

Municipality of the County of Richmond

Municipal Housing Needs Report

2023

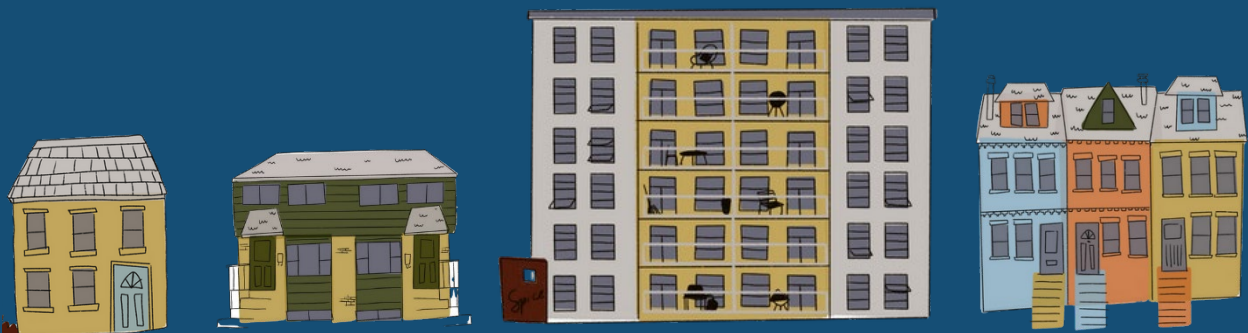


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1 Introduction

The purpose of a housing needs assessment is to understand the current and anticipated housing conditions across a given geography, in the case of this and accompanying reports, the conditions across the province of Nova Scotia and its municipalities. Generally, this work strengthens the ability of local stakeholders and governments to:

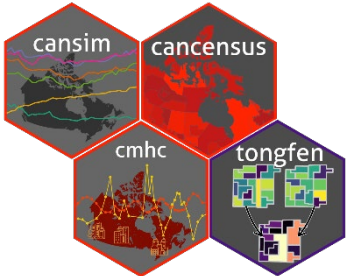
- Identify current and future housing needs and
- Identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply

Empowering municipalities and the province to become effective partners in housing provision requires reliable data to identify the stock necessary to meet current and future needs and how to drive related policy and investment. The insights generated by a needs assessment can help to inform ongoing land use and social planning initiatives at the local level, as well as provide hard evidence in support of advocacy to more senior levels of government.

The goal of this municipal report is to share appropriate, available, and accurate data to municipal governments so that they further understand their current housing situation and what they might anticipate. It is important to note that the same data methodologies and calculations are applied across each municipality, based on available data. This means that reports cannot consider all the nuanced conditions of individual communities that would be known best by municipal staff, stakeholders, and residents.

The report should be considered a form of base knowledge, intended for local review and discussion. Municipalities should use local information to provide additional context and information for discussion and decision-making as they see fit. For more details about methodologies, provincial trends, and definitions, please refer to the Provincial Report.

Note that all data references the municipality unless noted otherwise.



2 Key Findings

Housing shortage

As of the end of 2022, there was a gap between housing demand and the available supply of about 370 units, including both market and non-market housing.

Projections suggest that to keep pace with population growth, the municipality will need 515 new units by 2027 (including the existing shortage of 370) and 520 by 2032. Status quo construction will not be enough to meet 2027 projected demand. About 50 new units could be completed annually based on historical construction trends. If that pace continues, it will leave a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027 and 20 by 2032.

“Rural areas have unique needs, even compared to one another.”

Population

Between 2016 and 2021, the municipality’s population grew by 1% while the province’s population rose 5%. The municipality grew across only 65-84-year-olds, enough so to support an overall population increase.

Finance and Treasury Board (FTB) estimates suggest that the 2022 total population was 8,560, with a projected increase of 2% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should continue to increase during that time, complemented by growth across most age cohorts (except 45-to-64-year-olds).

Growth may not continue between 2027 to 2032, with an anticipated marginal contraction of the population.

Households

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an overall 4% increase in households, with tenures split into 82% owner households and 17% renters in 2021. Non-census (i.e., single person or roommate) households and lone parents rose by 15% and 14%, respectively, between 2016 and 2021.

Estimates suggest that total households reached 3,960 in 2022, with a potential increase of 2% from 2022 to 2027 (65 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among older working professional led households (45- to 64-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

Similar magnitudes of growth are not expected to continue from 2027 to 2032, with only a marginal increase during that timeframe.

Non-market housing

As of January 2023, the County of Richmond had a public-housing inventory of 117 units, of which 26 were for families and 91 for seniors.

Short-term rentals (STRs)

About 1.5% of the municipality's housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental in 2021 (the last full year of data). This means that upwards of 73 units might have been removed from the long-term market in 2022, though it is uncertain exactly how many would have been long-term rentals or purchased for permanent occupancy if not used as a STR.

Shelter costs

Average rents reported by the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) decreased marginally from 2020 to 2021, following a small increase between 2019 and 2020. The recent decrease reflects the high vacancy rate among the rental market - the municipality has had a vacancy rate between 6.2% to 6.9% since 2018, falling above the healthy vacancy range of 3% to 5%.

Median municipality home prices increased 67% from 2019 to 2022, compared to 10% between 2016 and 2019. The rapid rise in prices is a combination of increased demand and low interest rates (until recently).

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Survey Respondents from the Municipality
of the County of Richmond

Top Housing Challenges:

1. I am not experiencing any challenges with finding affordable housing
2. Finding housing at a price I can afford
3. I am already living in affordable housing
4. Finding housing that is in good condition and not requiring repairs
5. Finding housing that allows my pet(s)

If there were no limitation on housing, top choices would be:

1. House (single detached, duplex, mobile home)
2. I am already in housing that is suitable to my needs
3. Apartment (rental)
4. Community Housing/Non-profit Housing
5. Government-owned Public Housing

23%

of respondents have considered leaving
their community due to housing issues



Municipality's public survey responses

Affordability

In the municipality, affordability has fallen since 2016. At least 33% of all couples, 67% of all lone-parent households, and 90% of all single person households earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2022 median sale price of a local dwelling. For rentals, about 44% of renter households could not afford 2021 average local rents.

Housing need

When a household lives in a dwelling that requires more than 30% of its before-tax household income, is overcrowded, and needs major repairs - and no alternative exists - it is in Core Housing Need. In 2021, about 9% of the municipality's households (340 total) lived in Core Housing Need. Need is particularly prevalent among:

- 23% of renter households (160 total); and
- 17% of lone parent households (60 total); and
- 18% of single persons / roommate households (245 total)

Generally, the number of people in and rates of Core Housing Need across segments has decreased since 2016. However, comparing 2021 rates to 2016 rates (particularly for affordability) is difficult given the influence of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) on incomes. Overall, the municipality reported a lower rate of Core Housing Need than Nova Scotia overall (10%).

3 Housing Supply

3.1 Market Housing

As of the 2021 Census, there were 5,083 private dwellings across the County of Richmond, 78% of which were occupied by usual residents (those who live in the municipality permanently). The rest of the inventory may either be occupied solely by foreign residents and/or by temporarily present persons or be unoccupied dwellings. For those dwellings occupied by usual residents, Table 3-1 summarizes the total dwellings and distribution by structure type for the district. The overwhelming share of current supply is held by the single-detached home (89%).

Table 3-1: Total & Share of Dwellings Occupied by a Usual Resident by Structure Type

Total	Single-detached	Semi-detached	Row house	Duplex apt	Apt (< 5 storeys)	Apt (5+ storeys)	Movable	Other
3,960	3,515	25	10	20	225	0	155	10
100%	89%	1%	0%	1%	6%	0%	4%	0%

Source: 2021 Census



Municipality’s public survey responses

“We need provincial incentives for developers to build in rural areas. We’re just not getting the interest, and the private market will not take care of this itself.”

3.1.1 Construction Activity

The pace of construction is represented by the annual total units permitted, units started, and units completed - these are separate but related phases of the same unit construction process.

A permit signifies the anticipated future housing to be built, a start reflects how many permits led to a shovel in the ground, and a completion represents how many units

were actually added to the occupiable supply. Construction takes time and its pace varies depending on the building type. Consequently, the number of units permitted in one year cannot be directly linked to starts or completions in another. The Provincial Report offers a detailed explanation of each element.

Table 3-2 shows the number units permitted in the municipality. Note that 2022 data reflects an extrapolated September 2022 total and that negative numbers mean more demolitions occurred than new builds. Starts and completions data is not available.

Table 3-2: Construction Activity by Dwelling Type

Units permitted							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Total	36	45	50	52	50	53	41
Single	29	21	27	37	26	34	37
Semi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Row	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apartment	0	9	17	6	5	6	0
Other	7	15	6	9	19	13	4

* 2022 units permitted extrapolated from September 2022 YTD to date totals to reflect entire year.

Source: Statistics Canada Custom CSD Tables 34-10-0001, 34-10-0066

Note that not all additional units in the table necessarily reflect a new unit, and some may represent conversions from rental to ownership or vice versa. Between 2016 and 2021, total dwellings (not only occupied by a usual resident) increased from 4,955 to 5,083 – a 128-unit increase. This suggests that a higher share of the inventory may have been taken up for long-term permanent tenancy in 2021 versus 2016.

Table 3-3 summarizes the change in unit size and tenure between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. The distribution of new units shows what sizes are most occupied by renter and owner households. These Census results indicate that the long-term rental supply has grown at a faster pace than homeownership for 2- and 3-bedroom units in absolute numbers and equal or greater in percent change except for studio/1-bedroom units where homeownership grew at a faster pace in absolute terms and percent change.

Table 3-3: Change in Units by Size & Tenure between Census Periods

	Total	Studio / 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
Owned dwellings				
Owned (2016) - 84% of total HHs	3,225	125	725	2,370
Owned (2021) - 82% of total HHs	3,265	140	735	2,380
Change in units	40	15	10	10
Share of change	100%	43%	29%	29%
Rented dwellings				
Rented (2016) - 16% of total HHs	595	175	205	225
Rented (2021) - 18% of total HHs	695	160	275	260
Change in units	100	-15	70	35
Share of change	100%	13%	58%	29%

Source: Statistics Canada Tables 98-400-X2016220 & 98-10-0240

Table 3-4: Change in Total Dwellings versus Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents

Dwellings	2016	2021	% change
Total dwellings (a)	4,955	5,083	3%
Dwelling occupied by a usual resident (b)	3,820	3,961	4%
Share (b / a)	77%	78%	

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 & 2021 Census

3.1.2 Housing Accelerator Fund Considerations

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) is a program introduced by the Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) with the objective to bolster the housing supply at an accelerated pace. Local governments within Canada - including First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments who have delegated authority over land use planning and development approvals - are eligible to apply to the HAF. Interested municipalities can find the HAF's pre-application reference material [here](#). Note that a Housing Needs Assessment (such as this one) is required as part of a complete application (though not needed immediately for the initial submission).

An applicant is required to provide two projections to CMHC. The applicant must calculate their own projections based on reasonable assumptions and data sources, including Statistics Canada and/or its own administrative data. There is no prescribed formula; however, projections should be based on a three-year period ending September 1, 2026. The two projections are:

- The total permitted housing units projected without program funding.
- The total number of permitted housing units projected with program funding. This second projection is known as the “housing supply growth target.”

For additional guidance, Table 3-5 summarizes the growth by unit type (more closely defined with HAF application requirements) and tenure between 2016 and 2021. The table demonstrates that single-detached dwellings were the most notable form of occupied housing added to the long-term market.

Table 3-5: Unit Change by Estimated HAF Dwelling Type & Tenure, 2016 & 2021 Census

	Total	Single ^a	Missing middle ^b	Multi-unit ^c
Total dwellings				
Total (2016)	3,820	3,310	515	0
Total (2021)	3,960	3,510	445	0
Change in units	140	200	-70	0
Share of change	100%	74%	26%	0%
Owned dwellings				
Owned (2016)	3,225	2,980	255	0
Owned (2021)	3,265	3,090	160	0
Change in units	40	110	-95	0
Share of change	100%	54%	46%	0%
Rented dwellings				
Rented (2016)	595	330	260	0
Rented (2021)	695	420	285	0
Change in units	100	90	25	0
Share of change	100%	78%	22%	0%

a Single means single-detached homes, which are buildings containing 1 dwelling unit, which is completely separated on all sides from any other dwelling or structure.

b Missing middle refers to ground-oriented housing types that exist between single-detached and mid-rise apartments. This includes garden suites, secondary suites, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, row houses, courtyard housing, low-rise apartments (less than 4 storeys).

c Multi-unit refers to apartments that are 4-or-more storeys. The HAF further defines these by whether they are in close proximity to rapid transit or not, which is not possible to summarize based on the data available.

CMHC does not prescribe a formula for projections, leaving this decision up to the municipality who would know best about on the ground construction activity (not only by the numbers but also through discussions with local builders/developers).

A simple example includes using most recent permitting data (the five-year average between 2017 and 2021), applying the historical shares of new construction between 2016 and 2021, and comparing the potential units permitted to the estimated total demand over the three years (based on Housing Shortage data - Section 4). The results, shown in Table 3-6 are for discussion purposes and not a prescribed logic - the municipality can form its own approach based on other data provided and internal resources.

Note that the final column provides the straight-lined shortage anticipated by the end of the HAF. This may not represent the total possible intervention by the HAF, as this depends on the choices made by the municipality. Rather, it highlights the total shortage the HAF can help reduce. Furthermore, values are rounded to the nearest 5.

Table 3-6: Example of Simple HAF Permit Projection

	Historical share of new housing	Possible annual units permitted	Estimated 3-year units permitted ^a	Estimated 3-year unit demand ^a	Gap that HAF can help reduce
Total	100%	50	150 (A)	460 (B)	310
Single	74%	35	105	340	235
Missing middle	26%	15	45	120	75
Multi-unit	0%	0	0	0	0

Relationship between units permitted and shortage	
C: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: ^b	5,170
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years without HAF (A / C x 100):	2.9%
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years needed to meet demand (B / C x 100):	8.9%
% increase in units permitted to meet shortage (B / A - 1) x 100:	207%

Relationship between units permitted and HAF requirements (rounded up to nearest 5)	
D: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: ^b	5,170
E: Projected annual units permitted (based on '16-'21 average - see Table 3-2)	50
Required units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 1.1% average annual growth rate ^c (D x 1.1% x 3 years)	175
Required additional units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 10% increase ^d over historical average (E x 10% x 3 years)	15

^a Units permitted between September 2023 and September 2026; 3-year unit demand includes 2022 shortage

^b 2021 Census (Statistics Canada) + 2021 permits + 2021 permits x 2/3 (September 2023 estimate)

^c Average annual units permitted (min. 1.1%) = Total number of units permitted with HAF support / 3 years / Total dwelling stock (results rounded up to nearest 5)

^d Increase in units permitted (min. 10%) = (Projected average housing supply growth rate with HAF) / Projected average housing supply growth rate without HAF - 1 (results rounded up to nearest 5)

3.2 Non-Market Housing

3.2.1 Public Housing

Of the 11,200 total inventory of publicly owned dwelling units (as administered by the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Authority), 117 are in the County of Richmond. Most units are 1-bedroom apartments, due to the high volume of units reserved for seniors' housing - 78% of all units and 100% of these 1-bedroom units were for seniors.

About 57% of the County of Richmond’s public housing tenants have lived in public housing for more than 5 years, with most for more than 10 years.

Table 3-7: Public Housing Inventory, January 2023

		Total	Family	Senior
Total unit inventory		117	26	91
Inventory by unit size	Studio	0	0	0
	1-bedroom	91	0	91
	2-bedroom	2	2	0
	3+ bedroom	24	24	0
	Not reported	0	0	0
Inventory by dwelling type	Single family	22	22	0
	Row	0	0	0
	Apartment	95	4	91
	Not reported	0	0	0
Length of tenure in public housing	Less than 1 year	2%	4%	1%
	1 to 5 years	39%	42%	38%
	5 to 10 years	25%	42%	20%
	10+ years	32%	13%	37%
Household income	Median income (mth)	\$1,565	\$920	\$1,745
	Median income (ann)	\$18,780	\$11,040	\$20,940

Source: Derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

“[Richmond does not] have the financial capacity to build and operate housing.”

3.2.2 Rent Supplements

As of March 2023, 18 households across the County of Richmond were receiving rent supplement support, equivalent to 23 total people. About 17% were families, 61% were senior households, and 22% were classified as non-elderly households.

Table 3-8 further details the percentage share of rent supplements that served a specific vulnerable population.

Table 3-8: Rent Supplement Demographics, March 2023

	Total	Family	Senior	Non-elderly
Total rent supplements	18	3	11	4
People benefiting	23	8	11	4
Average HH size	1.3	2.7	1.0	1.0
Average dependents	0.3	1.7	0.0	0.0
Share of supplements serving a vulnerable group:				
Indigenous person(s)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Person(s) w/ a disability	11%	0%	9%	25%
At risk of homelessness	17%	0%	18%	25%
Homeless	0%	0%	0%	0%
Newcomer(s)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mental health / addictions	11%	0%	0%	50%
Racialized person(s)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Veteran(s)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fleeing domestic violence	6%	33%	0%	0%
Young adults	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

3.2.3 Non-Profit & Co-operative Housing and Shelters

Formal datasets related to third-party affordable housing organizations and their unit inventories are limited. The Provincial Report offers some discussion about what shelters exist provincially, with some detail by Economic Region.

A 2021 study of homelessness by the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group¹ indicated that at least 419 people (aged 16 or older) identified as experiencing homelessness across the six counties of eastern Nova Scotia. At least 64 children were identified, for a total of 483 persons. Key conclusions from this study were:

- More than half of those persons 16 or older lived with a mental illness or addiction.
- About 42% received income assistance.
- About 32% were between 16 to 29 years old and 29% were 30 to 39 years old.
- About 14% of survey respondents were Indigenous.

¹ Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group. (2021). Service-Based Homelessness County 2021. [https://www.endhomelessnesstoday.ca/images/Report - Service-Based Homelessness Count for Eastern Nova Scotia 2021.pdf](https://www.endhomelessnesstoday.ca/images/Report_-_Service-Based_Homelessness_Count_for_Eastern_Nova_Scotia_2021.pdf)

Of the 419 persons that are sixteen years and over that were experiencing homelessness, 43 were reported being in the Guysborough, Inverness, Richmond, & Victoria areas, of which 14% were unsheltered, 14% were accessing emergency shelters, and 44% were provisionally accommodated.

3.3 Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase of 45 dwellings used as short-term rentals. In 2022, 84% were entire homes or apartments and 78 were potentially² “commercial” units - meaning they were available/ reserved more than 50% of the year.

If 2021 commercial units are compared to the 2021 dwelling stock (5,083 - as per the Census), about 1.5% of the municipality’s housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental.

Table 3-9: Short-Term Rental Activity & Inventory

	Data by year				Percent change		
	2018	2020	2021	2022	'18-'20	'20-'22	18-'22**
Total unique STRs	131	169	173	176	+29%	+4%	+34%
Entire home/apt	99	143	142	147	+44%	+3%	+48%
Hotel room	0	1	1	0	n.a.	-100%	n.a.
Private room	32	25	30	29	-22%	+16%	-9%
Shared room	0	0	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Avg annual revenue	\$5,038	\$5,188	\$6,384	\$8,586	+3%	+65%	+70%
Total market ('000s)	\$660	\$877	\$1,104	\$1,511	+33%	+72%	+129%
Commercial STRs*	67	87	73	78	+30%	-10%	+16%

* A commercial STR is one that was listed as available and/or has been reserved more than 50% of the days in a calendar year.

** 2022 data reflects as of September 2022. Commercial STRs use 9 months for their calculations versus a full year.

Source: derived from AirDNA data

²Noted as “potentially” since 2022 data is only up to September.

4 Housing Shortage

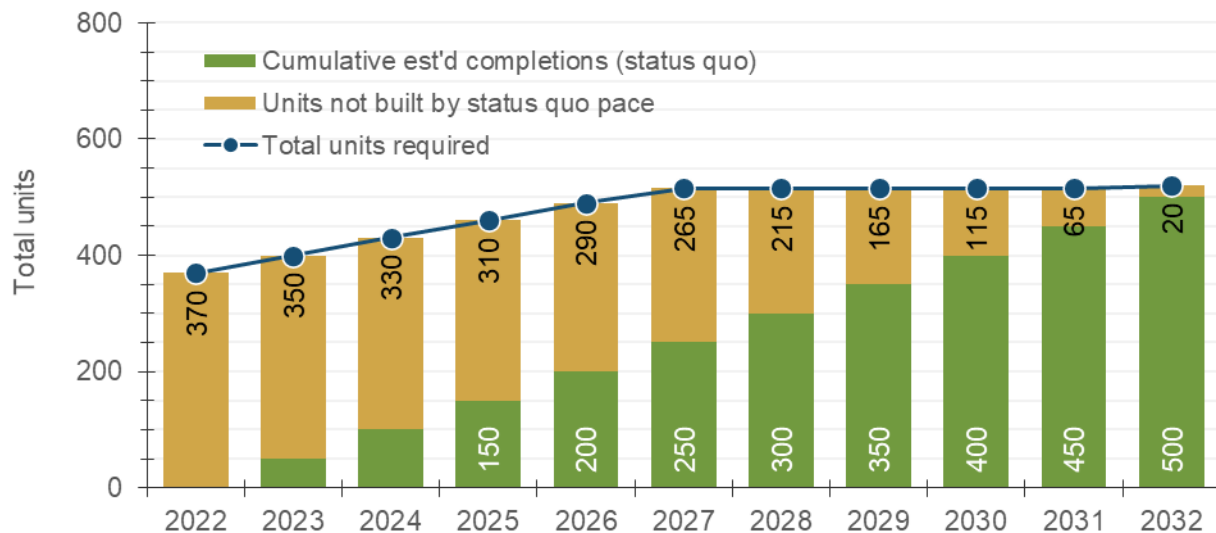
Based on demographic modeling results (see Provincial Report for details), the municipality’s potential housing shortage (as of the end of 2022) may be 370 units.³ Note that this estimate represents the sum of all units, be they rented or owned in terms of their tenure, or market or non-market housing.

Figure 4.1 offers a high-level summary of the trajectory of the housing shortage over the next decade under a base population growth scenario provided by Nova Scotia’s Department of Finance and Treasury Board.

In five years, the municipality may have a total dwelling demand (existing shortfall plus anticipated demand) of about 515 units, which could grow to 520 by 2032

Based on the recent pace of construction, supply could outpace anticipated new demand. About 50 new units could be completed annually over the next decade, based on assumptions using historical data trends. That leaves a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027. By 2032, the remaining gap after status quo construction could be 20 units. Note that status quo construction follows the method used in the provincial report, being average historical permits adjusted by 5% to account for permit withdrawals or cancellations. Results are rounded to the nearest 5.⁴

Figure 4.1: Anticipated Unit Gap based on Total Units Required and Estimated Completions, Demographic Model Results



³ The allocation of unit shortages is based on results for the Census Division, apportioned to its respective municipalities based on their share of local household change between 2016 and 2021.

⁴ All municipalities use the same approach for consistency. However, for smaller municipalities, the combination of fewer units permitted and rounding practices can under or over represent anticipated construction activity. As such, greater attention should be directed to the projected demand, instead of anticipated supply, which can be later cross-reference with internal municipal data.

Table 4-1 summarizes possible guides for constructing unit sizes over the next half-decade. As previously described, about 515 new units may be needed to meet demand by 2027. Based on historical preferences,⁵ about 30% could be studio/1-bedroom dwellings (155 units), 40% 2-bedroom dwellings (210), and 30% 3+ bedroom dwellings (150). This includes the existing unit shortfall.

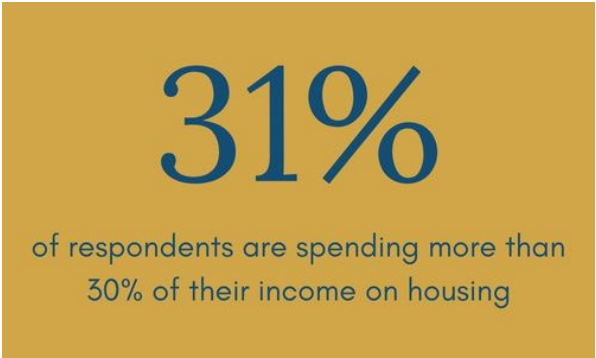
Table 4-1: Estimated Current & Anticipated Unit Shortfall by Unit Size, 2022 to 2027

	Total	Studio + 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
A: Current shortfall (end of 2022)	370	110	150	110
B: Anticipated demand by 2027	145	45	60	45
C: Total units required by 2027 (A + B)	515	155	210	150
D: Anticipated 5 year supply (status quo pace*)	250	75	100	75
E: Total shortfall	265	80	105	80
F: Total extra units required annually (E / 5 years)	55	15	20	15

* The distribution of supply is based on household preferences, not actual anticipated build out.

⁵ In this case, unit sizes reflect the preference for unit size, not the historical distribution of unit sizes in the existing inventory. Briefly, historical distributions of household sizes by household family types are used to estimate required bedrooms. The estimated share of unit sizes is then distributed into forecasted demand calculations. More explanation about how preference distributes can be found in the Housing Shortage section of the Provincial report.

5 Housing Affordability



Municipality’s public survey responses

“Current housing is not affordable for people on social assistance or with low income.”

5.1 Homeownership

Housing is becoming more expensive. This is not simply a claim of observing the appreciation of property as a commodity but also as an increase relative to other periods, levels of income, and availability.

5.1.1 Market Activity

Median sale prices across Nova Scotia have seen increases since 2016, with significant increases since 2019. Richmond’s median sale price has increased from \$120,000 to \$220,000 between 2016 and 2022. This represents a 83% change in median sale price.

Table 5-1: Median Sale Prices by Dwelling Type & Select Years

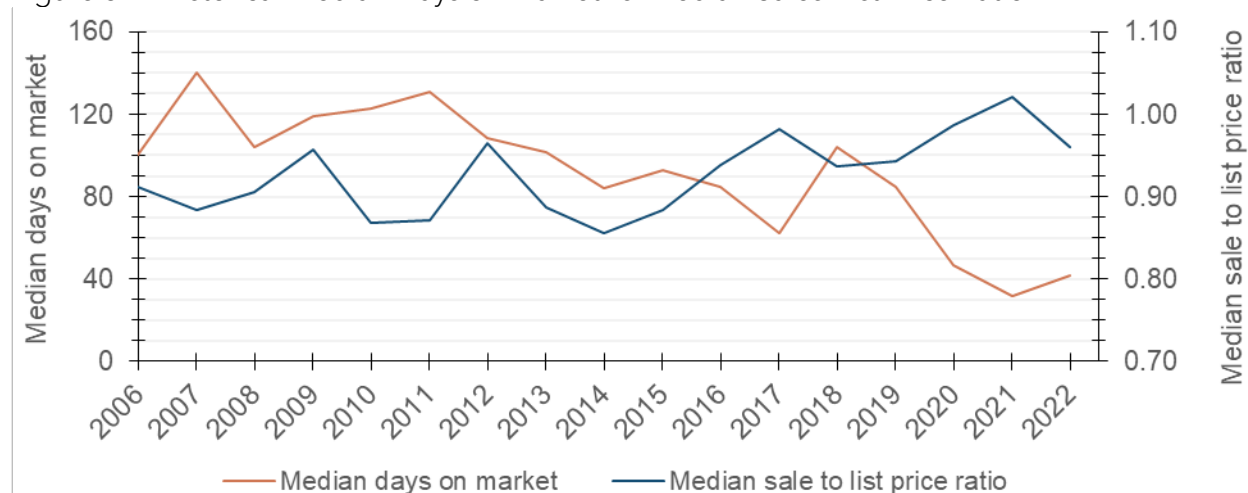
	Price				Percent Change		
	2010	2016	2019	2022	'10-'16	'16-'19	'19-'22
Total	\$100,500	\$120,000	\$132,000	\$220,000	+19%	+10%	+67%
Single	\$125,000	\$122,000	\$135,000	\$225,000	-2%	+11%	+67%
Semi	-	\$175,000	\$185,500	\$345,000	-	+6%	+86%

Source: NSAR MLS®

The increase in price can, at least in part, be attributed to an increase in demand. Figure 5.1 illustrates the sale-to-list-price ratio compared to the median days a dwelling was on the market. The number of days on the market is a general indicator of market demand (fewer days means more interest and more days means less interest). As the number of days on the market decreases, there is generally a rise in sale prices (and

sale to list price ratios). This is no different for Richmond. With recent declines in the median days on the market, the median sale to list price ratio has gradually increased, exceeding 100% in 2021.

Figure 5.1: Historical Median Days on Market vs. Median Sales-List Price Ratio



Source: NSAR MLS®

5.1.2 Homeownership Affordability

Table 5-2 details the percentage share of households, separated by household types, that could afford a home based on their respective income levels versus the median sale prices from 2022. The affordability threshold is the same used by Statistics Canada and CMHC - 30% of before-tax household income spent on shelter costs. Shelter cost calculations include the direct and indirect costs related to shelter. More detail is provided in the Provincial Report. Note that income bracket distributions are based on Census Division data.⁶

Lone parents and single persons are least likely to have income levels necessary to afford to own a home. Single-detached homes are the most financially accessible type of dwellings available on the market (single-detached homes are more likely to be older and thus often priced lower) based on available data. Even so, 67% of lone-parent households and 91% of single-person households fall below the income necessary to afford the median sale price of a single detached local home.

⁶ Since Census Division data is used, readers will notice estimate similarities between municipalities belonging to the same Census Division.

Table 5-2: Estimate of Sales Affordability by Income Level (All Households)

		2022 median sale price:			\$225,000	\$345,000
		% of HHs below income level			Single Detached Dwelling	Semi Detached
Income level	Attainable sales price	Couples	Lone parents	Single persons		
\$70,000	\$209,500	33%	67%	90%	no	no
\$75,000	\$224,000	38%	67%	91%	no	no
\$80,000	\$239,000	42%	73%	93%	yes	no
\$85,000	\$254,000	46%	76%	93%	yes	no
\$90,000	\$269,000	52%	76%	94%	yes	no
\$95,000	\$284,000	55%	76%	94%	yes	no
\$100,000	\$299,000	59%	76%	94%	yes	no
\$105,000	\$314,000	62%	76%	96%	yes	no
\$110,000	\$329,000	66%	76%	96%	yes	no
\$115,000	\$344,000	69%	76%	96%	yes	no
\$120,000	\$359,000	72%	78%	96%	yes	yes
\$125,000	\$373,500	75%	78%	96%	yes	yes
\$130,000	\$388,500	77%	78%	96%	yes	yes

Homeownership	Total Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	Semi Detached
Est'd income needed to buy median home	\$73,600	\$75,300	\$115,400
% of total households below income	57%	61%	83%

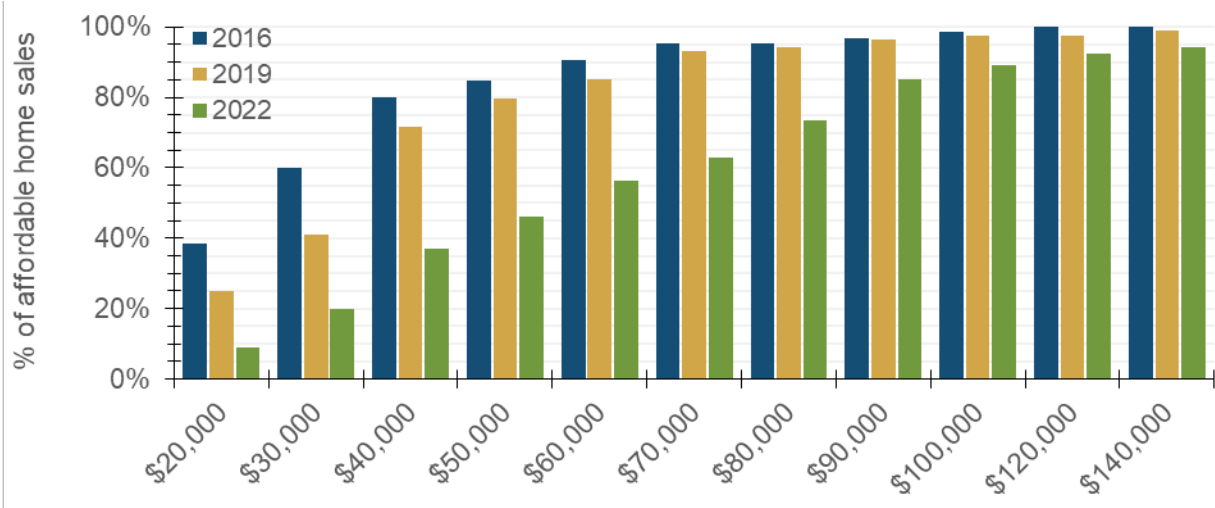
Source: derived from Statistics Canada tables (see Provincial Report), Bank of Canada, NSAR MLS®

About 57% of all local households earned an income below what would be needed (around \$73,600) to purchase the median home in 2022. This highlights the importance of housing interventions to address the shortage identified above in order to reduce typical housing prices to reasonably affordable levels.

Figure 5.2 presents the levels of affordability for respective household income levels between 2016 and 2022 for Richmond Census Division (no data is specifically available for the Municipality of the County of Richmond). It illustrates the percentage of home sales in each year that would be affordable (30% of household income) at a given income level.

While there were already signs of decreasing affordability from 2016 to 2019, the municipality suffered a significant shock from 2019 to 2022. For instance, a \$70,000 income could afford 93% of home sales in 2019. In 2022, this fell to 63%.

Figure 5.2: Estimated % of Households that can / cannot Afford Sale Prices, Richmond Census Division



Source: derived from Statistics Canada Custom Census 2021 Tables, Bank of Canada, NSAR MLS®

5.2 Rental Market

"As a landlord, I can tell you, it's impossible to make rent affordable with rising costs."

5.2.1 Market Activity

Table 5-3 reports the rental data for the County of Richmond (based on the combined areas of Richmond and Victoria). The overall average rent in 2021, per PVSC data, was \$623. This is a decrease of over 5% in rents since 2018. There has been a 6% increase for studio units, a negligible increase for 1-bedroom units, a 2% decrease for 2-bedroom units, and a negligible increase for 3+ bedroom units over the same period

Table 5-3: Average Rents by Unit Size & Select Years

	Price				Percent Change		
	2018	2019	2020	2021	'18-'19	19-'20	20-'21
Total	\$659	\$623	\$626	\$623	-6%	+0%	0%
Studio	\$495	\$495	\$495	\$522	0%	0%	+6%
1-bed	\$599	\$599	\$599	\$600	0%	0%	+0%
2-bed	\$677	\$677	\$677	\$663	0%	0%	-2%
3-bed	\$729	\$729	\$729	\$731	0%	0%	+0%
Vacancy	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	6.2%			

Source: PVSC Custom tables

Richmond's vacancy rate decreased from 6.9% to 6.2% between 2018 and 2021, falling above the healthy range of 3% to 5%.

5.2.2 Rental Affordability

Table 5-4 details the percentage share of renter households that can afford 2021 average rent for various unit types. It should be noted that the affordability reported is based on the ability to afford the rent for the entire unit, not split between tenants. Furthermore, the affordability threshold is the same used by Statistics Canada and CMHC - 30% of before-tax household income spent on shelter costs. Shelter cost calculations include the direct and indirect costs related to shelter. More detail is provided in the Provincial Report.

Table 5-4: Estimated Rent Affordability by Income Level (Renter Households)

Renting	Average	Studio	1-bed	2-bed	3+ bed
Est'd income needed to rent average unit	\$37,200	\$31,200	\$35,800	\$39,600	\$43,600
% of renter households below income	44%	37%	44%	44%	49%

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Custom Census 2021 tables, PVSC

Approximately 44% of local renter households earned an income below what would be needed (about \$37,200) to afford the average rental unit. Readers will notice that the financial barriers to own look to be significantly higher than to rent. While this may be the case, it is important to recognize the data source impacts to this discussion.

Sales data for homeownership only considers asking prices, not the existing mortgages held by homeowners at the same time. Rental data includes both asking and occupied rents, meaning that the rents reported underrepresent what households would pay changing units.

6 Housing Need

Three housing indicators are used to evaluate housing need: adequacy (housing condition), suitability (enough space), and affordability. Core housing need is a specific condition of housing where a household falls under one of the aforementioned indicators and cannot find reasonable housing without spending 30% or more of their before-tax income. Deep unaffordability (also known as “severe” unaffordability) is when a household is spending 50% or more of their before-tax income on housing.

Generally, housing indicators and Core Housing Need data demonstrate the number and share of households particularly impacted by precarious living conditions. These are the households that increased supply or non-market interventions would positively impact most, as many might not have the means or supports to escape these conditions without intervention.

6.1 Housing Need by Tenure & Indigenous Identity

Table 6-1 shows the share of households currently living in conditions that meet the three housing criteria, separated by tenure and Indigenous identity.

In Richmond, overall households living in unaffordable dwellings decreased by 9% between 2016 and 2021. Those living in unsuitable dwellings decreased by 27% and those living in inadequate dwellings increased by 1%. Notwithstanding respective 23% and 42% decreases between census periods, 13% of all renter households and 7% of Indigenous households lived in unaffordable dwellings as of 2021.

Table 6-1: Housing Need Criteria by Tenure & Indigenous Identity, 2021

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		3,905	3,215	700	515
Households living in inadequate conditions	Total households	380	305	55	65
	Change since 2016	+1%	-5%	+22%	-13%
	Share of households	10%	9%	8%	13%
Households living in unsuitable conditions	Total households	40	15	-	-
	Change since 2016	-27%	-40%	-	-
	Share of households	1%	0%	-	-
Households living in unaffordable conditions	Total households	440	255	170	35
	Change since 2016	-9%	-2%	-23%	-42%
	Share of households	11%	8%	24%	7%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

Table 6-2 shows the municipality’s households currently meeting the conditions of Core Housing Need and those in deep unaffordability, as well as the changes in those categories between 2016 and 2021. Since 2016, there has been a 39% decrease in overall Core Housing Need, with decreases across the tenure and Indigenous Identity. Notwithstanding, 9% of all households faced core housing need in 2021.

Since 2016 there has been an overall decrease of 7% to households living in deep unaffordability, but 9% of all renter households remain in these conditions.

Table 6-2: Core Housing Need & Deep Unaffordability by Tenure & Indigenous Identity, 2021

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		3,905	3,215	700	515
Households living in Core Housing Need	Total households	340	180	160	25
	Change since 2016	-39%	-44%	-32%	-62%
	Share of households	9%	6%	23%	5%
Households living in deep unaffordability	Total households	140	65	65	-
	Change since 2016	-7%	-28%	0%	-
	Share of households	4%	2%	9%	-

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

6.2 Housing Need by Household Type

Table 6-3 and Table 6-4 present information related to housing indicators and Core Housing Need, respectively, by household type. Note that suitability data is not available by household type.

Generally, renter and single person / roommate households experience similar issues when it comes to housing. About 19% of single person / roommate households faced financial challenges related to shelter in 2021.

Lone parents also faced considerable housing challenges, reporting the highest rate of inadequacy (18%) and the highest rate of unaffordability (20%).

"We're also seeing a big crunch on young families. People with young kids living hand to mouth and being renovicted."

Table 6-3: Housing Need Criteria by Household Type, 2021

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		1,275	715	355	1,385
Households living in inadequate conditions	Total households	70	55	65	180
	Change since 2016	-7%	+57%	-7%	+6%
	Share of households	5%	8%	18%	13%
Households living in unaffordable conditions	Total households	55	-	70	260
	Change since 2016	-27%	-	-13%	-7%
	Share of households	4%	-	20%	19%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

Since 2016, single persons / roommate households living in Core Housing Need decreased 29%, reaching a 18% share of all related households in 2021. Lone parents reported the next most prevalent core need (17%), despite a 40% decrease between census periods. Further, 7% of single persons lived in deeply unaffordable conditions as of 2021.

Table 6-4: Core Housing Need & Deep Unaffordability by Household Type, 2021

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		1,275	715	355	1,385
Households living in Core Housing Need	Total households	-	-	60	245
	Change since 2016	-	-	-40%	-29%
	Share of households	-	-	17%	18%
Households living in deep unaffordability	Total households	-	-	25	100
	Change since 2016	-	-	-	0%
	Share of households	-	-	7%	7%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

7 Demographic Profile

7.1 Population

7.1.1 Current Population

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of Richmond increased by 1%, compared to provincial growth rate of 5%. Table 7-1 below illustrates the municipality’s population change compared to provincial changes.

Overall, the municipality grew across only one of the defined age cohorts - there was strong growth among 65-84-year-olds, enough so to support an overall population increase.

Table 7-1: Total Population by Age Cohort (2021) & Five-Year Percent Change

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Nova Scotia	Total	136,710	106,185	234,180	276,990	192,285	23,035	969,380
	Share	14%	11%	24%	29%	20%	2%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+2%	-1%	+9%	-2%	+19%	+6%	+5%

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Municipality of the County of Richmond	Total	920	705	1,425	2,685	590	285	8,510
	Share	11%	8%	17%	32%	7%	3%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-4%	-7%	-3%	-5%	+9%	-2%	+1%

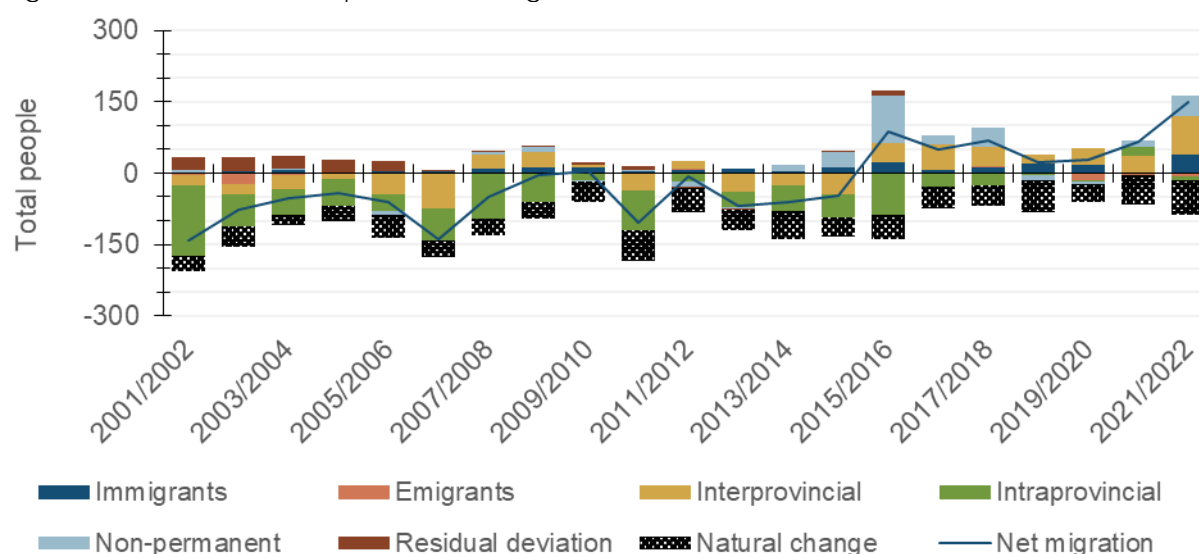
Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016-2021

7.1.2 Migration

Shown in Figure 7.1 is net-migration between 2001/02 and 2021/22, inclusive of totals for intra-provincial and international migration, as well as emigration.

Between 2016 and 2021, net-migration steadily increased from annual inflows to a two-decade high in 2021/2022, with a total of 149 newcomers in that year.

Figure 7.1: Historical Components of Migration



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0140

7.1.3 Anticipated Population

The municipality's anticipated population is derived from applying the historical share of local total populations by age cohort to the regional projections by age cohort produced by the Department of Finance & Treasury Board (FTB) in February 2023. In other words, results assume that the municipality will represent the same share of the region's population over the projection horizon.⁷ This does not consider nuanced population changes by community.

Table 7-2: Anticipated Total Population by Age Cohort and Five-Year Percent Change

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	960	745	1,455	2,360	2,780	405	8,705
	Share	11%	9%	17%	27%	32%	5%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+3%	+1%	+1%	-10%	+10%	+35%	+2%

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	910	720	1,375	2,220	2,920	525	8,670
	Share	10%	8%	16%	26%	34%	6%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-5%	-3%	-5%	-6%	+5%	+30%	0%

Source: derived Department of Finance & Treasury Board February 2023

⁷ Since a municipality represents the same share of its region (i.e., Census Division) over time for projections (population and households), similar rates of growth will exist for each of the municipalities within the region. Therefore, readers reviewing multiple reports may notice a likeness between them.

Estimates suggest that the total 2022 population was 8,560 with a projected increase of 2% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should continue to increase during that time, complemented by growth across most age cohorts (except 45-to-64-year-olds).

Growth may not continue between 2027 to 2032, with an anticipated marginal contraction of the population. Growth should still occur within senior populations. This demonstrates a short-term need to house families but a long-term need to meet the needs of an expanding senior age group.

7.2 Households

7.2.1 Current Households

Table 7-3 illustrates the various characteristics of households in Richmond. The tables show tenure splits for maintainer by age cohort, household types, and household sizes respectively, as well as the 5-year percent change in those populations. The primary household maintainer is the person within a household who pays the rent, mortgage, taxes, or other major expenses for the dwelling. For households in which multiple incomes are present, the first name listed on a census questionnaire is taken to be the primary maintainer.

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an overall 4% increase in households, with tenures split into 82% owner households and 17% renters in 2021. Non-census (i.e., single person or roommate) households and lone parents experienced the largest relative change, with 15% and 14% increase, respectively.

Note that the percent change of households can increase faster than population (or even if there is population decline). As residents age, their likelihood of forming or leading a household increases. For instance, a child growing up and moving out of their family home turns one household into two. This can also occur if there is notable growth among smaller household sizes.

Table 7-3: Households by Tenure & Characteristics (2021) and Five-Year Percent Change

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Household Maintainer Age	Total	20	735	1,425	1,610	150	3,960
	Owner	-	71%	86%	86%	86%	82%
	Renter	-	29%	14%	14%	14%	18%
	5yr %Δ	-50%	+9%	-8%	+18%	-29%	+4%

		Couple w/o Child	Couple w/ Child	Lone Parent	Non-census*	Other**	Total
Household Type	Total	1,280	715	360	1,405	185	3,960
	Owner	93%	90%	73%	71%	95%	82%
	Renter	7%	10%	27%	29%	5%	18%
	5yr %Δ	-4%	-7%	+14%	+15%	-5%	+4%

		1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5+ person	Total
Household Size	Total	1,285	1,665	490	365	160	3,960
	Owner	70%	89%	91%	83%	100%	82%
	Renter	30%	11%	9%	17%	0%	18%
	5yr %Δ	+13%	+4%	-7%	-12%	+14%	+4%

* Non-census means single persons or persons living with a roommate

** Other households are one-census-family households with additional persons or multiple-family households

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

7.2.2 Anticipated Households

A similar apportionment as for the anticipated population is performed for anticipated households. Note that anticipated households are a major input to housing demand calculations, but do not equate exactly to demand. Housing demand projections incorporated adjustments to reflect total dwellings (not only those occupied by a usual resident which projections would solely consider).

Estimates suggest that total households reached 3,960 in 2022, with a potential increase of 2% from 2022 to 2027 (65 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among older working professional led households (45- to 64-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

Similar magnitudes of growth are not expected to continue from 2027 to 2032, with only a marginal increase during that timeframe. Senior-led households (particularly those with a maintainer aged 85+) should remain the cohort with greatest relative

growth. From 2022 to 2032, about 330 new senior-led households might choose to live in the municipality, again reinforcing the need for senior appropriate or generally accessible housing over the foreseeable future.

Table 7-4: Anticipated Households by Maintainer Age and Five-Year Percent Change

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	20	755	1,255	1,790	205	4,025
	Share	0%	19%	31%	44%	5%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+0%	+1%	-10%	+9%	+32%	+2%

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	20	720	1,180	1,845	280	4,045
	Share	0%	18%	29%	46%	7%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+0%	-5%	-6%	+3%	+37%	+0%

Source: derived from Statistics Canada 2016 Census, Department of Finance & Treasury Board February 2023

8 Conclusion

The above information provides context for the County of Richmond's housing conditions. Recent increases in demand, coupled with limited growth in recent supply, have led to higher-than-expected local housing prices.

The current estimated unit shortage for Richmond is 370 units. Demand, which includes the shortage, is estimated to increase to 515 by 2027. Using current construction trends, about 50 units could be introduced to the market annually over the next 5 years, leaving a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027. Unless completions exceed the estimated annual rate of construction, ongoing trends within both rental and ownership markets can be expected to continue.