



PRINCE RUPERT

Social Development Assessment

JUNE 17, 2024



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The authors of the Prince Rupert Social Development Assessment respectfully acknowledge the Ts'msyen people on whose unceded traditional territory this work has been undertaken. This acknowledgement is a reminder of the discriminatory, racist, and colonial practices that have had a lasting legacy and continue to create barriers for Indigenous peoples and communities in Prince Rupert.

Prepared by:

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Acknowledgements

The City of Prince Rupert received funding from the Union of BC Municipalities for Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program. This program provides funding to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy.

We are grateful for the contribution of time, energy, and vital information from many individuals and organizations who participated in the development of this report. We wish to thank the people with lived experience of accessing social services in Prince Rupert who shared their experiences, knowledge, and ideas. Their contribution is the foundation of the findings and recommendations in this report. This report would not be possible without them.

We also wish to thank the members of the Community Advisory Group who took time out of their day to provide feedback on the engagement approach and engagement findings.

- Tamara Maier – Northern Health
- Andy Klimach – Coast Mountain College
- Dawn Butt – Salvation Army
- Paul Lagace – Prince Rupert Unemployed Action Centre
- Miranda Kessler – Kxeen Community Services Society
- Grainne Barthe – North Coast Transition Society
- Karen Buchanen – Changemakers Education Society
- Joyce Charlton – RCMP Victim Services

We also wish to thank the participants of the social services provider focus groups and the organizations that provided feedback on the service inventory. The participants were from the following organizations:

- Berry Patch Child Care Resource and Referral
- Coast Mountain College
- Change Makers' Education Society
- Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
- Hecate Strait Employment Development Society
- Kxeen Community Services Society
- Lester Centre of the Arts
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- North Coast Community Services Society
- North Coast Literacy Now
- North Coast Transition Society
- Northern Health
- Northwest International Family Services Society
- Prince Rupert Seniors Centre
- Prince Rupert Library
- Prince Rupert Unemployed Action Centre
- RCMP Victim Services
- Thompson Community Services
- Salvation Army



Introduction

In recent years, the City of Prince Rupert has experienced increasing social challenges including a growing income disparity, high household and child poverty rates, and increased visible homelessness and substance use. The COVID pandemic and worsening housing challenges have increased the barriers to supporting people experiencing poverty and overlapping experiences with mental health and addictions.

While social issues are felt most acutely at the local level, municipalities often do not have the powers, jurisdiction, or resources to address them. Under the Local Government Act, municipalities may include policies with respect to social, environmental and economic well-being as part of their planning efforts – however the vast burden of responsibility for providing social services falls to the Provincial and Federal governments. As such, the appropriate, practical and typical role for municipalities in supporting the social service sector is through the provision of information, advocacy to higher levels of government, and coordination between community partners. In some instances, policy adjustments to support social service activities or certain disadvantaged groups may also be possible. This can include implementing permissive zoning to allow for more child care spaces, allowing supportive housing developments in all zones, providing tax incentives or land for development of certain services such as affordable housing, and implementing of policy that allows low-income families to access recreation programs as examples.

Social services include, income assistance, general social service supports for families, local food bank and food distribution programming, homelessness prevention supports, Indigenous-focused social service supports, as well as programs specific to mental health and addictions.

The City undertook this Social Development Assessment as an initial step to better understand local social challenges and the City's role in supporting local solutions to those challenges. This Assessment works towards specific goals, including:

- 1 Identifying existing supports** and gaps so local service providers will be better equipped to advocate for improvements to social service provision in the community.
- 2 Supporting the City and the social service sector to apply for additional funding** that supports programming/activities that are directly informed by local data and experience.
- 3 Supporting the City to improve its role as a facilitator and information-gatherer** through a fulsome inventory of available programming that will enable the City to update an existing Community Resource Directory.

Once the Assessment is complete and local poverty-related barriers are better understood, City staff will **implement a Poverty Reduction/Social Impact Assessment Tool** that will be applied to municipal policies/programming to ensure that local policy applies a poverty reduction lens.

This Social Development Assessment is also being supported by other municipal-led initiatives including a food systems assessment and climate action plan as well as the establishment of committees on accessibility and Indigenous relations.

Understanding Systems and Trauma

The challenges that Prince Rupert faces are related to much larger social, cultural, economic, and environmental systems. These systems directly inform and are impacted by the work undertaken by the City of Prince Rupert and its partners.

Engagement with service providers and People with Lived Experience and Living Experience (PWLE) has highlighted how many people seeking access to social supports carry trauma with them. These systems of support and care can unintentionally inflict further trauma. Work through the Collective Change Lab¹ acknowledges how social systems carry trauma through relationships between people within the system. They explain trauma as the invisible force contributing to the “stuckness” of virtually all social systems and acknowledge that we must focus on healing these social systems (the individuals and relationships within these systems) to solve social problems.

1. Calderon der la Barca, L., Milligan, K, Kania, J. (2024). Healing Systems. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Retrieved from: <https://ssir.org/articles/entry/healing-trauma-systems#>

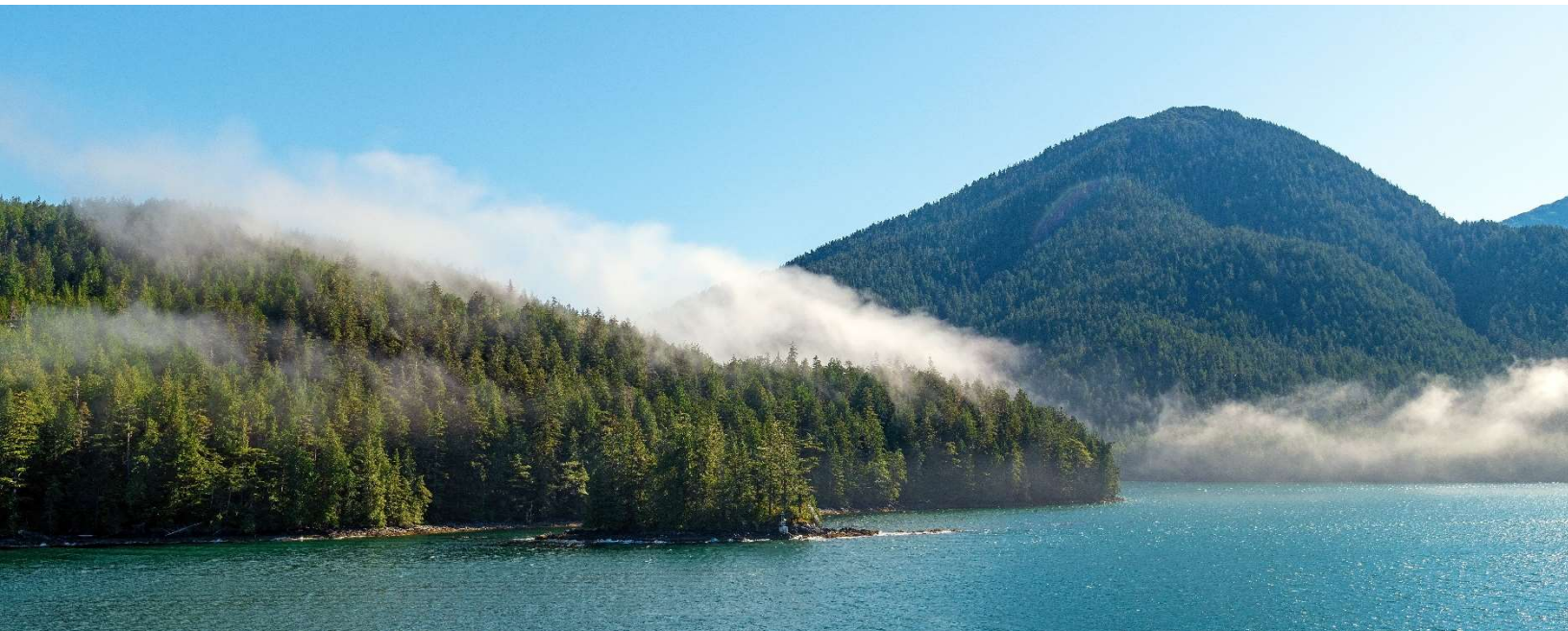
While this Assessment focuses on a defined aspect of social service needs and delivery in the City, understanding the influence of trauma can help Prince Rupert understand its role in the broader systems and the opportunities it has to support approaches that can help to heal these systems.

Methodology

This Assessment draws on the following sources of information:

- 1) **Local Knowledge of People Accessing Social Services in Prince Rupert** - The project team held focus groups at Cranes Crossing and the Prince Rupert Salvation Army. Project team members were also available for individual discussions after these focus groups for people who felt more comfortable engaging one-on-one. Everyone who participated received a \$25 honorarium.
- 2) **Local Knowledge of Service Providers** – The project team held in-person and virtual workshops with local social service providers in Prince Rupert. This included a session with an Indigenous-focused social service provider. The project team was also guided by an Advisory Group that provided input on the project’s engagement approach and key findings.
- 3) **Federal and Provincial Datasets** – This includes Federal Census data, Provincial child poverty and homelessness data, and early childhood learning and vulnerability data from the University of British Columbia.

While this process was able to engage with Indigenous people living in Prince Rupert, it was not able to engage with Indigenous Nations who provide services to their people in Prince Rupert. Readers of this report should be mindful of this key information gap. Action coming from this Assessment by the City and its partners should work to ensure this engagement gap is addressed.





Community Context

The City of Prince Rupert is located on the unceded traditional territory of the Ts'msyen people and the traditional keepers of their land. What's now called Prince Rupert Harbour had long been an intersection of trade and commerce for Indigenous people dating back to time immemorial.

The City of Prince Rupert is now a small but resilient community. The City has gone through several periods of economic expansion and decline. For many in the community, what makes the City strong is its diversity and ability for the community to come together to support one another. Over 40% of the population (according to Census data²) is Indigenous and the City is home to offices of many First Nations and Indigenous service organizations that offer local services to their members.

While the City of Prince Rupert has strong economic industries, community members have noted that this strong economic growth has not been directly reflected in the current circumstances of all residents. The City is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. Children and youth are experiencing some of the highest levels of poverty and vulnerability in the entire Province. The community is also seeing an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness and accessing services to meet their basic human needs.

Specific indicators of community well-being indicators are outlined in the sections below.

2. The Census likely underrepresents the number of Indigenous people in Prince Rupert.

Population and Demographics³

13,442

PEOPLE

In 2021, there were 13,442 living in the Prince Rupert Census Agglomeration. Approximately 12,300 of those individuals lived in the City of Prince Rupert. This represents an increase from 12,220 in 2016.

40.4

AVERAGE AGE

The population in Prince Rupert is slightly younger than the Provincial average. In 2021, the average age of the population was 40.4, both in the Census Agglomeration and the City. This is lower than the Provincial average age of 42.3.

40.5%

**INDIGENOUS
POPULATION**

In 2021, there were 5,390 Indigenous people in Prince Rupert Census Agglomeration, making up 40.5% of the population. In the City, 37.3% of the population were Indigenous. Of the Indigenous population in Census Agglomeration, 90.1% (4,855) were First Nations people, 7.1% (380) were Métis, and 0.2% (10) were Inuit. Due to the nature of Census data collection methods this is likely an underestimation.

35.5

**AVERAGE AGE OF
INDIGENOUS
POPULATION**

In 2021, the Indigenous population in Prince Rupert Census Agglomeration was much younger than the non-Indigenous population. The average age of the Indigenous population was 35.5 years in the Census Agglomeration and 34.8 years in the City.

13%

**FOREIGN-BORN
POPULATION**

In 2021, 13% of the City of Prince Rupert population were foreign-born. Approximately 12.2% of the population in the wider Census Agglomeration were foreign-born. The top three places of birth among immigrants living in Prince Rupert were Vietnam, India, and the Philippines.

3. Statistics Canada. (2023). Prince Rupert Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Retrieved from: www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00055947012&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0

Labour and Income^{4,5}

9.8%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In 2021, the unemployment rate in Prince Rupert was 9.5% compared to 8.4% across the province. Unemployment among the age groups varied. In the Census Agglomeration, the unemployment rate among people aged 15 to 24 was 17.1%, 8% for those aged 25 to 64, and 11% for those over 65. While there is no City-specific data for 2024, the North Coast and Nechako region has seen a 0.4% reduction in the unemployment rate from 2021 to 2024. The region's unemployment rate sits at 6.2% (as of January 2024).



MAIN SECTORS

The three main sectors by percentage of total employment for Prince Rupert and the surrounding area (based on the Census Agglomeration area) were transportation and warehousing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance.

12.1%

OF POPULATION WITH INCOME UNDER \$30,000

In 2020⁶, 12% of households in the Census Agglomeration people had incomes under \$30,000. This statistic differs from past Census years (2016 and 2011) and likely represents the introduction of the Canadian Child Benefit and the temporary pandemic benefits.

7.7%

OF POPULATION LIVING IN POVERTY

In 2020, approximately 7.7% of the population in Prince Rupert lived in poverty according to the Individual Market Basket Measure. This is likely an underestimation of need as this data was collected when many households were receiving temporary income supports during the pandemic.

Children and Youth^{7,8,9}

18.8%

CHILD POVERTY RATE

In 2022, the Prince Rupert Census Agglomeration had the third highest rate (18.8%) of child poverty in the Province.

42.6%

CHILD POVERTY RATES FOR LONE PARENT HOUSEHOLD

4. Statistics Canada. (2023). Prince Rupert Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Retrieved from: www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&DGUIDlist=2021A00055947012&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0

5. Statistics Canada. (2022). Individual Market Basket Measure poverty status by demographic and economic family characteristics of persons: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810011201&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.160&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

6. For the 2021 Census, the reference period for income data is the calendar year 2020.

7. Human Early Learning Partnership. (2024a). EDI Dashboard. University of British Columbia. Retrieved from: dashboard.earlylearning.ubc.ca/#demographics

8. Human Early Learning Partnership. (2024b). MDI Dashboard. University of British Columbia. Retrieved from: mdi.dashboard.earlylearning.ubc.ca/

9. First Call. (2023). 2022 BC Child Poverty. Retrieved from: baseline.bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2022-Child-Poverty-Report-Card.pdf

In 2022, 27.4% of children aged 0 to 14 in the Prince Rupert Census

46%

STUDENT RATE OF LOW WELL BEING

Agglomeration lived in a one-parent family. Child poverty rates for children in lone-parent families across 26 BC cities and towns were the highest in Prince Rupert at 42.6%.

Middle Years Development Instrument 2022-23 survey reported the following rates of low well-being among surveyed students in Prince Rupert: Grade 4 (45.8%), Grade 5 (45.2%), Grade 6 (49.1%), and Grade 7 (45.5%). This measure of well-being is based on a combined score of optimism, self-esteem, happiness, absence of sadness, and general health. Across all four grades, students in Prince Rupert reported higher rates of low well being compared to the Provincial average.

43%

VULNERABLE ON MORE THAN ONCE SCALE

According to the Early Development Instrument 2022-2023 survey of 119 children in Prince Rupert, 43% were vulnerable on at least one or more of the five scales of the EDI. These vulnerabilities include physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. The Provincial average was 33%.

Housing¹⁰

4,840

NEW HOMES BY 2030

According to the 2022 Housing Needs Report, Prince Rupert will need an additional 4,840 new homes by 2030, with 35% needing to accommodate families with 3 or more bedrooms, and 47% needed to serve households earning less than \$60,000 per year.

7.3%

HOUSEHOLDS IN CORE HOUSING NEED

In 2021, the 7.3% of households in Prince Rupert were in core housing need. A household is in core housing need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards, and it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to access acceptable local housing. The number of households reported to be in Core Housing Need is likely lower than 2024 levels due to the pandemic-related income benefits that were available during the 2021 Census data collection.



MANY HOUSING NEEDS

The 2022 Housing Needs Report highlighted several areas of key housing need, including the growing need for seniors housing with varying levels of support, the need for housing with supports for people living with complex mental health challenges and acquired brain injuries, a need for 2+ bedroom units for larger families, and affordable rental and ownership housing in good condition.

10. City Spaces. (2022). City of Prince Rupert – Housing Needs Report. Retrieved from: www.princerupert.ca/sites/7/files/2023-06/221128_Final_PR_HNR.pdf

Homelessness^{11,12}

146

**INDIVIDUALS
EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS**

In the 2023 Homeless Count, 146 people were identified as experiencing homelessness compared to 118 in 2021. These Point-in-time Counts are often under representation of homelessness, as they only capture visible homelessness.

41%

UNSHELTERED

Of the 41% unsheltered individuals identified in the 2023 Homeless Count, 68% were staying at someone else's place, 11% stayed outside, and 8% stayed in a makeshift shelter or tent.

88%

**INDIGENOUS
RESPONDENTS**

Approximately 88% of the people experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Homeless Count identified as Indigenous. Approximately 94% of the Indigenous-identifying respondents have lived or had generational experience with residential schools.

44%

**LACKED INCOME TO
MAINTAIN HOUSING**

Of the respondents in the 2023 Homeless Count, 44% of individuals noted a lack of income as their reason for housing loss.

Approximately 25% noted substance use, 15% noted conflict with their landlord, and 15% noted conflict with a partner or spouse.

60%

MEN

A majority (60%) of respondents to the 2023 Homelessness Count identified as male. Approximately 37% identified as female, and 3% identified with another gender identity.

11. BC Housing. (2021). Prince Rupert – 2021 Homeless Count. Retrieved from: bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Homeless-Count-Prince-Rupert-2021.pdf

12. BC Housing. (2023). Prince Rupert – 2023 Homeless Count. Retrieved from: bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Homeless-Count-Prince-Rupert-2023.pdf

20%

2SLGBTQIA+

Approximately 20% of respondents identified as 2SLGBTQIA+, while approximately 5% of respondents identified trans experience.

58%

EXPERIENCED
HOMELESSNESS LONG-
TERM

Approximately 58% of respondents to the 2023 Homeless Count had experienced homelessness for more than one year.

91%

LONG-TERM RESIDENTS

Approximately 91% of respondents to the 2023 Homeless Count had been in the community for more than one year. 83% had been in the community for five years or more, and 45% had always been in the community.





Assessment of Community Strengths and Needs

Summary of Lived Experience Interviews

This section highlights the experiences, knowledge, and ideas of the participants who participated in the focus groups for people who have lived or living experience of accessing social services in Prince Rupert.

SERVICES THEY USE

Participants noted that the services they use the most include the Salvation Army meals, Cranes Crossing housing, counselling, local transit, and the offices of the First Nations they belong to. While this is not a full list of services in Prince Rupert, it helps understand the focus of the feedback the project team received. The feedback in this section may not be fully reflective of the clients accessing services at other organizations in the City.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND SERVICE GAPS

Challenging and Traumatic Experiences Living in the Community

People spoke to the difficult moments in their lives and trauma that has led to their mental health challenges and addictions, including recent deaths that have collectively impacted their communities. They also talked about feeling stuck, not hopeful about the future, and not happy with their lives right now.

Difficulty Getting the Right Help

People mentioned it's tough to find and use services that could help them. They explained that they sometimes don't know what services are out there. Some people also mentioned being kicked out of specific programs/services, not being able to regularly attend sessions to receive training, and difficulty achieving practice hours for specific trades training.

Not Much to Do During the Day

People said there's not a lot going on during the day, especially when the shelter is getting cleaned. In the winter, they mentioned there aren't many places to go to stay warm. They said having nothing to do, especially in winter, makes them more likely to turn to substance use to escape from their current experience.

Finding the Right Place to Live is Tough

People living in the shelter said it's hard to go to appointments or other commitments because they have to sign in at a specific time every day to keep their bed. They also said it's tough to find an open spot in a permanent place to live, like at Cranes Crossing. Spaces in housing are so limited that they can't always access the service that might work best for them, such as finding sober housing when they need a sober space for recovery or vice versa.

Not Enough Help After Treatment

People said there aren't enough support services for them after they get help for addiction. They have to leave the community for treatment, and when they come back, it's hard to stay sober because there's not enough support.

Unequal Access to Services

There is a perception among some people that they receive unfair treatment when they try to use services or get training. Specifically, they didn't understand why certain people can access housing and training programs over others.

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR SITUATION**Short-Term Jobs**

People talked about problems they faced in keeping a steady job. They noted they would be looking for shorter-term and low-barrier opportunities to make money. They said this would help them make ends meet and build a sense of pride and respect within themselves.

Low Barrier Training

People found it hard to access training programs in the community. Once they did access training they had difficulty getting the required hours for certain trade certifications.

Wrap-Around and Peer Supports

People mentioned it would be useful if they had someone to check on them regularly, especially after going to treatment outside the city. One person said having someone who cares about them to guide their recovery would make a big difference.

Creative Outlets

People have hobbies like drawing, making crafts, and music, but they can't afford to do them. They think being able to pursue these hobbies would boost their self-esteem. Some said they'd like help to turn these hobbies into ways to make money, like selling art at a local market.

Connecting to Culture

Some Indigenous people talked about feeling disconnected from their culture. They said they need to connect with Elders and people who hold traditional knowledge to rebuild their ties to their community.

Summary of Service Provider Interviews and Focus Groups

It is important to note that many of the community strengths are also highlighted as challenges. They exist in both spaces as there are services helping to fill a specific need in the community, but they are not enough to address worsening community challenges. Many if not all of the community organizations noted that the need in the community is increasing, services are stretched to capacity, and they require more resources and capacity to address these needs.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Advocacy and Justice Supports

Several organizations, including the Prince Rupert Unemployed Action Centre, Kxeen Community Services Society, North Coast Transition Society, and the Prince Rupert Indigenous Justice Centre are providing necessary supports to navigate legal and justice processes.

Children, Youth, and Family Support

There are several organizations in the City offering support for children, youth, and families including the Berry Patch Child Care Resource and Referral, Change Makers' Education Society, Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert, Kxeen Community Services Society, the local office of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, North Coast Community Services Society, North Coast Literacy Now, North Coast Transition Society, Northwest International Family Services Society, and the Prince Rupert Library.

Community Diversity

For a relatively small city in the north, Prince Rupert has a very diverse population. This is a strength for the community. Over 40% of the population is Indigenous and there are many people from around the world who have made the Prince Rupert their home.

Community Relationships and Support

Participants of this project have noted the sense of community connection. During focus groups, several initiatives were highlighted that speak to the community's ability to come together for a shared purpose. There were also several instances of local businesses supporting social service organizations.

Employment and Training Supports

Community members have access to several education and training opportunities through School District 52, Coast Mountain College, TRICORP, North Coast Community Services, and Hecate Straight Employment and Development Services.

Food Security Programs

The Salvation Army runs the local food bank which is seeing an increasing number of people needing its services. The Church of Annunciation also provides soup and sandwiches every Sunday and holidays. These services need more capacity and resources to advance this work. For Indigenous residents, there are also food distribution systems that share specific allotments of seafood with area band memberships if/when it is available. The Nisga'a society also provides their members with fresh produce distribution opportunities through their local greenhouse at Yaga.

Housing Supports

Housing remains one of the top challenges for the community. A limited number of organizations have been offering emergency shelter and supportive housing options to help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and at-risk women and their children. Organizations providing this support include the North Coast Transition Society and Trinity Recovery House.

Indigenous-Specific Supports

In addition to local services offered by First Nations government offices to urban members, there are several organizations offering supports to meet the specific needs of Indigenous people in the City, including Kxeen Community Services, the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert, and the Prince Rupert Indigenous Justice Centre (run by BC First Nations Justice Council), as well as support for Residential School and Day School program applications through the Unemployed Action Centre. These services need more capacity and resources to advance this work. Kxeen Community Services in particular runs a cultural connections program that offers creative and cultural connections at KCSS, and they try to integrate a variety of Indigenous cultural practices.

Partnerships Between Organizations

Even with limited capacity and resources, organizations are working to break down silos and partner together to support the community. Quarterly meetings are being held to bring together local service providers and ensure the lines of communication stay open. There is a local Situation Table that is a resource for service providers to access multi agency supports for at-risk clients. Organizations outside of the social service delivery space, including the library, are also acting as key connection points for services.

Mental Health and Addiction Supports

As the mental health crisis worsens in Prince Rupert, several organizations have worked to provide a high-quality of care for their community including Northern Health, the local Ministry of Children and Family Development office, North Coast Transition Society, the Trinity Recovery House, and the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert.

Seniors Support

Seniors in the community are supported by several programs offered by the Prince Rupert Seniors Centre, the Better at Home program through Kxeen Community Services Society, and the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert. These services need more capacity and resources to advance this work.



Transit for Size of Community

Participants noted that while transit is lacking, it is much more useful compared to other communities of a similar size. There is the HandyDart and the local public transit are all great resources for the community. The Northern Health Bus and Friendship House Shuttle to Terrace are also available to access services outside of the community.

Upcoming Childcare Initiatives

In 2023, School District 52 received funding to add 111 childcare spaces. Childcare is currently being supported by several organizations in the community including Berry Patch Child Care Resource and Referral, Kxeen Community Services Society, and the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert.

Upcoming Housing Initiatives

The City and its partners are working to support new housing projects that will help address the community's current housing needs. Other partners are also exploring partnerships with the Province to develop housing projects. Indigenous organizations and governments are either actively building or applying for funding to build non-market housing.

Upcoming Reconciliation Initiatives

The City and Kxeen Community Services have started an Indigenous Relations Committee and are actively working on group priorities, projects and policy recommendations to bring forward to City Council.

Upcoming Safety Initiatives

The RCMP is launching a Car 68 program which will have a nurse in an RCMP vehicle to support mental health calls. The RCMP has recently reinitiated engagement with Kxeen community services Restorative Justice program.

CRITICAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

Service Delivery Issues/Opportunities to Address Multiple Needs

There are three core issues that impact many local organisations' ability to deliver services. These issues are a foundational barrier to addressing the community's needs.

1

Housing

The housing crisis is one of the main barriers to employment. Many staff leave the community due to the lack of affordable housing. It can also be hard to recruit new people who don't already live in the community.

The Housing crisis is also affecting everyone in the community. Families are struggling to find affordable homes. The lack of affordable housing is pushing many people into homelessness. Many international students are being taken advantage of due to the lack of housing options.

2

Staffing

Hiring remains a challenge across the sector, but particularly in Prince Rupert. Many individuals don't want to live in a remote Northern small town. The people that do come to the community are often earlier in their careers and don't stay long. The staff that do stay often deal with compassion fatigue, burnout, and lack of adequate compensation for the role they take on. These staffing challenges lead to issues of coverage; if someone needs to go on leave, this can lead to temporarily shutting down a service.

3

Funding

Funding is often short-term and inconsistent, which creates issues operating consistent and reliable programs for clients. The lack of suitable funding often means organisations can't provide the necessary stability that clients need to access support, leading to a lack of hope and trust. A lot of staff capacity is also spent searching for new funding sources and fitting their programs within a funding source's requirements.

Community Needs

Families, Children, and Youth

Families across the City are struggling to keep things together, given rising cost of living, lack of housing, and other issues. There is a need to further support organizations who are providing services for families as a unit, including the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert, the Ministry of Child & Family Services Office for Prince Rupert, North Coast Community Services, Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society, and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society.

The North Coast Transition Society offers housing for women and children fleeing domestic violence, though spaces are extremely limited. There is no similar service for men in the community.

The City lacks services for youth, including:

- **Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** There are no options for youth experiencing homelessness in Prince Rupert as all existing emergency and supportive housing facilities have minimum age requirements.
- **Mental Health Services:** The existing mental health services provided by School District 52 and Northern Health are often at capacity.
- **2SLGBTQ+ Support:** There are no specific supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Community members have witnessed a rise of anti-2SLGBTQ+ sentiment in the community leading many members of the community (including adults) to feel unsafe.

There is a lack of respite care for families who have children with special needs, people caring for family members, and foster parents. Community members believe the lack of respite care can partially explain the shortage of foster parents.

Current services for children with special needs are sometimes only offered virtually and do not have the capacity to meet the demand.



Income and Employment Supports

Life in Prince Rupert is becoming increasingly unaffordable for many community members.

There are opportunities for employment. However, these opportunities do not work for everyone. People accessing services have noted a desire for employment, but they sometimes struggle to meet the reliability requirements.

Employment is especially hard for people who were recently incarcerated, people struggling with mental health and addictions, and single parents. Employment is made even more difficult due to the lack of childcare spaces.

The Prince Rupert Unemployed Action Centre does provide advocacy services for employment insurance, tenancy issues, income assistance, Canada Pension Plan, disability, and employment standards. However, it needs more capacity and resources to advance this work.

Local Food Bank and Food Distribution Programming

Many households in Prince Rupert are food insecure given the rising number of people accessing food bank supports. The Food Bank isn't always able to meet the needs in the community – for example, some people noted that they receive ingredients for meals but have no place to prepare these meals.

The Salvation Army Soup Kitchen only operates Monday to Friday. The Annunciation Church offers meals on Sundays and holidays, but not during the summer so there are no meals available over the summer on weekends.

Homelessness Prevention Supports

Community members have pointed to the larger housing crisis that has forced many people into homelessness. There is a shortage of both affordable market rental units and units with deeper subsidies which is forcing many people into homelessness. There is also a reported problem of 'bad-faith evictions' and people being displaced.

The waitlists for supportive housing are extremely long. When there is a spot available people are not always paired up with the type of housing support that would best meet their needs and they are not able to easily move through various types and stages depending on their life circumstances.

Much of the homelessness in the City is invisible and not counted in traditional point-in-time counts. Common populations of hidden homelessness in the City include youth and seniors.

Indigenous-Focused Social Service Supports

Discriminatory, racist, and colonial practices and systems have had a lasting legacy and continue to create barriers for Indigenous peoples and communities in Prince Rupert.

Indigenous peoples accessing services report experiences issues of discrimination and racism.

The local Reaching Home grant, which offers funding to meet the needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, is undersubscribed.

There are very few services for Indigenous Peoples that are not connected with a specific Nation who have offices located in Prince Rupert.



Mental Health and Addiction

Many community social events revolve around alcohol consumption. There are very few sober spaces for community socializing.

There is no medically supported detox service in the community. Clients would have to travel to Prince George, which is a major barrier for anyone without transportation or resources.

There are a very limited number of treatment spaces in the community. Across the province, treatment facilities have long waitlists. When a spot becomes available it often does not line up with when a person is feeling ready to access treatment.

In-community mental health supports are at capacity and individuals often have to wait months to access support. The waitlist for Northern Health mental health services is at least a couple of months.

People accessing substance use treatment services must leave the community. When they return, there are few support services to help them stay sober if Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous doesn't work for them.

Other General Social Supports Challenges

After-Hours Services: Many services are offered Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm. This does not fit the schedules of many shift workers, especially those who work with the port and related industries who can be penalized if they miss or decline shifts.

Transportation to Other Communities: The bus to Terrace only runs twice a week and is expensive. People sometimes have to stay in Terrace for specific appointments that don't align with the bus schedule, which can add significant costs.

Transportation Within the Community: The bus does not run on Sundays, there is no bike infrastructure in the City, and the HandyDart doesn't run after 3:00 pm and doesn't go to Prince Edward.

No Funeral Home: The community lacks a funeral home which creates issues when there is a death in the community, as family members have to go to Terrace.

Lack of Options and Second Chances: Due to the size of the community, once someone is banned from a service, they do not have any alternatives to go to.

Lack of Referral Options: Every service has long waitlists, so it can be difficult to find places to refer people to specific services.



Recommendations for Strategic Action

This Assessment is a step towards understanding and documenting the City's social needs. The City could benefit from undertaking the development of a Social Strategy that aims to understand opportunities to address the community's challenges and the role that the City and social service sector organizations will play in the solutions. The following recommendations are pieces that could be further explored in a Social Development Strategy.

City Actions

- 1** Explore opportunities to better define the City of Prince Rupert's role in poverty reduction, social inclusion, and systems healing based on the existing assessment of strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This can include the development of a Social Development Strategy that clearly defines what is in and out of scope for the City's social development work. This Strategy can also support the City to prioritize the various opportunities.
- 2** Continue City's participations in the work being done by the Indigenous Relations Committee and Accessibility Committee.
- 3** Explore opportunities to develop incentive programs that would support the attraction of specific community services to address gaps, including youth programs or addiction services to the community.
- 4** communication and collaboration of social service organizations across the City, including the ongoing maintenance of the service inventory.
Continue to support the
- 5** Develop a lens tool to support inclusion of poverty reduction and accessibility considerations in the development of policies and projects, as well as events.

City Advocacy and Partnerships

- 1 Continue to work with partners to address the community's housing needs. This can involve several actions, including:
 - Implementing the Housing Acceleration Action Plan to increase the speed and supply of housing development.
 - Exploring opportunities for non-profit workforce housing to support staff hiring and retention.
 - Leveraging City-owned land to develop housing that will maintain affordability in perpetuity.
 - Supporting local non-profits to develop a range of housing projects that meets the diverse needs of the community.
- 2 Partner with local organizations, to explore opportunities to facilitate funding for and support development of new programs or retrofit existing programs that address the opportunities highlighted by people with lived experience of accessing service in Prince Rupert, including:
 - Programs to support short-term/low barrier employment, such as neighbourhood cleaning crews.
 - Activities offered during the day, including access to arts, culture, and community.
 - Programs that incorporate peer-navigation and peer support.
 - Support for placemaking activities that encourage the celebration of Indigenous culture and history and involvement of un-housed population, where possible
- 3 Continue to advocate for and support social service organizations across the City as outlined in Section 3 Assessment of Community Strengths and Needs.
- 4 Continue to support local social service organizations in their capacity-building and hiring processes. This includes supporting Community Future's work to attract Social Service Workers.
- 5 Continue to support Indigenous organizations that provide social services to Indigenous Peoples.

Engaging Indigenous People

- 1 Continue work to engage Indigenous Nations who provide services to their people in Prince Rupert as the City moves forward with its social development work, recognizing that building trust and engaging in reconciliation will have social benefits.

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