



2017 Homeless Count in Surrey Data Brief

Prepared by
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in partnership with the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Entity

For the
Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force

The Surrey Homeless Count Brief contains findings from the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver pertaining to the city of Surrey.

This report can be found on the Metro Vancouver Community Entity website, along with other reports generated from the 2017 Homeless Count and previous regional Homeless Counts:

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/resources/Pages/default.aspx>.

For further information and data, contact: HPSCE-MV@metrovancouver.org

Acknowledgements

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We would like to acknowledge the **tireless contribution of our local coordinators** Veronica Reiss, Jonquil Hallgate and Erick Parmiter that made the count a success in Surrey. Further, a big thank you for the support of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force's steering committee in the planning and implementation of the count.

2017 Partners:



1. Introduction

On March 8, 2017 the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place across the region. The purpose of the count was to estimate the number of people who are homeless in the region, obtain a demographic profile of the population, and identify trends compared to previous counts. This profile provides data from the 2017 Homeless Count specific to the municipality of Surrey. It informs local government and decision-makers, advocates and service providers about the dimensions of homelessness in Surrey in 2017 in relation to the region at large. This information is intended to ensure that appropriate resources can be made available to address the issue through adequate, appropriate and affordable housing and support services.

The report contains local count findings, including demographic cross-tabulations and an analysis of the SEUS strategy.

Limitations

Point-in-time homeless counts estimate the number of people who are homeless during a 24-hour period only. The Homeless Count methodology is most effective at counting one segment of the homeless population that is sometimes referred to as the **“visible” homeless**, which are those who tend to access homeless supports and services. Using the metaphor of an iceberg, the visible homeless represent just the tip of the iceberg. It is estimated that a large proportion of the **total** homeless population is not enumerated during the count.

For more information on the methodology, limitations and regional findings please review the full report (see above).

2. Homeless Count Participation in Surrey

Of the 602 people counted at facilities and on the street, a total of 494 people also participated in the survey and provided more details about their health, sources of income and other personal information.

Information on people staying at sheltered locations was collected from 23 facilities: two detox centres, six Extreme Weather Response (EWR)shelters, nine emergency shelters, two women’s transition houses, one youth safe house, two medical facilities and the Surrey RCMP.

Across all shelters, Surrey had a 77% response rate (294 out of 384 adults and unaccompanied youth responded to the survey).

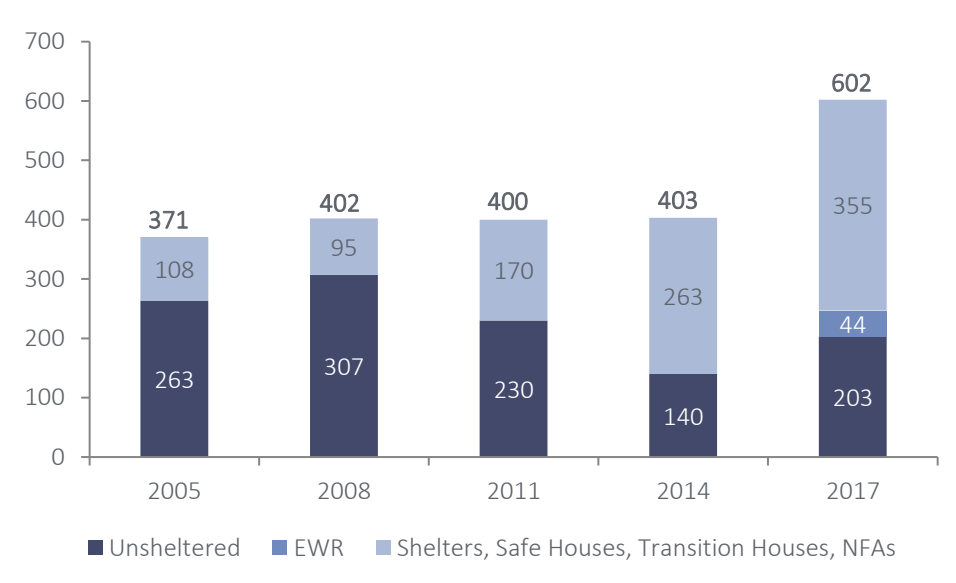
A two-day extended count also took place in Surrey-Newton (see Chapter 5).

3. People Experiencing Homelessness in Surrey

As with many other communities in the region the City of Surrey is faced with an unprecedented homelessness crisis. The total population enumerated in the homeless count was 602 individuals; of those, 399 (or 66%, compared to 71% across Metro Vancouver) were in shelters, including 44 in EWR shelters. The remaining 203 people were on the street.

Overall, the community saw an increase in homelessness of 54% since 2005, reaching its highest ever point this year. Since the last count in 2014 numbers have increased by 49%. In comparison, between 2011 and 2016, the total Surrey population has increased by 4.3% (Census 2016). The increase in homelessness is therefore disproportionately higher than the population increase and cannot be explained solely by the increase in overall population.

Figure 1: Surrey Homeless Population, Sheltered and Unsheltered, 2005-2017



4. Key Findings from the 2017 Homeless Count in Surrey¹

The following is an extract of key findings from the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver pertaining to the city of Surrey in relation to regional data. Data tables for the city of Surrey are provided in the appendix. While a total of 602 people were counted as homeless, all demographic data is derived from the 494 people who also participated in the survey.

-  30% of people who are homeless **identify as female** in Surrey. Therefore a slightly higher proportion of women in Surrey than across the region are homeless (30% compared with 27%).
-  With youth representing 10% of the population, Surrey has a lower proportion of **homeless youth** than across the region (10% compared to 16% in Metro); at the same time Surrey has a higher proportion of **homeless seniors** compared to the region (24% vs. 21%). Half the homeless population is between 35 and 54 years old.
-  Only 3% of the total population in Metro Vancouver as a whole identifies as Aboriginal (as per 2011 Census). However, 29% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Surrey identify as Aboriginal/Indigenous. While this is lower than the homeless population across the region (34%), individuals who are **Aboriginal/Indigenous** are significantly over-represented in Surrey's homeless population. The majority of people who are homeless and identify as Aboriginal are located in Vancouver, followed by the City of Surrey.
-  **Sexual orientation** can be a key driver of homelessness, particularly for youth. In Surrey, 7% of homeless respondents to the survey identify as LGBTQ2+, compared with 8% regionally.
-  Surrey's homeless population has a higher proportion of individuals with two or more **health conditions** than the regional homeless population (57% vs. 52%), indicating a greater need for health supports and services.
-  For three out of four **health conditions**, respondents in Surrey were more likely than respondents across Metro Vancouver to be faced with one of these. In comparison to the region the following conditions were more commonly reported: Addiction (56% vs. 53%); a medical condition (49% vs. 44%); or a physical disability (35% vs. 34%). In Surrey, self-reported rates of mental illness are slightly below the reported regional percentages (36% vs. 38%).
-  46% of Surrey's homeless population had been homeless for a year or more, compared with 51% of Metro Vancouver's homeless population. This shows that **long-term chronic homelessness** is an issue faced by nearly half of Surrey's homeless population.
-  More than half (52%) of the individuals in Surrey who experience homelessness had lived in Surrey for all their lives or 10 years or more, compared with 50% of the regional population. This shows that homelessness is an issue experienced by **long-term residents of Surrey**.

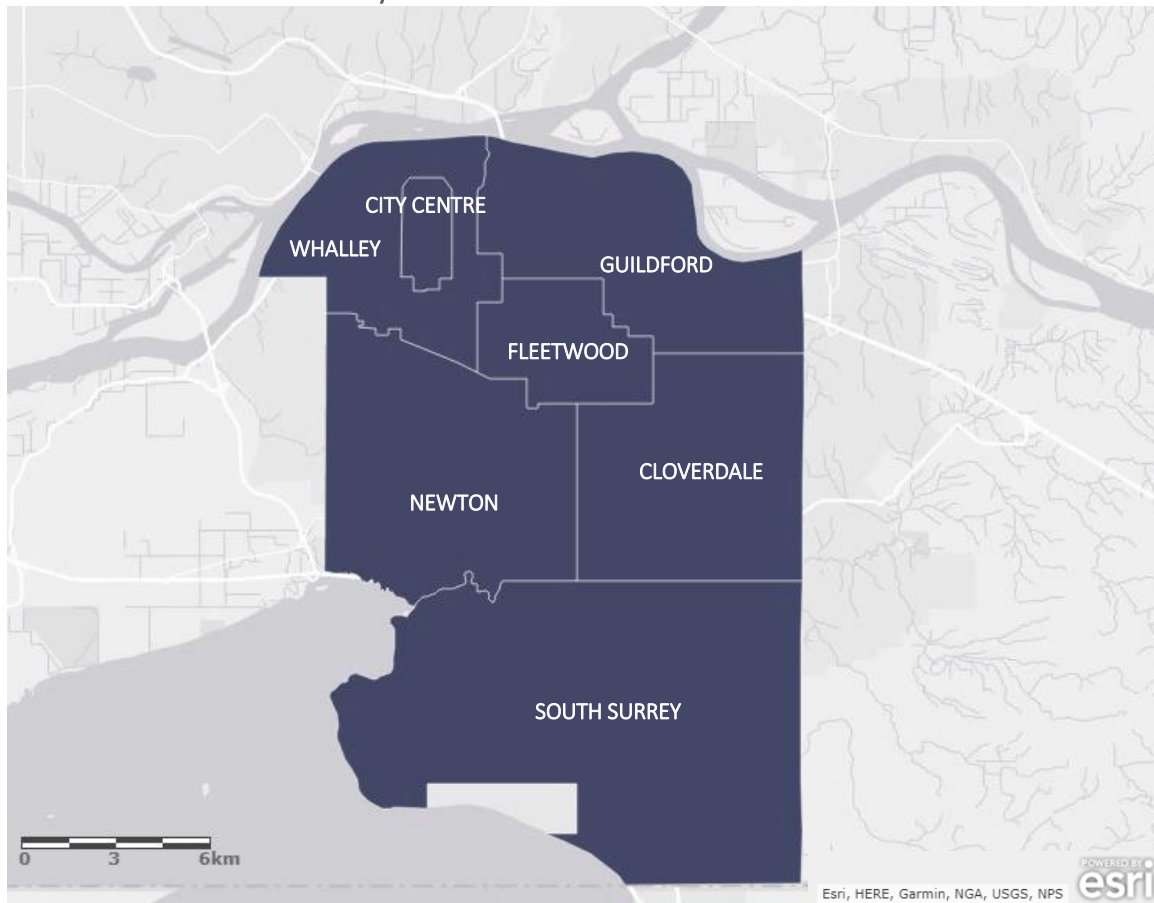
¹ The data set used to derive findings for communities like Surrey is small. Comparative results are not statistically significant at the 90% confidence level.

Income assistance was a primary **source of income** for 47% of respondents, while 42% reported it as a source of income regionally. More people among Surrey’s homeless population reported receiving disability benefits than compared to region-wide numbers (32% vs. 28%, respectively).). However, a lower proportion of individuals reported employment as a source of income (13% in Surrey vs. 21% regionally). This indicates that Surrey’s homeless population is more likely to access government assistance for income than in other areas.

The top five **services used** by respondents in Surrey were the emergency room (52%), meal programs (43%), ambulance (42%), hospital (non-emergency) 41%, and the health clinic (38%). Four of these five services are health-related, corresponding with high reporting of health conditions in Surrey’s homeless population.

87 people, or 20%, of respondents said that they are or have in the past been “in Ministry care.”

Homelessness across Surrey



Surrey Neighbourhoods (map). Using: ArcGIS (GIS software). Sources: Esri, DeLorme, HERE, MapmyIndia.

With 411 people — that is 68% of all individuals experiencing homelessness in Surrey— most people were located in Surrey Central. A further 20% of individuals experiencing homelessness were found in Newton (not including an additional 13 people counted during the SEUS strategy).

Table 1: Homeless Population by Surrey Community - Sheltered and Unsheltered, 2017

	Sheltered									
	Total		Shelters		EWR					
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Cloverdale	14	4%	10	3%	4	9%	1	0%	15	2%
Fleetwood	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%
Guildford	46	12%	45	13%	1	2%	10	5%	56	9%
Newton	75	19%	62	17%	13	30%	44	22%	119	20%
South Surrey	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Surrey Central	264	66%	238	67%	26	59%	147	72%	411	68%
Total	399	100%	355	100%	44	100%	203	100%	602	100%

Another 9% were found in Guildford and 2% in Cloverdale. One homeless individual was found in South Surrey and no homeless individuals were found in Fleetwood.

With 399 of 602 people, 66% of the population in Surrey was sheltered, compared to 71% in the population across Metro Vancouver. The majority of people who did not find shelter on the night of March 7 were found in Surrey Central (72% of all people who were unsheltered).

5. The Surrey Extended Urban Strategy (SEUS)

In order to better understand the limitations of the Point-in-Time (PiT) Count Methodology an additional strategy in the Newton area of Surrey was implemented to attempt to identify homeless individuals who were missed on count day. A similar approach was previously implemented in Montreal’s 2015 homeless count that included surveys for two days after their 24-hour count in selected service locations.

Surveying was continued on established routes and at partner organizations’ sites for two additional days on March 9 and 10 in the Newton area of Surrey. The enhanced survey consisted of screening questions that determined whether individuals had already been counted (a) in the 24-hour count on March 8 and (b) in the follow-up survey on March 9 and 10. Nine indicators were collected (age, gender, Aboriginal identity, length of time homeless, source of income, military service, length of time in the community, where individuals came from, Ministry of Children and Family Development care).

To ensure longitudinal comparability, results from the SEUS pilot are not tallied into the overall totals in this report.

5.1. SEUS Findings

A total of 13 additional homeless individuals were interviewed through the Surrey Extended Urban Strategy in Surrey-Newton. On March 8, the day of the Homeless Count, 119 individuals were found homeless. **There were therefore a total of 132 homeless individuals surveyed in Surrey-Newton, with SEUS participants representing 10% of those interviewed.**²

² Of the 13 interviewed through SEUS, seven of the individuals interviewed were men/male (54%), while six were women/female (46%). Three individuals (23%) identified as Aboriginal/Indigenous. Two individuals

6. Profile of Homelessness in Surrey and Metro Vancouver

Table 2: Surrey/Metro Homeless Population, Sheltered and Unsheltered (2017)

	Shelters	EWR	Unsheltered	Total
Surrey	355	44	203	602
Metro Vancouver	2,317	256	1,032	3,605

Table 3: Gender Identity – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017) and General Population (2016)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver		Metro Vancouver Population	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	326	69%	1,688	72%	1,202,175	49%
Female	144	30%	628	27%	1,261,255	51%
Another gender identity	4	1%	25	1%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents	474	100%	2,341	100%	2,463,430	100%

Table 4: Age Groups – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017) and General Population (2016)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver		Metro Vancouver Residents	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 25 Years	46	10%	386	16%	671,665	27%
25-34 Years	77	16%	437	18%	362,565	15%
35-44 Years	117	25%	522	22%	336,330	14%
45-54 Years	116	25%	550	23%	375,655	15%
55-64 Years	86	18%	395	16%	329,900	13%
65+ Years	28	6%	123	5%	387,315	16%
Total Respondents	470	100%	2,413	100%	2,463,430	100%

Table 5: Aboriginal Identity – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017) and General Population (2016)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver		Metro Vancouver Population	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indigenous/Aboriginal	137	29%	746	34%	64,945	3%
Non-Indigenous/Aboriginal	329	71%	1,453	66%	2,215,755	97%
Total Respondents	466	100%	2,199	100%	2,280,700	100%

were 55 or older (16%), while one individual was between 19 and 24 (8%). Ten individuals were adults between 25 and 54 years of age (77%).

Eight of the individuals interviewed had been homeless for less than one year, while five had been homeless for a year or more. Twelve of the thirteen (92%) had lived in Surrey for a year or more, with eight having lived there for more than 10 years (61%). Four (31%) reported having been in Ministry care. Six individuals (46%) received income from welfare/income assistance, while three individuals were on disability benefits (23%) and three individuals received income through binning (23%).

Table 6: Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit, queer or questioning – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Not LGBTQ2+ or questioning	417	93%	1924	91%
LGBTQ2+ or questioning	29	7%	171	8%
Other	2		25	1%
Total Respondents	446	100%	2,120	100%

Table 7: Incidence of health conditions – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
No health conditions	69	15%	384	17%
One health condition	135	29%	673	30%
Two or more health conditions	266	57%	1,164	52%
Total Respondents	470	100%	2,221	100%

Table 8: Types of health conditions – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Addiction	262	56%	1,172	53%
Medical condition/illness	232	49%	967	44%
Mental illness	170	36%	848	38%
Physical disability	163	35%	742	33%
Total Respondents	470		2,221	

Table 9: Length of time homeless – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Less than 1 week	12	3%	47	2%
1 week to under 1 month	21	4%	143	6%
1 month to under 6 months	146	31%	588	26%
6 months to under 1 year	76	16%	331	15%
1 year or more	220	46%	1,153	51%
Total Respondents	475	100%	2,262	100%

Table 10: Length of time in municipality – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Less than 1 week	4	1%	43	2%
1 week to under 1 month	10	2%	81	4%
1 month to under 6 months	57	12%	237	10%
6 months to under 1 year	21	4%	135	6%
1 year to under 5 years	86	18%	401	18%
5 years to under 10 years	48	10%	227	10%
10 years or more	171	36%	773	34%
Always lived here	78	16%	365	16%
Total Respondents	475	100%	2,262	100%

Table 11: Source of income – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Government Transfers				
Income assistance	221	47%	927	42%
Disability benefit	150	32%	615	28%
OAS/GIS	14	3%	80	4%
CPP or Other Pension	30	6%	165	7%
Employment Insurance	5	1%	26	1%
Youth Agreement	0	0%	8	0%
Employment	63	13%	468	21%
Part-time employment	43	9%	346	16%
Full-time employment	20	4%	122	6%
Other Sources				
Binning, bottle collecting, etc.	68	14%	339	15%
Panhandling	33	7%	232	11%
Friends/family	20	4%	189	9%
Honoraria	7	1%	39	2%
Vending	21	4%	153	7%
Other	35	7%	178	8%
No income	45	10%	208	9%
Total Respondents	469		2,209	

Table 12: Services used – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
Meal programs/soup kitchens	200	43%	1,014	47%
Emergency room	241	52%	1,089	50%
Drop-in	162	35%	810	37%
Health clinic	175	38%	843	39%
Outreach	137	30%	726	33%
Hospital (non-emergency)	188	41%	870	40%
Food banks	92	20%	565	26%
Ambulance	193	42%	845	39%
Total addiction services	119	26%	593	27%
<i>Addiction services (supervised injection site)</i>	30	6%	217	10%
<i>Addiction services (all other addiction services)</i>	76	16%	381	18%
Employment/job help	72	16%	457	21%
Dental	83	18%	383	18%
Mental health	88	19%	468	22%
Legal	51	11%	302	14%
Housing help/eviction prevention	78	17%	337	16%
Transitional housing	56	12%	244	11%
Parole/services for ex-offenders	27	6%	150	7%
Budgeting/trusteeship	10	2%	67	3%
Newcomer services	8	2%	52	2%
Faith-based/spiritual services	71	15%	356	16%
Other	11	2%	83	4%
None	6	1%	58	3%
Total Respondents	464		2,169	

Table 13: Currently or previously in ministry care – Surrey/Metro Respondents (2017)

	Surrey		Metro Vancouver	
	#	%	#	%
No	347		1,598	
Yes	87		423	
Total Respondents	434		2,021	

7. Cross-Tabulations of Gender Identity, Sexual Identity and Aboriginal Identity by Age for Respondents in Surrey

Please note that this information was not further analyzed in this profile but is provided for information and use by Service providers in Surrey.

	Age Group	Under 19	19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
What is your gender?	Man/male	35%	61%	62%	66%	72%	85%	72%	100%	70%
	Woman/female	65%	39%	38%	34%	27%	14%	20%	0%	30%
	Another gender identity	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	8%	0%	1%
	Total respondents	17	28	77	117	116	86	25	3	469
Do you identify as LGBTQ2+ or questioning?	No	82%	93%	84%	88%	91%	92%	92%	100%	89%
	Yes	12%	7%	9%	7%	5%	5%	0%	0%	6%
	Unknown	6%	0%	7%	5%	4%	4%	8%	0%	5%
	Total respondents	17	27	76	117	114	83	25	3	462
Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal person?	No	56%	64%	65%	62%	72%	83%	72%	100%	69%
	Yes	39%	32%	32%	38%	26%	15%	24%	0%	29%
	Unknown	6%	4%	3%	0%	2%	2%	4%	0%	2%
	Total respondents	18	28	77	117	116	86	25	3	470

