

CITY OF MERRITT HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

Council Presentation – February 23 2021

We acknowledge with respect the peoples on whose traditional territory M'akola operates and the Lək'wəṇən, Xwsepsum and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

With funding support from:



THOMPSON-NICOLA
REGIONAL DISTRICT


Merritt
FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

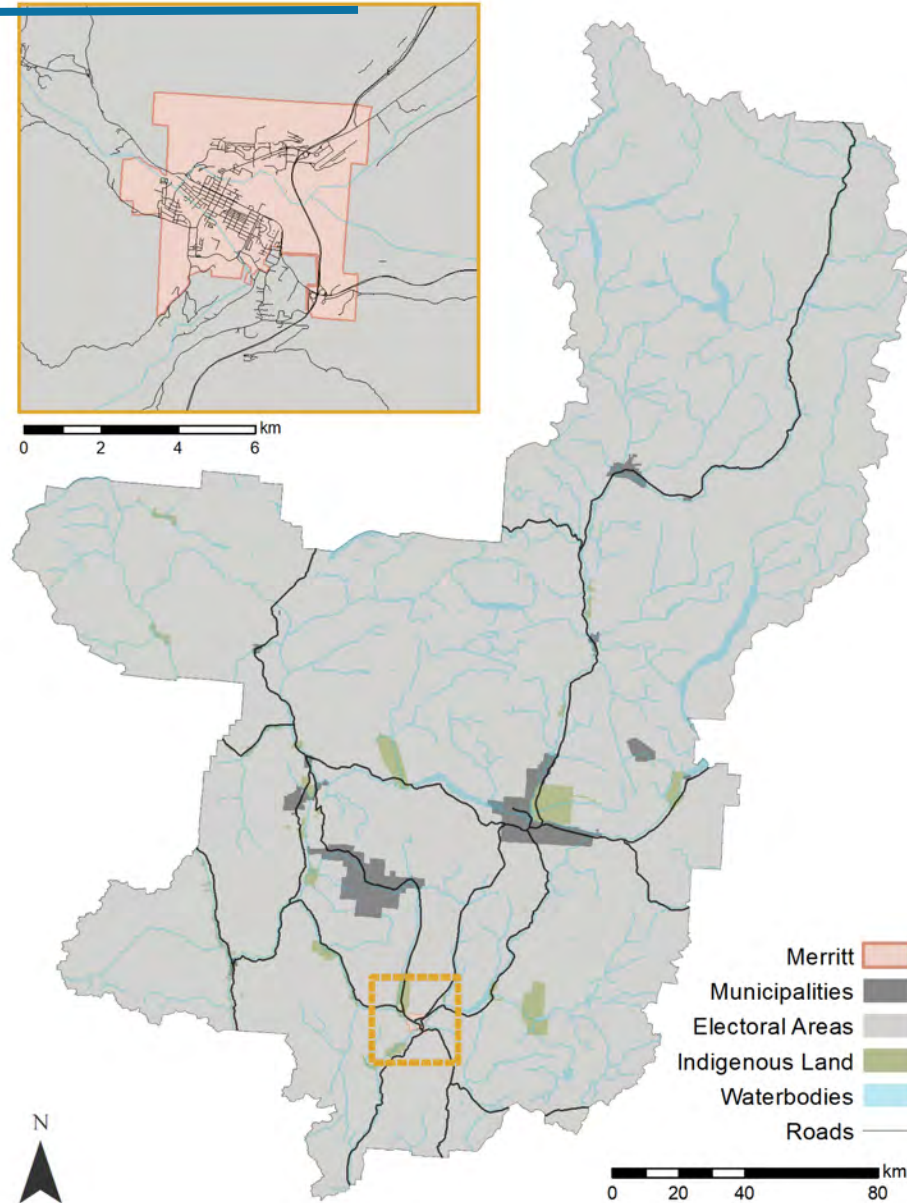


**TURNER DRAKE
& PARTNERS LTD.**



**MAKOLA
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES**

PROJECT AREA



Participating Communities:

- City of Merritt
- Village of Cache Creek
- Village of Clinton
- District of Logan Lake
- District of Clearwater
- Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality
- Electoral Areas A, B, E, I, J, L, M, N, P

In this Report:

- *What is Happening:* local and regional Information on demographics, households, incomes, economy, and housing affordability.
- *Who it's Happening to:* engagement data, affordability analysis, which income groups are struggling.

Not in this Report:

- *How:* Implementation, where new housing should go, or the form or density it should take.
 - Each local government will decide how to act on the information in the report to support their communities (through OCP or zoning bylaw updates, partnership development, community education, etc.)

Report has six components:

1. City of Merritt Housing Needs Report
2. Community Housing Summary
3. Housing Tools and Policy Guide
4. Indicators and Monitoring Guide
5. Engagement Summary Report
6. Data Tables



FINDINGS

Merritt is still reasonably affordable, especially to households making moderate to above-moderate incomes. Overall housing conditions improved from 2006-2016.

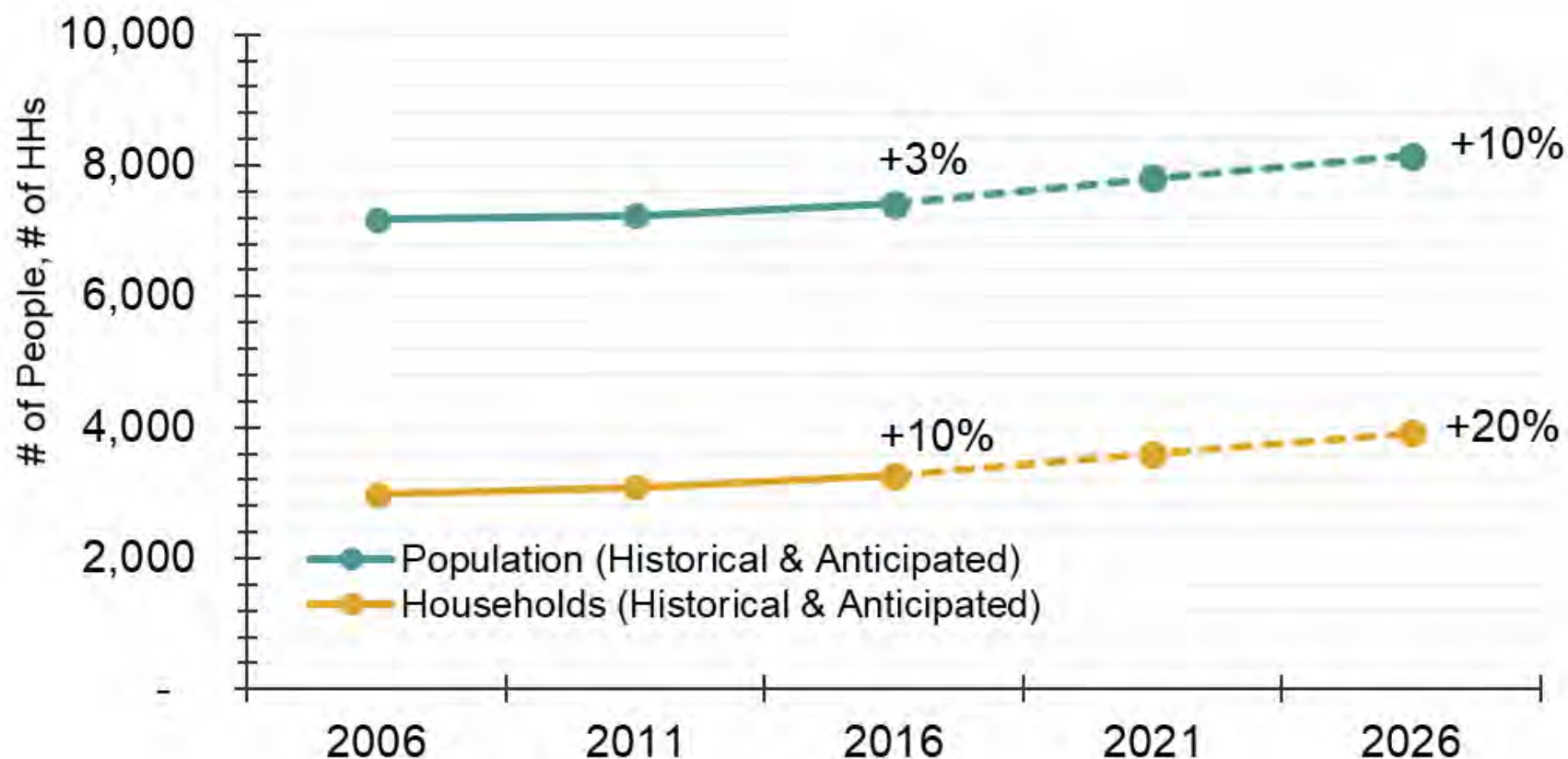
However:

- Housing conditions worsened for renters (33% in Core Housing Need)
- Aging population will present a challenge and need for different types of housing and specialized supports.
- Rental availability and condition is a challenge and trends indicate increasing rates of rentership.
- Housing markets are expanding and pressures from Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, and Kamloops are beginning to impact Merritt market.

This report should encourage action, not complacency.

POPULATION CHANGE

The population of Merritt is growing, but aging.



- Growth rate expected to accelerate over next 5 years.
- Household size is declining, meaning growth rate in demand for homes will exceed population growth rate.
- Household demand expected up 30% between 2006 and 2026 (only 13% population growth)

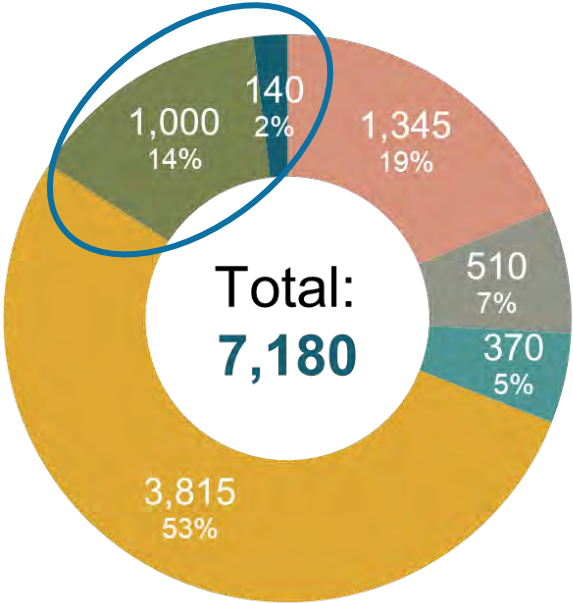
POPULATION CHANGE

65+:

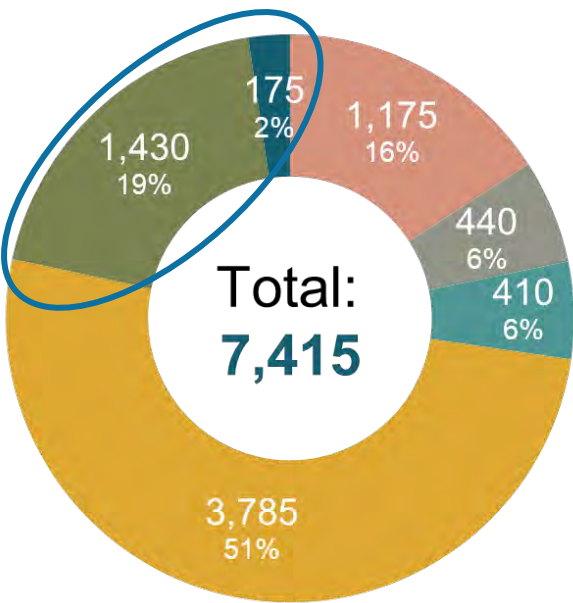
16%

21%

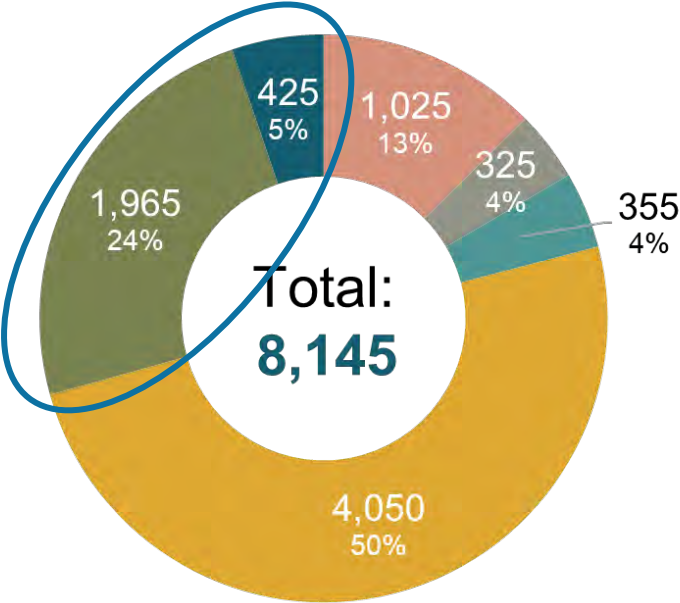
29%



historical
2006 Population
Median Age: 42



historical
2016 Population
Median Age: 44.1
%Δ '06-'16: 3%



anticipated
2026 Population
Median Age: 50.1
%Δ '16-'26: 10%

< 15 yrs 15 to 19 20 to 24 25 to 64 65 to 84 85+

Many older residents worried about their ability to maintain larger properties, but unable to downsize because of cost or availability.

Highlights a need for:

- Affordable and accessible housing, particularly rental housing
- Home care and semi-supported or supported options
- Housing closer to amenities and services

Ways Forward:

- Land-use decisions that prioritize multi-unit housing and active/public transportation
- Smaller units (not necessarily less bedrooms)

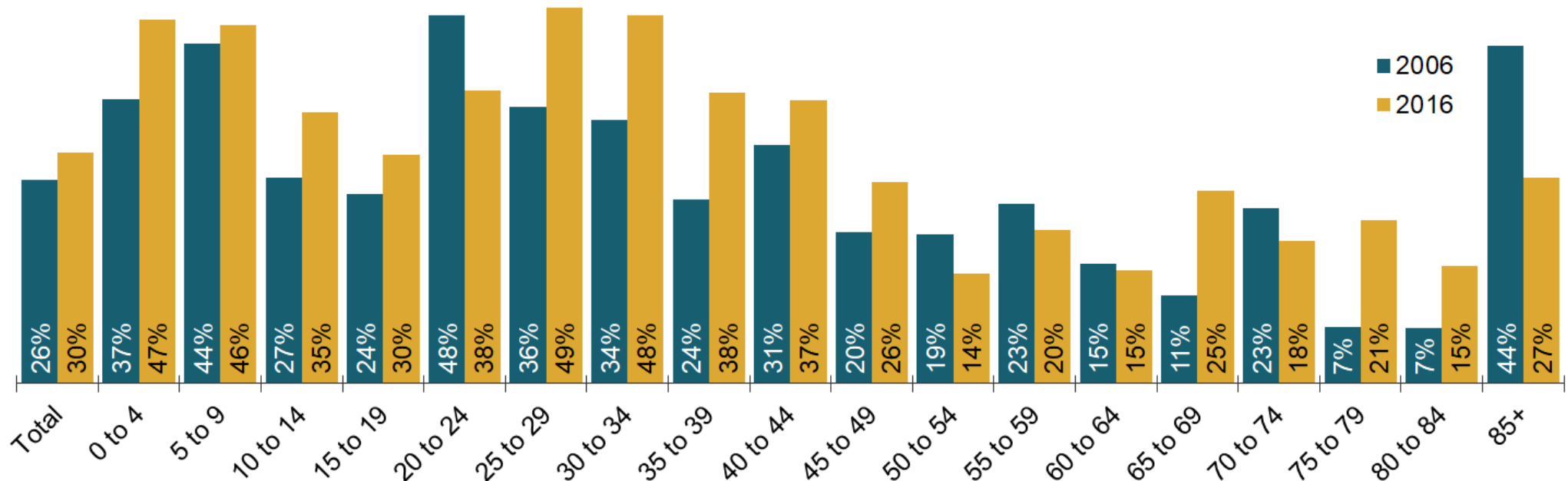
“Keep our senior off the streets”

“the prices of homes in Merritt has gone way up so has rent very hard for a single person, or senior”

“My parents are 80 and 85 years old and they are presently trying to downsize to a smaller house. Unfortunately there are limited rancher style houses available on the market.”

RENTERS

**The number of renters is increasing across nearly all age cohorts.
Renters are less likely to be able to meet their housing needs than owners.**



Largest jumps in families with school-age children.

Median Household Income: \$63,157, **+20%**

Median Owner Household: \$80,569, **+19%**

Median Renter Household: \$37,467, **+14%**

**More families renting at
increasingly expensive rates.**

Many employers reported housing directly affects their ability to attract and retain workers in key industries. Not just tourism and retail; construction, teachers, nurses, municipal workers.

Highlights a need for:

- More dedicated, affordable, and appropriate rental options
- Housing for workers in key industries
- Housing for families and individuals.

“Unable to attract new working-age residents to Merritt due to absolutely wild income/house price ratio.”

Ways Forward:

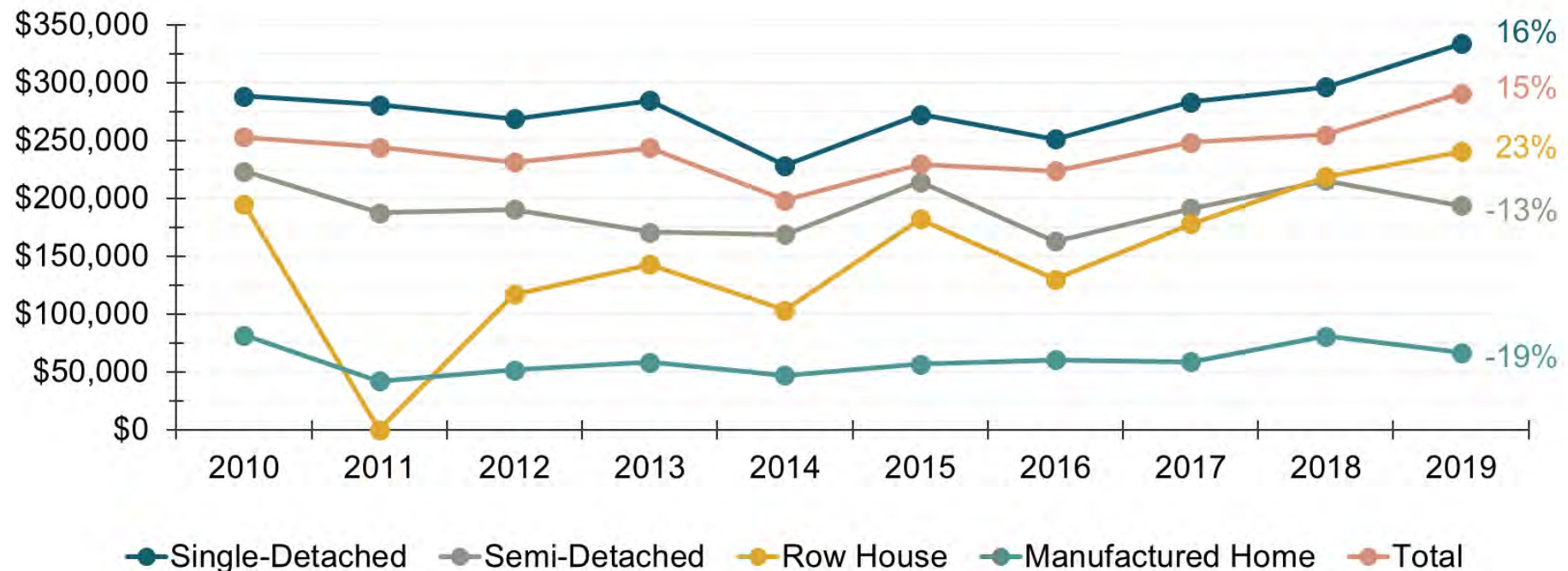
- Prioritize purpose-built rentals
- Expand suites/infill permissions
- Protect existing stock
- Pre-zoning, inclusionary zoning, no net loss policies, restrict conversions

“Lack of suitable rentals is a consistent drag on the economy, unable to attract mid-wage residents.”

OWNERS

Owner-occupied housing is more expensive:

- Median house prices steadily rising
- Expect 2020/21 to be large volume sales years



- Single-detached up 16%, anecdotal evidence that demand is higher than ever
- Engagement indicates market becoming harder to enter for middle-low income earners and single-income households.

Renters and owners are both challenged by the current housing market.

34% of all survey respondents indicated that their current housing was unaffordable.

65% of renter respondents indicated their current housing was not affordable.

Housing Concerns in the Next 5 Years:

- Cost of utilities
- Cost of maintaining my home
- Physical ability to maintain my home
- Cost of housing
- Distances to services and amenities
- Stability of housing

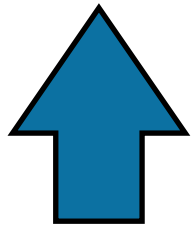
“I administrate a Rental page. There are more people moving to the area looking for rentals than ever before. Driving the cost up from units that would normally be \$700-800 per month to \$1400-1800 per month, this is ridiculous, there is virtually no affordable housing.”

“There is very little options for people to rent in Merritt and what is out there is so damn expensive! We need affordable living options for people.”

NON-MARKET HOUSING

Need for More Non-Market, Supportive, and Emergency Housing Options.

Merritt has most applicants in the study area.



**Numbers of people living or staying with family/friends.
“Hidden Homelessness”**

Many respondents reporting unsafe housing, poor housing conditions. General increase in stress and worry related to housing insecurity.

Merritt is the service hub for the Region and experiences higher rated of supportive and emergency housing need.

“Lack of clean, stable, affordable housing for the most vulnerable residents, such as single parent families, seniors, people with substance use disorders, people with mental health challenges, people experiencing poverty, youth”

“Housing for vulnerable residents needs to include wrap-around support from community agencies so that people have the best chance to succeed in staying housed, e.g. MHSU, life skills development, Work BC, childcare, etc.”

“More supportive housing for folks who face homelessness or have multiple barriers”

Highlights a need for:

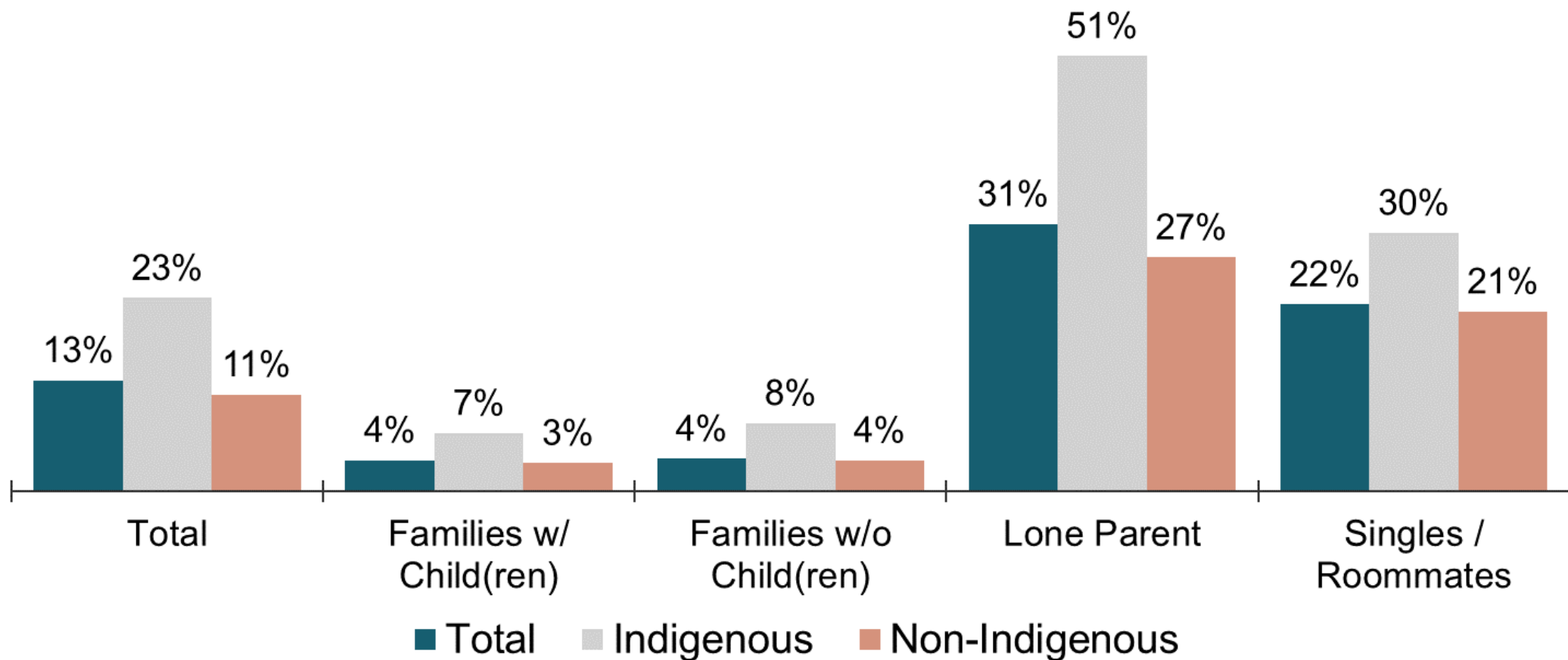
- More dedicated, affordable, and appropriate rental options
- Alternative tenure models
- Housing that is affordable in perpetuity. SECURED affordable housing.
- Increased funding from senior government
- Non-profit operated housing

Ways Forward:

- Educate community to reduce stigma around these uses
- Land acquisition and disposal strategy
- Explore incentives, encourage and support non-profit development
- Enforcement strategy to ensure rental suite maintenance
- Encourage applications to CMHC revitalization program

DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED GROUPS

Rates of Core Housing Need by Household Type and Indigenous Identity





NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

Council Resolution to Recieve
Post Housing Needs Report to Website
Staff Training – TBA
Community Forum – TBA



THANK YOU!

We would like to acknowledge and thank key stakeholders and members of the community who participated in the Regional Housing Needs survey, shared lived experience, or participated in interviews and focus groups, including:

Interior Health

Clinton and District Assisted Living Society

Canadian Mental Health Association, Kamloops Branch

ASK Wellness Society

Yellowhead Community Services

Nicola Valley Shelter and Support Society

Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice

Merritt Division of Family Practice

Sun Peaks Housing Authority

Glacier Mountain Lodge

Mike Wiegele Heli-Skiing Resort

Logan Lake Lions Club

Evergreen Acres Seniors Housing Society

Logan Lake Wellness Health and Youth Society

United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo

Conayt Friendship Society

Interior Community Services, Better at Home Program

**Special Thanks to Regina and Alex
at the Regional District and Don
at the City of Merritt.**

THANK YOU!

Please don't hesitate to contact us for help or information, now or in the future.

Sandy Mackay

smackay@makoladev.com

Photos courtesy Thompson-Nicola Film Commission

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