

Burnaby Housing Profile



Bernice, 37

Single newcomer mother

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Bernice moved to Burnaby from Oman in 2012 and lives with her three children in a small, two-bedroom apartment. She has moved many times over the past several years, but has only managed to access poorly-maintained rentals. She is looking for more secure and long-term housing options and is currently on BC Housing's waitlist for supportive housing. She has experienced discrimination as a renter in Burnaby and would like to see more access to housing for Burnaby's diverse population.

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Jillian, 19

Youth soon leaving care

Housing Type: In foster care

Housing Experience: Jillian's 19th birthday is quickly approaching and with it comes the stress of aging out of the foster care system, with nowhere to go.

She is frustrated by the limited services and supports in Burnaby for youth like herself.

She would like to know how to navigate this huge life change, especially with regards to housing options and mental health supports.

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Patrick, 42

Worker seeking family-oriented housing

“No room for family growth, I wish we had a 3-bedroom home in the same neighbourhood and that our rooms were bigger.”

Housing Type: Owner

Housing Experience: After saving for many years, Patrick and his partner were able to buy a two-bedroom condo in Burnaby, a few years ago after the birth of their first child. They are now expecting a second child and feel their condo will soon be too small for their growing family.

They would like to continue to live close to their respective workplaces but are experiencing first hand the limited options for family housing in the City.

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Yasemin, 53

Mother with son with disabilities

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Yasemin and Emir have been living in a 'Rent Geared to Income' condo for 20 years. Their two adult sons are still living with them and sharing a bedroom.

They are looking for affordable accommodation in their current neighbourhood, that would be accessible for their older son, who has developmental disabilities.

They are currently experiencing severe delays as non-market housing units are not accepting new tenants due COVID-19.

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Mel, 27

Young couple with pets

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Mel and his girlfriend struggle with past traumas and substance use issues. Mel has experienced housing discrimination and often feels unsafe. His current apartment is very poorly maintained, despite numerous requests to his landlord.

Their two dogs bring them solace and emotional well-being but have created barriers related to accessing well-maintained pet-friendly housing.

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Alejandra, 49

Family impacted by COVID-19

“We don’t have enough space for our home offices.”

Housing Type: Owner

Housing Experience: Until last year, Alejandra and her family had enough space in their home. However, with the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, she and her partner are both working from home. They now wish they were able to create a home office space.

Recently, Alejandra’s husband also had to self-isolate while he was waiting for a COVID-19 test result. This proved difficult without the additional space for physical distancing.

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Jeremy, 26

“Residents shouldn’t have to constantly worry about their housing future. There should be affordable options available that suit the needs of all.”

Housing Type: Lives with parents

Housing Experience: Jeremy is a student at Simon Fraser University. He works two part-time jobs and is looking to save enough money to move out. However, with current rental prices this is looking less and less likely in the near future.

Jeremy needs more affordable rental options such as subsidized housing or co-ops which allow young people like him to move out but still remain in Burnaby.



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Samantha, 27

“It’s about social well-being and taking care of those who live in horrible conditions. We need to do better.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Samantha works with at risk youth and lives in subsidized housing. She has major concerns with the quality of subsidized housing she and her clients have experienced in Burnaby. She would like to grow her family and move out of subsidized housing but doesn’t see that as a viable option with the current housing market.

Samantha would like the government to invest more funding in housing for those with mental health challenges and living with addiction.

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Karen, 33

“We would prefer to own our home instead of renting. We’re expecting our first child [and] we’re a young working couple that does work from home for full days, in the evenings and on weekends at times, so a separate home office would be nice.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Karen and her husband Joe currently live in a basement suite in Burnaby. They’re looking to purchase a townhome in the City but are finding the prices to be too expensive for their current incomes. They are also expecting their first child and would like to settle into a home that is near a good school and park.

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Kim, 38

Worried about Limited Housing Options for Single Mothers

“So many of my friends have moved out of Burnaby because they couldn’t afford it. I don’t recognize the neighbourhood anymore. The whole City has changed. I don’t want to be the last person left on the block.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: As a single mother with two young boys, Kim finds it hard to pay rent and save for the future. The lack of certainty surrounding her living situation causes her a great deal of stress and anxiety. In order to provide for her family, she works two jobs, but still finds it difficult to live in Burnaby. She would like to see more affordable housing options, particularly for single mothers.

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Aisha, 45

“Allow laneway houses. These can be excellent housing for seniors or young couples who want the “feel” of living in a house but don’t need the space. Many single-family homes like mine have under-utilized backyards.”

Housing Type: Homeowner

Housing Experience: Aisha currently lives with her husband and young children in North Burnaby. As a homeowner, she would like the opportunity to house her elderly parents who aren’t able to live alone anymore. To make this possible, she is interested in building a laneway home on her property, to ensure she is close to her parents but they continue to enjoy their own space as well.

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Sandra, 45

“Landlords need to be more responsive to requests to ensure that a space is accessible for all.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Sandra rents an apartment with her son who is in a wheelchair. Finding wheelchair friendly affordable housing in Burnaby has been very challenging.

Accessibility is a huge issue for her family and many others, and she urges property owners to create more wheelchair accessible spaces for rent.

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Rosette, 51

“We work hard to keep up with our rent, but it keeps getting harder each day. This is all very confusing and overwhelming.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Rosette recently immigrated to Canada with her husband from the Philippines. They currently rent a one-bedroom basement suite in Burnaby but are finding it very difficult to keep up with monthly payments. Both work two jobs and worry their landlord may increase the rent or evict them.

They would eventually like to find a larger, non-basement apartment but have noticed there is very little available with their price-range.



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Sue, 41

“I am embarrassed to ask friends for more help. There isn’t enough social housing for people with extremely low incomes. Everyone should be able to have a safe secure home that they can afford.”

Housing Type: Homeless/Renter

Housing Experience: Sue has lived in Burnaby most of her life. She usually shares accommodation with strangers but this makes her feel unsafe as a domestic abuse survivor so she moves frequently. Sue occasionally works at restaurants and receives a \$375 shelter allowance but still cannot afford rent. She has been on a waitlist for social housing for three years. Sue wants more affordable social housing to be built so that she can have a safe, permanent home.

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Suneel, 57

“We need to build neighbourhoods and communities where people can live comfortably.”

Housing Type: Homeowner

Housing Experience: Suneel lives with his wife and children in South Burnaby. As a homeowner, he is concerned about rising property taxes.

Looking ahead, Suneel worries about rising rent costs in Burnaby and the impact this will have on his children. He would like to see greater renovation credits for homeowners as currently there is little incentive to upgrade.

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Maria, 67

Demovicted Metrotown Resident

“As a senior, I am very scared of being demovicted. It’s like having an anvil constantly hanging over your head. You know it’s going to drop but you’re not sure when.”

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Maria lives in Metrotown and has been demovicted twice in the last 5 years. Her current building is scheduled to be demolished as well. She is extremely concerned about the living conditions she has experienced, including: mould, leaking plumbing and mice. Maria believes there needs to be more accountability to ensure proper living conditions within buildings like hers.

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Benny, 69

*“You can’t warehouse seniors.
They are offering us a box. We have needs as well.”*

Housing Type: Renter

Housing Experience: Benny moved to Burnaby from Vancouver 3 years ago. He rents a one-bedroom apartment. His current housing situation is becoming very expensive to maintain, but he doesn’t want to move.

He is worried that any affordable senior facility wouldn’t provide enough space or be close to transit, medical services and recreation facilities, like libraries.

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Karl, 72

“Our lot is too large for us seniors, about 7700 sq. ft. Our children grew up in this neighbourhood so we don’t want to move too far away. Ideally, we want to have [our home] zoned to build a duplex to rent out but with the zoning restrictions it would be hard to do.”

Housing Type: Homeowner

Housing Experience: Karl lives in his single-family home with his wife, Angela. Both their children have moved out of the house, so they have a lot of extra space. Karl and Angela would like to move into an affordable, smaller home in their neighbourhood or re-zone their current single-family home.