



HELPSSEEKER
TECHNOLOGIES

City of Penticton

Community Research Report Summary



Drafted By:
HelpSeeker Technologies

August 2023

About the Report

This report, completed by HelpSeeker in partnership for the City of Penticton and 100 More Homes, builds on the significant progress made locally in mapping existing system relationships and the programs and services available to support community wellbeing and safety.

In response to the community's call for a comprehensive understanding of the social infrastructure, particularly housing and homelessness, the Social Development Department led this systems audit. This initiative, which aligns with the department's priorities, underscores a commitment to identify and address urgent systems gaps within Penticton's social infrastructure.

Penticton's journey presents a unique blend of strengths and challenges. The city's system planning sophistication is impressive, especially considering its population size. However, it also grapples with areas of risk or urgent need, particularly in housing, substance use, mental health, and other community concerns.

This analysis, complemented by the data tools developed during this project, aims to spotlight the strengths within the existing system. Simultaneously, it provides insights into Penticton's social trend profile, equipping decision-makers with valuable information for effective planning and action.

Research Components

Social Trend Analysis: An analysis of key social trends in Penticton was conducted using the recently released 2021 Census Data, and selected indicators have been highlighted in this report. The analysis also included a spatial analysis comparing dissemination areas based on a cross-analysis of common census indicators.

HelpSeeker Supply Mapping: HelpSeeker collected information about organizations and programs that exist in the community using publicly available information such as websites and local directories. This information was sorted into categories, including organizational and program description, eligibility criteria, address, and more.

Needs and Navigation Mapping: A survey was conducted among a small group of individuals experiencing homelessness to better understand their needs, referral pathways, perspectives on local supports, and perception of program availability. Although the sample size was small, the survey provided rich insights into the experiences of individuals interacting with the social infrastructure.

Network Mapping: A pilot network mapping tool was developed and administered to organizations operating in Penticton's social infrastructure. The tool measured the relative strength of connections to organizations within the network and provided illustrative examples of how this data can be used to inform and strengthen collaboration.

While this analysis serves to bring forward some of the most interest findings, the City of Penticton has gained access to tools for ongoing evidence-led social infrastructure planning.

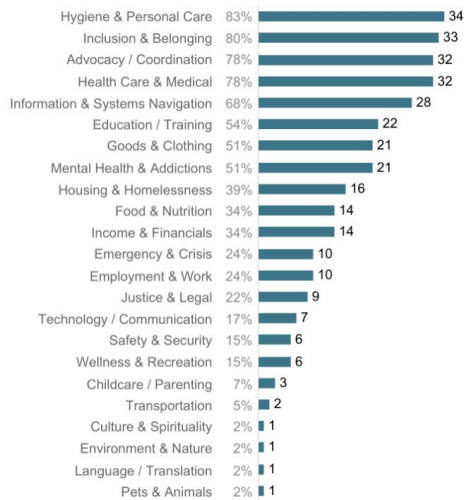
Social Infrastructure Organizations & Programs

To support a more comprehensive understanding of the local infrastructure, HelpSeeker undertook a supply mapping process. This involved gathering and analyzing data on organizations, programs, services, and populations. The supply mapping synthesized information from various sources, including directories, websites, Canada Revenue Agency listings, and HelpSeeker's base supply map, to offer a holistic perspective of the social infrastructure in the area.

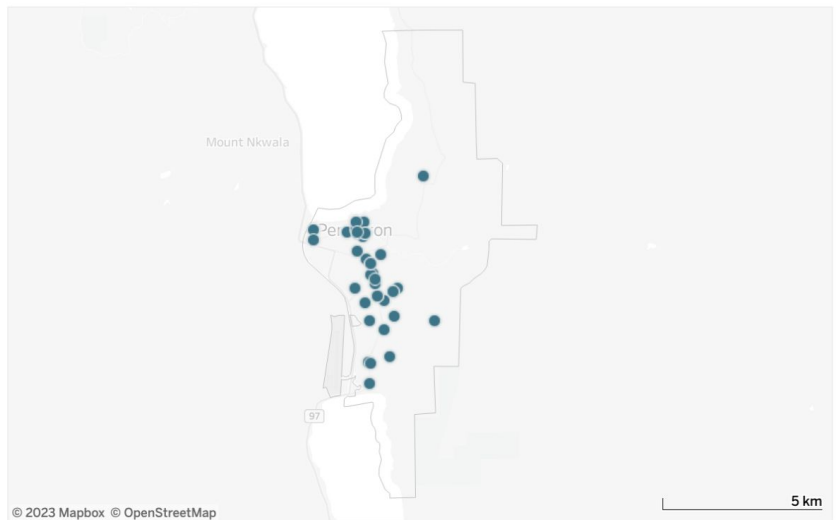
Service Supply Overview



Service Categories



*Organizations can fall under more than one Service Category.



This approach uses a broad definition of social infrastructure. It includes more than just charities and non-profit organizations; it covers various entities that enhance well-being and safety, like schools, system partners, and health agencies. Although no attempt at mapping resources can promise total completeness, this effort provides a strong foundation for future interactions and data collection with partners.

These organizations and program were classified by population served and services provided across the following wellbeing categories:

Penticton's Supply Map

291
Organizations

1270
Programs

- All
- Advocacy / Service & Care Coordination
- Childcare / Parenting
- Culture & Spirituality
- Education / Training
- Emergency & Crisis
- Employment & Work
- Environment & Nature
- Food & Nutrition
- Goods & Clothing
- Health Care & Medical
- Housing & Homelessness
- Hygiene & Personal Care
- Inclusion & Belonging
- Income & Financials
- Information & Referrals / Systems Navigation
- Justice & Legal
- Language / Translation
- Mental Health & Addictions
- Mobility / Accessibility
- Pets & Animals
- Safety & Security
- Technology / Communication
- Transportation
- Wellness & Recreation

Increasing Municipal Mandates for Social Issues

As cities grow, municipal governments find themselves addressing more intricate social challenges, necessitating an expansion of their social responsibilities. This expansion signals a move from relying mainly on physical infrastructure to including social infrastructure, thus fostering community wellness and safety. The suggested six-stage typology traces this transformation, providing a guide for municipalities as they transition from acknowledging social issues to creatively addressing upcoming obstacles.

Cities in the **Initial Stage** are starting to identify social problems within their communities, such as rising crime, visible homelessness, complex substance use, community unity gaps, and diversity issues. Their responses to these challenges remain limited.

Emergent Stage cities have begun taking specific actions to counter widespread social issues, but lack a unified, systematic strategy. Isolated projects or programs might target individual problems, but these issues haven't been woven into a larger social context.

By the **Progressive Stage**, cities acknowledge the intertwined nature of social issues and start developing comprehensive plans to address them. Cross-sector partnerships and community involvement begin to improve safety and wellness, with the social element gaining prominence in policy and decision-making.

Integrated Stage cities have a clear social purpose guiding their policies and actions. They adopt proactive measures to tackle social issues and boost community wellness and safety. Prevention and social infrastructure investment are prioritized to prevent further aggravation of social problems.

In the **Advanced Stage**, cities stand as leaders in incorporating social responsibilities into all operation facets. Their comprehensive and effective strategies to address social issues are driven by substantial community involvement and cross-department collaboration. Their policies and initiatives actively promote social unity, reduce crime, manage substance use, provide support for homeless individuals, and boost community wellness.

Innovative Stage cities are effectively addressing current social issues while employing predictive analytics and inventive methods to foresee and ready themselves for future challenges. Their strong social infrastructure, reduced inequalities, inclusive community engagement, and safe, unified community form their defining traits. Their social mission becomes a central guiding principle, directing their efforts towards a secure and thriving community.

In HelpSeeker's assessment, Penticton, currently in the Progressive Stage, is proactively addressing interconnected social issues. Under the leadership of the Social Development Department, the city is formulating comprehensive strategies, promoting cross-sector collaborations, and intensifying community engagement.

This demonstrates Penticton's dedication to incorporating a social mandate into its policy and decision-making processes. The city's next phase might involve furthering cross-departmental collaboration and advancing the integration of social infrastructure improvements.



Section 1:

Community Profile

Community Profile

Nestled in the heart of British Columbia, Penticton is a vibrant community that is as diverse as it is dynamic. This report provides a profile of Penticton, weaving together various demographic, socio-economic, and housing characteristics to paint a picture of a city that is not just growing, but evolving. At the heart of this evolution are two interconnected themes: community wellbeing and safety.

Penticton's population has seen a significant increase over recent years, a testament to its appeal as a desirable place to live. However, this growth is not without its challenges. A densely populated city, Penticton is home to a fluid population, with a high rate of resident mobility. This dynamism, while a sign of a thriving community, also underscores the need for robust public safety measures and community support systems to ensure the wellbeing of all residents.

The city's age demographics present a unique profile: a relatively lower proportion of young children and a higher percentage of older adults. This demographic mix necessitates a focus on services and amenities that cater to older residents, while also ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the younger generation.

Penticton's cultural fabric is rich and diverse, with a significant number of residents identifying as racialized or Indigenous, and a notable proportion of immigrants. This diversity, while a strength, also brings to the fore the importance of inclusive policies and practices that promote the wellbeing of all community members, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

The city's housing landscape is as varied as its population. With a high rate of renters and a significant number of residents living in different types of apartment buildings, housing affordability and quality emerge as key issues. These housing challenges, coupled with the fact that a considerable number of households spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs, underscore the need for initiatives that ensure safe and affordable housing for all residents.

Economic factors also play a significant role in shaping the wellbeing and safety of the Penticton community. With a certain percentage of households falling under the low-income measure after tax and a significant portion of residents without an employment income, economic stability is a key area of focus. Addressing these economic challenges is necessarily for reducing crime, enhancing public safety, and promoting overall community wellbeing.

In conclusion, Penticton is a city of contrasts — a vibrant and dynamic community that is also grappling with complex challenges. Understanding these challenges and how they intersect is important for social infrastructure planning and decision-making. By focusing on community wellbeing and safety, Penticton can continue to thrive and evolve, ensuring a high quality of life for all its residents.

The Value of Census Spatial Data in Social Infrastructure Planning

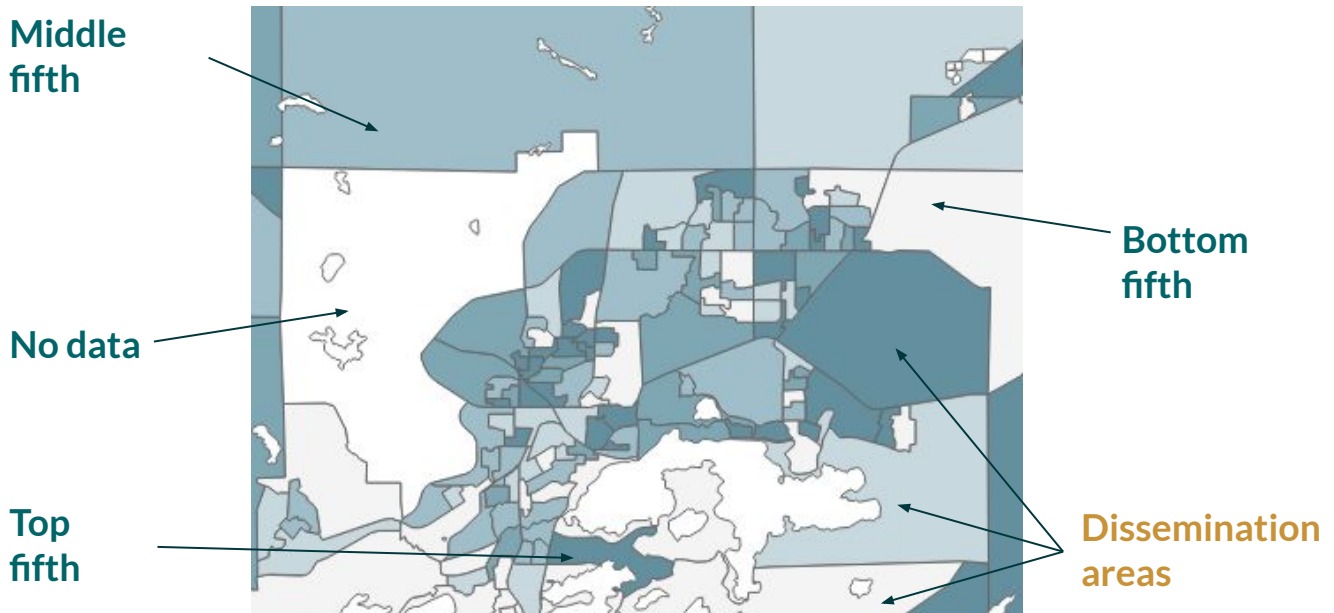
In this subsequent section, a series of maps are showcased that provide insights into Penticton's social trends in comparison to other communities in B.C., as well as neighborhood-level social trends within Penticton itself.

This spatial data provides invaluable insights for social infrastructure planning, especially in rapidly evolving communities like Penticton. By comparing different communities or examining specific areas within Penticton, we can understand the unique needs and challenges of various neighborhoods. This granular understanding supports personalized, neighborhood-level planning and proactive wellbeing and safety measures.

Spatial data can highlight areas with high rates of population growth, mobility, or specific demographic groups, guiding resource allocation and the development of targeted interventions. It can also reveal disparities between different communities or neighborhoods, promoting equity in social infrastructure planning. For instance, a neighborhood with many older adults may require different programs and services than a neighborhood with many young families.

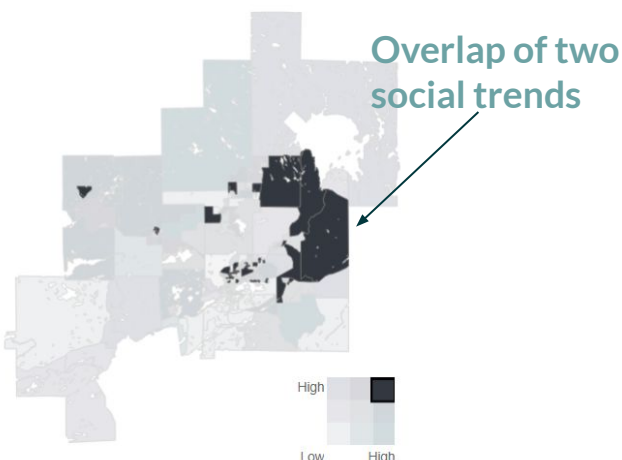
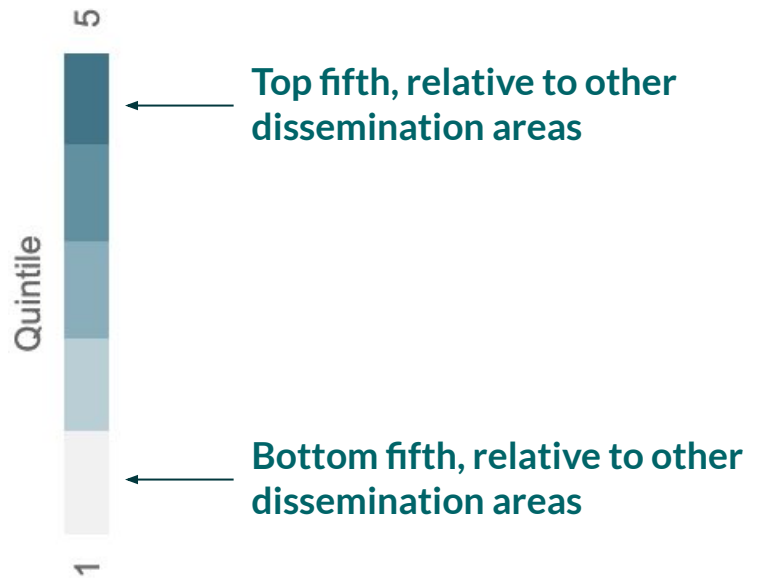
In a rapidly changing community like Penticton, this precision responsiveness is helpful. As the city grows and evolves, new challenges and opportunities will emerge. Census spatial data can help anticipate these changes and respond proactively, ensuring all residents have access to the services and support they need, regardless of where they live.

How to read HelpSeeker demand maps



HelpSeeker used demand map data from the 2021 census. The maps are broken down into **dissemination areas**, which are the boundaries by which the census is reported.

Each dissemination area is **colour-coded**, based on its own value* relative to the other dissemination areas on the map.



In some demand maps, dual indicators are shown. This helps us understand the **overlap between social trends**.

In these cases, we highlight the dissemination areas that have certain relative values across both indicators.

*Census dissemination areas vary in population size. We should therefore be cautious when comparing them to each other, as different population sizes affect the values of each indicator.

A Note on Representation

Geospatial mapping and social trend analysis are powerful tools that can provide valuable insights into communities and guide policy decisions. However, we must exercise caution, consideration, and intentionality when using these tools. We should not use them to stigmatize neighborhoods, for instance, or make broad generalizations about community members that do not reflect their lived experience.

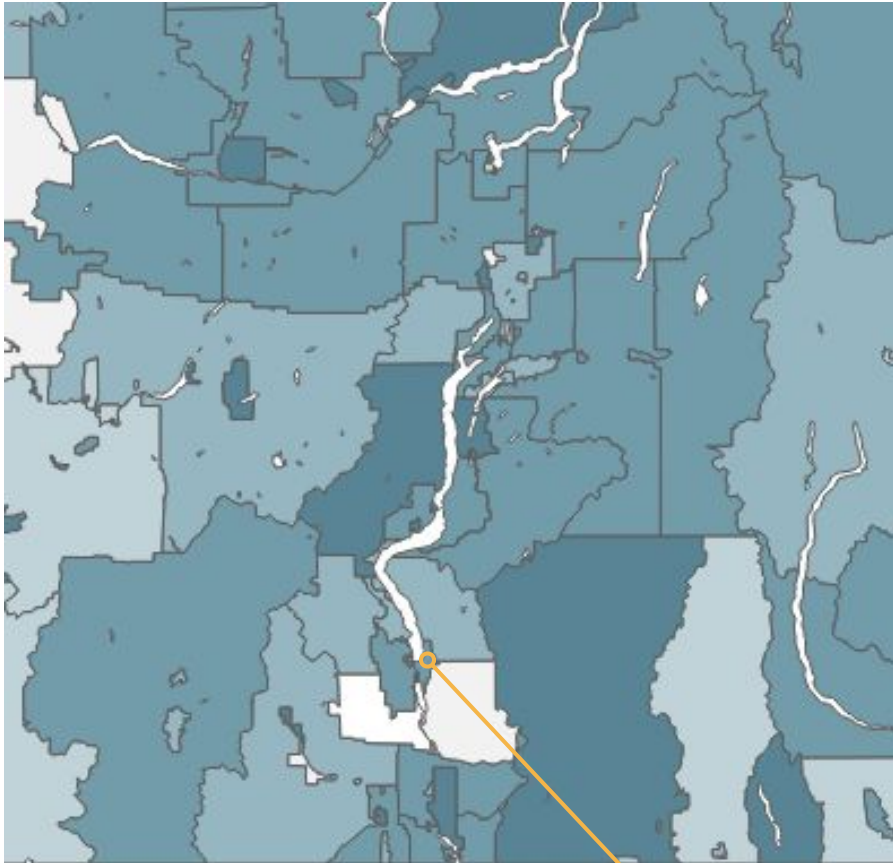
Macro-social trends are driven by a complex interplay of factors, that cannot always be explained by the correlation of two trends. In fact, our analysis shows that while some neighbourhood effects are statistically related, others are not.

Instead, we recommend using these tools to identify signals where there may be misalignment between community needs and supports and identify where further, meaningful engagement should occur in safe and productive way. We also acknowledge that all communities have informal or hidden supports – such as neighbourhood groups, family systems, or outdoor locations where people convalesce – that are essential to the fabric of wellbeing.

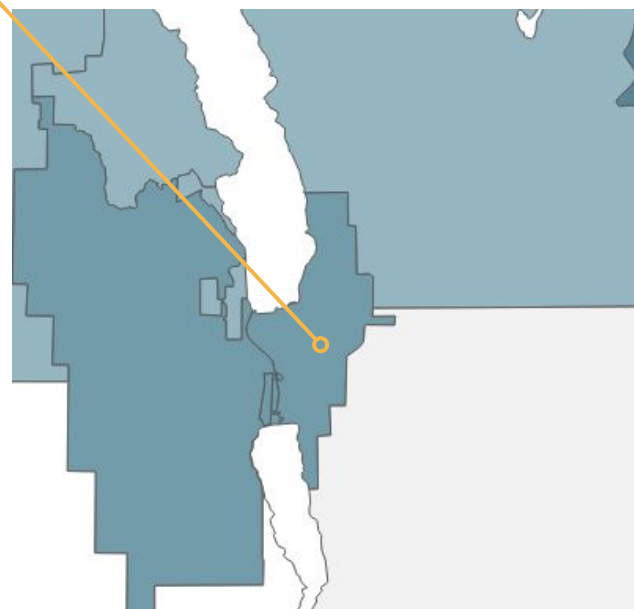
This analysis is intended to foster understanding and collaboration within the community, rather than to create tension over future facility locations, for example. The ultimate goal is to build a safe and healthy community where all members have access to the supports they need, exactly where they need them.

Population Change

Map 1.1 Population change [Okanagan Region]



Map 1.2 Population change [Penticton]

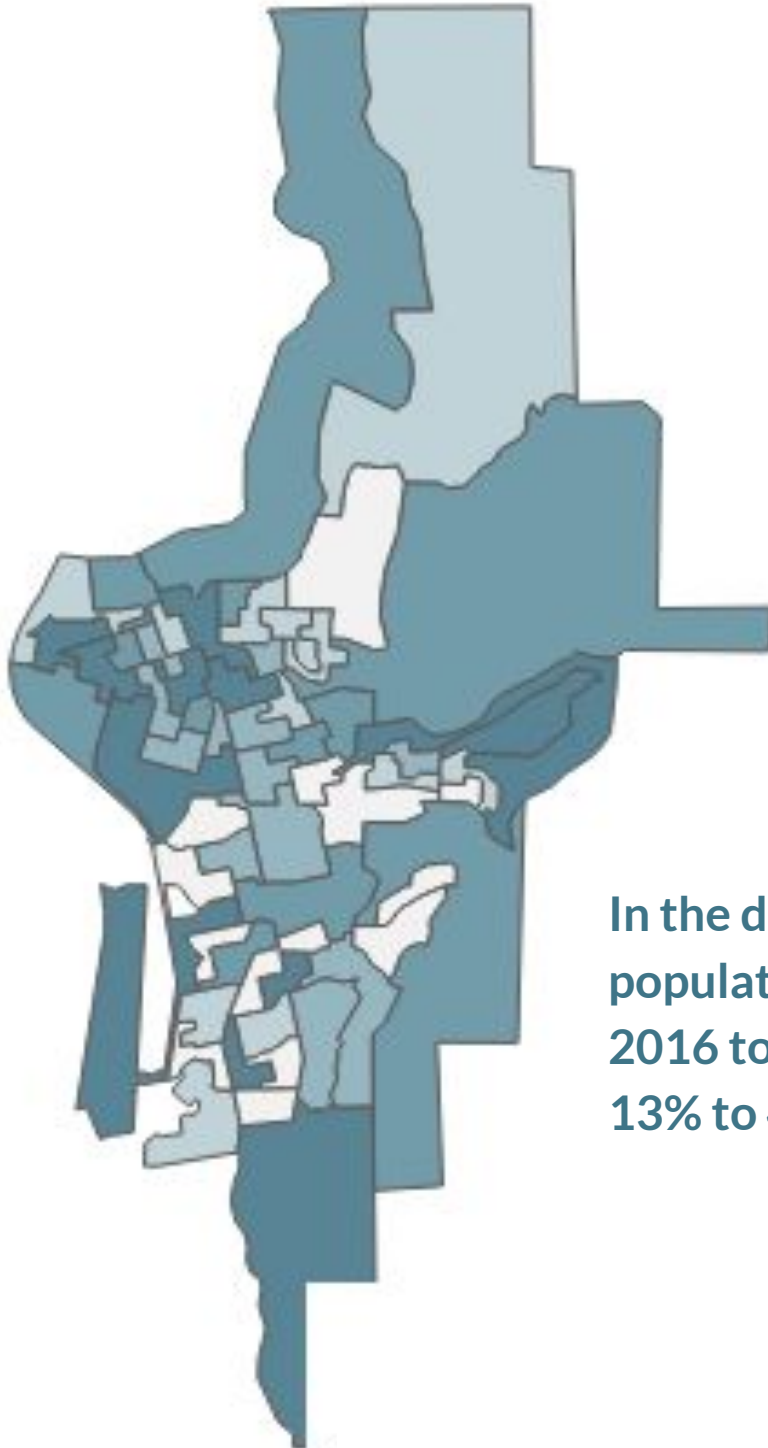


The darker the tone, the higher rate of population change within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 4th quintile with a population change of 9.3%.

Population Growth

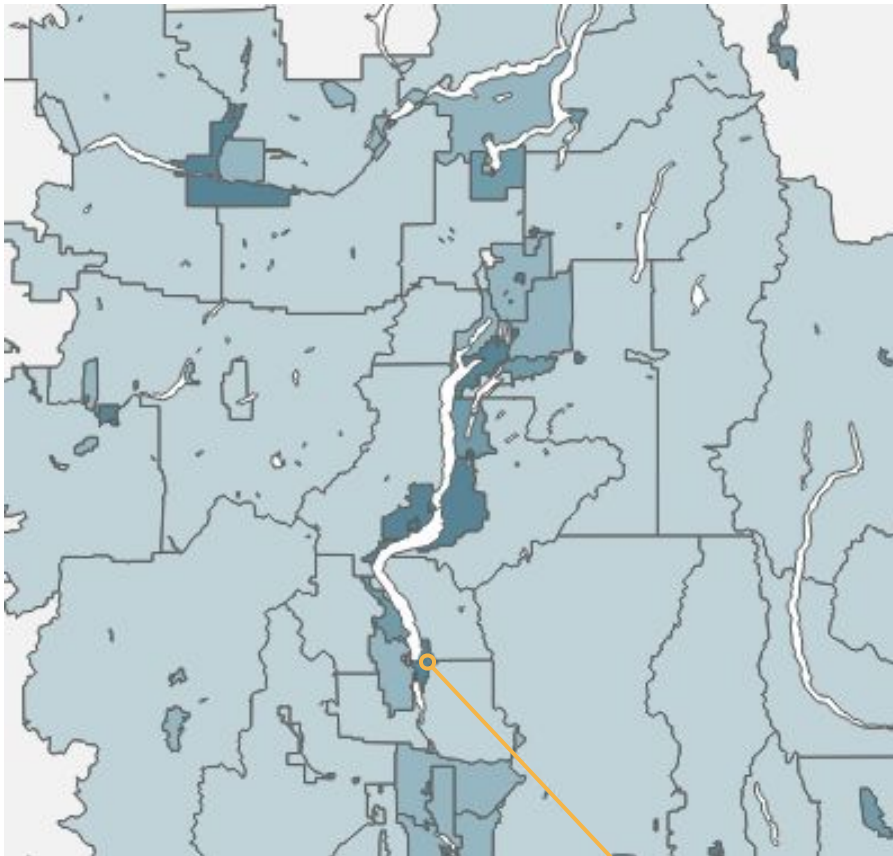
Map 2 Population growth [Penticton]



**In the darkest areas
population growth from
2016 to 2021 is between
13% to 48%.**

Population Density

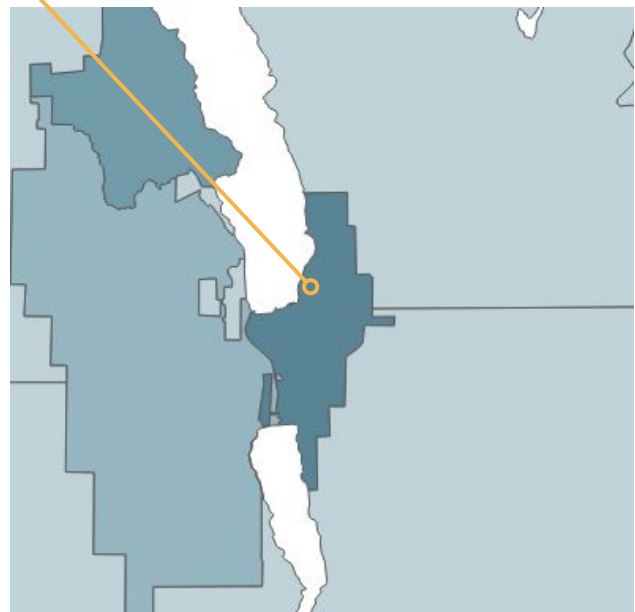
Map 3.1 Population density [Okanagan Region]



The darker the tone, the higher rate of population density within the census subdivision.

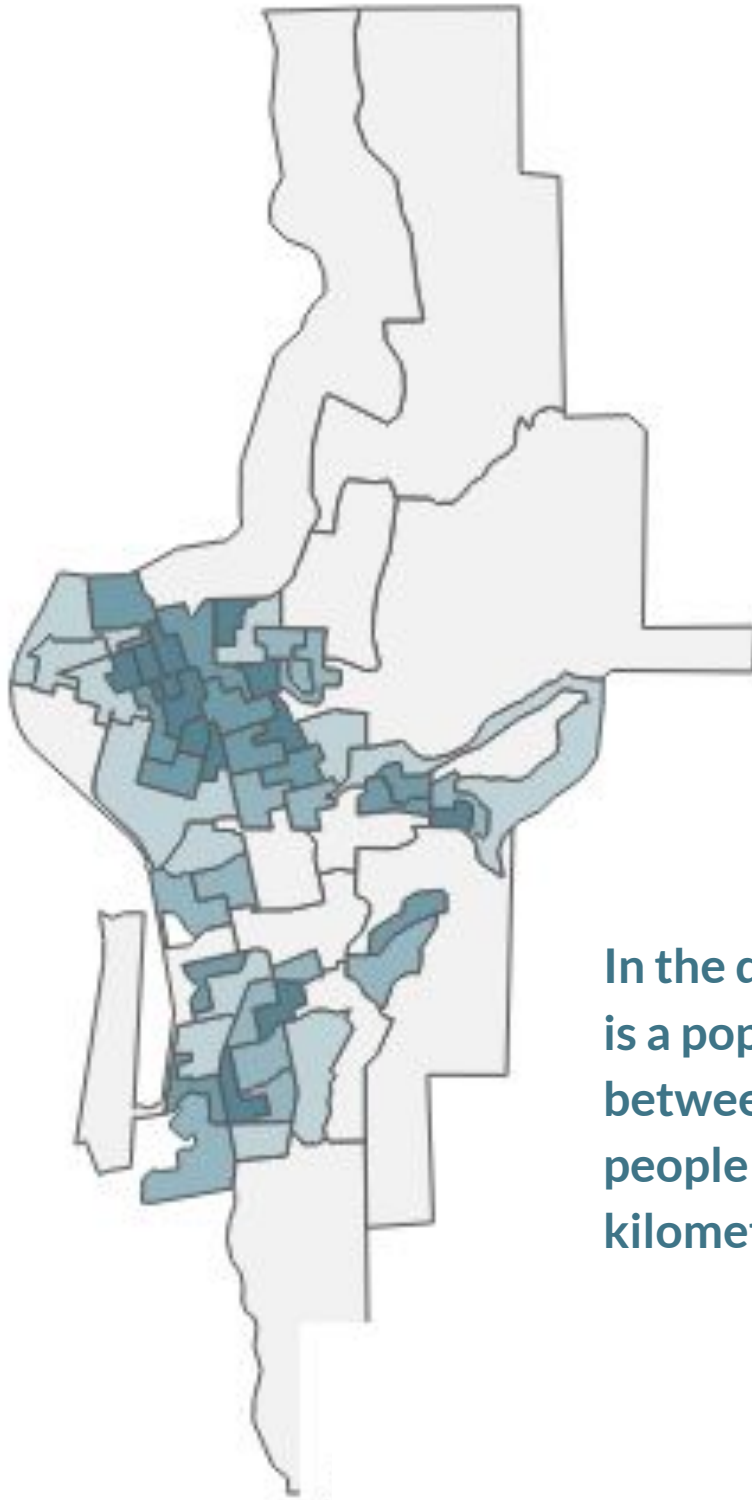
Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with a population density of 857 people per square kilometer.

Map 3.2 Population density [Penticton]



Population Density

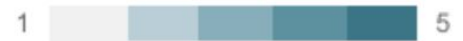
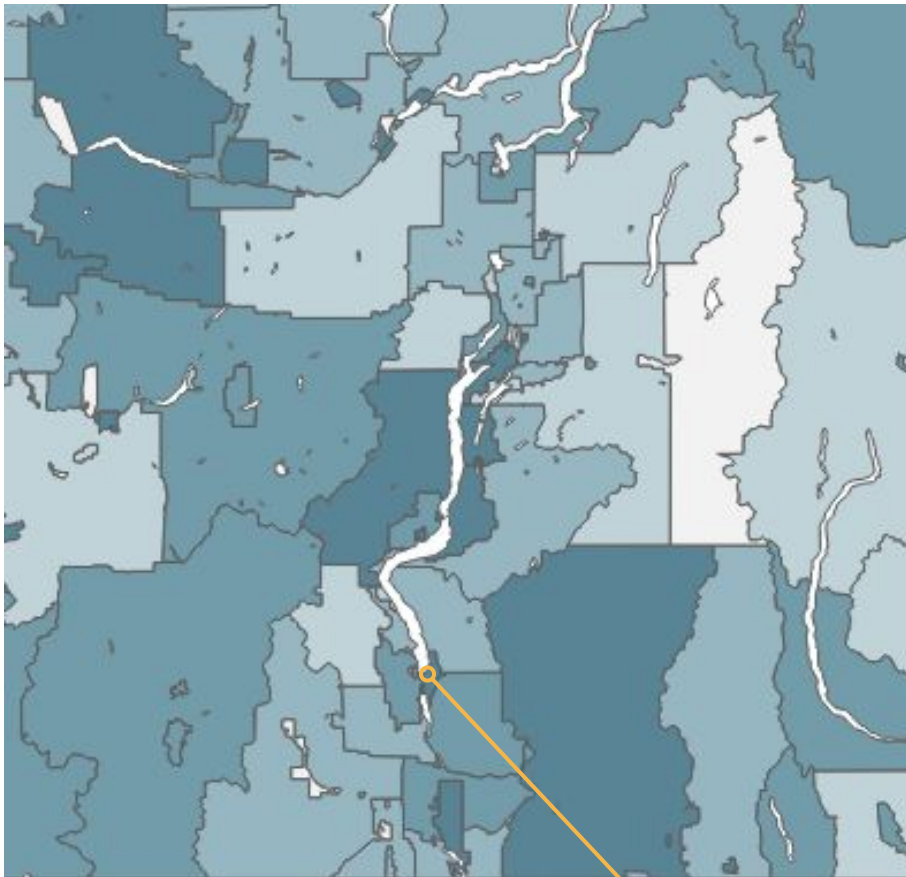
Map 4 Population density [Penticton]



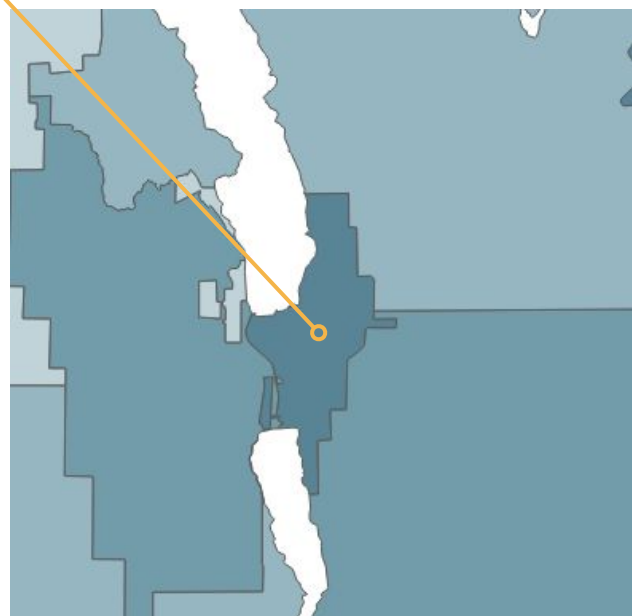
In the darkest areas, there is a population density between 371 and 6673 people per square kilometer.

In Migration

Map 5.1 Movers - 5 Year % [Okanagan Region]



Map 5.2 Movers - 5 Year % [Penticton]

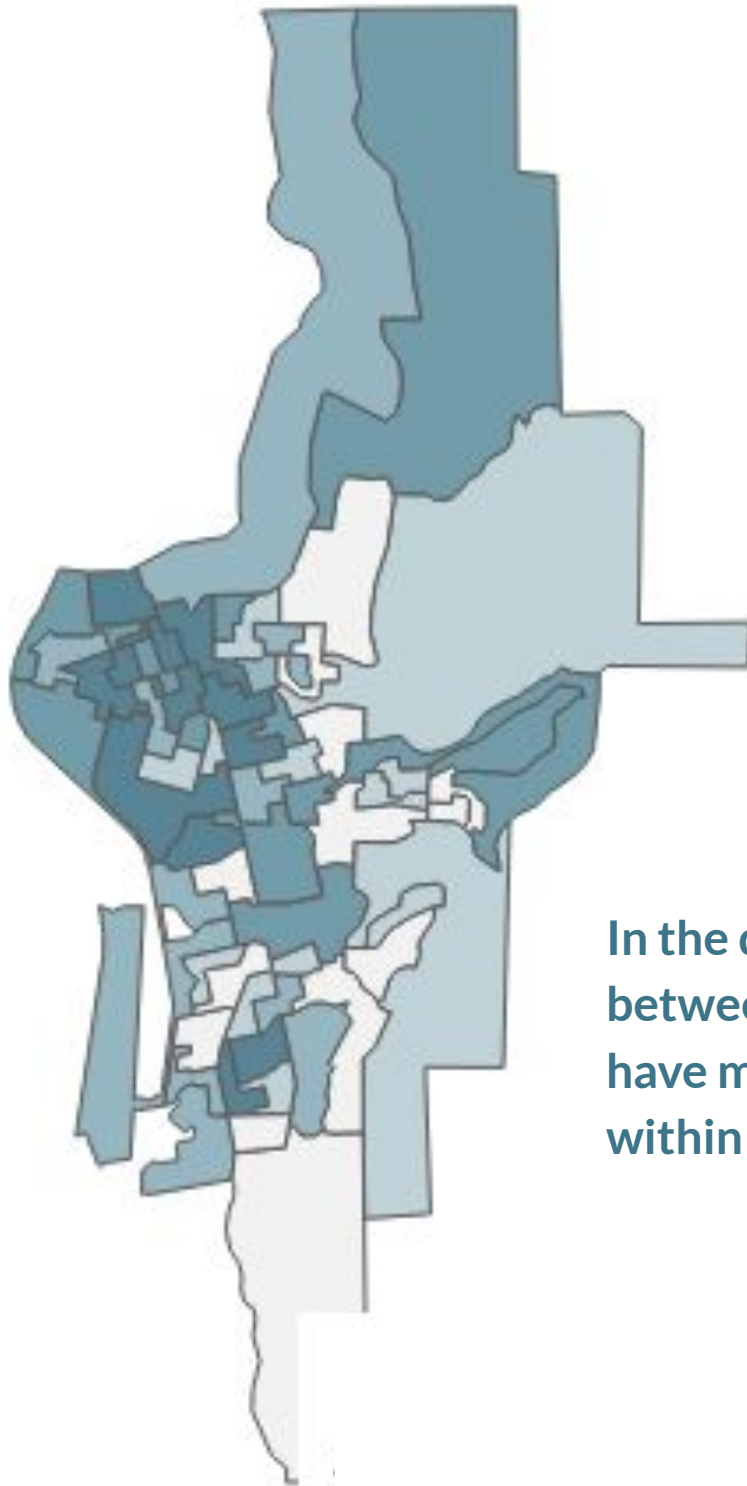


The darker the tone, the higher rate of movers within the last five years within the census subdivision. Movers are defined as anyone that has moved residences within the last five years, from within the community or outside.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 49.8% of residents reporting a move within the last 5 years.

Migration

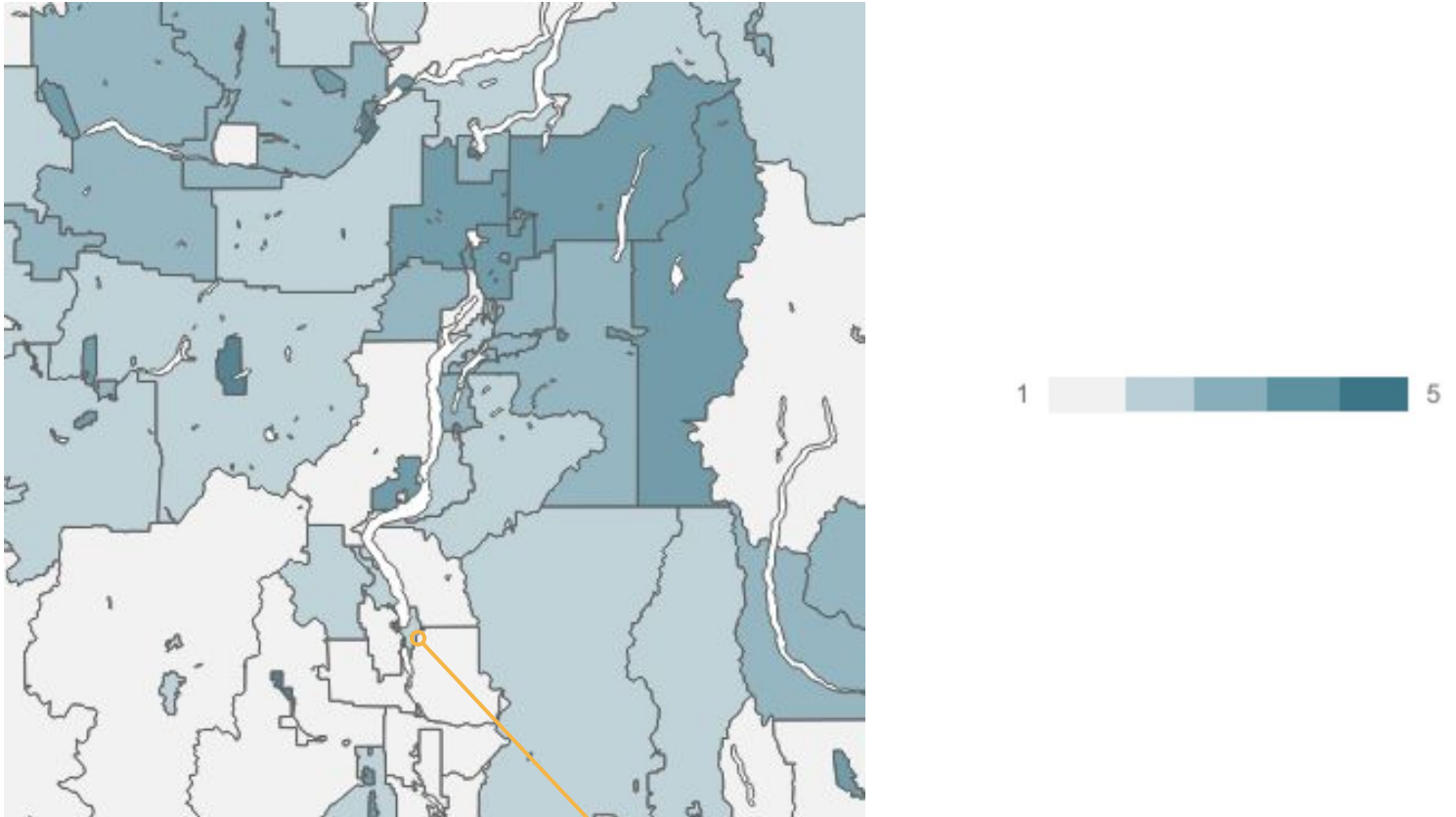
Map 6 Movers - 5 year % [Penticton]



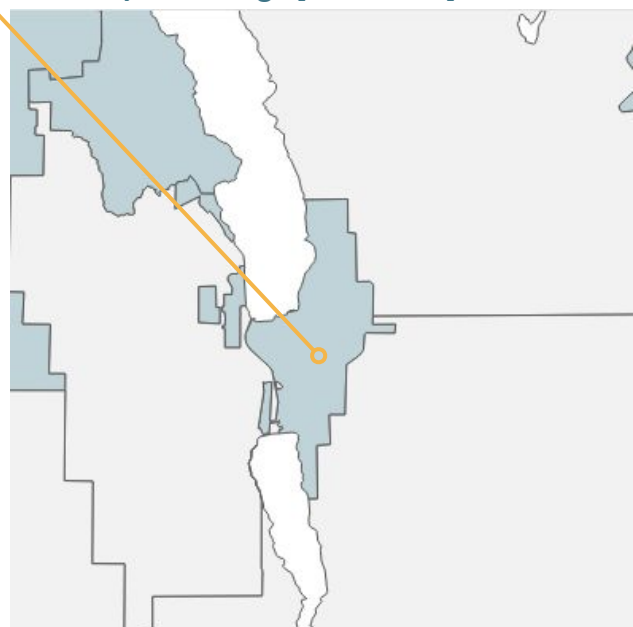
**In the darkest areas,
between 58% and 74%
have moved residences
within the last 5 years.**

Age Distribution

Map 7.1 Distribution of children aged 0 – 14 years of age [Okanagan Region]



Map 7.2 Distribution of children aged 0 – 14 years of age [Penticton]

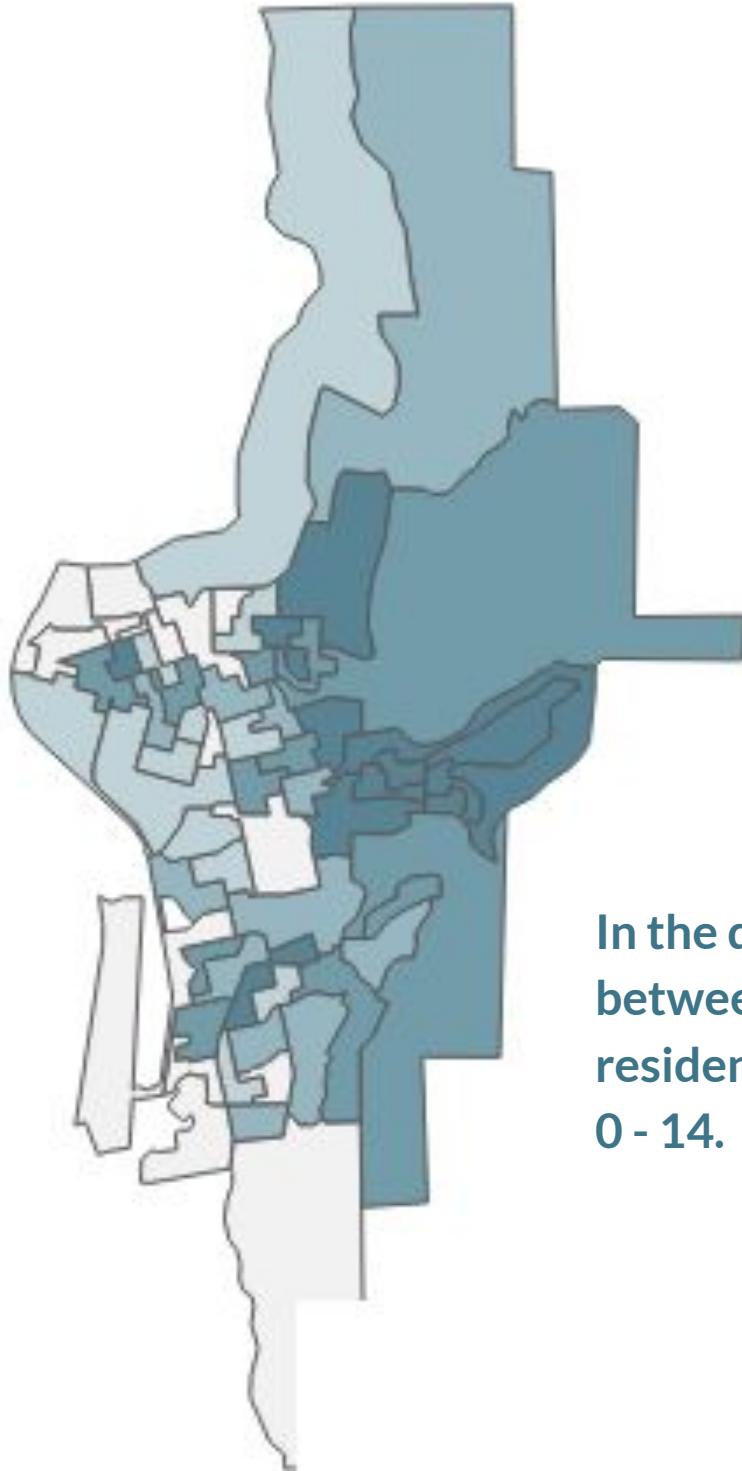


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of children aged 0 - 14 within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 2nd quintile with 11.9% of the population between 0 - 14 years of age.

Age Distribution

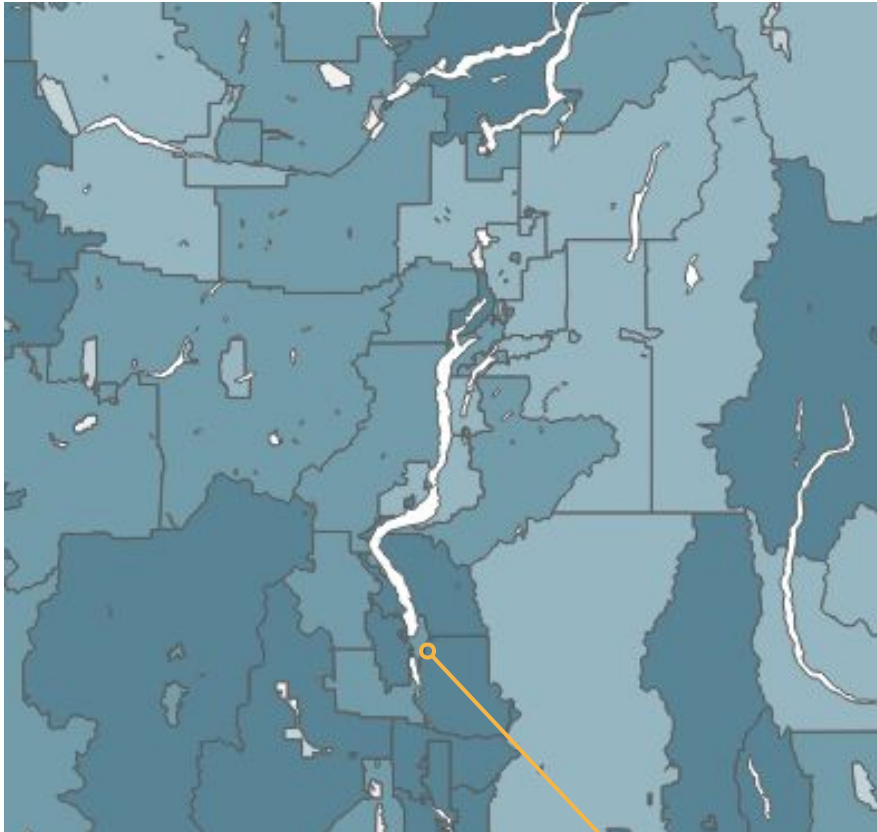
Map 8 Children aged 0 - 14 % [Penticton]



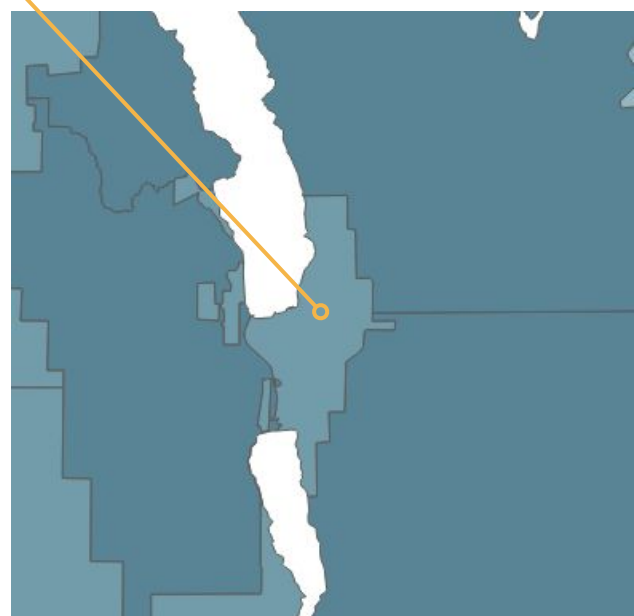
**In the darkest areas,
between 16% and 22% of
residents are children aged
0 - 14.**

Age Distribution

Map 9.1 Distribution of 65 years and over % [Okanagan Region]



Map 9.2 Distribution of 65 years and over % [Penticton]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of people aged 65 years and older within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 4th quintile with 30.4% of the population aged 65 years and older.

Age Distribution

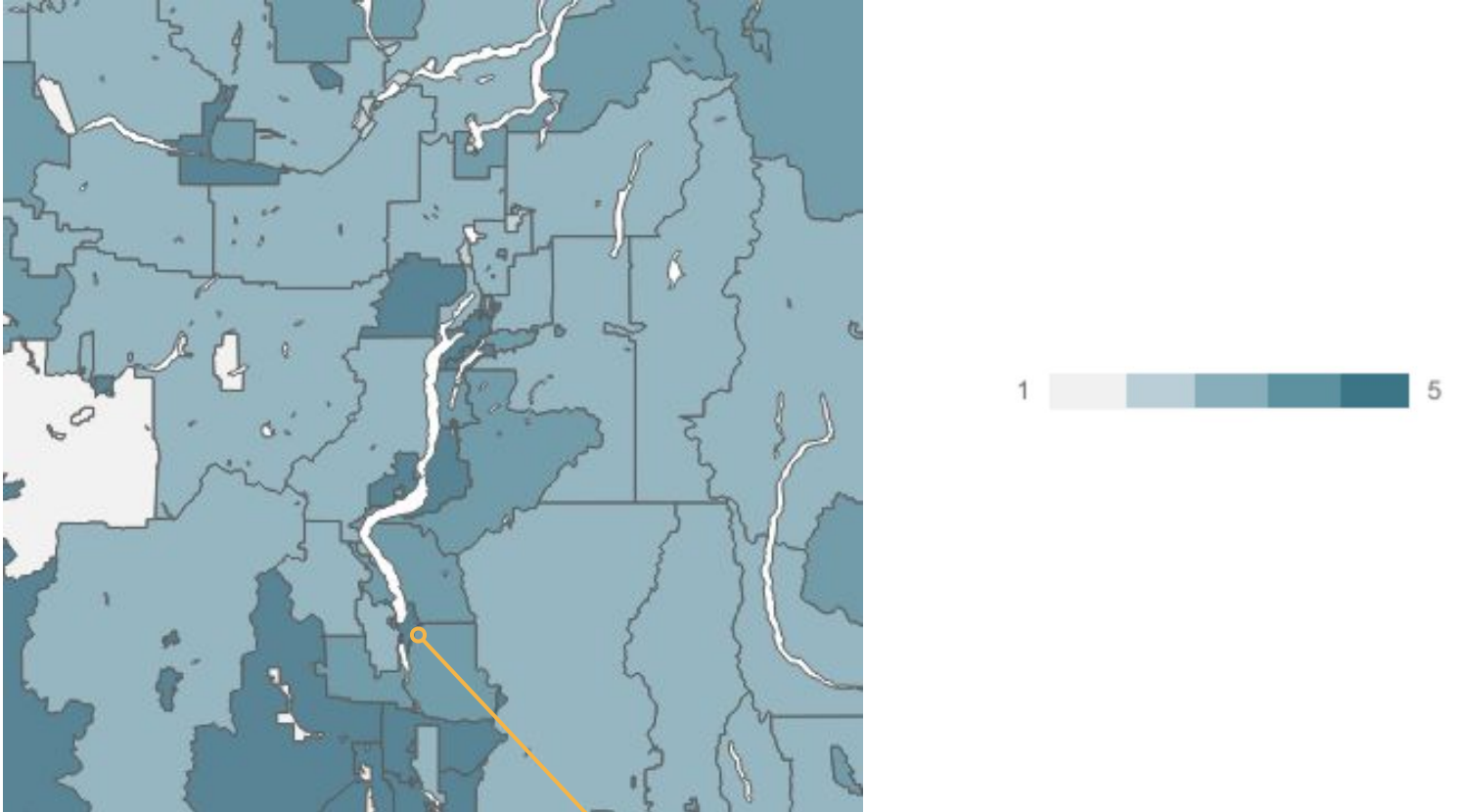
Map 10 65 years and older % [Penticton]



In the darkest areas, between 35% and 95% of people aged 65 years and older.

Racialized Communities

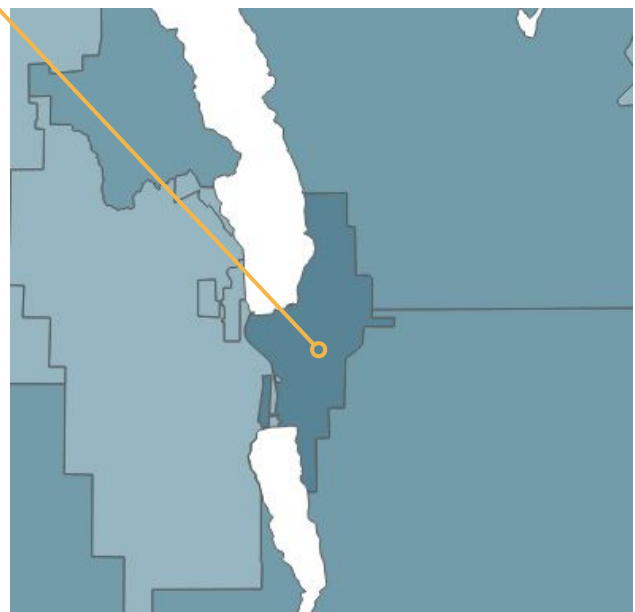
Map 11.1 Distribution of racialized communities % [Okanagan Region]



Map 11.1 Distribution of racialized communities % [Penticton]

The darker the tone, the higher proportion of racialized people within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 4th quintile with 8.9% of the population belonging to a racialized community.



Racialized Communities

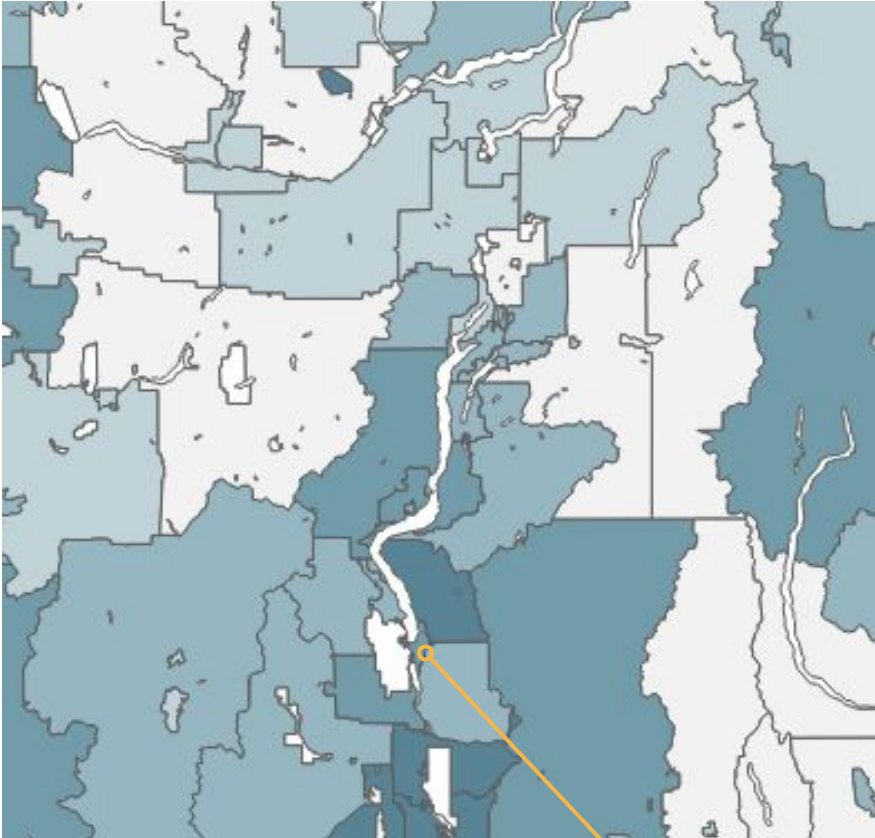
Map 12 Racialized communities % [Penticton]



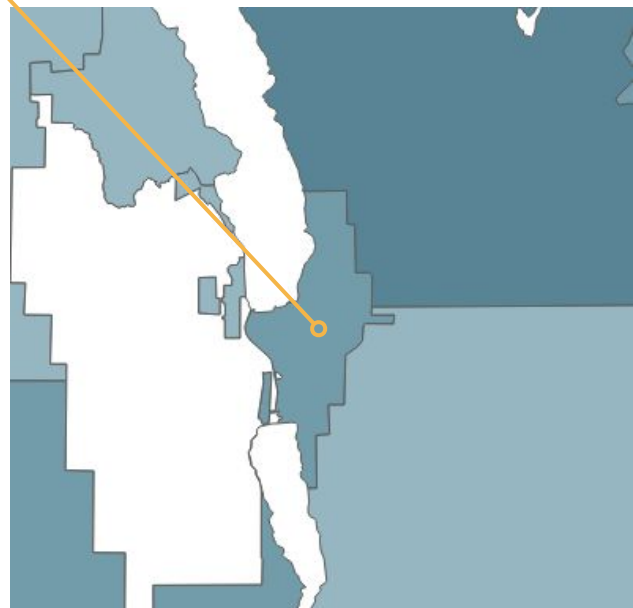
**In the darkest areas,
between 13% and 26% of
people identify as
racialized on the census.**

Immigration

Map 13.1 Distribution of immigrants % [Okanagan Region]



Map 13.2 Distribution of immigrants % [Penticton]



The darker the tone, the higher the proportion of people within the census subdivision who have immigrated from outside the country.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 4th quintile with 13.4% of the population having immigrated.

Immigration

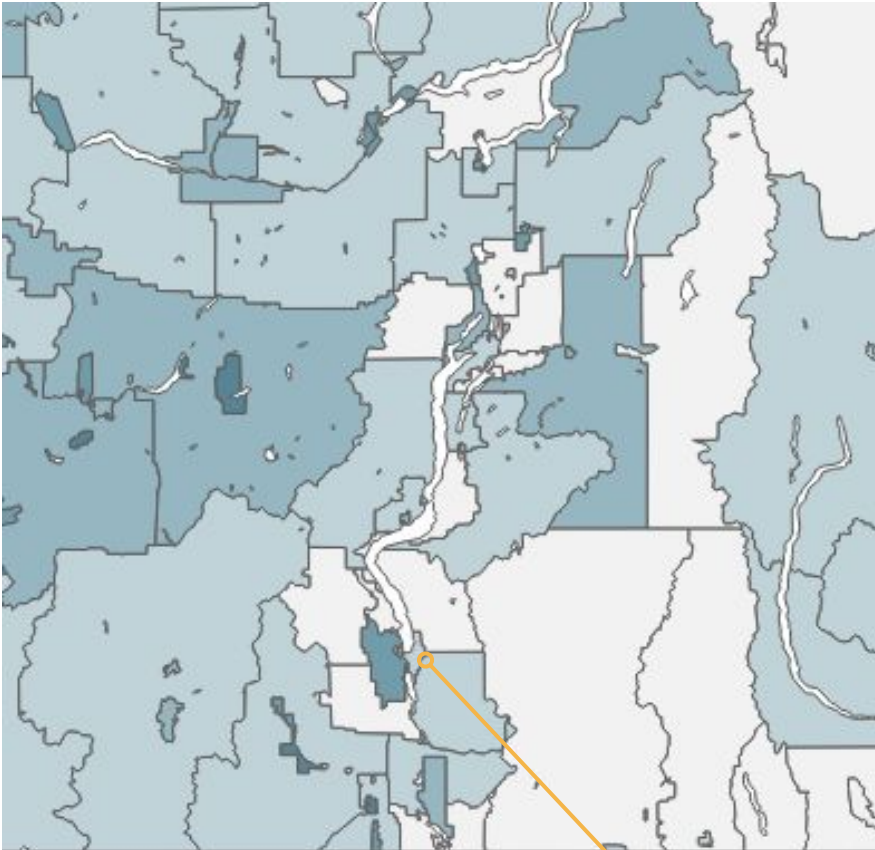
Map 14 Immigrants % [Penticton]



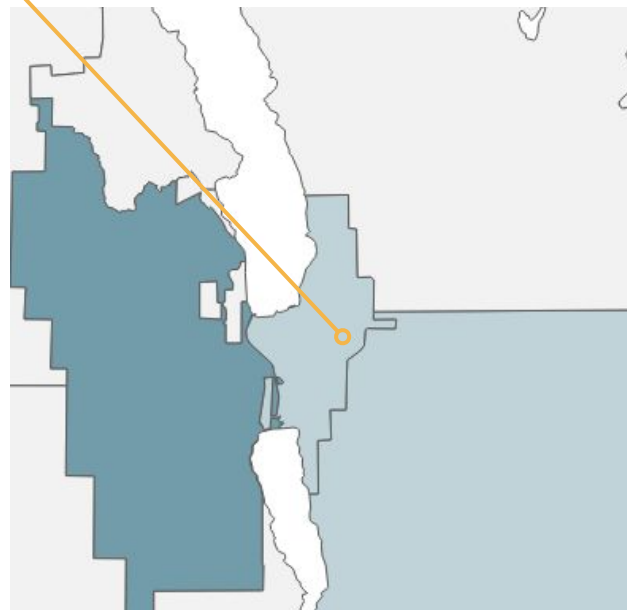
In the darkest areas,
between 16% and 31% of
people that have
immigrated.

Indigeneity

Map 15.1 Distribution of Indigenous % [Okanagan Region]



Map 15.2 Distribution of Indigenous % [Penticton]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of people who identify as Indigenous on the census.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 2nd quintile with 6.8% identifying as Indigenous.

Indigeneity

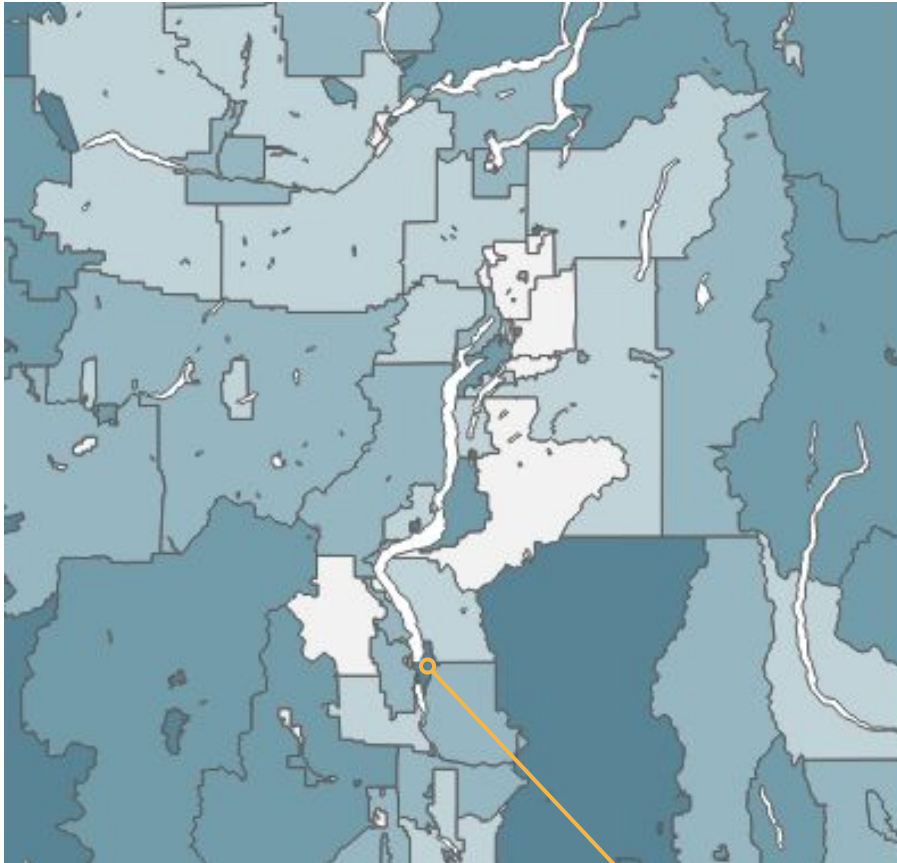
Map 16 Indigenous % [Penticton]



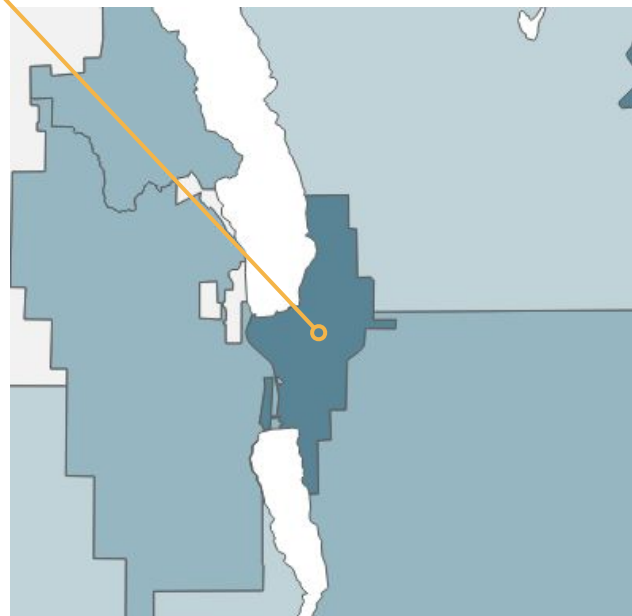
**In the darkest areas,
between 11% and 23% of
people identify as
Indigenous on the census.**

Household Composition

Map 17.1 Living alone % [Okanagan Region]



Map 17.2 Living alone % [Penticton]

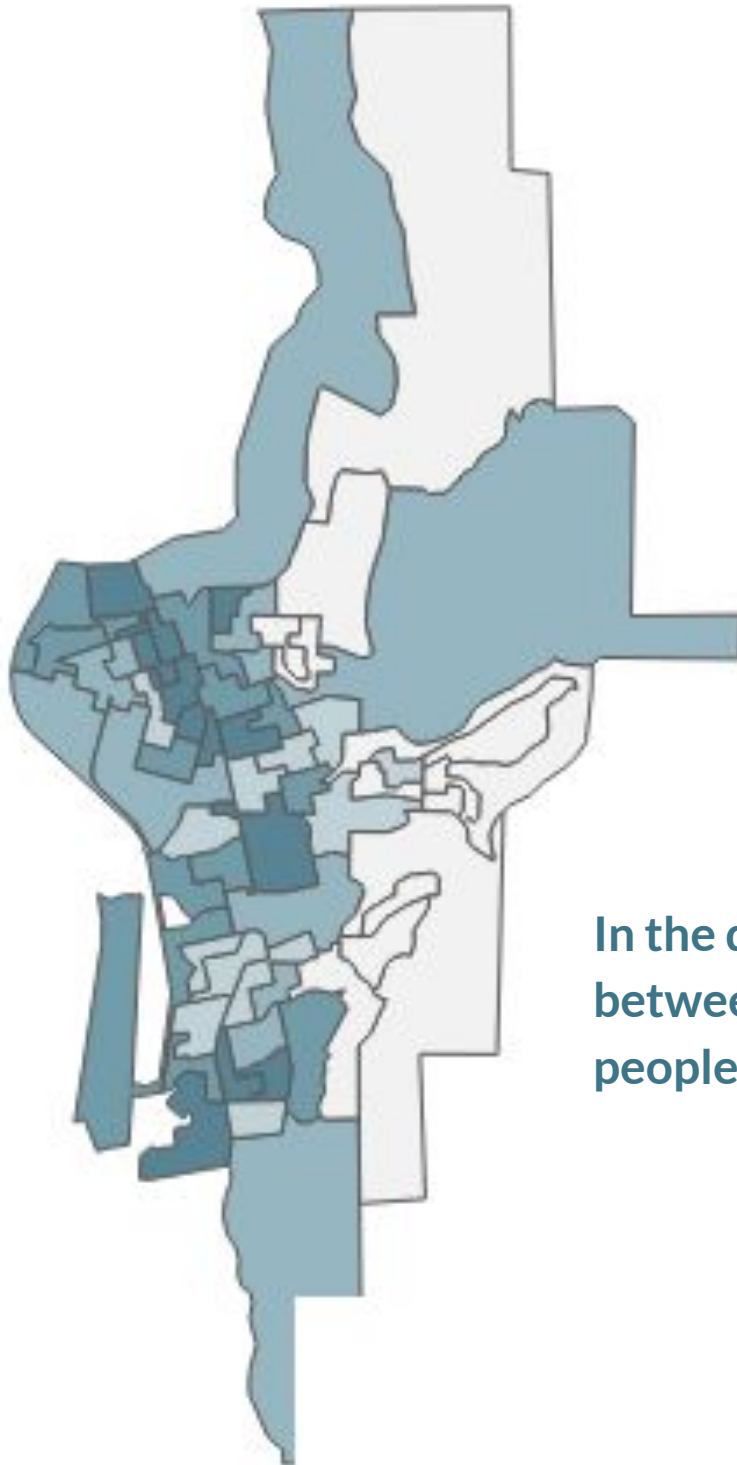


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of people living alone within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 18.2% of people living alone.

Household Composition

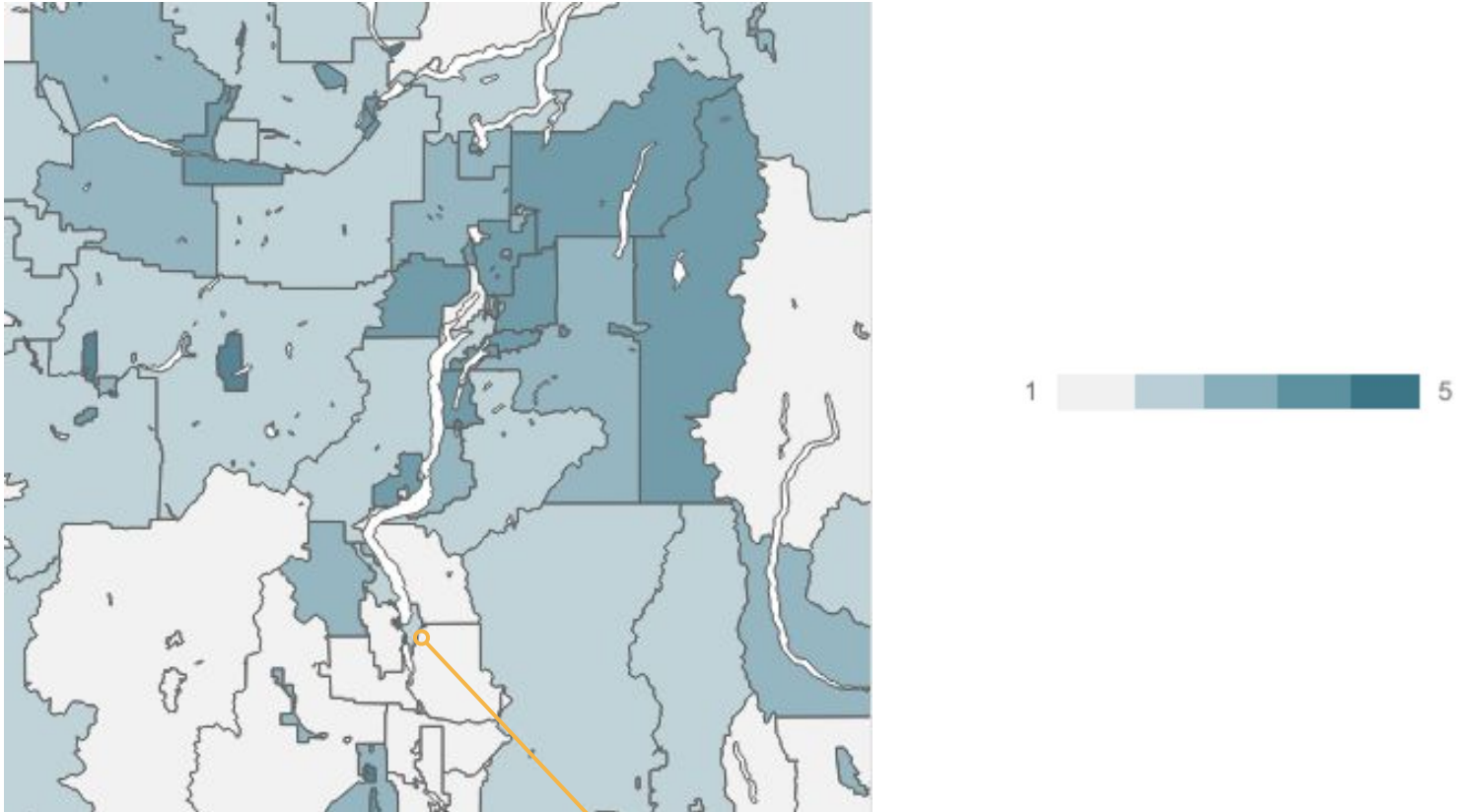
Map 18 Living alone % [Penticton]



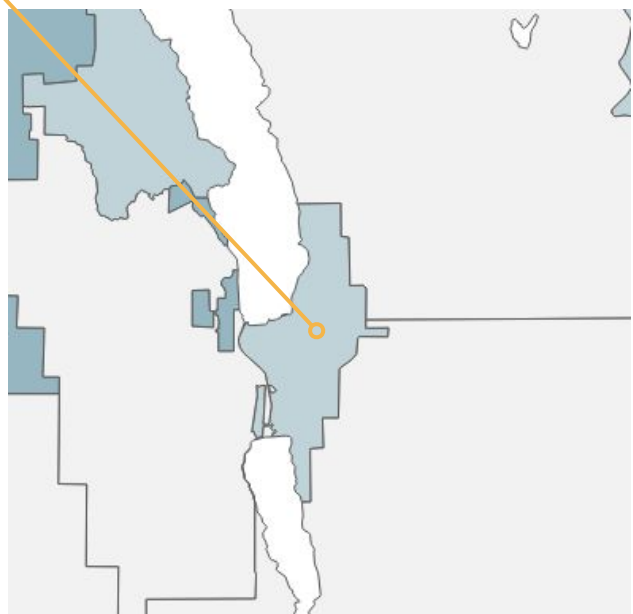
**In the darkest areas,
between 27% and 52% of
people are living alone.**

Family Composition

Map 19.1 Average family size [Okanagan Region]



Map 19.2 Average family size [Penticton]

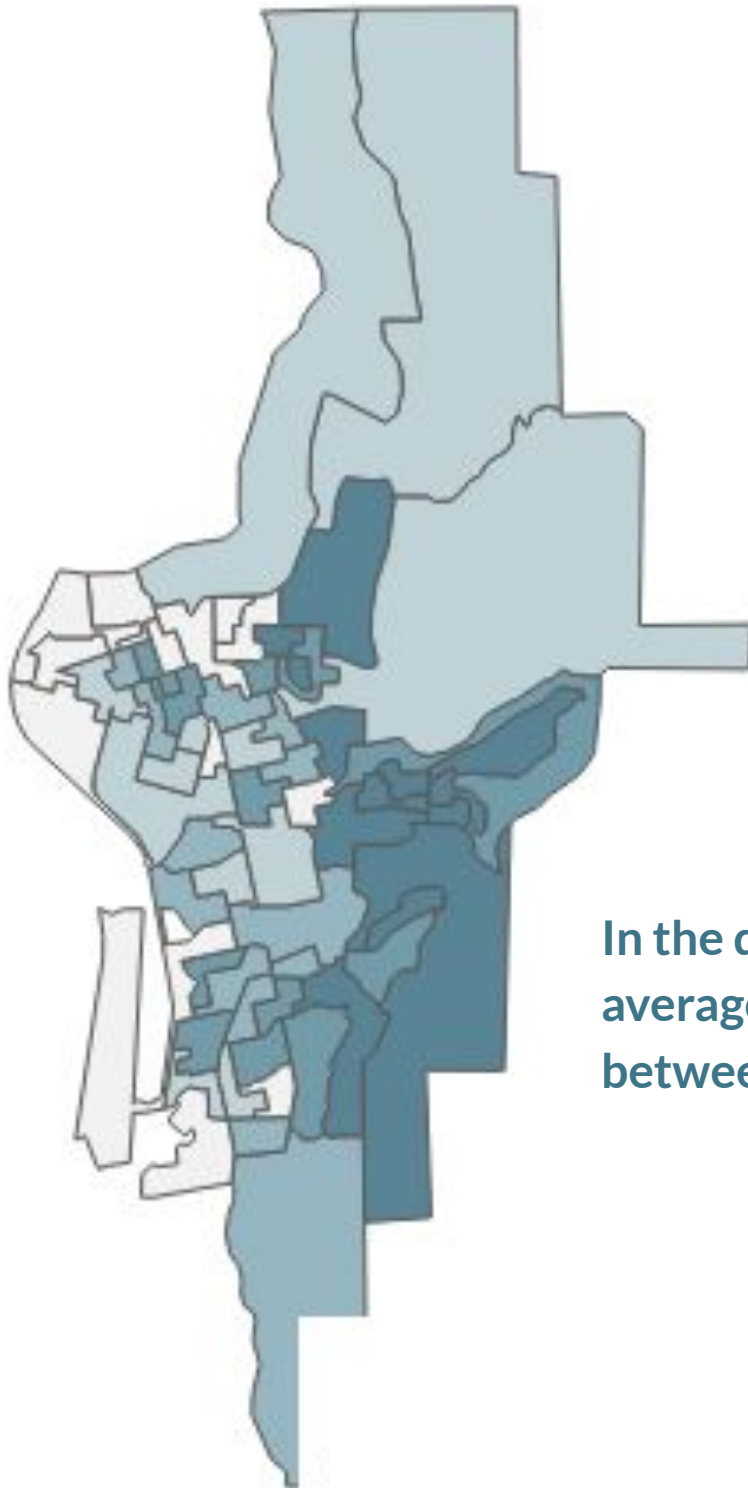


The darker the tone, the larger the average family size within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 2nd quintile with an average family size of 2.6.

Household Composition

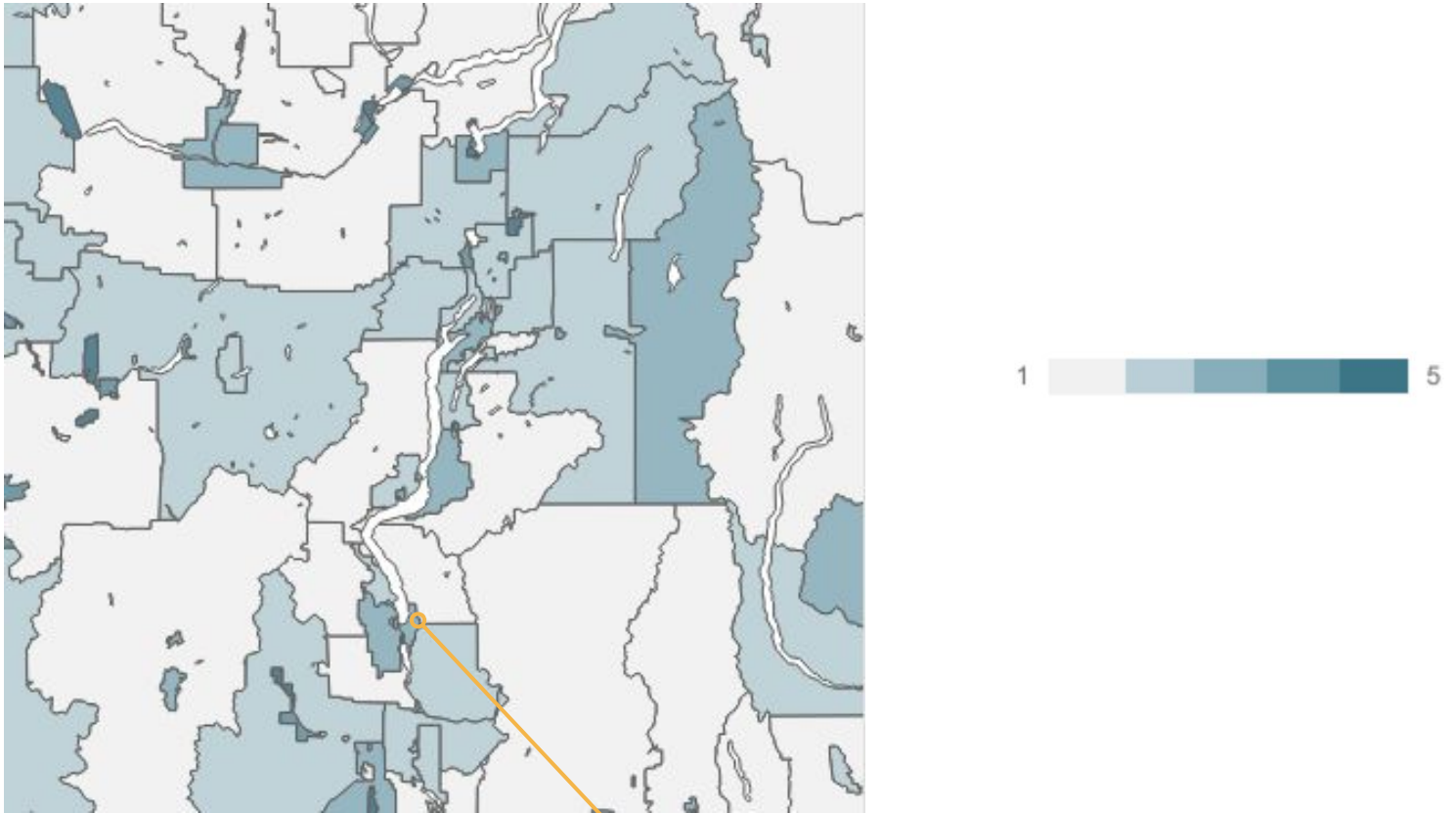
Map 20 Average family size % [Penticton]



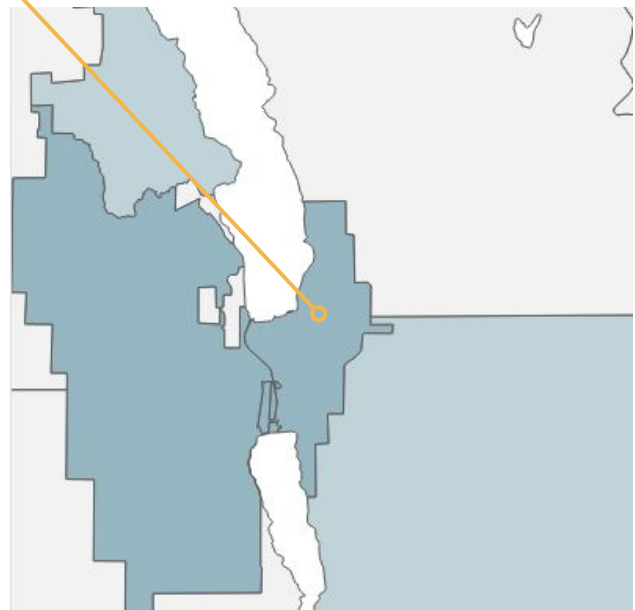
In the darkest areas, the average family size is between 2.7 - 3.1 people.

Family Composition

Map 21.1 Distribution of one-parent families [Okanagan Region]



Map 21.2 Distribution of one-parent families [Penticton]

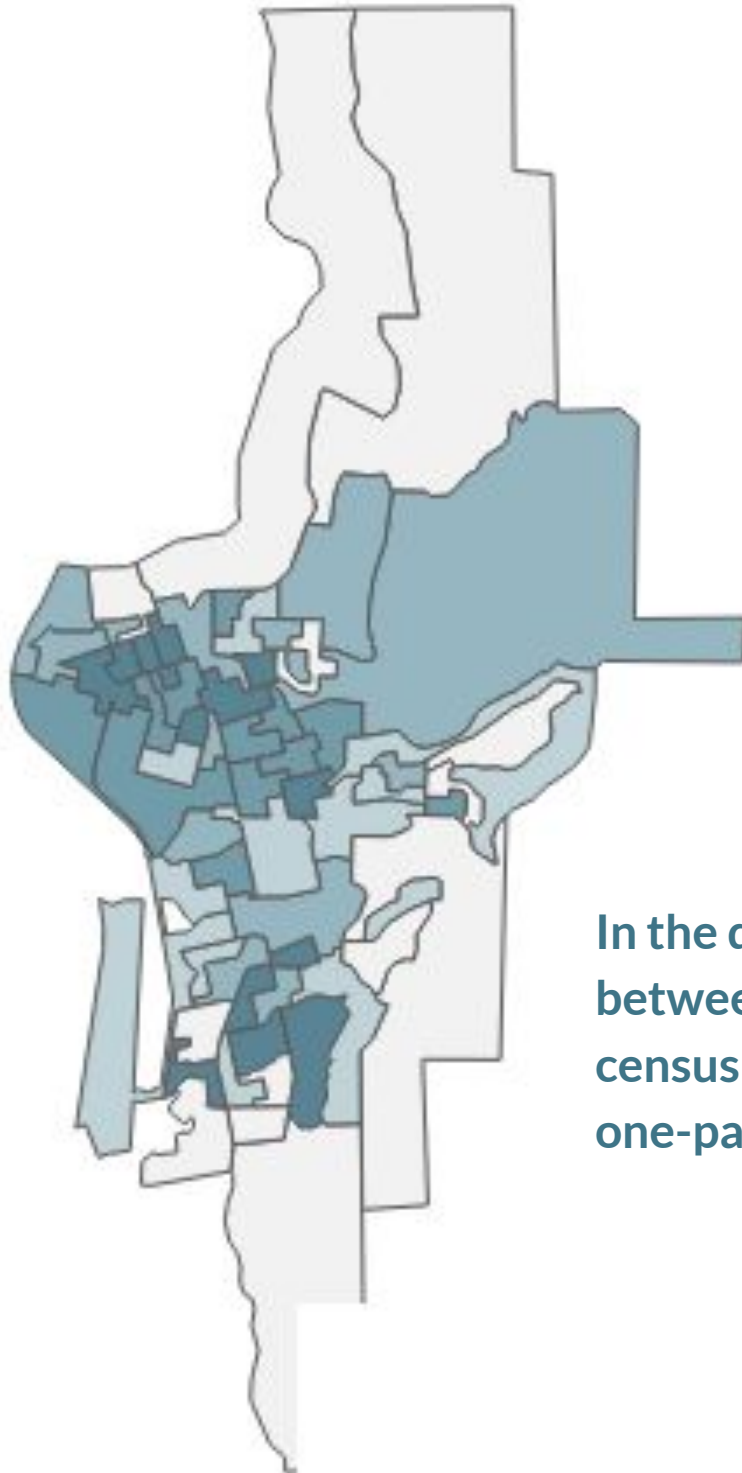


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of one-parent families within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 3rd quintile with 16.9% of families one-parent families.

Family Composition

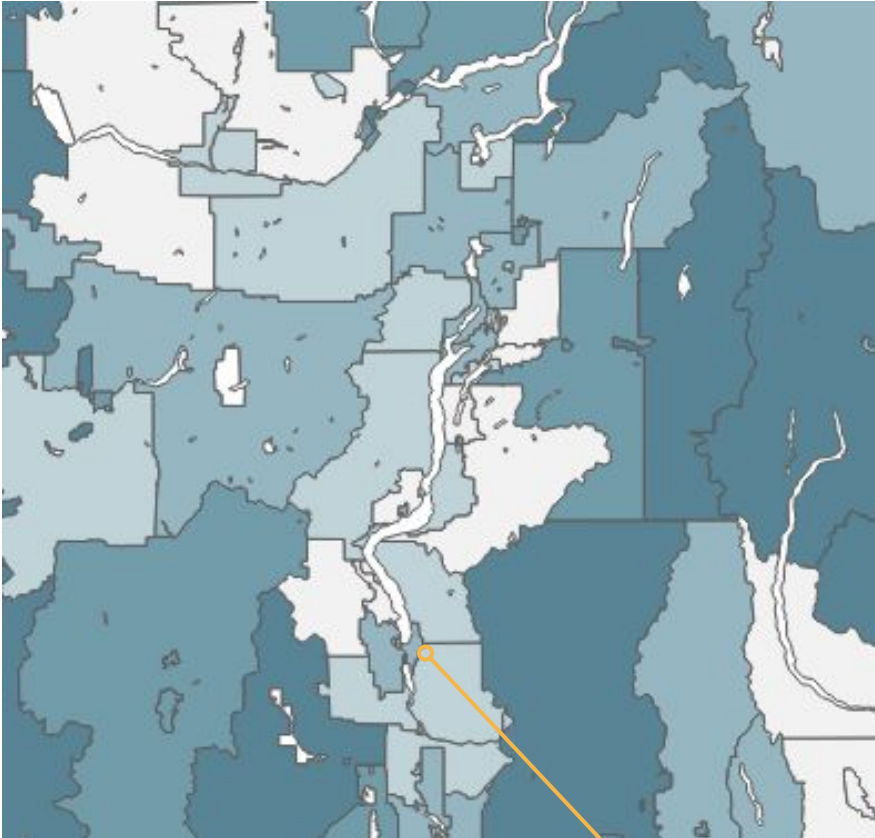
Map 22 One-parent families % [Penticton]



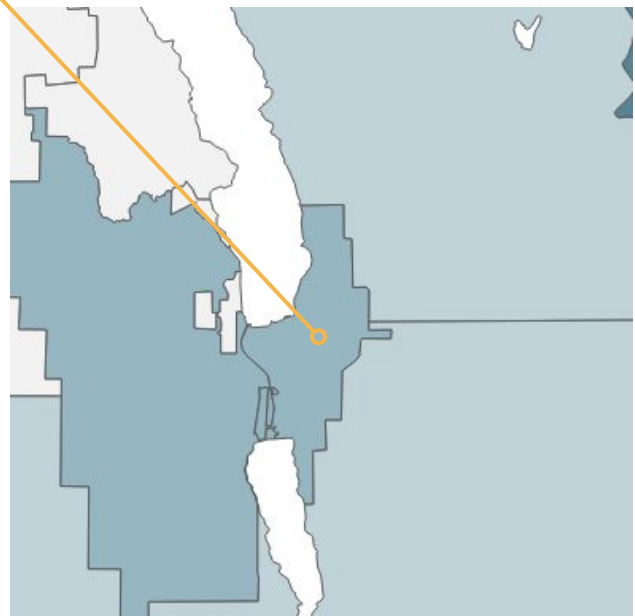
**In the darkest areas,
between 23% and 50% of
census families are
one-parent families.**

Income

Map 23.1 Low-income measure after tax % [Okanagan Region]



Map 23.2 Low-income measure after tax % [Penticton]

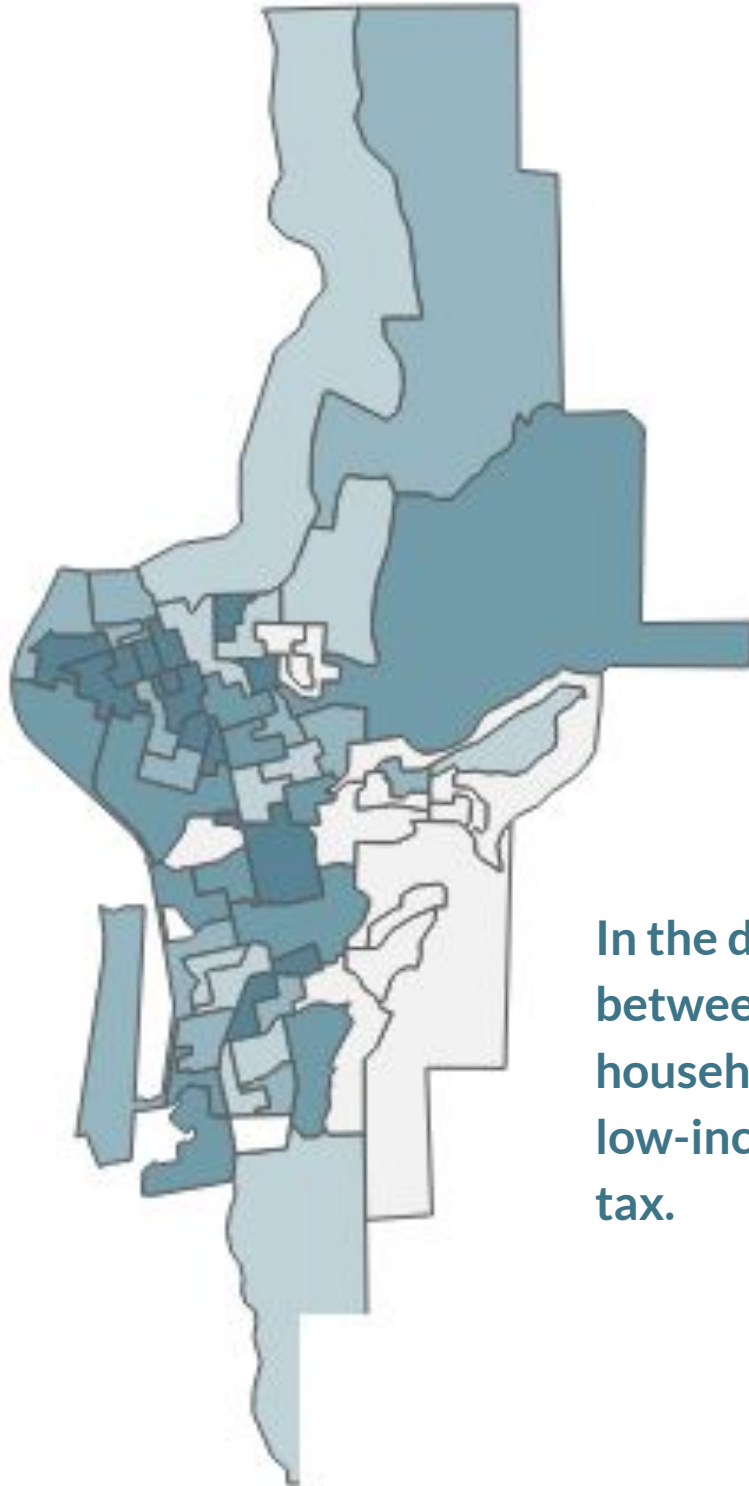


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of households are low-income, according to the low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT).

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 3rd quintile with 11.8% of households below the LIM-AT.

Income

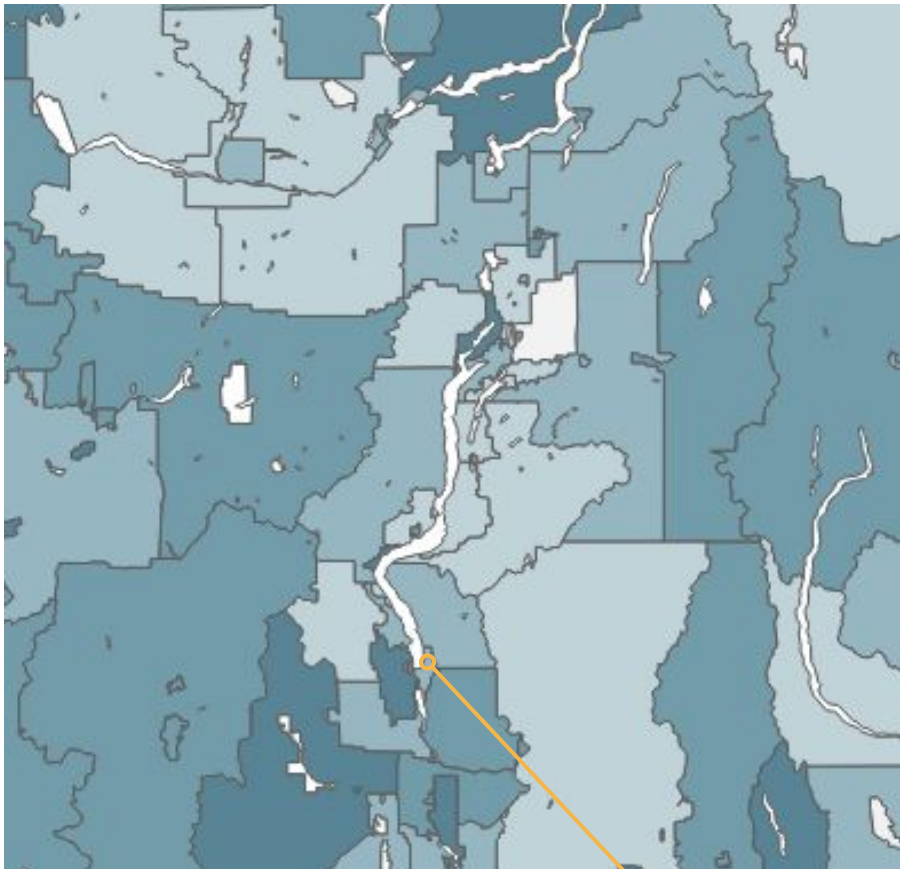
Map 24 Low-income measure after tax % [Penticton]



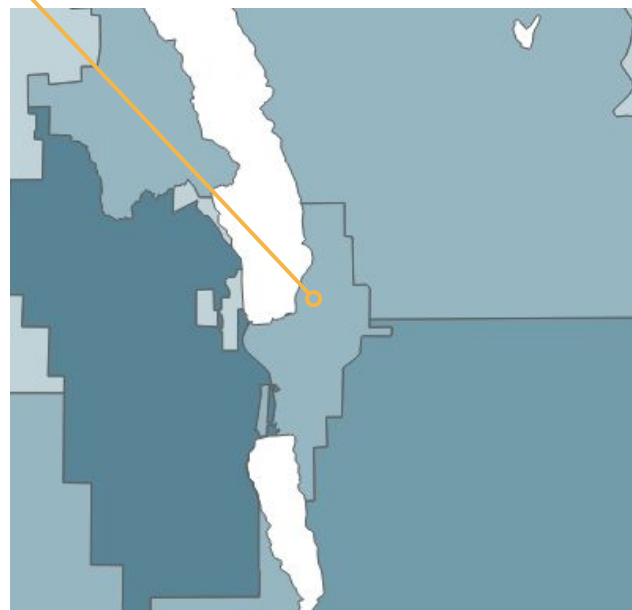
In the darkest areas,
between 15% and 36% of
households are below the
low-income measure after
tax.

Employment

Map 25.1 Without employment income % [Okanagan Region]



Map 25.2 Without employment income % [Penticton]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of people without an employment income within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 3rd quintile with 36.8% of people without an employment income.

Employment

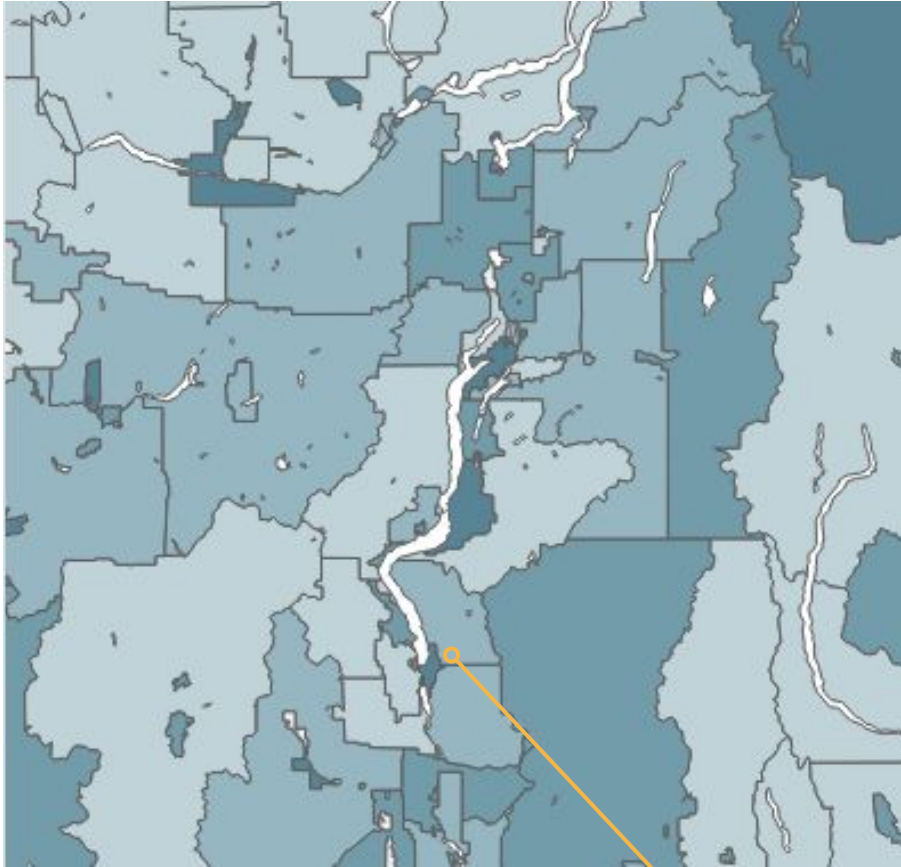
Map 26 Without employment income % [Penticton]



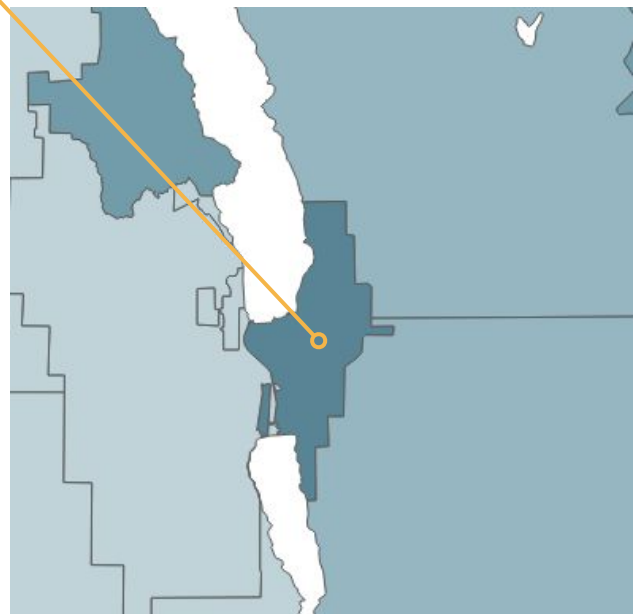
**In the darkest areas,
between 43% and 79% of
people are without
employment income.**

Housing

Map 27.1 Renters % [Okanagan Region]



Map 27.2 Renters % [Penticton]

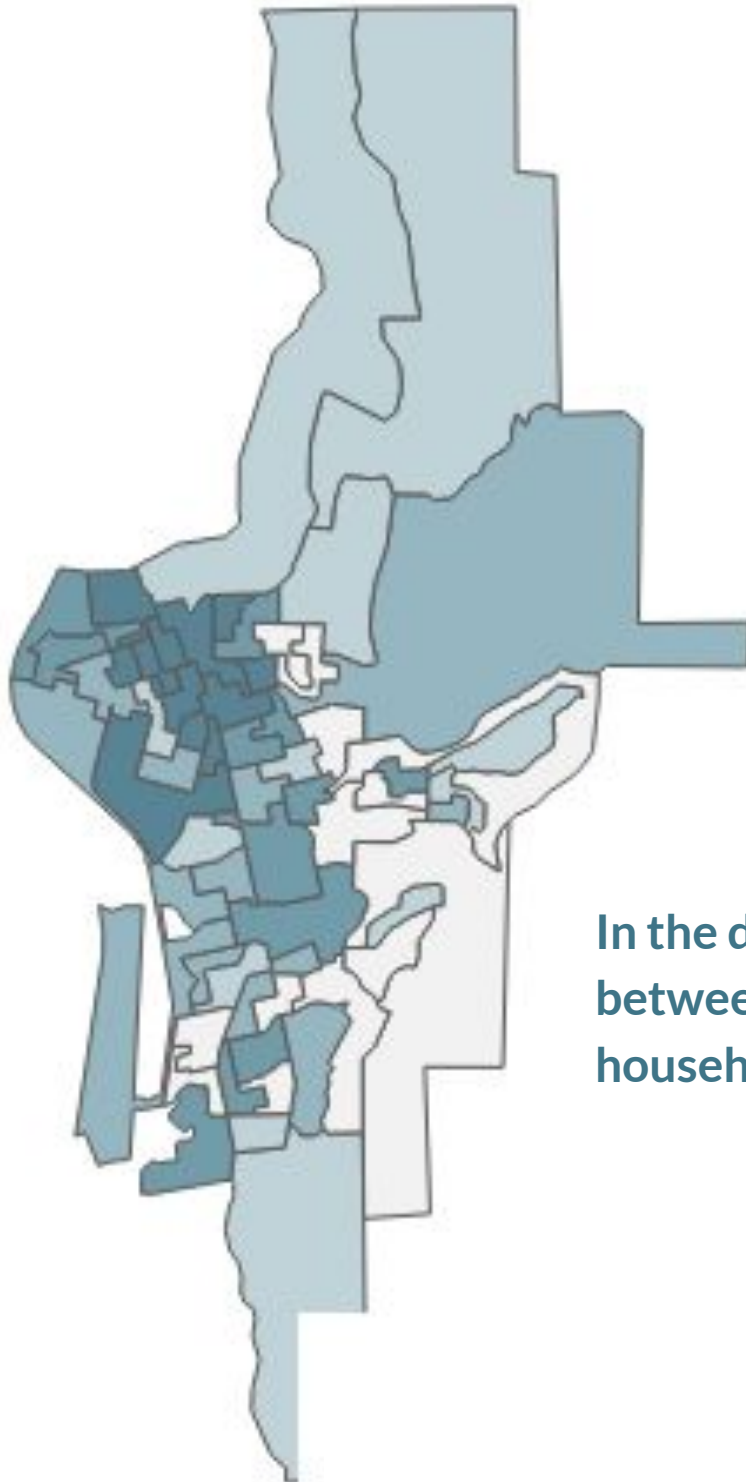


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of renters within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 36.7% of people renting.

Housing

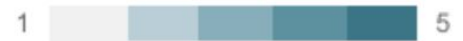
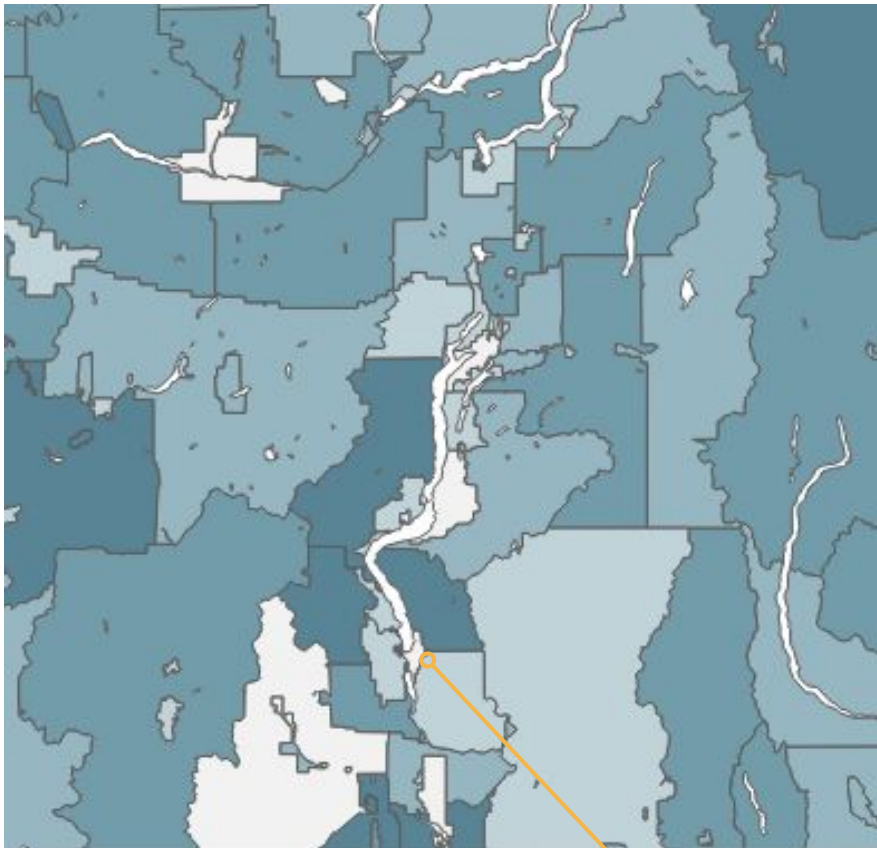
Map 28 Renters % [Penticton]



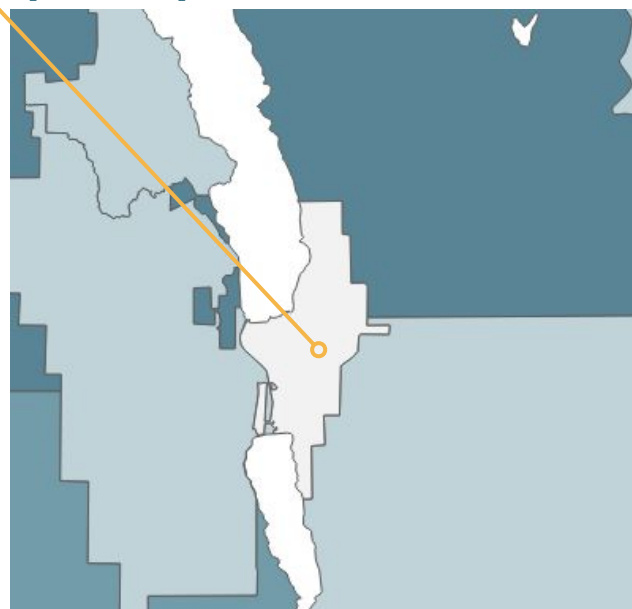
**In the darkest areas,
between 52% and 83% of
households are renters.**

Housing

Map 29.1 Single-detached house % [Okanagan Region]



Map 29.2 Single-detached house % [Penticton]

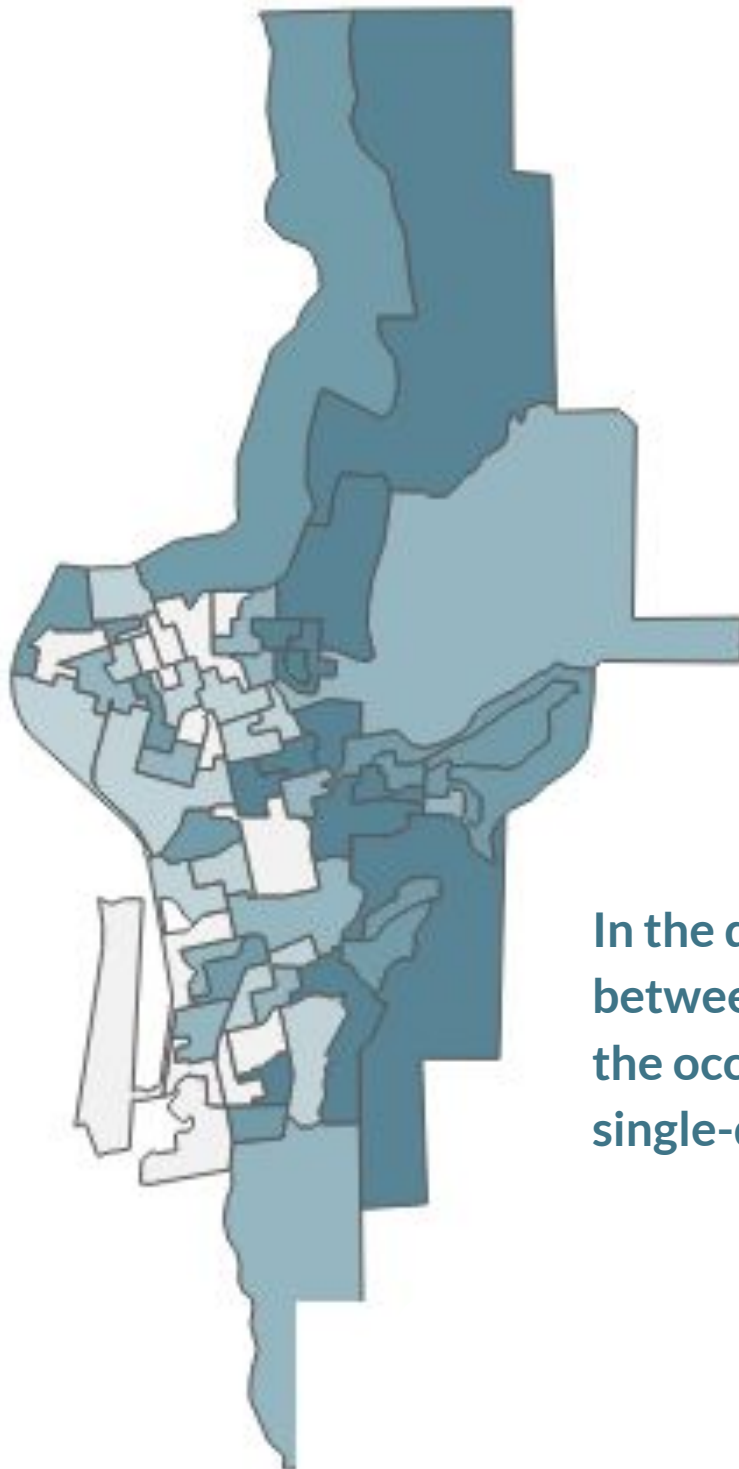


The darker the tone, the higher proportion of single-detached houses within the census subdivision.

Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 1st quintile with 40.3% of occupied dwellings categorized as single-detached houses.

Housing

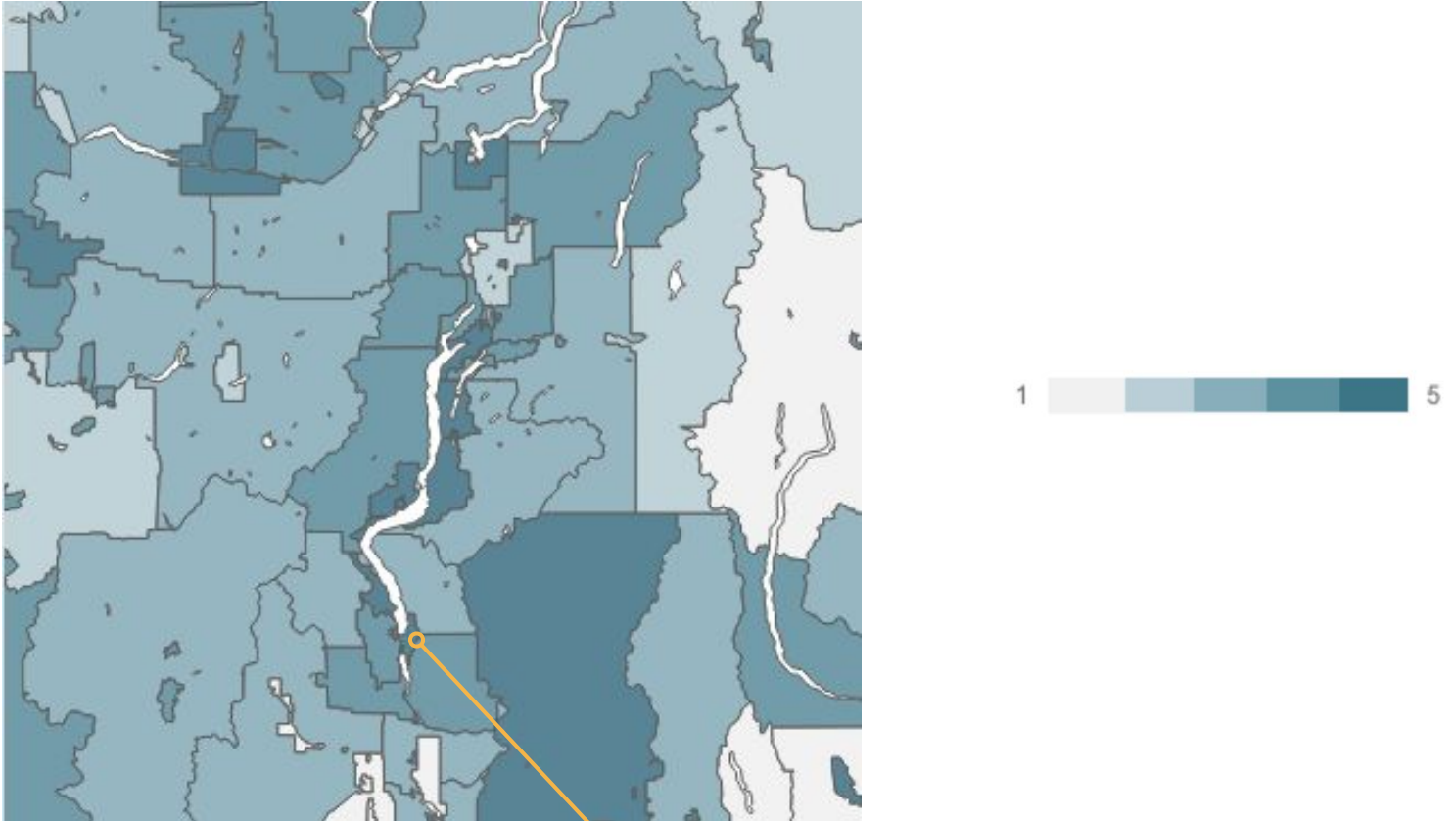
Map 30 Single-detached house % [Penticton]



In the darkest areas, between 77% and 100% of the occupied dwellings are single-detached houses.

Housing

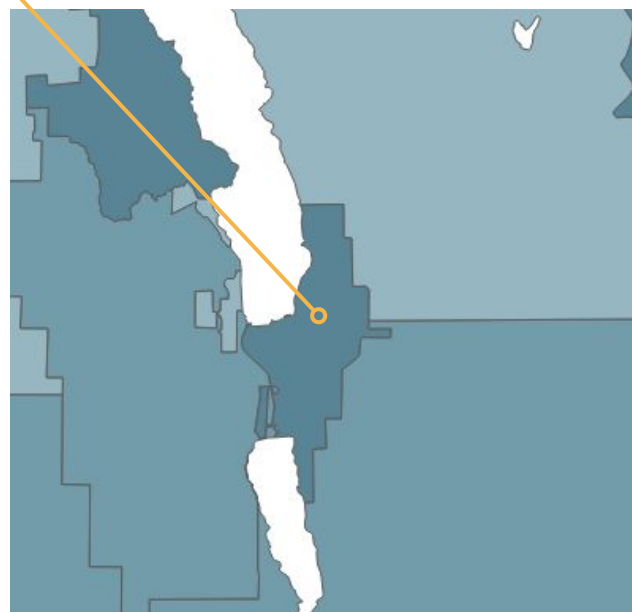
Map 31.1 Apartment in a building of fewer than 5 stories % [Okanagan Region]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of apartment building with fewer than 5 stories within the census subdivision.

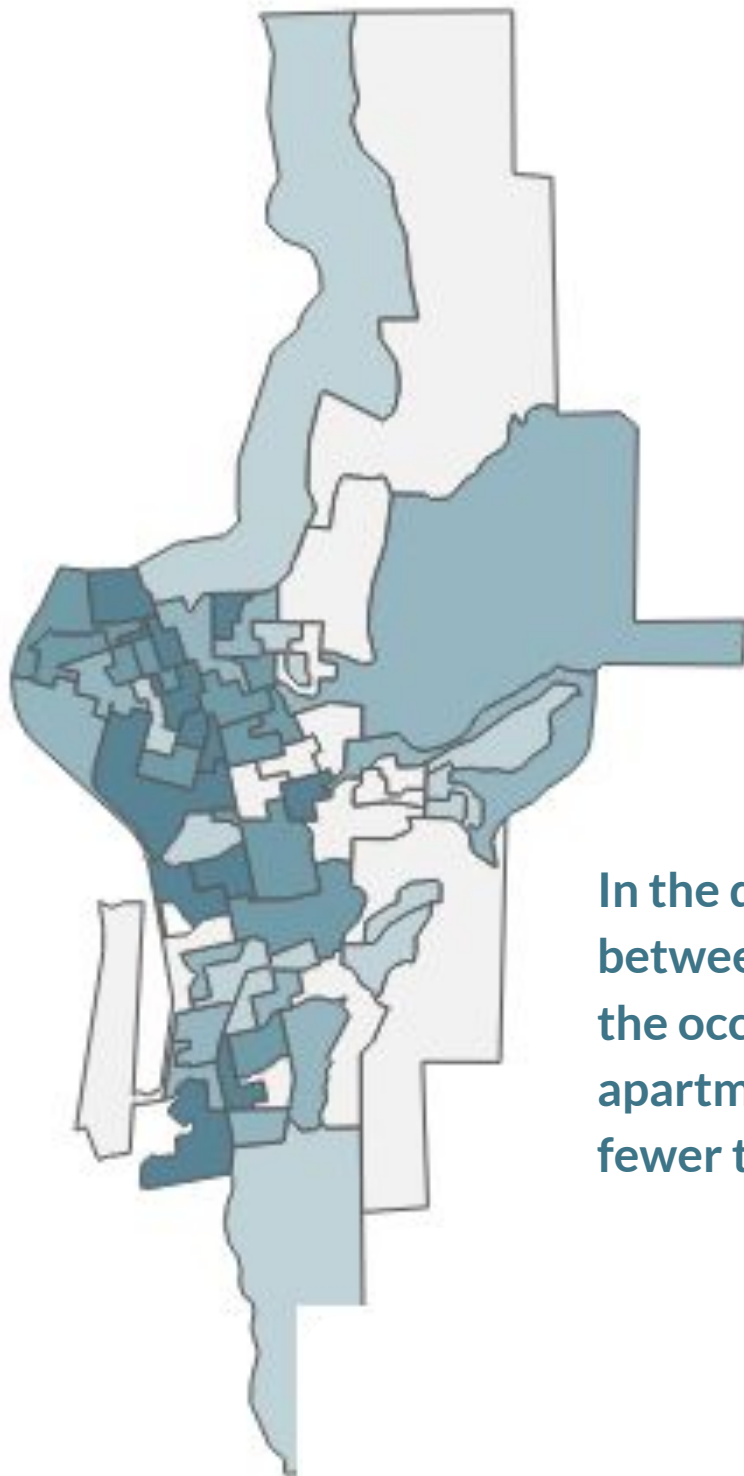
Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 29.2% of occupied dwellings categorized as apartments in buildings of fewer than 5 stories.

Map 31.2 Apartment in a building of fewer than 5 stories % [Penticton]



Housing

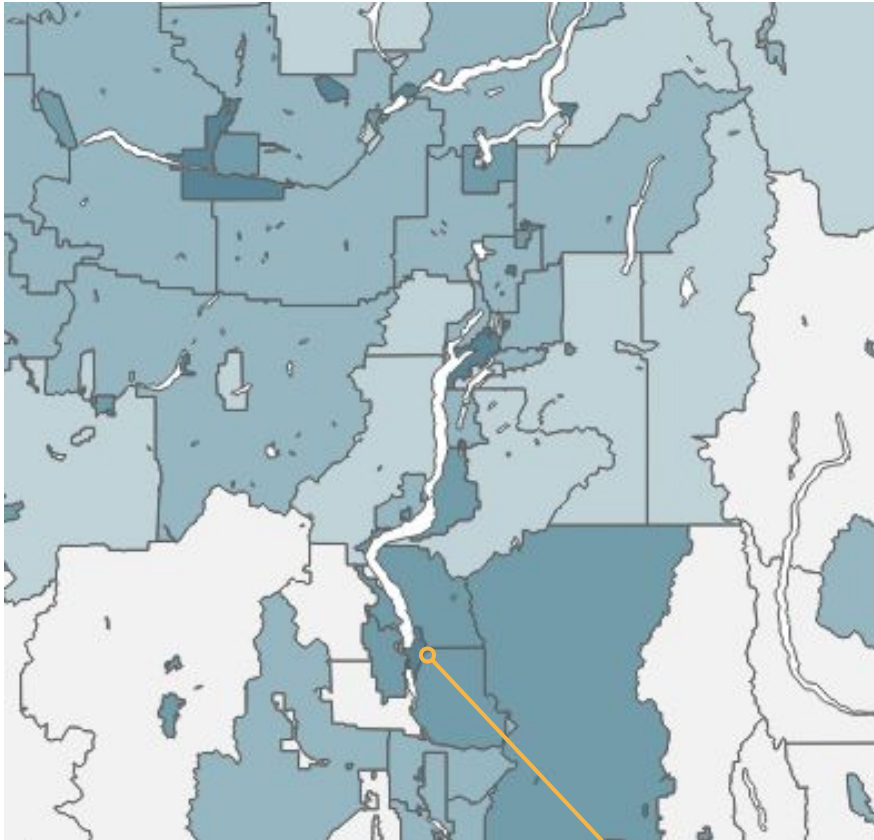
Map 32 Apartment in a building of fewer than 5 stories % [Penticton]



In the darkest areas, between 45% and 85% of the occupied dwellings are apartment building of fewer than 5 stories.

Housing

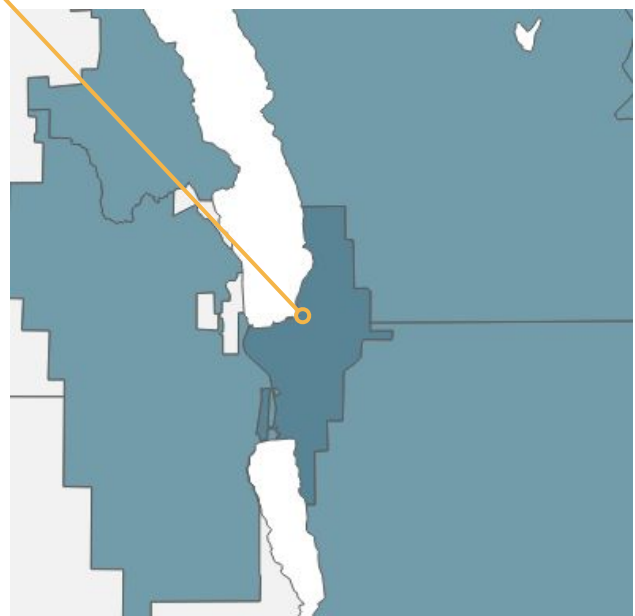
Map 33.1 Row house % [Okanagan Region]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of row houses within the census subdivision.

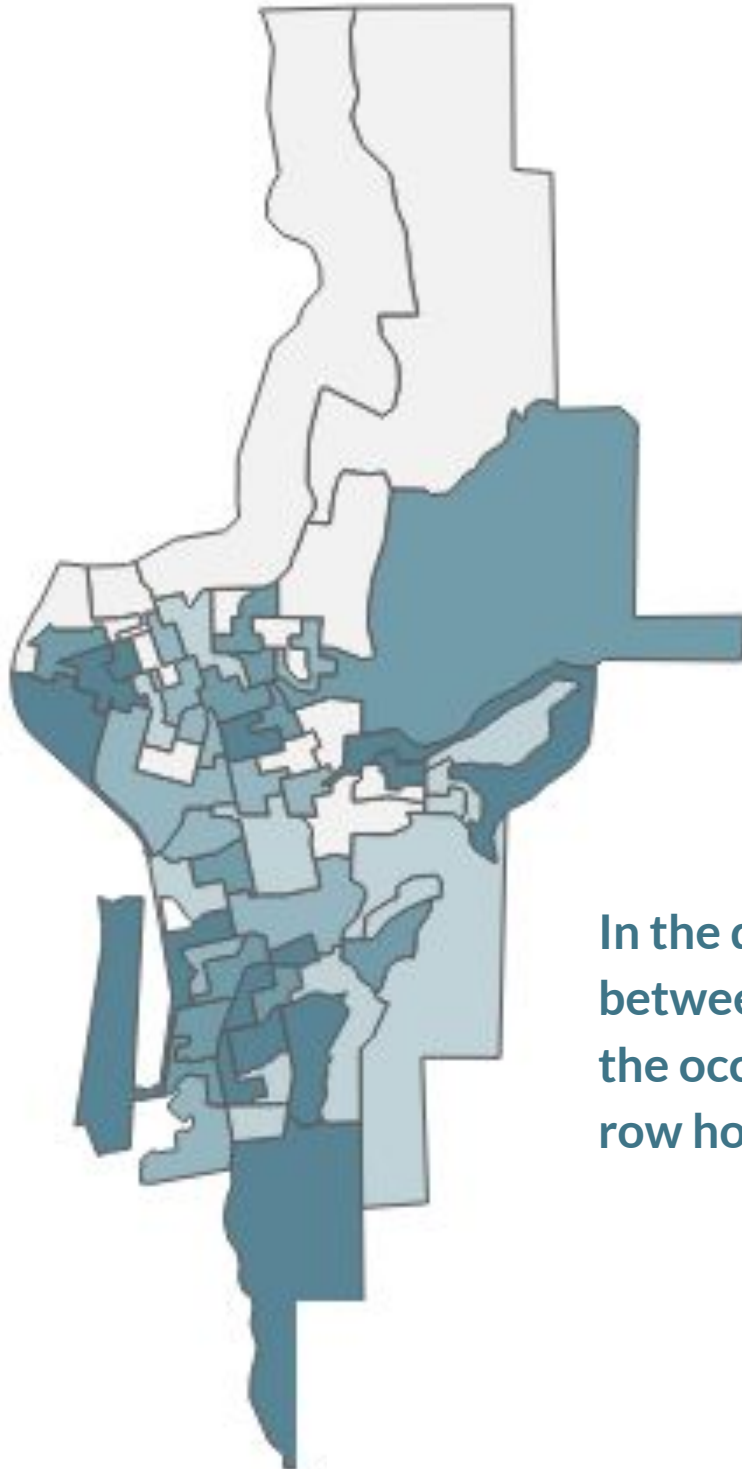
Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 10.5% of occupied dwellings categorized as row houses.

Map 33.2 Row house % [Penticton]



Housing

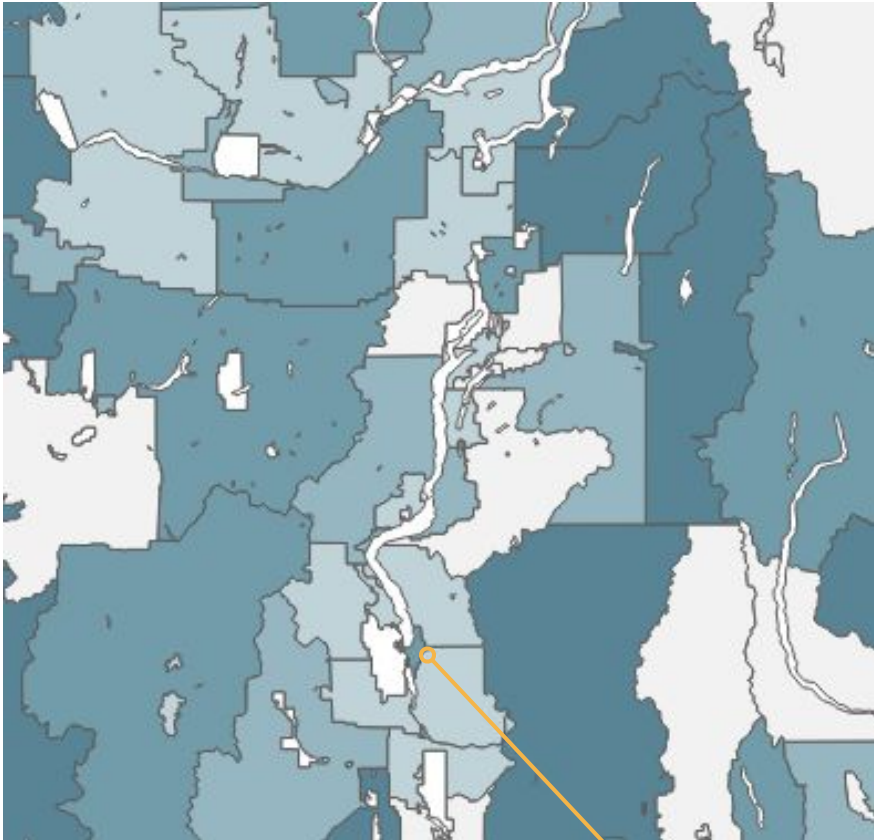
Map 34 Row house % [Penticton]



In the darkest areas,
between 16% and 53% of
the occupied dwellings are
row houses.

Housing

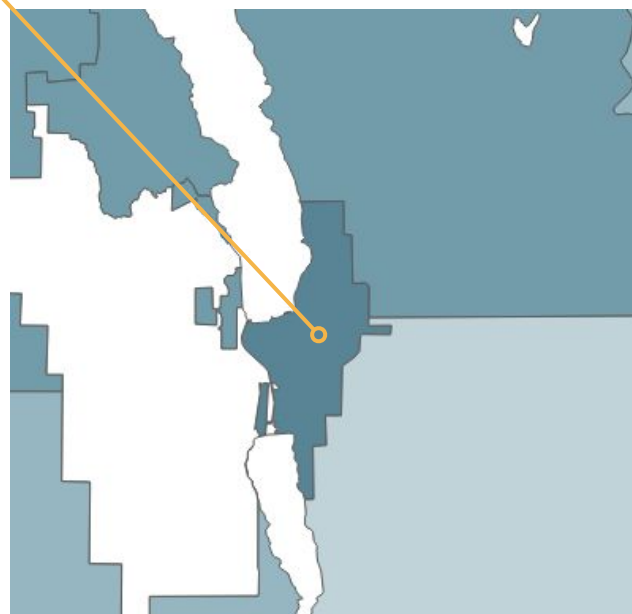
Map 35.1 Shelter costs 30%+ % [Okanagan Region]



The darker the tone, the higher proportion of households paying 30% of more of their income on shelter costs within the census subdivision.

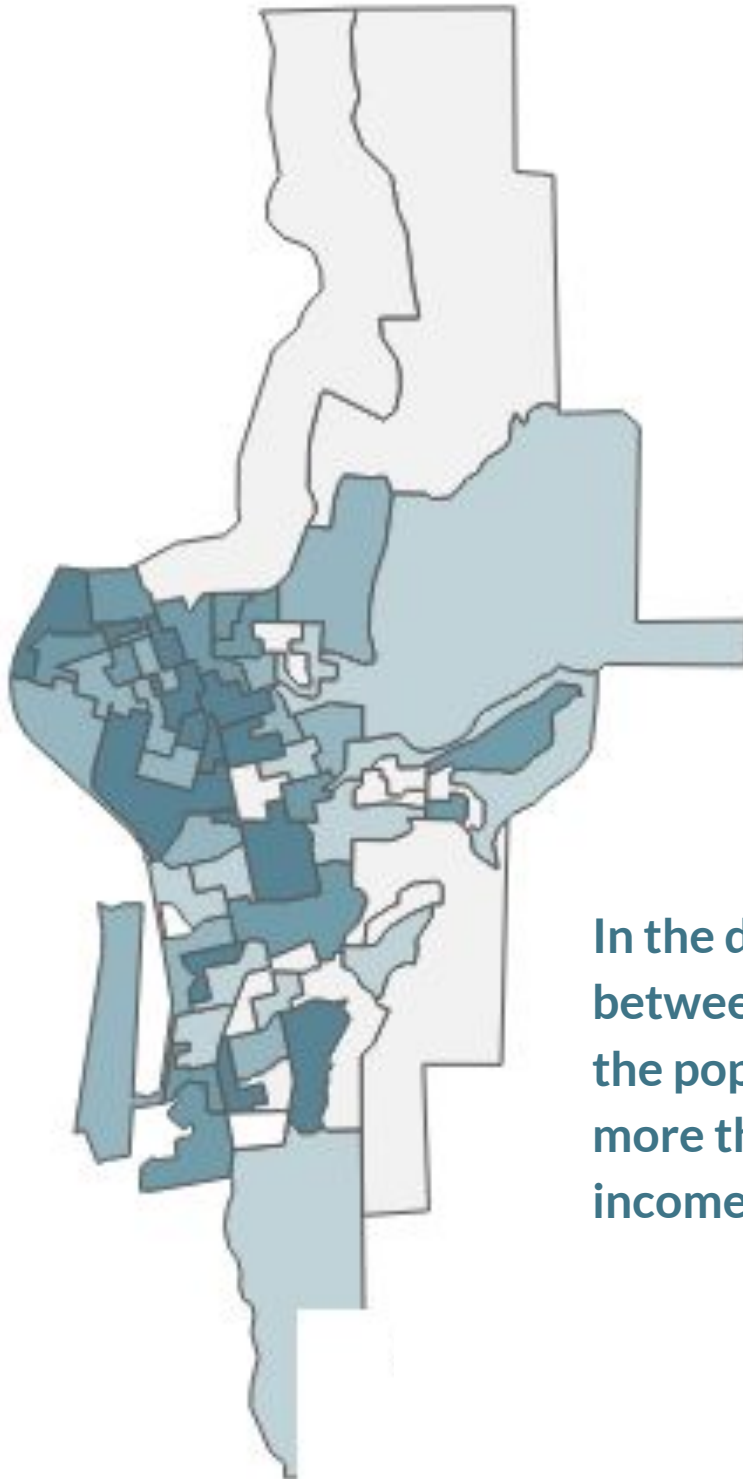
Of communities in B.C., Penticton is in the 5th quintile with 25.9% of households paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.

Map 35.2 Shelter costs 30%+ % [Penticton]



Housing

Map 36 Shelter costs 30%+ % [Penticton]



In the darkest areas, between 32% and 43% of the population is paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.

Layering Data for Intersectional Analysis

Spatial data analysis is valuable, not just for studying individual factors, but for examining how multiple elements together shape a community. In Penticton's context, integrating demographic data and risk factor indicators gives a deeper understanding of community needs, allowing for more precise social infrastructure planning.

When we integrate these indicators, we see more than a single aspect of the community. We get a multifaceted view that captures the complexities of residents' lives. For example, combining income data with demographics can expose how economic differences intersect with age, race, or family structure. This more nuanced perspective helps pinpoint areas facing multiple challenges that may need specialized attention.

Furthermore, combining both risk and demographic indicators can highlight various aspects of the community. Take for instance, a neighborhood with many low-income households and a high rate of resident movement - such areas could potentially face challenges like loneliness and isolation. Recognizing these areas helps ensure resources are effectively directed to prevent these issues from escalating.

In a fast-evolving community like Penticton, the capacity to integrate multiple indicators and examine compound characteristics is beneficial. As the city changes, its challenges and opportunities change too. By understanding the complex interplay of various factors, we can ensure social infrastructure planning effectively meets the diverse and changing needs of the community.

Seniors and Low-Income

This map highlights areas within Penticton that have the highest proportions of both older adults and households falling under the low-income measure after tax. Each factor, aging and financial constraints, can lead to challenges. These include social isolation, difficulty meeting basic needs, and a higher risk of homelessness. Neighborhoods with a high presence of both factors might indicate increased vulnerability, pointing to a potential need for more focused, preventative measures.

Map 37 65 years and over % and Low income measure after tax % [Penticton]



Areas in black have the highest proportion of households under the low-income measure after tax (13-37%) and people aged 65 years and older (32-90%).

Children and Low-Income Measure After Tax

This map points out areas in Penticton with the highest proportions of children aged 0-14 and households falling under the low-income measure after tax. Affording basic needs and housing, which are vital for child wellbeing, may pose a substantial challenge for these households. Areas with a high presence of both factors might indicate a combined vulnerability, suggesting a possible need for more focused, preventative measures.

Map 38 Children aged 0 - 14 % and Low income measure after tax % [Penticton]

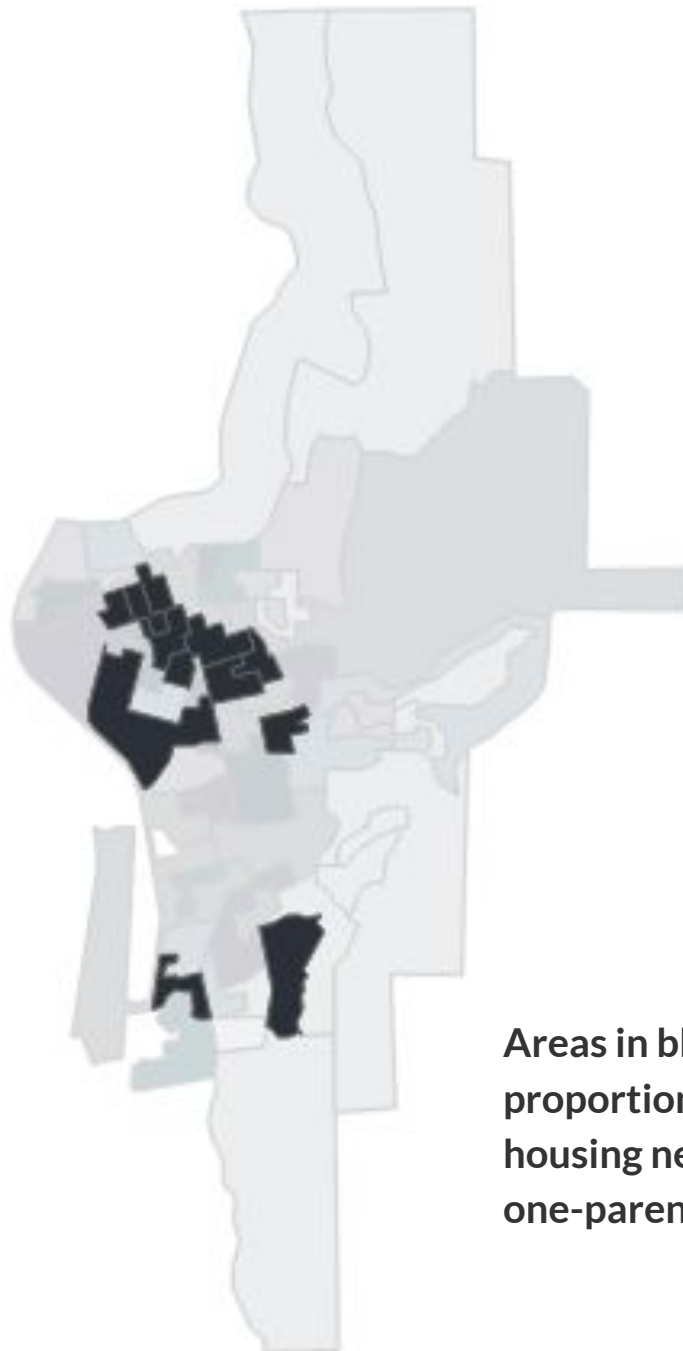


Areas in black have the highest proportion of children aged 0-14 (14-29%) and households under the low-income measure after tax (13-37%).

One-Parent Families and Core Housing Need

This map points out areas in Penticton with the highest proportion of both one-parent families and households experiencing core housing need. Single-parent families commonly face unique hurdles, such as financial strain, trouble finding affordable childcare, and restricted access to reasonably priced recreation. Concurrently, households in core housing need frequently shoulder housing costs that are excessively high compared to their income, leading to financial stress and potential instability.

Map 39 One-parent families % and Core housing need % [Penticton]

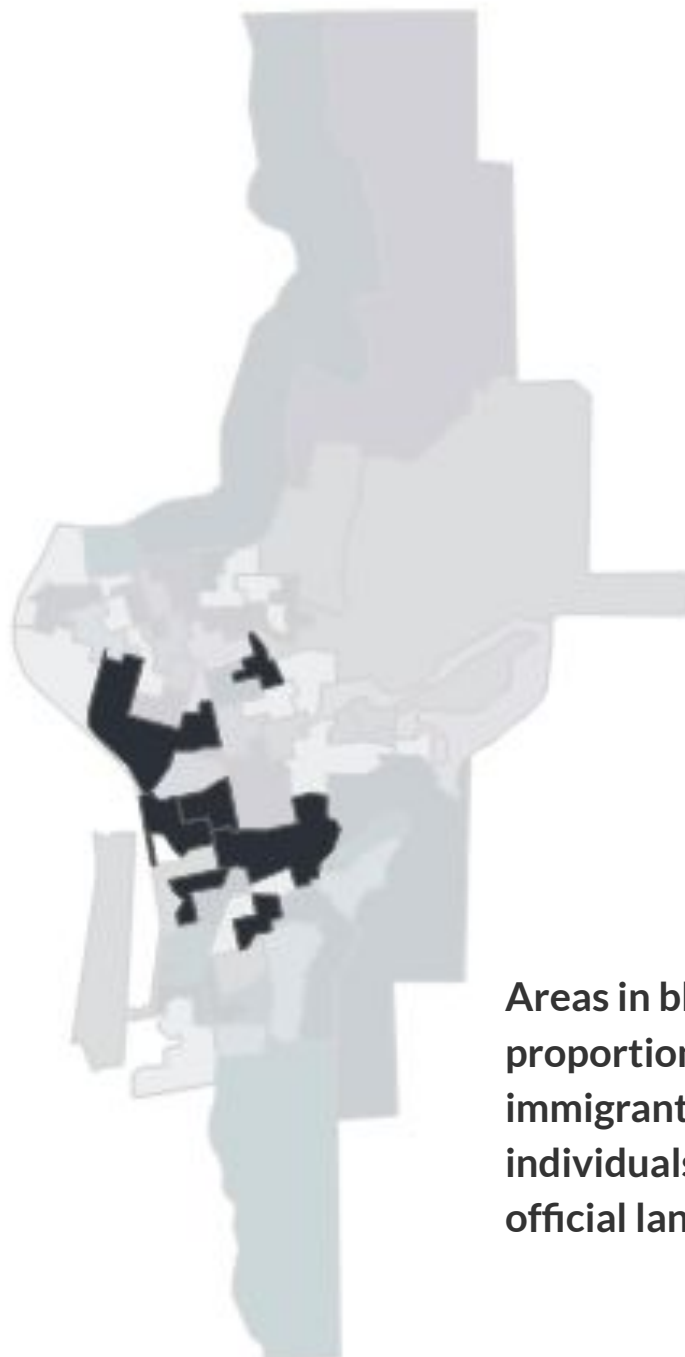


Areas in black have the highest proportion of households in core housing need (13-29%) and one-parent families (20-50%).

Immigrants and No Knowledge of Official Languages

This map highlights areas within Penticton that have the highest proportion of both immigrants and individuals with no knowledge of official languages. These groups might find it particularly challenging to navigate social infrastructure, which could impact their ability to access essential services and supports for wellbeing and safety. Areas with the highest proportions of both factors might signal an increased vulnerability, indicating a potential need for targeted, preventive measures, such as language support services and culturally-specific supports.

Map 40 Immigrants % and No knowledge of official languages % [Penticton]

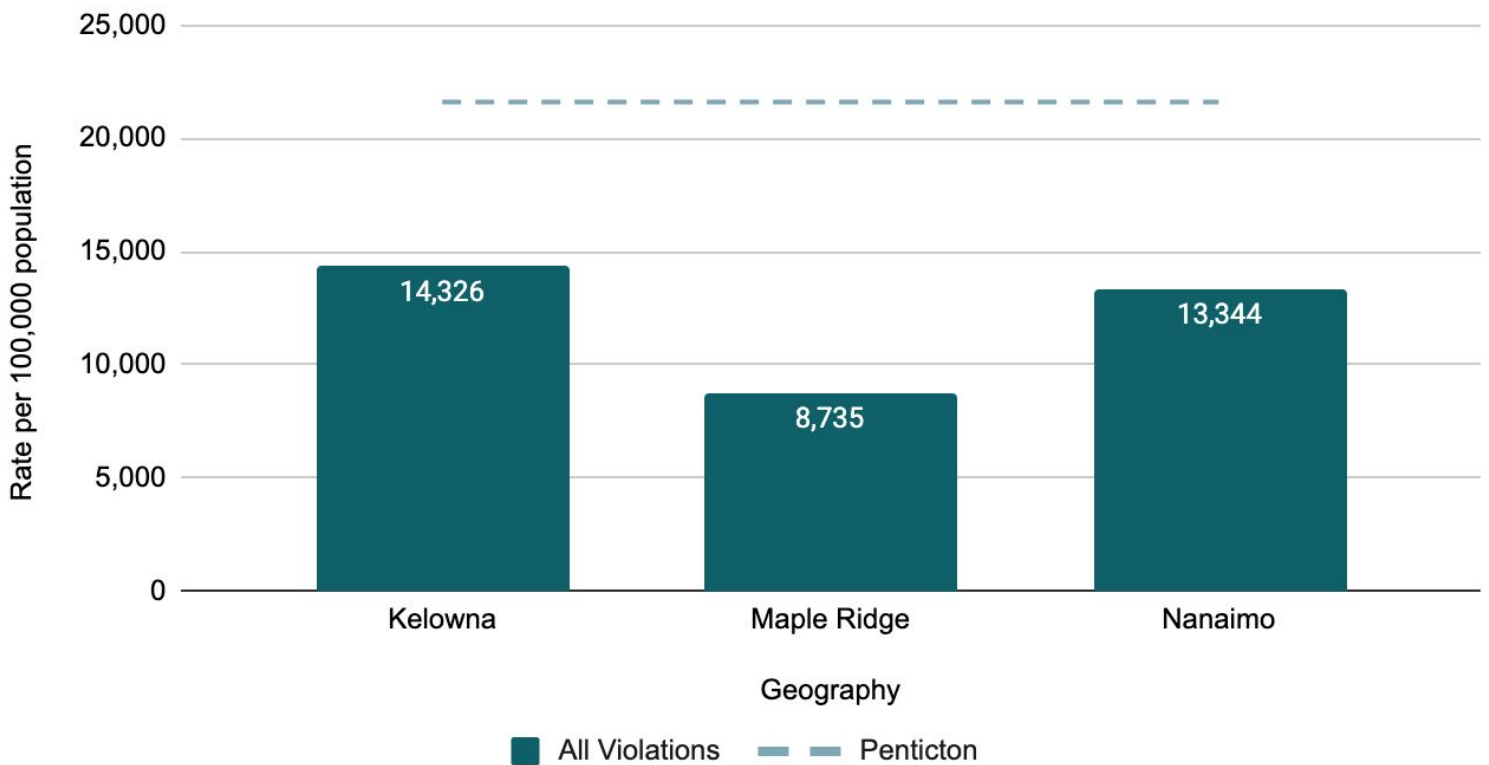


Areas in black have the highest proportion of people who are immigrants (14-30%) and individuals with no knowledge of official languages (1-30%).

Crime Data

In our exploration of social trends impacting Penticton, we also consider broader social trends, including crime data. This data provides additional insights into Penticton's social infrastructure, reflecting upstream issues such as mental health support, substance use prevention, and affordable housing, that also impact housing stability. While this isn't a deep dive into crime statistics, it offers a different view of the community's social landscape.

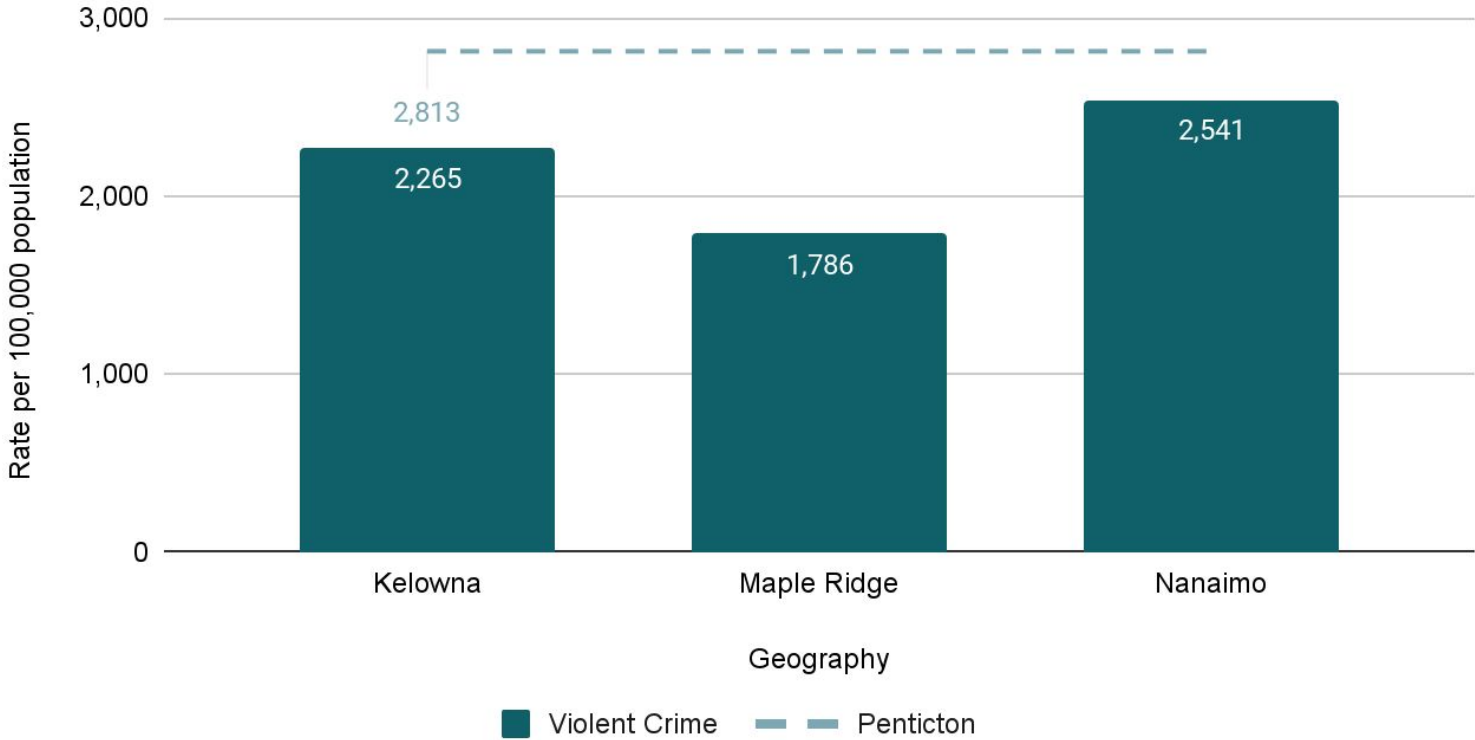
Total All Violations to Criminal Code Per 100,000 Population, Penticton and Selected Municipalities, 2021



The rate of criminal code violations per 100,000 in Penticton is notably higher compared to cities like Kelowna, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo. This data might hint that Penticton's social support systems could be less effective or harder to access. However, these numbers could also be shaped by different levels of law enforcement activity in these areas. These differences could point to possible gaps in areas like mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, affordable housing, or initiatives to engage youth.

Crime Data

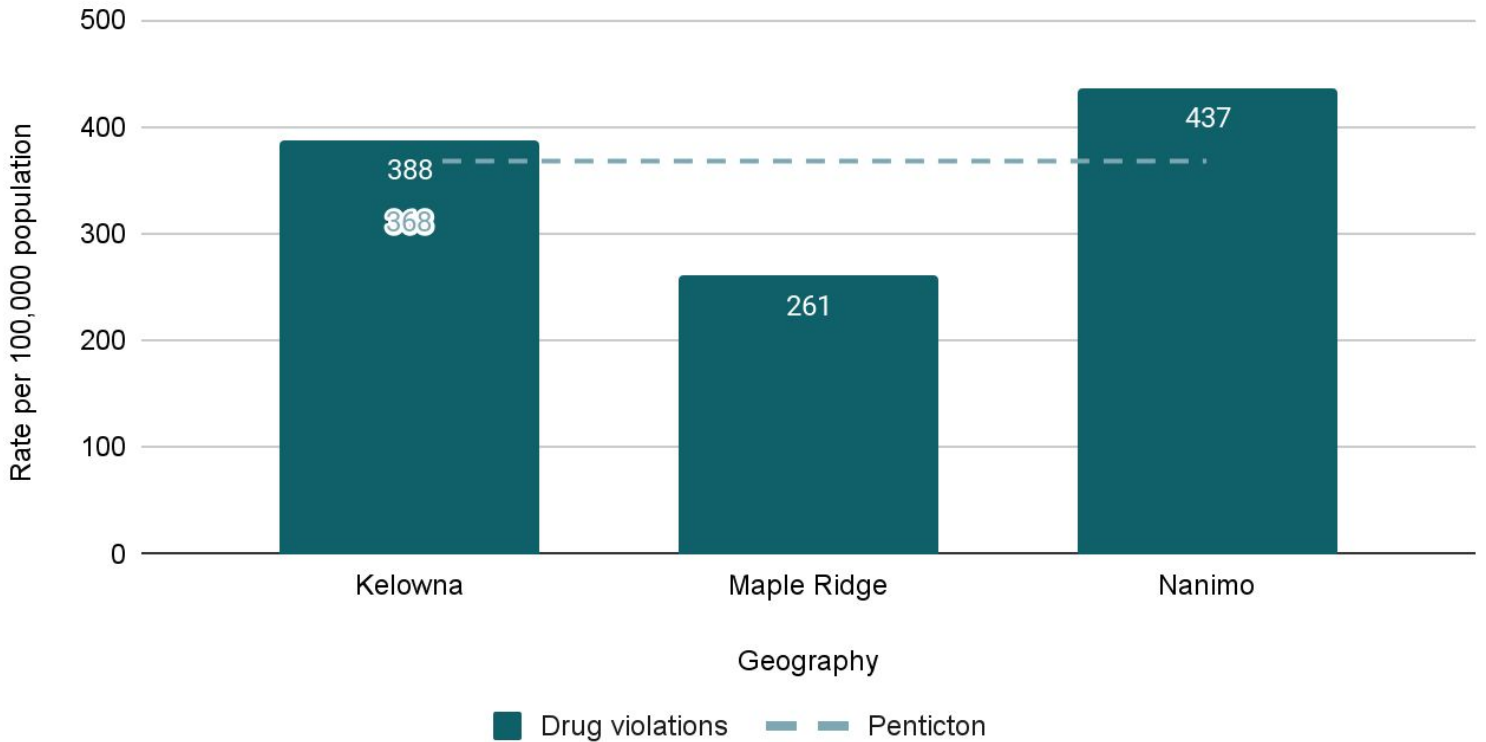
Total Violent Criminal Code Violations Per 100,000 Population, Penticton and Selected Municipalities, 2021



Penticton's higher rate of violent crime per capita, when compared to Kelowna, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo, highlights the need for strengthening its social infrastructure. This points to the need for more effective community safety measures, programs to prevent violence, and services to support victims. These insights go hand in hand with Penticton's social mandate, underscoring the value of a thorough approach that addresses root causes. This will inform Penticton's continued work to shape strategies that foster community safety and wellbeing.

Crime Data

Drug Violations Per 100,000 Population, Penticton and Selected Municipalities, 2021



In the context of drug violation rates, Penticton's rate exceeds those of Kelowna and Maple Ridge, while marginally falling below Nanaimo's. It's critical to acknowledge that these rates are often a reflection of enforcement strategies. More pressing is the fact that Penticton has seen a considerable increase in overdose calls, with an approximately 321% rise from 2016 to 2022. This indicates Penticton's struggle with escalating substance use issues. These observations emphasize the need to bolster Penticton's social infrastructure, particularly in areas like substance use prevention, harm reduction, and treatment services.

Section 2:

Needs and Navigation Mapping

Community-based research is helpful to understand the current patterns of need and desire for supports among people with specific characteristics, supplementing social trend data. To better understand homelessness and housing needs, a survey was conducted with a small sample of individuals experiencing homelessness at a shelter. While this survey is not representative of all individuals experiencing homelessness, it provides insights into the experiences of men in emergency sheltered locations.

The data collected from this survey serves as a useful starting point to develop personas and optimize the social infrastructure system, as discussed in the following section.

Survey Results

The survey included 13 respondents who reported experiencing homelessness. The majority of respondents were male and Caucasian, with an average age of 43 years old. To protect anonymity given the small sample size, age ranges will not be disclosed.

The 2021 Penticton Homelessness Count found a significant overrepresentation of Indigenous individuals (31%) experiencing homelessness. However, due to the small sample size and demographics of the respondents in this survey, there is a lack of congruity with those findings. This could be attributed to limited availability of Indigenous participants during the survey administration or potential trust and safety concerns due to historical instances of research being used as a tool of colonization and harm.

As a result, this findings of this research effort cannot be generalized to encapsulate the experiences of Indigenous-or racialized individuals experiencing homelessness, but to inform just one or two personas, from which there are many more.

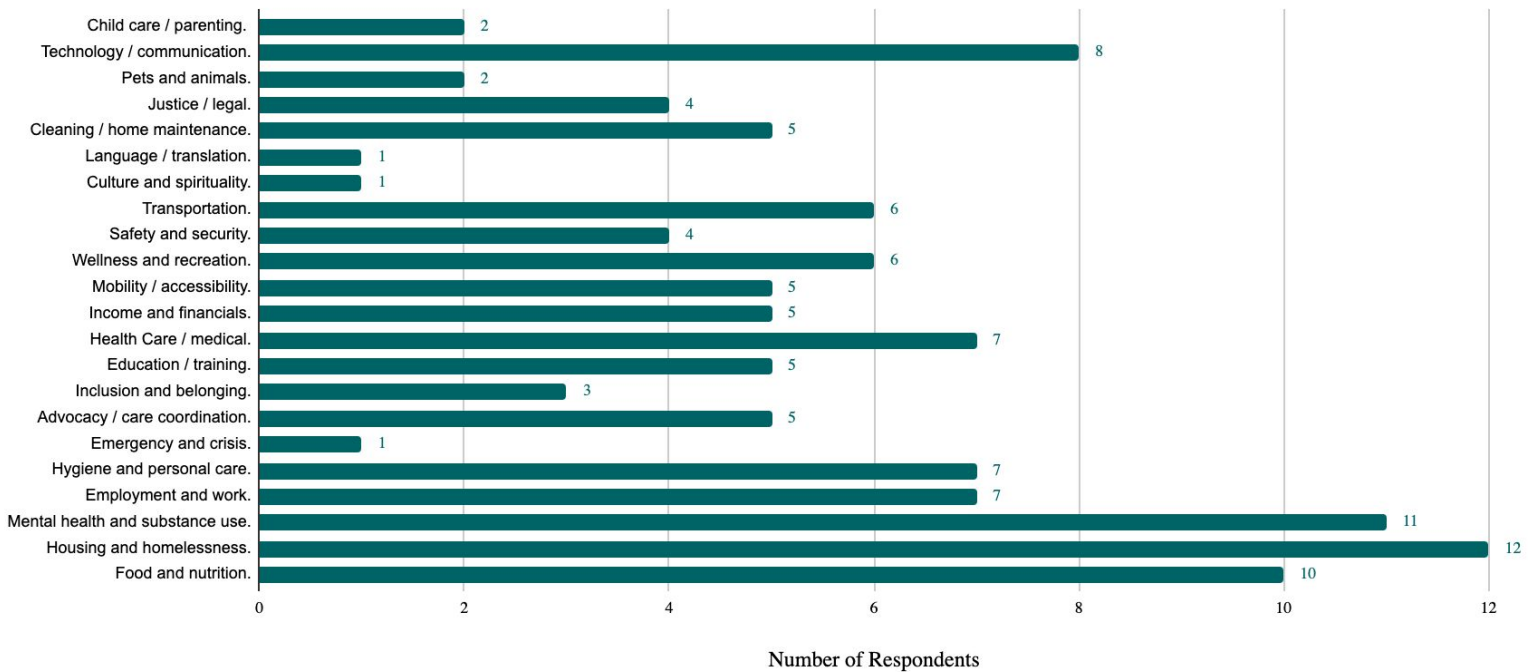
Service Needs

The most commonly identified service needs by respondents were housing and homelessness, food and nutrition, and mental health and substance use. Employment and work, hygiene and personal care, and advocacy/care coordination were also commonly identified needs. Other identified needs included education/training, health care/medical, income and financials, transportation, and technology/communication.

When comparing age with top needs, it was found that younger respondents were more likely to identify education and training as a top need, while older respondents were more likely to identify health care/medical as a top need.

It is worth noting that the top needs reported by respondents in each age group are fairly consistent with the overall top needs reported in the survey. Housing and homelessness and mental health and substance use were commonly reported across all age groups.

Service Needs Identified by Respondents



Wellbeing Concerns

When asked about their 3 - 5 top concerns in regards to wellbeing participants responses included lack of housing and resources for the homeless, high cost of rent compared to disability income, lack of low-income housing, and limited knowledge on how to access resources.



One respondents also expressed feeling forgotten or unimportant in the system. Other concerns include lack of transportation, accessing larger financial support, getting I.D., and finding affordable and safe housing for themselves and children. Weather conditions, being around substance use, hunger, and employment opportunities were also mentioned as concerns.

Organizations Accessed

The most frequently mentioned organizations across the responses are BC Housing, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Salvation Army, PDSCL Compass Shelter, Interior Health, and Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society.

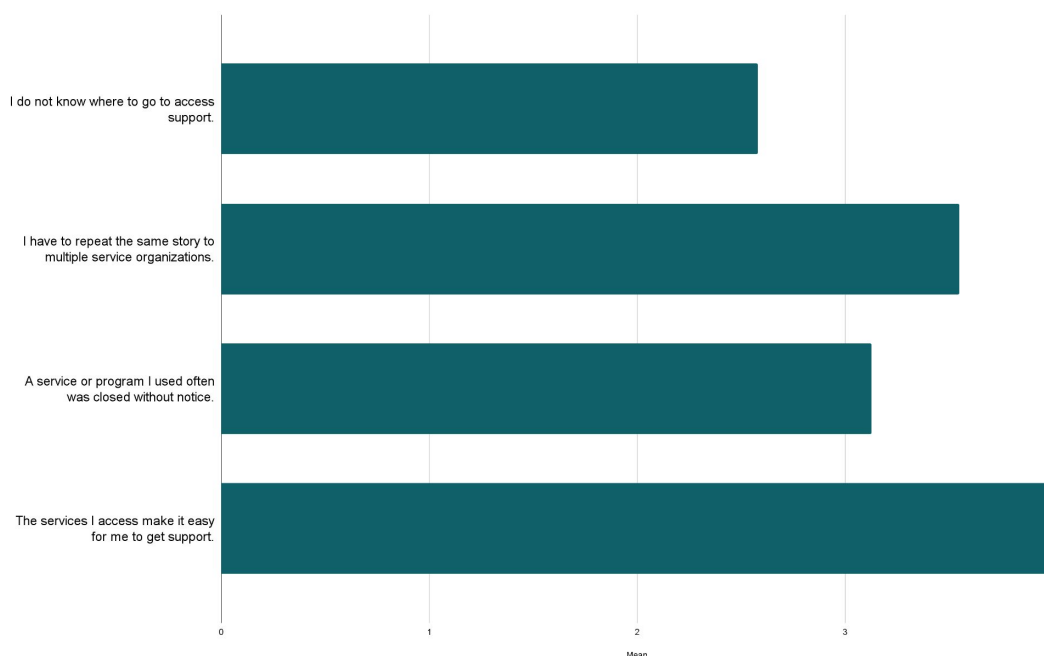
This suggests that these organizations are well-known and by people of this demographic experiencing homelessness in Penticton.

Other organizations mentioned include Legal Aid Services Society Penticton, Penticton Community Soupateria, Penticton Urgent and Primary Care Centre, Trades Labour Corporation, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and John Howard Society.

Systems Interactions

A 5-point scale was used to ask participants to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a set of statements, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree". The chart below shows the average of all the responses.

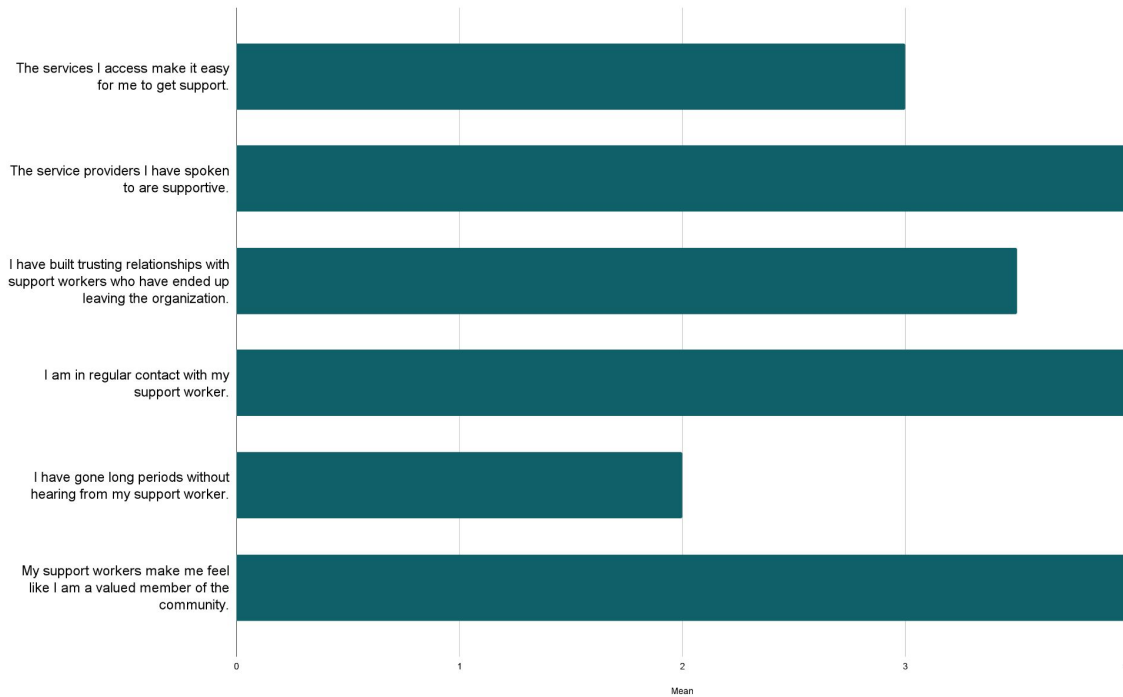
Responses on a 5-Point Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) Regarding the Following Statements



Supports Available

Similarly, respondents were asked about their experiences with support staff. Given the small sample size, caution should be used when interpreting these results. Despite overall positive results, there were several individuals that indicated they had not built trusting relationships with support workers, and have gone long periods without hearing from anyone.

Responses on a 5-Point Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) Regarding the Following Statements




Individuals were asked several open-ended questions about what could be done to support them. Due to the small sample size, and considering Penticton's population, individual responses are not shared. However, the responses indicated a broad range of needs and opinions about the existing system's performance.

Some respondents had expressed uncertainty about where to go or how to access information regarding low-income housing or other resources. Others had voiced a need for help reentering the workforce or financial support to meet current rental costs and food prices.

While some respondents had shown confidence in the support staff and services they use, others had suggested improvements such as more resources for employment opportunities. Some respondents also proposed policy changes, like holding landlords accountable for poor living conditions.

The responses, overall, revealed a mix of frustration, uncertainty, and hope for support and solutions to address issues related to homelessness and wellbeing.

Despite the small sample size, there was evidence to suggest that the current infrastructure has both strengths and areas for improvement. While some respondents had expressed confidence that organizations cared about their overall wellbeing, concerns were raised about the high waitlists of key resources, like mental health and substance use support and housing.



Section 3:

Persona Mapping

Personas are an effective tool for understanding the needs and experiences within communities. By using real-life data to form representative profiles, we can gain insights into the challenges faced by various segments of the population. This knowledge then informs the planning and implementation of social infrastructure services.

In the following sections, we will explore how persona mapping can be used to analyze social infrastructure and guide enhancements in program delivery.

Meet John*



Age: 40 **Income:** No regular income

Household type: Single, experiencing homelessness

Occupation: Unemployed

Health status: Has potential undiagnosed schizophrenia or other mental health challenges,, a history of substance abuse, and untreated diabetes

Needs and challenges

John is an individual who demonstrates incredible resilience in the face of significant adversity. He has an extended experience with unstable living circumstances, which has given him an enduring strength. His unique communication style, which may be influenced by mental health conditions yet to be diagnosed, sometimes complicates his ability to express his needs effectively. Despite this, he has displayed a remarkable capacity to establish trust and build relationships, as evidenced by his connection with the local soup kitchen staff.

He would benefit from assistance in securing a stable living environment, accommodating his unique mental health considerations, which have occasionally led to disruptions in his living situation in the past. Access to mental health services could offer essential support for the feelings of paranoia he sometimes experiences. As someone who has struggled with substance use in the past, access to supportive recovery programs could be beneficial. Additionally, he could benefit from medical interventions to manage his diabetes.

Currently, John's situation presents a hurdle to traditional employment, suggesting that he would benefit from alternative economic support mechanisms to ensure a consistent income. His ability to locate and connect with the necessary resources independently is somewhat limited, highlighting the need for a dedicated support person to advocate for his needs and guide him to the appropriate services. Programs focusing on safety and harm reduction could be of particular importance given his past experiences. A coordinated care approach, tailored to meet John's diverse needs, would provide an optimal framework to foster stability and promote his journey towards more independent living.

***The persona 'John' is a composite character created from community experiences. Any resemblance to actual individuals is purely coincidental and unintentional.**

John's Spectrum of Support

A spectrum of support is a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to care that considers all aspects of an individual's needs - from physical and mental health to social, economic, and community support. Below includes examples of the types of support John, or something else in similar circumstances, may find helpful.



Advocacy and Case Management: Due to John's difficulty in finding and accessing relevant services, he needs a dedicated case manager or social worker to advocate for his rights, navigate social services, and ensure that he's connected with all necessary supports.



Housing Support: John's chronic homelessness indicates the need for long-term, stable housing solutions. Possible supports might include shelters or transitional housing programs initially, moving towards a [Housing First approach](#) which prioritizes stable housing as the primary intervention.



Mental Health Services: John's undiagnosed schizophrenia, paranoia, and other mental health issues necessitate comprehensive psychiatric and psychological support. This could include regular counseling, psychiatric assessment and follow-up for medication management, as well as community-based mental health support programs that can help with life skills and social integration.



Substance Abuse Treatment: John's history of substance abuse calls for treatment and support services. This may include detoxification services, outpatient or inpatient rehabilitation programs, group therapy, and long-term support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.



Health Care Services: Given his untreated diabetes, John needs regular medical check-ups and access to proper medication. A primary care provider who can coordinate his healthcare needs and connect him with specialists is crucial.



Financial Support: John's inability to work means he may need to access social assistance programs, disability benefits, or other forms of financial support to ensure he can meet his basic needs.



Social and Community Support: Encouraging John's trust-building abilities and fostering social connections would be crucial for his recovery. Support from community centers, involvement in group activities, or connections to peer support networks could be beneficial.

These components, integrated into a coordinated care approach, would provide John with a holistic spectrum of support to meet his complex needs. By working in tandem, these supports could help John regain stability, manage his health conditions, and potentially move towards greater independence in the long run.

John's journey

Advocacy and Case Management

A comprehensive support system that assists individuals with high needs in navigating social services, ensuring their rights are protected, and coordinating resources to improve their well-being and access to necessary services.

An analysis of the supply mapping data reveals, 150+ programs offer some form of advocacy or case management. Many are not relevant to John, but the following might be able to assist him:

- **Intensive Coordinated-Care Opioid Navigator:** This program aims to provide coordinated care for individuals struggling with opioid dependence. The program offers a client-centered recovery service, daily support from a navigator, assistance for client families, and guidance in health, housing, finance, employment, and legal aid.
- **Mental Health Advocacy:** CMHA-SOS provides individual advocacy services for people with mental health disorders. The mental health advocate can assist with housing, finances, ministry communication, medical and mental health information, career, employment & education, legal information, and general support.
- **Intensive Case Management for Mental Health & Substance Use:** This offers community-based assistance for severe mental health and substance use concerns. Services include help with housing, primary care, outreach, treatment, support and recovery services.
- **South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society (SOSBIS) - Homeless Outreach:** Offers direct services to individuals, couples, families, and seniors who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They address immediate physical and safety needs, assist with housing searches and securing income support, and provide connections to other support services..
- **SOSBIS - Mental Health Housing Program:** Provides support for individuals with chronic mental health conditions who are often homeless or precariously housed. Services include advocacy, community resources, mental health and addictions treatment referrals, illness management, relocation support, financial subsidies.
- **Substance Use Connections Teams:** Assisting individuals who use drugs in hospital and community settings. They offer services such as short-term follow-up for community-based addictions care, referrals to Opioid Agonist Treatment, liaison with Addiction Medicine Consultation Services, assessment and treatment support, and safe discharge planning from hospitals. These services are provided to those who are at risk of overdose.

If John is able to get assistance from one of these programs, they can begin to coordinate care for him. **This will require someone to refer John directly to a service and help him to begin the process.** Programs may not have available openings, and he may not be eligible for all of them - for example, the Intensive Coordinated-Care Opioid Navigator program requires participants to be safely housed, and John is unhoused at present, meaning he cannot access their services.

A local soup kitchen staff member sees that John is in need, and connects him with a case worker, who is able to advocate on John's behalf. That case worker can now look into other supports that John will need.

John is hopeful that he can find a place to live and services that can help him.

John's journey

Housing Support

120+ programs offer some type of housing support. Many are not relevant to John, but his case worker is able to find a list of 11 programs that John may be eligible for:

- Transition Housing Program - Johnson Road
- Transition Housing Program - Nanaimo Ave
- Compass Court
- Penticton District Society for Community Living - Shelter for the Homeless
- South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society - Subsidized Housing
- Skaha Sunrise Apartments
- Onesky Community Resources Housing (The Rise)
- Burdock House
- Eckert Mens Home
- Fairhaven
- South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society - Common Grounds

There are several considerations. First, many housing programs will be filled and have long waitlists. Second, several options (e.g. Transition Housing Program - Johnson Road and Nanaimo Ave) are dry shelters, which will not accommodate John if he is using substances. However, wet shelters (e.g. Compass Court, Burdock House, Eckert Mens Home, Fairhaven) could house other individuals currently using substances, which could be detrimental to John's treatment plan.

John is able to be placed into PDSCL Shelter for the Homeless until a spot opens in a transitional housing program. This lends some stability to his life, but there is no firm timeline for moving into supportive housing.

John has experienced violence at emergency shelters in the past, and is anxious about living here.

At last, a place becomes available at Fairhaven. In this space, John can feel safer in his environment and experience greater stability in his life.

John wishes to stop using substances, and he knows that even if he struggles, he won't risk losing his home and will have the supports he needs.

A spot opens at The Bridge Youth and Family Services Transition Housing Program at Johnson Road. It is a drug free environment, and John has started using substances again to cope with the trauma of several violent victimizations over the past several years.

John is no longer able to access this program, and is upset and discouraged.


Persona-Based Design

A persona-based approach in social infrastructure planning shifts the focus from solitary issues like homelessness to the diverse needs of individuals. This places the person at the center of service design and simplifies system coordination. This approach calls for effective collaboration and deep engagement across all organizations involved in optimizing a specific service journey.

Should Social Development and other community partners choose to consider a persona-based approach to system design, here are examples of questions that can be discussed collaboratively. While those who interact with clients address these questions daily, it is the responsibility of the entire system to create these formal pathways on a larger scale. When this process is applied to multiple personas with various needs, the overall strength of the infrastructure will improve.

Collaboration Questions

- How will a persona know from which organization (Organization A) to seek help, based on their presenting need or needs?
- Given a persona's unique characteristics, how will they become aware of this organization?
- If a persona approaches Organization A, are there programs available within the same organization to support their follow-up and wellbeing needs?
- If not, which program would be the best fit for this persona? Which organization (Organization B) runs this program?
- Does Organization A have a working relationship with Organization B at a client-interaction level?
- Do Organizations A and B share a common referral process? Is it formal or informal?
- Do the staff at Organization A know the eligibility criteria and current waitlists of Organization B?
- Is there a data-sharing agreement in place so that a persona doesn't need to repeat their story?
- If a persona doesn't find Organization B a good fit, what are their options? Will Organizations A or B have processes in place to refer them to Organization C?
- If a new need arises for a persona, what supports are available at Organizations A, B, or C to address this new need? How will this information be shared with the persona?
- If a persona has a poor experience, can they report this information? To whom?
- In the event of a crisis or emergency, can a persona seek support from Organization A, B, C, or none of the above?
- To strengthen these formal connections across providers, what contracts, MOUs, and staff training are required?

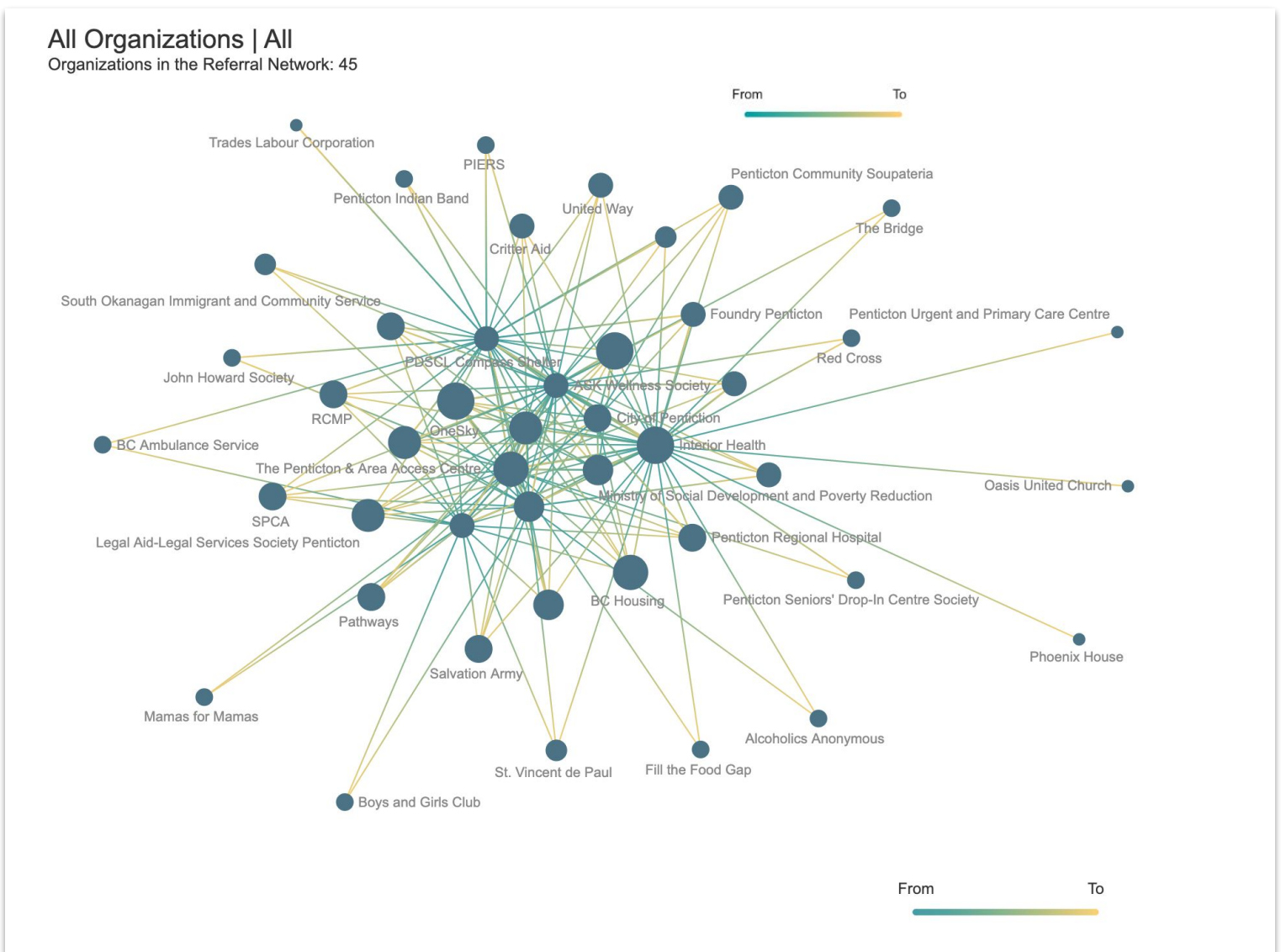


Section 3:

Network Mapping

Network mapping is a useful tool for studying the relationships between organizations within a social infrastructure ecosystem. When used alongside persona mapping, it sheds light on how individuals move through the system. Network mapping tracks the flow of information and referrals between service providers, helping to spot any gaps or inefficiencies in service delivery. This insight enables improvements to the network for better community outcomes.

Social Infrastructure Network Mapping



Pentiction's network of social service organizations is fairly connected, with a connection rate (or 'density') of 34.6%. This means over a third of all possible connections between organizations are active. There are no groups working in isolation or separate from the rest.

Key groups in this network include Interior Health, ASK Wellness Society, PDSCL Compass Shelter, Pentiction Area Access Center, Martin Street Outreach Center, and South Okanagan Women in Need Society. These organizations frequently share and receive referrals across different service areas.

Most often, referrals involve services related to housing, mental health and addiction, job support, and food assistance. These are key areas of focus for Pentiction's social support network.

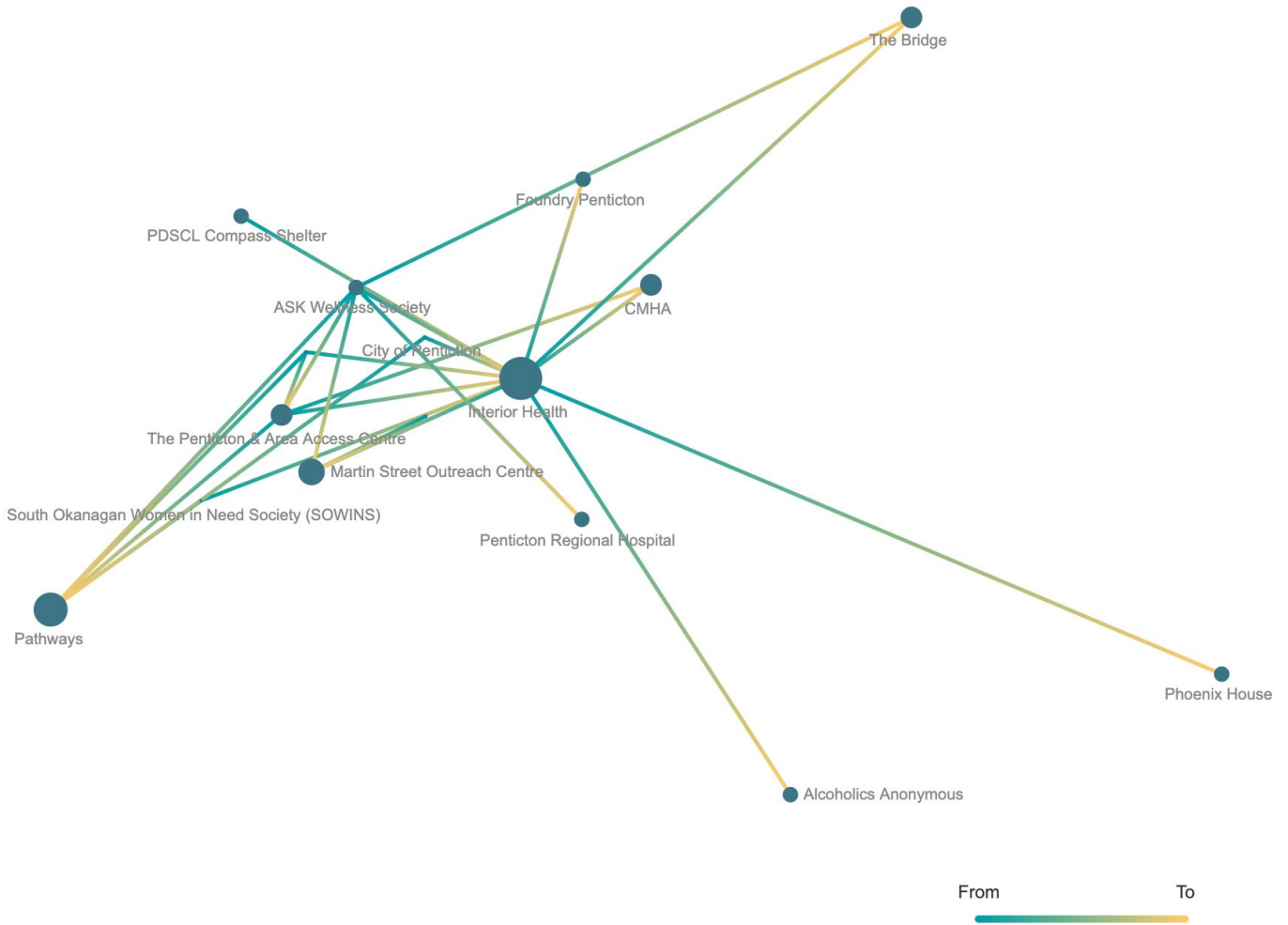
Pentiction benefits from a well-connected network of social service organizations, which lays the groundwork for improved pathways of support for community members. The active collaboration among the majority of these organizations represents a substantial asset in social infrastructure planning.

However, further analysis is required. To enhance the effectiveness of the social support ecosystem, an in-depth understanding of how both service users and providers navigate through the extensive offering of over 1,200 programs in Pentiction is essential. This understanding will contribute significantly towards ensuring comprehensive coverage and improving access to necessary supports for all community members.

The network mapping revealed that Interior Health is the top referral source and recipient in the mental health and addictions network, this is to be expected based on their role in providing clinical supports. Additional organizations receiving referrals include Pathways and the Martin Street Outreach Centre.

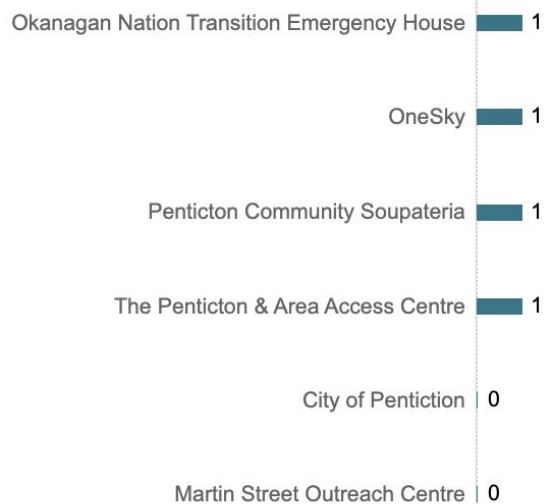
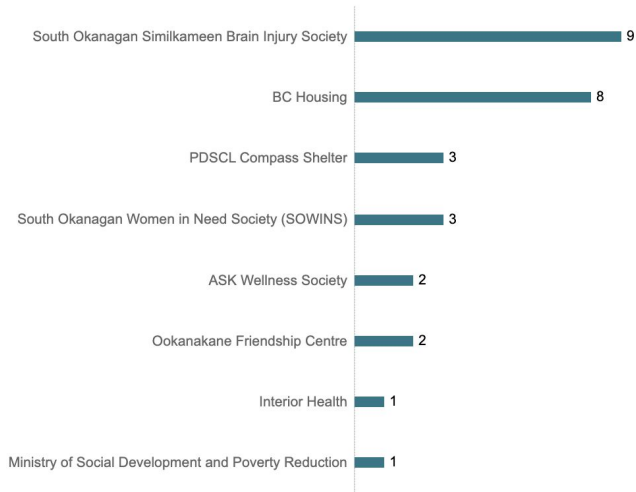
All Organizations | Mental Health & Addiction

Organizations in the Referral Network: 16

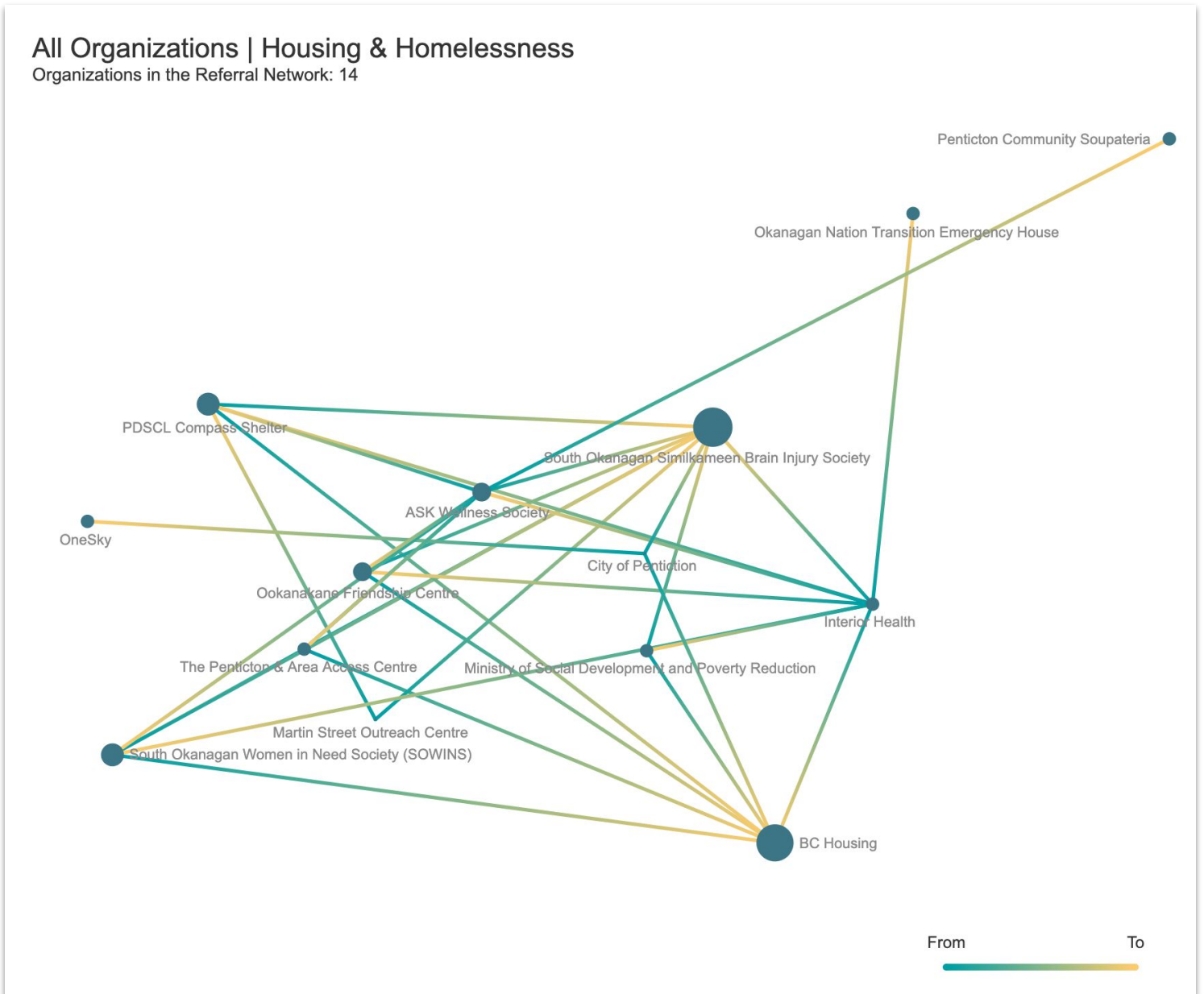


Number of Organizations: Incoming Referrals

Named Organizations: 14



Penticton's housing and homelessness network comprises 14 organizations. Among these, 10 organizations actively refer to others within the network. Conversely, 12 organizations are recipients of such referrals for housing and homelessness support services. BC Housing and South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society prominently stand out as the two primary organizations receiving these referrals.



A more fulsome network analysis will allow for a deeper understand of the network behaviours not only within certain domains, such as homelessness and mental health and substance use, but between areas of concern.

One of the most important aspects of the network mapping is to identify connectors – organizations (or programs in a future analysis) that have a high degree of connects or links with other nodes in the network. They serve as bridges or gatekeepers between different groups or communities within the network. Connectors are important because they facilitate the flow of information and clients through the infrastructure.

However, the presence of connectors can also create vulnerabilities in the network, as their removal or disconnection – caused by changes in staff, ineffective information and referral sharing practices or a lack of capacity – can lead to fragmentation or isolation of different parts of the network.

Contacts



City of Penticton Lead Contact:

Jamie Lloyd-Smith
Social Development Specialist
jamie.lloyd-smith@penticton.ca

HelpSeeker Lead Contact:

Travis Turner
Co-Founder / Co-President
travis@helpseeker.org