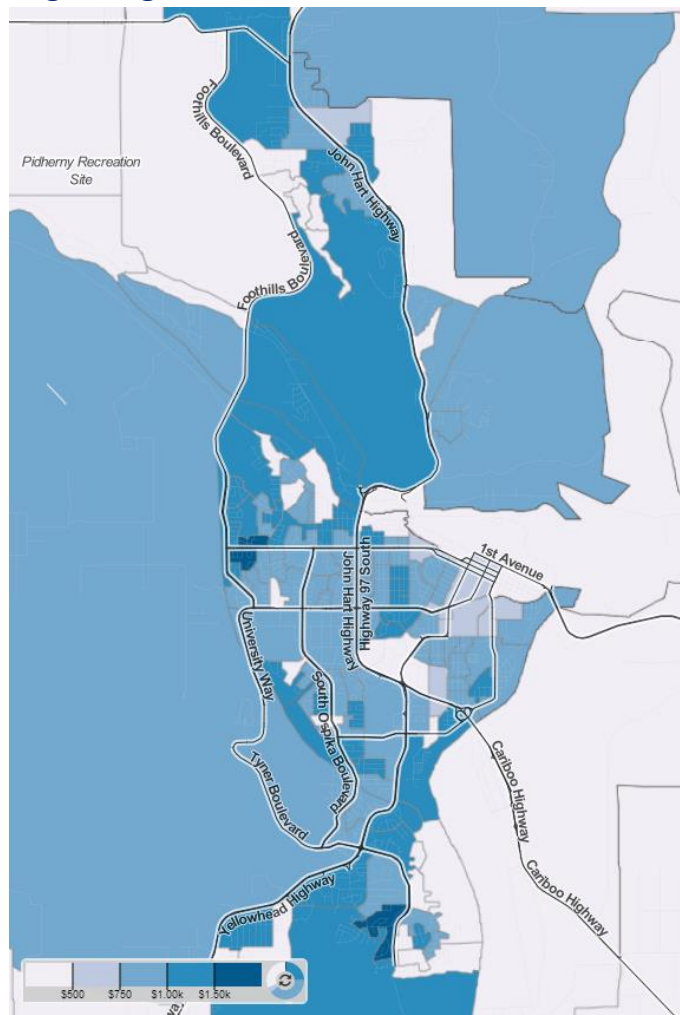


Figure 5. Average rental costs by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

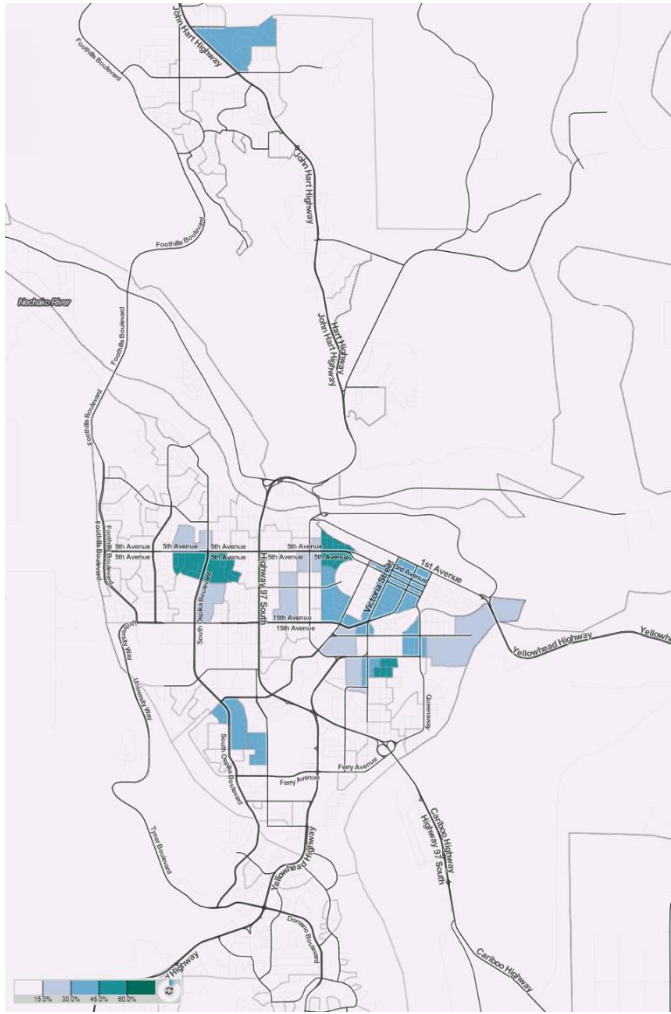


Figure 7. Tenants in subsidized housing as a proportion of total tenants by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

housing, rent supplements, housing allowances, and rent geared to income.⁴ Of all tenant households, 12.7% are subsidized, which is similar to the provincial average (12.5%). The dissemination areas reporting the lowest cost rent also tend to be associated with a high proportion of tenants in subsidized housing (Figure 7). The greatest proportion of tenants reporting subsidized housing are located around the area where 5th Avenue forks into 3rd and 4th Avenue, at 58.5% of tenants. Further discussion of housing subsidies, with updated statistics, is provided in the Housing Protection section below.

Despite the high proportion of home ownership and lower than provincial average rental costs, 19.5% ($n = 5,880$) of Prince George residents are spending more than 30% of their income on

shelter costs (Table 6).⁴ This is less than the provincial and national averages; however, renters are far more likely to spend 30% of their income or more on shelter costs than owners, with 39.6% of renters in Prince George meeting this cutoff compared to only 10.4% of homeowners.

Table 6. Proportion of individuals spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs (%)

	Prince George	British Columbia	Canada
Overall	19.5	28.0	24.1
Owner	10.4	20.7	16.6
Renter	39.6	43.3	40.0

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

As shown in Figure 8 there are few dissemination areas where homeowners are spending more

than 30% of their income on shelter. In comparison, Figure 9 depicts the same statistic,



Figure 8. Proportion of owners spending over 30% of their income on shelter by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

increased considerably since 2015.

The BC Northern Real Estate Board maintains the Housing Affordability Indicators (HAIs) for homeownership in northern BC.¹⁰ This indicator takes into account mortgage costs, utilities, and taxes for an average single-family home. For 2018, the HAI for Prince George was 30.9%, meaning that homeownership costs for the year would consume 30.9% of the average Prince George family income. This is higher than northern BC's

but for rental tenants. The area encapsulated by Ferry Avenue, Highway 16, and the Fraser River reports the highest proportion of tenants spending over 30% of their income on shelter at 83.3%. Multiple dissemination areas also report over 50% of tenants spending over 30% of their income on shelter. These areas are interspersed throughout the city.

It is important to keep in mind that the statistics above were mostly reported from the 2016 Census for the 2015-2016 year. However, the costs of housing have

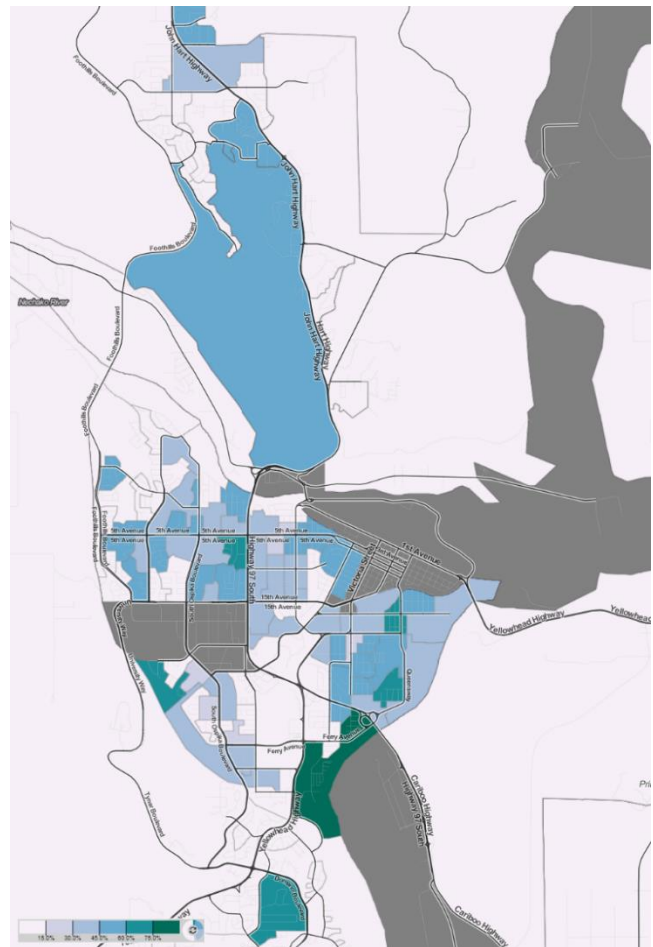
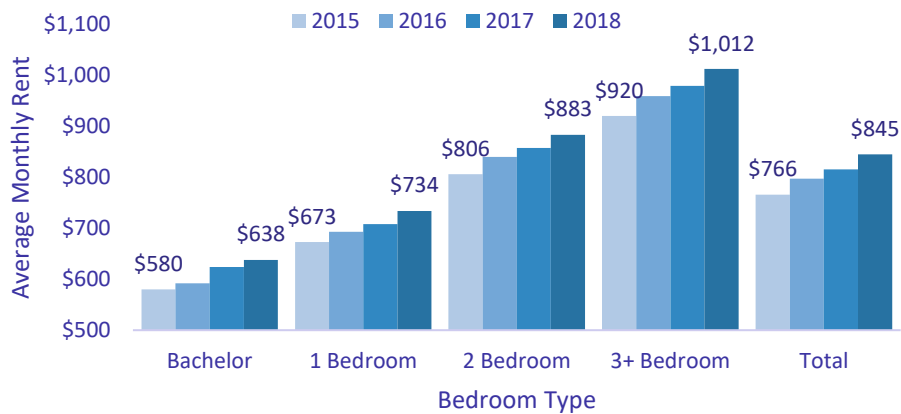


Figure 9. Proportion of tenants spending over 30% of their income on shelter by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

HAI of 26.9%. The Prince George HAI has also steadily increased from a low point in 2015. The average single-family house price in Prince George has also increased to about \$350,000, compared to about \$240,000 in 2010. This growing HAI and house prices for Prince George may indicate that the costs of homeownership have increased considerably since the 2016 Census and more Prince George homeowners may be spending over 30% of their income on shelter than presented above.

Like the increasing costs of homeownership, the costs of tenancy have also increased since the 2016 Census. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation conducts and reports the annual Rental Market Survey.¹¹ Unlike the 2016 Census, rental costs in the Rental Market Survey do not include any applicable taxes, fees, or utilities, and only include apartment and townhouse rentals, which means the amounts reported are less than the census data for the corresponding year. Regardless, these updated data give a picture of how rental costs have increased since the 2016 Census. Figure 10 depicts this change between 2015 and 2018 by the bedroom type of the rental. From 2015 to 2018, the average monthly rent increased from \$766 to \$845. This growth in rent since the 2016 Census may indicate that more Prince George homeowners may be spending over 30% of their income on shelter than presented above.



Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019

Figure 10. Change in average monthly rent in Prince George census subdivision between 2015 and 2018.

Housing Suitability and Conditions

Beyond the affordability of housing, individuals also need access to housing that meets their needs. Although there are several personal and household characteristics that contribute to individual housing needs, this section of the profile focuses on housing

characteristics themselves, including suitability and living conditions, that impact housing need.

The 2016 Census defines housing suitability using the National Occupancy Standard.⁴ A household is considered suitable if it has enough bedrooms to adequately support the occupants. In Prince George, 815 private households (2.7%) are unsuitable for the occupants, with only 235 households (0.7%) having more than one person per room. These proportions are about half of the provincial averages at 5.3% unsuitable and 2.2% having more than one person per room. The greatest proportion of unsuitable housing in Prince George was concentrated in the area encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway (Figure 11), with one dissemination area reporting that 15.6% of households were unsuitable for the occupants. Another concentration of unsuitable housing was also reported in the area encapsulated by Highway 97, 15th Avenue, 5th Avenue, and Alward Street, with one dissemination area reporting that 14.6% of households were unsuitable.

Although housing suitability in Prince George compares well to the provincial average, it does not compare well to the provincial average in terms of housing conditions. In 2015, 2,660 houses (7.3%) needed major repairs—beyond simple renovations—compared to the provincial average of only 6.3%. Comparing by dissemination area, there are some similarities between housing unsuitability (Figure 11) and houses needing major repairs (Figure 10). With 31.3% of homes in one dissemination area needing major repairs. However, the need for major repairs seems to be a

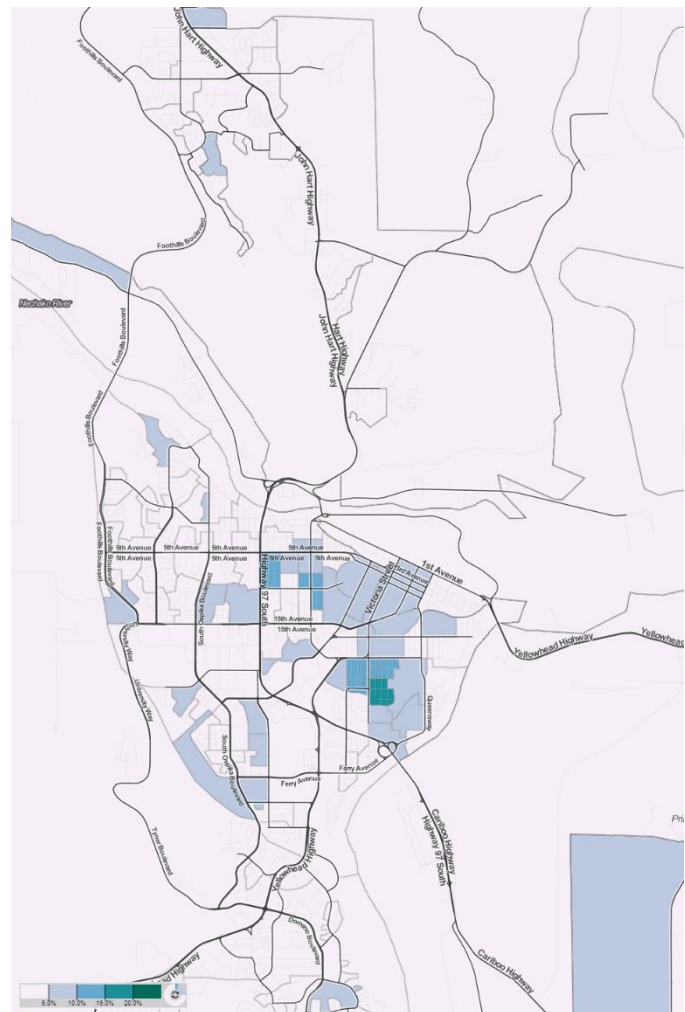


Figure 11. Unsuitable households by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

bit more dispersed throughout Prince George as compared areas with unsuitable households.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation takes into consideration the affordability, suitability, and housing condition data reported above and calculates a Core Housing Need measure. A household is in core housing need if they live in a home that is unsuitable, in need of major repairs, or costs over 30% of their income; and they cannot afford alternative housing that meets their needs. The most recent data on core housing need in Prince George are reported by Statistics Canada from the 2016 Census.¹² Of all households, 3,010 (10.2%) were in core housing need (Figure 12). This is a decrease from 12.4% in 2010, but still elevated from 9.4% in 2006. Though it should be noted that core housing need remains below both the provincial (14.9%) and national (12.7%) averages.

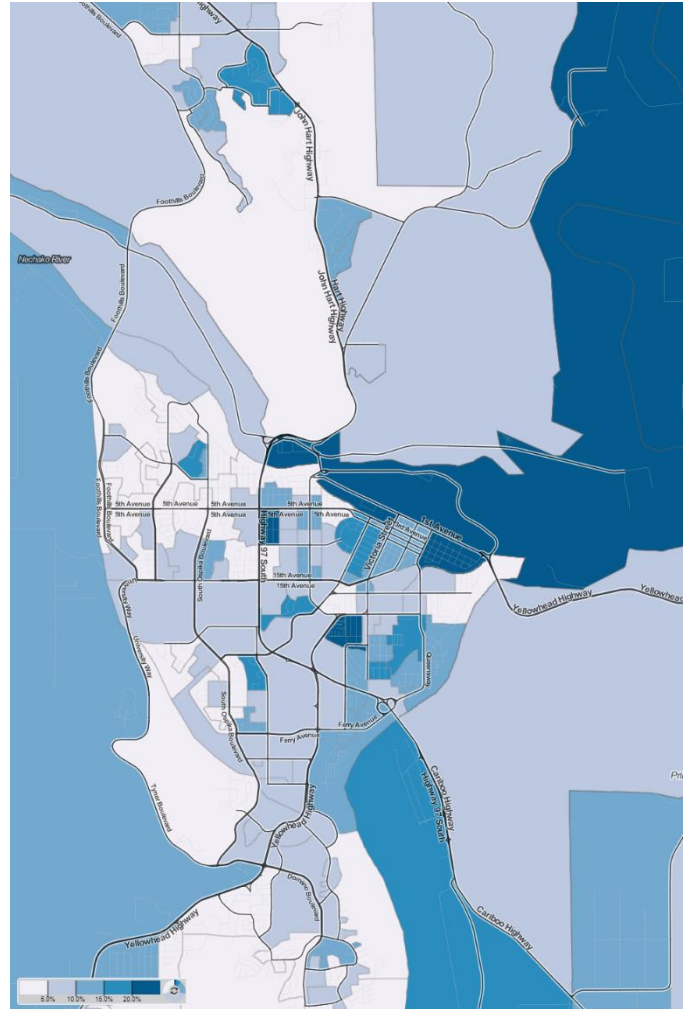
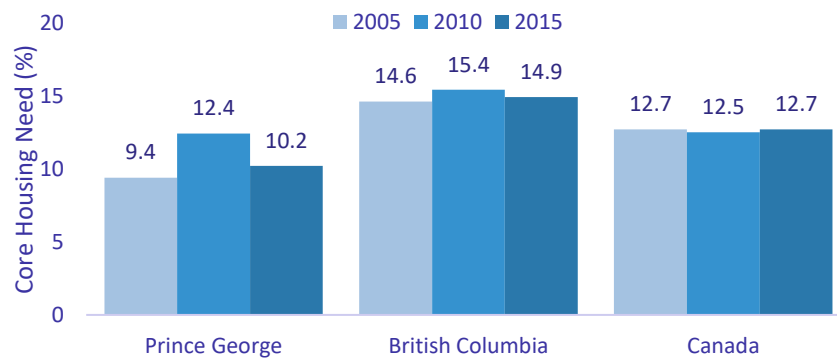


Figure 12. Houses in need of major repairs by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca



Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 13. Change in Core Housing Need in Prince George, BC, and Canada.

Housing Protection

There are a multitude of services and programs available to Prince George residents to assist them in overcoming housing affordability issues. The type of service or program available to a resident depends on their needs. BC Housing administers a number of these programs and monitors statistics regarding the number of units under each service allocation group. Table 7 provides a summary of the number of housing units under BC Housing administration as of March 31, 2019.

Table 7. Number of housing units under BC Housing administration in Prince George by service allocation group and subgroup

<i>Service Allocation Group</i>	<i>Service Allocation Subgroup</i>	<i>Units</i>
<i>Emergency Shelter and Shelter for the Homeless</i>		351
	Homeless Housed	137
	Homeless Rent Supplements	123
	Homeless Shelters	91
<i>Transitional Supported and Assisted Living</i>		325
	Frail Seniors	150
	Special Needs	141
	Women and Children Fleeing Violence	34
<i>Independent Social Housing</i>		725
	Low Income Families	435
	Low Income Seniors	290
<i>Rent Assistance in Private Market</i>		520
	Rent Assist Families	158
	Rent Assist Seniors	362

Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, BC Government, 2019

At the time of database creation, a total 1,921 housing units were under BC Housing administration.¹³ Transitional supported and assisted living constituted 325 of these units.¹³ Transitional supported and assisted living units include housing for seniors who cannot live independently (Frail Seniors), housing for youth or adults with mental and/or physical disabilities (Special Needs), and transitional housing for women and children who have experienced violence or are at risk of experiencing violence in their previous housing situation (Women and Children Fleeing Violence). There were 520 units receiving rent assistance in the private market, including housing subsidies for low-income families, including Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and other rent supplements (Rent Assist Families); and housing subsidies for seniors with low or

moderate incomes, including Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program and other rent supplements (Rent Assist Seniors). Finally, there were 351 emergency shelter and housing for the homeless units, including housing for those who were recently homeless or at risk of homelessness (Homeless Housed), rent supplements for those who are homeless (Homeless Rent Supplements), and short-term shelter in shared sleeping arrangements (Homeless Shelters).

The most recent point-in-time count of homelessness in Prince George took place April 18, 2018 and was conducted by the Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH).¹⁴ Comparisons between the Prince George point-in-time count and other 2018 counts in BC are also reported by the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC), though some figures are inconsistent between the reports.¹⁵ On the night of April 17, 2018, there were a minimum of 133 individuals who were absolutely homeless in Prince George, staying outdoors or in emergency shelters; and an additional 79 were in transitional housing. Of those who participated in the survey, 16% were unsheltered.¹⁴ Although the HSABC reports a greater proportion of unsheltered homeless individuals Prince George (31%) than the CPAH report, this proportion is still below the average of all homeless counts in BC in 2018 (37%).¹⁵ Of those surveyed in the CPAH report, 50% were female and 45% had previously been in foster care or group homes, which are more than the BC averages (30% and 29%, respectively). A greater proportion of homeless individuals were also between the ages of 25 and 54 than the BC average (72% vs. 65%, respectively). Only 3% of Prince George survey respondents indicated that they had employment income, with 97% reporting government programming being their source of income. When asked why they lost their housing, 28% reported that they could not afford to pay rent or their mortgage, 25% reported substance use issues, 16% reported unsafe housing conditions, and 16% reported family conflict. However, almost all respondents (96%) indicated that they wanted a permanent housing solution.

Finally, it is important to note that there are some Prince George community organizations that provide additional support for individuals to help them start in a new home. An example of one such organization is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. As part of their Thrift Store, they provided 3,023 vouchers for low-income families to receive household goods free of charge in 2018 (B. Goold, Society of St. Vincent de

Paul, personal communication, July 30, 2019). This translated to over \$67,000 in products. The Society also provides home start-up support, where low-income families are supplied with free household goods (e.g.: bedding, tableware, towels, etc.) if they provide proof of obtaining a new rental or other housing agreement.

3.2: Childcare

From the 2016 Census, there are 12,955 youth aged zero to 14 years in Prince George.⁴ This age group represents a greater proportion of the Prince George population (17.5%) than the provincial proportion (14.9%), indicating that there may be a greater need for childcare services in Prince George than the provincial average. The youth age subgroups are reported in Table 8.

Table 8. Number of youth by age group in the Prince George census subdivision in 2016, and proportion of total population in each age group compared to provincial population

	Prince George		British Columbia
	Number	Proportion of Population	Proportion of Population
<i>0 to 14 years</i>	12,955	17.5%	14.9%
<i>0 to 4 years</i>	4,220	5.7%	4.7%
<i>5 to 9 years</i>	4,550	6.1%	5.1%
<i>10 to 14 years</i>	4,185	5.9%	5.0%

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Continuing with data from the 2016 Census, there are 20,535 census families living in private households in Prince George.⁴ Of all census family households, 19.3% are lone-parent families ($n = 3,965$). This is greater than the corresponding statistic for BC, at 15.1% of census families being lone-parent. Of Prince George lone-parent families, 77.2% are female lone-parent families ($n = 3,060$), which is only slightly less than the BC statistic (78.6%). Most lone-parent families in Prince George have one child (62.0%, $n = 2,460$), followed by two children (27.1%, $n = 1,075$) and three or more children (6.2%, $n = 435$).

Figure 14 presents the proportion of lone-parent census families within Prince George census dissemination areas. There are some areas that stand out with high proportions of lone-parent families such as the areas surrounding the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street, with three dissemination areas reporting over 50% of families

being lone-parent. The area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent also reports the second highest proportion of lone-parent families, at 56.3%. It is important to cross-reference Figure 14 with Figures 2 and 3, as the areas with the greatest proportion of lone-parent families also report some of the highest low-income proportions in the city.

Choice and Use of Childcare Services in British Columbia

The most recent national survey data reporting on the status of childcare need and accessibility is the Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements (SELCCA), with data released in April of 2019. However, these data are not available for public analysis and reporting is currently limited.¹⁶ Focused on children aged zero to five years, it was found that 59.9% of children nationally and 57.6% of children in BC are in some sort of early learning or childcare arrangement.¹⁷ The nature of these arrangements are listed in Table 9, with British Columbians reporting slightly greater use of daycare centre,

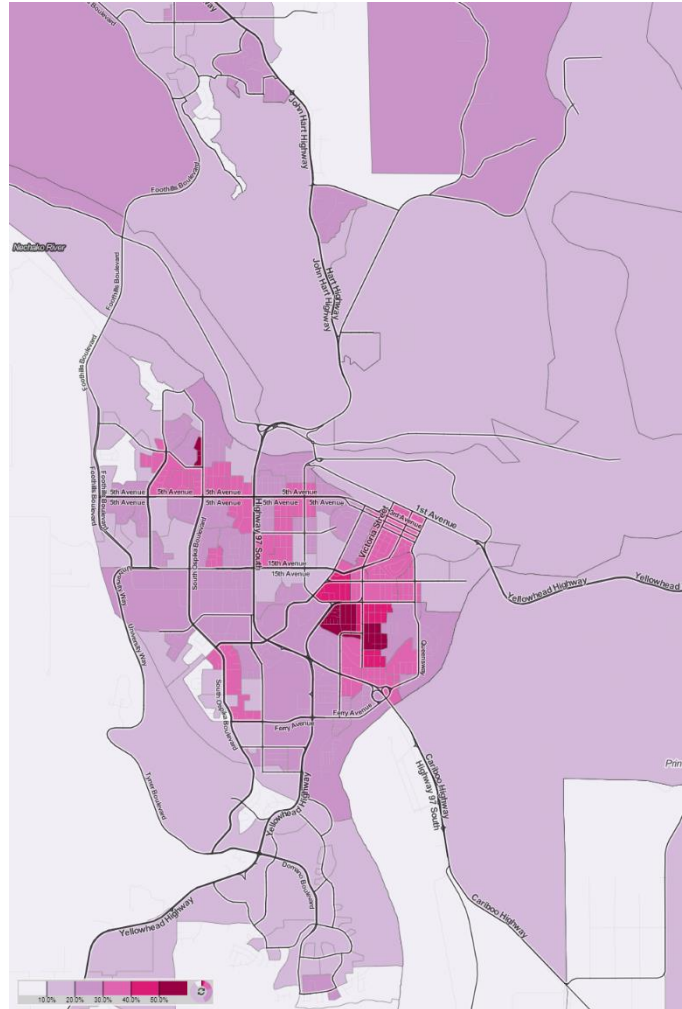


Figure 14. Lone-parent census families as a proportion of all census families by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

Table 9. Childcare arrangement by type, as a proportion of all children aged 0 to 5 years in childcare (%)

	British Columbia	Canada
Daycare centre, preschool, or childcare centre	56.2	51.9
Care by a relative other than parent	34.8	25.6
Care by a non-relative in the child's home	8.5*	5.0
Family childcare home	12.8	20.4
Before or after school program	7.6*	9.3
Other childcare arrangement	2.9*	3.1

* Statistics Canada notes to use these figures with caution

Source: Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements 2019, Statistics Canada, 2019

preschool, or childcare centre use than the national average (56.2% vs 51.9%, respectively); and care by a relative other than the parent (34.8% vs 25.6%, respectively).¹⁸ It appears that British Columbians rely on family childcare homes to a lesser extent than the national average (12.8% vs 20.4%, respectively).

When parents/guardians were asked why they chose their main childcare arrangement, the majority reported doing so based on the location (53.9%) and characteristics of the person providing the childcare services (52.0%), followed by the hours of operation (45.5%), and affordability (39.3%).¹⁹

One reason why British Columbians utilize early childhood education and childcare to a lesser extent than the national average may be due to the difficulty in finding childcare services in BC. More British Columbians reported having difficulty finding childcare in 2018 than the national average (46.5% vs 36.4%, respectively).²⁰ Of those parents/guardians reporting difficulty finding childcare in BC, 66.4% reported a lack of childcare available in their community, and 59.3% reported a lack of affordable childcare as a reason for their difficulty finding childcare services.²¹ Of those children who are not in childcare arrangements, 26.2% report that costs are too high in BC—again, greater than the national statistic (25.2%).²² As a result of the difficulty in finding childcare services in BC, many parents/guardians report having to use multiple childcare arrangements or temporary arrangements (47.4% of those with difficulty finding childcare, 12.7% overall), change work schedules (46.1%, 12.4%), and/or work fewer hours (44.9%, 12.1%).

As previously noted, data from the SELCCA are currently limited and it is worth monitoring Statistics Canada to see if any other relevant statistics or publicly available datasets become available. A report using data from the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) provides additional information regarding childcare needs in Canada. It was noted that there were many factors that impacted the choice of childcare arrangement, including income.²³ Canadian parents with household income below \$40,000 tended to use daycare centres for their children aged zero to five years, which was suggested to be the case due to the availability of government subsidies for daycare centres. Among the \$40,000 to \$100,000 income group, home daycare was the most common; and above \$100,000, daycare centres and private arrangements

were the most common. However, for school-aged children, there was little difference in income, as before- and after-school programming were the most common forms of childcare arrangements.

Childcare Programs in Prince George

The number of childcare programs in Prince George varies between sources. According to Northern Health’s Public Health Protection portal, there are 143 licensed childcare facilities in the Prince George area with a total capacity of 1,825 children, as of August 2019.²⁴ The number of programs and their total capacities by program type are listed in Table 10—please note that some facilities operate under multiple program types, meaning the program totals do not sum to 143 in Table 10. The greatest number of childcare programs ($n = 86$) are operating as family childcare, with a total capacity of 602 children. When considered together, the largest childcare program types are group childcare, 30 months to school age ($n = 345$); group childcare, school age ($n = 333$); and preschool, 30 months to school age ($n = 315$).

Table 10. Number of childcare programs and capacity in Prince George by childcare type according to Northern Health

	Number of Programs	Total Capacity
<i>Group childcare (under 30 months)</i>	2	40
<i>Group childcare (30 months to school age)</i>	10	345
<i>Preschool (30 months to school age)</i>	12	315
<i>Group childcare (school age)</i>	16	333
<i>Family childcare</i>	86	602
<i>Multi-age childcare</i>	5	32
<i>In-home multi-age childcare</i>	13	104
<i>Child-minding</i>	1	24
<i>Unreported</i>	1	30

Source: Northern Health, 2019

The Union of BC Municipalities maintains a different database of childcare programs limited to programs that receive Child Care Operating Funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. As of April 2019, there are 158 child care programs in the Prince George area with a total capacity of 2,152 children.²⁵ The number of programs and their total capacities by program type are listed in Table 11. Like the

Northern Health data, the largest single program type in Prince George is family childcare, with 78 programs and a total capacity of 546 children.

Table 11. Number of childcare programs and capacity in Prince George by childcare type according to the Union of BC Municipalities

	Number of Programs	Total Capacity
<i>Group childcare (birth to 36 months)</i>	7	80
<i>Group childcare (30 months to school age)</i>	15	358
<i>Preschool</i>	12	252
<i>Group childcare (school age)</i>	25	748
<i>Family childcare</i>	78	546
<i>Multi-age childcare</i>	7	56
<i>In-home multi-age childcare</i>	14	112

Source: *Union of BC Municipalities, 2019*

The Union of BC Municipalities also provides information regarding operating hours of the listed facilities. Before-school care is provided by 13 facilities and after-school care by 24. Five facilities are open for overnight care, 10 are open on statutory holidays, and 19 operate with extended hours (before 6 am and/or after 7 pm).

The Ministry of Children and Family Development reported that there are 140 licensed childcare locations in Prince George as of June 2019.²⁶ Of these facilities 94 are licensed family programs and 46 are licensed group programs. Focusing on areas unique from the Northern Health and Union of BC Municipalities databases, the Ministry reported that there are 10 providers that have the ability to accommodate children with special needs, nine have at least one employee that is an Early Childhood Educator, and nine use the Early Learning Framework. However, out of the 140 facilities, only about half reported vacancies around the month of June: 17 facilities were accepting children aged under 36 months, 36 for children between 30 months and 5 years, 19 for school-aged children, and 9 preschools.

Cost of Childcare Programs in Prince George

The cost of childcare services ranges greatly depending on the timing, extent of care needed, and facility type. Unfortunately, no up-to-date sources regarding childcare costs in Prince George were found. Typically, family childcare providers in Prince

George do not publicly report costs. However, some of the larger group childcare facilities do post their current rates. A comprehensive study of childcare costs in Prince George would be needed to estimate the cost of childcare in the city.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives maintains a yearly survey of childcare costs in major Canadian cities. The average monthly costs for full-time childcare in 2018 for Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, and Surrey are reported in Table 12.²⁷ From their 2017 report, it was found that childcare fees in rural areas of Ontario and Alberta were similar to the smaller urban areas near them. This finding suggests that rates for childcare in Prince George may be slightly cheaper, if not comparable to the cities in Table 12. Between 2017 and 2018 the costs for childcare services decreased in Richmond by 0.5% but increased by 5.3% in Vancouver, 6.3% in Surrey, and 7.1% in Burnaby. However, it should be noted that these costs were estimated before implementation of the BC Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

Table 12. Average monthly cost for full-time childcare in four major BC cities by facility type and child age (\$)

	Group Childcare			Family Childcare		
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
<i>Vancouver</i>	1,407	1,435	980	1,300	1,200	1,035
<i>Richmond</i>	1,335	1,200	975	1,200	1,000	875
<i>Burnaby</i>	1,300	1,260	900	1,025	1,000	800
<i>Surrey</i>	1,300	1,250	875	977	850	800

Source: Macdonald & Friendly, 2019

The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative was implemented by the Government of British Columbia as part of Childcare BC. Childcare providers apply to be part of the program and, if accepted, must agree to reduce their full-time costs by up to \$350 per month for infant/toddler group childcare, \$200 per month for infant/toddler family childcare, \$100 per month for group childcare between three years and school age, and \$60 per month for family childcare between three years and school age, with pro-rated part-time costs.²⁸ Between April 2018 and August 2019, 104 childcare providers in Prince George were approved to be part of the initiative.

In addition to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, parents/guardians may also apply for the Affordable Child Care Benefit.²⁹ Most BC residents are eligible, and the amount of the benefit varies depending on the type of child care sought and family income. For

example, the maximum funding available through this benefit was \$1,250 per month for group childcare for children under 19 months of age.

3.3: Transportation

The data regarding transportation in Prince George and across Canada are limited, especially as it may pertain to poverty. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be a uniquely Canadian issue, as the literature investigating the effects of transportation on poverty has been limited since the 1970s and focused on major American cities.³⁰ Yet the limited research in the area suggests that poor access to transportation creates a barrier that hampers an individual's ability to move from social support to sustainable employment.

Although it is generally agreed that poor access to transportation creates barriers to employment, it is not clear how transportation accessibility can be best achieved. For example, one study conducted among 62 low-income single mothers in Pittsburgh found that, while access to transportation was a better predictor of employment than education or work experience, mothers with access to personal vehicles were at a greater advantage than those accessing public transportation.³¹ However, another spatial analysis of socioeconomic census data and public transportation use in Atlanta concluded that public transportation provides mobility for low-income households, allowing them to move out of urbanized environments while maintaining mobility.³²

Recently, a Canadian study investigating 'transport poverty' in eight major metropolitan areas was released by researchers at the University of Toronto.³² It was found that low-income neighborhoods generally have better access to public transportation, but there are still around 40% of low-income Canadians living in the studied cities that lack suitable access to public transportation. The researchers recommended that policymakers focus on improving accessibility of public transportation in low-accessibility neighborhoods that rely on this service for mobility.

Transportation in Prince George

Although the previously discussed research investigating poverty and transportation is limited and a bit conflicting in conclusions, they do emphasize the need to better

understand the modes of transportation used to get to work and the areas that rely on them the most.

From 2016 Census data, the main mode of commuting for work in the Prince George census subdivision compared to the provincial averages is presented in Table 13.⁴ More workers in Prince George commute via car, truck, or van, either as a driver or passenger, than the provincial averages (drivers: 83.6% vs 70.5%; passengers; 6.2% vs 5.5%, respectively). As such, a smaller proportion of Prince George workers take public transit (2.9% vs 13.1%), walk (5.0% vs 6.8%), or bicycle (1.0% vs 2.5%). Compared between sexes, trends are similar between the Prince George and provincial averages, with a greater proportion of male vs female drivers, and female vs male passengers, walkers, and bicyclists. However, unlike the provincial data, a slightly greater proportion of public transit users are male (3.2% male vs 2.5% female) among Prince George work commuters. Unfortunately, analysis of these modes of transportation by low-income status is not publicly available at the Prince George level.

Table 13. Mode of commuting for work in the Prince George census subdivision as a proportion of total commuters (%) by sex, and compared to the provincial averages

	Prince George			British Columbia		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
<i>Car* – as driver</i>	83.6	84.4	82.7	70.5	73.9	66.8
<i>Car* – as passenger</i>	6.2	5.1	7.5	5.5	4.5	6.5
<i>Public transit</i>	2.9	3.2	2.5	13.1	10.8	15.6
<i>Walk</i>	5.0	4.6	5.4	6.8	5.7	7.9
<i>Bicycle</i>	1.0	1.3	0.8	2.5	3.0	1.9
<i>Other</i>	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.7	2.0	1.3

*Car, truck, or van

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figures 15, 16, and 17 present the proportion of commuters who travel to work by driving, taking public transit, or walking by Prince George census dissemination areas. As would be expected, the dissemination areas further away from major routes of the Prince George transit system (Appendix 8.2) rely on driving as their primary mode to commute to work. However, there are some dissemination areas that sit alongside transit routes that have a strong reliance on driving as compared to public transportation use. For instance, 97.1% of those living in a dissemination area at the intersection of Ferry Avenue and Upland Street report driving to work, and 94% of workers living in a dissemination area south of the Massey Drive and Ospika Boulevard

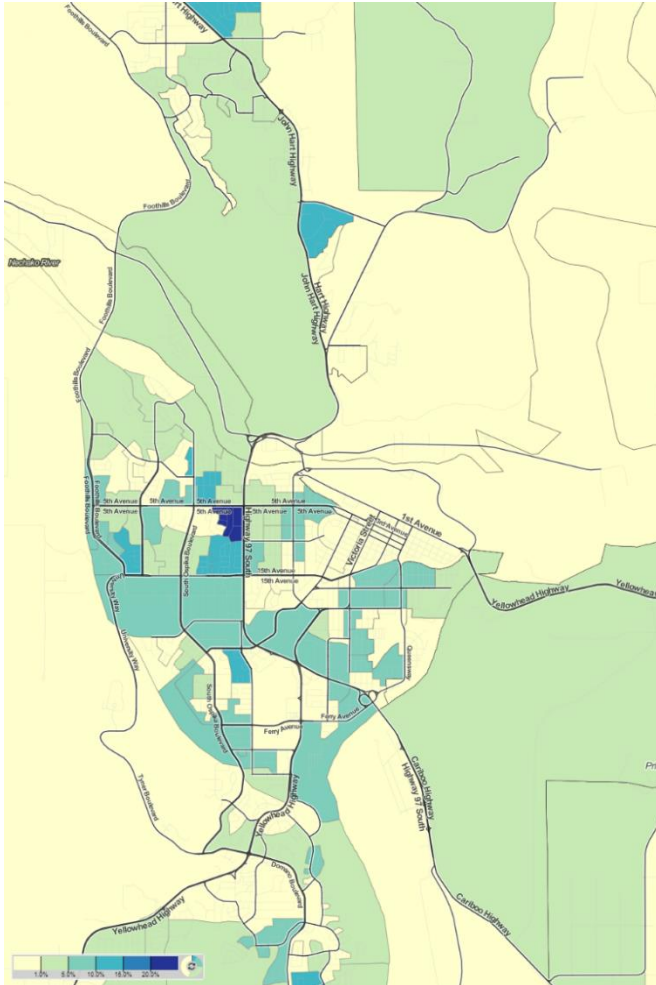


Figure 15. Proportion of workers take public transit to work by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

prevalence by dissemination area, some conflicting observations are made. Some dissemination areas reporting high prevalence of low-income correspond with areas of high public transportation use, such as the area to the southwest of the Highway 97 and 5th avenue intersection; while others correspond with areas of high reliance on driving, such as the area to the south of the Massey Drive and Ospika Boulevard intersection.

intersection report doing the same. Conversely, the dissemination area to the southwest of the Highway 97 and 5th Avenue intersection only reports 45.5% driving to work, compared to 20.0% taking public transit and 20.0% walking. Similarly, only 41.7% of those living in the downtown along the Victoria Street and Dominion Street areas drive to work, with 41.7% walking to work.

When the commuting modes are compared from Figures 15, 16, and 17 to Figures 2 and 3, which depict low-income

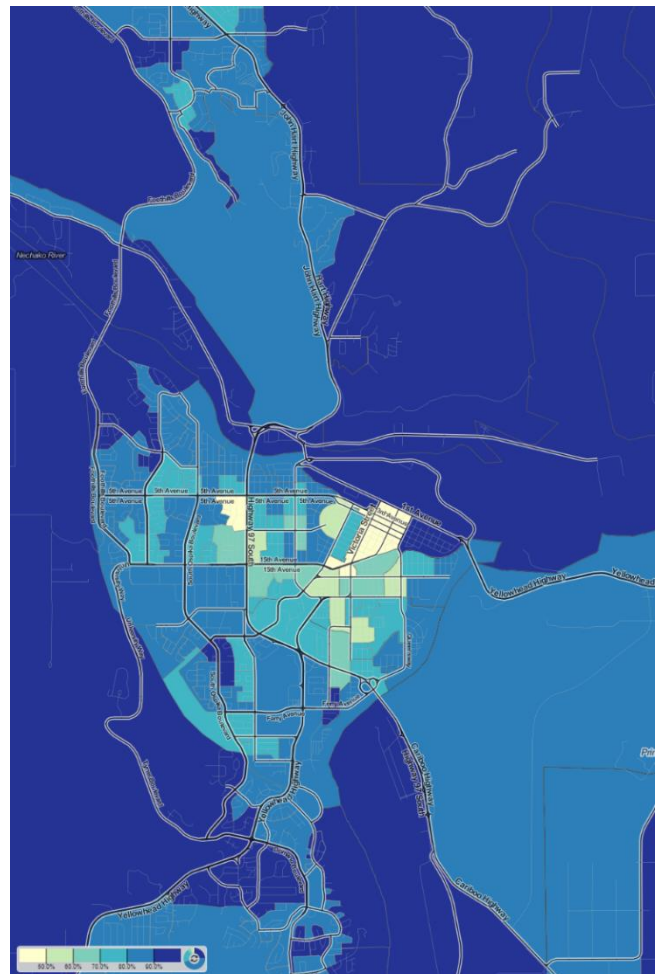


Figure 16. Proportion of workers who drive to work by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

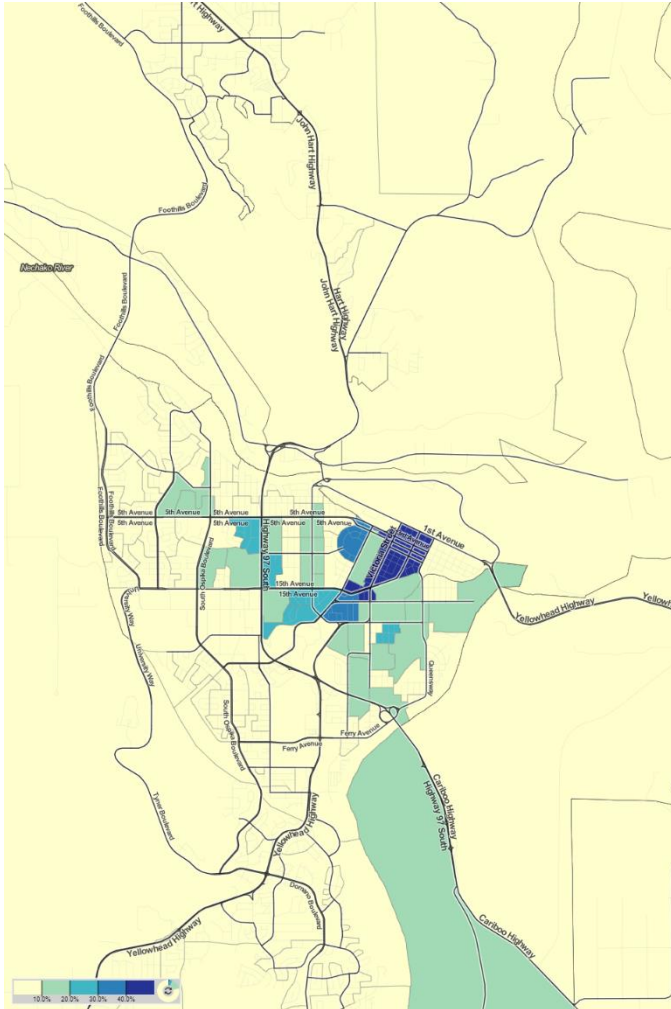


Figure 17. Proportion of workers walk to work by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

There are many potential reasons for the discrepancy between low-income status and public transportation use. For example, some dissemination areas may not be as well served by the Prince George transit system than others, or costs may be prohibitive to some residents. However, these hypotheses are not easily tested with the currently available public census data. Like the general need for more research investigating the relationship between poverty and transportation in Canada, more research may be needed to determine the cause of the discrepancies observed here.

Affordability of Transportation in Prince George

The Transit Assistance Program operates in partnership between the City of Prince George and the United Way of Northern BC. Through this program, transit vouchers are distributed to 28 local agencies who registered with the program in 2019, and these agencies are tasked with distributing the vouchers to their clients to assist with transportation to work, medical appointment, education, or other needs (C. Oakley, United Way of Northern BC, personal communication, August 12, 2019). Between April and June of 2019, 2,265 vouchers were distributed. Extrapolating this 2nd quarter data, it is estimated that around 10,000 vouchers will be distributed in the 2019 year. The most vouchers this quarter (34.4%) were used for other purposes, such as transportation to the food bank, court, or counselling services. The next most common use was for medical appointments (24.9%), followed by work (17.7%), education (12.0%), and social activities (11.0%).

3.4: Food Security

Food security can be simply defined as the availability and access to adequate foods. However, that simple definition fails to address the barriers that impact food accessibility, availability, and adequacy. For example, the most extensively studied barrier to food security is the affordability of nutritious foods.³³ However, it should also be noted that there are other factors, such as the physical availability of foods in the community that meet individuals' dietary requirements, transportation and mobility barriers that hamper accessibility, and the ability to properly cook the food once it is obtained. This section will focus on the affordability of nutritious foods, as it relates to food security.

In Canada, the primary measure of food security is through the Household Food Security Survey Module that was first used as part of the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) in 2004.^{33,34} This module uses responses to a variety of questions to classify households as being, food secure, moderately food insecure, or severely food insecure, with some organizations also including marginally food insecure. Unfortunately, the food security module was only mandatory for all provinces for the 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 CCHS years. Furthermore, although BC opted into the module for the 2015-2016 CCHS, food security results are not publicly available at the city level. Instead, the lowest available measure of geography is at the health authority and health service delivery

Defining Household Food Security

Food Secure

- Continuous access to enough food to sustain an active and healthy lifestyle for all household members.

Marginally Food Insecure

- Worries about running out of food and/or limited selection of food.

Moderately Food Insecure

- Compromised quality or quantity of food that begins to impact household lifestyles.

Severely Food Insecure

- Severely impacted access to food, resulting in missed meals or reduced food intake that impacts household lifestyles.

area (HSDA) levels. Maps of the health authorities and HSDAs are included as Appendices 8.3 and 8.4, respectively.

Weighted analysis of the CCHS 2015-2016 Household Food Security Survey Module revealed that 7.9% of Canadian households (excluding Newfoundland, Ontario, and the Yukon Territory) are food insecure, with 5.1% reporting moderate food insecurity and 2.8% reporting severe food security.³⁵ British Columbia reports higher food security than the national average (92.3% vs 92.0%); however, 4.7% of British Columbian households report moderate food insecurity and 2.9% report severe food insecurity. This suggests that although BC has slightly better overall food security than the national average, food insecurity may be slightly more severe when present.

Table 14 compares food security by BC health authority. From this table, a smaller proportion of households within the Northern Health region report food security (89.2%) and a greater proportion report severe food insecurity (4.6%), as compared to the other health authorities.³⁵

Table 14. Food security as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module for the 2015-2016 CCHS survey year by BC regional health authority as a proportion of total households (%)

	Interior Health	Fraser Health	Vancouver Coastal Health	Vancouver Island Health	Northern Health	BC Total
<i>Food secure</i>	89.8	91.6	95.2	93.1	89.2	92.3
<i>Moderately food insecure</i>	6.0	5.3	3.3	4.0	6.2	4.7
<i>Severely food insecure</i>	4.2	3.1	1.5	2.9	4.6	2.9

Source: 2015-2016 Canada Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2017

Table 15 compares food security by HSDA within Northern Health. From this table, Northern Interior HSDA households report slightly less food security (89.0% food secure) than the Northern Health total area (89.2%), with moderate food insecurity reported by a slightly greater proportion of households (6.4%) and an identical proportion reporting severe food insecurity (4.6%).³⁵ From these proportions, it is estimated that there are 11,965 households reporting moderate or severe food insecurity in the Northern Interior HSDA, with 4,976 of them reporting severe food

insecurity. These statistics place the Northern Interior HSDA between the Northwest and Northeast HSDAs in terms of food security, with the Northwest HSDA having the greatest proportion of households reporting food security (91.7%) and the Northeast HSDA having the least (87.5%). Again, all Northern Health HSDAs have a smaller proportion of households reporting food security than the BC total.

Table 15. Food security as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module for the 2015-2016 CCHS survey year by Northern Health service delivery areas as a proportion of total households (%)

	Northwest	Northern Interior	Northeast	Northern Health Total	BC Total
<i>Food secure</i>	91.7	89.0	87.5	89.2	92.3
<i>Moderately food insecure</i>	5.2	6.4	6.6	6.2	4.7
<i>Severely food insecure</i>	3.1	4.6	5.8	4.6	2.9

Source: 2015-2016 Canada Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2017

The following statistics focus on the Northern Interior HSDA—the lowest level of geography available for public analysis. As Prince George is the largest population centre within the Northern Interior HSDA, it is also the largest contributor to the food security statistics generated for the region. Please note that although this is the closest approximation to Prince George possible through public analysis, it is still Northern Interior HSDA data and should be interpreted as such.

Table 16 presents the proportion of households reporting that they experienced a variety of effects of food insecurity within the past year.³⁵ Of the effects listed in the table, 10.9% of Northern Interior HSDA households reported that they were at least sometimes worried that food would run out, 9.0% reported that their food did not last and that they did not have money to buy more, and 9.0% reported that they could not afford to eat balanced meals. Overall, 44.3% of households reported that adults skipped or cut the size of at least one meal in the past year due to costs, with 35.8% (15.9% overall) of these adults skipping or cutting the size of a meal due to costs at least once per month. A total of 13% of households reported that their adults did not eat for a whole day at least once in the past year, with 26.8% (3.5% overall) reporting that this happened at least once per month. Overall, 51.2% reported that they ate less

than they felt they should at least once in the past year due to costs, 29.6% were hungry but could not afford enough food, and 19.4% lost weight because they did not have enough money for food. Overall, 89.5% of adults in Northern Interior HSDA households were food secure, with 5.9% moderately food insecure and 4.6% severely food insecure.

Table 16. Proportion (%) of households within the Northern Interior health service delivery area reporting various effects of food insecurity by the frequency of experiencing the effect in the past year, as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module for the 2015-2016 CCHS survey year

	Often	Sometimes	Never
<i>Worried food would run out</i>	2.3	8.6	89.1
<i>Food did not last and no money to buy more</i>	1.6	7.4	91.0
<i>Could not afford to eat balanced meals</i>	2.3	6.7	90.9
<i>Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed children</i>	3.0	8.1	88.9
<i>Could not feed children a balanced meal</i>	1.1	7.4	91.5
<i>Children were not eating enough</i>	1.5	18.0	80.5

Source: 2015-2016 Canada Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2017

Focusing on children, 19.5% of households reported that their children were, at least sometimes, not eating enough, 8.5% could not feed their children a balanced meal, and 11.1% relied on a variety of low-cost foods to feed their children.³⁵ A total of 6.7% of households reported that they cut the size of their children’s meals due to cost at least once in the past year and 8.8% reported that their children were hungry but could not afford more food. A total 2.9% reported that their children skipped meals at least once in the past year due to cost, though none reported that their children did not eat for an entire day due to cost. Overall, 97% of children in Northern Interior HSDA households were food secure, with 2.9% moderately food insecure and 0.1% severely food insecure.

The Cost of Food in the Northern Interior HSDA

Every two years, the BC Centre for Disease Control coordinates with the Regional Health Authorities to report the costs of food across BC, with the most recent report available for food costing in 2017.³⁶ The costs are based on a family of four to purchase Health Canada’s National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB). The NNFB contains 67

minimally processed foods that would provide a nutritious and balanced diet. The average costs are generated from a random sample of stores within each health authority and health service delivery area.

Table 17 presents the average monthly cost for a family of four to purchase the NNFB by health authority, with Northern Health costing slightly over the BC average (\$1,038 vs \$1,019).³⁶ Although the cost of the NNFB has increased from 2015 to 2017 (\$45 per month province-wide), the cost has increased by the smallest amount (\$6 per month) for the Northern Health region. The cost of the NNFB for a family of four is lower in the Northern Interior HSDA (\$992 per month) than the Northern Health and provincial averages, with only the Northeast HSDA reporting lower per month costs (\$912; Table 18).

Although it appears that the NNFB cost in the Northern Interior HSDA and Northern Health compare well to the provincial average, the authors of this report do provide a word of caution.³⁶ It is speculated that the growing and high costs of the NNFB in some regions, such as the Vancouver HSDA and South Island HSDA, are largely due to the expansion of expensive “health food” grocery stores. This effect may inflate the provincial averages and overshadow growing costs in other regions, such as Northern Health and the Northern Interior HSDA. Finally, the report authors also note that the average NNFB costs do not mean much in isolation. Instead, the real power of the measure comes when income data are compared to the NNFB costs. As the NNFB cost grows, it disproportionately impacts those with inadequate incomes, making it

Table 17. The average monthly cost (\$) of food for a family of four, based on the National Nutritious Food Basket, by the BC Health Authorities in 2017

	Average Monthly Cost
<i>Interior Health</i>	1,019
<i>Fraser Health</i>	982
<i>Vancouver Coastal Health</i>	1,056
<i>Vancouver Island Health</i>	1,043
Northern Health	1,038
<i>British Columbia Average</i>	1,019

Source: Kurrein, et al., 2018

Table 18. The average monthly cost (\$) of food for a family of four, based on the National Nutritious Food Basket, by the Northern Health health service delivery areas in 2017

	Average Monthly Cost
<i>Northwest</i>	1,184
Northern Interior	992
<i>Northeast</i>	912
<i>Northern Health Average</i>	1,038

Source: Kurrein, et al., 2018

even more difficult to afford nutritious and balanced diets, and leading to further food insecurity.

Food Security Programming in Prince George

Multiple organizations within Prince George support residents to obtain accessible and affordable foods. The following is not an extensive review of these services within Prince George but does serve as a general overview of some of the major programs.

One of the largest food security programs in the city is delivered by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. At the Drop-In Centre, three meals are served during weekdays, with two meals available on weekends (B. Goold, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, personal communication, July 30, 2019). The Centre is only closed for three days per year to provide community dinners. In 2018, 119,076 meals were served out of the Drop-In Centre.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul also distributes emergency food hampers to families with children under the age of 19 and seniors aged 60 or older, with one hamper available every two weeks, depending on need. Typically, 110 to 120 hampers are distributed per month, with 25 to 30 dedicated to seniors. In 2018, 1,413 hampers were distributed. Bags of fruits and vegetables are also available from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, with a limit of one bag per person per week. In 2018, 2,911 bags were distributed. Between the emergency food hamper and fruit/vegetable bag programs, there were 232 total seniors and 125 new families accessing these services in 2018.

Quick Facts from 2018

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

- 119,076 meals served
- 1,413 emergency food hampers distributed
- 2,911 bags of fruits and vegetables distributed
- 362 Christmas hampers distributed

Salvation Army

- 13,005 food bank visits
- 30,357 food bank users served
- 193 emergency food hampers distributed

BC Association of Farmers' Markets

- 10,701 coupons redeemed at farmers markets

During the winter holiday season, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul also distributes Christmas hampers to families in need, containing seven to 10 days of groceries, the food needed for a turkey or ham dinner, and gifts for the children and parents when available. In 2018, 362 Christmas hampers were distributed.

Overall, it is estimated that there has been a 10 to 12% increase in food distribution by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul over the past few years.

The Salvation Army also provides one of the largest food security programs in the city, operating a Food Bank available to low-income individuals and families. In 2018, there were 504 new and 1,213 renewal food bank registrations permitting low-income families to access food bank services.³⁷ In total, there were 13,005 recorded visits to the food bank, which served an estimated 30,357 individuals, and is a decrease from the 38,150 recorded visits in 2016. In addition to food bank services, 193 emergency food boxes were distributed to low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disability. There were also 257 accesses to the Bread Line program, where individuals could receive perishable food items, such as bread and produce.

The BC Association of Farmers' Markets, as funded by the Ministry of Health, provides a Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program whereby low-income families, seniors, and pregnant women can receive coupons from partnering community agencies that they can use toward the purchase of fresh vegetables and other food items at the local farmers' markets. Each household enrolled in the program can receive a minimum of \$21 per week in \$3 coupons. In 2018, 185 families were supported by the program and 10,701 coupons were redeemed at Prince George farmers markets totaling \$32,103 (P. Leblanc, BC Association of Farmers' Markets, personal communication, September 12, 2019). As of the writing of this profile, 235 families are being supported by the program in 2019, with 11,060 coupons redeemed at Prince George farmers markets.

Of course, there are many other organizations in Prince George that work to support food security in the community. The Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Positive Living North, Carrier Sekani Family Services, and Prince George Council of Seniors—among many others—have combinations of food hampers, food banks, and/or lunch programs available to low-income residents meeting the respective eligibility requirements.

3.5: Summary Points

Housing

- Average home ownership (\$1,133 per month) and rental costs (\$928) are less than the provincial averages.
 - Costs are increasing at rates resembling the provincial average.
 - Rental costs are highest in the southern portion of College Heights and at the intersection of Foothills Boulevard and 5th Avenue, and lowest in area where 5th Avenue forks into 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue, and the Downtown area around Victoria Street (Figure 6).
 - These areas with low rental costs are associated with areas with subsidized housing (Figure 7).
 - 12.7% of tenant households are subsidized in Prince George, which is at the provincial average.
- 19.5% of Prince George residents spend over 30% of their income on shelter costs, which is less than the provincial and national averages.
 - Renters are more likely to report spending over 30% of their income on shelter (39.6%) as compared to homeowners (10.4%).
 - The area encapsulated by Ferry Avenue, Highway 16, and the Fraser River reports the highest proportion of tenants (83.3%) spending of 30% of their income on shelter (Figure 8).
- 2.7% of Prince George household are unsuitable for the occupants, less than the 5.3% provincial average.
- 7.3% of houses need major repairs, more than the 6.3% provincial average.
- 10.2% of households are in core housing need, which is a decrease from 2010 and less than the provincial and national averages (Figure 13).
- 1,921 housing units were under BC Housing administration as of March 31, 2019.
 - 351 emergency shelter units
 - 325 transitional supported and assisted living units
 - 725 independent social housing units
 - 520 rent assistance units in the private market
- 13 people were absolutely homeless and 79 were in transitional housing in Prince George on the night of April 17, 2019
 - A greater proportion are female (50%) than other BC homeless counts

-
- 28% were homeless because they could not afford to pay their rent or mortgage
 - Nearly all (96%) would like a permanent housing solution

Childcare

- 17.5% of the Prince George population is under age 15, greater than the provincial proportion of 14.9%,
- 19.3% of census families in Prince George are lone-parent families, greater than the provincial proportion of 15.1%.
 - 77.2% of lone-parent families in Prince George are headed by a female family member.
 - 62.0% of lone-parent families in Prince George have one child, 27.1% have two, and 6.2% have three or more.
 - A greater proportion of lone-parent families is found in the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent and the areas surrounding the intersection of 20th Avenue and Victoria Street (Figure 14).
- 46.5% of British Columbians have difficulty finding childcare, which is greater than the national average
 - 66.4% of those with difficulties report a general lack of childcare in their community
 - 59.3% of those with difficulties report a lack of affordability
- 26.2% of BC children who are not in childcare are not in childcare due to high costs, which is slightly greater than the national average
- Canadian households with income less than \$40,000 tend to use daycare centres for their young children (0 to 5 years), possibly due to the availability of subsidies.
 - There is little difference in choice of childcare provider for children of school age by income group.
- The number of licensed childcare programs in Prince George varies between sources
 - 143 facilities according to Northern Health
 - 1,825 child capacity overall
 - 158 programs according to the Union of BC Municipalities
 - 2,152 child capacity overall

-
- 140 facilities according to the Ministry of Children and Family Development
 - Only about half of the facilities had vacancies in June
 - No source was found that reported the average cost of childcare in Prince George
 - As of August 2019, 104 childcare providers in Prince George were approved to be part of the Government of British Columbia’s Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

Transportation

- There is a lack of data regarding transportation in Prince George and across Canada.
- Most Prince George workers commute as drivers (83.6%), more than the provincial average (70.5%)
 - A smaller proportion of Prince George workers take public transit (2.9%) or walk (5.0%) to work than the provincial averages (13.1% and 6.8%, respectively).
- Comparing commuting mode by census dissemination areas to the Prince George transit system map, it appears that areas on transit route tend to report greater use of public transportation, though some areas are notable exceptions (Figure 15).
- Comparing commuting mode (Figures 15, 16, and 17) to dissemination areas with a large proportion of individuals living with low-income (Figures 2 and 3), there seems to be an inconsistent relationship or no relationship between low-income status and the mode of transportation used.
- Between April and June of 2019, 2,265 Transit Assistance Program vouchers were distributed by 28 partner agencies to low-income individuals – estimated that 10,000 vouchers will be distributed in 2019
 - 24.9% of vouchers were used for medical appointments, 17.7% used for work, 12.0% used for education, 11.0% used for social activities, and 34.4% used for other purposes (such as transportation to the food bank, court, or counselling services).

Food Security

- Food security is lower in Northern Health than any other BC health authority
 - 89.2% of Northern Health households are food secure, less than the provincial average (92.3%)
- The Northern Interior HSDA reports lower household food security (89.0%) than the Northern Health Average (89.2%)
 - 6.4% of households are moderately food insecure
 - 4.6% of households are severely food insecure
 - 13% of households reported that their adults did not eat for a whole day in the past year
 - 26.8% of these adults reported that this happened at least once per month
 - Food security is higher among children (97%) than adults (89.5%)
- The cost of the National Nutritious Food Basket is \$1,038 per month in Northern Health, higher than the provincial average (\$1,019)
 - The cost is \$992 in the Northern Interior HSDA
 - Cost increases from 2015 to 2017 have been the lowest in the Northern Health region
- 119,076 meals were served by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 2018
- 30,357 food bank users were served by the Salvation Army in 2018

4: Opportunity

This profile has so far focused on affordability factors related to low-income and poverty, namely housing, childcare, transportation, and food security. However, there are a multitude of other priority areas noted in British Columbia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy that impact the lives of Prince George residents. The following subsections briefly overview a select set of data sources reporting on opportunity factors that impact low-income and poverty in the community. Please note that they do not provide a detailed summary of the current initiatives to improve these opportunities in the community. Further research would be needed to accomplish this task.

4.1: Education and Training

As compared to the provincial total, a smaller proportion of the Prince George population has obtained a university certificate, diploma, or degree, while a greater proportion has obtained a secondary school diploma, or an apprenticeship or trades certificate (Table 19). Most notably, a greater proportion of the Prince George population does not have a certificate, diploma, or degree (19.9%) as compared to the provincial total (15.5%).⁴

Table 19. Educational attainment by level as measured by the 2016 Census as a proportion of the population in Prince George and BC

	Prince George	British Columbia
<i>No certificate, diploma or degree</i>	19.9%	15.5%
<i>Secondary school diploma or equivalent</i>	32.5%	29.4%
<i>Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma</i>	11.3%	8.8%
<i>College or other non-university certificate or diploma</i>	18.3%	18.1%
<i>University certificate or diploma below bachelor level</i>	2.2%	3.6%
<i>University bachelor level degree or above</i>	15.8%	24.6%

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 18 presents the proportion of Prince George residents within each census dissemination area who do not have a certificate, diploma, or degree. The area encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway contains

dissemination areas with a large proportion of residents without a certificate, diploma, or degree, with 48.5% of the population in one dissemination area reporting so. Areas, such as the downtown core (42.3%) and the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent (43.9%) also have large proportions of residents without a certificate, degree, or diploma.

It is important to note that the areas with large proportions of the population without a certificate, degree or diploma also tend to be areas reporting negative effects from the low-income and affordability factors described above.

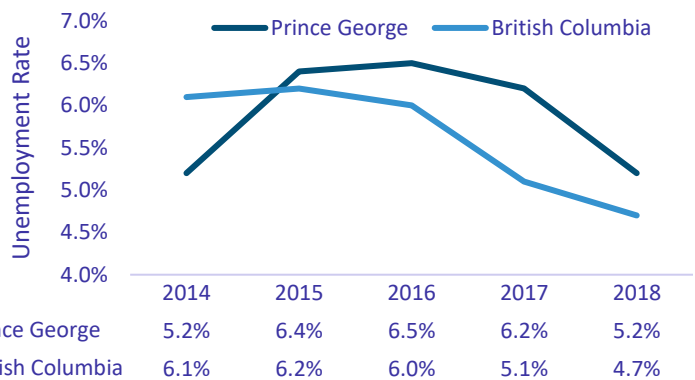
4.2: Employment and Jobs

The most recent data reporting the employment status of Prince George residents comes from the Labour Force Survey. Though it should be noted that reporting of the Labour Force Survey is limited to the Prince George census agglomeration area, which is larger than the census subdivision area used elsewhere in this profile.

From the annual reporting of 2018 Labour Force Surveys, the



Figure 18. Proportion of residents without a certificate, diploma, or degree by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca



Source: 2014-2018 Labour Market Surveys, Statistics Canada

Figure 19. Change in unemployment rate for the Prince George census agglomeration and British Columbia

participation rate, the proportion of individuals of working age who were employed or seeking work, for Prince George is 71.3%.³⁸ This is a greater participation rate than the total for BC at 64.9%. However, 5.2% of the Prince George workforce is unemployed, which is also greater than the provincial total of 4.7% (Figure 19).

Returning to 2016 Census data, Figure 20 presents the proportion of the workforce that was unemployed between May 1 and 7 of 2016 within each Prince George census dissemination area. The dissemination areas encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway report elevated unemployment rates, with one dissemination area reporting an unemployment rate of 26.3%, and the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent also reporting a high unemployment rate of 30.8%.

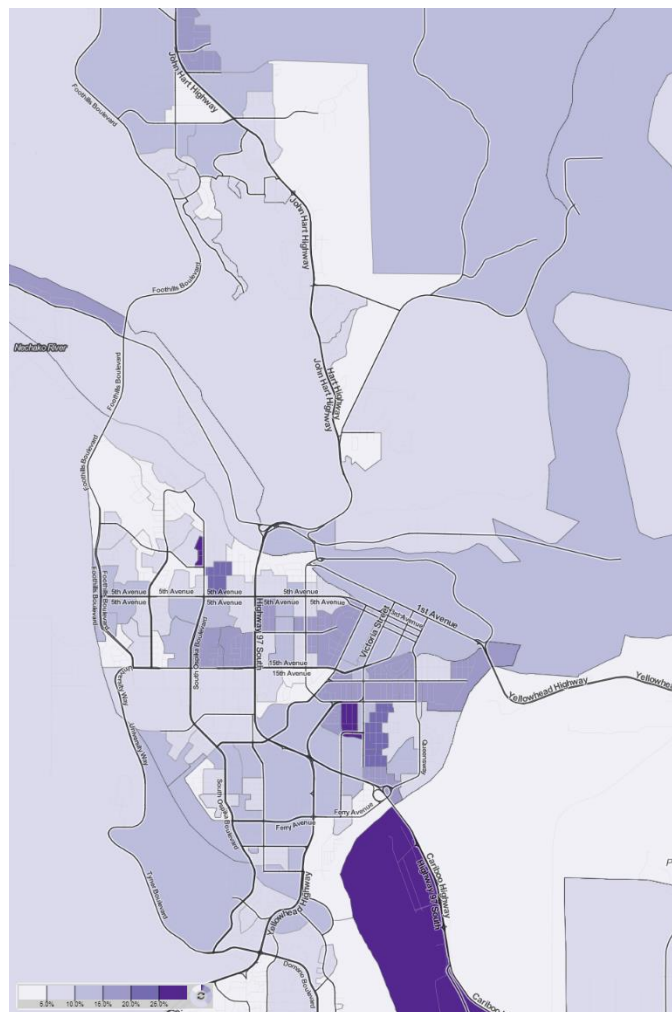


Figure 20. Proportion of residents in the workforce who are unemployed by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

4.3: Access to Healthcare

The most recent available data through the Provincial Health Services Authority regarding physician numbers in the Prince George Local Health Area (LHA; Appendix 8.5) are for the 2009-2010 year. At that time, the Prince George LHA had 120 physicians per 100,000 residents, which is notably more than the provincial total of 112 per 100,000.³⁹ However, the Prince George LHA performed worse than the provincial total for number of specialists (92 vs. 94 per 100,000) and supplementary practitioners, such as massage therapists and physiotherapists (81 vs. 133 per 100,000).

Although overall physician coverage may be greater in the Prince George LHA compared to the BC total, it should be noted that low-income Canadian face greater issues accessing healthcare services than other income groups. From overall 2015-2016 CCHS data, a greater proportion of Canadians in the lowest income group (less than \$20,000) report that they do not have a primary care provider (23.1%) than the national average (19.6%).³⁵ Low-income Canadians are also less likely to access preventative dental care and other services that are not usually covered under provincial medical plans.^{39,40} They are also less likely to access other preventative services, such as eye exams, prenatal care, and cancer screening.

Many of the affordability issues discussed in this profile serve as barriers to healthcare for low-income Canadians, such as limited access to affordable transportation and childcare that make it difficult to attend appointments.^{39,40} Additional barriers include discrimination, insensitivity of healthcare workers, and negative past experiences with the healthcare system. Lower-income Canadians also tend to lack knowledge of the healthcare services available to them.

4.4: Mental Health and Addictions

From the 2015-2016 CCHS, 89.8% of those living in the Northern Interior HSDA reported that they have at least good mental health, with only 2.7% reporting poor mental health.³⁵ However, only 81.4% of those in the lowest household income group (less than \$20,000) reported at least good mental health, with 5.0% reporting poor mental health.

As also noted in the overall 2015-2016 CCHS, a larger proportion of those in the lowest income group report drug use.

Including one-time cannabis use, 19.2% of respondents in the lowest income group reported using illicit drugs at least once in the past year, compared to the all-incomes average of 11.4%.³⁵ Excluding one-time cannabis use, this disparity remains consistent,

Table 20. Hospitalizations at least partially due to substance use by substance in 2016 in the Prince George Local Health Area and BC (per 100,000)

	Prince George	British Columbia
<i>Alcohol</i>	524.44	397.03
<i>Cannabis</i>	41.55	27.76
<i>Cocaine</i>	17.60	13.07
<i>Depressants</i>	41.79	31.87
<i>Opioids</i>	50.35	45.80
<i>Stimulants</i>	42.72	27.46
<i>Tobacco</i>	754.97	491.47
<i>Other</i>	80.68	20.96

Source: Canadian Institute of Substance Use Research, University of Victoria, 2019

with 18.4% of those in the lowest-income group reporting illicit drug use in the past year, compared to the all-incomes average of 10.8%.

Unfortunately, the drug use data reported for the 2015-2016 CCHS above does not include Northern Interior HSDA data. However, data are available through the Canadian Institute for Substance Research that detail the negative impacts of substance use on hospitalizations and death in the Prince George LHA. The Prince

George LHA had more hospitalizations per 100,000 population that were at least partially attributable to substance use than the provincial average (Table 20).⁴¹ This effect was observed across all recorded substances, with the most hospitalizations attributable to alcohol and tobacco. In terms of deaths, a similar result is observed, with the Prince George LHA reporting a greater number of deaths per 100,000 population than the provincial average (Table

20.) However, these rates were lower for deaths attributable to cocaine and opioids within the Prince George LHA than the provincial average.

4.5: Summary Points

Education and Training

- 19.9% of Prince George residents do not have a certificate, diploma, or degree, more than the provincial average of 15.5%
- The area encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway; the downtown core; and the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent have large proportions of residents without a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Table 21. Deaths at least partially due to substance use by substance in 2016 in the Prince George Local Health Area and BC (per 100,000)

	Prince George	British Columbia
<i>Alcohol</i>	99.15	82.90
<i>Cannabis</i>	8.03	3.25
<i>Cocaine</i>	0.48	3.69
<i>Depressants</i>	1.44	0.83
<i>Opioids</i>	9.15	11.09
<i>Stimulants</i>	2.77	1.55
<i>Tobacco</i>	181.14	127.70
<i>Other</i>	4.80	0.98

Source: Canadian Institute of Substance Use Research, University of Victoria, 2019

Employment and Jobs

- 5.2% of the Prince George workforce is unemployed, more than the provincial average of 4.7%
- The areas encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway; and the area encapsulated by McIntyre Crescent report elevated unemployment rates.

Access to Healthcare

- In 2009-2010, the Prince George LHA had 120 physicians per 100,000 residents, greater than the provincial average of 92 per 100,000.
- Canadians in the lowest household income group are more likely to report that they do not have a primary care provider (23.1%) than the national average (19.6%).
- Low-income Canadians are less likely to access preventative dental care, eye exams, prenatal care, cancer screening, and other preventative services.

Mental Health and Addictions

- 89.8% of those living in the Northern Interior HSDA report that they have at least good mental health
 - 81.4% of those in the lowest household income group report at least good mental health
- 19.2% of respondents in the lowest income group (less than \$20,000 per year) report using illicit drugs (including cannabis) at least once in the past year, compared to the all-incomes average of 11.4%.
 - In 2016, the Prince George LHA had more hospitalizations and deaths per 100,000 residents that were at least partially attributable to substance use.
 - Although not testable with available datasets, it is suspected that these hospitalizations and deaths disproportionately impact low-income residents.

5: Social Inclusion

It is widely accepted that social inclusion has incredible value in society, and that inclusion is the goal of many social programs and policies.⁴² However, there is no universally accepted definition of social inclusion or exclusion in the literature, and no official measure. Much of the literature and policy around social inclusion focuses on income and employment. By this definition, any individual living with low-income and/or without employment would be considered socially excluded. This view has been criticized in recent years due to its reductive nature and focus on small-scale individual interventions rather than large-scale community interventions.⁴²

Recent efforts to conceptualize social inclusion have focused on the multifaceted and dynamic nature of social inclusion, recognizing how societal factors impact social inclusion and how multiple factors interact to determine social inclusion.⁴² Some of the previous measures of social inclusion, such as income, employment, and housing, are now being combined with more subjective measures to gauge overall social inclusion within communities. Such measures include civic engagement, such as charitable activities, voting, and protesting; religious participation; social contact within and outside the workplace; educational advancement; leisure activities; involvement in arts and culture; neighborhood cohesion; self-reported health; stigmatization; and readiness to change.⁴²⁻⁴⁴

The multifaceted dynamic nature of social inclusion was recognized in the early 2000s by the Department of Justice Canada and Department of Canadian Heritage after consultation with community agencies, research agencies, and policy makers to research social cohesion and its measurement in Canada.⁴⁵ In the report, it was noted that participation is a key element of social cohesion, and that “full participation requires access to economic, political, and cultural opportunities and involves active engagement with other members of the community and society.” The collective society benefits from the participation of all members, and this participation must be the product of free will. Six areas were created to encapsulate the issues discussed in the consultative process. Paraphrased from the report, these six areas are civic engagement, income, diversity, capacity building in Indigenous communities, peace, and information technology. Although these early 2000s priorities may not completely

represent modern society, they serve as potential areas where social cohesion and inclusion can be better measured and understood in Prince George.

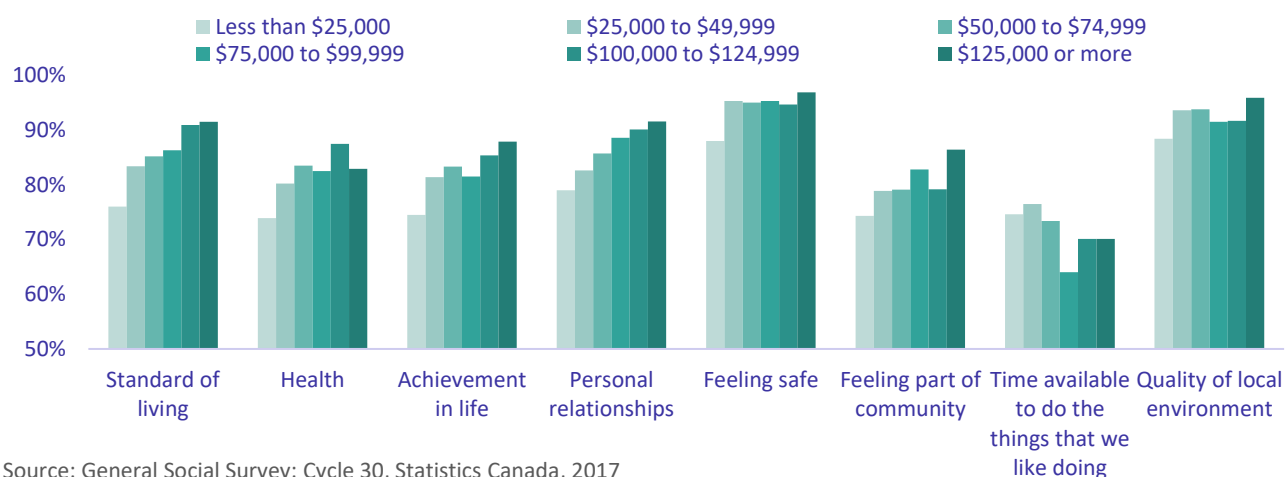
Although composite measures of social inclusion are being developed, they are not well-validated and available for the city of Prince George. Every factor discussed as part of this profile can be used as a partial measure of social inclusion—not to be used in isolation, but to be combined with other measures to obtain a clearer picture of social inclusion in Prince George. For example, another measure to gauge social inclusion in Prince George could be voter turnout in municipal elections. Typically, lower voter turnouts are associated with lower median income, high unemployment, and a greater proportion of the population who are not in the workforce and have children at home.⁴⁶ In 2018, Prince George had a 24.0% voter turnout for the municipal election, which was 11.6% lower than the BC municipal election average (35.6%), and a decrease from historical voter turnouts in Prince George (32% in 2008, 29% in 2011, and 37% in 2014).⁴⁷ In isolation, this low voter turnout does not indicate low social inclusion in Prince George. However, when it is considered along with the other issues discussed in this profile, it may be an indicator of larger concerns.

5.1: Examples of the Effects of Income on Social Inclusion

The publicly available data that can provide an insight into the effects of income on social inclusion are not readily available at the Prince George level. Instead, a weighted descriptive analysis of the 2016 (Cycle 30) General Social Survey (GSS) was limited to BC census metropolitan areas and census agglomeration areas, such as Prince George. Responses to questions related to social inclusion were then compared between income groups. Again, it is important to note that these statistics are not specific to Prince George but provide an insight into how income impacts social inclusion for British Columbians in large cities.

Figure 21 reports the difference in domain satisfaction by income group. Like the concept of social inclusion, life satisfaction is a composite of many factors, or domains, that contribute to an individual's overall satisfaction with life. Domain satisfaction, as measured in the GSS, is a measure of multiple areas of life satisfaction. Depending on the domain being measured, there are large differences between the highest and lowest income groups. Those with a household income less than \$25,000 per tend to

report lower levels of satisfaction with their standard of living, health, achievement in life, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling part of their community, and the quality of their local environment than the higher income groups.⁴⁸ Indeed, the only measure of domain satisfaction included in the GSS that did not show such a difference was satisfaction with the time available to do things that the family enjoys, with the lower income groups tending to report greater levels of satisfaction than the highest income groups, though only around 75% of those in the lowest income groups report satisfaction in this domain.



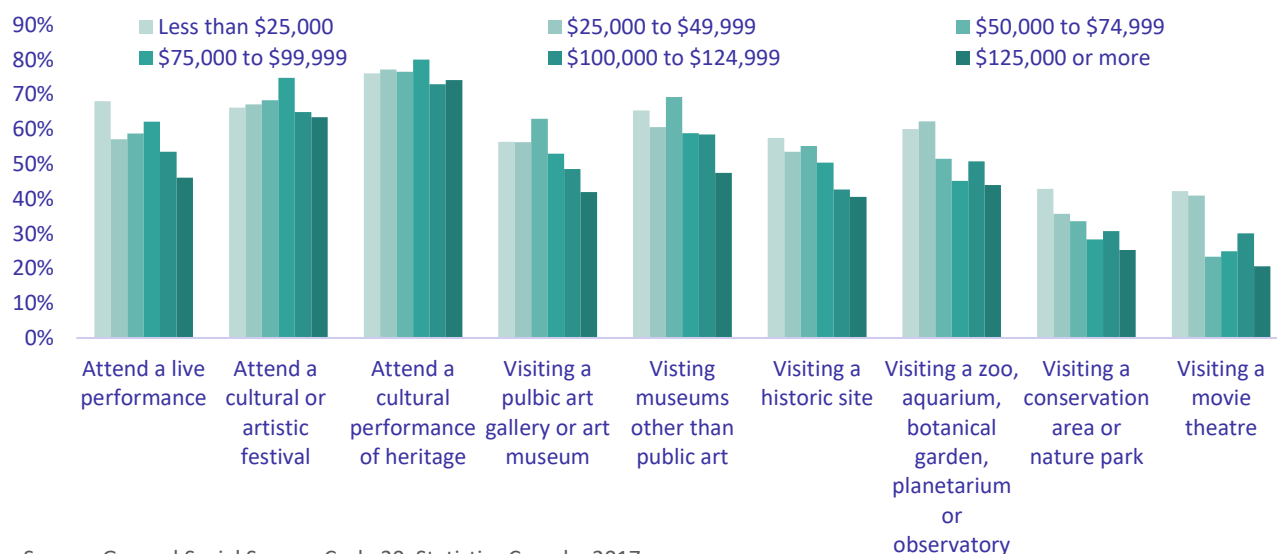
Source: General Social Survey: Cycle 30, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 21. Proportion of those who are at least somewhat satisfied with the listed areas of domain satisfaction by income level and restricted to BC GSS Cycle 30 respondents from Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomeration Areas

Consistent with the finding above that income does not appear related to satisfaction with the time available to do enjoyable family activities, lower income families tend to report generally high levels of satisfaction with the quality of time they spend as a family. The lowest income group reported that 83.9% were very satisfied or satisfied with their quality of time spent as a family, compared to 84.0% of the highest income group that reported the same.⁴⁸

Another area from the GSS that can provide insight into the social inclusion of low-income families is participation in community activities, such as cultural participation, outdoor activities, and sports. Figures 19 and 20 summarize the frequency of participation in cultural activities by income groups. Across all cultural activities, individuals in the lowest income group more often reported that they never attended the activity in the past year than the highest income group (Figure 22). However, the differences between these groups varied greatly depending on the type of activity,

with 68.1% of the lowest income group reporting that they never attended a live performance in the past year and only 46.1% of the highest income group reporting the same.⁴⁸ A greater difference between income groups appears when comparing frequent participation in cultural activities (Figure 23). For all activities, far fewer respondents in the lowest income group reported that they attended the listed cultural activities at least once in the past year than the highest income group. Using live performances as another example, only 21.0% of the lowest income group respondents reported that they attended at least one live performance in the past year, while 46.2% of the highest income group respondents reported doing so. Even for cultural activities that are often free or have reduced costs for low-income families, such as visiting a public art gallery, museum, or historic site, lower income families are less likely to attend than higher income families. This suggests that the barriers to cultural participation may not be solely linked to the affordability of the activity.



Source: General Social Survey: Cycle 30, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 22. Proportion of those who never attended the listed cultural activities in the past year by income level and restricted to BC GSS Cycle 30 respondents from Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomeration Areas

Comparing participation in outdoor activities and sports gives a better idea of the barriers preventing lower income families from participating in social activities. Participation in outdoor activities, such as hiking and canoeing, is lowest among the lowest income group (61.1% participating in the past year) and highest in the highest income group (84.1%).⁴⁸ Participation in sports follows the same trend, with 19.9% of the lowest income group participating in sports in the past year, while 32.2% of the highest income group reported doing so. As expected, the lowest income group was

twice as likely to report that the reason why they did not participate in sports was due to costs (8.0%) as compared to the highest income group (3.3%). However, this was not the predominant reason why the lowest income group did not participate in sports. The biggest barrier to participation in sports was not having the time (22.8%), being too old (18.1%), and having injury or health concerns (16.9%). Notably, 12.3% of individuals who did not participate in sports in the lowest income group reported that they had a disability preventing their participation. This factor was disproportionately represented in the lowest income group, with the next highest proportion of respondents reporting the same reason being only 5.8% of the next highest income group (\$25,000 to \$49,000 per year). These findings suggest that, although the cost of social participation impacts the lowest income group more than higher income groups, it may not be the primary barrier. Factors related to time and physical ability may have a greater influence.

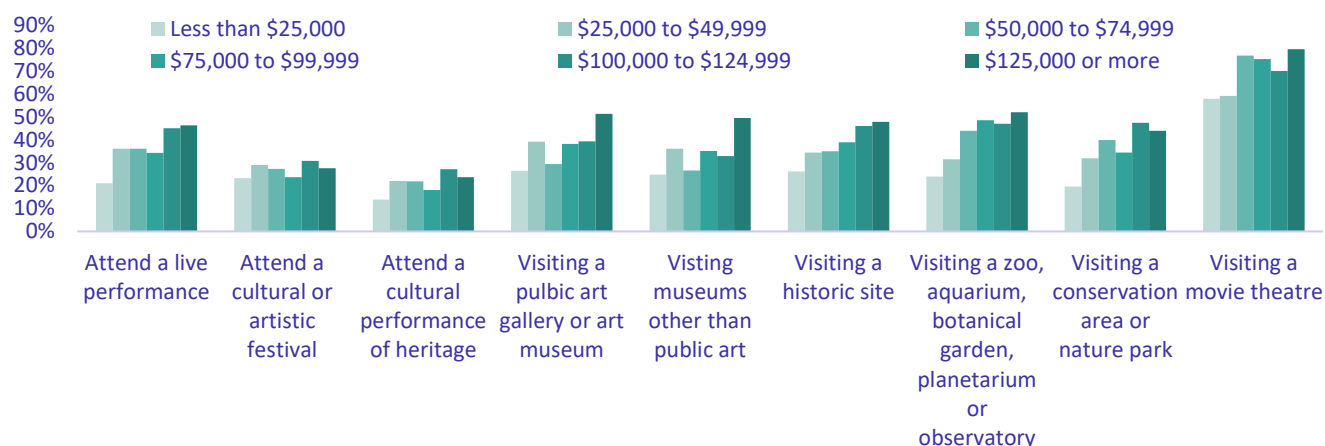


Figure 23. Proportion of those who frequently (at least once) attended the listed cultural activities in the past year by income level and restricted to BC GSS Cycle 30 respondents from Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomeration Areas

5.2: Social Inclusion Programming in Prince George

Many of the organizations that are already working to improve the status of social programming within Prince George also serve as community hubs. For example, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s Drop-In Centre not only works to improve food security within the community, it also serves as a gathering place for friends and family members, helping to build a sense of cohesion and community (B. Goold, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, personal communication, July 30, 2019). Additionally, the Society has opened a Social Concerns Office that supports individuals in accessing other social

services available to them throughout the community. In 2018, there were 2,572 visits to the Social Concerns Office.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is not the only organization providing gathering places and facilitating access to community support services. Organizations such as the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association: Prince George, Foundry Prince George, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Prince George Council of Seniors, and the Prince George Brain Injured Group Society, to name just a few, provide similar services for their clients.

Many other programs also exist to reduce barriers to social inclusion activities, such as KidSport Prince George. The KidSport program provides youth aged five to 18 years in low-income households the opportunity to participate in sports by funding up to \$150 to cover the costs of registration (P. Wilson, City Liaison, KidSport Prince George, personal communication, August 2, 2019). In 2018, this program provided subsidies for 169 children, with the average number of subsidies being around 200 per year over the last ten years.

Again, KidSport is one of many organizations and programs working to reduce barriers to social inclusion activities. Programs such as Jumpstart and the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council work to improve access to youth sports; the Leisure Access Program subsidizes swimming and skating costs for low-income families; and the YMCA of Northern BC provides financial support for low-income families to send their children to camp. Again, this is not an extensive list of the programming available in Prince George to support social inclusion activities. Further research would be needed to compile a comprehensive list of resources available to Prince George residents, including local, provincial, and national opportunities and stratified based on their eligibility criteria.

5.3: Summary Points

- Social inclusion is a complex, multifaceted concept that lacks objective measures.
 - All measures reported in this profile can be considered partial indicators of social inclusion.

-
- Those in the lowest household income group report lower levels of satisfaction with their standard of living, health, achievement in life, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling part of their community, and the quality of their local environment.
 - Low-income families tend to report high levels of satisfaction with the quality of time they spend as a family.
 - Low-income families are more likely to report that they do not participate in cultural activities, outdoor activities, and organized sports than higher income groups.
 - The lowest family income group is twice as likely to report that they do not participate in sports due to cost (8.0%) than the highest income group (3.3%).
 - Larger barriers to participation in sports among the lowest income group include not having time (22.8%), being too old (18.1%), and having injury or health concerns (16.9%).
 - There are multiple organizations in Prince George working to improve social inclusion among low-income residents.

Social cohesion requires economic and social equity, peace, security, inclusion and access. Diversity and differences are conducive to social cohesion because they contribute to a vibrant political and social life.

– Department of Justice Canada and Department of Canadian Heritage, n.d.

6: Reconciliation

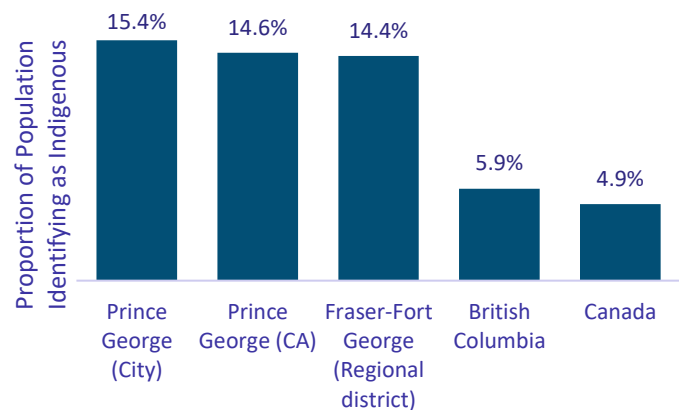
From the 2016 Census, there were 11,160 Prince George residents in private households who reported that they identify as Indigenous, representing 15.4% of the population (Table 22).⁴ By self-reported sex, the division of males vs. females reporting Indigenous identity mirrors the sex division in the overall Prince George population, with 49.9% of the Prince George population identifying as male (50.1% female) and 49.8% of residents identifying as Indigenous also identifying as male (50.2% female). However, the Indigenous population of Prince George is younger than the non-Indigenous population, with the average age of the Indigenous population being 29.7 years, while the average age of the non-Indigenous population is 40.3 years.⁵ Furthermore, 29.1% of the Indigenous population is aged 14 and under, compared to only 15.7% of the non-Indigenous population.

Table 22. Number of individuals in private households by Indigenous identity in the Prince George census subdivision in 2016, and proportion of total population in each age group compared to provincial population

	Prince George		British Columbia
	Number	Proportion of Population	Proportion of Population
Indigenous Identity	11,160	15.4%	5.9%
<i>First Nations</i>	6,465	8.9%	3.8%
<i>Métis</i>	4,365	6.0%	2.0%
<i>Inuk</i>	25	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Multiple responses</i>	260	0.4%	0.1%
<i>Other Indigenous identity</i>	45	0.1%	0.0%

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 24 presents the proportion of the population identifying as Indigenous by geographic level.⁵ The proportion of residents reporting Indigenous identity in the Prince George census subdivision (City) greater than all higher levels of geography, at nearly triple the



Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Figure 24. Indigenous identity by geography

proportion of BC residents reporting Indigenous identity (5.9%) and over triple the national proportion (4.9%).

Some census dissemination areas within Prince George also contain greater proportions of residents reporting being Indigenous than others. As depicted in Figure 25, the area encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway contains dissemination areas with a large proportion of residents reporting Indigenous identity, with 48.1% of residents in one dissemination area reporting Indigenous identity. Another area of strong Indigenous identity is in the downtown core, with 42.3% of residents reporting Indigenous identity.

It is important to consider the areas with a large proportion of residents reporting Indigenous identity as they do somewhat overlap with dissemination areas reporting low-income, high income spending on housing costs, housing needing major repairs, lone parenting status, and other disadvantaged affordability and opportunity factors discussed throughout this profile. The following sections further report the affordability and social inclusion factors that may be disproportionately impacting Indigenous people in Prince George.

6.1: Affordability

Statistical analysis of the 2016 Census and 2015-2016 CCHS are not publicly available at the Prince George level. However, it is possible to compare many of the affordability

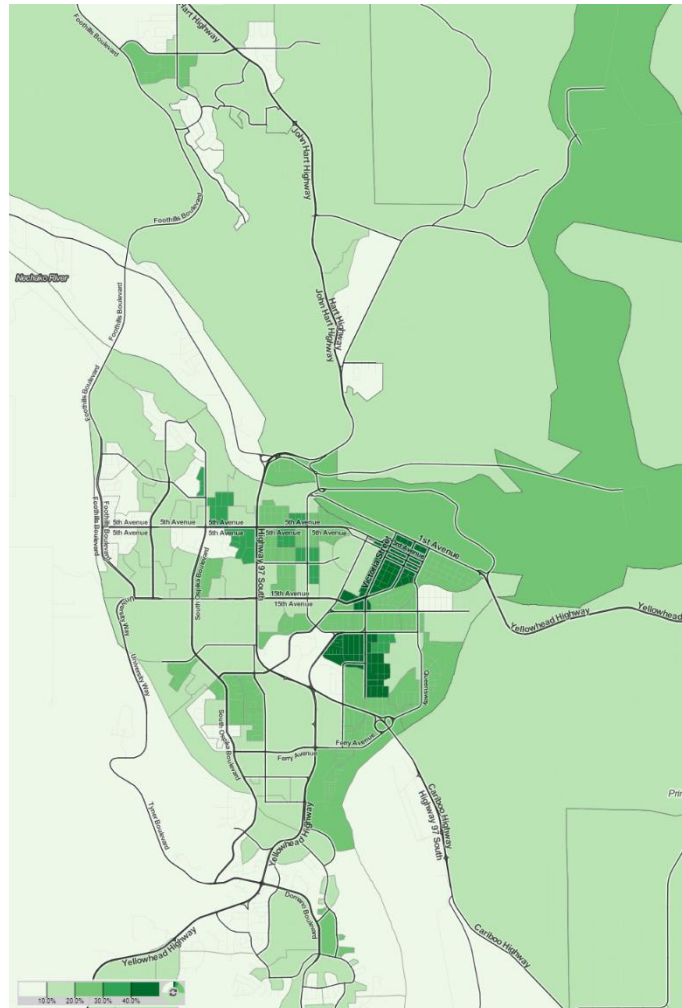


Figure 25. Proportion of residents reporting Indigenous identity by Prince George census dissemination areas. Source: CensusMapper.ca

indicators discussed earlier in this profile between self-identifying Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in BC.

Housing

Table 23 presents some housing indicators compared between self-identified Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in BC using 2016 Census data. Across all indicators, Indigenous people are more likely to report poor housing conditions than non-Indigenous people.⁴⁹

Table 23. Housing indicators compared between those self-reporting Indigenous and non-Indigenous identity in BC as measured by the 2016 Census

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
<i>Core housing need</i>	20.7%	12.0%
<i>Unsuitable housing</i>	12.6%	8.1%
<i>Housing in need of repairs - minor</i>	33.6%	23.7%
<i>Housing in need of repairs - major</i>	17.5%	5.7%
<i>Subsidized housing</i>	17.7%	9.6%
<i>Rental housing</i>	45.2%	26.7%

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

Indigenous people are more likely to be in core housing need, in housing conditions that are unsuitable for their family, and in housing needing minor or major repairs. Indigenous people are also more likely to report living in subsidized or rental housing than non-Indigenous people.

Although data by Indigenous identity is not available at the Prince George level using 2016 Census data, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation does report core housing need in Prince George by Indigenous Identity. In 2011, 25.9% of Indigenous households reported being in core housing need, compared to only 10.2% of non-Indigenous households.¹¹ When considering rentals alone, 46.1% of Indigenous households were in core housing need, compared to 26.6% of non-Indigenous households. Coupling this finding with a comparison of the spatial data presented in Figures 11, 12, and 24, it is likely that the effects seen across housing indicators in BC between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people would be observed in Prince George as well.

Indigenous people are also overrepresented in the Prince George homelessness data. From the homelessness count that took place on April 18, 2018, 79% of homeless individuals self-identified as Indigenous.¹⁴ This finding is inconsistent with the overall

data from communities included in the 2018 count, as only 38% of homeless individuals self-identified as Indigenous overall.¹⁵

Childcare

As previously mentioned, the SELCCA is the most recent national study investigating childcare use and needs. However, there are no public use datasets available for analysis at the time of this profile, and current reporting does not include analysis by Indigenous identity. Furthermore, the available public use dataset of the 2011 (Cycle 25) GSS does not permit analysis by Indigenous identity, and the public use dataset of the 2016 Census does not permit analysis at the Prince George level. This lack of data availability makes it difficult to understand the state of childcare use by and needs of Indigenous families in Prince George.

In a 2014 report, the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society noted a general consensus in the research literature that well-resourced early childhood care and development programs are beneficial to combat the effects of poverty and racism in early childhood, improving overall well-being and school preparedness.⁵⁰ According to the Ministry of Children and Family Development’s childcare dataset, of the 140 licensed childcare providers in Prince George, only two provide Indigenous-specific programming.²⁶

Transportation

As previously noted, there is a lack of research investigating the relationship between transportation and low-income or poverty in general, let alone the specific effects in Indigenous populations.

Table 24 reports the most common mode of

transportation to work in BC and compared by self-reported Indigenous identity. Those

Table 24. Mode of commuting for work in BC by self-reported Indigenous identity as a proportion of total commuters (%)

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
<i>Car* – as driver</i>	64.5	69.0
<i>Car* – as passenger</i>	11.1	6.0
<i>Public transit</i>	9.0	13.9
<i>Walk</i>	11.1	6.7
<i>Bicycle</i>	1.7	2.5
<i>Other</i>	2.7	1.9

**Car, truck, or van*

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2017

who self-identify as Indigenous were more likely to report that they drive to work as a passenger or walk, and were less likely to report that they drive to work as the driver, bike, or take public transit.⁴⁹ The greater proportion of those walking to work may be due to a greater number of Indigenous individuals reporting that they travel less than 15 minutes to work (39.2%) than non-Indigenous individuals (28.5%). However, when the analysis was restricted to commutes over 15 minutes in duration, the same differences were observed. This finding suggests that the differences between self-identified Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in terms of mode of transportation to work are not explained by commute time alone.

Food Security

Limiting the previously reported 2015-2016 CCHS food security data to only the Northern Interior HSDA, comparisons in food security status can be made between

Table 25. Food security as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module for the 2015-2016 CCHS survey year within the Northern Interior HSDA by self-reported Indigenous identity as a proportion of total households (%)

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
<i>Food secure</i>	76.5	90.3
<i>Moderately food insecure</i>	11.9	5.8
<i>Severely food insecure</i>	11.6	4.0

Source: 2015-2016 Canada Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2017

self-identified Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the northern interior. As noted in Table 25, moderate and severe food insecurity are more prevalent in the Indigenous population (11.9% and 11.6%, respectively) as compared to the non-Indigenous population (5.8% and 4.0%, respectively).³⁵

Table 26 reports some of the effects of food insecurity in the Northern Interior HSDA by self-reported Indigenous identity. Across all measures, Indigenous individuals are between two and three times as likely to at least sometimes experience the effects of food insecurity in the past year than non-Indigenous individuals.³⁵

It is well-documented that Indigenous people in Canada are at a greater risk of food insecurity than the non-Indigenous population.⁵¹ Part of this increased risk can be attributed to other risk-factors associated with food insecurity, including extreme poverty and lone-parenting. However, even when these other factors are accounted

for, Indigenous people still face a greater risk of severe food insecurity. Indeed, the issue of food insecurity in Indigenous populations is multifaceted and is the current topic of extensive research.

Table 26. Proportion (%) of households within the Northern Interior HSDA reporting that they at least sometimes experienced the listed effects of food insecurity in the past year by self-reported Indigenous identity, as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module for the 2015-2016 CCHS survey year

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
<i>Worried food would run out</i>	21.7	9.9
<i>Food did not last and no money to buy more</i>	17.1	8.3
<i>Could not afford to eat balanced meals</i>	17.0	8.1
<i>Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed children</i>	19.6	7.7
<i>Could not feed children a balanced meal</i>	16.9	6.1
<i>Children were not eating enough</i>	27.4	8.3

Source: 2015-2016 Canada Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2017

6.2: Social Inclusion

As previously noted, there are currently no standard measures of social inclusion, and any rudimentary measure of social inclusion is bound to miss important aspects of social inclusion due to its multifaceted nature. Regardless, to better understand areas where social inclusion may differ between self-reported Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, a similar descriptive analysis of the 2016 (Cycle 30) GSS as used in Section 5.1 was conducted comparing Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. In this instance, income was not included in the analysis.

Figure 26 presents the same measures of domain satisfaction used in Section 5.1 compared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous BC residents living in census metropolitan and agglomeration areas. There was an overall high level of satisfaction with each area of domain satisfaction except feeling part of the community, where only 77.2% of Indigenous individuals reported being at least somewhat satisfied; and time available to do what the family likes to do, with only 58.9% who reported being at least satisfied.⁴⁸ Additionally, Indigenous individuals reported slightly lower satisfaction with their standard of living, personal relationships, and the quality of their local environment; though it should be noted that satisfaction was still strong in these areas.

Again, following the methods set in Section 5.1, participation in a list of cultural activities was compared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents. Figure 27 reports those who participated at least once in each activity in the past year. Indigenous individuals were less likely to report frequenting live performances, artistic festivals, zoos, non-art museums, and movie theatres; but were more likely to report frequenting cultural performances of heritage, historic sites, and conservation areas than non-Indigenous individuals.⁴⁸ Indigenous individuals were also more likely to report participating in outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, and canoeing, in the past year (85.5%) as compared to non-Indigenous individuals (77.8%), but were less likely to regularly participate in organized sports (12.8% Indigenous vs 32.9% non-Indigenous).

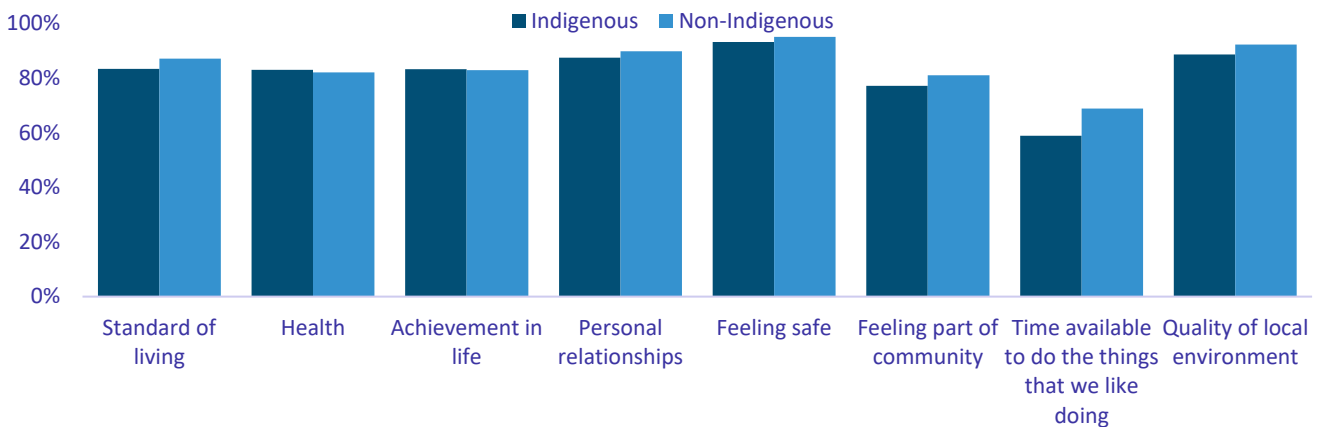


Figure 26. Proportion of those who are at least somewhat satisfied with the listed areas of domain satisfaction by self-reported Indigenous identity and restricted to BC GSS Cycle 30 respondents from census metropolitan areas and census agglomeration areas

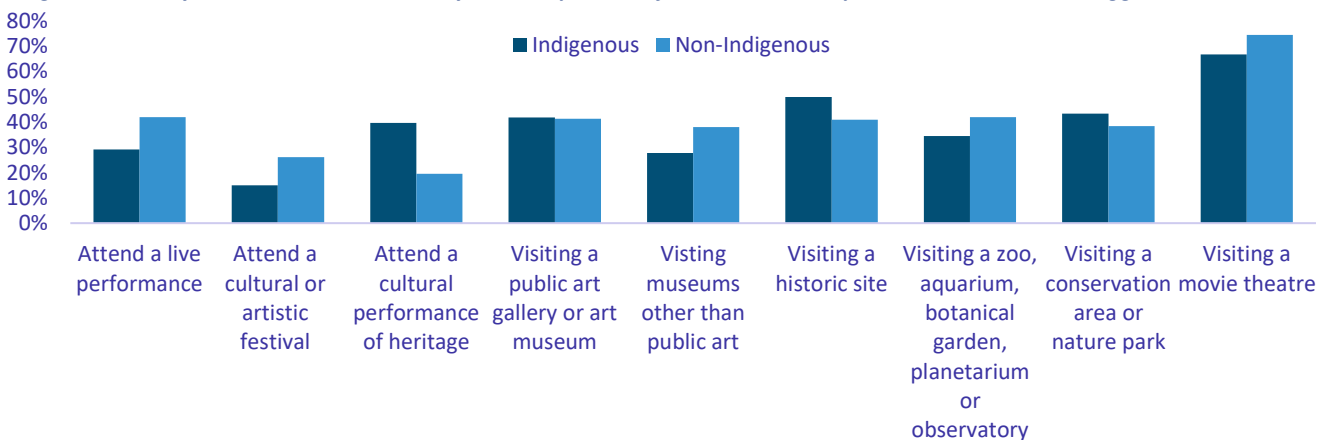


Figure 27. Proportion of those who frequently (more than once) attended the listed cultural activities in the past year by self-reported Indigenous identity and restricted to BC GSS Cycle 30 respondents from census metropolitan areas and census agglomeration areas

It is very important to note that the differences in social participation noted above are likely poor measures of social inclusion in Indigenous populations. Instead, they may be better measures of cultural differences in preference of activities. When attempting to gauge the effect of programs aimed at increasing the social inclusion of Indigenous people, this potential effect should be considered. This may mean that different measures of social inclusion may be necessary to better understand social inclusion in different cultural aspects of Prince George society.

It is well documented that suppression of language and culture is associated with adverse health effects, including substance use, depression, suicide, and overall wellbeing.⁵² The free expression and maintenance of language and culture is a critical aspect of social inclusion. As noted above when comparing activities included in the GSS, Indigenous respondents tended to favour activities related to culture and place. Indeed, cultural participation is an important part of many Indigenous peoples lives, with 74.2% of First Nations youth aged 12 to 17 and 67.1% of adults reporting that they at least sometimes participate in cultural activities. Furthermore, the perceived importance of these activities has increased since the early 2000s.

To further support cultural preservation and language revitalization, it has been strongly recommended that investments be made in early childhood development programs to support the learning of traditional language and culture alongside community elders.⁵² Place-based learning and activities may also benefit adults by promoting a sense of connectedness with the land, self-reliance, and wellbeing. Further research and consultation with local Indigenous elders and stakeholder groups is necessary to better understand the state of social inclusion among Indigenous people in Prince George, and to strengthen current initiatives and develop new initiatives to support cultural preservation and language revitalization in the community.

6.3: Summary Points

- 15.4% of the Prince George population self-identifies as Indigenous, more than the provincial proportion of 5.9%.
- The Indigenous population in Prince George is younger (average 29.7 years) than the non-Indigenous population (40.3 years).

-
- The area encapsulated by Highway 16, Highway 97, 20th Avenue, and Queensway; and the downtown core contain large proportion of residents reporting Indigenous identity (Figure 25), indicating that Indigenous people in Prince George may be disproportionately impacted by the factors described in this profile.

Housing

- Indigenous people in BC are more likely to report living in rental housing, in subsidized housing, poor housing conditions, in housing not suitable for their family, and in core housing need than non-Indigenous people (Table 23).
 - 25.9% of Indigenous households (46.1% of renters) are in core housing need in Prince George, more than non-Indigenous households (10.2%; 26.6% of renters).
- 79% of homeless individuals in Prince George self-identified as Indigenous in the 2018 count, more than the proportion in the overall count (38%).

Childcare

- Well-resourced early childhood care and development programs are beneficial to combat the effects of poverty and racism in early childhood, improving overall well-being and school preparedness.
- Of the 140 licensed childcare providers in Prince George, two provide Indigenous-specific programming.

Transportation

- Indigenous people in BC are more likely to drive to work as a passenger or walk than non-Indigenous people, and were less likely to be the driver, bike, or take public transit.
 - These differences are not easily explained based on commute time alone.

Food Security

- Moderate and severe food insecurity are more prevalent among the Indigenous population (11.9% and 11.6%, respectively) in the Northern Interior Health Services Delivery Area than the non-Indigenous population (5.8% and 4.0%, respectively).

-
- Likewise, the indicators of food insecurity are more pronounced in the Indigenous population as well (Table 26).

Social Inclusion

- Indigenous people in large BC cities report lower satisfaction with their standard of living, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling part of the community, the quality of their local environment, and the time available to do the things the family likes to do than non-Indigenous people, though domain satisfaction is high overall (Figure 26).
- Participation in cultural activities, outdoor activities, and organized sports might be poor measures of social participation in Indigenous populations and may be better measures of cultural preference toward certain activities.
- Language revitalization and preservation of culture may be important contributors to social inclusivity of the Indigenous population in Prince George.
 - Further research and consultation with local Indigenous elders and stakeholders is necessary to better understand social inclusion among Indigenous people in Prince George.

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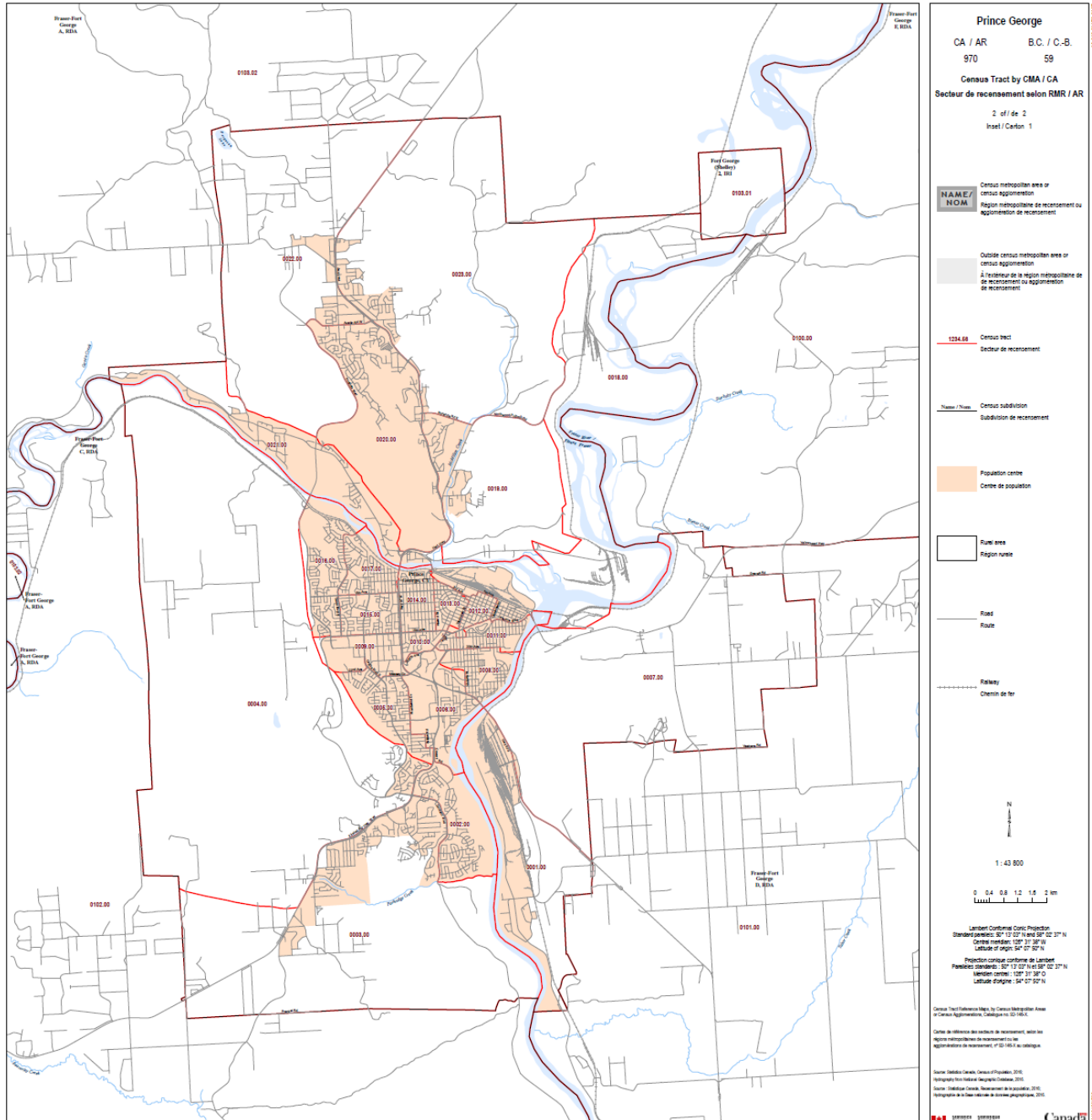
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8: Appendix

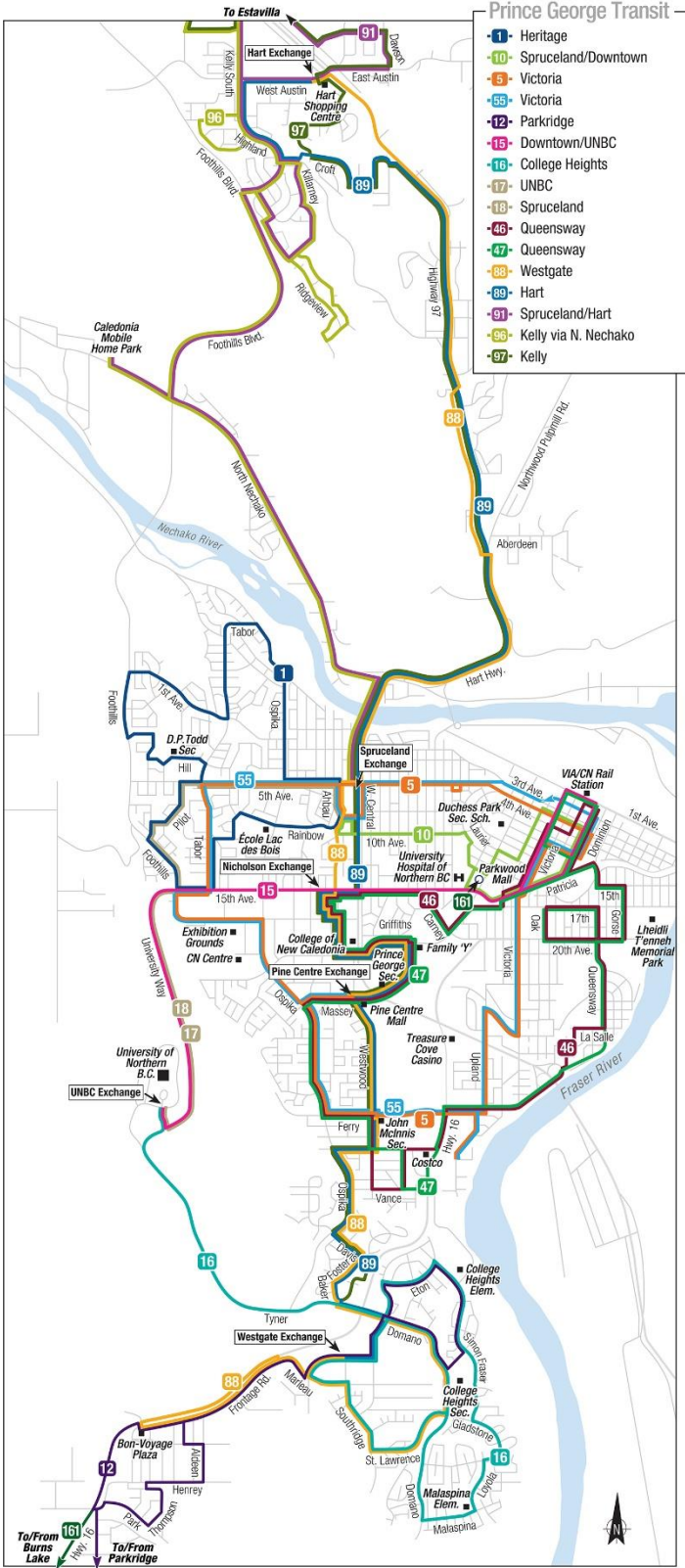
8.1: Census tracts within the Prince George census subdivision



Note: This map is focused at the Prince George City census subdivision level (outlined in dark red). Outlying census subdivisions within the Prince George census agglomeration are excluded.

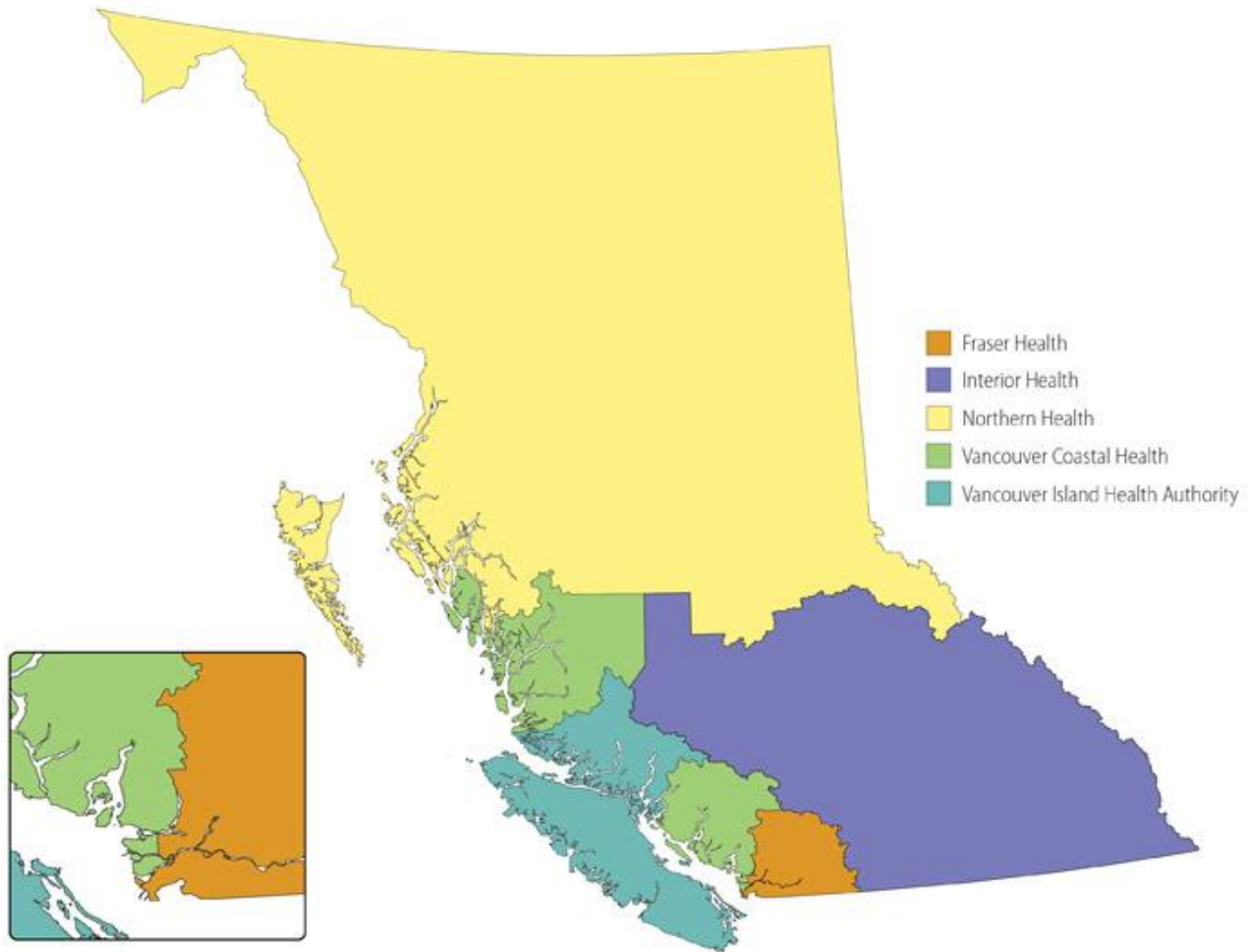
Source: Statistics Canada, 2017; <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/geo/map-carte/ref/ct/alternative-eng.cfm?CMACA=970>

8.2: Map of the Prince George transit system



Source: BC Transit, n.d.; <https://www.bctransit.com/prince-george/schedules-and-maps>

8.3: Map of the regional health authorities of BC



Source: Government of British Columbia, n.d.; <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>

8.4: Map of the health service delivery areas within Northern Health

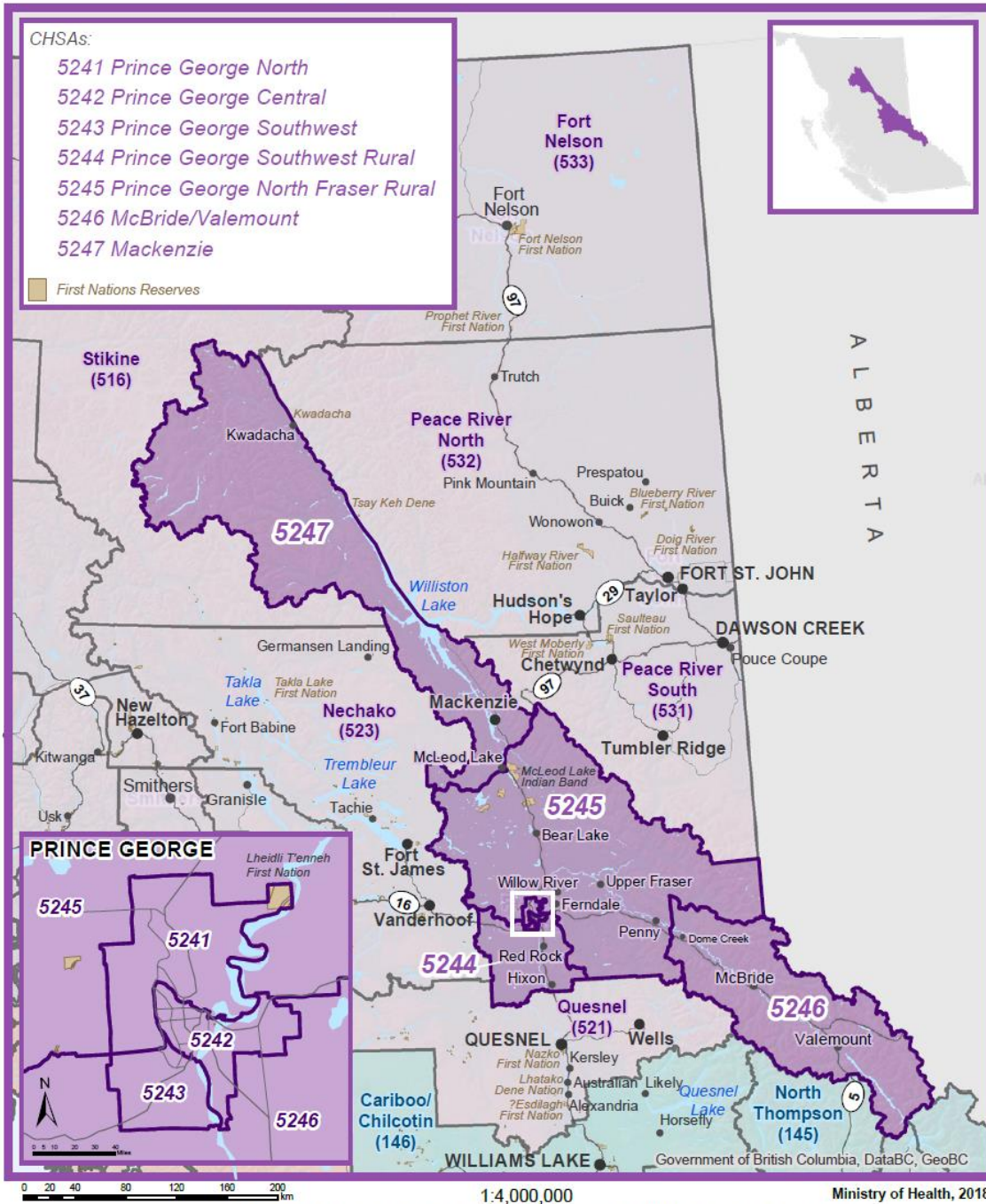
HA: 5 Northern Health Authority



Source: Government of British Columbia, n.d.;
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/land-use/administrative-boundaries/health-boundaries>

8.5: Map of the Prince George local health area

HA: 5 Northern
 HSDA: 52 Northern Interior
 LHA: 524 Prince George



Source: Government of British Columbia, n.d.;

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/land-use/administrative-boundaries/health-boundaries>