



Social Determinants of Health Fact Sheet:

Quadra Island

The Strathcona Community Health Network is pleased to share these community health profiles. We have developed a community health profile for each of the eight communities within our region.

Community health profiles were developed for two purposes: 1) to support the ongoing work of the Strathcona Community Health Network, and 2) to build capacity within the Strathcona region.

1. The Strathcona Community Health Network (SCHN) has articulated our approach to work, which includes a commitment to being evidence-informed by balancing the best available data with local knowledge in collaborative decisions. These community health profiles, then, have created an opportunity to define and collect or generate local data to support decision making and future action by the SCHN.
2. Perhaps more importantly, the SCHN's approach also involves community capacity building. Per our Strategic Plan, we "encourage a capacity building approach so the community is strengthened and partners grow and improve their knowledge, skills and infrastructure through engaging with the network."

Community health profiles can be used to build community capacity in many ways, including the following:

- Use the information within to support planning and decision-making processes.
- Utilize this report as evidence when applying for grant funding and/or providing evaluation information to funders.
- Employ the information within when advocating for policy changes at all levels of government.
- Connect with the individuals, organizations, and coalitions within your community that are working towards greater outcomes. If you'd like more information about these groups, please contact us.
- Initiate conversations with your neighbours, family, friends, and colleagues about the information that stood out to you. Can you take any small or grassroots actions in support of increased community health?
- Let us know if the SCHN should be aware of any initiatives happening in your community related to the social determinants of health. Our contact information is on the final page.



Community Context

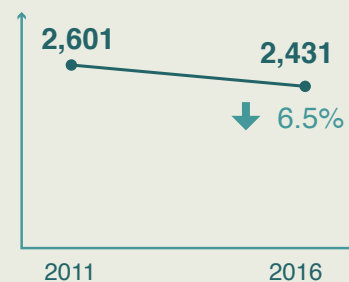
Like many west coast communities, Quadra Island was inhabited by Indigenous peoples prior to colonization. Salish people lived in the area until the Laichwiltach people expanded their territory, likely in the late 18th century. Pre-contact and colonization, most Indigenous settlement was at Cape Mudge, which has been restored and is now the home of We Wai Kai First Nation reserves and the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre.¹ Today, **4.4%** of the population of Quadra Island is Indigenous.²

The population of Strathcona Electoral Area C, of which Quadra Island is the largest community, is **2,431**, and has decreased by **6.5%** since 2011 when the population was **2,601**. The largest age cohort in Area C is the population aged 15-64 years old. They comprise **61.1%** of the population. The remainder of the population is comprised of seniors (**28.6%**) and children 14 years old and younger (**10.5%**). The median age of the population is **56.3** years, considerably higher than the provincial median of **43.0**.² The median age of the population increased by **4.8** years between 2011 and 2016, which is significant in comparison to the increase of **1.1** years across the province. The population increases in the summer, as Quadra Island sees nearly **100,000** tourist visits. Of these, about half stay in lodging on the island while the other half are day-trippers.³

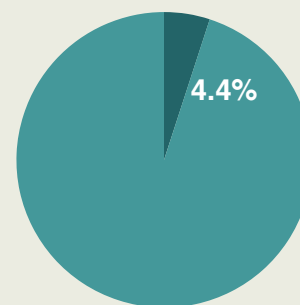
Area C's population has been relatively stable for the last decade. As some residents leave the community, others join. Between 2011 and 2016, **470** people moved to Area C – most from within British Columbia, but nearly a dozen each from outside of the province and outside of the country.²

Like neighbouring communities, Quadra Island fits into multiple service delivery areas. It is a member of the Strathcona Regional District's Area C, part of School District 72, in Local Health Area 72 (Campbell River), and in the larger North Vancouver Island Health Services Delivery Area.

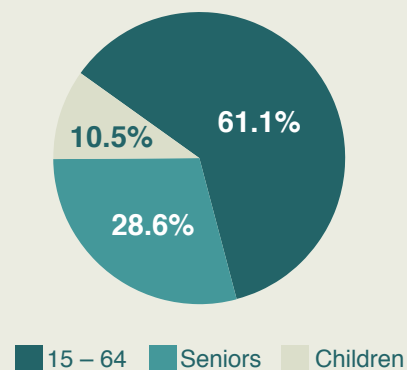
Population 2011-2016



Indigenous Population



Quadra Island Age Cohorts





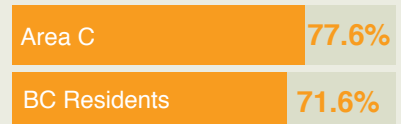
General Well-being

As members of the North Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area, residents of Area C report a high rate of community belonging: **77.6%** of residents report a somewhat strong or strong sense of community belonging, compared to **71.6%** of BC residents. Volunteerism is a strong community value, given that resources available in larger communities aren't often present on Quadra. For example, Quadra's Emergency Social Services program has over 100 volunteers, significantly more than larger urban areas.

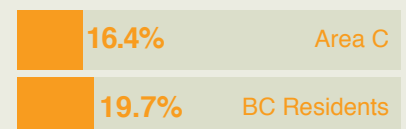
Area C residents report lower perceptions of life stress than provincial residents (**16.4%** report that most days in their lives are quite a bit or extremely stressful, compared to **19.7%** provincially).⁴

In Local Health Area 72, which includes Quadra Island, **13.5** litres of absolute alcohol are sold per person. This is considerably higher than the Island Health average of **10.9** and the provincial average of **9.0**. Given that one litre of absolute alcohol is equivalent to 58 standard drinks, residents of LHA 72 are consuming **783** alcoholic beverages annually, on average.⁵

Community Belonging



Life Stress



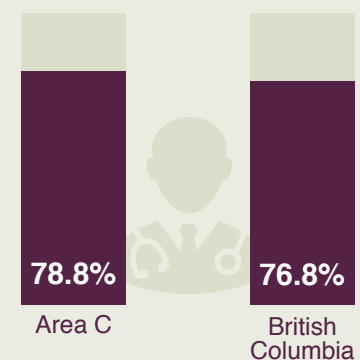
Health Care

Another measure in which residents of Island Health Region 72 (Campbell River) compare positively to their provincial counterparts is in physician attachment. In LHA 72, which includes Area C, **78.8%** of residents are patients of a physical or other primary health care provider (nurse practitioner, community health nurse, etc.). In BC, **76.8%** of residents are attached to a primary care provider.⁵

Quadra Island residents receive most of their health services from one of the two medical practices on the island. Combined, the practices offer four family doctors' and a nurse practitioner. Island residents can access regular medical care Monday-Saturday. There is a health outreach practice on Read Island, which is also part of Area C. The North Island Hospital (Campbell River & District) is the closest hospital for Area C residents.

Note: At the time this profile was prepared, the future of the Quadra Island Medical Clinic was unclear, given the departure of a doctor in summer 2018, the retirement of another in November 2018. The community quickly mobilized to form the Quadra Island Health Society, which obtained interim funding from the Ministry of Health for a locum physician position for 14 months. The new Society will administer the QI Medical Clinic in order to maintain the services of the Nurse Practitioner, twice weekly lab service, telehealth and mental health services used by patients from both medical clinics and outer islands, to recruit a permanent family physician, and to apply for funding to become a community-based integrated care clinic.

Physician Attachment





Children and Youth

Time and time again, research emphasizes that investing in the health and well-being of children and youth has positive health, economic, and community impacts for decades to come. One of the most important measures of young children's health is the Early Development Instrument, which examines a child's experiences in the first five years of life via 5 scales (Physical Health & Well-Being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge). In School District 72, which includes Area C, **28%** of Kindergarten children are deemed vulnerable, meaning that without additional support, these children may experience future challenges in school and society. Provincially, the vulnerability rate is **32.2%**.⁶

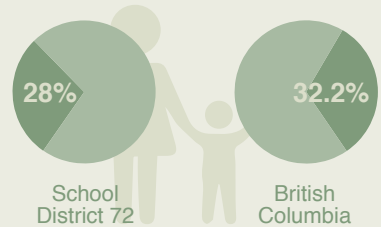
Another measure of support for early childhood development is the number of childcare spaces available. On Quadra Island, there are **59** licensed childcare spaces spanning infant/toddler, preschool, and after-school care. The We Wai Kai Nursery and Daycare has **19** spaces, and the Quadra Children's Centre has **40**.⁷

As children get older, there are a number of institutions to support healthy development, including a swimming pool, a community centre, parks and playgrounds, beaches, a library, and many organized sport, recreation, and arts and culture opportunities.

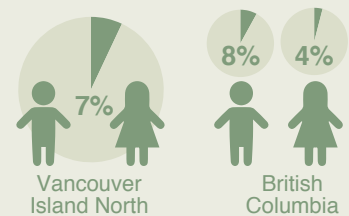
The youth obesity rate for Vancouver Island North, which includes Area C, is **7%** for both males and females. Provincially, it is **8%** for males and **4%** for females.⁸

The McCreary Adolescent Health Survey reports on youth experience with alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco. In Vancouver Island North, which includes Area C, **52%** of youth have tried alcohol, compared to **45%** provincially. Similarly, **37%** of Vancouver Island North youth have tried marijuana, compared to **26%** provincially. Tobacco sees a similar trend, with **29%** of Vancouver Island North youth trying tobacco, compared to **21%** of youth provincially.⁸

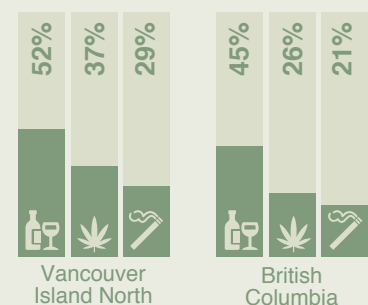
Child Vulnerability Rate



Youth Obesity Rate



Youth Experience with Alcohol, Marijuana & Tobacco



Food Security

The World Health Organization (WHO) includes food security in its list of social determinants of health and defines household food security as “appropriate food being available, with adequate access and being affordable (location of markets, supermarkets, and closure of small suppliers creating food deserts in cities).” WHO stresses the importance of food security particularly in small and remote communities.⁹

There are **3** grocery stores and one health-food store on Quadra Island.¹⁰ Those on Quadra Island who require assistance accessing food may turn to the Quadra Food Bank, community lunches by donation at the Quadra Recreation Centre Community Kitchen, or the Cape Mudge Elder's Lunch.¹¹ The Old Farm Community Garden offers plots of different sizes to local growers.

The Provincial Health Services Authority's "Food Costing in BC" report for 2017 reports on the cost of sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods across the province. For the North Island Health Services Delivery Area, the monthly cost of healthy food is **\$1,036** (compare this to the provincial average of **\$1,019**).¹² However, the cost can be greater for communities like Quadra Island, because food may be more expensive in local grocery stores, or because local stores may carry limited stock and a trip to Campbell River may be necessary. Fares for a vehicle and passenger to ferry from Quadra Island to Campbell River are **\$29.55**.¹³



Transportation

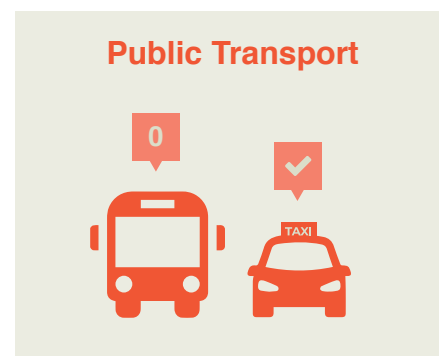
Being able to get from one place to another is essential for everyone, but particularly for members of rural and remote communities. In Area C, having access to a vehicle is necessary to purchase food and household goods, access health and social services, access employment, and travel to Vancouver Island.

There is no public transportation in Area C. No bus routes exist. There is a taxi service on Quadra Island. Aside from owning a vehicle, taxiing, or utilizing active transportation, there are posts advertising "Car Stops" on the island where a person could stand and wait for a driver to stop and pick the person up.¹⁴

Travel by boat is a necessity for Area C residents. BC Ferries operates two ferries on Quadra Island: one from Campbell River to Quathiaski Cove, and another from Heriot Bay to Cortes Island. Water taxi is also an option, and two privately owned companies in Campbell River serve Quadra, Read, and other islands.

There are no official active transportation routes in Area C, but Quadra Island residents report that many locals ride their bikes to commute to work, run errands, and for leisure.¹⁵ The relatively quiet roads may be safe to bike without bike lanes. For recreation, there are many hiking and mountain biking trails on Quadra Island.¹⁶

When asked about how employed residents get to work, **62.8%** reported that they drive. Another **11.0%** reported walking to work, **7.4%** reported biking, and **18.8%** utilized another method, including carpooling, other active transportation, or public transit.² **34.3%** of employed residents commute at least 30 minutes to work, or 60+ minutes roundtrip. Given that **36.6%** of employed residents commute off-island for work, long commutes likely contain a ferry ride.² The need to own a vehicle for accessing basic needs likely accounts for the **76%** of residents that have a driver's license.¹⁷



Housing

Access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing is essential in ensuring the health of a community's residents. Inadequate housing affects physical health – housing that is mouldy, dirty, or in need of major repairs may put a resident at risk of developing one-time or chronic illnesses. Housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or otherwise unsuitable contributes to increased stress and/or decreased quality of life.

Housing costs in Area C are amongst the highest within the Strathcona Regional District. The median value of a home is **\$349,451**. The median monthly cost of home ownership is **\$408**. Median monthly cost is the total cost for a mortgage, property taxes, and the cost of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services.² Only **16.9%** of owner households in Area C spend **30%** or more of their income on housing. Though renter households only comprise **22.6%** of total households in Area C, median monthly shelter cost are **\$702** and **39.6%** of renters spend 30% or more of their income on housing.² A household is considered at risk of homelessness when 30% or more of the resident's earnings are spent on housing costs.

Of all homes in Area C, **10.7%** have been reported as requiring major repairs.²

As no formal homelessness count has been conducted in Area C, local residents were relied on for their input. Residents mentioned the hidden homeless population. The hidden homeless may be couch surfing or living in overcrowded residences with family or friends. Additionally, by choice or by circumstance, some residents of Area C live rough (in cars, tents, boats or homemade shelters).¹⁵

Monthly Housing Costs



Home Ownership: **\$408**

Home Rental: **\$702**

Median Home Value



Connectivity

Access to phone and internet services is necessary for reasons related explicitly to health – including access to health and emergency services and opportunities for telehealth – but also to meet other needs. Access to phone and internet services also allows access to education and professional development, employment, connection to friends and family, and entertainment, among others.

There is cell phone coverage on Quadra Island. Many residents continue to rely on landlines, or have both a landline and a cell phone. A landline from can cost **\$40** per month or more, depending on whether or not additional features are needed.¹⁸

Phone Costs



Phone (Landline)
\$40 per month

There are a handful of internet providers offering wireless internet to Quadra Island. An individual household can expect to pay between **\$35** and **\$120** per month, depending on desired speed and usage.¹⁹ The Quadra Island branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library offers free access to the internet during open hours. Internet is available in many of the bed and breakfasts, cafes and other accommodations for visitors.

Though not all residents who work from home would utilize home phone and internet, some would. In Area C, **18.5%** of the workforce works from home.²

Internet & Cable Costs



Cable/DSL
\$35 - \$120 per month



Employment and income

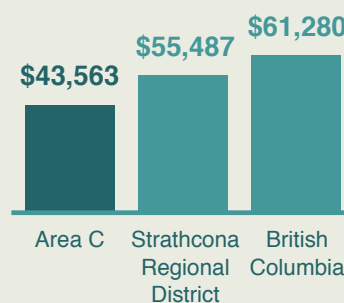
Living Wage Canada notes that “Income plays an important role in health outcomes. In general, the less someone is paid the poorer their health is across a number of physical and psychological measures. In addition, employment and working conditions have a significant impact on our health.”²⁰ Small and somewhat remote communities like Quadra Island have limited education and employment opportunities and may have fewer appropriate work opportunities than larger communities. The Discovery Islands Chamber of Commerce (which includes Quadra and Cortes Islands) addresses local business, employment and related community concerns.

Area C’s median household after-tax income is **\$43,563** – nearly **\$20,000** less than the provincial average. It is also lower than neighbouring Campbell River, and less than the Strathcona Regional District median of **\$55,487**.²

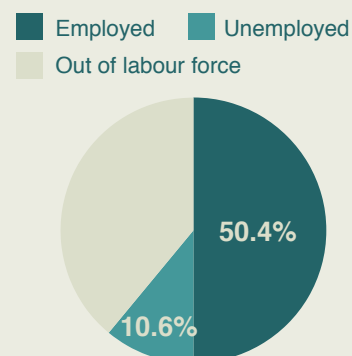
Most income in Area C is generated by employment (**53.1%**), while **17.7%** comes from government transfers including the Old Age Pension, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan, child benefits, or social assistance benefits.² Area C has an employment rate of **50.4%** and an unemployment rate of **10.6%**.²

Given Quadra Island’s reputation as a tourist destination, it isn’t surprising to learn that **22.6%** of employed residents work in sales and services, which includes accommodations. The number of employed resident’s dependent on visitors may also explain the high rate of part time and/or part year workers –in Area C, **68.7%** of the workforce is part year and/or part time, compared to **54.1%** of the provincial population.¹

Median Household Income



Employment Rates





Education and Training

Education and training are increasingly integral to employment success. There is an elementary school on Quadra Island, but middle school and high school students must travel to Campbell River to complete their education.²¹ Then, those wishing to access post-secondary training may choose between leaving the community, commuting to Vancouver Island, or learning via distance. North Island Employment Foundations Society (NIEFS) visits the community occasionally to deliver job search skills and training, and often partners with Quadra Literacy to do so.



Ageing

Growing old requires related social, financial, and health supports. Currently, the proportion of the population in LHA 72 (which includes Area C) that is comprised of seniors is **21.9%**. That proportion is expected to grow to **29.3%** by 2027, and to **29.7%** by 2037.⁵

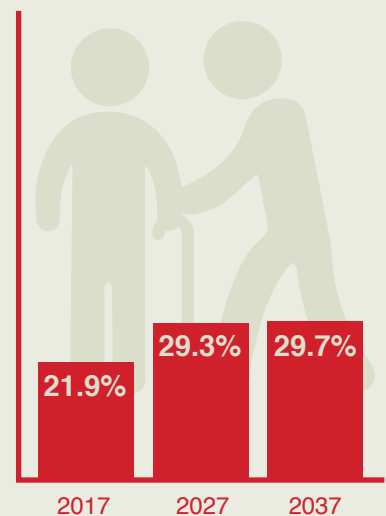
Given the proximity of Area C to Campbell River, Quadra Island residents are much closer to a hospital and to additional health services than many other Strathcona Regional District residents.

Some senior's care also exists on Quadra Island. In addition to home care nursing, the Quadra Island Seniors Housing Society operates 5 units of seniors' independent accommodations for low-to-moderate-income seniors. The society is currently overseeing the development of a **15-unit** supported-living apartment that is affordable and close to community services.²² There are no memory care facilities for people with Alzheimer's or dementia, and no retirement homes on Quadra Island.

Likewise, one measure of senior health is the proportion of seniors who live at home (often called "ageing in place"). Seniors who age in place can feel isolated if they live alone; seniors that live with a partner, roommate, or family members often have a higher quality of life than those living alone. In Local Health Area 72 (Campbell River), which includes Area C, **26.3-28.1%** of seniors live alone. Provincially, **27.3%** of seniors live alone.² Quadra Circle Community Connections Society provides seniors outreach and support services: home-delivered meals, volunteer drivers to appointments and social activities, a seniors exercise and activity program based in Quadra School, peer visiting and a weekly hot lunch. Quadra lacks a housekeeping, shopping, and yard maintenance service such as Better At Home.

Like neighbouring Cortes, one of the barriers to growing old on Quadra Island is the existing housing stock. Many of the homes are large, and are situated on large properties that require substantial upkeep. A senior individual or couple would have difficulty finding a suitable home that allows them to downsize.

Percentage of Seniors



The Social Determinants of Health

The Strathcona Community Health Network (SCHN) works collaboratively to increase the health of the residents of the Strathcona Regional District. Focusing on upstream prevention, the SCHN focuses on the social determinants of health to guide its work.

In Canada, the following social determinants of health are frequently referenced: Income and income distribution, education, unemployment and job security, employment and working conditions, early childhood development, food insecurity, housing, social inclusion/exclusion, social safety network, health services, aboriginal status, gender, race, disability.

The SCHN has engaged in extensive community consultation, including two forums. Community consultation surfaced the following social determinants of health most relevant to the region: First Nations and Cultural Safety, Healthy Children, Food Security, Housing, Ageing and Caregiver Support, Connectivity, Transportation.

Within these seven distinct determinants, there are many areas of overlap. On Quadra Island, for example, the link between seniors and housing is particularly evident. As a rural community, Quadra Island does not have densified housing, nor are there many different types of housing, like apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. A typical home on Quadra Island is detached, and is typically large in both square footage and land size. For a senior wishing to age in place, a large home may present maintenance and affordability issues.

Like other small islands near Vancouver Island, housing is also an important consideration when examined alongside the need for year-round rentals and management of vacation rentals. As a popular vacation destination, there are opportunities to make money on AirBnB, VRBO, or similar vacation rental platforms. Although this is lucrative for homeowners, it means that many renters are evicted during peak tourism months (often May – September), or have to pay exorbitant rates to remain in their rental.

A final example of linked social determinants of health is that of transportation and education. Both high school and post-secondary students must leave Quadra for their education. Even if a student only goes as far as Campbell River, they must invest nearly \$30 and 1-2 hours of travel per trip. Though an advanced education is increasingly important, residents of Quadra must go above and beyond to achieve this.

Which links are evident to you?

Sources

- ¹ Jeanette Taylor, Quadra Island History – A Turbulent Past, <http://www.quadraislandtourism.ca/discover/history.html>
- ² Statistics Canada, Census 2016 – Strathcona C, Regional District Electoral Area [Census Subdivision]
- ³ Tourism British Columbia, Quadra Island Tourism Plan, 2008
- ⁴ Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015-2016
- ⁵ Island Health, Local Health Area Profile 72 (Campbell River), 2015
- ⁶ Human Early Learning Partnership, Early Development Instrument, School District 72, 2014-2016, www.earlylearning.ubc.ca.
- ⁷ PacificCARE Child Care Information and Referral (Personal correspondence)
- ⁸ Poon, C., Peled, M., Stewart, D., Kovaleva, K., Cullen, A., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society (2015). North Vancouver Island: Results of the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.
- ⁹ World Health Organization, The determinants of health, <http://www.who.int/hia/evidence/doh/en/index3.html>.
- ¹⁰ Canada 411, Search for Grocery in Quadra Island, BC
- ¹¹ Strathcona Food Security Project, Food Security Needs Assessment, 2014, <https://www.greenwaystrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/sf-sp-needs-assessment-final.pdf>.
- ¹² Provincial Health Services Authority. (2018). Food Costing in BC 2017. Vancouver, B.C.: Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program.
- ¹³ BC Ferries, Fares, Campbell River to Quadra Island (Quathiaski Cove)
- ¹⁴ Quadra Island, Travel to Quadra Island, http://www.quadraisland.ca/about_quadra_island/travel.html#.W4xRkIIZN-U
- ¹⁵ Consultation with local residents
- ¹⁶ Quadra Island, Activities, <http://www.quadraisland.ca/adventure-recreation-tours/mountain-biking/index.html#.W4xRv1IZN-U>
- ¹⁷ ICBC, Driver licensing & ID
- ¹⁸ Telus.com, Home phone plans
- ¹⁹ Yellow Pages, Internet Service Providers for Quadra Island, BC
- ²⁰ Living Wage Canada, What is a living wage?, <http://www.livingwagecanada.ca/index.php/about-living-wage/>.
- ²¹ School District 72 (Campbell River), School Boundaries & Locator
- ²² Quadra Island Seniors Housing Society, <https://qishs.ca>



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