


City of Surrey

Age Friendly Strategy



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We recognize and are grateful that we are situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the ǵícəý (Katzie), ǵʷɑ:ńłəń (Kwantlen) and səmyámə (Semiahmoo) land-based Nations who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.

Message from Mayor



I am proud to introduce the updated Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors, reaffirming the City of Surrey's commitment to create an age friendly community where seniors enjoy lifelong activity and engagement.

In Surrey, over 28% of the population is aged 55 and older (2021 Census). This strategy represents a crucial step towards meeting the evolving needs of our aging population and will serve as our guiding framework in the years to come.

Since the strategy was first created in 2014, Surrey has experienced significant changes, dealing with shifting demographics and more complex challenges related to healthcare, housing, climate change, and more.

Hearing from residents and community stakeholders about what matters to them has been vital in understanding the current needs of our senior community. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who took part in this process. Your feedback played a significant role in updating this strategy.

Looking ahead, our next step is to develop an action plan to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy. Together, we will work towards fostering an age friendly city that not only meets the needs of our senior community but enhances the well-being of all residents.

Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey

Introduction

With the population of Surrey growing exponentially, we are also experiencing a significant population increase of older adults who are living longer and healthier lives. This change in population is happening not only in Surrey but also globally. The aging of populations and urbanization are two significant factors shaping the 21st century. As the senior population continues to grow, it is more important than ever to support the health and well-being of older adults.

World Health Organization's (WHO) [Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide](#) has spurred worldwide responses to support healthy and active aging. Aligning with this approach, Surrey initiated the development of its Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors (2014) through extensive community consultation. The strategy outlines the important plans and goals for creating a community that is friendly for people of all ages.

Over the past decade, Surrey has evolved into an age friendly city, implementing recommendations from the initial plan. Programs, events, services and facilities designed for residents aged 55 and above have effectively reduced barriers and enhanced well-being.

Integration with key strategies

This strategy builds on the City's many overarching plans and strategies to provide an integrated approach to address the comprehensive needs of seniors across the city. These include: the Sustainability Charter, Public Safety Strategy, Official Community Plan, Social Action Plan, Transportation Plan, Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan, Accessibility Action Plan, Parks, Recreation and Culture Ten-Year Strategic Plan, New Walking Plan, and Greenways Master Plan. All these plans collectively contribute to the well-being of seniors. A common theme across these plans is the idea that a community that meets the needs of seniors is a community that meets the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.

Responding to change

The City of Surrey has experienced significant changes since the initial development of the Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors in 2014. While this strategy update focuses on actions that fall under the City's responsibility, the City's operating environment has become more complex due to a number of factors and emerging issues such as COVID-19, health care crisis, climate change, housing affordability, increasing food insecurity, changing demographics, population growth, deeper understanding of the need for actions in support of Truth and Reconciliation and our relationships with the urban and land based Indigenous communities in Surrey. All of this has created a different and constantly changing community landscape.

Given this context, the updated strategy seeks to define new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations - both internally across City departments as well as externally with various community organizations and groups to meet the needs of our senior community.

New factors that have informed the updated strategy:

- > Impact of COVID-19
- > Climate change
- > Shifting demographics
- > Engagement with Indigenous communities' leaders in strategy development
- > Housing affordability and food insecurity
- > City plans and strategies that intersect with positive outcomes for seniors

Creating age-friendly environments is one way to address the determinants of health

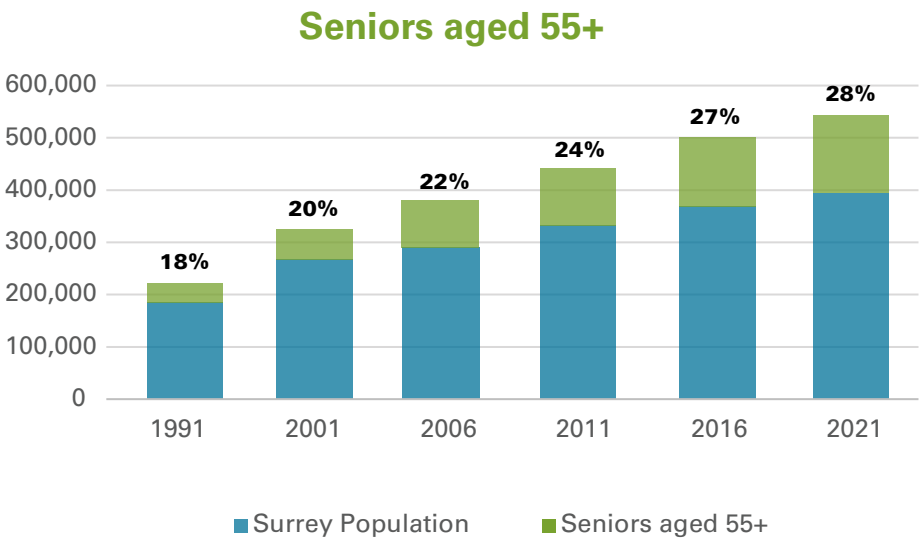
Dr. Theresa Tam
Chief Public Health Officer
Public Health Agency of Canada

Community Profile of Seniors in Surrey

Like many other cities, Surrey is experiencing an increase in both the number and percentage of seniors, aged 55 and older. The growing aging population in Surrey will impact various aspects of the community, such as facilities, infrastructure, programs, and services. Creating opportunities that foster active and healthy aging is now more essential than ever.

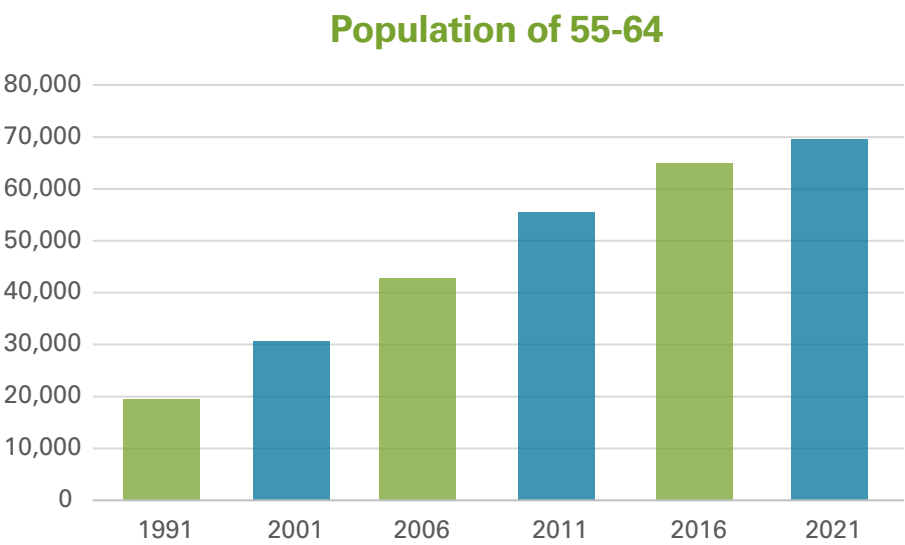
In 2021, 156,765 seniors (people aged 55 and older) were living in Surrey which represents 28% of the total population of 568,320.

TABLE 1: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SENIORS AGED 55 AND OVER IN SURREY FROM 1991 TO 2021



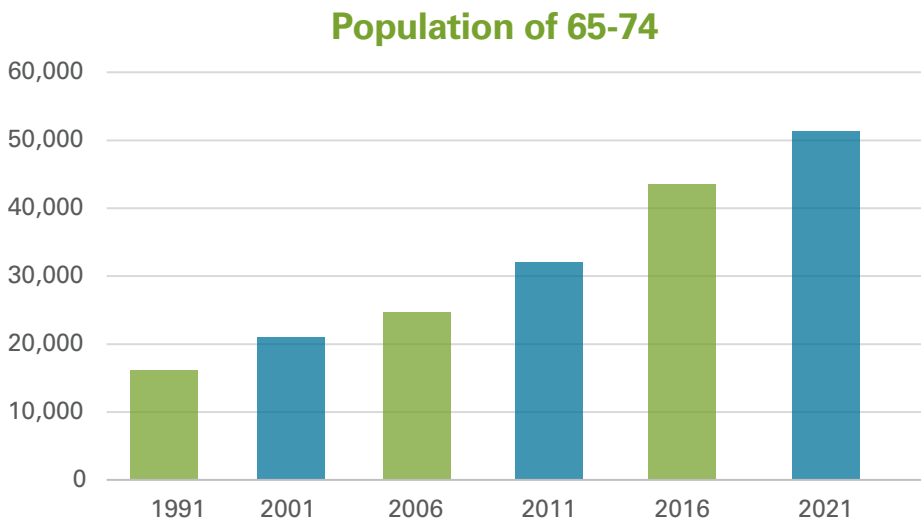
Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2021

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF SENIORS AGED 55 TO 64
IN SURREY FROM 1991 TO 2021**



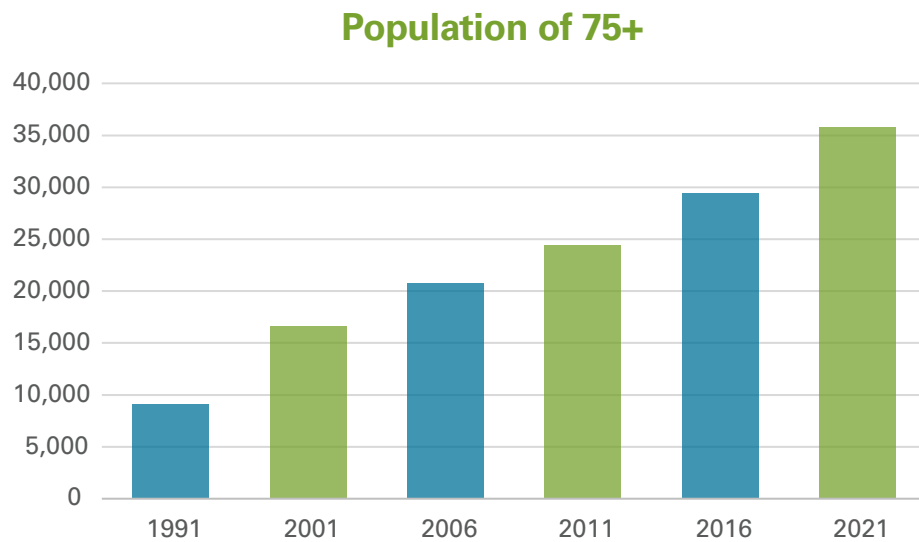
Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2021

**TABLE 3: NUMBER OF SENIORS AGED 65 TO 74
IN SURREY FROM 1991 TO 2021**



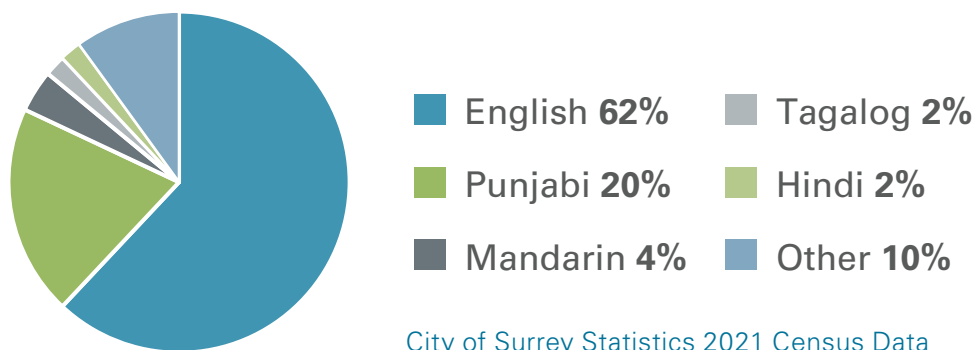
Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2021

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF SENIORS AGED 75 AND OVER IN SURREY FROM 1991 TO 2021



Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2021

TABLE 5: MOST COMMON LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME IN SURREY



[City of Surrey Statistics 2021 Census Data](#)

Surrey's demographics are changing and social-cultural services need to anticipate and adapt to these changes. Surrey's population is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, with a growing proportion of seniors and a continuous growth in the numbers of children, youth and young families.

[City of Surrey Official Community Plan](#)



Surrey Local Immigration
Partnership Fact Sheet
(April 12, 2023)

Ten percent (10%) of recent
immigrants who arrived in
2021 are 55 or older.

[Surrey LIP factsheet](#)

Seniors participating in Carpet
Bowling, Newton Seniors Centre



What is an age friendly community?

In an age friendly community, the policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to help seniors age actively by living safely, enjoying good health and staying involved.

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Age-friendly Communities](#)





Seniors participating in Pickleball,
Guildford Recreation Centre

Age Friendly Cities

Surrey's Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors is based on the following key features which have been adapted from the World Health Organization's Global Age Friendly Cities.

1. Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible.
2. Public transportation is accessible and affordable.
3. Housing is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed and secure.
4. Opportunities exist for social participation in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.
5. Older people are treated with respect and are included in civic life.
6. Opportunities exist for employment and volunteerism.
7. Age friendly communication and information is available.
8. Community support and health services are tailored to older persons' needs.

Age Friendly Strategy Framework

The following framework for the Age Friendly Strategy was initially developed with significant community input. It contains the vision and four anticipated outcomes related to Safety, Health and Wellness, Transportation and Mobility, Home and Buildings and Outdoor Spaces.

VISION

Surrey is an age friendly city where people enjoy lifelong activity and engagement

OUTCOMES

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Seniors are supported to be active and engaged in their community and engagement practices are in place to prevent isolation

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

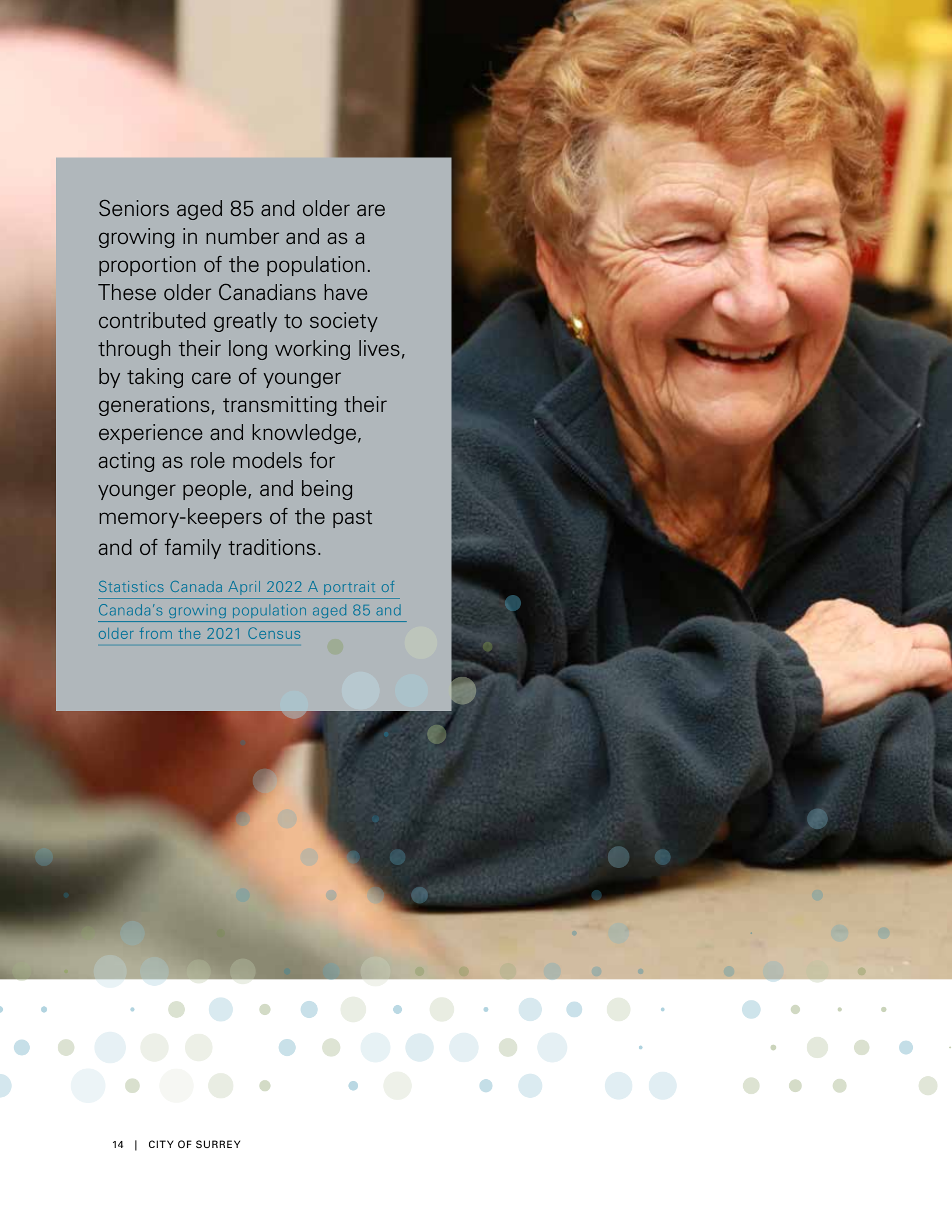
Seniors have a range of safe, convenient, and affordable transportation choices

HOME

Seniors have access to affordable and appropriate housing, and support necessary to remain as independent as possible

BUILDINGS AND OUTDOOR SPACES

Public places, outdoor spaces and buildings are designed to be welcoming, safe and accessible



Seniors aged 85 and older are growing in number and as a proportion of the population. These older Canadians have contributed greatly to society through their long working lives, by taking care of younger generations, transmitting their experience and knowledge, acting as role models for younger people, and being memory-keepers of the past and of family traditions.

[Statistics Canada April 2022 A portrait of Canada's growing population aged 85 and older from the 2021 Census](#)



Guiding Principles

The Age Friendly Strategy is based upon these guiding principles:

**INCLUSION
FOR ALL**

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

RESPECT

Development of the Age Friendly Strategy

The initial Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors was adopted in May 2014. This inclusive process involved:

- > Conducting focus groups with key stakeholders.
- > Delivering presentations to gather insights.
- > Administering surveys both online and in-person at community locations.
- > Engaging City staff in the consultation to ensure diverse perspectives from different disciplines and sectors.

Updated Strategy (2023)

In 2023, the City of Surrey took steps to update its Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors, ensuring it stays comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive to the evolving trends and challenges faced by our aging population.

The process engaged the Surrey Age Friendly for Seniors Network that consists of a well-informed sector, seniors in the community and expansive representation from various departments in the city. Valuable, insightful input from lived experiences and diverse perspectives were collected and shaped the update of the strategy.

Stakeholders, residents, and caregivers were encouraged to share their thoughts through participation in focus groups and an online survey. Their input covered a range of topics such as healthcare, housing, transportation, social connections, and recreational opportunities.

This consultation process successfully identified overall strategic goals and key priority areas, contributing significantly to shaping and updating of the strategy and will be used to develop the action plan.

Overall Strategic Goals

- > Collaborate with community partners to address issues outside of City mandate.
- > Support innovation within City departments, while building on existing plans and strategies.
- > Apply an age friendly seniors' perspective to existing and future City plans and strategies.
- > Define Age Friendly for Seniors Project Manager role as a direct link to seniors serving as a key contact to provide information and assistance in navigating City programs and community resources.
- > Explore alternative models and successful practices, and customize for local implementation.
- > Engage with Indigenous leaders for ongoing input and feedback.

At over 12,000 people, the Indigenous population in Surrey is the second largest Indigenous population in BC, behind Vancouver.

City of Surrey City Profile
2021 Census Data

Key Priority Focus Areas

The collected data during consultation highlighted key areas that have been identified as top priorities to be addressed in the action plan.

The plan will aim to reduce barriers and gaps in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility for Seniors.

- > **Health and wellness** emerged as the top priority in the survey and consultations. Specifically, access to primary care and City health and wellness programs.
- > **Navigation of City and community services** was identified as a significant gap. The City needs to increase the use of diverse communication channels, formal and informal (including digital literacy) to ensure that seniors are aware of City and community programs.
- > The City needs to employ multiple channels to **raise awareness** about:
 - > The Housing Needs Report and ensure that a seniors' voice continues to be included in future policy and strategic developments.
 - > Surrey's Emergency Program: The Emergency Notification app "Alertable" which will notify people of an imminent threat to health and safety with some instructions. In addition, City of Surrey heat preparedness resources and supports. [Heat Season Preparedness | City of Surrey](#)
 - > The Surrey Transportation Plan and ensure that a seniors' voice continues to be included in future policy and strategic developments.
 - > Build on and expand coordination of events that support social connections in parks and public spaces.
 - > Establish an ongoing and consistent relationship with Indigenous communities' leadership.



Outcomes

Safety, Health and Wellness

Seniors are supported to be active and engaged in their community and engagement practices are in place to prevent isolation.

Communications

- > Make it easy for seniors to learn about and access the City and community-based programs and services.
- > Improve communications to inform seniors about City programs, services and resources.
- > Provide channels for seniors to learn about and be engaged in the development of City plans and strategies.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- > Reduce language and equity barriers.
- > Facilitate information flow about primary health care and access to City wellness programs.

Collaboration with Indigenous Communities

Continue to collaborate with the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee to support implementation of recommendations from the [All Our Relations A Social Innovation Strategy \(2017\) Phase 2 of the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Project](#)

The vision of the Age Friendly Strategy is that Surrey is an age friendly city where people enjoy life long activity and engagement is woven into the Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan, that reflects our commitment to serve our community and to improve the quality of life for everyone through exceptional delivery of parks, recreation and culture amenities, programs, and services.

[Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan 2018–2027](#)

Transportation and Mobility

Seniors have a range of safe, convenient and affordable transportation options.

Promote walking, cycling and rolling to neighbourhood destinations

Staying active is one of the most important ways to maintain physical and mental health for seniors. Providing safe, connected and accessible networks of walking and cycling routes is a fundamental role of the City. The City has in place a number of comprehensive policies within the Walking Plan, Transit Action Plan, Cycling Plan and Greenways Plan. There are a range of specifications to improve opportunities and promote walking, including creating a pedestrian environment that is safe, accessible and interesting.

- > Enhance awareness among seniors regarding the [Surrey Transportation Plan](#).
- > Create meaningful participatory opportunities for seniors to provide input in City's initiatives/plans aimed at achieving the goals outlined in the Surrey Transportation Plan.
- > Advocate for seniors by sharing their viewpoints when the City works towards achieving goals in its transportation plan.

Education

- > Increase seniors' awareness of road safety and active transportation choices, such as walking, biking and taking transit.



Seniors participating in WALKit Activity Program, Fraser Heights Recreation Centre

Fifteen percent of non-driving seniors aged 65-74 report that walking or cycling is their most common form of transportation, while this drops to less than 5% of non-driving seniors aged 85 and older.

Seniors Transportation (2018).
Office of the Seniors Advocate.

[Seniors Transportation Report](#)



Seniors participating in WALKit Activity Program, Sunnyside Acres Park in South Surrey

The City of Surrey Transportation Plan recognizes that seniors need access to a full range of transportation options enabling them to go where they want, when they want, so they can continue to live full and active lives.

Home

Seniors have access to affordable and appropriate housing, and supports necessary to remain as independent as possible.

Information and Inclusion

- > Promote and educate seniors about the Surrey Housing Needs Report (updated in March 2022).
- > Facilitate all possible opportunities for seniors to be represented at any learning sessions or discussions related to housing needs.

“The City has a role to play in ensuring there’s an adequate supply of housing to meet demographic needs, and to make that happen, to work in partnership with the development and homebuilding industry, senior levels of government and community-based housing societies”

[Housing & Homelessness | City of Surrey](#)

Due to limited, fixed incomes, changing physical abilities and mobility issues, seniors 65+ face the greatest housing challenges.

- > More options are needed to enable seniors to age in their own homes by improving accessibility and in-home care.
- > Seniors identified the need for more housing types that enable downsizing during retirement.
- > Seniors on fixed incomes are at risk of significant housing vulnerability if they are forced to move out of rental that they have been living in long-term due to the high cost of vacant units and/or newer rental.
- > There are increasing numbers of seniors who are homeless. 22% of survey respondents to the Homeless Count were 55 and over.

[Surrey Housing Needs Report](#)

Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

Public places, outdoor spaces and buildings are designed to be welcoming, safe and accessible.

Advocacy and Inclusion

- > Continue to work with community-based service organizations to identify opportunities for creative use of public space.
- > Reduce barriers and improve seniors access to public spaces.
- > Collaboration with Indigenous communities.
- > Work with the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee (SUILC) to support their vision for public spaces where cultural gathering places are created and meet the needs of healing, integration and connection.
- > Ensure buildings and outdoor spaces are accessible for seniors of all abilities.
- > Provide parks and outdoor spaces that support healthy and active living.
- > Provide public places that support social connections and gatherings.
- > Design public places based on the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

[City of Surrey Parks /planning](#)



Seniors participating in 'Try It'
Sports Clayton Community Centre

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is a statement of objectives and policies that guide the growth of the City. Taking a comprehensive and long-term perspective, the Plan provides guidance for: the physical structure of the City, land use management, industrial, commercial and residential growth, transportation systems, community development, provision of City services and amenities, agricultural land use, environmental protection, and enhanced social well-being.

[Official Community Plan | City of Surrey](#)

Examples of Age Friendly Programs and Services for Seniors

The following are some of the age friendly services and programs that are happening in Surrey.



Age Friendly for Seniors Network

The purpose of the Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors Network is to

- > Connect individuals, service agencies, and organizations working with seniors.
- > Carry out initiatives supporting the goals of the strategy.
- > Share information about the various - programs and services for seniors, caregivers, and families in the City of Surrey.

The Network is a collective of diverse Community-based sector (includes, Settlement Services), academia, Fraser Health, Division of Family Practice, faith based groups, City of Surrey (e.g. Fire Services, Surrey Libraries, By-Laws, Transportation, Social Planning, Community Services), Police, TransLink, Surrey Accessibility Leadership Committee (SALT), and Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre (FRAFCA).

Forums and Events

Throughout the year, forums on various topics are offered, made possible through the Age-Friendly for Seniors Network collective. These forums cover subjects such as Technology, Transportation, Housing, Elder Abuse prevention, Frauds and Scams, Safety, health, and wellness, and are organized through multiple partnerships.

In an age-friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively by:

- > recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among older people;
- > anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences;
- > respecting their decisions and lifestyle choices;
- > protecting those who are most vulnerable; and
- > promoting their inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.

World Health Organization (2007).
Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide. (p.5)

Canadian seniors report strong levels of social support, social networks and social engagement, but social isolation is a growing concern

Dr. Theresa Tam
Chief Public Health Officer
Public Health Agency of Canada

Digital Technology Hub

The [Digital Technology Hub](#) is a free platform to help older adults benefit from digital technologies in their lives and to help make transition into the digital world more comfortable. This hub has resources that can help users navigate the digital world and make life easier to connect to services and programs. It was developed through a community-based and City collaboration.

WALKit Web Map

The [WALKit Web Map](#) was created through a community and City collaboration. It promotes age friendly pedestrian routes, and is a tool that supports individuals to explore their neighbourhood, build social connections and promote active transportation.

Key features of the map include a zoom in/out function, a search option, and a locator (if you choose to enable it). The layer list offers information on important elements such as the location of washrooms, lighting, bus stops, and stairs—features identified by seniors as crucial. Additionally, the map includes a link to the City's 'report a problem' feature.

Seniors' life expectancy is increasing and they report overall good health, although the risk of developing chronic diseases increases with age

Dr. Theresa Tam
Chief Public Health Officer
Public Health Agency of Canada

Home Safe: Fire, Safety and Prevention

The [HomeSafe Program](#), created by the Surrey Fire Service, aims to enhance safety from potential fires in Surrey. Firefighters will:

- > schedule a free in home inspection of your private residence
- > provide recommendations to improve fire safety
- > test the smoke alarm to ensure it is working and install one for free if it is found not to be in working condition

[Smoke Alarms | City of Surrey](#)

Fall Prevention

Anyone can fall, but the risk of falling becomes greater with age. Most falls are predictable and preventable. Fall prevention focuses on promoting independence and activity.

In collaboration with Fraser Health, Falls Prevention Mobile Clinics are offered throughout Surrey, held at many different locations including community recreation centres. The clinics are free and involve a personalized assessment session and education session that provides information on fall risk factors, and the four pillars of fall prevention (vision, medication, exercise, and home safety). In the assessment session, participants sit one-on-one with health professionals (pharmacist, kinesiologist and physiotherapist). At that time, various aspects of the senior's fall risk status will be assessed, and interventions will be discussed. A detailed report of all the recommendations is provided to the participant and sent to his or her primary physician and any referring health professional, if applicable.

[Falls Prevention Mobile Clinic](#)
- [Fraser Health Authority](#)



Senior swimming, Guildford Pool

Conclusion and Next Steps

The updated Age Friendly Strategy serves as a framework to guide future decisions and address the needs of Surrey's growing and diverse community of older adults and seniors.

Next, the City will create an action plan to put recommendations into action and improve Surrey's age friendly initiatives over the next five years, aiming to build a community where seniors thrive, connect, and enjoy an exceptional quality of life.

Thank you to all those who contributed
to the Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors.



References

[2022-2023 Annual Report of the Office of the Seniors Advocate](#)

[Aging and chronic diseases: A profile of Canadian seniors \(2020\). Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

[All Our Relations A Social Innovation Strategy \(2017\) Phase 2 of the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Project](#)

City of Surrey Official Community Plan [Official Community Plan - Bylaw No. 18020 \(cld.bz\)](#)

City of Surrey City Profile 2021 Census Data [SurreyCityProfileCensusData2021.pdf](#)

City of Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan 2018-2027 [PRCStrategicPlan.pdf \(surrey.ca\)](#)

[Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide \(2007\). World Health Organization's \(WHO\)](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Age-Friendly Communities](#)

[Seniors Transportation \(2018\). Office of the Seniors Advocate](#)

[Statistics Canada 1991 Census Area Profile](#)

[Statistics Canada 2001 Census](#)

[Statistics Canada Census 2006 Community Profile](#)

[Statistics Canada 2011 Census Profile](#)

[Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile](#)

[Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Population](#)

[Statistics Canada April 2022 A portrait of Canada's growing population aged 85 and older from 2021 Census](#)

Surrey Housing Needs Report (updated March 2022) [Surrey Housing Needs Report March 2022](#)

Originally created 2014; updated 2023

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