

# Filling the Gaps:

Evictions and Government Policy  
in Metro Vancouver during  
Covid-19

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
The housing crisis in the Metro Vancouver area .....	5
Covid-19 and housing need .....	8
Income and tenancy protections during the pandemic .....	9
Methods .....	12
Findings .....	18
1. Eviction filings decreased during the pandemic in response to the eviction moratorium .....	18
2. The proportion of eviction filings that resulted in an eviction stayed relatively stable between 2019-2022, with the RTB favouring landlords over tenants in both ruling and response time .....	23
3. Areas in Metro Vancouver that had more eviction filings per renter household were also more impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic .....	28
Limitations and Discussion .....	36
Conclusion .....	39
Appendix A .....	41
Appendix B .....	43
References .....	46

# List of Figures

Table 1: Overview of changes to tenancy protections in response to Covid-19 .....	10
Figure 1: Timeline of major government initiatives during Covid-19 pandemic for Metro Vancouver .....	11
Table 2: Variables considered for Vancouver analysis and data source .....	15
Figure 2: Comparison of Forward Sortation Area (FSA) & Local Health Authority (LHA) Boundaries, Metro Vancouver .....	16
Table 3: Cluster analysis of Vancouver FSAs .....	17
Figure 3: Filing types (%) 2010-2022 for Metro Vancouver .....	18
Figure 4: Number of filings (OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC) 2010-2021, by landlord and tenant for Metro Vancouver .....	19
Figure 5: Total Number of filings vs. OPR/OPU/CNR and OPC/CNC, 2010-2021 for Metro Vancouver .....	20
Figure 6: Number of Disputes (OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC) 2019-2022, by month for Metro Vancouver ...	21
Figure 7: Percent Change in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC Disputes from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver .....	22
Table 4: Eviction filing and ruling outcomes (2010-2022) .....	23
Figure 8: Number of Disputes OPR/OPU/OPC and CNC/CNR 2010-2022, by decision outcome for Metro Vancouver .....	24
Figure 9: Percentage of OPR/OPU/OPC filings resulting in order of possession, 2020-2021 by month for Metro Vancouver .....	25
Figure 10: Average number of days from filing to decision date by dispute code, 2010-2022 for Metro Vancouver .....	26
Figure 11: Cluster map based on selected variables related to evictions, housing need, Covid-19 benefits, and Asian visible minorities, 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver .....	28
Figure 12: Cluster map based on selected variables related to evictions, housing need, Covid-19 benefits, and general visible minorities, 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver .....	29
Figure 13a: 2020 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	30
Figure 13b: 2021 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	31
Figure 13c: January – June 2022 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	31
Figure 14a: 2020 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	32
Figure 14b: 2021 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	33
Figure 14c: January – June 2022 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver .....	33



# Introduction

*This report explains how tenancy and income protections impacted evictions during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Metro Vancouver area by looking at eviction filings patterns from 2010-2022.*

The key question explored in this report is whether rental protections and income supports had the intended result of ensuring that households did not lose their housing due to hardships brought on by the pandemic. As stated by Leilani Farha, former UN Special Rapporteur on Affordable Housing, “Housing has become the frontline defense against the coronavirus. Home has rarely been more of a life-or-death situation” (1). For much of the pandemic, social distancing was necessary to reduce community spread, meaning that safe and secure housing was fundamental to health and safety. Between March and September 2020, the Provincial Government in BC implemented an evictions moratorium to protect households impacted by pandemic layoffs and support the wider effort to keep people safely distanced. This report evaluates the impact of the pandemic policies between 2020 and 2022 and the role that weak tenant protections played to undermine eviction moratorium and wider efforts to counter-act forced displacement.

## The housing crisis in the Metro Vancouver area

*The Metro Vancouver area has almost two dozen municipalities and multiple Indigenous communities, which together comprise a population of approximately 2.6 million people (2). Housing costs in the Metro Vancouver area are deeply unaffordable; as of January 2024, the benchmark price for single detached properties in the region was \$1,942,400, a 34% increase from March 2020 (3). Even so, housing sales in the region continue to skyrocket (4). The City of Vancouver is the least affordable city in Canada and one of the least affordable housing markets in the world (5).*

High levels of unaffordability have a direct impact on renters: Canada’s most expensive rental markets are also in the Metro Vancouver area, with average rents continuing to rise in 2023 (6). According to CMHC’s 2024 rental market report the average rent for a 2-bedroom unit in purpose built rental buildings was \$2,181 while average rents in the condo market was \$2,580 (7).

There are two factors that likely contribute to the concentration of Canada’s most expensive rental markets in Vancouver. The first factor is the rent gap between occupied and unoccupied units. The average rent for an occupied 2-bedroom unit in Metro Vancouver in 2023 was \$2,175 compared to the asking rent for vacant units of \$2,608, which is on average 20% higher than the rates for occupied units (7). Thanks to rent control in BC, allowable rent increases for occupied units are limited, set at 2.5% in 2019, 2.6% in 2020, 0% in 2021, and 1.5% in 2022. This discrepancy means a landlord would have to apply the maximum allowable rent increase every year<sup>1</sup> for 11 years to achieve the market rates of a single unit turnover. This discrepancy is the direct result of vacancy decontrol in British Columbia (e.g. a lack of policies within the Residential Tenancy Act to govern the allowable increase in rents between tenants).

<sup>1</sup> Based on an average increase of 1.65%/year which is the average annual increase between 2019 and 2022

This gap between the regulation of occupied units (i.e. through the Residential Tenancy Act [RTA]), and a lack of regulation for unoccupied units, incentivizes unit turnover, especially through informal (i.e. undocumented) means and contributes to bad-faith evictions. Bad-faith evictions happen when landlords work to take advantage of higher rents and maximizing profits by creating conditions that force a tenant to move, for example, by claiming that they or a family member need to move into a unit (8).

***"This gap between the regulation of occupied units (i.e. through the Residential Tenancy Act [RTA]), and a lack of regulation for unoccupied units, incentivizes unit turnover, especially through informal (i.e. undocumented) means and contributes to bad-faith evictions."***

In addition to the rent gap, Vancouver's unaffordability is deeply impacted by the limited purpose-built rental stock. In a 2021 report, the City of Vancouver estimated that 80% of purpose-built rental (PBR) housing was built before the 1980s (9). The drop-off in PBR construction in the city is a by-product of federal policies in the early 1990's entrusting responsibility for housing to the provinces (10). In turn, the province looked to municipalities to build affordable housing for residents without providing adequate funding, leading to minimal development of purpose-built rental stock in the last three decades. At the same time, tax policies favouring strata condo development led to a condo boom across Metro Vancouver. While the condo market and secondary suites have played an important role in meeting housing needs, these kinds of housing are also more likely to be converted to short-term rentals and financialized by market forces, contributing to greater housing insecurity for tenants (11,12).

While the lack of affordability is widespread, the lack of affordable rental housing in the Metro Vancouver region has not impacted all renters equally. Within the Census Metropolitan Area of Vancouver (i.e. Metro Vancouver), there are approximately 394,710 renter households. According to the 2021 Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) profile for Metro Vancouver, there is a deficit of approximately 166,105 homes in the region, and more than 100,000 of those units require rents of \$1,125/month or less (13). Among visible minority households, 24.01% are in core housing need, compared to 19.25% of all households, meaning that visible minority households are more likely to live in housing that is unaffordable, inadequate or unsuitable and they cannot afford to move to housing that meets their needs in their community. In the 2020 census, 68.7% of Metro Vancouver's population identified as a visible minority. The lack of affordable rental housing also intersects with gender, and immigration status in important ways, as both single-mother-led households and refugee claimants have high rates of core housing need in the Metro Vancouver region. This substantial deficit of affordable housing and disproportionate rates of housing need in racialized communities means that increases to rental rates are more likely to impact marginalized groups.



## Evictions in British Columbia

*The same reasons that Vancouver is the most expensive city in Canada also contribute to the high rates of eviction in the province: British Columbia is known as the “evictions capital” of the country (14).*

In their analysis of 2021 Canadian Housing Survey data, Silas Xuereb and Craig Jones found that approximately 10.5% of BC tenant households had experienced an eviction in the past five years and 85.4% of evictions resulted from no fault of the tenant (14). A second study by First United surveyed British Columbians about their eviction experiences and found that 67% of evictions were no-fault and resulted because the landlord wanted to use the property (40%), the landlord wanted to renovate the property (9%) or the landlord wanted to sell the property (18%) (15). The same survey estimates that 28% of tenants received no documentation when they were evicted (15).

What both studies show is that most evictions in British Columbia are “no fault” and are initiated by the landlord (e.g. selling the unit, renovation, moving a family member or friend in), not based on the tenant’s actions (e.g. not paying rent) . In contrast, evictions data from the Rental Tenancy Board (RTB) suggests that being behind on rent is the most common reason for a landlord to apply for a notice to end tenancy. This discrepancy between at-fault and no-fault evictions reflects the lack of administrative data on no-fault evictions; in many cases, landlords can initiate a no-fault eviction without a formal eviction filing ever being processed. In other words, RTB filings only represent a fraction of evictions that are occurring, and many evictions take the form of “ghost evictions” where no documentation, legal or otherwise, is produced (16). This report focuses on formal evictions, although we acknowledge the acute need for reliable data on informal and “no-fault” evictions.

***“While the condo market and secondary suites have played an important role in meeting housing needs, these kinds of housing are also more likely to be converted to short-term rentals and financialized by market forces, contributing to greater housing insecurity for tenants.”***

## Covid-19 and housing need

*The Covid-19 pandemic also had an unequal impact on households across Canada. National research suggests that neighbourhoods with a higher percentage of visible minorities had higher mortality rates from Covid-19 when compared to neighbourhoods with a lower percentage of visible minorities (17). In British Columbia, standardized mortality rates were almost ten times greater in neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of visible minorities when compared to those with the lowest proportion (17).*

In their analysis of neighbourhood-level risk factors in Ontario, van Ingen et al. found that neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of racialized populations, immigrants, and larger household size were associated with Covid-19 risk (18). Their study found that essential workers, which were more likely to be lower income and identify as a visible minority, experienced higher cumulative Covid-19 rates and related mortality, which was likely the result of the challenges to sheltering in place experienced by essential workers.

The gap between Covid-19 infections and deaths in neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of visible minority households and neighbourhoods with a lower-proportion of visible minority households suggests that policies could have gone further to protect visible minority households (18,19,20).

### **Did governments help fill the gaps in housing during the Covid-19 pandemic?**

While there is some understanding of the impacts that the housing crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic have had on certain populations, the extent to which government programs were successful at mitigating the harms of these dual crises has not been mapped out. This report deep-dives into available data to consider the success of government attempts to “fill the gap” of affordable housing during the pandemic in Metro Vancouver (21). In this analysis we draw on eviction filing data, census data, Covid-19 data, and case law reviews to assess how effective governments were in providing housing, income supports and protecting tenants from displacement between 2020 and 2022. Based on the data collected, we were able to conclude the following:

- Income and tenancy protections introduced during the pandemic, including the eviction moratorium and rent freeze, resulted in lower levels (but not elimination) of evictions filed for unpaid rent or utilities, or for cause.
- Eviction moratorium had a limited impact on the decisions made by the Residential Tenancy Branch. Orders of possession continued to be granted by the RTB, even though the eviction moratorium did not allow for an order of possession to be enforced. The RTB continued to grant orders of possession throughout the pandemic, in part because adjudicators do not have the legislative power to consider the hardship that would be caused by an end to tenancy.
- Surrey had the highest rates of eviction filings per 100 renter household in Metro Vancouver in 2020 and 2021. Compared to Metro Vancouver, Surrey also had an above average proportion of households in core housing need, above average uptake of income benefits, and greater proportion of the population that identified as a visible minority in 2020. This overlap suggests that more targeted income and tenant protections were needed to ensure that vulnerable populations did not fall through the gaps of government protections.



In this report these findings are explored in more detail, providing insights into the protective role that government programs played during the pandemic, while also calling for further data transparency to aid in effective policy development and review.

## Income and tenancy protections during the pandemic

*This section sets out the various policies that were introduced by federal, provincial, and municipal governments to provide income and housing supports to people in the Metro Vancouver area.*

Covid-19 policies, including those related to tenancy protections, were generally established through emergency powers. Under federal and provincial legislation, governments can declare a state of emergency, which grants them power without needing to go to Parliament or legislatures to pass bills. Emergency powers anticipate a rapid, large-scale response to a short-term event, but not necessarily a long-term pandemic that impacts every element of society. The BC government, which is the body responsible for tenancy protections, declared a state of emergency on March 18, 2020 that ran until June 30, 2021 (22,23).

On March 30, 2020 the Ministerial Order M089 came into effect, which meant that orders of possession were not enforceable (24). It is important to note that orders of possession were still granted if the landlord gave a tenant a notice to end tenancy before order M089 went into effect. In other words, if a tenant had been issued a notice to end tenancy on March 25, 2020, they could be forced to move within 10 days of receiving the order of possession and at the height of pandemic restrictions.

### Federal income support

The federal government introduced the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) as a financial assistance program administered by the federal government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The program, which ran from March to September 2020, aimed to assist Canadian residents who were financially impacted by the pandemic, particularly those who lost employment, could not work, or experienced a reduction of hours. Those who were successful CERB applicants were provided \$2,000 per four-week period for up to seven periods. Statistics Canada estimates 25.1% of Canadian adults received income through the program (25). The federal government also enacted several mortgage payment support programs, including payment deferrals and mortgage relief programs, alongside financial institutions to ease the financial burden of mortgages during the pandemic (26). The province of BC also introduced a Temporary Rental Supplement Program from April 1, 2020–August 31, 2020. Low to moderate-income households and their landlords were eligible to apply to receive a rent supplement that was paid directly to the landlord (27).

## Residential tenancy protections

In addition to the income supports, the provincial government introduced a range of legal protections to mitigate the effects of Covid-19 on housing security (28,29,30). The table below lists the various protections given to residents in BC as a result of Covid-19:

Type of Residence	Legal Protections
Traditional dwellings (homes covered by the Residential Tenancy Act, including eligible SROs)	<p><b>March 30, 2020:</b> Provincial rent and evictions moratorium, which halted evictions and rent increases effective immediately. Evictions were not allowed unless the eviction order had been issued before the Order went into effect or it was unreasonable to wait (27).</p> <p>Rent freeze takes effect until 2022.</p> <p><b>April 2020:</b> Temporary Rental Supplement Program introduced, providing supplements for low- to moderate-income renters who lost income due to Covid-19. Required tenant and landlord to apply jointly, supplement was paid directly to the landlord (27,30).</p> <p><b>June 2020:</b> Evictions resume; landlords could issue a Notice to End Tenancy for any reason other than unpaid or late payment rent (30).</p> <p><b>July 2, 2020:</b> Landlords with existing orders for eviction (e.g., orders of possession issued during the moratorium) could take them to the courts for enforcement.</p> <p><b>September 2020:</b> Landlords required to give tenants in arrears a payment plan for missed rent between March and August 2020. Landlords had to give tenants until July 2021 to repay outstanding rent as long as monthly instalments were paid. Evictions for non-payment resume.</p> <p>Temporary Rental Supplement Program ends.</p>
Supportive housing	Many exempted from the Residential Tenancy Act and, therefore, receive limited protection from eviction.
Student residences	Exempted from the Residential Tenancy Act - students living in university housing are subject to the contract between them and the university. There is no additional legal protections for student housing tenants.

Table 1: Overview of changes to tenancy protections in response to Covid-19



A summary of these protections, illustrating when they were in place, is set out below.

### Timeline of Major Government Initiatives During COVID-19 Pandemic for Vancouver CMA

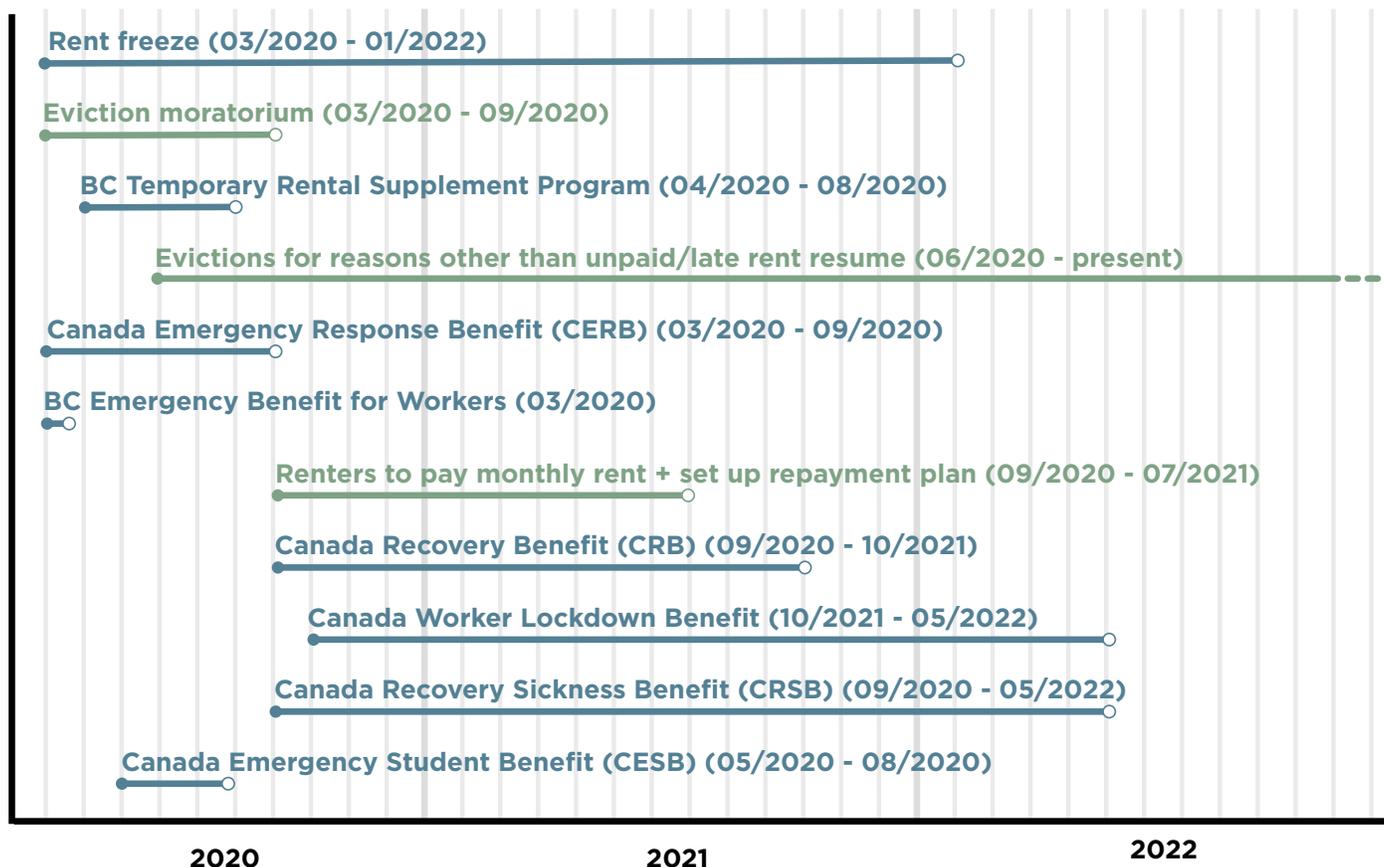


Figure 1: Timeline of major government initiatives during Covid-19 pandemic for Metro Vancouver

The next section examines the methods used to look at the relationship between evictions, Covid-19 cases, and government programs in Metro Vancouver using available data.

# Methods

*This research uses three sources of data for the analysis of Metro Vancouver eviction filings, Covid-19 cases and selected demographic variables. The variables considered and the respective data sources are outlined in Table 2.*

## 1. Custom data on evictions filings

Eviction filings from 2010 to 2022 were obtained from the BC RTB for Metro Vancouver through multiple Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. The data on eviction filings included various attributes, and this analysis considered:

1. Date of the eviction filing
2. Date of the decision outcome
3. Location of the filing (organized by Forward Sortation Area [FSA])
4. Applicant type (landlord or tenant)
5. Filing type according to dispute code
6. Decision outcome (disposition)

The eviction filings data was categorized according to dispute code and organized to draw out five specific dispute codes by two types:

### Filings by landlords

- Notice to end tenancy issued for cause including unpaid rent (OPC)
- Notice to end tenancy for unpaid utilities (OPU)
- Notice to end tenancy for unpaid rent (OPR)

**Filings by tenants** (see Appendix A for further detail on eviction filing dispute codes):

- Dispute a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Unpaid Rent or Utilities (CNR)
- Dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause (CNC)

These dispute codes were chosen because they capture evictions that could have been prevented by government policies focused on protecting tenants from displacement, and represented the majority of RTB cases. While the eviction moratorium from March to September 2020 was for all types of evictions (See Appendix A for full list), the relatively small number of filings for other types of evictions (e.g. landlord use [OPL] or renovation [OPL-4M]) led to the focus on what are often considered “at fault” evictions. The data on eviction filings provided by the RTB has multiple dispute codes associated with distinct filings, and those filings with multiple dispute codes were recoded to reflect this. From the eviction filings in Metro Vancouver, ten filings had a negative value for the number of days from filing date to outcome date were excluded, assuming that the associated data with these filings is likely incorrect. In the Metro Vancouver context, the RTB data on eviction filings only provided locational data at the FSA level, not at the individual property level. The RTB data on eviction filings for 2022 was only provided up until July 2022, while data from 2010 to 2021 included all calendar months.



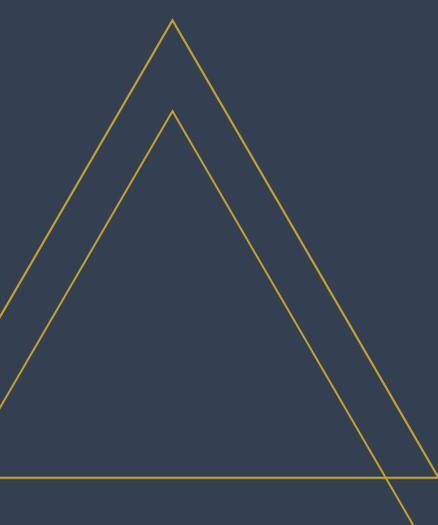
## 2. Selected variables from the 2021 Census of Canada

The second source of data is the 2021 Census of Canada by Statistics Canada, from which several variables were selected:

1. Proportion of renter households
2. Proportion of the population that received Covid-19 benefit payments
3. Proportion of the population that received employment insurance (EI) payments
4. Proportion of tenant households in core housing need
5. Proportion of households that did not identify as a visible minority
6. Proportion that were non-economic immigrants
7. Proportion of visible minorities (also referred to as racialized groups in this report).

Previous research on the effects of Covid-19 have highlighted the importance of analysis that looks at the impacts of the pandemic on African, Caribbean, and Black communities (20). More than half of Vancouver's population identifies as a visible minority according to 2020 census data, but just over 2% of the visible minority population in Metro Vancouver identifies as Black. This research focuses on visible minority populations that have greater representation in Metro Vancouver and were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, specifically Filipino, Korean, South Asian, Southeast Asian and West Asian, populations, which together compose 26.7% of visible minority population in private households as of 2020.

The choice to consider a specific grouping of visible minorities for comparative analysis with Covid-19 and evictions-related data is supported by statistical surveys reporting that these groups are largely represented in employment sectors that faced greater job losses during the pandemic (e.g., service, retail), and more likely to report experiencing financial difficulties during the pandemic (31). In Canada, 23.2% of people that identified as white reported pandemic related financial difficulties meeting essential needs, while rates in Arab (44%), Black (38.5%), Filipino (42.9%), Korean (36.1%), South Asian (38.5%), Southeast Asian (40.3%) and West Asian (42%) were much higher (31).



### 3. Covid-19 case data

The third source of data was drawn from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). Within Metro Vancouver, Covid-19 case data from March 2020 to June 2022 is not available at the FSA level and has only been publicly released at the local health area (LHA) level. A table outlining the overlap between LHAs, and FSAs can be found in Appendix B. In cases where an FSA fell within two LHAs, the FSA was excluded from analysis. The reasoning for excluding overlapping FSAs from the analysis of Covid-19 case data is because spatial distribution of population density within distinct FSAs is unknown and therefore weighting Covid-19 case data accordingly is contingent on broad assumptions. For this reason, 21 FSAs overlapping multiple LHA boundaries were excluded from analysis. These 21 excluded FSAs had a population of 600,075 as of 2021, accounting for 22.7% of the total population in Metro Vancouver. This exclusion was based on the assumption that the group of FSAs within the LHA would provide a more accurate picture of the trends at the LHA level, than moving forward on the assumption that geographic trends within the FSA were proportionate to the area within a specific LHA.

Covid-19 case data collected by the BCCDC varied in terms of the collection methodology. At the beginning of the pandemic, the provincial government utilized exposure-based testing, which transitioned to targeted testing on March 16, 2020, to expanded testing on April 9, 2020. By April 21, 2020 people in British Columbia could receive symptom-based testing, but all testing remained centrally controlled and a positive case resulted in public health follow-up. By January 18, 2022, the provincial government used a symptom-based testing approach for high-risk populations, but take-home tests became widely available to the general population. A positive home test result did not need to be reported to the public health authority. This shift to targeted testing and the wide distribution of take-home tests likely resulted in case undercounts by 2022 (32).



Variable	Data Source
Proportion of population that received Covid-19 Benefits payments in 2020	2021 Census
Proportion of population that received Employment Insurance payments in 2020	2021 Census
OPC/OPR/OPU/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household in 2020/2021 request	BC Residential Tenancy Branch Custom FOI request
Proportion of tenant households in core housing need in 2020	2021 Census
Proportion of households renting in 2020	2021 Census
Proportion of population that was a non-economic immigrant in 2020	2021 Census
Proportion of population that was Filipino, Korean, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and West Asian in 2020	2021 Census
Proportion of population that was non-visible minority in 2020	2021 Census
Average daily number of Covid-19 cases per 100,000 residents by LHA	BCCDC

*Table 2: Variables considered for Vancouver analysis and data source*

Once the above variables were identified in Metro Vancouver, the correlation between selected variables were explored via Pearson correlation coefficients. Pearson correlation coefficient measure the linear correlation between two sets of data and help us understand if they are related. Variables were considered to have strong correlation with each other for values greater than 0.46. Variables were subsequently clustered and explored as a group spatially at the FSA or LHA level. Variables that were clustered and explored spatially included the percentage of population that received EI benefits, the percentage of the population that received Covid-19 benefits, eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause per 100 renter households, the percentage of tenant households in core housing need, and the percentage of visible minority populations. These variables were subsequently used to complete a spatial analysis that looked at above and below average clusters at the FSA level (See Appendix B for cluster analysis results).

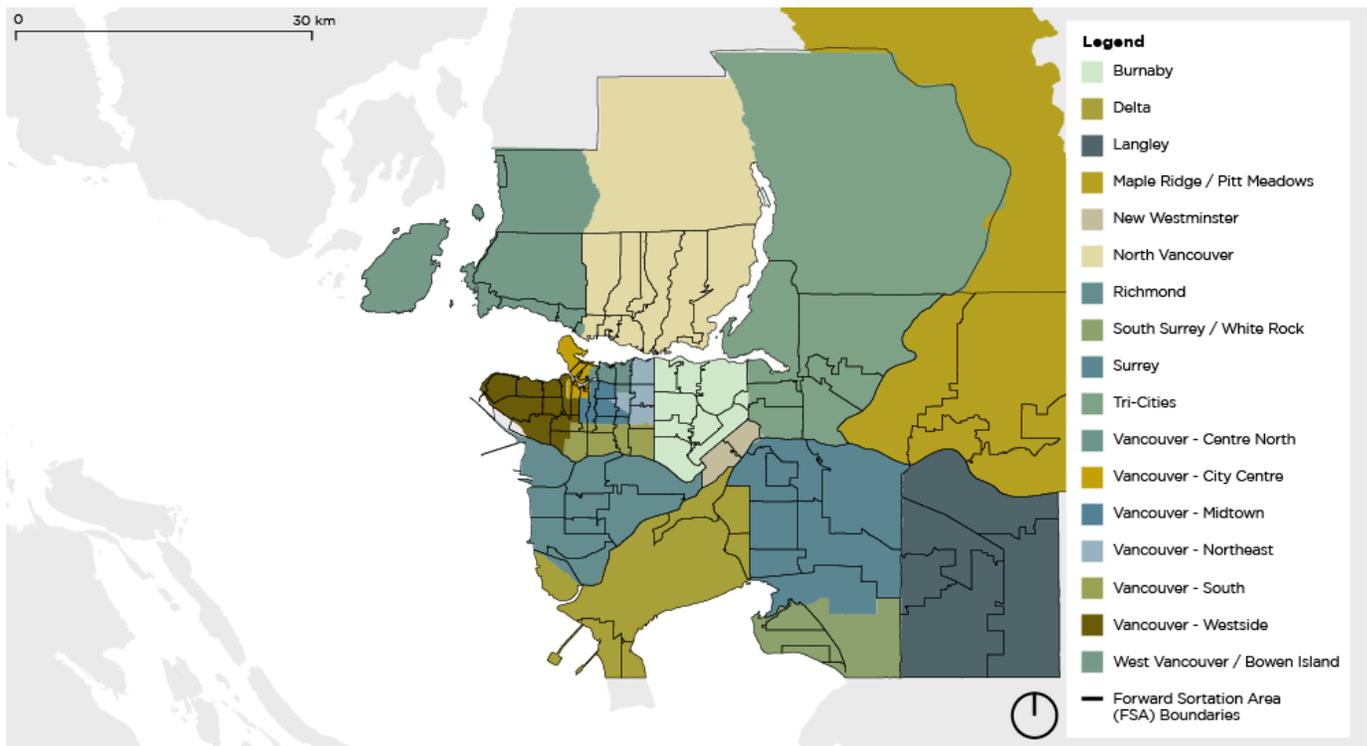


Figure 2: Comparison of Forward Sortation Area (FSA) & Local Health Authority (LHA) Boundaries, Metro Vancouver

Based on the variables of:

- Percent of population receiving Employment Insurance payments in 2020
- Percent of population receiving Covid-19 benefit payments in 2020
- Eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause per renter household in 2020, 2021
- Eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause, per renter household in 2020, 2021
- Percent of tenant households in core housing need in 2020
- Percent of population that identified as Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, Korean and Filipino in 2020.

Three clusters were identified using location quotients<sup>2</sup>:

1. The above average cluster (N=4) which includes FSAs which had location quotients of one or more in all six variables
2. The below average cluster (N=18) which includes FSAs which had location quotients of less than 1 in all six variables; and the last cluster which contains remaining FSAs (N=71).

<sup>2</sup> Location quotients are a used to map geographic concentration of specific variables and compare subareas with a geographic region.

FSA Cluster Group	Total Population	Percent Households Renting 2021 (%)	Percent Tenant Households in Core Housing Need, 2021 (%)	OPR/OPU/ OPC/CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per 100 Renter Households 2018	OPR/OPU/ OPC/CNR/ CNC Eviction Filings per 100 Renter Households 2019	OPR/OPU/ OPC/CNR/ CNC Eviction Filings per 100 Renter Households 2020	OPR/OPU/ OPC/CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per 100 Renter Households 2021
<b>Above Average Clusters (N=4)</b>	168,587	43	31	1.00	1.47	0.64	1.24
<b>Below Average Cluster (N=18)</b>	338,579	42	20.25	0.45	0.50	0.19	0.37
<b>Remaining FSAs (N=71)</b>	2,201,500	46.70	32.43	1.18	1.17	0.56	0.97
FSA Cluster Group	Percent Change in OPR/ OPU/OPC/ CNR/ CNC Evictions between 2019 and 2020 (%)	Percent Change in OPR/ OPU/OPC/ CNR/ CNC Evictions between 2018-19 and 2020-21 (%)	Percent Population is Non-Visible Minority 2021 (%)	Percent Population Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, Filipino, Korean, 2021 (%)	Percent Population is Non-Economic Immigrant 2021 (%)	Percent Population Received EI Benefit 2020 (%)	Percent Population Received Covid Benefits 2020 (%)
<b>Above Average Clusters (N=4)</b>	-52.58	-24.82	41.13	38.36	43.16	10.04	31.64
<b>Below Average Cluster (N=18)</b>	-55.08	-25.88	55.77	12.25	25.66	5.61	23.44
<b>Remaining FSAs (N=71)</b>	-59.11	-38.76	63.64	34.01	47.52	9.65	34.29

Table 3: Cluster analysis of Vancouver FSAs

# Findings

## 1. Eviction filings decreased during the pandemic in response to the eviction moratorium

Based on the FOI data that we obtained on formal evictions, filings decreased significantly during the pandemic, particularly during the eviction moratorium (March–September 2020).

Figure 3 shows an overview of eviction filings by type, including a distinction between filings by landlords and tenants. For example, a landlord can file to evict for cause with an OPC filing, notifying the RTB that they “issued a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause.” Many filings end there, but some trigger a CNC filing by the tenant to “dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause.” As can be seen in Appendix A, the underlying eviction type may be the same (e.g. cause), but the dispute code distinguishes between who makes the filing.

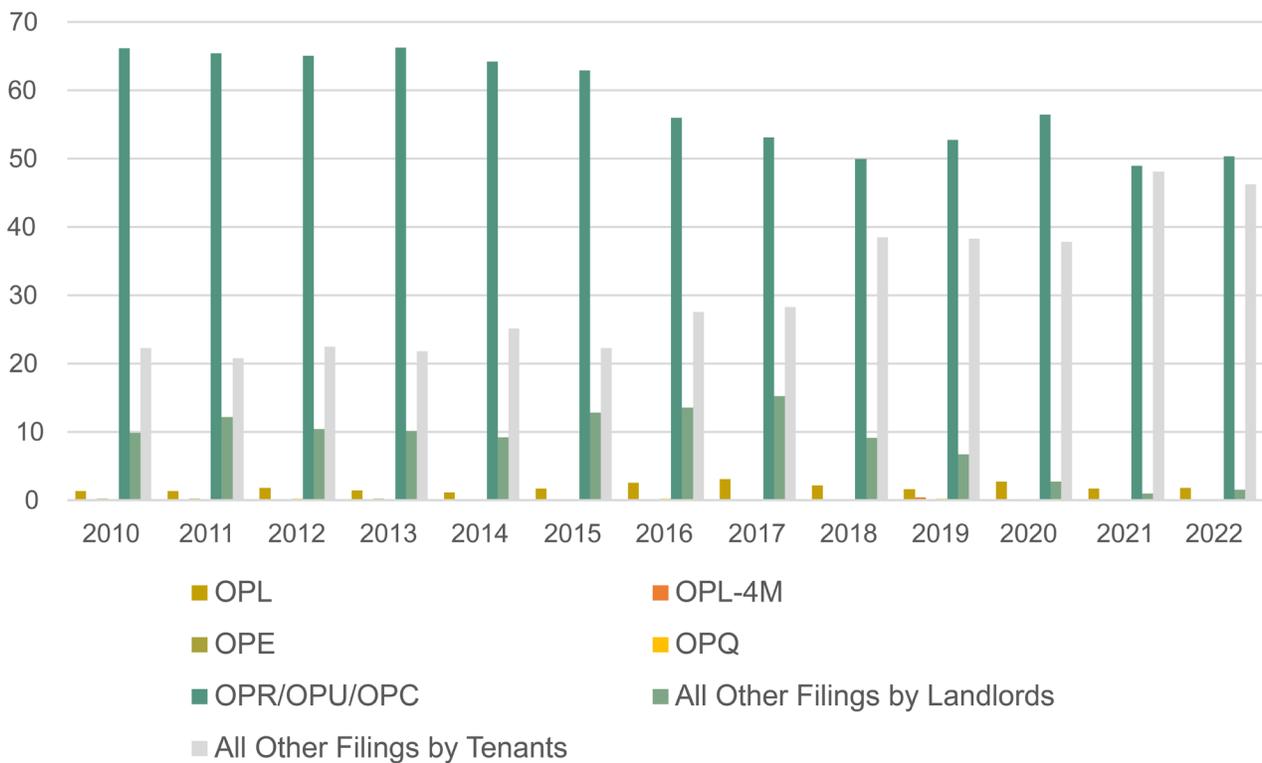


Figure 3: Filing types (%) 2010-2022 for Metro Vancouver



The distinction between landlord and tenant filings can be seen in Figure 4 where filings for unpaid rent, unpaid utilities and cause are explored. In this report, both initial eviction filings by landlords and disputes by tenants will be referred to as filings.

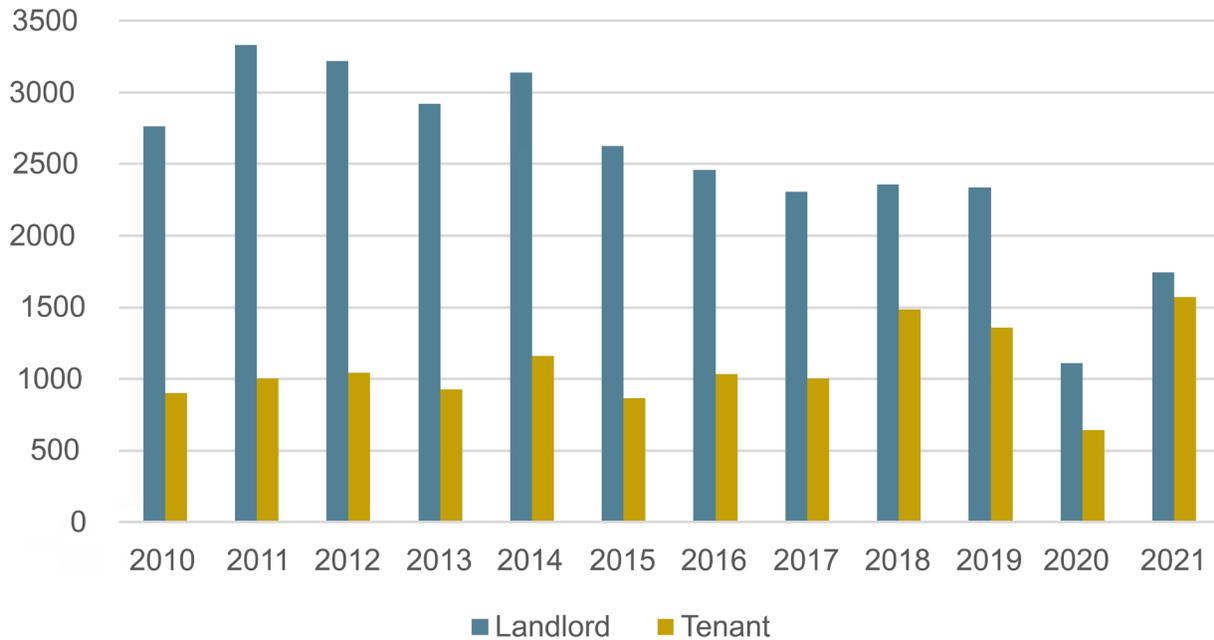


Figure 4: Number of filings (OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC) 2010-2021, by landlord and tenant for Metro Vancouver

In the data that we received there were 53,115 filings in Metro Vancouver recorded at the RTB between January 2010 and July 2022. This is an average of about 351 cases filed each month, and about 11 cases filed each day. The data showed that 88% of the complaints filed with the RTB related to evictions, as opposed to some other cause of action. Of filings related to evictions, 44,884 filings (96%) were related to unpaid rent, unpaid utilities or filed for cause.

**“Of filings related to evictions, 44,884 filings (96%) were related to unpaid rent, unpaid utilities or filed for cause.”**

Figure 5 illustrates eviction filings by landlord and tenant between 2010 to 2022. This analysis includes filings categorized by the selected dispute codes in the Methodology, along with the corresponding dispute codes for filings by tenants (see Appendix A). Between 2010 to 2019, the majority (71.6%) of eviction filings were made by landlords.

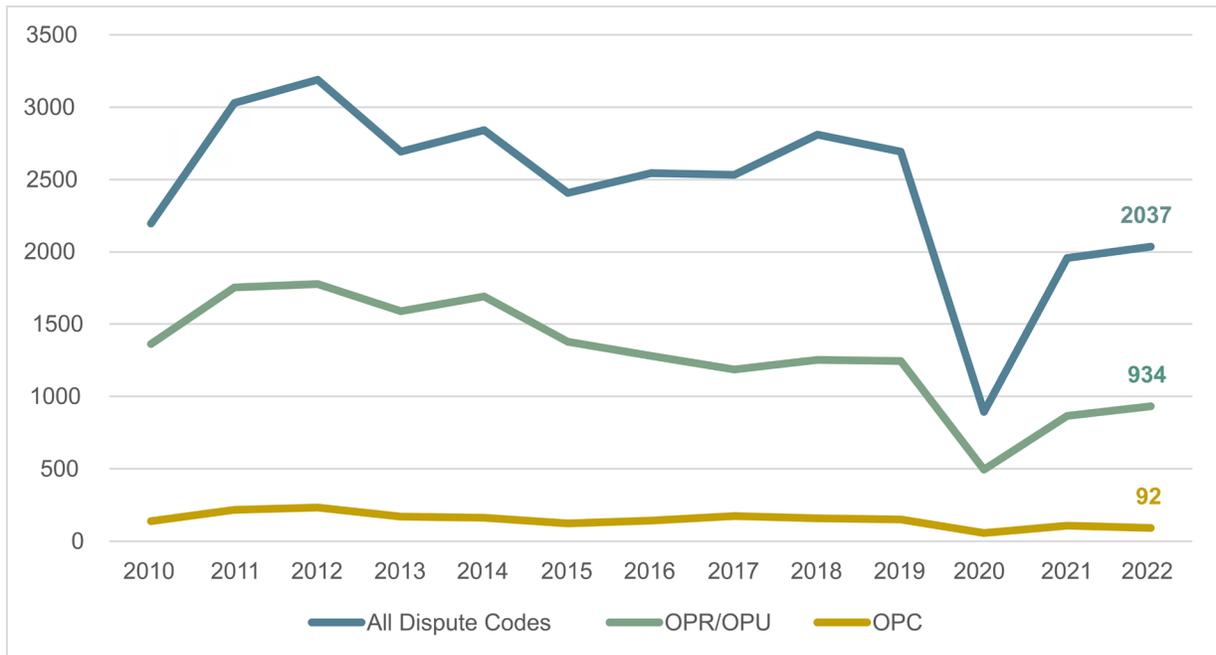
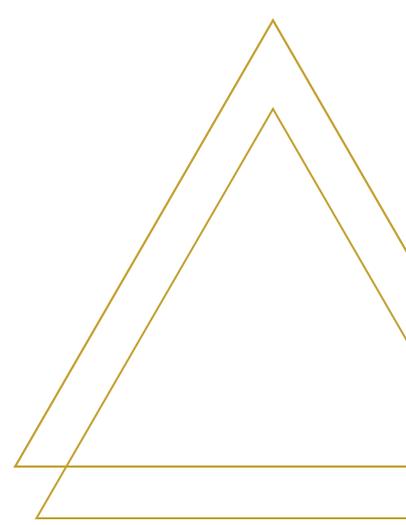


Figure 5: Total Number of filings vs. OPR/OPU/CNR and OPC/CNC, 2010-2021 for Metro Vancouver





The number of filings at the RTB dropped sharply in 2020, reaching its lowest level in July, as seen in Figure 6. This corresponds with the moratorium on eviction filings for unpaid rent or utilities between March and September 2020 and provincial guidelines that required landlords to provide tenants that were behind on rent with a repayment plan. A closer look at eviction filings between 2019 and 2022 on a monthly basis (Figure 6) shows that the eviction moratorium impacted filing for unpaid rent or cause (OPR/OPU/OPC) with the most dramatic decrease in filings occurring during the moratorium. One thing to note is that except for cases where it was considered “unreasonable to wait” the eviction moratorium did not allow for orders of possession to be enforced, but orders of possession could still be filed for by landlords. This likely explains why there continued to be filings to the RTB during the eviction moratorium.



Figure 6: Number of Disputes (OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC) 2019-2022, by month for Metro Vancouver

The number of filings by both landlords and tenants related to evictions for unpaid rent, utilities, or for cause, fell 53% between 2019 and 2020 and bounced back with an increase of about 77% between 2020 and 2021 to pre-pandemic levels. Looking closer, filings by landlords and tenants related to evictions issued for unpaid utilities or rent decreased 54% between 2019 and 2020 but rebounded with a 75% increase between 2020 and 2021, suggesting that the eviction moratorium only provided temporary protection to tenants from displacement, despite long-term shifts in the labour market and economy keeping many people financially vulnerable.

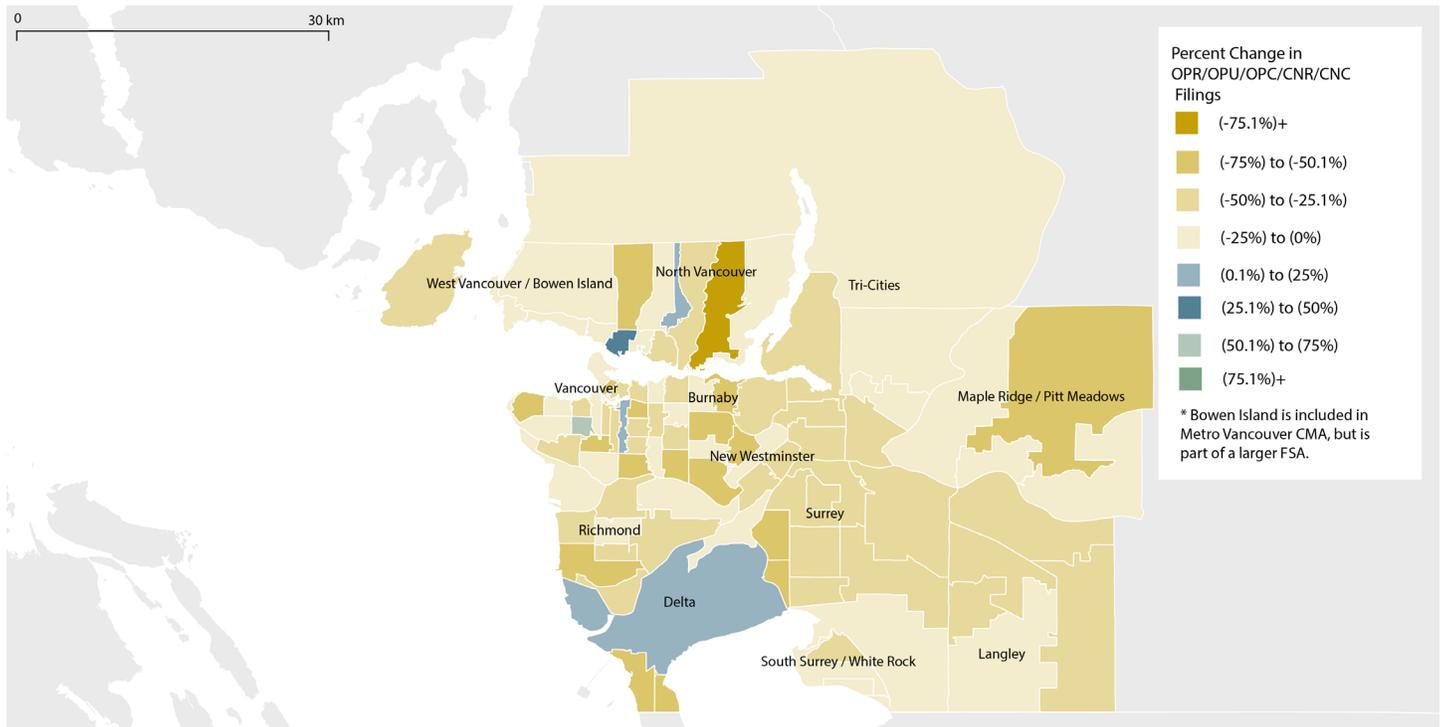


Figure 7: Percent Change in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC Disputes from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver

Spatial analysis of eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause demonstrate that not all areas of Metro Vancouver experienced the eviction moratorium in the same way (Figure 7). Overall, Metro Vancouver experienced a 35% decrease in eviction filings for unpaid rent between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. However, there were parts of the region, (Figure 7, highlighted in blue) that actually saw an increase in eviction filings. For example, the area between West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver along Marine Drive saw a 28% increase in eviction filings from 2018-2019 to 2020-2021.

**“The area between West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver along Marine Drive saw a 28% increase in eviction filings from 2018-2019 to 2020-2021.”**



## 2. The proportion of eviction filings that resulted in an eviction stayed relatively stable between 2019-2022, with the RTB favouring landlords over tenants in both ruling and response time

As discussed, the primary legal protections afforded to tenants in major Canadian cities were eviction moratoriums and rent freezes. The eviction moratorium in British Columbia was in place from March to September 2020 for non-payment of rent, with some limitations, as noted in Table 1; a rent freeze was in effect until December 31, 2021. Despite these measures, RTB data suggests that the proportion of eviction filings that resulted in an eviction remained relatively unchanged.

To explore overall trends we examined the decision outcomes for filings over unpaid rent, utilities or cause in Metro Vancouver since 2010:

- 32,285 of filings resulted in an eviction decision (71.9%)
- 10,722 of filings resulted in a no-eviction decision (23.9%)
- 1,877 of filings have an unclear decision or outcome (4.2%)

Looking more closely at decision outcomes for filings specifically related to unpaid rent or utilities in Metro Vancouver since 2010, the RTB ruled slightly more in favour of landlords when filings related to cause were not included:

- 25,769 of filings resulted in an eviction decision (75.1%)
- 7,217 of filings resulted in a no-eviction outcome (21.0%)
- 1,309 of filings have an unclear decision or outcome (3.8%)

For filings over cause in Metro Vancouver since 2010:

- 6,516 of filings resulted in an eviction decision (61.5%)
- 3,505 of filings resulted in a no-eviction decision (33.1%)
- 568 of filings have an unclear decision or outcome (5.4%)

As shown in this data, the majority of eviction filings end in an order of possession being granted to the landlord, but an order of possession granting an eviction was even more likely for filings related to only unpaid rent or utilities (which make up over half of total filings) where 75.1% of filings resulted in an eviction.

Ruling	OPC (%)	OPR (%)	OPU (%)	CNC (%)	CNR (%)	OPC/ CNC (%)	OPR/ OPU/ CNR (%)	All dispute codes	All dispute codes (%)
Eviction	60.1	74.2	53.6	62.2	80.2	61.5	75.1	36,563	69
No Eviction	34.5	22.6	43	32.3	13.2	33.1	21	13,895	26
Unclear	5.3	3.1	3.3	5.3	6.5	5.3	3.8	2,678	0

Table 4: Eviction filing and ruling outcomes (2010-2022)

When considering filings related to the broader category of unpaid rent or utilities, or for cause, the proportion that resulted in an eviction decreased from 71.5% in 2019, to 69.9% in 2020, and 69.6% in 2021, as seen in the graph below.

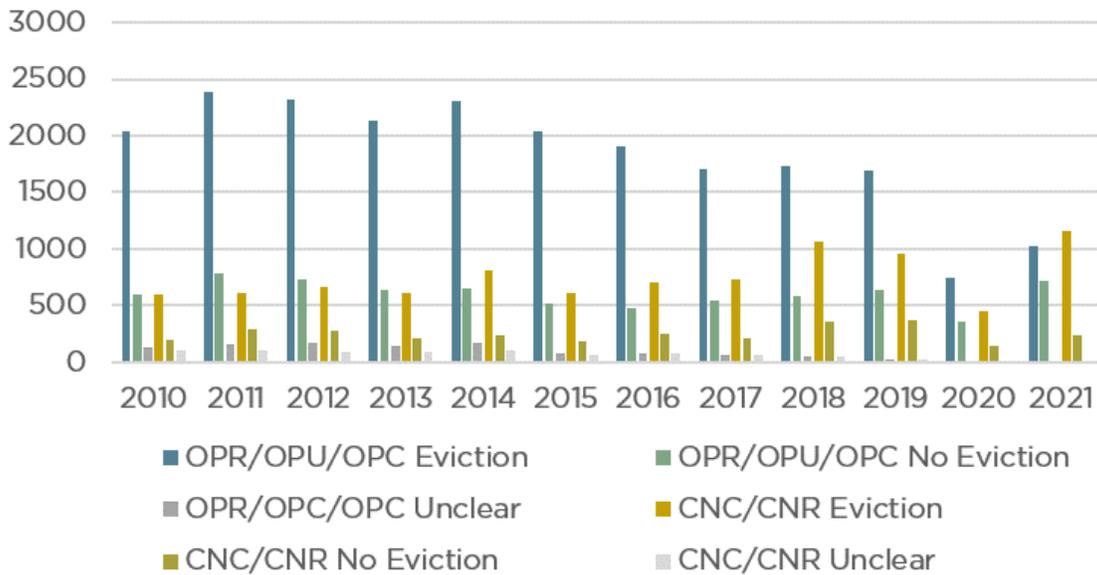


Figure 8: Number of Disputes OPR/OPU/OPC and CNC/CNR 2010-2022, by decision outcome for Metro Vancouver

Taking a closer look at monthly decision outcomes in 2020 and 2021 provides a clearer picture of trends. Figure 9 overleaf illustrates the percentage of disputes that resulted in an eviction for unpaid rent or utilities (OPR/OPU) and for cause (OPC). What this figure shows is that only eviction filings for cause seem to have been impacted by the evictions moratorium and this impact was limited to a short time frame between March and May 2020. Furthermore, despite legislated repayment plans, landlords were able to file for eviction throughout the pandemic for unpaid rent, and the RTB ruled in favour of the landlord and issued an eviction ruling in most cases.

**“In more than half of cases arbitrators continued to rule in favour of evicting tenants for unpaid rent or utilities (OPR/OPU) throughout the eviction moratorium, and into 2021.”**

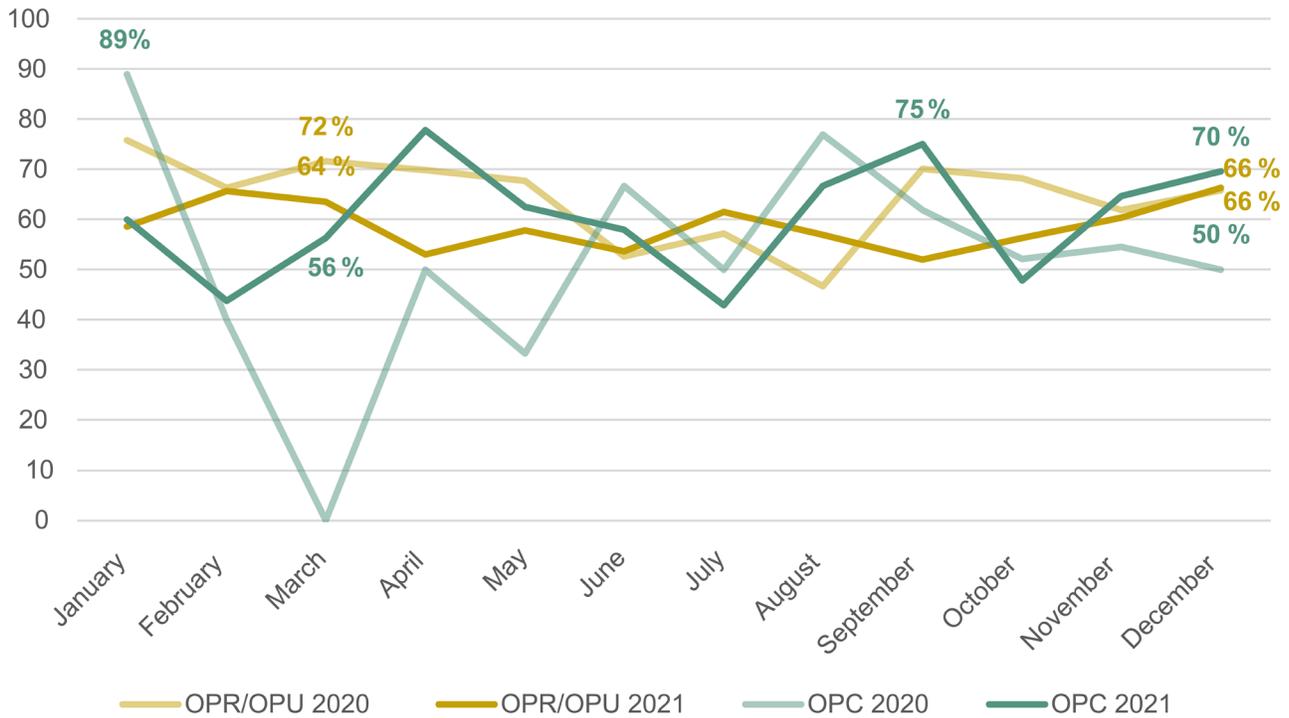


Figure 9: Percentage of OPR/OPU/OPC filings resulting in order of possession, 2020-2021 by month for Metro Vancouver

Figure 9 also shows the percentage of filings by landlords that resulted in an eviction for unpaid rent, unpaid utilities, and for cause. Evictions for cause seem to be most impacted at the start of the eviction moratorium, with a sharp decrease in rulings in favour of evictions for cause. The eviction moratorium seems to have had less of an impact on the decisions made by arbitrators in the case of notices to end tenancy for unpaid rent or utilities (OPR/OPU) (see the yellow lines in Figure 9 above). In more than half of cases arbitrators continued to rule in favour of evicting tenants for unpaid rent or utilities (OPR/OPU) throughout the eviction moratorium, and into 2021. The trends suggest that the RTB continued to rule in favour of landlords filing to end tenancy throughout the eviction moratorium, although an order of possession was not enforceable during the moratorium under Ministerial Order M089 (24).

In addition to impacting the number of evictions (if not the rate of eviction rulings), the pandemic also impacted the time between an eviction filing and the decision date. As shown in Figure 10 below, the average number of days for the RTB to issue a decision on a filing increased dramatically between 2020 and 2022 from approximately 40 days to 84 days. Notably, eviction filings by landlords issued for unpaid rent typically had the shortest period between filing date and decision date, peaking at 57 days in 2022. Filings by tenants had the highest number of days between filing and decision date in 2021 and 2022, with disputes for evictions for cause (CNC) increasing from 101 to 108 days, and disputes for evictions for unpaid rent or utilities (CNR) increasing from 96 to 100 days. In other words, landlords had to wait about half the time for the RTB to make a decision on their case, while tenants often had to wait for over three months for their application to be heard and a decision on their case made. It is notable that when the RTB rules against a tenant dispute, the eviction allows the landlord to repossess the home within just 48 hours, disincentivizing tenants from disputing filings for cause.

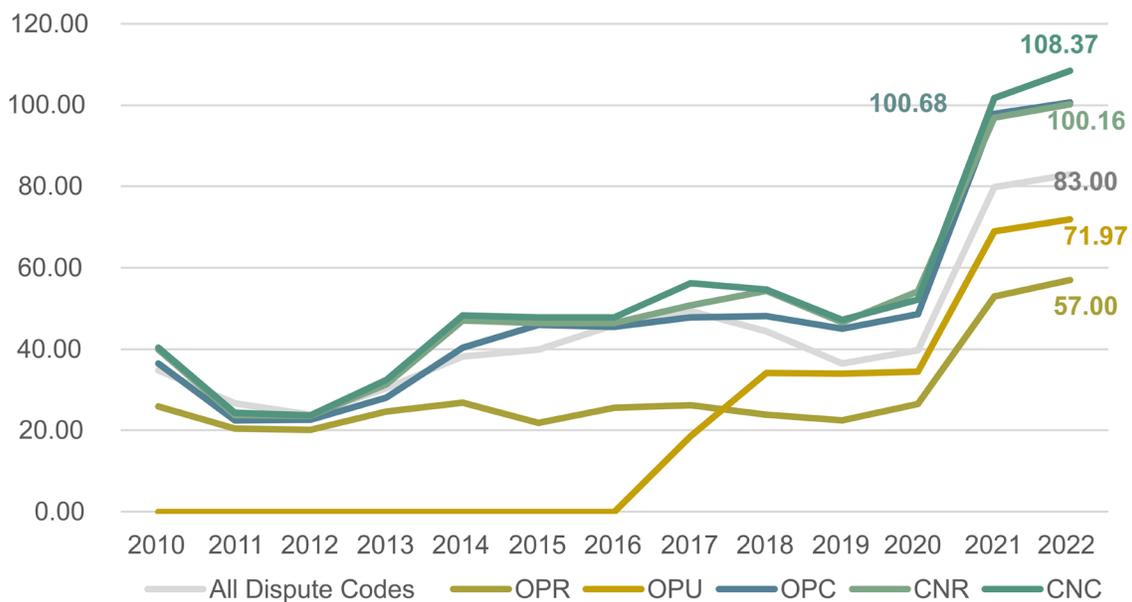


Figure 10: Average number of days from filing to decision date by dispute code, 2010-2022 for Metro Vancouver

Between March and the end of August 2020, 290 cases were filed by landlords to evict tenants based on unpaid rent (n=237), utilities (n=14) or for cause (n=39). Because case numbers were not part of the FOI filing data released by the RTB it is difficult to determine overlap between the case law review and filings data. Of the 282 cases from March 1, 2020 to March 30, 2021 that were reviewed it was clear that tenants continued to experience pandemic related hardship after the eviction moratorium was lifted.

An analysis of case law review further supports the finding that arbitrators were more likely to rule in favour of landlords, even during the eviction moratorium. Unlike in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories, BC tenant legislation does not explicitly allow adjudicators the discretion to consider alternatives to eviction. As the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights recently concluded, “This means that in some parts of Canada, but not others [e.g. British Columbia], adjudicators have the authority to avoid unnecessary evictions by considering reasonable alternatives” (33).



The following case provides examples of how this lack of discretion played out:

- In decision 6136, the landlord was granted an order of possession in June after the tenant failed to pay rent from March to June 2020. The arbitrator said that the tenant had no right to “deduct some or all of the rent” nor did the tenant “app[ly] to cancel the Notice” (34). In the analysis, the arbitrator added that “the email correspondence between the parties suggests that the tenant is simply taking advantage of the government’s moratorium on the enforcement of orders of possession.”

In contrast, arbitrators did seem to have some discretion in deciding when the moratorium on evictions could be lifted:

- In case 6196, the arbitrator stated that on June 24, 2020, the moratorium on “issuing notices to end tenancy due to the COVID-19 pandemic was lifted in many circumstances” (35).

While the prior cases point to the RTB placing limited weight on the risks that tenants would face if evicted during the pandemic, case 6619 points to the arbitrator taking the safety concerns related to Covid-19 raised by landlords and other tenants in the building much more seriously:

- In decision 6619, the landlord was granted an order of possession in May 2020 that was effective two days after service on the tenants, due to the tenants putting the “health and safety of the occupants at the residential property at risk, particularly given the covid-19 pandemic” (36). The decision only briefly mentioned the moratorium.

Arbitrators also strictly applied the rules for landlord-imposed repayment plans. In BC, there is little to no discretion for the RTB to delay evictions where the proper procedure for issuing an eviction notice has been followed by the landlord (33), and the limited discretion granted most often benefits the landlord. For example, a student whose classes were cancelled as a result of the pandemic attempted to cancel their lease. The arbitrator found that the unique circumstances caused by the pandemic were irrelevant. Thus, the student tenant broke the lease and was ordered to pay one month’s rent to the landlord (37).

While the eviction ban was meant to limit evictions during the pandemic, they continued nonetheless due to the limited discretion given to adjudicators under the Residential Tenancies Act. The evictions moratorium, meant to, i. prevent households from falling into homelessness as a result of pandemic-related income loss, ii. prevent the unnecessary displacement of people from their homes, where they could increase community exposures to Covid-19. While landlords filed significantly fewer evictions during the moratorium, the RTB approved evictions at roughly the same rate as pre-moratorium. In cases where Covid-19 was used as a reason for disputing the eviction, in some cases RTB arbitrators dismissed the pandemic as insufficient grounds to prevent the evictions.

The limited discretion given to adjudicators under the RTA meant that they could not consider unaffordability within the housing system or the alternatives to an eviction that could lead to homelessness and this lack of consideration of alternatives to evictions benefits landlords.

### 3. Areas in Metro Vancouver that had more eviction filings per renter household were also more impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic

The next section of this report looks at trends between eviction filings, Covid-19 and racialization in Metro Vancouver. Figure 11 looks specifically at the spatial overlap between eviction filings are areas with a higher proportion of Asian visible minority households. The key finding was that Surrey, New Westminister and the V7P FSA in North Vancouver experienced above average number of eviction filings per renter household, and also had an above average number of households in core housing need, above average number of households that identified as Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, Korean, and an above average percentage of the population that was receiving employment insurance (EI) and Covid-19 benefits. The above average clusters containing each of these variables, as seen in Figure 11.

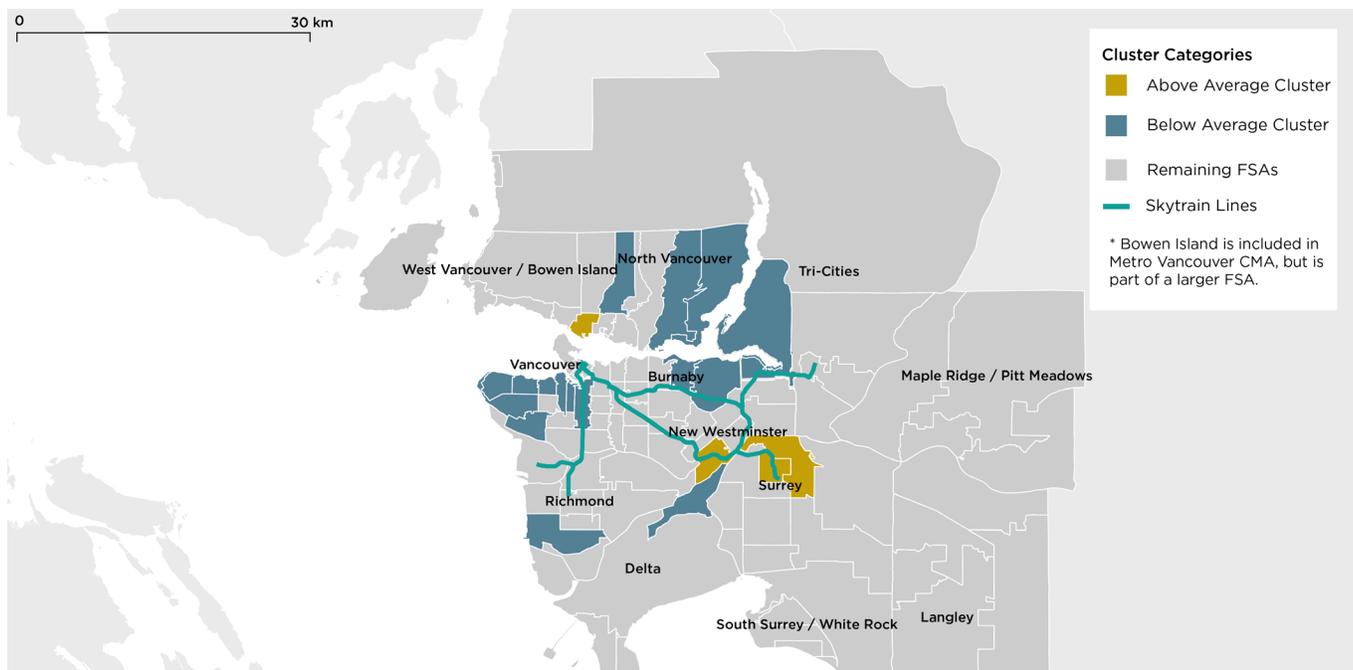


Figure 11: Cluster map based on selected variables related to evictions, housing need, Covid-19 benefits, and Asian visible minorities, 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver

These areas are somewhat diverse. The majority of housing in the V3M FSA in New Westminister and V3T FSA in Surrey are apartment buildings and the two areas have a similar population (47,927 and 45,514 respectively). On the other hand, the V3R FSA in Surrey has a mix of mid-rise apartment buildings and single detached homes that house a relatively large population (61,436) while the V7P FSA between North and West Vancouver has a mix of housing types and a comparatively smaller population (13,710). An overview of each region's characteristics are provided here.

As of 2021, the V3M FSA in New Westminister has a population of 47,927 residents, 47% renter households, an average household size of 2.2 persons, an average age of 41.6 and a median after-tax household income of \$71,000 (2020). This area is primarily characterized by apartment buildings, with 47% apartments under five storeys and 34% apartments above five storeys.



The V3R FSA in Surrey has a population of 61,436 in 2021, an average age of 40.1, about 35% renter households, an average household size of 2.9 persons, and a median after-tax household income of \$78,500 (2020). The area has 55% apartments under five storeys, followed by 27% single-detached dwellings.

The V3T FSA in Surrey has a population of 45,514 residents in 2021, an average age of 38.5, an average household size of 2.4 persons, about 52% renter households, and a median after-tax household income of \$66,000 (2020). This area is primarily made of apartment buildings, where 43% of dwellings are apartments under five storeys, and 37% of dwellings are apartments above five storeys.

The V7P FSA is between West and North Vancouver, composed of the areas of Pemberton Heights, Norgate and Capilano Indian Reserve No.5. As of 2021, this FSA has a population of 13,710 residents, an average age of 42.5, about 37% renter households, an average household size of 2.3 persons, and a median after-tax household income of \$72,000 (2020). This area has a similar proportion of apartments under five storeys, apartments above five storeys, and single-detached homes (31%, 29%, and 28% respectively).

The patterns that are seen in Figure 11 also show up when all visible minority groups are included (see Figure 12). When all visible minority categories are explored, the UBC Vancouver area is no longer classified as below average, and New Westminster and the North Vancouver area no longer classified as above average (see Figure 12 below). While the two FSAs in Surrey continue to show up as above average, there is also a third above average cluster that emerged in this analysis V7A in the Richmond / Delta area, which has a population of 26,533, about 28% renter households, an average age of 43.2, and an average household size of 2.9 persons. This area has a median after-tax household income of \$81,000 (2020) and 46% of dwellings are single-detached homes.

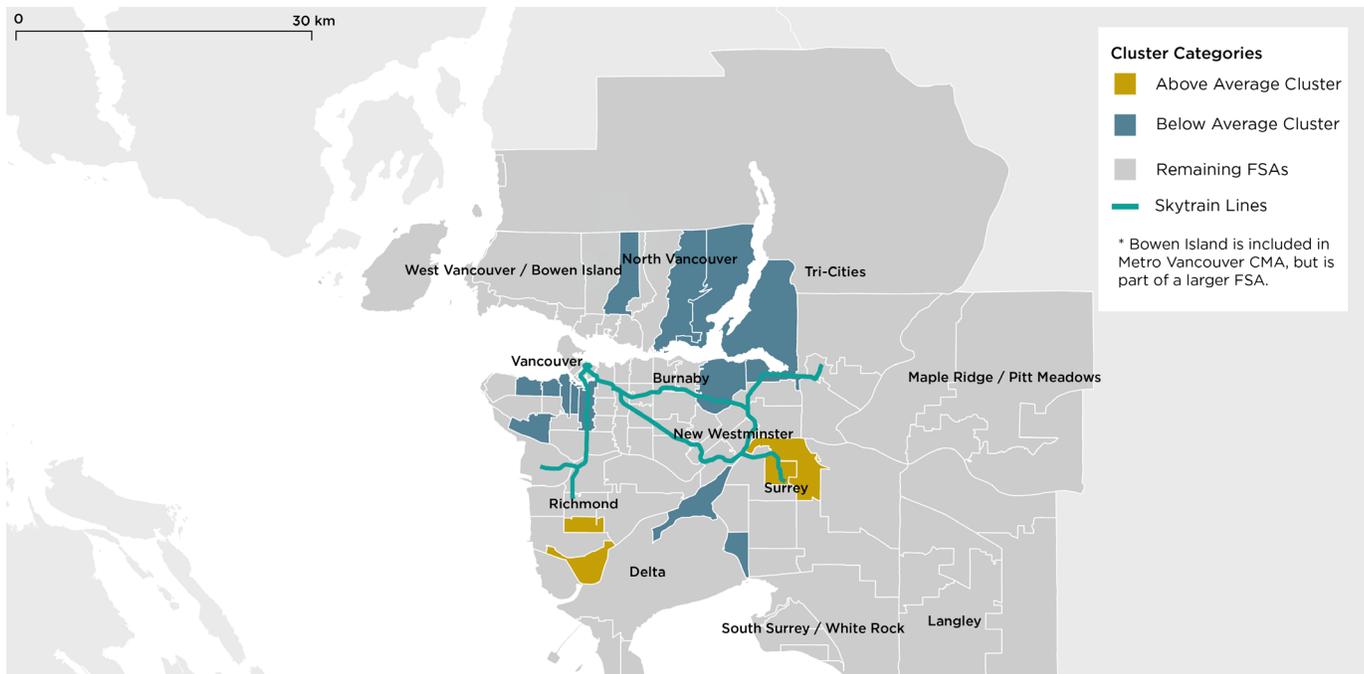


Figure 12: Cluster map based on selected variables related to evictions, housing need, Covid-19 benefits, and general visible minorities, 2020-2021 in Metro Vancouver

To further explore spatial patterns in eviction filings we also looked at data for Covid-19 cases from 2020-2022. This data was only available by LHA, which made analysis that included Covid-19 data limited to a larger geographic area compared to previous analyses. Using the approach described in the methodology section, Figures 13a-c show that the Surrey LHA had both the highest number of evictions per renter household (in green) from 2020 to June 2022, and the highest number of average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 residents in 2020 and 2021 (see the star in Figures 13a and 13b), and the second highest number of average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 residents from January to June 2022. The green in the maps provides an overview of the number of filings per renter households, and clearly shows the LHA that Surrey falls within at the epicenter of eviction filings.

In 2020, Surrey led Metro Vancouver in evictions with over six filings per 100 renter households, which then increased to almost 11 filings per 100 renter households in 2021, and fell again to six filings per 100 renter households between January and June 2022. Analysis of all filings resulting in an order of possession by LHA shows that Surrey emerges again, with nearly 4.5 eviction outcomes per 100 renter households in 2020, 7.4 in 2021, and 4.5 between January to June 2022. Burnaby, Langley, and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows also feature with over four eviction outcomes per 100 renter households in 2021, when considering all dispute codes.

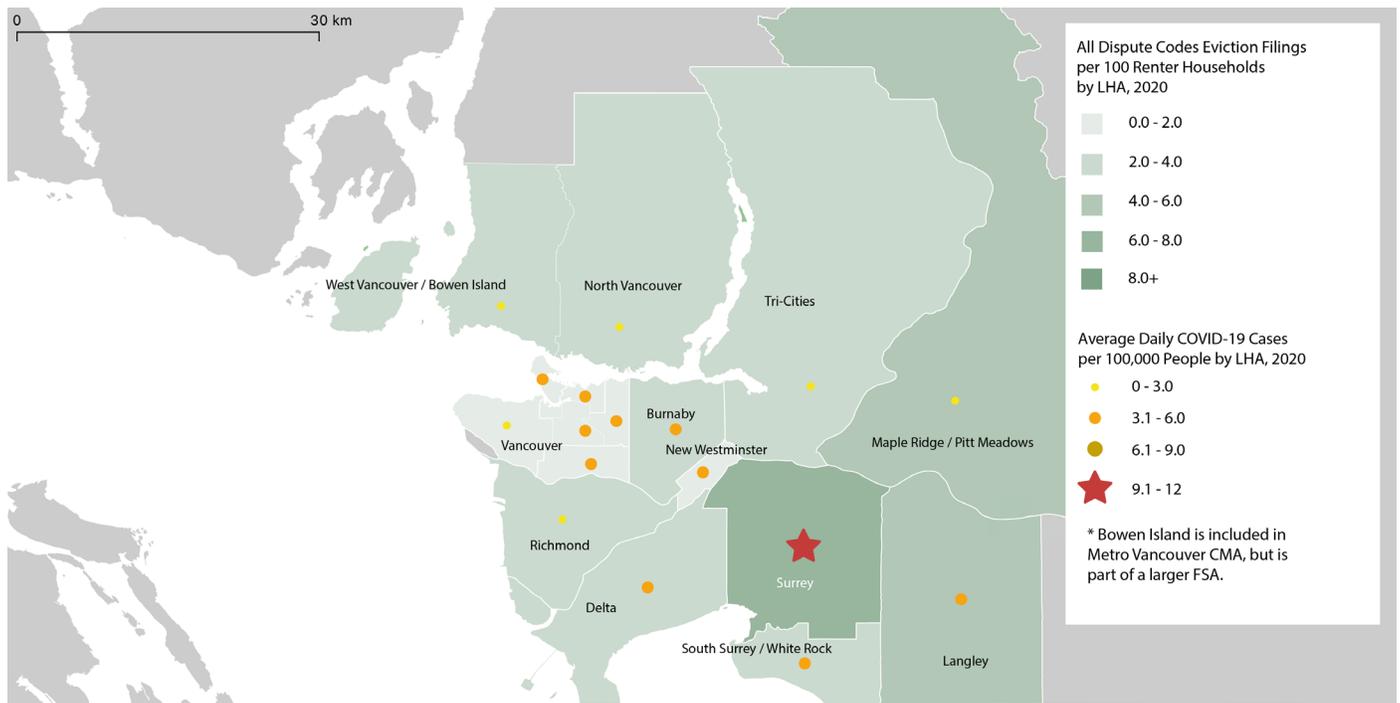


Figure 13a: 2020 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

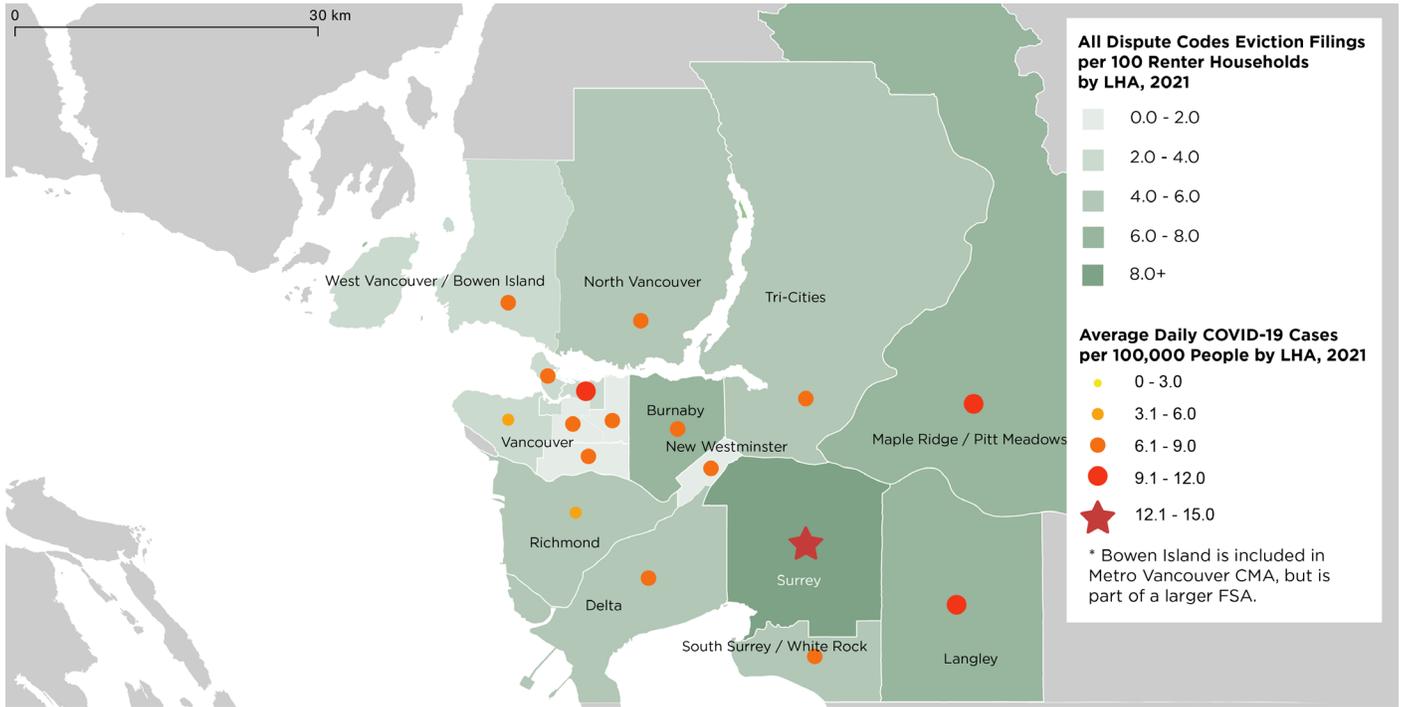


Figure 13b: 2021 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

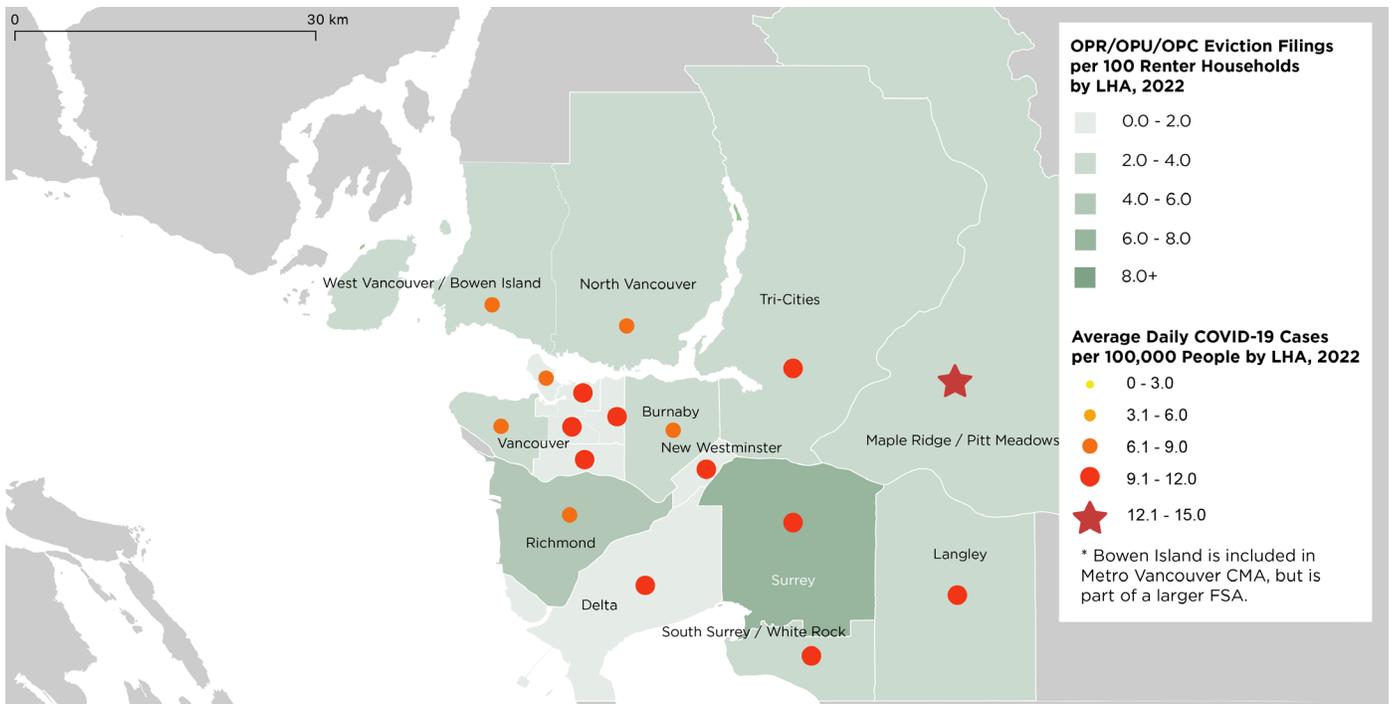


Figure 13c: January – June 2022 trends in all eviction filings per renter household and Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

Figures 14a-c provides a similar analysis with a focus on eviction filings from both landlords and tenants for unpaid rent or utilities (OPR/OPU/CNR) and for cause (OPC/CRC). One important trend to take note of is that when the eviction moratorium was lifted, there was an overall increase in the number of eviction filings per 100 renter households and also an increase in the average daily Covid-19 cases with Surrey again at the epicenter of both trends.

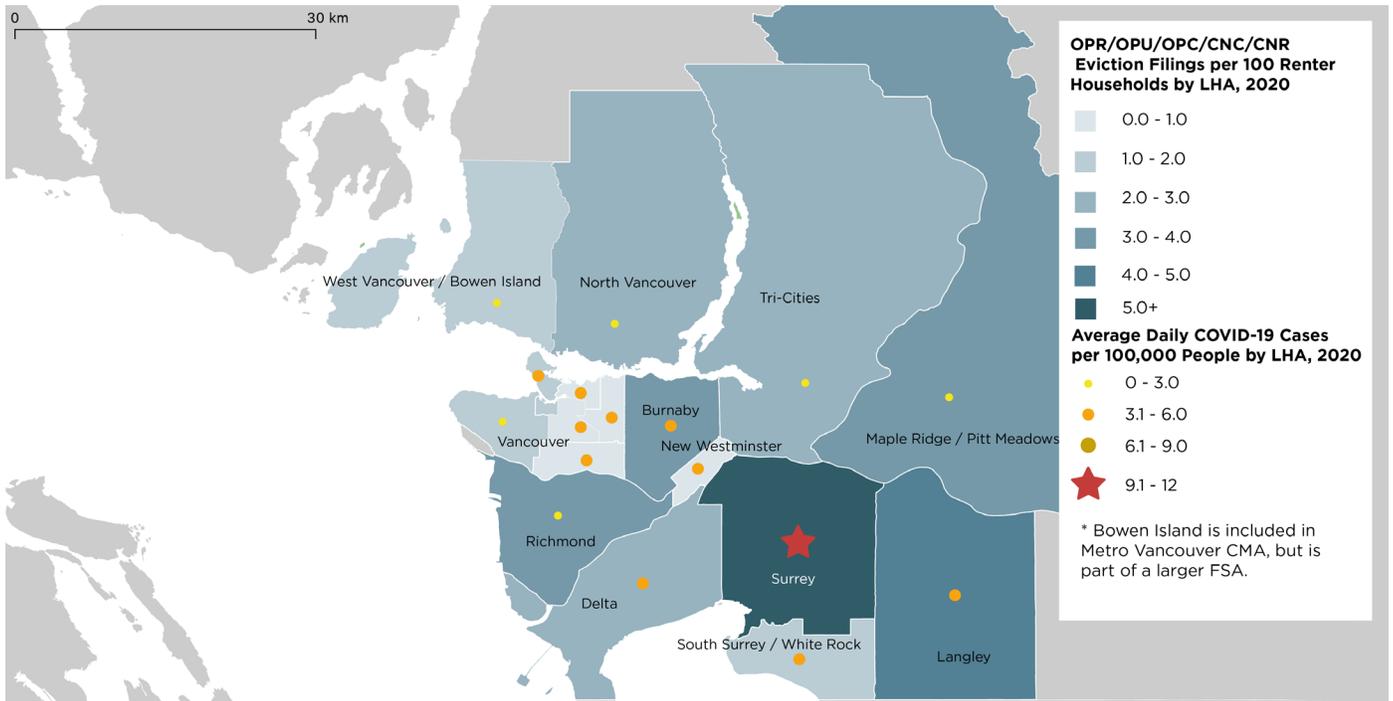


Figure 14a: 2020 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

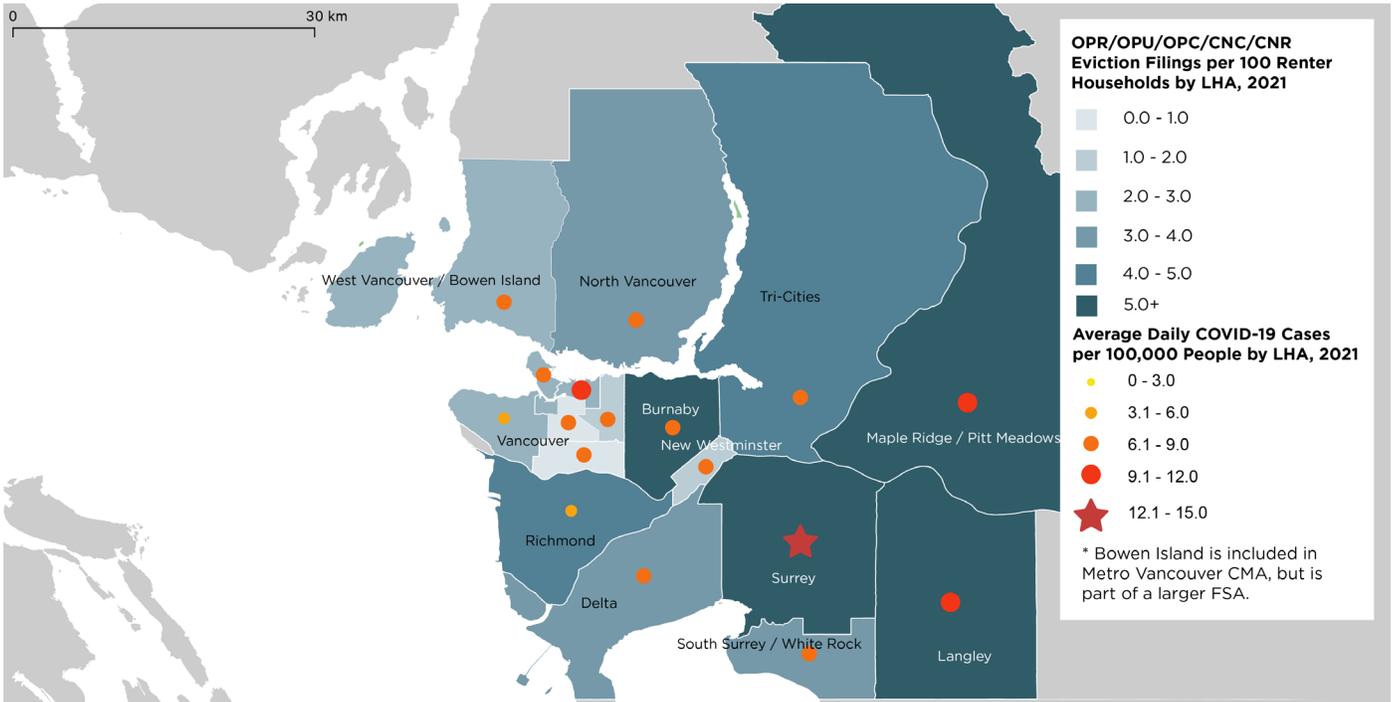


Figure 14b: 2021 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

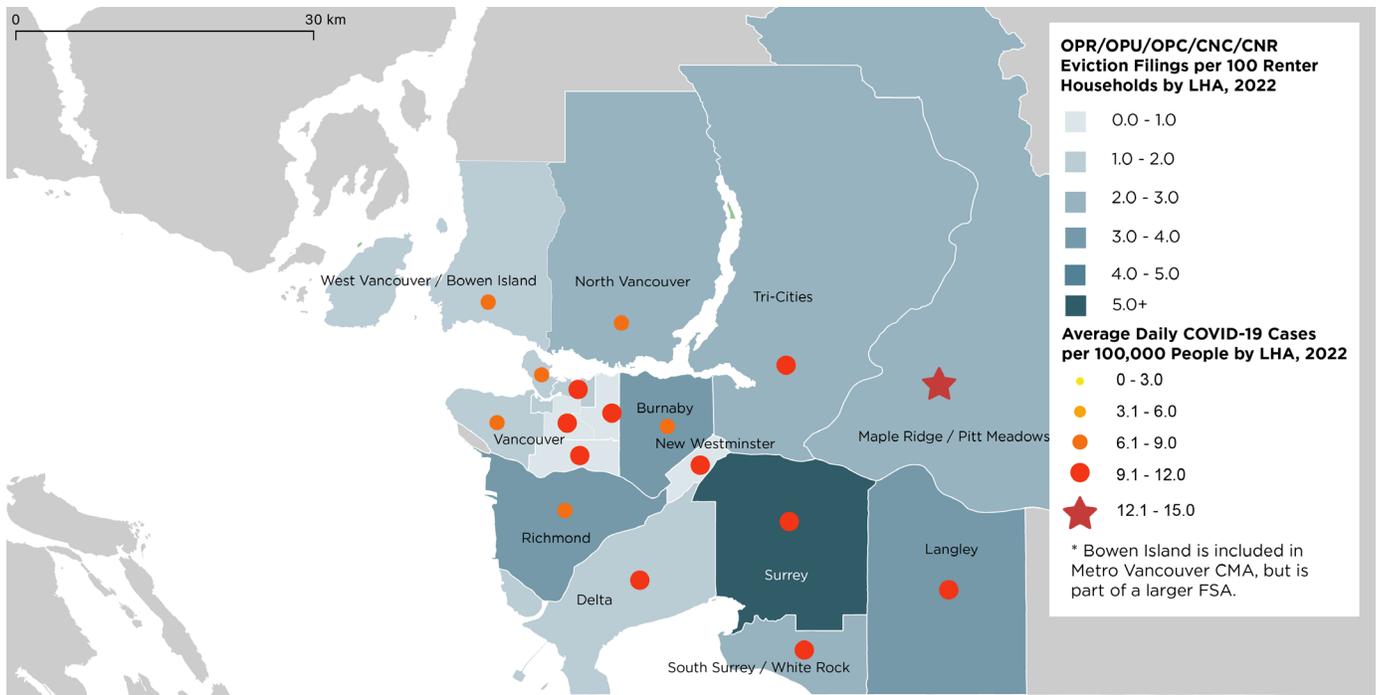


Figure 14c: January - June 2022 trends in OPR/OPU/OPC/CNR/CNC eviction filings per renter household and average daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people by LHA in Metro Vancouver

To recap, eviction filings were consistently higher in the LHA that includes Surrey, when compared to surrounding LHAs. There were 5.3 filings per 100 renter households in 2020 in the LHA that includes Surrey. This is followed by Langley with 4.4 filings per 100 renter households in 2020. In 2021, LHAs with over five eviction filings per 100 renter households expanded to Burnaby, Langley, and Maple Ridge/ Pitt Meadows with Surrey reaching nine filings per 100 renter households. From January to June 2022, Surrey was once again the highest, with five eviction filings per 100 renter households. Overall, analysis of eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause resulting in an eviction shows that Surrey consistently trended higher from 2020 to 2022, with four eviction outcomes per 100 renter households in 2020 and the first half of 2022, and six eviction outcomes per 100 renter households in 2021.

***“When the eviction moratorium was lifted, there was an overall increase in the number of eviction filings per 100 renter households and also an increase in the average daily Covid-19 cases.”***



## Limitations and Discussion

*Although the intended goals of this research project were straight-forward, gathering data proved to be quite difficult. We were disappointed by the lack of available data on eviction rates, informal evictions, and comprehensive Covid-19 data in the Metro Vancouver region. In some cases, data did not exist. To gain access to data on eviction filings through the RTB, our project required numerous FOI requests which, once obtained, had major gaps.*

A major limitation to this work is that only eviction filings that are disputed are tracked by the provincial government. All evictions under the RTA, except those for renovation, start with the landlord giving the tenant a notice to end tenancy (formal or informal). If the tenant does not dispute a formal notice to end tenancy, no further data is required by the RTA. There are many reasons that a tenant might not dispute a notice to end tenancy, including not understanding their rights to not wanting to pay the \$100 fee that is required to file a dispute. Furthermore, if the RTB rules against a tenant that has disputed a 10- or 30-day notice to end tenancy, a 48-hour order of possession is often issued to the landlord. Given Vancouver's low vacancy rates and competitive rental market (7) it is difficult to imagine anyone being able to secure a rental unit in such limited time. This is one of the reasons that First United has called on the Provincial Government to amend the RTA and end the practice of granting 48-hour orders of possession (38).

***“There is no way of determining whether an order of repossession results in an eviction nor is there a way to determine the percentage of evictions that resulted in homelessness.”***

Additionally, while we have information on the resolution to the eviction filing, we can only assume that a RTB ruling in favor of a landlord results in an eviction. In contrast, when an eviction filing is disputed, the outcome is documented and reflects the final decision that was reached through arbitration: in favour of a landlord leading to eviction, or in favour of the tenant staying an eviction. There is no way of determining whether an order of repossession results in an eviction nor is there a way to determine the percentage of evictions that resulted in homelessness, but the First United eviction survey found that 27% of BC tenants that responded to the survey had not found housing after experiencing an eviction (15). As a result, the findings here from formal eviction filings and tenant disputes may differ from the conclusions drawn in other reports, and likely dramatically undercount the number of tenants that experienced a forced move, as well as the impacts to the broader community impacts as a result.

The Federal Housing Advocate's recent "Observational Report on British Columbia" highlighted how existing methods of eviction data collection and reporting through the RTB are potentially undercounting the actual number of evicted tenants, and this challenge is only exacerbated by the limited avenues for tenants to dispute eviction outcomes, both individually or as a collective (39). Research from the United States estimates that for every formal eviction that is filed, 5.5 informal evictions take place (40). This estimate is very similar to British Columbia estimates using the 2021 Canadian Housing Survey (14).

Another gap in the data is likely the result of system changes in February 2020 at which time the RTB implemented a new dispute management system. During this time changes were made to how disputes were tracked, although the exact nature of these changes is unclear and there is no public record of it to our knowledge.

***“Without the ability to consider alternatives to eviction the RTB does not have the tools it needs to protect housing affordability and the right to housing.”***

The data also reflects changes that seem to have come into effect in July 2017 around the time of the provincial election. An announcement of changes to RTB processes was published on December 2017, reflecting an end to fixed tenancies and changes to rules concerning rent increases (41), however the decrease in filings proceeds the 2017 announcement.

Analysis for this report was also severely limited by the RTBs decision not to share property level data. Property or address level data provides important information on the property type and landlord, with which we would have been able to build an understanding of the role that different types of landlords (such as financialized landlords) play in driving evictions.

There are further limitations to this data based on the number of tenants that do not have rights under the Residential Tenancy Act. Numerous categories of residents are not protected by residential tenancy legislation: for example, roommate disputes are only governed by the common law around contracts (42). Those living in university housing are exempted from the BC's Residential Tenancy Act and housing is instead covered by the individual contracts that students sign with universities. Different universities may have different clauses and notice periods for evictions. As a result, students living on campus do not have recourse to administrative tribunals, however students living in private market housing are covered by the RTB. In addition, unhoused populations have no legal protection, other than very narrow grounds under common law (43).



Additionally, to our knowledge the demographic characteristics of households that are evicted are not captured when an eviction is filed. Without this information the RTB has no insight into whether racialized and other marginalized households are disproportionately impacted by evictions, and therefore cannot respond with policies to protect vulnerable tenants. While housing precarity is likely a predictor of at-fault evictions there continues to be a gap as administrative report data in the Canadian context does not include demographic characteristics.

This report points to trends in evictions that disproportionately impact racialized tenants. Not having specific data on who is impacted by evictions is a major gap that could potentially be contributing to bad-faith evictions and systemic inequities. For example, there is mounting evidence that Indigenous renters are disproportionately impacted by evictions (15,44).

Qualitative interviews with tenants who had experienced an eviction in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and New Brunswick found that Indigenous tenants were more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous tenants to have experienced a previous eviction (44). Of further concern, First United's eviction survey found that 45% of Indigenous renters in British Columbia who had experienced an eviction had not found a place to live after being evicted (15).

Finally, there were also limitations regarding Covid-19 data. Covid-19 data was not available by FSA in British Columbia, in contrast to RTB data on eviction filings, thereby impeding potential intersectional analysis linking Covid-19 case data with eviction filings or census demographic data. This data poverty is not the case everywhere, and the current decentralized systems for collecting Covid-19 data across Canada will continue to negatively impact future efforts towards equity and rights-based housing and health-related research at a national scale (45).

We urgently recommend that the Government of British Columbia improve data availability and access, especially related to tenancies, so that evidence-based policies can be developed to create a more just system. This call for improved disaggregated data availability and accessibility is echoed in the British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commission report advocating for disaggregated demographic data collection (46).

***"45% of Indigenous renters in British Columbia who had experienced an eviction had not found a place to live after being evicted."***

## Conclusion

*This report shows that the eviction moratorium resulted in a reduction in eviction cases. There is also evidence that income supports and tenancy protections made a difference for many tenants during the pandemic. This “filling of the gap” was important during a time of uncertainty and precarity. Even so, evictions did occur during the pandemic, in part because adjudicators did not have the legislative power to consider the hardship that would be caused to tenants impacted by an eviction. Following the moratorium in September 2020, evictions sharply increased again and as of June 2022 were on track to be at a similar level to before the pandemic. Without the ability to consider alternatives to eviction the RTB does not have the tools it needs to protect housing affordability and the right to housing.*

There are broader access to justice issues that need to be addressed including tenants right to a timely dispute hearing. Trends in the time to hearing outlined in Figure 10 suggest that the RTB processed filings from landlords much more quickly than disputes by tenants. Decreasing wait-times for tenants that dispute a notice to end tenancy is an important first step to reducing bad-faith evictions and reducing housing precarity.

There is also some evidence that government protections related to evictions could have gone further to help protect those hardest hits by the virus. Surrey was the hardest hit area in terms of Covid-19 and eviction rates. Our data also shows a relationship between income benefits, housing need, and evictions, with Surrey, New Westminster and the V7P FSA of North Vancouver impacted the most. It should be a cause for alarm that Surrey was also an area that saw a concentration of Covid-19 cases and eviction filings for unpaid rent, utilities or cause, suggesting that people fell through the cracks and were not adequately protected from displacement during the pandemic.

***“Decreasing wait-times for tenants that dispute a notice to end tenancy is an important first step to reducing bad-faith evictions and reducing housing precarity.”***



We acknowledge that BC changed its residential tenancy legislation in 2021 based on recommendations from the Rental Housing Task Force, adding further protections for tenants. Now, landlords must apply for tenants to vacate rental units prior to renovations, with a four-month notice period. New provisions also protect tenants living in manufactured homes. Nevertheless, there continues to be a lack of protections that place tenants at risk of homelessness and displacement including the limited time that tenants are often provided with to dispute a notice to end tenancy. Furthermore, if a tenant disputes a notice to end tenancy and the RTB rules in favour of the landlord and grants an order of possession, tenants may only have 48-hours to find housing which is not enough time to secure housing by any measure.

***“Strengthening the RTA by requiring all notices to end tenancy to first be filed with the RTB is another vital way to fill the gap of evictions data and protect affordability”***

In the throne speech on February 20, 2024 the Province of BC signaled that they would be working to reduce bad-faith evictions (47). Strengthening the RTA by requiring all notices to end tenancy to first be filed with the RTB is a vital way to fill the gap of evictions data and protect affordability. Protecting affordability is also a key goal of BC's Minister of Housing, Ravi Kahlon (48). Under this legislation only after an eviction is filed with the RTB would the landlord have the right to give the tenant a notice to end tenancy. This type of change to the Residential Tenancy Act is also a key piece of First United recent report “Everyone Needs a Home: Solutions to preventing homelessness, evictions, and displacement” (38). This report provides further evidence that many of the calls to action outlined in the First United report are long overdue. Requiring landlords to make an application to end the tenancy, prior to issuing a notice to end tenancy would provide all levels of government with greater insights into the prevalence and type of evictions taking place, and allow for responsive policies that protect affordability, and reduce homelessness and forced displacement. We urge the province to continue to strengthen protections for tenants, including introducing legislation that gives adjudicators more discretion to ensure that evictions are a last resort, reducing wait times, requiring a landlord to make an application before issuing a notice to end tenancy, and providing more transparent and accessible data on residential tenancies, including evictions. These changes are important steps to protecting affordability and the right to housing for all.

# Appendix A

## Disposition codes for filings by landlords:

Code	Issue
OPR- DR	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent that was not paid in the required time
OPU- DR	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Utilities that was not paid in the required time
OPR	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent that was not paid in the required time
OPU	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Utilities (and Rent) that was not paid in the required time
OPC	I issued a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause
OPE	I issued a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause of End of Employment
OPL	I issued a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Landlord's Use of Property
OPQ	I issued a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued because Tenant Does Not Qualify for Subsidized Rental Unit
OPL- 4M	I issued a Four Month Notice to End Tenancy for Demolition, Renovation, or Conversion to Another Use
OPLC	I issued a 12 Month Notice to End Tenancy for Conversion of Manufactured Home Park
OFL	I want an Order of Possession because the rental unit appears uninhabitable due to events out of my control and the tenancy agreement is frustrated
OPR- DR-PP	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent (with repayment plan) that was not paid in the required time
OPU- DR-PP	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent or Utilities (with repayment plan) that was not paid in the required time
OPR- PP	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent (with repayment plan) that was not paid in the required time
OPU- PP	I issued a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent or Utilities (with repayment plan) that was not paid in the required time
PFR	I am seeking possession of this rental unit for renovations
CNE- MT	I want to dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for End of Employment and need more time to dispute this notice



### Disposition codes for filings by tenants:

Code	Issue
CNR	I want to dispute a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Unpaid Rent or Utilities
CNR- MT	I want to dispute a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Unpaid Rent or Utilities and need more time to dispute this notice
CNC	I want to dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause
CNC- MT	I want to dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Cause and need more time to dispute this notice
CNE	I want to dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for End of Employment
CNE- MT	I want to dispute a One Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for End of Employment and need more time to dispute this notice
CNL	I want to dispute a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Landlord's Use of Property
CNL- MT	I want to dispute a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Issued for Landlord's Use of Property and need more time to dispute this notice
CNQ	I want to dispute a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Because Tenant Does Not Qualify for Subsidized Rental Unit
CNQ- MT	I want to dispute a Two Month Notice to End Tenancy Because Tenant Does Not Qualify for Subsidized Rental Unit and need more time to dispute this notice
CNL- 4M	I want to dispute a Four Month Notice to End Tenancy for Demolition, Renovation, or Conversion to Another Use
CNL- 4M- MT	I want to dispute a Four Month Notice to End Tenancy for Demolition, Renovation, or Conversion to Another Use and need more time to dispute this notice

# Appendix B

## Comparison of Local Health Area (LHA) Boundaries and Forward Sortation Area (FSA) Boundaries for Metro Vancouver:

LHAs	FSAs within particular LHA
Burnaby	V3N, V5A, V5B, V5C, V5E, V5G, V5H, V5J
Delta	V4C, V4E, V4G, V4K, V4L, V4M
Langley	V1M, V2Y, V2Z, V3A, V4W
Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows	V2W, V2X, V3Y, V4R
New Westminster	V3L, V3M
North Vancouver	V7G, V7H, V7J, V7K, V7L, V7M, V7N, V7R
Richmond	V6V, V6W, V6X, V6Y, V7A, V7B, V7C, V7E
South Surrey / White Rock	V4A, V4B, V4P
Surrey	V3R, V3S, V3T, V3V, V3W, V3X, V4N
Tri-Cities	V3B, V3C, V3E, V3H, V3K
Vancouver – Centre North	V5L, V6A
Vancouver – City Centre	V6E, V6G, V6Z
Vancouver – Midtown	V5T
Vancouver – Northeast	V5K, V5M
Vancouver – South	V5X, V5S
Vancouver - Westside	V6K, V6L, V6N, V6R, V6S, V6T
West Vancouver – Bowen Island	V7S, V7T, V7V
FSAs overlapping multiple LHAs, excluded from analysis	V0N, V3J, V3Z, V5H, V5J, V5P, V5R, V5N, V5V, V5W, V5Y, V5Z, V6B, V6C, V6E, V6H, V6J, V6M, V6P, V7P, V7W

**Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Cluster Analysis of Variables:**

	Percent Renter Households, 2021	Percent Population Received EI Benefits, 2020	Percent Population Received Covid-19 Benefits, 2020	OPC/OPR/ OPU/ CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per Renter Household, 2020	OPC/OPR/ OPU/ CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per Renter Household, 2021	OPC/OPR/ OPU/ CNR/CNC Eviction Outcomes per Renter Household, 2020	OPC/OPR/ OPU/ CNR/CNC Eviction Outcomes per Renter Household, 2021	Percent Tenant Households in Core Housing Need, 2021	Percent Population Non-Economic Immigrant, 2021	Percent non-visible minority population, 2021	Proportion of Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, Filipino, Korean population from total, 2021
Percent Renter Households, 2021	1.00										
Percent Population Received EI Benefits, 2020	0.30	1.00									
Percent Population Received Covid-19 Benefits, 2020	0.46	0.79	1.00								
OPC/OPR/OPU/CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per Renter Household, 2020	-0.36	0.14	0.01	1.00							
OPC/OPR/OPU/CNR/CNC Eviction Filings per Renter Household, 2021	-0.26	0.28	0.16	0.78	1.00						
OPC/OPR/OPU/CNR/CNC Eviction Outcomes per Renter Household, 2020	-0.32	0.13	0.04	0.95	0.75	1.00					
OPC/OPR/OPU/CNR/CNC Eviction Outcomes per Renter Household, 2021	-0.21	0.29	0.19	0.74	0.96	0.71	1.00				
Percent Tenant Households in Core Housing Need, 2021	0.13	0.29	0.21	0.24	0.34	0.22	0.31	1.00			
Percent Population Non-Economic Immigrant, 2021	-0.14	0.67	0.47	0.34	0.42	-0.29	0.44	0.18	1.00		
Percent non-visible minority population, 2021	-0.19	-0.36	-0.65	0.06	-0.03	-0.01	-0.04	-0.16	-0.16	1.00	
Proportion of Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, Filipino, Korean population from total, 2021	0.02	0.46	0.61	0.22	0.30	0.27	0.29	0.19	0.50	-0.65	1.00



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