

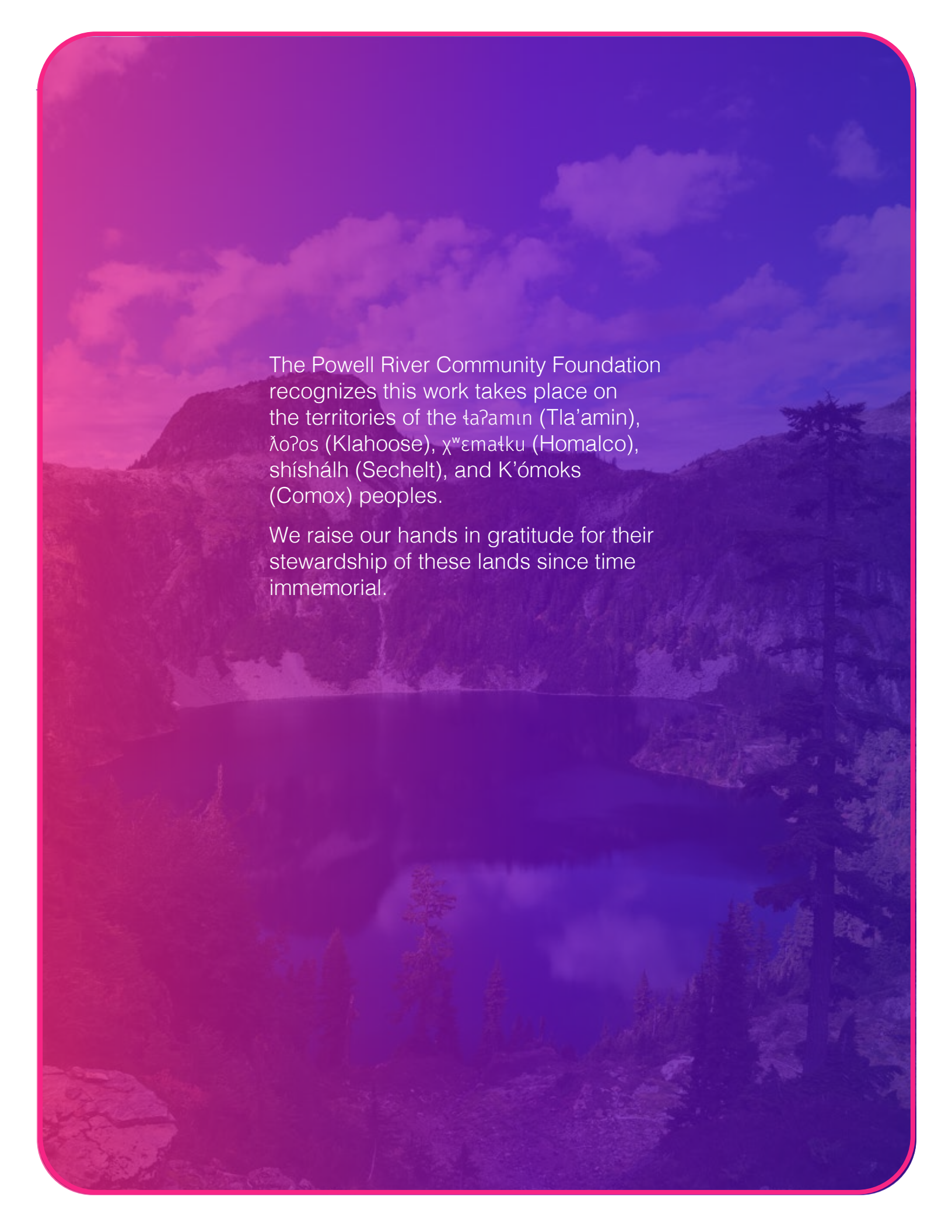
qathet Region's

VitalSigns.®

2022-2023



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA
all for community



The Powell River Community Foundation
recognizes this work takes place on
the territories of the łaʔamín (Tla'amin),
łoʔos (Klahoose), x̣ʷemałku (Homalco),
shíshálh (Sechelt), and K'ómoks
(Comox) peoples.

We raise our hands in gratitude for their
stewardship of these lands since time
immemorial.



Table of Contents

President's Message	4
About the Report	5
Acknowledgements	6
Sponsors	7
Demographics	8
Truth, Reconciliation + Relationship	10
COVID	14
Local Economy + Work	16
Poverty	18
Education + Learning	22
Climate Change + Environment	26
Health + Wellness	30
Housing	36
Belonging + Connection	40
Civic + Community Involvement	44
Arts + Culture	46
Sports + Recreation	50
Transportation	54
Food + Agriculture	58
Community Justice + Emergency Services	62
Support your community through Powell River Community Foundation	64
Vital Signs Methodology	65
Endnotes	67

A scenic sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon and its reflection visible. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and purple. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of trees and bushes. At the very top of the page, there is a white line graphic that resembles a heartbeat or an EKG line.

President's Message

I am pleased to represent an organization that is so committed to the qathet region, and this report is one part of that equation. Vital Signs is a compilation of data gathered from and about our community with the intention of providing a “check in” on our community’s key indicators. It helps us figure out which issues in our community are most in need of attention, and how we might make this an even better place to live.

This important document doesn’t happen on its own, and I welcome the opportunity to thank all of our sponsors and contributors that have stepped up with financial and in-kind contributions. Community support is what makes this report, and the Foundation, possible. Thank you! The Powell River Community Foundation is “For Good, For Ever.”

– **Alston Miller**

President, Board of Directors
Powell River Community Foundation



About the Report

What is Vital Signs?

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. The Vital Signs trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

Powell River Community Foundation produces this report to identify trends and issues related to quality of life, sense of belonging, and residents' experiences in Powell River and the qathet region as a place to live, learn, work, and grow. It gets used in a variety of ways:

- To support community planning decision-making by nonprofits, governments, funders (e.g. what to fund, what programs to create, what issues to focus on);
- To include in advocacy and grant applications by community groups and government;
- For researchers, program planners, and others to get reliable information and statistics about the local region;
- To increase public awareness about issues facing our community; and
- To help people's decision to relocate to our community

Powell River Community Foundation published previous Vital Signs reports in 2011/12 and 2015. They are available at prcommunityfoundation.com/vital-signs.

What Areas are Covered?

This report includes the City of Powell River, qathet Regional District, and ɫaʔamin (Tla'amin)

Nation. While Area E (Lasqueti Island) is covered by Parksville-Qualicum Community Foundation and is outside Powell River Community Foundation's geographic focus, Area E is sometimes included or referenced in this report.

How is the Report Organized?

The report is divided into 16 topical themes that each contribute to our community's vitality and well-being. Within each topic area there are sub-topics, or "indicators". The indicators are based on verified statistics and data from the province, Canada, community groups, and other reliable sources. When possible, the data show how the region compares to the province and Canada, and whether there has been improvement or decline from previous years. The report also includes the results of two Vital Signs surveys, one for adults and one for youth on the same topics. In contrast to the data indicators, which measure concrete facts, the survey measures our community's beliefs and feelings on how we are doing. Together, the indicators and survey give a well-rounded picture of our community.

Who Decided What to Include in the Report?

Powell River Community Foundation hired a consultant who worked with a number of advisors from community serving organizations. All told, we met and talked with more than 35 representatives of community organizations, business groups, educational institutions, and government. We engaged different sectors of the community to make sure that wide-ranging areas of need were considered. The advisers provided their expertise on a host of subjects to identify indicators and trends that were relevant.



Acknowledgements

Community Input + Support

A variety of individuals and organizations provided support to this project: through early-stage advice, interviews, survey design, data provision, and more. We deeply appreciate their input and help. Some people have changed jobs since their input; we apologize for any errors or omissions.

- Jayde Bazinet, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Volunteer Powell River
- Russell Brewer, former Chief Administrative Officer, City of Powell River
- Siobhan Brown, Program Coordinator, qathet Community Justice
- Rebecca Burbank, Chief Librarian, Powell River Public Library
- Stuart Clark, Executive Director, Lift Community Services
- Kathryn Colby, Director Community Development, Lift Community Services
- Rachel Driedger, Youth Representative
- Abby Francis, Youth Representative
- Neil Frost, President Powell River Sunshine Coast Real Estate Board
- Leni Goggins, Project Manager Inclusion Powell River
- Liam Haggarty, Campus Administrator tiwšemawtxw
- Campus, Vancouver Island University
- Maggie Hathaway, former Councillor, City of Powell River
- Rob Hill, School District 47 Board of Education and Constituency Assistant to Nicholas Simons
- Liam Holthuysen, Youth Representative
- Parker Holthuysen, Youth Representative
- Nola Poirier, Researcher
- Nancy Jeakins, Tidal Art Centre
- Julie Jenkins, former Director Community Engagement & Resource Development, Powell River & District United Way
- Julhi Jobi, Manager, Powell River Farmers' Market
- CaroleAnn Leishman, former Councillor, City of Powell River
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- Christien Kaaij, Alofl! Consultancy
- Meriko Kubota, former Regional Social Planner
- Karen Kumon, qathet Art Centre
- Sandy McCormick, Electoral Area D Director, qathet Regional District
- Claudia Medina, Researcher
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- Cate Miner, Youth Representative
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- Vanessa Sparrow, Food Literacy Program, School District 47
- Ryan Thoms, Manager Emergency Services, qathet Regional District
- Adriana Virtue, Food Systems Manager, Lift Community Services

Powell River Community Foundation Board of Directors

- Alston Miller, President
- Kathy Tait, Vice President and Secretary
- Shirley Court, Secretary
- Tim Wall, Treasurer
- Joan Baker
- Dave Hodgins
- Trina Isakson, Vital Signs liaison

Vital Signs Sponsorship Support

- Jeff Sauve
- Réal Sigouin

Vital Signs Report Team



- Lisa Moffatt, project manager, researcher, report writer
- Alix Krahn, researcher, data analyst, report writer, report layout
- Marie-Gabrielle Béchard, data analyst

Sponsors

Gold Sponsors



The City of Powell River is proud to enthusiastically support the Powell River Community Foundation's Vital Signs as an integral pillar for the sustained growth and well-being of our community.



For over 35 years Community Futures has been a proven leader in supporting entrepreneurs in our region and working with local partners to build a strong, vibrant and sustainable economy.



First Credit Union is a B Corp certified, values-based financial cooperative. Driven by a vision to build financially healthy communities, they strive to develop socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable communities.



Fleming & Associates provides full service legal expertise in Real Estate Conveyancing, Wills and Estates, Corporate organization, Commercial transactions, together with bright and creative representation in a broad range of Litigation areas.

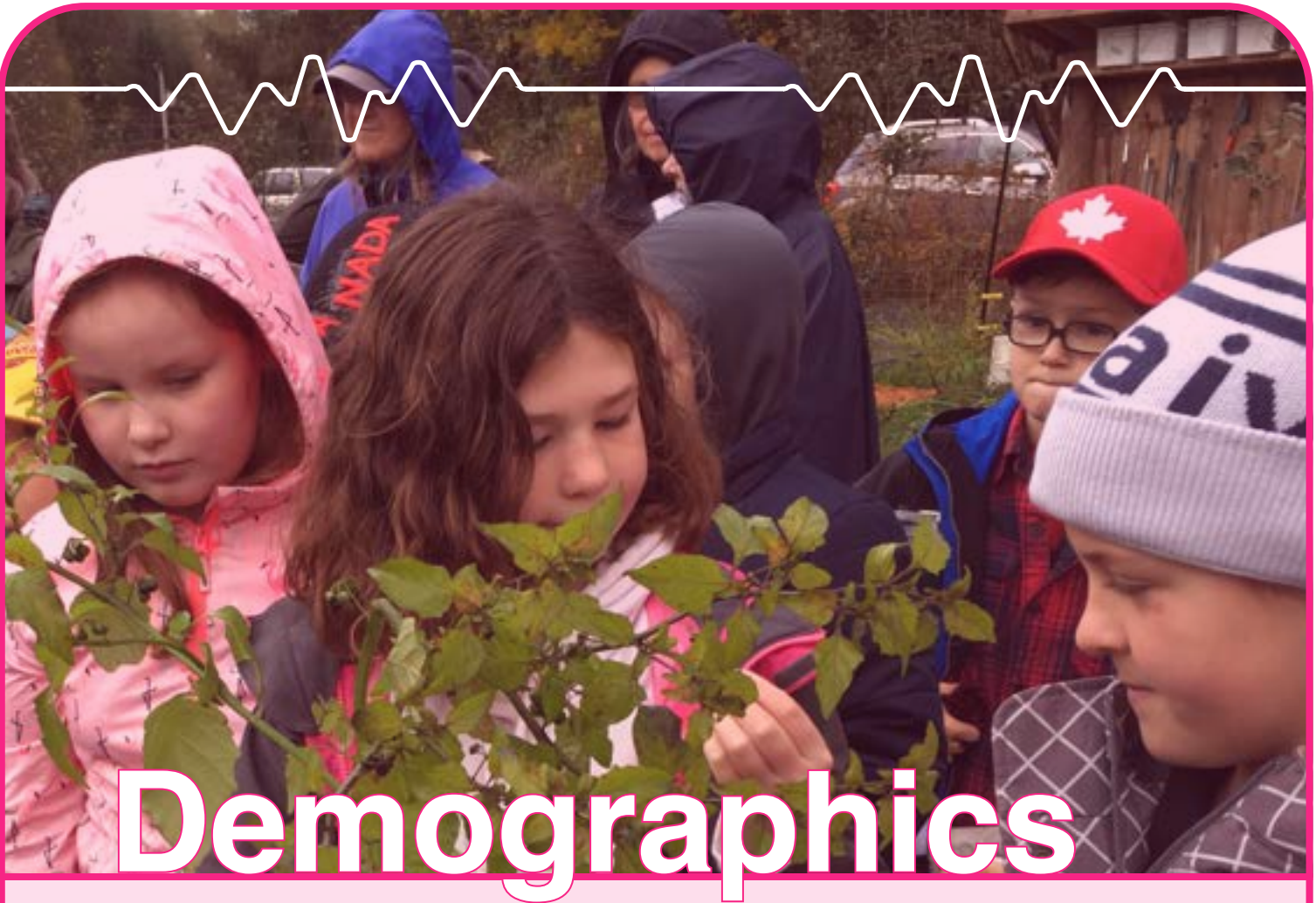
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Demographics

Growth and Projections

The region's population is centered in Powell River, which contains 65% of the region's population - 13,943 people live in the City of Powell River, and 21,496 people across the region.¹

The pace of growth increased after 2016. From 2016 to 2021, the Regional District grew by 7.1% to 21,496. The City grew by 6% to 13,943.

The region grew slowly (2%) from 2006-2016. Electoral Area's A and E grew the fastest, at 21% and 11% growth respectively over the 10 year period. (Note that Electoral Area E's population is quite small, so the growth in number of residents is still quite small.) The two Electoral Areas adjacent to the City of Powell River (A and B) increased

in population while those further away or requiring access by ferry (C and D) declined in population or remained the same.

Households

Most private dwellings are occupied by residents who count this home as their primary residence – including 95% of units in Powell River, and over 80% of units in Electoral Areas B, C, and D.² Electoral Area A stands out as a clear exception, with just 45% of units occupied by usual residents.³

Average household size ranges from 1.7 (Electoral Area E) to 2.2 (Electoral Area B), generally decreasing from 2011 to 2021, consistent with demographic trends across the province.

Age

Residents across the qathet region have a median age of 53.5, higher than the provincial median age of 43.0. Areas across the region have a median age ranging from 53.2 in Powell River to 62.4 in Electoral Area D. All areas have also increased in median age faster than the province.⁴

Age distribution across the qathet region is shown below. Residents aged 60 to 69 (20%), 50 to 59 (17%), and 70 to 79 (12%) are the most common.

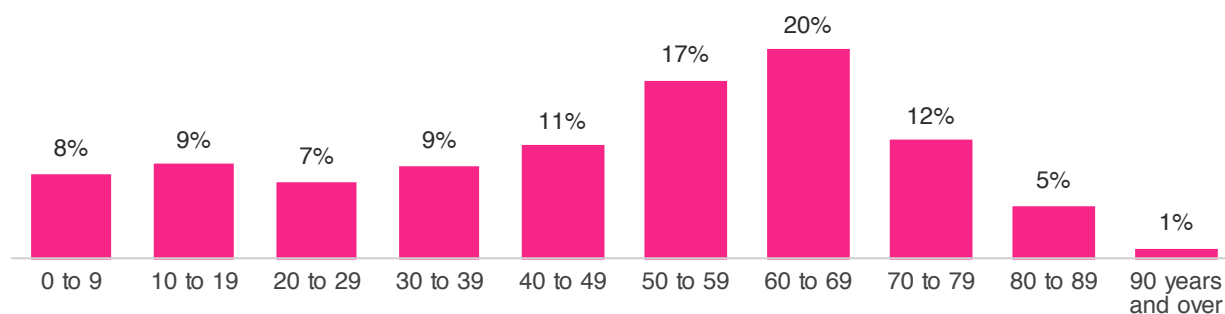


Figure 1: Age distribution across the qathet region (2021)

Indigenous Population

Across the qathet region, 8.6% of the population (1,805 people) identify as Indigenous. This is an increase from 2016, when 8.0% of the population (1,575 people) identified as Indigenous.⁵

Number of Immigrants

Across the qathet region, 13% of residents are immigrants to Canada, most of whom (56%) immigrated to Canada before 1980.⁶

łə́ʔamín

From the łə́ʔamín Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned:

- 29% of survey respondents live away from łə́ʔamín lands
- 71% of survey respondents live on łə́ʔamín lands

Language Use

Approximately 2.6% of residents in qathet region most commonly use a language other than English at home. This includes a variety of languages, including French (0.6%), Punjabi (0.2%), Italian (0.2%), Mandarin (0.2%), Polish (0.1%), Afrikaans (0.1%), Spanish (0.1%), Korean (0.1%), Yue (Cantonese) (0.1%), and more.⁷



Truth, Reconciliation + Relationship

Photo Credit: Anji Smith

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission produced a series of 94 Calls to Action (2015). In 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) produced their report. Tla'amin (łaʔamɪn) have been here since time immemorial (almost 8,000 years).⁸ Also in 2019, the Province of British Columbia adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)⁹ as the Province's framework for reconciliation. These three documents identify issues around the quality of living for Indigenous Peoples and call on us all to examine the role of oppressive systems on their quality of life, and to take action towards healing.

łaʔamɪn Final Agreement

After more than 20 years of treaty negotiations, the łaʔamɪn Nation signed the Final Agreement (treaty) with the Canadian government in the spring of 2014 and it went into effect on April 5, 2016.¹⁰ This means the łaʔamɪn Nation is a self-governing nation.

Community Accord (2003 and 2018) and Protocol Agreement

The Community Accord (2003) is a living document that outlines how the Łaʔamɨn Nation and the City of Powell River will work together at a government-to-government level.

The Community Accord was re-signed in 2018, after the Łaʔamɨn Nation treaty was implemented. At that time the City and the Nation consented to have four parcels of City land designated as Łaʔamɨn Treaty Settlement Lands. The properties include:

- A small property on Wharf Street beside Marine Traders
- The site of Powell River's former hospital at the of Arbutus Street and Highway 101
- The 245.6 acre Gibsons Beach property
- The industrial waterfront, the site of Łaʔamɨn's log dump for its forestry operations

This means the Łaʔamɨn Nation is the government and taxation authority for the properties.

A Protocol Agreement on Culture, Heritage and Economic Development, signed in June 2004, commits Łaʔamɨn Nation and the (now) qathet Regional District to protect and promote the culture and heritage of the region and to explore joint economic ventures.¹¹


Possible Name Change Request

In June 2021, Łaʔamɨn hegus John Hackett wrote a letter to the City of Powell River requesting the City change its name from Powell River to "...a more respectful and inclusive name that is more reflective of both the oral history of these lands and the present-day collaborative communities." This came in light of the rediscovery of hundreds of children's bodies buried at residential school sites (at the time of writing this number is over 10,000 children) and in acknowledgement of the lasting impact Israel Powell has had on Łaʔamɨn peoples as the first superintendent of Indian Affairs in the province of British Columbia.¹² A Joint Working Group, per the Community Accord was struck and consultants hired to design and implement a public engagement process.

There were varied opinions and level of support for the request in the City and region, from people opposed who feel like the request threatens their identity and place in history here; to wanting to identify the decision-making tool (i.e., a referendum, opinion poll or assent voting) before engaging in a process; to those who feel a name change is inevitable and not a place for them to be involved; to those who see the request as a representation of justice and reconciliation.¹³



Photo Credit: Abby Francis



Members of the ŁaʔamŁn who participated in the engagement activities could be categorized in three different groups:

- Concerned and hesitant - these citizens were concerned about the extra (negative) attention that this process has shone on ŁaʔamŁn Nation, and about increases in experiences of racism. They feel that this process is for others to take on, and are not interested in getting involved. Some may not support the request.
- This is the just way forward - some ŁaʔamŁn citizens were active at events and in encouraging supporters to participate. They feel restoring original names is an act of honouring Indigenous rights and sovereignty. They want the City to honour commitments to reconciliation and to demonstrate leadership by moving forward with a process to change Powell River's name. They may be involved with The Name Matters.
- Believe minds open through conversations and relationship - Some ŁaʔamŁn citizens believe in the power of sharing their perspectives and lived experiences through individual conversations, and changing "one mind at a time". They have energy and the will to be in conversation with people who need more time to process the request for a name change. They might reach out to friends and former classmates from the city who have shared opposition (e.g., on social media).

“ I used to feel safe and respected, and now I feel less safe expressing my culture and identity. ”

The Joint Working Group identified 11 recommendations for the City, which include:

- That additional public education and community engagement activities be planned on issues of shared values, history, and reconciliation.
- That engagement activities be targeted to under-reached demographics.
- That future engagement on the name change be designed to maximize the safety of all participants.
- That the City make reconciliation and relations with ŁaʔamŁn Nation a strategic priority.
- That ŁaʔamŁn Nation develop a set of educational materials describing what they want their neighbours throughout the qathet region to know about them, and that the City include this information in training for City staff and leadership.
- That the City, ŁaʔamŁn Nation, and qathet Regional District, through the community-to-community-to-community (C3) process, establish a Reconciliation Committee mandated and resourced to advance reconciliation throughout the City and Regional District.
- That the City establish staff position(s) to support the implementation of recommendations in this report and maintain positive reciprocal relationships with the ŁaʔamŁn Nation and other Indigenous residents throughout qathet region.
- That public information and engagement events for various ages, groups, and in a range of formats be undertaken to better understand racism and colonialism and promote action to achieve racial equity.

- That ceremonial efforts be undertaken to reject all forms of racism and support healing and unification amongst all residents of qathet region.
- That additional community engagement activities be planned on issues of shared values, history, and reconciliation as the basis for identifying options for a new name for the City.
- That a referendum or assent voting process is one of many available tools to engage the public and gauge public opinion. It is not the appropriate tool to utilize right now. A possible assent voting process and topic should only be carefully considered after implementation of the recommendations of this report.

Powell River City Council voted to forward the recommendation to the next council's strategic planning process, to take place after the 2022 local election.

Some groups in the qathet region that changed their names recently include:

- Vancouver Island University's local campus is now called tiwšɛmawtxw (too-shem-out) which means "house of learning"
- qathet General Hospital
- qathet Museum and Archives
- The Lund Resort at Klah ah men
- Peak: voice of the qathet region
- qathet Living

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 33% of respondents selected reconciliation and decolonization as one of their top three priorities for the region, and they provided 112 comments related to the actions they are personally taking towards reconciliation, which included a wide variety of actions - from attending marches and public events, reading, doing self-guided study, listening to Indigenous voices, learning about colonial history and injustices, learning words in ayajuthem (ʔayʔaʃuθəm - the language of the ɬaʔamɪn people), and more.

There were 12 survey responses that were not supportive of actions taken towards reconciliation, and four respondents with mixed feelings.



Photo Credit: Abby Francis



COVID

Photo Credit: School District 47

Quotes from the Vital Signs Survey

“ I lost a job due to political differences around COVID denialism, mandates and vaccines. ”

“ Being an introvert, I sailed through relatively easily. No outstanding problems during the lockdown time. ”

“ Family member attempted suicide. ”

“ I am a healthcare worker that experienced significant increase in work stress, this has not ended. ”

“ I have lost confidence in government and public agencies to provide transparency in information available. ”

“ I have not travelled and consequently not seen any family members in person for more than 2 years. ”

Some impacts that people experienced included having a family member or friend die (13%), losing work or a job (12.6%), losing housing (2.2%), experiencing domestic violence (1.8%), or getting long COVID (4.5%).

From the Łąřamin Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned that 89% of elders felt that [Łąřamin] leadership's response to COVID has been effective.



COVID | 15



Local Economy + Work

Photo Credit:
Lift Community Services

Living Wage

A living wage is the hourly amount a family needs to cover basic expenses.¹⁴ These basic expenses include food, clothing, rental housing, child care, transportation, and small savings and cover illness or emergencies.

For Powell River, the Living Wage for 2022 is calculated as \$23.33 per hour, up from \$16.31 in 2019.¹⁵

Unemployment + participation rates

In 2021, the participation rate across the qathet region (the percentage of the labour force who are either working or looking for work) was 50.3%, down from 52.5% in 2016, and much lower than the 2021 provincial rate of 63.3%. This is attributed to a high population of retirement age residents in the qathet region. In 2021, the unemployment rate in the region was 9.3%, up from 7.8% in 2016, and higher than the 2021 provincial rate of 8.4%.¹⁶

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 36% of respondents selected local economy as one of their top three priorities for the region, and was the second top priority selected by all survey respondents.

Economic sectors

The total labour force across the qathet region was 9,280 people in 2021. The top seven industries that employed the labour force in 2021 were (in order):¹⁷

- Health care and social assistance: 17.1% (up from 14.3% in 2016);
- Retail trade: 12.8% (12.9% in 2016);
- Construction: 10.4% (up from 8% in 2016);
- Accommodation and food services: 6.6% (down from 7.7% in 2016);
- Educational services: 5.9% (down from 6.4% in 2016);
- Manufacturing: 5.7% (down from 8.3% in 2016); and
- Agriculture/forestry/fishing: 5.4% (down from 7.1% in 2016).



Tourism

Tourism is an important economic sector in the qathet region. In 2021, 5,214 people came through the Powell River Visitor Centre, an increase of 37% (3,808 people) in 2020. This was a large decrease from pre-COVID, where 9,991 people came through the Visitor Centre (2019). The majority of people visit in July, August, and September (accounting for 24%, 25%, and 15% of the visitors for 2021, respectively).¹⁸

Mill Closure

After 110 years in operation, Paper Excellence, the owner of the Catalyst Paper tiskwat Mill, announced an indefinite curtailment of operations on December 21, 2021. This resulted in a loss of 206 jobs.

Survey Results

Approximately 14% of respondents to the Vital Signs survey were impacted by the mill closure, including 3% who lost their job, 9% who had an immediate family member who lost their job, and 6% who lost revenue to their business.¹⁹

Survey Results

COVID + Jobs

A number of people's work was impacted by COVID. In the Vital Signs survey, 12.6% of respondents lost work or their job, 22.9% had a reduction in income, 7.6% had an increase in income, 13.9% of respondents changed work or jobs, 4.0% had to close their business, 1.8% started a business, and 1.8% own a business and had to let staff go.

Work Satisfaction

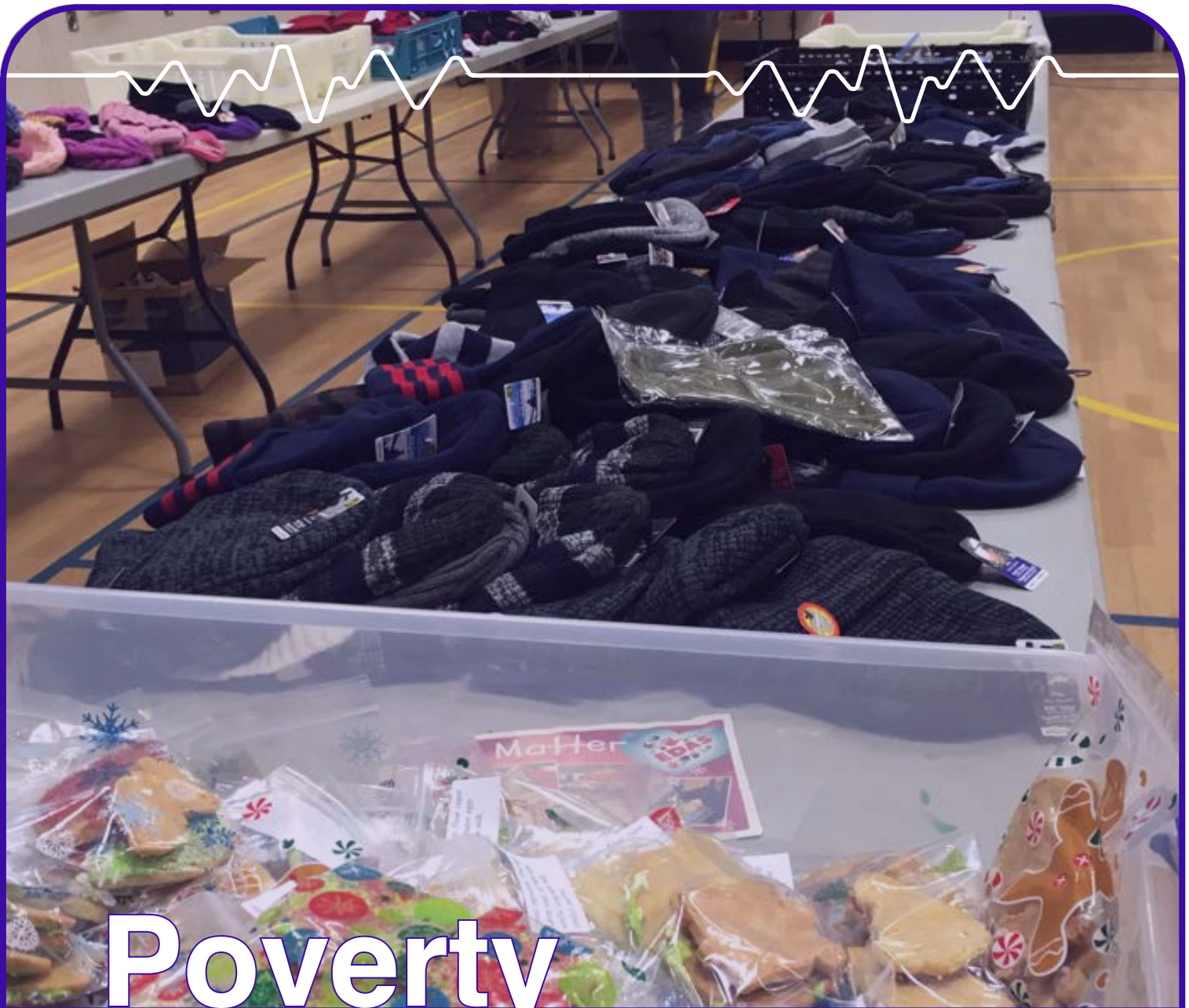
Most people are satisfied with their work. In the Vital Signs survey, of people who work, over 68% (and 76% of youth) rated their level of satisfaction with work as "very fulfilling" or "somewhat fulfilling".

Youth Employment

In the Youth Vital Signs Survey, youth who have a job or work are doing so for multiple reasons (respondents could select multiple answers), including:

- Wanting their own money to spend (71%)
- They are not in school and need to support themselves (67%)
- They are interested in gaining work experience (48%).

Most youth are able to save money and pay for things they want or need - 63% of youth said they could easily or mostly pay for things, with 21% of youth saying they rarely could.



Poverty

Income Distribution

The median household (before-tax) income in 2020 across the qathet Regional District (including the City of Powell River) was \$64,000 (up from \$53,056 in 2015) and was less than the provincial median household income of \$85,000 (up from \$69,995 in 2015).

Median income within the City of Powell River in 2021 was \$67,000 (up from \$56,525 in 2015). Of areas A through D, qathet Regional District Area D had the lowest median in 2021, at \$54,000.²⁰



Current Experiences of Poverty

In 2020, 12.6% of individuals in the City of Powell River, and 14.3% of individuals across the qathet Regional District, are considered low income²¹ - that is 3,020 people in our region, including about 460 children under the age of 18.²²

There is a gender disparity between poverty experienced by men and women across ages. While low income is higher among women and girls across all ages, the disparity is especially high for girls under five years old across the Regional District (19.6%, vs. 14.4% for boys) and women 65 and older (18.5%, vs. 13.6 for men).²³ Data is not reported for non-binary or gender diverse residents.

According to the regional Poverty Reduction Strategy, in 2018 almost half (47.1%) of lone-parent households were low income (as defined by the Census Family Low Income After-Tax measure). Over a third (35.5%) of single-person households were low income.

Nearly 25% of all children in the region are low income. More than 60% of children in lone-parent families and 100% of teens who live independently are low income. Over 28% of seniors living alone are low income, compared to over 12% of all seniors.²⁴

Challenges Meeting Needs

In the Community Wellbeing Survey completed as part of the qathet Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy, 37.7% of survey respondents had challenges meeting their or their family's needs each month.²⁵ There was a direct link between income and the percentage of respondents indicating they face challenges - with over 70% of respondents with a household income of less than \$30,000 per year facing challenges.

29% of respondents never or rarely had enough money to cover unexpected one-time costs (e.g. car repair, medical bill, etc.) without feeling that it would impact their ability to pay their other monthly expenses.

Disability Rates

Disability assistance across British Columbia varies by family size and composition, from \$983.50 for a single person to \$1,953.50 for two-parent families where both parents are on disability support.²⁶



Food Programs

From July 2021 to Jun 2022, 724 individuals across 528 households used the food bank in Powell River. There were 2,671 visits to the food bank. Of individuals who visited the foodbank, 18% were children and 8% were seniors. In a month, there were (on average) 250 individuals in 180 households. Individuals visited an average of three times per year.

Clients had a diversity of income sources. The main income source for households was disability benefits (39% of households), income assistance (19%), Old Age Security (8%), and employment (8%). 2% of households had no income.²⁷

In addition, Lift's Food Pantry is used frequently by families throughout the week.

At Lift, the BOND (Babies Open New Doors) Program (Canada Prenatal NutriCon Program) had 15 women enrolled in 2022, about half prenatal clients and half postpartum. The Spring Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program²⁸ had 20 families enrolled, with 35 children.²⁹

Thriving

The Community Wellbeing Survey asked a number of questions about people's ability to thrive or live well.³⁰

Respondents were also asked how they would rate themselves on a wellbeing scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is barely surviving and 10 is fully thriving. The average score was 6.7. People facing challenges scored 5.1. Of all respondents, 12% ranked themselves at a four or lower.

When asked about the greatest assets in this community that support respondents' ability to thrive or live well, access to affordable and healthy food, access to affordable, safe and appropriate housing, and living wage (sufficient income) all scored the highest. These were closely followed by employment, friends and family and recreation opportunities. Access to affordable childcare scored the lowest.

In response to the question "What do you think are the three most important things that would support all people to thrive?" the top five answers were:

- Affordable and suitable housing (67%)
- Affordable healthy food (29%)
- Better wages (22%)
- Access to services (21%)
- Community connections (17%)

Cost of living was experienced as the greatest barrier all respondents face to make ends meet or thrive. For those experiencing challenges, lack of income was identified as the second barrier, followed by disability related issues, access to affordable, safe and appropriate housing, and access to employment. Other respondents identified lack of social connections as the second greatest barrier to make ends meet or thrive.

Those respondents who indicated experiencing barriers to access services were asked to indicate what services they were unable to access. The top five services mentioned were:

- Health and dental care
- Transportation
- Mental health services
- Support services (e.g. homecare and home maintenance)
- Recreation



Photo Credit: City of Powell River



Education + Learning

Photo Credit: Anji Smith

Family Place

Family Place is a family resource program run by Lift Community Services. Family Place offers a daily drop-in, structured programs, and support, resources, referrals and information for families with young children to promote optimal child development and increase family and community capacity.

Family Place currently provides services for about 15 to 20 families and 15 to 20 children a week during the drop-in hours. There are three drop-in times a week with five to 10 families visiting each day. Lift offers an outdoor program twice a month which has about eight to 10 families a session. Lift also offers a Baby Time Program once a month with approximately seven families and 10 children per session.³¹

Continuing Education

In the Vital Signs survey, ongoing learning was very important to 58% and important to 28% of respondents. 90% of respondents are currently or have previously taken a course, or regularly attend lectures, educational presentations, or panels.

Online continuing education and self-guided learning (e.g., books) are by far the most common way people are accessing continuing learning (71% and 70% of respondents), with significant numbers using in-person continuing education (45%) and informal in-person learning (39%).

38% of respondents are very or somewhat satisfied with opportunities to pursue ongoing learning and continuing education in the region, and 10% of respondents would like to but are not able to access continuing education.

Library Use

The Powell River Public Library opened the doors at its new location in July 2017 enabling the expansion of services, collections and space use including the addition of meeting rooms for programming and public use. The current library is almost 2.5 times the size and provides a wide variety of spaces for enjoyment and learning that were not available at the smaller location.

The digital collection has grown to over 87,000 titles (2022) from 74,800 titles (2016), and the physical collection has grown to 53,916 volumes (2022) from 46,852 volumes (2016).

The library navigated challenges in both 2020 and 2021, delivering services within the health restrictions of the pandemic and then navigating the impacts of a flood that partially closed the library for five months in 2021.³²

Enrolment + Graduation Rates

Enrolment in School District No. 47 has increased over time. As of 2021/2022, there are 3,174 students enrolled in public school in School District No. 47. Of these students, 13% (422) are Indigenous and 19% (604) have diverse abilities/disabilities.³³

Across all students in public school in the region, the completion rate (in six years) of high school is 79% (2020-2021).³⁴ The completion rate has been increasing over the last three years, from 71% in 2018/2019. The completion rate is significantly lower for Indigenous students (65%) and students who have diverse abilities/disabilities (52%).

Across the province, the completion rate (in six years) of high school is 90% (2020-2021), which has been steady over the last three years, from 89% in 2018/2019.³⁵

Dual Credit Programs

School District No. 47 has expanded the number of dual credit program offerings for students, as well as post-secondary partnerships. Options include dual credit programs like Carpentry, Welding, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education, and Health Care Assistant, as well as many different individual academic courses like English, Sociology, Psychology, Business, and Geography that can be used toward many different post-secondary certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

45 students are currently being supported through dual credit programming in their Grade 12 school year with 34 students taking full programs and 11 students taking individual post-secondary academic courses.³⁶

Post-Secondary Transition

The transition to post-secondary institutions rate is the percentage of students transitioning to post-secondary institutions in British Columbia within three years. There are slight variations from year-to-year, but pre-COVID transition rates remained fairly consistent for School District No. 47. There has been a recent decline in post-secondary enrolment within the past three years both locally and provincially. This decline has likely been influenced by restrictions and changes to programming due to COVID-19.³⁷

	<i>School District No. 47</i>	<i>British Columbia</i>
2016/2017	59%	68%
2017/2018	65%	67%
2018/2019	59%	65%
2019/2020	48%	59%
2020/2021	26%	44%



Survey Results

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, for those respondents planning on post-secondary education, 35% are not worried or somewhat worried about being able to afford it, 18% are worried but have a plan or options to pursue, and 47% are worried or very worried.

Respondents generally feel that there are enough post-secondary opportunities available: 53% felt that there are many or some options available and accessible, 26% felt that there are some options available but they are hard to access or not in the fields they are interested in, and 21% felt that there are very few or no post-secondary options available and accessible.

Vancouver Island University's tiwšɛmawtxw campus

Vancouver Island University's tiwšɛmawtxw Campus provides diverse educational opportunities for lifelong learners throughout the qathet region and beyond. Academic courses allow students from the area to stay home while completing their first years of study. Certificate and professional programs include Automotive Service, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Education Assistance and Community Support, and Health Care Assistance.

Specialized programming is delivered in response to local economic and social needs. Examples of this programming include the Heavy Equipment Operator Certificate Program for laid off mill workers, the Work Essential Skills and Training Program for peoples with diverse abilities, and an in-community delivery of the Early Childhood program in ʔišosəm for citizens of ʔaʔamɪn Nation. The campus also offers vocational

programming and Academic and Career Preparation programs.

The campus, formerly named after the City, was gifted the name tiwšɛmawtxw (pronounced too-shem-out) in fall 2022 by the ʔaʔamɪn Nation. This name, which means “House of Learning”, recognizes Vancouver Island University's commitment to reconciliation and inclusion of learners of all ages, identities, cultures, and backgrounds.

Enrollment at the tiwšɛmawtxw campus was 454 for the academic year 2020/21 and was 418 for the academic year 2021/22.³⁸ This comprises approximately 4% of Vancouver Island University's total student population.³⁹

Bullying + Safety

Students are experiencing being bullied at school, and the number decreases by grade. When answering the question, “Have you ever felt bullied at school”, the following share of students answered yes:⁴⁰

- Grade 4: 54%
- Grade 7: 46%
- Grade 10: 37%
- Grade 12: 36%

While most students feel safe at school. When answering the question “Do you feel safe at school”, the following share of students answered yes:

- Grade 4: 76%
- Grade 7: 81%
- Grade 10: 76%
- Grade 12: 80%



Survey Results

Preparation for Adulthood

Many respondents to the Youth Vital Signs Survey felt that their education had not prepared them for adult life - 47% felt not prepared at all or mostly not prepared. 26% of respondents felt mostly or definitely prepared.

“*[The topics I feel are a gap in my education are] domestic abuse, financial abuse, financial literacy, and Indigenous history.*

I feel like COVID has impacted my education level.

I need more life skills. How do I deal with banks? What does buying a car look like? What do taxes look like?”

Support at School

Respondents to the Youth Vital Signs Survey had a wide variety of experiences getting adequate support, help or resources to succeed at school. 42% have always or usually been able to access adequate help and supports, 26% have sometimes been able to, and 26% have rarely or never able to.

Education about Indigenous Peoples

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, when asked about the education they receive about Indigenous Peoples in school, most respondents (53%) felt that there is some amount of information taught but there are significant gaps or inaccuracies. The majority of the rest of respondents (27%) felt that there is a decent amount of true information taught, and Indigenous Peoples are well represented.

Sex Education

Many respondents to the Youth Vital Signs Survey were not satisfied with sex education they received at school: 47% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, and just 16% were somewhat or very satisfied.

When asked about their go-to source for information about sex, most respondents said friend or peers (77%), online forum (e.g., Discord, Reddit) (53%), online (other websites) (53%), and online sex-ed specific websites (e.g., Scarleteen, AMAZE, Planned Parenthood) (47%).



Climate Change + Environment

Ecological Footprint

An ecological footprint is an estimate of how much biologically productive land and water area an individual or population needs to produce all the resources it consumes and to absorb the wastes it generates.⁴¹ Based on current global population and biological productivity levels, an average of 1.7 global hectares (gha) is available for each person on the planet.

Results show that the City of Powell River's per capita footprint is 6.0 gha/person. This means that residents are consuming 3.5 times more of the Earth's resources than what is currently available. Put another way, this means that approximately 3.5 Earths would be required to support the global population if everyone had lifestyles comparable to a Powell River resident.⁴²



Territorial and Consumption-Based GHG Emission Inventories

A territorial inventory for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions includes emissions generated within the city - including buildings, transportation, and emissions associated with solid waste management. In 2016, emissions for Powell River were 7.0 tonnes CO₂ per person.

A consumption-based inventory includes all emissions from a territorial inventory, as well as emissions that result from the production and transport of all goods consumed within the region, as informed by life cycle assessment data. Using this calculation, in 2016, in the City of Powell River emissions were 12.6 tonnes CO₂ per person.

Across both calculations, transportation accounted for the majority of emissions (71% of the territorial emissions, and 59% of the consumption emissions), followed by buildings (21% of territorial emissions, and 18% of consumption emissions). Waste, food, consumables, and water accounted for the remainder of emissions.⁴³

Emission Reduction Targets

The City of Powell River had an interim emission reduction target of 18% in 2016 and 33% in 2020 compared to 2007 emissions. Community emissions are currently not in line with the targets and show an upward trend in both transportation and natural gas use. In 2016, community emissions in Powell River were 97% of 2007 emissions. In 2017, community emissions increased to 101% of 2007 emissions.

In 2019, the City of Powell River declared a Climate Emergency. Following that, the City Council directed staff to update the City's emission reduction targets to match the updated Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientific targets of a 45% reduction from 2010 levels by 2030, to reach net zero emissions in 2050.⁴⁴

Climate Changes

The qathet region will see a number of impacts from climate change. From the baseline historical period (1961-1990) to the 2050s, the region is projected to see:⁴⁵

- Increase in average temperature of 2.9C⁴⁶
- Increase of winter precipitation of 4.4%
- Decrease of summer precipitation of 11%

To the 2080s, the region is projected to see:

- Increase in average temperature of 4.7C
- Increase of winter precipitation of 12%
- Decrease of summer precipitation of 20%

Survey Results

Concern about climate change

Fifty percent (50%) of Vital Signs survey respondents (and 40% of Youth Vital Signs survey respondents) feel anxious or depressed due to often thinking about climate change impacting their vision or plans for their future, and an additional 40% (and 47% of youth) sometimes think about climate

change impacting their future. Just 5% of respondents (7% of youth) do not think about climate change impacting their future.

Respondents to the Vital Signs survey were most concerned about the following impacts of climate change.

Table 1: Respondents concerns about climate change impacts

	<i>Vital Signs Survey</i>	<i>Youth Vital Signs Survey</i>
Wildfires and air quality from smoke	38%	87%
Increased heat during the summer	37%	80%
Impacts on growing food	36%	80%
Impacts on the ecosystem	33%	67%
Impacts to their children, grandchildren, or their grandchildren's children	38%	(not asked)
Disproportionate impacts on people in more vulnerable places (e.g., the Global South)	22%	47%
Impacts to the water supply	16%	73%
Increased flooding	4%	73%
Impacts to physical health	13%	67%
Increased severity of storms during the winter	13%	67%
Sea level rise	13%	60%
Impacts to mental health (e.g., stress from emergencies, climate grief)	8%	60%
Impacts to Indigenous peoples (e.g., impacts to harvesting traditional food)	10%	47%

Energy Poverty Rates

Energy poverty is a high home energy cost burden (households spending 6% or more on home energy costs). In the City of Powell River, 24% of households experience energy poverty (2016). In the qathet Regional District, it is even higher: 27% in Electoral Area B; and 36% in Electoral Area C (data is not available for the other electoral areas). This is higher than the 15% of households who experience energy poverty across British Columbia.

In the City of Powell River, median home energy expenditure is \$150 per month (2016). It is slightly higher in the qathet Regional District - \$152 per month in Electoral Area B, and \$159 per month in Electoral Area C.⁴⁷ This is slightly higher than the province, where the average home energy expenditure is \$130 per month.⁴⁸





Photo Credit: First Credit Union

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 35% of respondents selected health and wellness as one of their top three priorities for the region, and was the third top priority.

Impact from COVID-19

In December 2020, in answer to a community survey from the Powell River Division of Family Practice, the majority of respondents rated the impact of COVID-19 as having an impact of between four and seven (where 1 is very negative and 10 is very positive) - showing that COVID-19 is not having a significant negative or positive impact on their daily life

so far. A larger share of respondents reported than COVID-19 had a negative impact (27% of respondents) compared to summer 2020 (16% of respondents).

For those negatively impacted, they said the highest impact was feeling disconnected from family and friends due to COVID-19 (86% of participants). The majority of participants also worried about loved ones getting sick, and were worried about getting sick. Other stressors included feeling alone and isolated, feeling frustrated with government restrictions, financial stress, and more.

49% of survey participants caring for school-age children reported their child/children's mental health has significantly worsened during the pandemic.⁴⁹



Health + Wellness

Across the North Shore/Garibaldi Health Region (which includes this region), 70% of people reported their perceived health as excellent or very good, and 6.4% reported their perceived health as fair or poor.⁵⁰

Survey Results

From the Vital Signs survey, for those who responded to this section, we learned:

- Physical wellness: 47% feel consistently or often fulfilled and healthy
- Social wellness: 43% feel consistently or often fulfilled and healthy
- Emotional wellness: 51.2% feel consistently or often fulfilled and healthy
- Spiritual wellness: 57% feel consistently or often fulfilled and healthy

ł̓aʔamin

From the ł̓aʔamin Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned:

- 20% of youth and 70% of Elders say the care they receive outside of ł̓aʔamin is free from racism and discrimination
- 48% of members said they had to travel to meet basic health needs
- 65% of members said that trauma prevents them or members of their family from being healthy as they could be
- 84% of members said that anxiety and depression are among family and friends
- 63% of members overall and 36% of members under 30 said that they have regular opportunities to be out on the territory
- 65% of members said that they regularly practice traditional wellness (such as cleansing, plant medicines, etc.)

Hospital Services

qathet Regional General Hospital⁵¹ is a 33-bed facility with a Surgical Department, a Department of Anesthesiology, Family Medicine Department, Emergency Department, a Maternity Ward and an intensive care unit (ICU). There are no palliative care beds in the community. The hospital has a number of specialty clinic services including Oncology Clinic, Renal Dialysis (managed by Providence Health Care), Ambulatory Care Clinic and an Endoscopy Clinic.

In 2017/2018 the Hospital provided 2,975 day procedures, or a rate of 143.4 per 1000 residents, which is significantly higher than the rest of British Columbia that has a rate of 91.0.⁵²

Paramedical Services

Most respondents to the Vital Signs survey access paramedical services (e.g., massage therapy, physiotherapy, chiropractor, therapist, etc.) either one to a few times a month (24%) or once to a few times a year (35%), with 37% accessing these services less than once a year and 4% who access once to a few times a week.



Access to Health Care

In 2018, 13% of respondents to the Unattachment Survey reported that they are unattached from a primary care provider. This translated to approximately 2,610 residents at the time. This is similar to the unattachment number of 2,538 provided by the Ministry of Health in August 2019. Between 2011 and 2018, access to a primary care provider decreased by 26%.

Unattached respondents were more likely to be 20 to 34 years old, and less likely to be 65 or older; were more likely to live outside of the city and to have lived in their community for less than five years; were more likely to live alone; and were less likely to be able to access medical care when needed.⁵³

COVID-19 changed access to health care, with health care practitioners offering virtual appointments. 83% of respondents who recently received care from a family doctor or nurse practitioner through a virtual appointment report it was an effective way to address their concern.⁵⁴

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 16% of respondents felt they experience no barriers to accessing health care services. 68% felt that there are some or a few barriers, and 16% experience many barriers or only experience barriers and are unable to access healthcare services.

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, 29% of respondents felt they experience no barriers to accessing health care services. 59% felt that there were some or a few barriers, and 12% experience many barriers to health care services.

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, 30% of respondents who use substances felt safe disclosing all of their substance use to health care professionals, and 50% felt safe disclosing some, but not all of their substance use (e.g., alcohol but not MDMA).



Mental Health

Across the North Shore/Garibaldi Health Region, 66% of people self-report their mental health as excellent or very good, and 11% as fair or poor. Over 22% of people report their life stress as quite a bit or extremely stressful most days.⁵⁵

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, when asked specifically about mental health care services, 10% of respondents felt that there are no barriers, 56% felt that there are some or a few barriers, and 34% experience many barriers or only barriers, and are unable to access mental healthcare services.

For respondents to the Youth Vital Signs survey, 18% felt that there are no barriers, 35% felt that there are some or a few barriers, and 47% experienced many barriers or only experience barriers to mental health care services.

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, 71% of respondents have experienced passive suicidal ideation (where you think about, but don't plan, your own death), and 41% of respondents have experienced active

suicidal ideation (where you plan your own death).

We asked how mental health impacts various aspects of life in the Youth Vital Signs survey. Respondents mostly felt that their mental health did not negatively affect or did affect but they were able to manage it well in school (59%), relationships with peers (65%), relationships with family (47%), and life in general (47%).

Youth respondents' work/life was the most impacted by their mental health - while 50% of respondents felt that they were able to manage their mental health for work, 50% of respondents felt that their mental health can impact their work/job negatively.

“Mental health services do their best but they are not accessible enough, the wait time for a counsellor or psychiatrist is often months, by the time a client is able to get into the system they may not even be alive.

Emergency mental health services should be doing more than directing people in crisis to 911, where they are often traumatized by RCMP response instead of medical health.

”



Drug Poisoning Crisis

Canada is facing a national drug poisoning crisis that continues to have devastating impacts on communities and families. We are not removed from this crisis in the qathet region. In fact, we have one of the highest deaths from drug toxicity in the province.

The drug poisoning crisis is escalating. In 2021, the illicit drug toxicity death rate (per 100,000 person-years) in Powell River was 86.4 (18 deaths) - which has almost doubled in three years (it was 57.7 in 2020, 24.2 in 2019, and 43.7 in 2018). This rate is higher than other comparable communities: Alberni/Clayoquot had a death rate of 62; and Kamloops had a rate of 68.3 in 2021. It is also higher than across the province, which had a death rate of 43.6 in 2021 (an increase from 31.2 in 2018, 19.4 in 2019, and 34.3 in 2020).⁵⁶

Survey Results

Neurodivergency

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, 41% of respondents identify as neurodivergent, that is, their brain works in ways different from how society is set up to share and receive information (e.g., they are autistic, ADHD, dyslexic, etc.).

Chronic Conditions

The Powell River Local Health Authority has a higher rate of people living with illness and chronic conditions (51% of the population), than Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (38%), or in British Columbia (42%). Powell River Local Health Authority also has a higher rate of people towards the end of life (1.8%, as compared to 1.2% and 1.2%).⁵⁷

Racial Discrimination in Accessing Healthcare

The In Plain Sight (IPS) report found that Indigenous-specific stereotyping, racism and discrimination exist in the British Columbia health care system. Only 16% of all Indigenous IPS respondents reported not being discriminated against when receiving health care.⁵⁸

As a result of this stereotyping, Indigenous people experience harm, poorer quality of care and even death. Another result of stereotyping, profiling and discrimination is mistrust and avoidance of the health care system by Indigenous people, and anticipatory behaviours and strategies to avoid discriminatory treatment.

At the time of writing, Vancouver Coastal Health is studying racism in health care experiences in the health region.

Survey Results

Youth Substance Use

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, we asked, if they use substances and what effect they feel it has on various aspects of their life.

	<i>Positive Impact</i>	<i>Negative Impact</i>
Social life	62%	31%
School work	42%	33%
Mental health	25%	25%
Relationship with family	25%	42%

Abuse Experienced by Youth

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, many youth said they have experienced abuse. We asked if they had experienced the following:

	<i>Date or partner</i>	<i>Peer or friend</i>	<i>Parent, guardian, or other adult family</i>	<i>Sibling or other family similar in age</i>	<i>Coworker or boss/supervisor at work</i>
Emotional abuse: someone who consistently used emotions to criticize, embarrass, shame, blame, or otherwise manipulate them	53%	55%	58%	25%	16%
Physical abuse: someone who intentionally acted or behaved in ways causing injury, trauma, or other physical suffering or bodily harm	26%	15%	11%	25%	5%
Sexual assault: sexually touched or contacted you in ways that were not wanted by you	42%	20%	11%	11%	0%
Was supposed to provide for you (e.g., a parent or a caregiver) but did not provide the care necessary	-	-	33%	-	0



Housing

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 58% of respondents selected housing as one of their top three priorities for the region, and was the top priority selected.

The majority of Vital Signs survey respondents (77%) will definitely or are very likely to stay living in qathet region in the future. Just 8% of respondents will definitely or likely move away from the region.



Affordability, Adequacy + Suitability

According to the 2021 qathet Regional Housing Needs Report, 18.7% of all households are struggling with affordability (spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs), 7.1% of all households have housing that needs major repair (i.e., is inadequate), and 2.6% of all households are in housing that is too small (i.e., not suitable, does not have enough bedrooms for the household members).⁵⁹

Housing Unit Choice

The majority of housing is single-detached homes - 78% of units in the region. 9.7% of units are apartments, 3.5% of units are in a “duplex” (e.g., basement suite), and 4.9% of units are movable dwellings (e.g., mobile homes). The remainder are semi-detached houses, and row houses.⁶⁰

Housing Units Needed

The Housing Needs Report projected that the region will need between 789 and 1,458 new units by 2026:

- Electoral Area A: 32 units
- Electoral Area B: 31 units
- Electoral Area C: 22 units
- Electoral Area D: 47 units
- City of Powell River: between 581 and 1,251 units
- Ła?amin Nation: 76 units

Tenure

Across the region, 22% of households are renters and 77% are owners, and 1% live in band housing. All areas across the qathet region have a lower proportion of renters and a higher proportion of owners than the average across British Columbia, which includes 33% renters, 67% owners, 0.5% band housing. The city of Powell River and Electoral Area C have the highest proportion of renters, at 25% and 23% of households respectively.⁶¹

Experiences of Homelessness

Current homelessness⁶² counts in the region are unknown due to difficulties tracking and reporting. Anecdotally, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness is reported as increasing in recent years. There are approximately 140 people currently needing extra supports while living in vulnerable and precarious housing.

People experiencing homelessness often experience discrimination. In particular, across British Columbia Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness have significant experiences of racism, stigmatization, social profiling, and discrimination.⁶³

Non-Market Housing

In the City of Powell River there are 383 independent social housing units and rent assistance units, as well as 44 people housed in supportive housing, 40 supportive seniors housing units, 21 accessible housing units, and nine units for women and children fleeing violence. Lifecycle Housing owns and manages 12, two-bedroom cottages in Brew Bay for affordable housing.⁶⁴

Rental Housing

In October 2021, average rent (for purpose-built units) across the qathet region⁶⁵ was \$872, ranging from an average of \$592 for studio units to \$904 for 3+ bedroom units. The vacancy rate was low, at 0.6%.⁶⁶ For all units across qathet, as of 2021, total shelter costs for rented units was \$987 and 35.5% of renter households were spending more than 30% of their income on rent, making housing unaffordable.

Survey Results

A majority of renters (63%) who answered the Vital Signs survey think it is unlikely or that they have no prospects of owning a home in the future. 23% believe that they have likely good or good prospects of owning a home.

Who is Buying and Selling Homes

Over 2021, 62% of people buying homes were from outside of the region. Of those, 63% were buying for a principal residence, 19% were buying as an investment, and 19% were buying raw land. Most of these buyers (52%) were from the area from Hope to Squamish, with lower but significant numbers from the Lower Sunshine Coast (16%), and Vancouver Island (13%).⁶⁷

Prices for Owned Homes

The average price for a single family home sold in 2021 was \$584,372, an increase of 27.3% from 2020. The average price for a condo/townhome/duplex in 2021 was \$584,372 – an increase of 31.5% from 2020 – and for a mobile or manufactured home it was \$236,070 – and increase of 36.8%.

There were 322 single family homes, 70 condo/townhome/duplex homes, and 36 mobile or manufactured homes sold in 2021.⁶⁸

Property Tax Deferrals

In 2022, 363 property owners applied for property tax deferment.⁶⁹



Photo Credit: City of Powell River

Survey Results

Youth + Housing

Most youth who answered the Youth Vital Signs survey think it is unlikely they will own a home in the future - 16% believe they have likely good or good prospects of owning a home. The majority of youth - 53% - think it is unlikely or that they have no prospects of owning a home.

Youth have a variety of perspectives if they will be able to afford to move out. 35% of respondents felt they are relatively sure they will be able to move out when they are ready to, 25% felt they will likely have a short delay due to costs, 15% felt

they will likely have a long delay, and 25% are not sure if they will ever be able to move out.

Some youth are planning on staying in qathet/Powell River as an adult - 15% are planning on staying, and 30% want to stay but are planning on moving permanently or temporarily due to opportunities and other factors. 35% of respondents don't want to stay in the qathet region or Powell River as an adult.



Photo Credit: City of Powell River



Belonging + Connection

Sense of Belonging

Across the North Shore/Garibaldi Health Region (which includes this region), 76% of people feel a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging to their local community, and 95% are satisfied or very satisfied with life.⁷⁰

ᑭᐱᐱᐱᐱ

From the ᑭᐱᐱᐱᐱ Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned:

- 32% of members in ᑭᐱᐱᐱᐱ and 60% of members living outside ᑭᐱᐱᐱᐱ felt that the community they live in supports gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people
- 70% of members said that they have regular opportunities to learn the language

Survey Results

Dignity + Belonging

In the Vital Signs survey, we asked respondents about their level of fulfillment in a number of aspects of dignity and belonging:

- Bodily autonomy (I experience the freedom to make decisions about my body without force or coercion): 71% feel often or consistently fulfilled in this aspect
- Sense of purpose (I feel like I work towards things that are meaningful to me and have a positive impact on the world): 65%
- Sense of home (I feel like I belong where I live): 63%
- Sense of routine (I have meaningful daily practices): 59%
- Love of self (I nurture myself with the things I need): 55%
- Hope (I have an expectation of positive outcomes): 49%
- Relief from suffering (I feel I am respected and am treated with dignity): 48%
- Community connection (I feel I have good connections to friends and neighbours and I feel like I am part of a community): 45%
- Being understood (when I share information, I feel the person I am speaking to understands what I am trying to say): 44%

Seniors + Social Isolation

Of seniors who answered the Vital Signs survey, 65% feel very or usually satisfied with their social connections.

Newcomers to qathet Region

Across the qathet Region, 27% of people moved to a different city, town, township, village, or reserve in the period from 2016 to 2021. Most of these (83%) moved within British Columbia. The remainder moved from another province (12%) or another country (5%).⁷¹

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, newcomers to the qathet region (within the last five years) struggled with having a sense of belonging (55% found it very difficult or somewhat difficult), getting work or employment (38% found it difficult), or meeting other people and feeling connected with other members of their community (33%).

“ I can't pin-point where I have seen [gender discrimination], its like its hidden everywhere I look, like a invisible snake. ”



Experiences of Discrimination

We asked a number of questions about discrimination in the Vital Signs survey and the Youth Vital Signs survey.

	<i>Vital Signs Survey</i>	<i>Youth Vital Signs Survey</i>	
Racial Discrimination	60% of racialized respondents occasionally experience racism in the community.	Witnessed or experienced racial discrimination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% at school • 67% with friends • 50% at work • 42% at home 	
Gender Discrimination	<i>Not asked in survey.</i>	Witnessed or experienced gender discrimination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% at school • 71% with friends • 43% at work • 34% at home 	
Homophobia + Transphobia	78% of respondents who identify as two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, plus (2SLGBTQ+) regularly or occasionally experience homophobia in the community.	Witnessed or experienced homophobia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% at school • 64% with friends • 50% at work • 43% at home 	Witnessed or experienced transphobia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% at school • 47% with friends • 60% at work • 40% at home
Ableism	65% of respondents who are people with disabilities regularly or occasionally experience ableism in the community.	Witnessed or experienced ableism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% at school • 46% with friends • 39% at work • 46% at home 	
Indigenous Experiences	Over 80% of Indigenous respondents reported that their experience in the community has gotten worse since before the process to potentially change the name of the City of Powell River started.	20% of respondents who identify as Indigenous had regularly experienced racism about their identity or when practicing their culture, and 60% of respondents had rarely experienced racism.	
Substance Use	People who use substances to cope with pain, mental health, or daily living have a variety of feelings of acceptance in the community, spread evenly from “I do not feel accepted and face significant stigma or discrimination” to “I feel fully accepted as myself”.	<i>Not asked in survey.</i>	

Survey Results

Youth Social + Group Activities

The respondents to the Youth Vital Signs survey enjoy a wide variety of activities with other groups of people. The top activities include: hanging out with friends (94%), cooking/baking (69%), hiking (69%), volunteering (57%), music (50%), hobbies (e.g., building models) (50%), gardening (50%), and art (50%).

Most youth felt that there are groups and social events catering to their preferred activities that are welcoming for them - 56% felt that there are definitely groups that are welcoming or somewhat welcoming. 31% felt that there are rarely groups or no groups for activities they enjoy doing.

Safety + Support of Youth

The majority of youth answering the Youth Vital Signs survey always (45%) or usually (35%) feel safe at home. There are some youth who sometimes feel safe (15%) or never feel safe (5%) at home.

Most youth feel they have people in their life that they can turn to for encouragement, support, and personal growth. 15% said they have many people, and 50% said they have quite a few people. Many participants want more people: 5% said they have some people but want more, 20% said they have a few people but don't feel like they receive enough encouragement and support, and 10% said they have no or very few people in their life who encourage and support them.

While youth generally feel that they were able to express and be themselves at home (69% feel encouraged or safe to be fully themselves) and with friends (88% feel encouraged and safe to be fully themselves), this experience is lower at school (31% feel encouraged and safe to be fully themselves, and 44% feel safe only sometimes).

Neighbourhood Block Party Grants

Block Party is a gathering of people who want to celebrate and strengthen their neighbourhood's feeling of togetherness. The City of Powell River provides Neighbourhood Party Grants. They provided 30 grants in 2018, 18 in 2019, and 14 in 2021 (the program was put on hold in 2020 due to COVID).⁷²





Civic + Community Involvement

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, respondents varied widely in how much they felt able to be heard on issues that are important to them in the region. 3% were very satisfied, and 30% were satisfied, 23% were unsatisfied, while 16% were very unsatisfied (27% of respondents were neutral).

In the Youth Vital Signs survey, respondents also varied in how much they felt they have a voice in what happens in the region - 13% were very satisfied, and 38% were satisfied, 19% were unsatisfied, while 25% were very unsatisfied (6% of respondents were neutral).

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From the ᑭᐱᐱᐱᐱ Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned that 56% of members over 30 and 28% of members under 30 felt they had opportunities to weigh in on decisions that impact community wellness.

Local Government Election Voter Turnout

In 2022, 5,251 voters, 47% of eligible voters, voted in the municipal election in Powell River.⁷³ This has been consistent over time: 45% (2011), 43% (2014), and 47% (2018).⁷⁴

In qathet Regional District, 1,405 voters (25% of eligible voters) voted in 2022 for the Regional District Board. This was lower than previous elections. 1,748 voters (45% of eligible voters) voted in 2018 for the Regional District Board, which was higher than in previous elections, where the turnout was 32% (2008), 13% (2011), and 31% (2014).

Provincial Election Voter Turnout

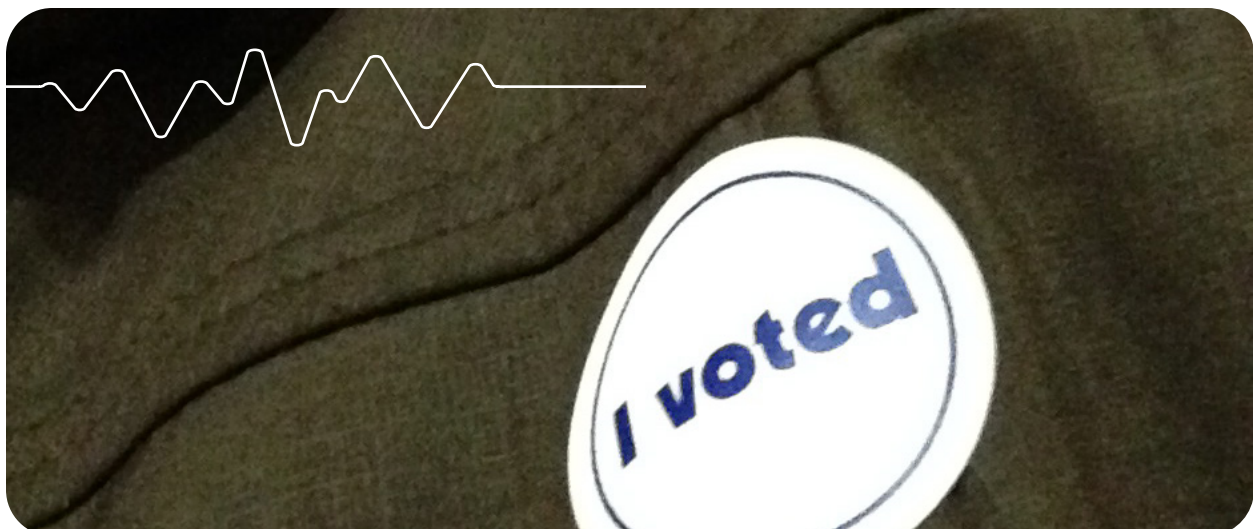
In 2020, 60% of eligible voters across the Powell River-Sunshine Coast riding voted. Voters aged 25-34 had the lowest participation rate, at 36%, while voters aged 65 to 74 had the highest participation rate, at 76%. This was a marked decrease in participation from 2017, where 70% of eligible voters in the riding voted; in the 2013 election, the participation rate was 63%.⁷⁵

Federal Election Voter Turnout

In 2021, 60,684 people, or 65% of eligible voters across the North Island-Powell River riding voted. This was a decline from 70% in 2019, and 75% in 2015. In the 2011 and 2008 elections, Powell River was part of the West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country riding, which saw 63% turnout in both of the 2011 and 2008 elections.⁷⁶

Charitable Donations

Since 2010, the number and percentage of people in Powell River making charitable donations has decreased, from 3,130 donors (24% of tax filers) in 2010, to 2,690 (19% of tax filers) in 2018; 2,570 (19%) in 2019; and 2,530 donors (18%) in 2020. The median donation has increased, from \$330 in 2010 to \$430 (2018); and steady at \$450 in 2019 and 2020.⁷⁷





Arts + Culture

Arts

The qathet region is home to artists who practice across disciplines including the literary arts, visual arts, media arts, musical arts, theatre arts, fibre arts, dance, and graphic arts, to name a few.

The qathet region is home to almost 20 different art galleries, including qathet Art

Centre (a public gallery), Tidal Art Centre, Turadh Fine Art, and Wind Spirit Gallery.

The qathet Art Council was established in 2007 and works to support diverse artistic and cultural activities; enables accessible education through the arts; and advocates for artists, arts, and culture organizations.⁷⁸

Culture

Cultural festivals in Powell River include the International Choral Kathaumixw, PRISMA (Pacific Region International Summer Music Association) Festival and Academy, and Townsite Jazz Festival.

The qathet Museum and Archives changed its name from the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives in April, 2022. The Museum's mission is "to continue to engage visitors by providing exciting educational programming that ensures publicly accessible collections, and inclusive and informative exhibits." It offers in-person and online exhibits.

The Patricia Theatre is the longest running movie theatre in Canada. It opened in 1913. It was named, through a contest, after the daughter of Governor General, the Duke of Connaught's daughter, Patricia.⁷⁹ The Patricia offers Hollywood box office films and art house productions.

Performing arts spaces in the region include: the Max Cameron Theatre (at Brooks Secondary), the Patricia Theatre, James Hall, the Evergreen Theatre, and Cranberry Hall.

Kathaumixw International Choral Festival

The International Choral Kathaumixw is a five day choral festival filled with concerts, common song singing, choral and vocal solo competitions, conductor's seminars and social events. The festival, which occurs every two years, is a place where all can learn from each other and from world renowned choral personalities. The festival attracts over 1,200 singers worldwide.⁸⁰

PRISMA

PRISMA is a two week festival and academy that brings world-renowned guest artists and top international music students for two weeks of musical exploration by the sea.⁸¹ It is attended by over 5,000 people each year.⁸²

Townsite Jazz Festival

Townsite Jazz Festival was founded in 2017, and aims to attract some of Canada's finest jazz musicians to Powell River, with a mission to entertain a coastal community and inspire a new generation of artists.⁸³ Attendance for 2022 was over 2,000 (1,500 ticketed concerts, 100 free concerts, 800 school concerts (kindergarten to grade 12)). There were almost 450 participants across professionals and student groups (both from in and out of town).⁸⁴

Blackberry Festival

In 2022 we welcomed back the Blackberry Festival, sponsored by the Marine Area Business Association. Residents and visitors enjoyed entertainment and music, great food, local shopping, and a fireworks display.



Survey Results

Engagement with Arts + Culture

In the Vital Signs survey, people engage with arts and culture in a variety of ways in the region. The most common were:

- Attending cultural celebrations (63%)
- Attending concerts (60%)
- Attending art exhibits (55%)
- Visiting art galleries (49%)
- Buying art (45%)
- Creating art (44%)

Satisfaction with Arts + Culture

In the Vital Signs survey, 60% of people were very or usually satisfied with their experience of arts and culture in the qathet region. Just 6% were usually not satisfied or not satisfied at all.

For people creating or working in arts and culture, 31% were very or usually satisfied with the funding of arts and culture in the qathet region. 38% were sometimes satisfied, and 31% were usually not or not satisfied at all.

People were mostly satisfied with the diversity of arts and culture in the qathet region: 47% were very or usually satisfied, and just 17% were usually not or not satisfied at all.





Filming in qathet

Hollywood is coming to the qathet region and there are films already screening that were shot here.

Bones of Crows, a selection at both the Toronto International Film Festival and the Vancouver International Film Festival, is based on the true stories of residential school survivors and includes an ʔayʔaʔuθəm speaking character. A local ʔaʔamɪn Nation citizen acted as the cultural consultant to the film. This film is becoming a mini series, for release in 2023.

Exile is a mystery/thriller starring Adam Beach that was filmed in Powell River City Hall, Cran Bar, Black Point Grocery, Skeeter Jacks and Okeover Inlet. Production in the region ended in November 2021. It premiered at the Whistler Film Festival in December 2022.⁸⁵

Grant Funding

There were six arts and culture organizations who received a total of \$371,954 in funding from provincial grants in Powell River, including \$247,354 in Capital Project Grants and \$124,600 in Community Gaming Grants.

The largest recipient was Powell River (now qathet) Film Society, who received a Capital Project Grant as well as a Community Gaming Grant for media arts. Other recipients included the Powell River Academy of Music, PRISMA, qathet Art Council, Townsite Heritage Society, and Malaspina Art Society.⁸⁶



Sports + Recreation

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 60% of people were very or usually satisfied with their experience of sports and recreation in the qathet region. 3% were usually not satisfied or not satisfied at all.

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From the ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ Health, Wellness, and Healing Plan survey, we learned that 58% of members said that they actively participate in recreation and physical activities that bring their teachings to life.

Recreation Programs

In Fall 2022, the City of Powell River ran the following recreation programs:⁸⁷

- 112 aquatic programs, ranging in age from infants (four to 12 months) to seniors
- 37 fitness programs
- Nine skate programs
- 27 other programs (e.g., life skills, first aid, mushroom picking)

There were 5,904 registrations in recreation programs in 2019.⁸⁸

From 2019 to 2021, entries increased. In 2019, there were 250,432 entries through the west entrance, decreasing to 218,560 in 2020 (due to COVID), increasing to 333,823 in 2021.^{89 90}

Survey Results

Access to Parks + Nature

Over half of respondents (52%) to the Vital Signs survey use green spaces, parks, trails, or access nature once a day or more, and 39% of people once to a few times a week.

Survey respondents identified 40 different favourite green spaces, parks, or natural spaces (in addition to general answers, such as the forest, lakes, or other places). The space identified by the most people was the Sunshine Coast Trail (18 people), followed closely by Willingdon Beach and trails (16 people). Other favourite locations included Inland Lake, Powell Lake, Haslam Lake, Millennium Park and trails, sea walk, Penticton trails, Duck Lake and trails, and Stillwater Bluffs.



Photo Credit: Anji Smith

Survey Results

Indoor Activities

Indoor recreation activities (e.g., indoor climbing, going to the gym, going to the swimming pool, using indoor sports courts, etc.) are popular among respondents to the Vital Signs survey, but less popular than outdoor activities.

Of respondents, 4% participate in indoor recreation once a day or more, 17% participate once to a few times a week, 24% participate once to a few times a month, and 17% once to a few times a year. A large number of people (38%) participate in indoor recreation less than once a year.

For people who participate in indoor activities, swimming (48%) and yoga (38%) are the most popular. Other activities include using the weight room (17%), group fitness classes (e.g., HIT (high intensity training), spin, power circuit) (15%), individual cardio (13%), Tai Chi and Qigong (13%), and ice skating (10%).



Photo Credit: Anji Smith

Outdoor Activities

Respondents to the Vital Signs survey are active: 40% participate in outdoor recreation (e.g., walking, running, hiking, mountain biking, all terrain vehicles (ATV-ing), hunting, etc.) once a day or more, and 46% participate once to a few times a week. 13% participate less than once a week.

By far the most popular activity to enjoy in the outdoors is walking (70% of respondents), followed by hiking (48%), swimming (35%), and camping (28%). Participation in other activities includes kayaking (17%), mountain biking (10%), foraging (12%), canoeing (8%), and road biking (7%).

Organized Sports

Fewer people responding to the Vital Signs survey participate in organized sports than in other recreation: 12% participate once to a few times a week, and 13% participate once to a few times a year - all other respondents participate less than once a year.

For people who do participate in organized sports, the top organized sports are soccer (43%), followed by hockey (24%), ultimate frisbee (19%), and tennis (14%).

Trail Network

There are 519 trails identified over the region, with over 1,000 km of existing trails over 12 areas (Duck Lake, Gallagher Hill, Hammil Lake, Knuckleheads Winter Recreation Area, Malaspina, Penticton Maze, Savary Island, South Powell Divide, Suncoast Trails, Texada Island, ʔamɪn, Willingdon).^{91 92}

Trail Building

There are a number of trail building groups in the qathet region including PAWS (Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society), dedicated to building and maintaining the Sunshine Coast Trail; Chain Gang, Bomb Squad, Maze Men, and qathet Regional Cycling Association, groups who build and maintain mountain bike and hiking trails; and Knuckleheads Winter Recreation Association, dedicated to alpine recreation.

Kids Sports

There are a number of sports organizations for kids, including:

- Powell River Aquatic Club
- Powell River Gymnastics and Circus Arts
- Powell River Minor Baseball Association
- Powell River Youth Soccer Association
- Powell River Minor Hockey Association

Sports Hall of Fame

The Powell River Sports Hall of Fame celebrates and honors the athletic achievements of current and former Powell River residents that have made a lasting impact on the local, national and international sporting scene.

It is located in the upper foyer at the Powell River Recreation Complex. The first Sports Hall of Fame induction took place in 2018.⁹³

Sports Grants

There were five sports organizations in the region who received a total of \$267,300 in funding from provincial grants, including \$114,000 in Capital Project Grants and \$153,000 in Community Gaming Grants.

The largest recipient was the Powell River Curling Club, who received a Capital Project Grant as well as a Community Gaming Grant. Other recipients included the Minor Hockey Association, Gymnastics Society, Youth Soccer Association, and Kings Hockey Club Society.⁹⁴



Photo Credit: Anji Smith

A photograph of a child wearing a blue helmet and a yellow shirt, riding an orange bicycle on a paved road. In the background, a silver pickup truck is driving away. The scene is framed by a blue border with a white heartbeat line at the top.

Transportation

Photo Credit:
City of Powell River

Mode of Transportation

In 2016 across the region, 79% of people drove a car, truck, or van to work. An additional 6% were a passenger in a car, truck, or van. 8% of people walked, 2.3% used public transit, 1.1% bicycled, and 3.3% used another method. Walking, public transit,

and bicycling rates were slightly higher in the City of Powell River. Compared to the province, more people drove a car, truck, or van; and walked. Fewer people used public transit or bicycled.⁹⁵

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, walking and driving were the most used transportation methods.

- **Walking:** 49% of respondents walked once a day or more, and 21% walked once to a few times a week. Just 5% walked less than once a year.
- **Driving a car, truck, or van:** 36% of respondents drove once a day or more, and 46% drove once to a few times a week.
- **Ferry:** Most respondents (68%) used a ferry once to a few times a year. 25% of respondents used a ferry once to a few times a month.
- **Bicycle or e-bike:** Occasional use of bikes was common: while just 3% of respondents biked once a day or more, more biked once to a few times a week (13%), once to a few times a month (11%), or once to a few times a year (17%).
- **Public transit:** No respondents use public transit every day, but quite a few use public transit occasionally: 7% use public transit once to a few times a week, 6% once to a few times per month, and 19% once to a few times a year.

Fuel Usage + Emissions

Total emissions from fuel (from across qathet, including gasoline and diesel, excluding commercial cardlock stations) stayed relatively consistent from 2007 to 2018. In 2018, the total gasoline used was 13.1 million litres and the total diesel used was 1.1 million litres - an equivalent of 33,888 tonnes of CO2 emissions.⁹⁶



Photo Credit: City of Powell River

Public Transit

In 2019, there were 226,356 rides on British Columbia Transit in the region. This decreased during 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to 129,109 rides. In 2021, ridership increased to 147,743 rides.⁹⁷

On Handydart, there were typically over 500 rides per month in 2021, ranging from 302 (April) to 611 (June), serving 276 registrants (as of October 2021).⁹⁸

	2019	2020	2021
Route 1 - Townsite/Wildwood	113,850 rides (50%)	65,101 rides (50%)	78,807 rides (53%)
Route 2 - Grief Point	68,457 (30%)	41,075 (32%)	41,888 (28%)
Route 3 - Upper Westview	29,623 (13%)	16,426 (13%)	17,524 (12%)
Route 1 - School Special	14,426 (6%)	6,507 (5%)	9,524 (6%)

Zunga Bus

Zunga Bus is a pilot on-demand public transit service that currently provides door-to-door service. The Zunga Bus costs \$2.25 to ride - the same as British Columbia Transit. It has eight in-service hours every day of the week and covers central and south Powell River. Hotspots for pick-up and drop-off locations include the Recreation Centre, the Town Centre Mall, Crossroads Village/Library, Airport, the commercial land use in upper Westview, Powell River Christian School, and Westview Elementary/Vancouver Island University.⁹⁹

From January 11 to November 25, 2021, a total of 1,373 user accounts were created. 472 users who took at least one trip and 283 users who took more than one trip across July, August, and September.¹⁰⁰ The maximum number of rides per hour is 22 passengers. For most of its service hours, Zunga Bus carries between one to nine passengers.

Survey Results

Satisfaction with Public Transit

Of respondents to the Vital Signs Survey, many people are not satisfied with public transportation in the region. Almost half (47%) are not satisfied at all or not very satisfied with public transportation, and just 18% or mostly or very satisfied.

Respondents to the Youth Vital Signs survey were more satisfied with public transportation: 47% are very satisfied, and 27% were somewhat satisfied. 20% were not satisfied. We asked how transportation could be improved to better meet their needs. Youth wanted improved bus schedules (especially increased frequency of buses), expanding bus route coverage (especially to rural areas), and free or more affordable bus fares.

Bicycle Network

Since 2015, the following bike lanes have been added to the City's bicycle network:¹⁰¹

- Manson Ave bike from Duncan St to Kemano St (one km)
- Manson Avenue from Joyce Avenue to Mitchell Brothers store (2.2 km)

BC Ferries

Round Trips

There are three ferry routes servicing the region. In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, the Powell River to Comox route had 2,868.5 round trips (an average of 55 per week) and a 49.6% capacity utilization. The Earls Cove to Saltery Bay route had 2,868.5 round trips (an average of 55 per week) and a 34.7% capacity utilization. The Powell River to Texada route had 2,946.5 round trips (an average of 57 per week), and a 42.1% capacity utilization.¹⁰²

Fares

For service between Powell River and Comox, a passenger cost \$14.10 and a standard vehicle cost \$44.15 (as of July 1, 2022). This is a decrease in price since 2015, where a passenger cost \$15.60 and a standard vehicle cost \$48.75.

For the Earls Cove to Saltery Bay route, a round trip cost \$14.05 for a passenger and \$46.80 for a standard vehicle (as of July 1, 2022). This has also decreased in cost since 2015, when a passenger cost \$15.55 and a standard vehicle cost \$51.60.¹⁰³

Cancellations

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, the Powell River to Comox ferry was cancelled for 20 round trips (1.47% of sailings) - 17 times due to weather and three due to vessel mechanical failure. The Earls Cove to Saltery Bay ferry was cancelled for 9.5 round trips (0.35% of sailings) - two due to weather, seven due to maintenance, and 0.5 due to safety.¹⁰⁴



Photo Credit: City of Powell River



Food + Agriculture

Photo Credit: Lift Community Services

Cost of Food

In 2017, the average monthly cost of a nutritious food basket (for a reference family of four) across the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi area (including the qathet region) was \$1,038, slightly higher than the average across British Columbia (\$1,019). Monthly food costs have steadily increased across the province since 2011.¹⁰⁵

In the Community Wellbeing Survey, 48% of respondents spend more than a quarter but less than half of their income on food, and 8% spend more than half of their monthly income on food. 14% of respondents had to often or always choose between buying healthy foods or paying for other household costs.¹⁰⁶

Survey Results

In the Vital Signs survey, 65% of people had noticed a significant change in their food costs over the last year.

Where We Buy Our Food

In the Vital Signs survey, the top locations of where people buy their food include:

- Chain grocery store (e.g., Save-On Foods, Quality Foods) (94%)
- Local grocery store (e.g., Townsite Fruit & Veg, Mitchell Brothers) (57%)
- Someone in the household grows food (48%)
- From local farmers (31%)
- Restaurants or take-out (31%)

Community Gardens

Community gardens can help build a sense of place and community. In the qathet region, community gardens include Sycamore Commons in Townsite, Community Resource Center, Kelly Creek Church, and 7th Day Adventist Church.

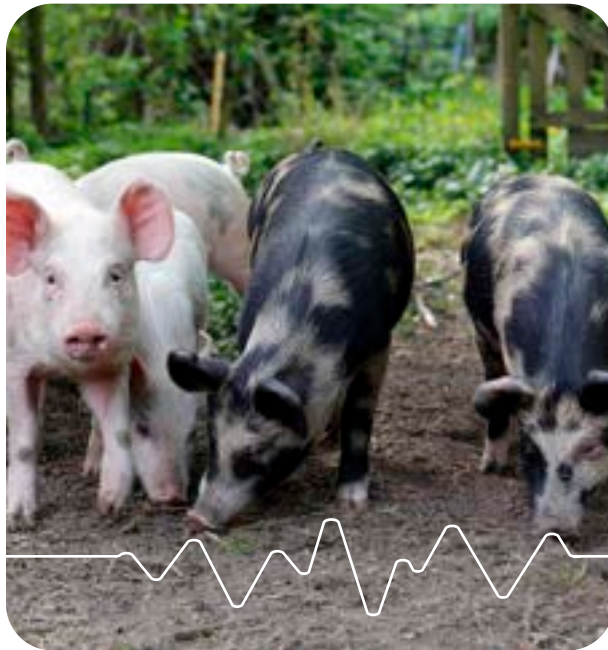


Photo Credit: Anji Smith

Farmland + Food Production

In 2016, there was 1,563 hectares of active farmland in the region.¹⁰⁷ The overall active farmland area data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture was too unreliable to be published by Statistics Canada. Of the types of uses that could be reported, 23 hectares were used for field vegetables, 45 hectares for fruits, and one hectare (10,086 square metres) for greenhouse fruits and vegetables, representing a total of approximately 69 hectares, up from 64 hectares for food crops in 2016.^{108 109}

The 2021 Census of Agriculture describes 63 farms operating in the qathet region (down from 80 in 2016) and 90 farm operators. In 2022, 59 farms were listed in Home Grown¹¹⁰ as actively producing and selling food (including farms on Texada Island).

In 2021, the most common food-related purposes reported in the census by local farms include:

- Vegetables and melons: 11
- Fruits and tree nuts: 8
- Chicken egg production: 7
- Both fruits and vegetables: 6
- Animal combination farming (may or may not be for food): 6
- Food crops grown under cover: 5
- Other miscellaneous crop farming (may or may not include food-related crops): 5
- Beef cattle ranching and farming: 4
- Nursery and tree production (may or may not include food-related nurseries): 4

In 2022, six farms offered community-supported agriculture (CSA) or produce boxes.



Farmer Income + Demographics

In 2021, 57 farms reported total operating revenues of \$2,948,739, and 56 farms reported total operating expenses of \$2,833,555. 50 farms report selling directly to consumers, and for half of these farms, direct sales represent 100% of operating revenues.¹¹¹

Of the 90 farm operators in 2021:

- 56% are male, and 44% are female (slightly more gender balanced than British Columbia: 60% male/40% female) (Statistics were not captured for non-binary or gender diverse farmers.)
- 61% are over 55 years old, and 33% are 35-54 years old (median: 57 years; median in British Columbia: 59 years). Farm operators under 34 comprise 5.6%, slightly higher than 5.1% provincially

Local Market Challenges

Local restaurants and grocery stores are using/selling local farm goods and would like to use/sell more. However, there is a lack of farmer understanding of restaurant and store needs, as well as managers not having time to search for reliable local suppliers, and their need for fixed price points.¹¹²

łaʔamin

łaʔamin actions to secure access to traditional foods

Colonialism disrupted the łaʔamin people's access to their traditional foods and collection sites for more than 200 years. With self-governance restored, the Nation is acting to protect, conserve, and restore traditional food sources for present and future generations. łaʔamin people engaged in agriculture post-contact, including planting and managing orchards in important food gathering sites, and raising cattle on Harwood Island. In addition, traditional foods are an important factor in the health of Indigenous Peoples.¹¹³

Pacific Herring are Under Threat

The Georgia Straight is the most important herring spawning ground in BC. Herring are essential to the larger ecosystem, and are a dietary staple for łaʔamin Nation. In 2013, the federal Fisheries Minister, against the advice of DFO staff scientists and objections of coastal First Nations, gave the commercial roe fishery an opening with a 10% catch rate (half of what is normally allowed in an opening). According to DFO staff, this rate had been proposed by the herring industry, frustrated with the ongoing closure of roe fisheries.

łaʔamin Nation continues to oppose the possibility of a commercial herring roe fishery being opened in Area 15, the heart of the Nation's traditional fishing territory.¹¹⁴

In December 2021, the Fisheries Minister announced they were reducing the herring quota by 50% in the Strait of Georgia to a 10% harvest rate. This was based on recently intensified risks to wild salmon, for which herring is an important food source.¹¹⁵





Community Justice + Emergency Services

Photo Credit: City of Powell River

qathet Community Justice

qathet Community Justice is a restorative justice organization that aims to restore relationships where conflict or crime has caused harm, and address the underlying issues that perpetuate injustice. They provide services to the qathet region, including the City of Powell River.¹¹⁶

In 2021, qathet Community Justice received eight referrals. Of these eight, four were community referrals and four were referrals from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Two were referred to another service, six were recommended for a restorative approach, and two pursued a restorative approach. In total for 2021, qathet Community Justice had four cases (with two continued from 2020) and 24 case participants. There were 233 total participants in public or partner education or awareness events, and 26 active volunteers (eight of which are youth).

Fire Department

In 2021, the Powell River Fire Department responded to 1,009 calls - an increase from 940 calls in 2019 and 689 calls in 2020. The majority of calls (58% in 2021) were as a first responder. The next top types of calls were alarm activations (9.5%), public assistance (8.7%), investigation/burning (7.0%), motor vehicle accidents (4.6%), and fires (4.1%). As of the end of August, there were 783 calls in 2022 - continuing a trend of a steady rise in calls.^{117 118}

Powell River Fire Rescue has two Chief Officers, 14 Suppression Firefighters, a coordinator/public educator, and approximately 30 paid, on-call Auxiliary Firefighters.

Powell River Fire Rescue covers the city, as well as aiding fire or medical first responders within the qathet region on Nootka Street, Myrtle Avenue, Claridge Road, Tanner

Avenue, and Covey Street. The department also provides support for the region.¹¹⁹

qathet Regional District operates four volunteer fire departments: Malaspina, Savary Island, Northside, and Lasqueti Island.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

British Columbia Emergency Health Services tracks every medical emergency event created using their dispatch system. The number of Emergency Health Services responses in Powell River has increased consistently over time, from 2,030 in 2017 to 2,627 in 2021.^{120 121}

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The RCMP is contracted to provide policing services to the City of Powell River and has done so since the 1950s. Areas of responsibilities include the enforcement of Federal and Provincial laws as well as Municipal Bylaws.

The RCMP attended 6,716 calls for service in 2021 which represented a 10.5% increase over 2020 (6,079 calls) and a 3.3% increase from 2019 (6,501 calls). This compares to 5,750 calls in 2018 and 5,428 calls in 2017.¹²²

Calls for Service

Between 2019 and 2021, according to the 2021 Policing Report by the RCMP, the following trends in calls for service were experienced.

There was an overall decrease in the number of calls by 8%. Calls for breaking and entering decreased by 32.4%; for theft under \$5,000, calls decreased by 9.3%; for assaults, calls decreased by 7.4%; for impaired driving, calls increased by 9.5%; calls for drug offences decreased by 39.2%; and calls involving mental health increased by 1.2%.

“We get a lot of mental health calls... other agencies are better equipped to handle them...”¹²³

“Increasingly, the police service is being called on for non-enforcement roles and is being used as a catch-all for many social issues...”¹²⁴
– Rod Wiebe,
RCMP Staff Sergeant

Crime Severity

In 2021, the overall crime severity index (which measures both the number and seriousness of the violations) for the qathet region¹²⁵ was 120.92. This is a 15% increase from 2020, when it was 105.18 – but a decrease of 19% from 2019, when it was 150.01.¹²⁶

	2019	2020	2021
Break and enter	170 calls (14.7%)	115 calls (12.3%)	115 calls (10.8%)
Theft under \$5,000	183 calls (15.8%)	116 calls (12.4%)	166 calls (15.6%)
Assault	205 calls (17.7%)	202 calls (21.6%)	190 calls (17.8%)
Impaired driving	169 calls (14.6%)	161 calls (17.2%)	185 calls (17.4%)
Drug offences	148 calls (12.8%)	88 calls (9.4%)	90 calls (8.5%)
Mental health	284 calls (24.5%)	255 calls (27.2%)	319 calls (29.9%)
Total calls	1159 calls	937 calls	1065 calls



For good. For ever.

Support your community through Powell River Community Foundation

Powell River Community Foundation makes it easy to build a lasting source of local philanthropic funds. Powell River Community Foundation gathers donations, invests them in a permanent community endowment, and grants money from the interest earned each year. Donations become a lasting legacy that do good today and tomorrow, and will keep on giving 50, 75, and even 100 years from now.

You can become a donor by making a one-time donation, leaving a bequest in your will, or even naming us as a life insurance beneficiary. Some donors set up specific funds within the endowment, for interest to be distributed to specific causes or organizations. Donations to our general endowment fund are flexible and help us give to where the demand is greatest.

Our grant-making is 100% local. In the 22 years since its founding, the Powell River Community Foundation has distributed grants

for seniors' housing, women's health, music, art, film, museums, heritage activities, animal rescue, ambulance services, cancer recovery, disability support, persons, poverty law, salmon enhancement, playgrounds, public fitness, land trusts, local sports, youth activities, and more. These grants make a real difference to the lives of people in the qathet region.

To make a one-time donation, visit <https://www.prcommunityfoundation.com/donate-online> or send a cheque to: Powell River Community Foundation, PO Box 335, Powell River, British Columbia, V8A 5C2

To name us in your will or insurance policy, talk to your lawyer, accountant, or other professional wealth advisor.

For other opportunities to support the community or get involved, contact us at prcf@firstcu.ca.



Vital Signs Methodology

Selection of Indicators

We selected some indicators that are used in Vital Signs in communities across Canada.. For other indicators, we relied heavily on the community advisors and local data. Ultimately, each indicator was chosen to be understandable, relevant to community concerns, a neutral, objective, and commonly used measure of local conditions, as current as possible, trackable for future reports, and relevant to many different audiences. We wanted the indicators taken together to give a complete picture of the conditions and circumstances in our community and to help to provide a focus on the future and long-term needs.

Data Compilations

Some of the data compilations from Statistics Canada and others do not include the whole of the qathet region. Unless noted, this report relies on data that include the most complete coverage, and we refer to all these data as being for the qathet region or for the City of Powell River. Any variations in results for the same item caused by differences in the coverage areas are not significant for our purposes.

The Vital Signs team also gathered statistics from local qathet region organizations as well as other reliable sources. Data sources for all indicators are cited in this report in case anyone wants to do further research.

Special Terms

This report refers to the value of dollars for the year reported, except where “current dollars” are noted in the item itself. The last Canada-wide census was conducted in 2021, so we have relatively recent data.

Surveys

We conducted two public surveys to inform this Vital Signs report. A Vital Signs Community Survey (Vital Signs Survey) and a Youth Vital Signs survey. Information on the 2022 Vital Signs survey and 2022 Vital Signs youth survey is found throughout the report in relevant sections. The Vital Signs survey ran from mid July to mid August and the youth survey ran from mid June to mid August 2022.

In addition to these surveys, there were two other key surveys we drew information from:

- The 2021 Community Wellness Survey, which was administered as part of the qathet Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy; and
- The 2021 Community survey that informs the Ła?amin Health and Wellness Plan.



Who Answered the Surveys?

Vital Signs Community Survey

We received 264 responses to the Vital Signs survey. Respondents had the ability to choose which topics they answered questions on; not all respondents answered all questions.

Age: Most respondents were over 50, with 35% aged 50 to 64, and 37% aged 65 to 79 - both age groups overrepresented compared to the region. Respondents aged 20 to 34 (7%) were underrepresented, as were respondents aged 80 or older (2%). Respondents aged 35 to 49 (19%) were approximately representative.

Gender: Most respondents (71%) were women, who were overrepresented compared to the region. 24% of respondents were men, and 4% were non-binary, genderqueer, or another gender identity.

Sexual orientation: 10% of respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, plus (LGBTQIA2S+).

Race: Most respondents (89%) identified as white. 5% of respondents identified as Indigenous, 2% as various racialized identities, and 7% as other (non-specified). This is an underrepresentation of Indigenous people and racialized people compared to the region.

Disability, neurodiversity, illness: 27% of respondents identified as any of the following: “disabled or a person with a disability, autistic or as a person with autism, neurodivergent, Deaf or deaf, mad, and/or having a disability, mental illness, or chronic/long-term condition.”

Geography: 66% of respondents live in the City of Powell River, 40% live in qathet Regional District, and 2% live in tišosəm (T’ishosum, the main Tla’amin community); this is approximately representative of the region. (Respondents could select more than one.)

Youth Vital Signs Survey

We received 34 responses to the Youth Vital Signs survey. Respondents had the ability to choose which topics they answered questions on, not all respondents answered all questions.

Age: Most respondents were aged 15 to 19 (70% of respondents). There were also respondents aged 10 to 14 (5%), 20 to 24 (21%), and 25 to 30 (2%).

Gender: There was a diversity in the gender of the respondents: 35% of respondents were men or boys, 33% were women or girls, and 31% were nonbinary or genderqueer.

Sexual orientation: 56% of respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, plus (LGBTQIA2S+).

Race: 47% of respondents were white, 38% of respondents were Indigenous, and 24% of respondents were racialized. (Respondents could select more than one answer.)


Disability: 40% of respondents identified as a person with a disability (e.g., disabled or as a person with a disability, autistic or as a person with autism, neurodivergent, Deaf or deaf, mad, and/or having a disability, mental illness, or chronic/long-term condition).

Geography: 55% of respondents live in the City of Powell River, 45% live in qathet Regional District, and 6.5% live in tišosəm. This is an overrepresentation of qathet Regional District and tišosəm compared to actual population split across the geographic area.



Endnotes

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123 Rod Wiebe quoted by Pieta Woolley. "RCMP are frustrated, too," qathet Living, October 2022, 9.

124 Rod Wiebe quoted in meeting minutes from the City of Powell River Finance Committee. November 24, 2022. Available online: <<https://powellriver.civicweb.net/FileStorage/1D9BC5E214384F568A05592140F44C60-REPORT-%202023-2027%20Financial%20Plan%20Draft%201.docx>>. Last accessed: January 12, 2023.

125 This includes the areas covered by the Powell River RCMP detachment, which serves Powell River, ŁaŁamin, Texada Island, Savary Island, Lund, Saltery Bay, Desolation Sound, Gillies Bay, and Van Anda.

126 Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0063-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, police services in BC. The Crime Severity Index is based on the number and type of criminal incidents coming to the attention of police. It tracks changes in the severity of police-reported crime by accounting for both the amount of crime reported by police in a given jurisdiction and the relative seriousness of these crimes (it weights more serious crimes heavier in the index). It tells us not only how much crime is coming to the attention of police, but also about the seriousness of that crime.

In January 2018, Statistics Canada updated its crime reporting methodology for police services across Canada to represent a "victim-centred approach" to recording crimes, which means it is to be believed that the crime occurred unless there is credible evidence to prove it did not. These changes were expected to increase the incidence and decrease the clearance rate for certain crimes, such as sexual assault.

Police agencies across British Columbia implemented these scoring rule changes in January 2019, which contributed in part to notable increases in crime rates and decreases in clearance rates for British Columbia in 2019.

