



## Vital Conversations

In July and August, 2023, approximately 40 North Shore agencies gathered to share what they are experiencing in their work – new or deeper challenges, gaps in services, effective strategies and programs, and areas where resources and support is needed. These Vital Conversations provided valuable information, insights, and evidence related to challenges faced by many North Shore residents, and by organizations that serve them, as well concerns about environmental issues.

Many organizations described how conditions such as poverty, poor health, disability, age, isolation, or discrimination can make people more vulnerable to problems such as addiction, homelessness, abuse, hunger, and illness. These compounding challenges often increase pressures on organizational resources and capacity, and require innovative and collaborative solutions, some of which were shared in the *Vital Conversations*.

Follow-up surveys, interviews, and research, combined with the information gleaned from the *Vital Conversations*, forms the basis of the 2023 North Shore Vital Signs Report – a series of themed modules that will be released monthly between November 2023 and April 2024.

## A Vital Partnership

The **West Vancouver Foundation** (WVF) and the **North Shore Community Foundation** (NSCF) are part of a network of over 200 community foundations in Canada, each contributing local knowledge, leadership, and financial support to local initiatives, and helping people to support their communities where they need it most.

To gain the depth of community knowledge to be as effective as possible and deepen their impact, many community foundations undertake a community check-up known as Vital Signs. Since its first Vital Conversation in 2015, the West Vancouver Foundation has utilized Vital Signs research, indicators, and insights to measure the vitality of West Vancouver, identify significant trends, and support action towards improving quality of life. Now, recognizing the geographic, economic, social, organizational, and environmental relationships and interactions between and among West Vancouver and North Vancouver City and District, the West Vancouver and North Shore Community Foundations are working together on North Shore Vital Signs, an initiative that will encompass the whole North Shore, from Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove.

*The North Shore Vital Signs initiative is fully funded through community partners from the community and we are grateful for this support.*

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PROPERTIES

west vancouver

DISTRICT OF  
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Leith Wheeler  
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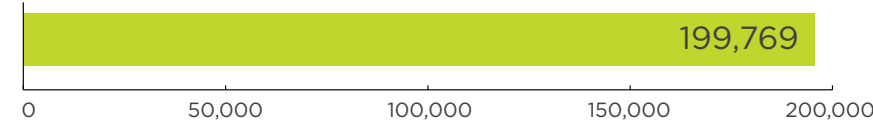
## Village of 100

### NORTH SHORE COMMUNITIES

If the North Shore were a village of 100 people, the data provided on these pages would illustrate how many of those 100 individuals possess specific characteristics or attributes. This approach offers an alternative means of presenting statistical information compared to using percentages of a population.

*Sources: Data and statistics in this report originate from Statistics Canada and research projects conducted by partners in our local community.*

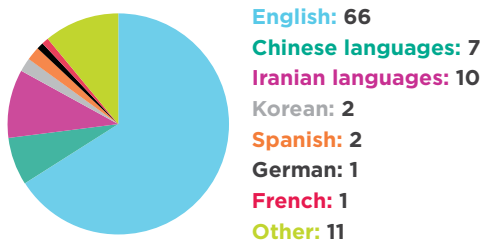
### Population



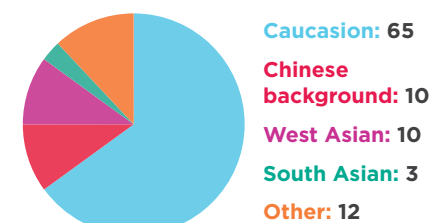
### Age (Distribution by groupings)

Age:	0-4	4-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65-84	85-100	100+
	4 7545	11 20,495	11 21,127	24 45,635	29 55,865	17 33,720	4 8,180	0.04 70

### Language (spoken at home)



### Ethnicity



### Employment (Person icon = 5 residents)

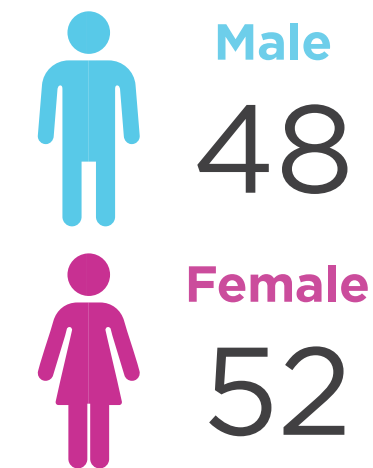


### Household Size

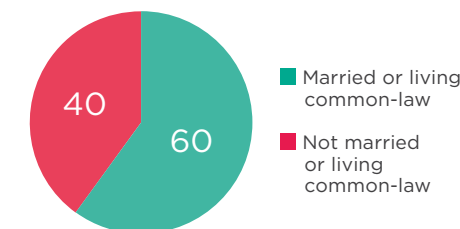
Occupied by usual residents



### Gender

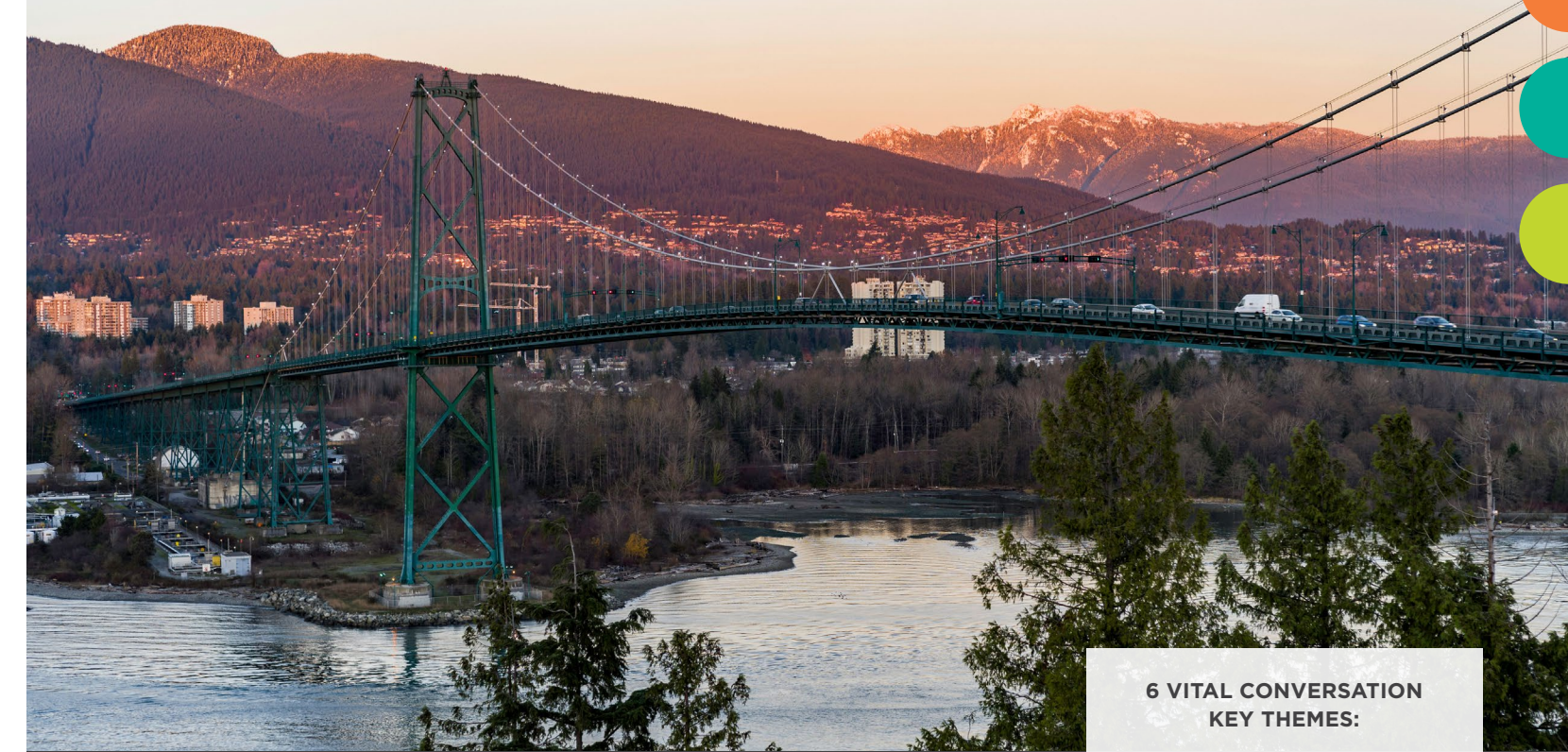


### Marital Status



2023 NORTH SHORE

# Vital Signs



## Community Health and Vitality

North Shore Vital Signs is intended to help us better appreciate who lives here and how well their needs are being met, from the most basic needs – food, shelter, safety – to those that give quality of life, such as places and opportunities to play, learn, and create. The overall health of a community has a notable influence on the health and well-being of the individuals who live there. Where we live, work, learn, and play significantly impacts how long and how well we live. In a healthy community, many sectors work together to improve the conditions that influence health and well-being. In exploring these sectors and determinants of health, Vital Signs contributes to a better understanding of how our social, economic, environmental, and built environments contribute to wellness and quality of life on the North Shore.

### 6 VITAL CONVERSATION KEY THEMES:

Health and Wellness

Safety and Security

Food, Shelter, and Economic Security

Diversity and Inclusion

Arts, Culture, and Learning

Environment and Climate Change

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## Health and Wellness

Health is not the absence of disease or disability; rather health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. In addition to individual genetics, lifestyle choices, and behaviours, where we are born, grow, live, work, and age also significantly influences our health. The main determinants of health include: income and social status; employment and working conditions; education and literacy; childhood experiences; physical environments; social supports and coping skills; healthy behaviours; access to health services; biology and genetics; gender; culture; and race.

### Illicit drug toxicity

is the **fourth leading cause of death** on the North Shore

#### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:

- **Peer-led groups and support**, eg. CMHA's Recovery College and Let's Talk; Foundry's Bounce Back.
- **Social prescribing** and navigation/connector programs.
- **Programs to create connections**, such as: intergenerational activities; fitness, food, and music for cross-cultural connecting; Neighbourhood grants focused on community building.
- **Awareness and education** on important topics layered into existing activities,

#### KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS

- There is an **increase in mental health issues**, particularly for children, youth, and young adults.
- There is a need for more prevention and early intervention before problems worsen, and more supports for parents.
- **Caregiver stress has increased**, along with negative effects on mental health.
- There is a significant **lack of awareness of community supports** and services; navigators are needed to connect people to services.
- **Social isolation and exclusion affect health and well-being**, particularly among youth, older adults, and newcomers. For newcomers, language barriers, cultural differences, and financial stress affect access to health services, and help is needed in navigating systems.
- There is a **disconnect between primary care and social supports**, as well as connections with local government, school systems, and other agencies.

## Food, Shelter, and Economic Security

Food insecurity, housing precarity, poverty, and dependence on others for basic needs significantly affects physical and mental health, and feelings of inclusion, belonging, and dignity. Ensuring basic needs are met is a prerequisite to addressing other conditions that affect quality of life.

#### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:

- **Food insecurity can be reduced** through school meal programs, community gardens, community commercial kitchens. Vancouver Food Runners works in partnership with 160+ food businesses, and 300+ active volunteers to deliver surplus food to 130+ nonprofit organizations across the Lower Mainland, including the North Shore.
- **Resources for housing precarity** include the North Shore Rent Bank, North Shore Community Housing Action Committee, updated policies and legislation, and subsidized housing.

A 2023 study by the BC Centre for Disease Control indicates the **average monthly cost of a nutritious diet** for a family of four on the North Shore

is the **highest in B.C.** at **\$1,379**



The 2023 Homelessness Count identified **168 individuals experiencing homelessness** on the North Shore, an **increase from 121** in 2020.

## Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity refers to all the ways we differ from each other, such as culture, race, language, faith, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and education. When these differences are embraced, when we recognize our common humanity, and when an environment of respect, engagement, and connection is fostered, our community becomes more inclusive and benefits from the richness of different experiences, perspectives, ideas, and contributions.

#### KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS

- **Language and cultural barriers**, as well as affordability, can prevent people from engaging in community.
- There is a **need for more in-person gathering places**, welcoming spaces, events, programs for youth and for older immigrants (including ESL) to help people feel part of a community.
- **Racism and bigotry, including against LGBTQ2S+, has been noted** in public spaces and facilities.
- There is a notable **lack of civic pride, and of engagement** and participation in community, local government, and volunteerism.

2020 **↑ 11%**

In Impact North Shore's survey with immigrants, there was an **increase in the number of respondents who indicated they had experienced an attack, harassment, or discrimination** based on their **skin colour, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or race**.

#### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:

- Creating new pathways for **civic engagement, inclusion, and learning about local government**.
- **Collaboration among community organizations**, including development of youth leaders, anti-racism programs, and pro-active outreach.

## Environment & Climate Change

The North Shore's geography, natural beauty, and proximity to forest, mountains, and ocean makes it a desirable place to live and to visit. However, these same features also contribute to environmental pressures and an increased susceptibility to the negative impacts of climate change. The cooperation and collaboration of all levels of government, non-profit groups, businesses and citizens is required to counter these impacts.

#### KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS

- **Extreme weather events**, sea level rise, wildfires, and air quality issues are increasing in frequency and impact.
- The North Shore is **highly car-dependent**; trains, transit, and an active transportation infrastructure is needed.
- Fear, threat, and risks contribute to **climate change anxiety**, while there is also a general laziness, lack of interest, and some community polarization. The magnitude and severity of the issue makes it hard to grasp and commit to do anything, and contributes to cognitive dissonance.
- **Tree canopy is important**, but not always valued, and can create conflict among neighbours.
- Local government roles, leadership, policies, and **example setting is critical**.

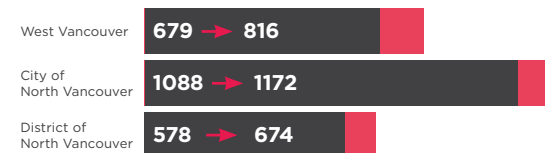
## Safety and Security

There are many agencies, laws, policies, and practices aimed at preventing or minimizing harm to individuals, businesses, and communities due to crime, accidents, or disasters. In addition to protection from harm, the feeling of being safe and secure is also important to well-being and quality of life. The perception of living in a safe community contributes to increased trust and interaction among neighbours, more participation in community and recreational activities, and reduced fear and stress.

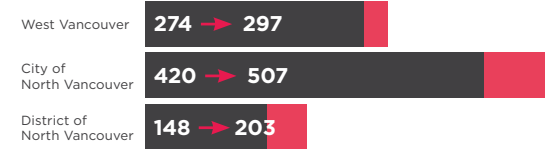
#### CRIME RATES:

Although crime rates are still significantly lower than in previous decades, **violent crime rates** have been **rending slightly upward**, including on the North Shore.

From 2021 to 2022, there was an **increase of violent crimes reported** per 100,000 people:



Similarly, the **Youth Crime Rate**, the number of youth aged 12-17 years charged per 100,000 population **also increased**:



#### KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS

- **Youth violence has increased**. An increase in people experiencing mental illness contributes to increased fear in using public transit.
- **Racism and discrimination lead to fears for personal safety**. Some immigrants fear calling police as a result of negative experiences and perceptions in their country of origin.
- There has been an **increase in internet fraud**, particularly scams targeting seniors.
- **First Responders experience staffing challenges**, largely due to the cost of living on the North Shore.
- **Accelerating climate change and increase in climate related disasters** requires new prevention and response strategies and resources. Seniors and people with disabilities face increased challenges during emergencies.
- **Road safety** is a key concern, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians.

## Arts, Culture, Learning

Community spaces and events, formal institutions and grassroots organizations, all play a critical role in providing opportunities for North Shore residents to learn and create, connect with others, and experience and appreciate a wide range of arts and culture. Schools, libraries, festivals, and arts organizations improve quality of life and contribute to community vitality by fostering social interaction, sparking innovation, increasing community pride, and contributing to the local economy.

#### KEY ISSUES/CONCERNS

- **More arts programs should be reintroduced** into schools; people are born creative, but often need to learn how to tap into it.
- There is a need for **more attention on preserving, accessing, and celebrating history and cultures**, particularly Indigenous.
- Libraries - public spaces open to all - **are seeing more people lingering longer**, likely out of loneliness.
- **More access to spaces and resources is needed**, along with creative ways to address the challenges of isolation and lack of connection.
- There is a **need for more opportunities to engage seniors and youth together** for appropriate intergenerational connecting and mentoring.

#### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:

- **North Shore Culture Compass**, a hub of cultural assets intended for residents, tourists, planners, and the cultural sector, to help build audiences, drive tourism, fill gaps, and encourage partnerships to better highlight our rich cultural diversity.
- **InterGen North Shore** helps connect different generations on the North Shore while providing resources to help community partners establish intergenerational programming.
- **Elder College** offers life-long learning opportunities for older adults.
- **Responding to the demand for in-person programs and events**, while continuing online offerings to increase flexibility and access, and include more participants.

**Attendance at in-person arts and culture events has rebounded**

and is typically **exceeding pre-COVID levels**. North Shore Culture Compass includes **over 800 current events** listed over the year.

Across the North Shore, **library use has also surged back** to pre-pandemic levels. Although many programs and services successfully transitioned to online delivery, in-person access is important in creating community connections and reducing isolation, particularly for the North Shore's 40,000+ seniors, and the 15,000 + newcomers from other countries who have made the North Shore home over the past five years.



### Rainfall

in Metro Vancouver June - Aug 2023 was **well below average at 59% of normal**.

#### EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:

- **Education programs for all ages**
- **Increased support for environment organizations**
- Promotion of **water conservation, carbon reduction, invasive species removal, and green infrastructure** such as rain gardens
- Increasing **cycling infrastructure** and **improving transit**